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**REPORT OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE COMMISSION ON THE SITUATION
IN THE CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC (CAR)**

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. At its 195th Meeting held on 17 June 2009, the Peace and Security Council (PSC) adopted decision PSC/PR/2(CXCV) on the situation in the Central African Republic (CAR). In that decision, Council, among other things:

- **Stresses** the need to mobilize all required efforts with a view to implement the DDR programme and security sector reform. In this regard, Council **calls** on Member States and other international partners to provide the necessary support to this end;
- **Urges** all development partners, including international financial institutions, to provide increased assistance to the CAR in order to facilitate the efforts made by the Central African Government regarding programmes of reform and economic recovery and adapt their assistance to the particular situation of the RCA;
- **Encourages** the Chairperson of the Commission to strengthen the contribution of the AU in this process, including the mobilization of the Member States and the international community for increased assistance and one that is better suited to CAR, the continued involvement in the implementation of the recommendations of the Inclusive Political Dialogue (IPD), in particular assistance and electoral monitoring, for the proper conduct of elections scheduled for April 2010.

2. This report is submitted as part of the regular monitoring of the situation in the CAR by the Commission and implementation of the decision adopted by Council on 17 June 2009. It covers the period June-December 2009.

II. MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS SINCE JUNE 2009

3. During the period under review, the Commission continued to monitor closely the unfolding developments in CAR. In that regard, several missions were fielded to Bangui to evaluate the situation on the ground, hold talks with the authorities of Central African Republic and other concerned players and participate in the activities undertaken in the country in support of the peace consolidation process. Noteworthy in this respect was the visit of my Special Envoy, Sadok Fayala, to Bangui from 17 to 20 November. The following paragraphs provide a synoptic account of the outcomes of the various visits undertaken and the talks held.

a) **Security Situation and the “Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) Programme**

4. On the whole, the security situation was marked by significant abatement, even if the authorities recognize the persistence of sporadic clashes in Bangui, as well as pockets of agitation or banditry especially in the extreme South-East with elements of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) at Birao and Ndélé, in the North-East and at Paoua, Sido and Kabo in the North of the country. The Minister of Territorial Administration and Decentralization gave the assurance that there was free movement throughout the country, that all the prefects were at their posts and that the administration was functioning normally in all the provinces. However, the democratic opposition have pointed to the continued presence of road blocks and the impossibility of moving freely in certain regions of the country, a situation said to be largely due to the delay in the implementation of the DDR programme.

5. This programme was established in accordance with the terms of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement and the Framework Document on DDR signed in Libreville on 21 June and 20 November 2008, respectively. In February 2009, the Steering Committee that was set, comprising the representatives of Government, the political-military movements signatories to the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, UNDP, the United Nations Peace-building Office in the CAR (BONUCA), the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) Mission for the Consolidation of Peace in the CAR (MICOPAX), France, the European Commission, AU and the World Bank. The Committee held several meetings, and adopted a project document as well as a timetable of activities articulated around the issues of disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and reinsertion. An initial awareness-raising campaign in the conflict zones was conducted from 26 August to 4 September 2009. This exercise made it possible to ascertain the expectations of the people to see the DDR enter its active phase.

6. The problem of deployment of military observers to supervise the DDR which had generated an impasse, was resolved following the signing, on 4 November 2009, of a Technical Agreement between ECCAS and the Steering Committee, the Government of Central African Republic and the political-military movements. The European Commission also accepted to finance a substantial part of the operation. ECCAS military observers arrived in Bangui on 17 December 2009 and were officially presented to the authorities of CAR. They were expected to be deployed in the field on the conclusion of the second awareness-building campaign in the areas affected by the conflict.

7. It should however be mentioned that the programme experienced delays in regard to the initial timetable and the expectations voiced by the political-military movements, and the populations' impatience to see the page of rebellion definitively turned over. The need and urgency to create a climate of security and confidence propitious to the holding of the next presidential and legislative elections scheduled to take place in 2010, conferred a special character on the DDR and heightened the related stakes.

8. The Central African Republic authorities which are closely monitoring the programme consider the methodology adopted by UNDP for implementation of the DDR as cumbersome; a

methodology which, according to them, is the source of the delay. The armed groups, moreover, laid down pre-conditions for the exercise. The *Union des Forces démocratiques pour le Rassemblement (UFDR)*, for example, demands that the ethnic groups hostile to it in the North-East of the country should be equally disarmed, and a solution found to the situation of insecurity created by the transhumance of livestock rearers from neighbouring Chad and The Sudan. The People's Army for the Restoration of Democracy (*APRD*) wants the self-defence groups entrenched in the villages and the armed bands present in its area of activity to be similarly disarmed.

