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**7TH MEETING OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONTACT
ON THE CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC**

BRAZZAVILLE, 16 MARCH 2015

CONCLUSIONS

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1. The International Contact Group on the Central African Republic (ICG-CAR) held its 7th meeting in Brazzaville, on 16 March 2015, under the co-chairmanship of Mr. Basile Ikouebe, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of the Republic of the Congo, and Ambassador Smaïl Chergui, the African Union (AU) Commissioner for Peace and Security. The list of countries and organizations that participated in the meeting is indicated below¹.
2. The opening ceremony was marked by the statements made by the Ambassador of Chad in the Republic of Congo, on behalf of the Chairman of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS); the AU Commissioner for Peace and Security; the Special Representative of the United Nations (UN) Secretary-General and Head of the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the CAR (MINUSCA); the Special Representative of the ECCAS Secretary-General; the Minister of External Relations of the Republic of Angola, on behalf of the current Chairman of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR); the Prime Minister of the CAR; and the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of the Republic of the Congo.
3. Participants noted with satisfaction the continued engagement of the region, in support of the peace and reconciliation process in the CAR, as demonstrated by the consultative meeting of the ECCAS Heads of State and Government, on the margins of the 24th Ordinary Session of the AU Assembly of Heads of State and Government, held in Addis Ababa, on 30 and 31 January 2015. They seized the opportunity to hail the commitment of all the leaders of the region, especially Presidents Idriss Déby Itno of the Republic of Chad, current Chairman of ECCAS, Denis Sassou Nguesso of the Republic of the Congo, International Mediator in the CAR crisis, and Eduardo dos Santos of the Republic of Angola, current Chairman of the ICGLR, for their continued support to the transitional authorities and the process to end the crisis in the CAR. They also hailed the determination displayed by the region in the fight against the Boko Haram terrorist group, as well as the action taken by the AU to neutralize the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), as part of the overall efforts to promote peace, security and stability in the Central Africa region as a whole, including in the CAR.
4. Participants stressed that the pursuit of the activities of the ICG-CAR, particularly the convening of the 7th meeting of the Group, was an additional illustration of the solidarity of the international community with the CAR people. They expressed the determination of their respective organizations and countries to continue to support the CAR authorities and

¹ Algeria, Angola, Australia, Brazil, Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic (CAR), Chad, China, Republic of Congo, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, European Union (EU), France, Gabon, International Organization of *La Francophonie* (OIF), Japan, Libya, Luxembourg, Nigeria, Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), Russia, Rwanda, South Africa, Sudan, Turkey, United Kingdom, United States of America, Zimbabwe, African Development Bank (AfDB), African Union (AU), AU Mission in the CAR and Central Africa (MISAC), Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR), International Monetary Fund (IMF), United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the CAR (MINUSCA), United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA) and World Bank

people, with a view to helping them fulfill their aspirations to peace and national reconciliation.

5. Participants noted that the 7th meeting of the ICG-CAR took place on the eve of important deadlines for the transition process, which require greater national ownership, the adoption of the expected political decisions and the acceleration of the implementation process of the Roadmap for the transition, as well as the mobilization of important financial resources. These relate to the Forum scheduled to take place in Bangui, in April 2015, the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) programme and security sector reform (SSR), as well as to the legislative and presidential elections that will mark the end of the transition.

6. Participants reviewed the evolution of the situation in the CAR since the 6th meeting of the ICG-CAR, held in Bangui on 11 November 2014, on the basis of the updates provided by the Prime Minister of the CAR and other members of his delegation, the Special Representatives in the CAR of the AU, the UN and ECCAS, and the representative of the World Bank, on behalf of the Coordination Group for the Preparation and Follow-up of the ICG-CAR meetings (G8-CAR), as well as on the basis of the interactions that ensued.

On political and security aspects

7. Participants noted with satisfaction the pursuit of the political process initiated in Brazzaville with the signing of the Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities of 23 July 2014, notably the implementation of its phase II. In this respect, they noted that grassroots level consultations were held throughout the CAR territory, as well as in the neighboring countries hosting CAR refugee camps, and witnessed the active participation of the concerned populations. Participants welcomed the inclusiveness of these consultations.

8. Participants welcomed the commitment of the transitional authorities to complete the transition process. They took note of the establishment of the Preparatory Committee of the Bangui National Forum and the technical and financial support extended by MINUSCA, the UN, ECCAS and the International Organization of *La Francophonie* (OIF), as well as by other stakeholders. They urged the Preparatory Committee to ensure an as inclusive participation as possible, took note of the progress report prepared by the Committee and welcomed the progress made thus far in the preparation of the Forum, whose role is crucial for the promotion of national reconciliation. Similarly, Participants urged the transitional authorities to persevere in their efforts to promote good governance, as well as national reconciliation, but without undermining the search for the truth about past crimes and the fight against impunity.

