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PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL
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**INFORMATION NOTE ON THE REPORT OF THE UNITED NATIONS SECRETARY-GENERAL
ON THE CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC PURSUANT TO PARAGRAPH 48
OF SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION 2127 (2013)**

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. The present Information Note is submitted in pursuance of paragraph 13 of communiqué PSC/AHG/COMM.2(CDXVI), adopted by Council at its 416th meeting held at the level of Heads of State and Government, on 29 January 2014. The Note provides the background of the report submitted, on 3 March 2014, by the United Nations (UN) Secretary-General on the Central African Republic (CAR), pursuant to paragraph 48 of UN Security Council resolution 2127 (2013), adopted on 5 December 2013, and a summary of its content. It articulates AU's positions on the issues involved, and concludes with observations on the way forward.

II. BACKGROUND

2. In resolution 2127 (2013), the UN Security Council requested the Secretary-General, in consultations with the AU, to report to the Security Council no later than three months from the adoption of the resolution, with recommendations on the possible transformation of the African-led International Support Mission in the Central African Republic – CAR (MISCA) into a UN peacekeeping operation, including an assessment of progress towards the appropriate conditions on the ground referred to in paragraph 45 of the report of the Secretary-General dated 15 November 2013.

3. On 24 January 2014, the UN under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations wrote to the AU Commissioner for Peace and Security informing him that, as a follow-up to Security Council resolution 2127 (2013), the UN would dispatch an integrated team to the CAR, from 4 to 15 February 2014, to prepare the UN Secretary-General report. He invited the AU to participate in the mission. In response, the Commissioner for Peace and Security, in a letter dated 3 February 2014, confirmed the participation of the AU in the UN assessment mission.

4. In paragraph 13 of communiqué PSC/AHG/COMM.2(CDXVI), Council:

- (i) stressed the need to ensure that all international efforts are geared towards the strengthening of MISCA and the mobilization of the necessary resources in its favor, to enable it to effectively discharge its mandate and pave the way for the possible deployment of a UN peacekeeping operation, in conformity with the relevant provisions of resolution 2127 (2013);
- (ii) took note of the mission that a UN integrated team was to undertake to the CAR, to enable the Secretary-General to carry out the assessment provided for by resolution 2127 (2013) and to make, as soon as possible, recommendations to the Security Council on the transformation, in due course, of MISCA into a UN peacekeeping operation, including an assessment of the progress made to meet the necessary conditions for such a deployment; and
- (iii) welcomed the participation of the Commission in this assessment, and looked forward to receiving on time an update on the outcome of the assessment, to enable it to rapidly pronounce itself on the issue.

5. As planned, the UN assessment mission visited the CAR from 14 to 15 February 2014, with the participation of AU experts. As part of this assessment, the UN Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations visited Bangui on 11 and 12 February 2014, together with a senior AU Official. On 3 March 2014, the Secretary-General submitted his report on the CAR pursuant to paragraph 48 of Security Council resolution 2127 (2013).

II. SUMMARY OF THE UN REPORT ON THE CAR

6. The report of the Secretary-General revolves around the following main headings: major developments, international security response, conditions for the UN peacekeeping operation to operate successfully, and recommendations for the possible transformation of MISCA into a UN peacekeeping operation. It concludes with observations on the way forward.

7. Under the heading “Major developments” of the period under review, which runs from November 2013 to February 2014, the report deals extensively with the security, human rights and humanitarian situations. It notes that, since the last assessment conducted in November 2013, there have been dramatic changes in the situation on the ground, as attacks by elements of the anti-Balaka against the ex-Seleka, in early December 2013, led “to a reversal of the conflict dynamic, a significant deterioration of the security situation and sparked a cycle of reprisals among civilians and clashes between anti-Balaka and ex-Seleka across the country.” It further notes that these developments led to a grave deterioration of the human rights situation. The report stresses that “logistical constraints and capacity gaps notwithstanding, MISCA has made a significant difference in its areas of deployment in and outside Bangui, including with regards to the protection of civilians.” The report indicates, however, that over the past weeks, the ethnic and religious demography of the CAR has changed radically, as many Muslims have fled the country. It further states that vulnerable groups continue to be affected disproportionately and that grave human rights violations committed against children are alarming. All these developments have resulted in a humanitarian crisis of unprecedented proportions.

