DISARMAMENT, DEMOBILIZATION AND REINTEGRATION (DDR) SENSITIZATION BRIEFING FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

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ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

OPENING STATEMENT BY
EL-GHASSIM WANE DIRECTOR PEACE AND SECURITY DIVISION
Acting High Commissioner for DDR and SSR in the Central African Republic,

Representatives from the Government of CAR,

The Representative of the United Nations Multidimensional Mission for Stabilization in CAR,

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen

It is my pleasure to welcome you to the African Union Headquarters in Addis Ababa Ethiopia, for this meeting on DDR, a stepping stone towards finding a sustainable solution towards peace and stability in Central Africa Republic. Your presence here shows your commitment to being part of the collaborative process that will see all our efforts towards the realization of a peaceful state on the track towards accelerated growth.

As the African Union, we remain committed to supporting positive steps taken by the nation towards stability and peace reconciliation, and we stand behind you in your efforts. Indeed as part of the African Union vision of promoting unity, solidarity, cohesion and cooperation among the people of Africa and African States, the African Union, through its liaison office in Bangui, has been monitoring very closely events in CAR and remains keenly involved in the developments within the country.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

On 19 December 2013, the African Union deployed through its African-led International Support Mission to CAR (MISCA) more than 7,000 uniformed and civilian personnel, from 10 different countries, to CAR in an effort to bring back stability and put an end to the brutal violence that was spreading. This intervention to quell the volatility and support the fragile State, within the context of high inter-communal tension and the lack of national cohesion resulted in calm and the peacekeeping mission being eventually handed over to the United Nations Multidimensional Mission for stabilization in CAR (MINUSCA) in September 2014.
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Nonetheless, and despite the challenges faced, the Bangui Forum was held in May 2015, aimed to be the first stage in a process of reconciliation. This initiative has sent out a positive call for unity as a follow up to the signing of the Brazzaville agreement and is a commendable fete which I must applaud you on.

You continue to seek multifaceted support from partners and various stakeholders to implement the agreements and recommendations from the Forum, and this is what brings us here today. At your request for DDR and SSR capacity support, the AU is therefore pleased to convene this Sensitization workshop on DDR in an effort to contribute to ongoing DRRR initiatives currently taking place in CAR and commit to supporting the Government of Central Africa in regards to capacity and in turn national ownership of this process.

Distinguished participants,

With elections scheduled to take place before the end of the year, we need to take stock of activities undertaken and ensure that there is a clear national DDR program and that the conditions required for a successful disarmament program exist. Following the creation by the Transitional Government of the “DDRR agreement Follow-up Committee/ Comité de suivi de l’Accord sur le DRRR”, it is evident that an inclusive structure has been put in place to monitor the process, with the participation of non-armed groups from the society playing a vital role in guaranteeing success in the implementation of the DDR program, however there are some key steps to be taken towards this.

Often times we see the role that DDR plays in broader post conflict reconstruction and development being misunderstood when in reality the only way it can succeed is when there are clear linkages with local economy reconstruction, development, security sector development and community violence reduction programs. This comprehensive disarmament policy caters for not only armed forces but also communities with focus on sustainable reintegration.
As influential national actors that have a stake in the DDR process, we will be relying on you to assist with clarifying this misconception through setting up awareness campaigns allowing for a genuine DDR process to begin.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This meeting provides an ideal opportunity to discuss how we can work collectively to ensure that our work becomes even more coordinated, effective and most importantly, sustainable.

On behalf of the African Union, I assure you that under the African Union DDR program through MISAC, we will continue to contribute and stand by your side in the implementation of initiatives geared towards achieving peace, security and stability in the Central African Republic, in the Central African region and the African continent as a whole together with our partners, particularly MINUSCA.

I look forward to our exchanges during this meeting and the steps we agree on for the future.

Thank you for your attention.