9. Participants underlined the importance of focusing efforts on the political process initiated on 23 July 2014 in Brazzaville and which should be followed by the signing of an agreement on the disarmament of the armed groups and the convening of the Bangui Forum. In this regard, they recalled the relevant provisions of the ECCAS communiqué of 31 January 2015 and the will of the CAR people to ensure that the political process takes place in the CAR and that no parallel initiative is undertaken outside the country. They called upon

the international community to provide the necessary financial support for the convening of the Forum.

10. Participants called upon the transitional authorities to guarantee the respect of the Transitional Constitutional Charter, particularly with respect to the issue of ineligibility. In this regard, they stressed that the international community is paying particular attention to compliance by the CAR political class with the commitments made in the lead-up to the Libreville Agreements of January 2013, and that no efforts should be spared to foil attempts to use the forthcoming referendum to adopt a new Constitution to change the ineligibility clause contained in the Transitional Charter. They called for the strict respect of the ineligibility clause regarding political stakeholders targeted by AU-PSC and/or UN Security Council sanctions, as well as the transitional authorities.

11. Participants noted that the overall security situation had significantly improved, pointing out that the efforts deployed by the international forces throughout the CAR territory have contributed to the decrease of direct clashes between the armed groups and abuses against the civilian population. They welcomed the intervention of international forces in the town of Bria, which facilitated the reestablishment of Government control over the administrative buildings that were illegally occupied by armed groups. They noted that this intervention had sent a strong signal to the armed groups in other *prefectures*, resulting in the evacuation of the office buildings they had occupied.

12. Participants deplored, however, the continued acts of banditry, particularly the kidnapping of staff of international and non-governmental organizations, as well as of a member of the Transitional Government, following the arrest of an anti-Balaka leader. They strongly condemned these acts of violence and encouraged MINUSCA, as part of its mandate, to take all measures deemed necessary for the effective protection of the civilian population and the restoration of lasting security. They warned spoilers, and stressed that they would be held accountable for their actions in accordance with the sanctions regime provided for by Security Council resolutions 2127 (2013), 2134 (2014) and 2149 (2014) and the relevant AU-PSC communiqués. They urged the CAR authorities to bring the perpetrators before the competent national and international courts.

13. Participants noted with satisfaction the efforts being deployed by the transitional authorities, with the support of the international community, with the view to combating impunity, through the resumption of the functioning of the judicial system. In this respect, they welcomed the establishment of a Special Criminal Court charged with investigating and prosecuting serious crimes committed in the CAR. They called upon the CAR authorities to effectively put in place the Court, and appealed to the international community to contribute to the financing of its operationalisation, as well as to the restoration of the courts and prisons in the countryside, noting the improvement of the security situation.

14. Participants reiterated their call on all the parties, especially the leaders of the ex-Seleka and anti-Balaka, as well as to all other armed groups signatories of the Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities of Brazzaville, to resume the path of dialogue. They underlined that dialogue is the only viable means towards lasting reconciliation and peace, while constituting

at the same time an essential condition for the successful implementation of MINUSCA's mandate, with the support of the international forces.

Humanitarian aspects

15. Participants expressed concern over the internal displacements caused by the violence recorded in the north-eastern part of the country. On the other hand, they noted a decline in the number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Bangui. They expressed their appreciation of the efforts of the humanitarian actors and reiterated their gratitude to the neighboring countries that are still hosting about 420,000 CAR refugees. They appealed to the armed groups to cease violence against humanitarian actors and civilians and to refrain from hindering humanitarian access to civilian populations, in accordance with international humanitarian law.

16. Participants reminded the transitional authorities of the recommendation of the 6th meeting of the ICG-CAR, relating to the dismantling of the IDP camp located at the Bangui airport, before the convening of the 7th meeting of the Group, and the establishment of conditions conducive to the respect of free movement and the return of IDPs and refugees, notably through the building of capacities to provide basic social services and the continuation of the efforts aimed at promoting social cohesion and inter-communal dialogue. They reiterated the need to implement this recommendation. Furthermore, they urged the international community to support the ongoing efforts for the establishment of conditions conducive to the return of IDPs, including through the restoration of basic social services and the redeployment of administrative services, as well as to the development of income-generating activities.

On the electoral process

17. Participants took note of the decision of the International Mediator in the CAR crisis, President Denis Sassou Nguesso, to extend the transition by six months, until 15 August 2015, in accordance with article 102 of the Transitional Constitutional Charter and the relevant recommendations of the 6th meeting of the ICG-CAR.