8. Still under “Major developments”, the report provides an update on the evolution of the political situation. It makes reference to the resignation, on 10 January 2014, of the former Head of State of the Transition, Michel Djotodia, and the Prime Minister, Nicolas Tiangaye; the subsequent election of a new Head of State, Madame Catherine Samba-Panza, and the formation of a new Government. It stresses that, while not fully in line with the provisions of the Libreville Agreements and other related documents, these steps represent a positive development, providing new impetus to the transition. The report highlights the complexity of the crisis in CAR, which has, at its roots, long-standing political, governance and socio-economic deficiencies, worsened by a number of other factors, including corruption, nepotism and internal strife. Other issues addressed in this part of the report include the rule of law, socio-economic situation and sub-regional aspects. On that last point, the report acknowledges the active engagement of the sub-region, under the leadership of the Economic Community of the Central African States (ECCAS), highlighting in this respect the conclusions of the ECCAS Extraordinary Summit of 9 and 10 January 2014. The report also covers the regional impact of the crisis, particularly in terms of refugee flow into neighboring countries and reported presence of foreign fighters.

9. With respect to the “International security response”, the report provides a brief overview of MISCA’s activities, stating that, its swift deployment notwithstanding, the Mission faces significant challenges in terms of air mobility, information and communication systems, intelligence capacity, medical facilities, and logistics supply and sustainment. It refers to the support rendered to MISCA by a number of partners, and also covers the Sangaris operation and the deployment of a European Union (EU) force. Finally, the report makes reference to the six-point initiative proposed by the UN Secretary-General to the Security Council on 20 February 2014, to “stop the violence and killings, protect civilians, prevent the de facto partition of the country, facilitate the delivery of humanitarian assistance and provide the Government with urgently needed support.”

10. Under the heading “Conditions for the United Nations peacekeeping operation to operate successfully”, the report refers notably to the need for the transition to remain in place and for the transitional Government to demonstrate its commitment to the process and take concrete steps to implement the agreed framework. The report notes the encouraging steps taken by the new Head of State of the Transition and her Government, stressing, however, that the fragility of the current political framework poses a major risk for any future peacekeeping operation. Concerning the reconstitution of the national security institutions, the report states that, while some progress has been made at the technical level, creating consensus around a national vision with regard to security and rule of law institutions throughout the country, a process which is fundamentally political, is yet to take place.

11. On the “Recommendations for the possible transformation of MISCA into a United Nations peacekeeping operation”, the report starts by recalling the letter dated 27 January 2014 from the Foreign Minister of the CAR, requesting the deployment of a UN peacekeeping operation to stabilize the country and address the civilian aspects of the crisis. The report also makes reference to the letter sent by the Chairperson of the Commission to the UN Secretary-General, on 17 February 2014, stressing that the deployment of MISCA was aimed at facilitating a broader and more sustainable international engagement in the CAR, which would include a UN operation in due course, once the required conditions are created on the ground.

12. The report states that, “in spite of the progressive effectiveness of MISCA and Sangaris, the current deployment of international security forces is not sufficient, and lacks the civilian component to adequately protect civilians under imminent threat or tackle the root causes of the conflict. Addressing the crisis in the CAR requires a unified and integrated approach, through the deployment of a multidimensional peacekeeping operation, with the protection of civilians as its utmost priority.” The report adds that the UN “is uniquely positioned to deploy and sustain a multidimensional peacekeeping operation with the full range of capacities that are required to address the deep-rooted nature of the complex crisis now unfolding in the CAR.

