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Security Council

Seventy-first year

Provisional

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Friday, 15 April 2016, 10 a.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Liu Jieyi	(China)
Members:	Angola	Mr. Gaspar Martins
	Egypt	Mr. Mahmoud
	France	Mr. Lamek
	Japan	Mr. Okamura
	Malaysia	Mrs. Adnin
	New Zealand	Mr. Taula
	Russian Federation	Mr. Iliichev
	Senegal	Mr. Seck
	Spain	Mr. González de Linares Palou
	Ukraine	Mr. Vitrenko
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Hickey
	United States of America	Mr. Pressman
	Uruguay	Mr. Rosselli
	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	Mr. Ramírez Carreño

Agenda

The situation in the Central African Republic

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in the Central African Republic (S/2016/305)

Letter dated 13 April 2016 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2016/342)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Central African Republic

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in the Central African Republic (S/2016/305)

Letter dated 13 April 2016 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2016/342)

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of the Central African Republic to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Mr. Hervé Ladsous, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, and Mr. Omar Hilale, Chair of the Central African Republic configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission and Permanent Representative of Morocco.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2016/305, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in the Central African Republic. I also wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2016/342, which contains a letter dated 13 April 2016 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council.

I now give the floor to Mr. Ladsous.

Mr. Ladsous (*spoke in French*): Mr. President, you have before you the Secretary-General's report (S/2016/305) on the situation in the Central African Republic and on the implementation of the mandate of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA), which presents to the Council the significant process made in the country over the past few months.

Today, I would like to update the Council on key developments that have taken place since the issuance of the report. On 30 March, Faustin-Archange Touadéra was sworn in as President of the Central African Republic, and that step formally ended the country's transition phase. The promulgation of the new Constitution by the outgoing Head of State of the Transition on the very day of the inauguration symbolized in the strongest possible terms a return to constitutional order and marked an important milestone after three years of severe and arduous crisis.

On 31 March, the day after the inauguration of President Touadéra, the country held the second round of legislative elections. Those elections went off peacefully throughout the country, which I think is worth noting. The final results of this round were announced on 5 April, with the result that some key political figures, including some former presidential candidates Dologuélé, Méckassoua and Ziguélé, won parliamentary seats. By-elections will have to be organized for some 10 constituencies in the country where formal results from the second round were invalidated. In the interim, transitional institutions such as the Transitional National Council and the Transitional Constitutional Court will remain in place until the legislative process is completed and the Court has validated the final results of all legislative elections, which is expected to take place later this month.

Meanwhile, President Touadéra has moved quickly to form a new Government. On 11 April, last Monday, following the appointment of Prime Minister Sarandji a week earlier, on 2 April, the President issued a decree on the formation of the Government. The new Government is much leaner than the previous one, with some 23 ministerial posts, including four women. It is also worth underscoring that four appointees are members of the Muslim community. The new Government — it should also be mentioned — includes representatives from each of the country's 16 prefectures. On the flip side, no representatives of armed groups are among the new members of the Government.

I would now like to share some impressions from my recent visit to the Central African Republic to attend the inauguration of President Touadéra on behalf of the Secretary-General. Like many others, I was very much struck by the President's attachment to democratic values. He vowed publicly, for example, to respect the newly promulgated Constitution, including the two-term limit for presidential mandates. He also made it clear that he was prepared to work tirelessly towards national unity. When I met with the President, he told me that his priorities for the country would be to re-establish security, with a particular focus on

disarming armed groups. He also said that it was a priority for him to advance reconciliation, economic and social development and good governance. He robustly reaffirmed that he is determined to continue working very closely with international partners.

During my visit, I personally witnessed the important progress made in the Central African Republic towards healing past rifts among the various communities in the country. As an illustration, when I visited the Boeing district in Bangui — an outlying district where Muslim and Christian communities were until very recently viciously fighting each another and causing much damage — to my great astonishment I found the two communities engaged in a local reconciliation process, which stands as a model and is supported by MINUSCA. This is worth noting as a positive step. The Ambassador of the United States was also in Bangui on that day and he joined me in the discussion with the communities in Boeing.

If I may say so, it is very heartwarming to see how, in the space of a few months, the attitudes of the communities have changed so much. Experiences such as these — and there are many I could point to in the country — can serve as a basis for the long-term process of reconciliation. I think that it also shows the resilience of the Central African people and their widely-held feeling that they have to work collectively peace and unity.

As I said at the outset, the Central African Republic has reached a critical milestone with the successful holding of free and fair elections. If I may, I would say that in that part of the world there are not that many presidential elections where the winner is not known in advance. There are few elections that take place without difficulties or whose results are not challenged by the loser or where the post-election transition is smooth. I therefore think that the Central African Republic elections serve as an excellent model.

That marks the conclusion of the transition and the start of a new phase for the country. The new Government must now deliver tangible progress for the Central African people because the expectations are high — expectations of peace and of lasting security, and, simply, of the improvement of living conditions for people. I told the President that the first 100 days will be decisive.