9. For most of the armed groups which are stakeholders in the DDR programme, the major concern is the provision of food for their men pending the actual commencement of the disarmament and demobilization phases. The need to address this situation led the Steering Committee to adopt emergency measures on 3 November 2009, consisting of organizing a pre-assembly during which combatants would receive some subsidies while awaiting the deployment of observers, and of rapidly establishing Local DDR Programme Committees. Unfortunately, the pre-assembly expected by the armed groups did not take place on 1 November 2009 as agreed. Furthermore, of the five armed groups, only four submitted their list of combatants. To date, the Central African Liberation Movement for Justice (MLCJ) has not met this primary requirement for DDR. It should be noted that the relations between the leaders or representatives of the armed groups sent to Bangui and the rest of the troops in the province remain tenuous. Besides, unity, even within these movements is extremely precarious.

10. In addition to these difficulties, there is the problem of financial management of the programme. The desire of the Central African authorities to administer the CEMAC funds, amounting to 5 billion CFA francs, themselves instead of the Trust Fund run by UNDP, and the difficulties encountered with regard to the financing of the first awareness-raising campaign conducted 26 August 2009, suggest that the active phase of the DDR could meet with obstacles that could result in further delays. Lastly, adequate provision is yet to be made for the phase of reintegration of combatants. UNDP has warned that having received no funds for reintegration, its activities within the framework of the DDR would come to an end once the reintegration kits have been distributed to the combatants. However, the Steering Committee has initiated a brainstorming on these issues and should, in the coming months, come up with a reintegration programme.

b) Political and Electoral Process

11. There has been an increase in political activity since the promulgation of the Revised Electoral Code, the establishment of the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC), the announcement of the candidatures of certain political leaders and the creation of a presidential party, the *KNK*. The revision of the Electoral Code and the establishment of the IEC were among the key recommendations of the Inclusive Political Dialogue (IPD). The revision of the Electoral Code, for instance, was to be carried out with the assistance of the international community to ensure the required objectivity. As for the IEC, guidelines had already been set out for its composition by the IPD, which stipulated that it should include all the bodies that had participated in the Dialogue.

12. Following some controversies arising from the differences observed between the text submitted by the *Ad Hoc* Committee for the Revision of the Electoral Code and that transmitted by the Government to the National Assembly for adoption, as well as the final text enacted by the President, Law 09.016 on the Electoral Code of the CAR, in its final version, was endorsed by the President of the Republic on 2 October 2009. For its part, the IEC was established by decree on 8 October 2009, and its members were appointed also by decree, on 16 October 2009. The IEC is chaired by a neutral personality, Pastor Joseph Binguimalé. The other 30 members are from the six bodies that participated in the IPD, with five representatives for each body: Democratic Opposition, Government, the Presidential Majority, Other Parties, the Civil Society, and the Political-Military Movements.

13. One of the major issues that emerged during the period under review concerned the respect for the constitutional deadline for the holding of elections, that is, April-May 2010. Given the fact that the deadline seemed relatively short for some, and also the risk of a political crisis if the presidential elections are not held within the stipulated timeframe, some political stakeholders suggested that the said elections be postponed. They felt that the IEC, which was established only on 8 October 2009, with its members appointed only on 19 October 2009, was not in a position to organize proper elections within the given timeframe, particularly in view of the different tasks that have to be carried out in advance, to ensure the smooth conduct of presidential and legislative elections. They also point to the security situation, which in their opinion, is far from conducive to the holding of elections, and to the inadequacy of the financial resources mobilized by the Government to finance the elections.

14. As far as the Government and the political parties of the presidential majority are concerned, the IEC was established in good time to organize the elections and will abide by the deadline if the necessary means are provided. The President of the Republic stressed his determination to respect the constitutional deadline for the holding of the elections, in order to preserve the country's credibility with the international community. For him, if there is good will on the part of the different stakeholders, the elections will be held by the deadline set by the Constitution.

15. In this regard, it is encouraging to note that after several consultations, members of the IEC adopted a calendar of activities paving the way for the holding of the elections within the timeframe set by the Constitution. The calendar is as follows:

- establishment of the IEC (including its branches such as National Coordination and Local Committees): 10 October - 27 December 2009;
- preparation of elections (particularly the voters' registration, data processing, registration of candidates and the electioneering campaign, etc): 28 December 2009 - 4 April 2010;
- first round of elections: Sunday, 18 April 2010;

- second round: 23 May 2010.

16. Concerning financing and electoral assistance, many bilateral and multilateral partners have offered to provide their support. The European Commission plans to contribute 4 million Euros, while France will provide 200,000 Euros. Other institutions, namely, the United Nations and the International Organization of the Francophony, undertook electoral assistance missions to the CAR. I urge all partners of the CAR to provide the financial and technical assistance required to ensure the holding and smooth conduct of the elections.