13. The report indicates that, in the early stages of its deployment, a UN peacekeeping operation will need to “focus its efforts on the most urgent priorities and provide immediate dividends to the population in the areas of security, protection of civilians, human rights and justice, building on progress made by MISCA and Sangaris. In the long term, in order for the United Nations to make a lasting difference in the CAR, it will need to support national efforts to break the cycle of recurring political and security crisis, and contribute to establishing the conditions for long-term stability, and social and economic development.” The mandate of the proposed UN operation would include the protection of civilians, the protection of UN personnel, installation and equipment, support to the political process, creation of security conditions conducive to the delivery of humanitarian assistance, the promotion of human rights and support to disarmament demobilization and reintegration of former armed elements, repatriation of foreign elements, as well as community violence reduction programmes. Additional tasks are contemplated.

14. The report outlines the tasks to be fulfilled by the proposed UN operation; deals with the support considerations, bearing in mind the challenge of deploying a highly decentralized multidimensional mission in a landlocked country with extremely poor infrastructure; and articulates the modalities for the transition from MISCA to the proposed UN operation. The report states that it will take approximately six months for the UN to prepare for the deployment of its operation. It recommends the establishment by the UN Secretariat, in coordination with the Commission, of a transition team tasked with establishing the proposed peacekeeping operation with a view to preparing for a transfer of operation by 15 September 2014. The team would also work with MISCA to support the strengthening of its contingents and address critical gaps for possible re-hating into the peacekeeping operation, including through the use of the dedicated Trust Fund.

15. In the observations, the report reiterates the Secretary-General's concerns about the dramatic deterioration of the situation in the CAR, acknowledges that international efforts, in particular the swift deployment of MISCA and Sangaris, were critical to saving lives, and welcomes the decision to increase the international forces, including through the temporary deployment of an EU force. It states that, despite the presence of international forces, violence and wide spread human rights violations have continued across the country, hence the need for urgent action, and for the Security Council to support the six-point initiative proposed by the Secretary-General. The observations stress the need for a comprehensive, multidimensional and sustained response in order to help stabilize the country. It recommends the deployment of multidimensional UN peacekeeping operation with a total strength of 10,800 military personnel and 1,800 civilian police officers. The report also stresses the need for a political commitment from national stakeholders, as well as a commitment from the international community to work together and to provide the necessary assistance to the CAR to ensure the effectiveness and sustainability of its actions.

III. AU VIEWS ON THE ISSUES AT HAND

16. The Commission welcomes the steps taken by the UN Secretary-General in pursuance of the relevant provisions of Security Council resolution 2127(2013). It notes with satisfaction the collaboration between the two organizations during the assessment mission and subsequent exchanges on the issues at hand. The Commission maintained close consultations with the UN to ensure that the AU views on the situation were understood, including through the two letters sent by the Chairperson of the Commission to the UN Secretary-General, on 13 and 17 February 2014, respectively, copies of which are herewith attached for information.

17. The Commission would like to emphasize the significant improvement of the security situation in the CAR, both in Bangui and in the countryside. While the situation remains volatile and civilians continue to be subjected to unacceptable acts of violence and other abuses, it is clear that the deployment of MISCA and Sangaris has made a significant difference. The number of security incidents has significantly reduced, and many human lives have been saved. Internally displaced persons are increasingly returning to their original homes. In Bangui, life is gradually returning to normalcy. Furthermore, MISCA has been able to secure the corridor linking Bangui to the border with Cameroon, which is vital both for the provision of humanitarian assistance and trade flow. It is providing protection to the transitional authorities, securing key infrastructure and assisting humanitarian organizations in a variety of ways. Steps have also been taken to disarm armed elements from the ex-Seleka, the anti-Balaka and other groups, as well as support national efforts towards DDR and Security Sector Reform. Clearly, the situation that prevails today is significantly different from the one that was prevailing before the deployment of the MISCA, particularly in the aftermath of the attacks launched in Bangui by the anti-Balaka group. The Commission is confident that, in the next few weeks further progress will be made and that the initial stabilization phase will be completed within the envisaged timeframe.