18. Participants called upon the transitional authorities, as well as the National Electoral Authority (ANE), to urgently take the necessary political, legal, financial and logistical steps to accelerate the electoral process and facilitate the holding of free, fair and credible elections which will mark the end of the transition, by August 2015 at the latest. In this regard, they requested the ANE to organize, on a weekly basis, briefing sessions with the G8-CAR, to take stock of the progress made in the preparation of elections, as well as to post on its website a matrix of concrete actions to be taken, so as to inform the public in real time about the evolution of the electoral process.

19. Participants welcomed the establishment of the proposed Support Programme to the CAR Electoral Cycle (PACEC), signed on 25 November 2014, establishing a Basket Fund, so as to enable the mobilization of financial resources to the tune of US\$ 44 million. They also welcomed the contributions made, and urged all those who had made pledges to honour their commitments to fill the gap of US\$ 18 million identified to date. They also appealed to

other international partners to contribute to the financing of the electoral process. In this context, they welcomed the decision of the European Union (EU) to disburse, in installments, the amount of 20 million Euros – of which 8 million Euros have already been disbursed – earmarked for the electoral process, to enable the commencement of the related operations. They also welcomed the pledge made by the AU to disburse, in the coming weeks, an initial contribution of US\$ 500,000 in support of the electoral process.

On the economic and financial situation

20. Participants took note of the improvement of the economic and financial situation which is attributable to the gradual restoration of security in Bangui, to which the international forces, namely EUFOR-RCA and Sangaris operations, contributed, as well as to the steps taken to secure the Douala-Bangui corridor. They noted, however, that the destruction of the productive sectors of the economy continues to have an adverse impact on the collection of State revenues and economic growth.

21. Participants called upon the transitional authorities to implement the reforms relating to the management of public finance, including the establishment of a Central Accounting Agency of the Treasury and the adoption of specific measures to address tax and customs fraud, reestablish financial administration in the countryside as state authority is restored, and reactivate the Permanent Consultative Framework (CPC) between the public and private sector in order to improve the business environment. Participants made an urgent appeal to international partners for the provision of an additional budgetary support to bridge the present gap. They welcomed the measures being taken by the EU, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the African Development Fund (AfDB) towards the provision of additional budgetary support.

Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration

22. Participants welcomed MINUSCA's commitment to support the transitional authorities towards the elaboration of a national DDR strategy based on a community approach, in order to break with past DDR processes and ensure the active participation of the population. They called on the transitional authorities to rapidly define this new approach, which should be part of a global development recovery, be closely linked to SSR and promote durable solutions to the CAR crisis. Within this framework, Participants welcomed the launching of the EU Military Advisory Mission in the Central African Republic (EUMAM CAR).

23. Participants recognized the existence of challenges related to the identification and the vetting of potential candidates for DDR from the various armed groups and the determination of their strengths and eligibility criteria, to ensure that only eligible candidates participate in the DDR programme.

24. Participants expressed their concern about the delay recorded in the mobilization of the funds necessary for the grouping of the fighters of the different armed groups – an indispensable operation to allow the gradual return to stability in the country, as well as for disarmament, demobilization and, especially, community reintegration and community

violence reduction programmes, which require substantial resources and whose implementation will guarantee the durability of the results obtained. They called on the international community to mobilize at least US\$ 20 million.

25. Participants reminded the transitional authorities of their obligation to carry out an SSR programme in conformity with UN Security Council resolution 2121 (2014), which stressed the need for the establishment of “professional, balanced and representative” security forces, and encouraged the UN and the CAR Government to cooperate closely as regards to the requests to the UN Security Council in order to obtain exemptions for the import of weapons and ammunitions within the framework set by the said resolution.

26. Participants welcomed the initiatives already undertaken by MINUSCA within the pre-DDR programmes, through the launching of small scale community projects involving combatants and local communities, in order to lay the foundation for durable security and stability at community level. They made an appeal for the mobilization of US\$ 3 million for grouping 5,000 combatants for a period of 6 months, in implementation of article 4 of the Brazzaville Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities.

On the Follow-up of the Conclusions of the meeting of the ICG-CAR

27. Participants requested the International Mediator, with the support of the G8-CAR, to ensure the follow-up to the relevant provisions of these Conclusions, particularly with regard to the completion of the process launched in Brazzaville, through the organization of the Bangui Forum, the drafting of the new Constitution and the holding of elections.

28. Participants welcomed the initiative of the EU to organize a conference to mobilize new donors for the Bekou Fund, on 24 April 2015, in Brussels.

Gratitude and next meeting

29. Participants thanked the Congolese authorities for the organization of the 7th meeting of the ICG-CAR and the welcome which was accorded to them. They expressed their appreciation to the G8-CAR for the preparation of the meeting.

30. Participants agreed to convene their next meeting in Addis Ababa, in June 2015, at a date to be fixed after consultations.

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