Throughout the electoral process, there was positive momentum upon which, I think, we must build, based on the principles and the agreements reached last May during the Bangui Forum on National Reconciliation. It is the Government's responsibility to work for the establishment of a lasting peace and stability that will benefit all citizens. And rapid tangible progress must be achieved in the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process. I would highlight — as I believe it is important — the repatriation of too high a number of refugees and internally displaced persons, which will not be easy. However, expectations are high, and this will be important.

What will also be important is the launch of key reforms in the security and defence sector, that is, with regard to the future of the Central African armed forces. To stimulate economic development, which has been a problem for decades, the State's authority must be extended throughout the country. I understand that all the prefects are already in place in the 16 prefectures. I also understand that almost all of the sub-prefects are in place. However, that must then be reinforced in the various administrations. It is also necessary to improve access to basic security services, strengthen the judicial and penal chain, make progress in the fight against impunity — an element important to national reconciliation — and ensure universal respect for human rights. As far as MINUSCA is concerned, it will continue to provide its full support to the new Government as it works to realize those changes.

As I said previously, very significant progress has been achieved over the last two years. Although considerable challenges remain, I think we can be reasonably hopeful. What is important now is that we continue to focus on the key priorities. It is also important that the various international partners of the Central African Republic work together to ensure that the measures taken have as large an impact as possible. We have a window of opportunity to help the Central African Republic. We must not allow that window to close. The opportunity must not be wasted.

I have just spoken of the positive developments; now I must mention the absolutely catastrophic and shocking increase in allegations of sexual misconduct by the MINUSCA forces and international forces. It is all deeply regrettable and appalling. Certain cases are extremely shocking and shameful. It is a genuine scourge. To address that scourge, as members of the Council are aware, MINUSCA has established a transparent and victim-centred approach. In addition, the Secretary-General's Special Coordinator on Improving United

Nations Response to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, Ms. Jane Holl Lute, recently travelled to the Central African Republic to examine the best ways to better support MINUSCA.

In parallel, my counterpart, the Under-Secretary-General for Field Support, Mr. Atul Khare, and I have engaged with all of the contingents and the countries that provide uniformed personnel to MINUSCA. I did that personally in Bangui. Mr. Khare and I did it together in New York in order to insist, more than ever, on the imperative need for swift investigation and, of course, once the facts have been established, for deterrent punishments for the perpetrators. We stand firmly with the victims, who have demonstrated courage in coming forward and reporting the events in question. We continue to do everything possible to ensure that those victims receive the assistance they need and that justice is delivered as quickly as possible.

I take this opportunity to repeat to all troop- and police-contributing countries that we are redoubling our efforts to really address these events, which are profoundly unacceptable. It is a must that we do everything possible to put an end to these practices, which are committed by a handful of individuals. Their actions utterly compromise the image and the quality of the contributions and courage demonstrated by the great majority of their colleagues. I am personally, along with my colleagues, very directly and actively engaged in the handling of this problem.

In conclusion, as the members of the Council are aware, MINUSCA's mandate is set to expire on 30 April. The Secretary-General has recommended a technical roll-over of the mandate to allow the Secretariat to consult in some depth with the new Central African authorities before making recommendations to the Council on the definitive mandate, which should take the new situation into account, to the extent possible.

I would also like to inform the Council that it is our intention to work very closely with the Central African authorities as well our international partners in order to establish what we sometimes refer to as the compact. That compact is a framework of mutual engagement to be formalized between the United Nations and the Central African authorities and its international partners, including the major donors. I talked about it with President Touadéra. He seemed very interested, in principle. We will therefore focus on that. I consider it a pilot project within the framework of the Security Council, but something that should hopefully serve to consolidate the activities of the international community during the next two or three years in the Central African Republic, with a focus on accepted priorities. I believe that with benchmarks and periodic reviews, every action and all the actors involved in the country should become more effective. Of course our colleagues working to consolidate peace are fully involved in this process, which we will continue over the next few months.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank Mr. Ladous for his briefing.

I now give the floor to the representative of Morocco.

Mr. Hilale (Morocco) (*spoke in French*): I wish to thank you, Sir, for this opportunity to brief the Council on behalf of the Peacebuilding Commission in my capacity as Chair of the Central African Republic configuration.

I too would like to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Central African Republic and Head of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA), Mr. Parfait Onanga-Anyanga, for the work accomplished and efforts made in fulfilling his mandate. I would also like to thank Mr. Hervé Ladsous for his exhaustive and objectively optimistic briefing on the situation in the Central African Republic.