17. Since the adoption of the Electoral Code and the setting up of the IEC, at least three candidatures have been announced for the election, namely: Mr. Jean Jacques Demafouth, Head of the People's Army for the Restoration of Democracy (*APRD*), Mr. Martin Ziguélé of the Central African People's Liberation Movement (*MLPC*) and the former President, Ange Félix Patassé who was expelled from the *MLPC* but decided to stand as an independent candidate. The announcement of the candidature of President François Bozizé as a candidate and his endorsement as such expected to take place on the occasion of the first congress of the "*Kwa Na Kwa*" (*KNK*) Party on 13 October 2009, were postponed.

c) Socio-economic situation

18. The economic situation was adversely affected by the uncertainties of the global financial and economic meltdown characterised by a fall in the volume of the two key exports of the country, namely, timber and diamond, leading to a downturn in general economic activity. As a result, the positive effects expected from the debt relief following the country's accession to the completion point of the Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative were mixed. The country was to suffer once again in 2010 from the effects of the global crisis and the decline in production activities. Under the HIPC programme, the debt acknowledged by the multilateral creditors amounted to US\$ 578 million; of this amount two major debt reductions of US\$ 207 million and US\$26.7 million had been granted by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), respectively.

19. Admittedly, the Government succeeded in clearing a few months of salary arrears, thus bringing real relief to workers in the public sector. However, in general, public finances remain grossly inadequate and, thus, the country cannot afford to instantly meet its social responsibilities as expected. Consequently, the authorities of the country intend to pursue in 2010 the reforms instituted with the support of the international financial community and development partners.

III. AU SUPPORT TO ONGOING EFFORTS

20. As indicated earlier, I sent my Special Envoy for the CAR, Mr. Sadok Fayala, on a mission to the Central African Republic from 17 to 20 November 2009, to examine with the authorities, the social and political actors and CAR partners, the unfolding situation in the country in regard to the decision of Council. He had working sessions with the country's highest authorities, including the President of the Republic François Bozizé, the political and social players and the

representatives of partner countries and institutions. The discussions focused on the political and electoral process and on the implementation of the DDR programme.

21. In its capacity as a member of the All-inclusive Political Dialogue Recommendations Follow-up Committee (*CSRDP/1*) and of the DDR Steering Committee, the Commission participated in several meetings of these two very important structures, fielding officials to the country notably in June and September 2009. It also continued to lend its financial support to the *CSRDP/1* providing it with an additional amount of US\$30,000 in September 2009, thus bringing the total amount of AU financial contribution to the political process in the CAR to US\$130,000.

22. The Commission also dispatched a representative to the Sector Round Table on Security Sector Reform (SSR) held in Bangui on 29 October 2009 following the meeting in Addis Ababa on 15 October 2009 between the Chairperson of Council for the month of October 2009, the Special Envoy of the Chairperson of the Commission for the CAR, and an emissary of the Government, the Minister Delegate for Defence, accompanied by the Central African Coordinator for the CAR and a UNDP representative.

23. Moreover, the Commission pursued its partnership and its collaboration with the European Commission and the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) within the context of the financing of the activities of the Mission for Peace Building (MICOPAX) deployed in the CAR through the African Peace Facility. A joint EC-AU-ECCAS meeting was held in Libreville from 9 to 11 November 2009 to adopt the main activities and the budget needed by MICOPAX for 2010. The European Commission (EC) will contribute 14.7 million Euros under the African Peace Facility (APF) out of a total budget estimated at 30,866,000 Euros.

24. In accordance with previous decisions of Council, final arrangements are underway for the opening of the AU Liaison Office in the CAR. I have appointed Mrs. Hawa Ahmed Youssouf, former Minister of Regional Cooperation of the Republic of Djibouti, Special Representative and Head of the Office. She will be taking up duties very shortly.

IV. OBSERVATIONS

25. The formation of a broad-based Government, the adoption of the electoral law, the setting up of the IEC, the preparations for the elections and the impending commencement of the disarmament and demobilization phases of the DDR programme - all attest to the implementation of a significant number of the major recommendations of the IPD, despite the difficulties encountered. I take this opportunity to congratulate the Government of the Central African Republic and the stakeholders for the remarkable progress achieved and urge them to persevere in their efforts. I also thank the international partners for their invaluable support. The consolidation of the progress achieved calls for the continued commitment of all the Central African Republic stakeholders, especially to ensure the holding of the presidential election on the scheduled date.

26. The present phase of the peace building process in the CAR requires that members of the international community continue to work closely together to maximize their support and thus assist the CAR in meeting the upcoming events particularly the presidential election. Beyond that, it is needful to continue to mobilize the financial and technical support needed for the socio-economic recovery and for peace consolidation in the CAR. The AU, for its part, will continue to leave no stone unturned to sustain the CAR in its present efforts and to mobilize the support of Member States.