18. The Commission notes with satisfaction that the UN report acknowledges the significant difference made by MISCA in its areas of deployment in and outside Bangui, including with regard to the protection of civilians. It is important that the Security Council and the larger international community clearly acknowledge the improvement of the situation and the role played by MISCA and Sangaris. In so doing, the international community also encourages a more proactive role of the AU and its Regional Mechanisms for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution in the efforts to end conflict on the continent and sustain peace. Ultimately, lasting peace on the continent requires greater African ownership and leadership.

19. This recognition is all the more important as these achievements were made at a great cost, with about 20 uniformed personnel killed and over 100 injured in the discharge of their duties, and in a particularly challenging environment. The speed with which the AU was able to reach

MISCA's authorized strength and the role being played on the ground by the Mission, with the support of Sangaris, demonstrate, once again, the clear value-added and distinct advantage of AU peace support operations, as they are deployed in unstable environments with a view to creating conditions for possible UN peacekeeping operations. The AU and the UN should build on this and other relevant experiences to ensure greater complementarity in their efforts, as they strive to build an innovative and forward looking partnership that will enable them to more effectively address the peace and security challenges confronting the African continent. Therefore, in deploying a peacekeeping operation, the UN should aim at consolidating and building on the gains made by MISCA with the support of Sangaris.

20. The AU has always been in favor of the deployment of a UN operation, once the required conditions are created. This was emphasized in the Chairperson's letter of 17 February 2014 to the UN Secretary-General. In that letter, she also indicated that MISCA, with the support of Sangaris, was planning to complete the initial stabilization phase within six to nine months. Accordingly, the Commission welcomes the recommendation for the deployment of a UN peacekeeping operation, with a possible transfer of authority by 15 September 2014, with the understanding that this date shall be confirmed following a further joint AU-UN assessment. In this respect, the Commission would like to highlight the following elements that should inform the transformation of MISCA and the mandate of the envisaged UN operation:

- (i) **Promotion of national ownership of the peace efforts in the CAR:** While the international community, including through a UN peacekeeping operation, will continue to play an important role in the long-term stabilization of the CAR, it is clear that without national ownership, no amount of international support can bring about lasting solutions to the challenges facing the country. In this regard, the Commission notes the emphasis placed by the UN report on the need for political commitment from national stakeholders, as contained in its paragraph 105. The role of the international community should not be to substitute the CAR stakeholders and people, but rather to complement and accompany their efforts, in full respect of the country's sovereignty. This consideration should underpin the mandate of the envisaged UN peacekeeping operation and its implementation, as well as the role that the International Contact Group on the CAR (ICG-CAR) should continue to play, notwithstanding steps that could be taken to strengthen its effectiveness.
- (ii) **Recognition of, and support to, the role of the region, notably through ECCAS, and the AU in the post-MISCA phase:** This role should be clearly recognized and supported, so that the envisaged UN peacekeeping operation and other related efforts can be anchored on a strong regional and continental involvement. The region, working closely with the AU, has demonstrated strong leadership in addressing the crisis in the CAR, as illustrated, among others, by the ECCAS Extraordinary Summit held in Ndjamena on 9 and 10 January 2014. Its continued involvement with the support of the AU will be crucial to the success of the envisaged UN peacekeeping operation. Therefore, it is important that the Security Council continues to support the leading role of the region, through the efforts of the Chair of ECCAS and the Chair of the ECCAS Follow up Committee on the CAR, and the role of the AU, including through the ICG-CAR. In this respect, the Commission notes paragraph 85 of the UN Secretary General report which states that a UN peacekeeping operation will only succeed if the region continues to play an important and complementary role, and proposes that the envisaged UN mission provides support to the AU and ECCAS, including the deployment of human rights and military observers and other support as appropriate. The AU, in collaboration with ECCAS, will consult further with the UN on the implementation modalities of such support and how best to ensure close coordination between the UN and the AU efforts.

- (iii) **Ensuring that the deployment of a UN peace keeping operation is part of a broader and more sustainable international engagement in favor of the CAR:** As rightly pointed out in the Secretary-General report, the challenges facing the CAR are complex and multifaceted. They include socio-economic, governance and other challenges. Addressing them effectively requires a holistic approach and the involvement of a variety of international actors on the basis of their respective comparative advantages.
- (iv) **Mobilizing adequate support for MISCA pending its re-hating:** As indicated above, the successful implementation of MISCA mandate is critical for the success of the envisaged UN operation. In this respect, every effort should be made to avail MISCA with the much-needed logistical and financial support to enable it complete the initial stabilization phase of the situation within the envisaged timeframe. The Commission notes the proposals contained in paragraph 94 of the report to address critical gaps through the dedicated Trust Fund. The Commission further notes the appeal made by the Secretary-General on bilateral partners and members states to urgently provide MISCA with rapid and generous financial and material support, as contained in paragraph 102 of his report. In light of earlier experiences, the Commission calls for a full-fledged UN support package funded through assessed contributions and availed to all MISCA contingents, as they all contribute to the successful conduct of the Mission's operations.
- (v) **Learning from the experience of the transition of the African led International Support Mission in Mali (AFISMA) to the UN Integrated Multidimensional Mission in Mali (MINUSMA):** For the transition process to be successful, there is need to learn from past experiences, as acknowledged in paragraph 93 of the report. This requires close consultation between the AU Commission and the UN Secretariat, in a spirit of transparency and partnership, including jointly defining the terms of reference of the planned transition team, generating forces and agreeing on the modalities for the re-hating of the contingents currently serving under MISCA. It also requires that the AU be adequately consulted from the outset on the draft resolution that would mandate the deployment of the envisaged UN peacekeeping operation, so as to be in a position to express any concern it may have throughout the drafting process. Without compromising the timelines envisaged for the deployment of the UN peacekeeping operation, it is important that adequate time is given for the consultation process to be carried out to the satisfaction of all concerned stakeholders. The AU would welcome the co-authoring of the draft resolution with one of the African members of the UN Security Council. Such a step will be in line with communiqué PSC/AHG/COMM/1.(CCCXCVII) adopted by Council at its 397th meeting held in New York, on 21 September 2013, which called for the active involvement of the African members of the Security Council in the drafting of resolutions, presidential statements and statements to the press concerning African, including through the designation of African states as penholders/co-penholders of draft resolution that concern the continent.

Learning from the Mali experience, and without prejudice to the relevant UN rules, it would be important to ensure that the African stakeholders, including the region, are adequately consulted on the appointment of the leadership of the envisaged UN peacekeeping operation. In this respect, the Commission recommends the appointment of Africans to lead the envisaged Mission and its military and police components. In addition, and pending the designation of substantive leaders of the Mission, continuity should be ensured in the leadership of the Mission, in order to facilitate the consolidation of the achievements made by MISCA with the support of Sangaris.

IV. CONCLUSION

21. The deployment of a UN operation in the CAR will mark a new step towards a broader and more sustained international engagement in the CAR, anchored on the principle of national ownership and strong regional and continental involvement. Such an approach will go a long way in enhancing the effectiveness of the international efforts and the prospects for the restoration of lasting peace, security and stability in the CAR.

22. Since the deployment of MISCA, less than three months ago, the region and the AU, building on earlier efforts by ECCAS, have relentlessly endeavored to assist the CAR in overcoming the many challenges confronting it. Huge resources continue to be committed, tremendous political efforts are being exerted, while on the ground MISCA is proactively implementing its mandate. In so doing, Africa acted on the basis of the principle of solidarity. Africa cannot relent in its commitment to assist the CAR and its people in their hour of need. Therefore, it is critical that member states provide MISCA with the financial and logistical support it so urgently need for it to effectively discharge its mandate. In the same vein, and in view of the evolving needs on the ground, the Commission recommends that an increase in MISCA's strength be authorized to enable the deployment of up to 4 Formed Police Units and specialized capabilities in the areas of medical support, signals, engineering and transportation.

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Information Note on the Report of the United Nations Secretary-General on the Central African Republic Pursuant to Paragraph 48 of Security Council Resolution 2127 (2013)

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