The Central African Republic configuration would like to express its satisfaction. We endorse the conclusions of Mr. Ladsous' briefing with regard to the peaceful conclusion of the political transition and the return to constitutional order in the Central African Republic. Building on the positive momentum generated by the Bangui Forum on National Reconciliation, the Central African people have clearly and strongly expressed their longing for peace and stability, thereby contributing to the conclusion of the transition. Moreover, presidential candidates have demonstrated patriotism and unity but also responsibility by prioritizing the greater interests of the nation by complying with the code of good conduct and accepting the electoral results. Those peaceful elections, in the situation that exists in the Central African Republic, would not have been possible without such a dynamic, combined with the strong engagement and the coordination of efforts of all stakeholders at the national, regional and international levels.

As mentioned in the letter of 3 March that the configuration sent to Mr. Faustin Archange Touadera to congratulate him on his election, I would like to reiterate our commitment to continuing to provide full support to the creation of an environment conducive to peacebuilding. We also welcome the appointment as Prime Minister on 2 April of Mr. Simplice Sarandji and on 11 April of the members of the new Government, four of whom, we are pleased to note, are women.

The Central African Republic has come a long way since its relapse in 2013. With the end of the political transition, the country is now at a critical, indeed historic juncture, and our collective and timely support for the people of the Central African Republic and its new authorities is more important than ever if we are to ensure that the priorities for peacebuilding will be pursued. Those goals must be closely aligned with the national priorities outlined by the President in his inauguration address — a restoration of stability to the entire territory through the implementation of the processes of disarmament, demobilization, repatriation and reintegration and security sector reform; promotion of national reconciliation and cohesion; reform of the public finance system and the productive sectors; and, lastly, rehabilitation of the country's public services.

For its part, the configuration, together with the international community, has provided support to the Central African authorities before and throughout the transitional period in overcoming the challenges resulting from the country's volatile situation. In that context, it has also played a key role in supporting the United Nations Development Programme and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations in their efforts to raise the international community's awareness of the situation and challenges in the Central African Republic and to advocate for the holding of timely elections, particularly in relation to mobilizing resources for the electoral basket fund. Furthermore, with regard to fighting impunity, in partnership with the United Nations Global Focal Point for Police, Justice and Corrections Areas in the Rule of Law in Post-Conflict and Other Crisis Situations, the configuration established a reference group aimed at providing a supporting platform for re-establishing the penal system and setting up the Special Criminal Court. The next meeting will deal with the modalities of recruiting international magistrates for the Special Criminal Court in order to enable it to begin its sessions.

As this new and historic phase begins, the activities of the Central African Republic configuration will have to adapt to the new situation and be implemented in a way that will ensure the appropriate and needed support for the country's long-term political stability and economic prosperity. To that end, its activities should conform to three closely linked preconditions — they should be action-oriented, timely and strictly aligned with the priorities outlined by the national authorities. Apart from this, our work should be structured around three phases.

First, in the short term, we should facilitate a rapid and coordinated response to the challenges that the new authorities encounter from the very beginning of their mandate, since we know that the people will have high expectations of improvement in their living conditions. Our collective support should therefore emphasize efforts that let the people see immediate results from the peace dividend, especially in the area of their basic public service needs. In that regard, the configuration will ensure that the various assessments of urgent needs and initiatives that are currently under way or being planned by the principal stakeholders are coherent and coordinated. The aim is to avoid a fragmented approach within the donor community and to build positive momentum for a successful future donor conference.

Secondly, in the medium term, we should continue and strengthen coordination with the national authorities and principal stakeholders in order to ensure the implementation of a national development plan. The configuration is also ready to support the various types of engagement planned or currently under way in the Central African Republic. Mechanisms based on mutual engagement of the United Nations with the country, such as Global Compact projects, or evaluations aimed at identifying appropriate forms of support, such as the World Bank's 2014 fragility assessment, which was recently updated, are some specific examples. Moreover, the principal Central African Republic donors are engaged in multiple projects, along with the Peacebuilding Fund, which has been providing the country with critical and timely financial support for the past few years.

Thirdly, in the long term, we should ensure the establishment of a stable and inclusive political environment that will promote a lasting peace through an effective national reconciliation effort that reaches every sector of society, with no exceptions. On the economic front, we should support the identification of

the key sectors that can ensure economic growth and recovery and encourage international investment. In that regard, the Peacebuilding Commission's experience in areas such as the mobilization of domestic resources could benefit the country significantly. All of these efforts — short-, medium- and long-term — are aimed at supporting the establishment of a lasting peace and paving the way for the reconstruction and development of a country that has been devastated by a long crisis. The humanitarian situation is still worrying, particularly as regards internally displaced persons and refugees. We call on humanitarian organizations to continue to intervene in support of these people who have lost everything.

I plan over the next few weeks to visit the Central African Republic and to meet with the principal international and regional stakeholders in order to discuss these initiatives further and decide on the best way for the configuration to support those efforts. Indeed, this type of situation is where the role of the Peacebuilding Commission can make a key contribution as a catalyst for initiatives and by contributing to a coherent and coordinated approach. Another important aspect of our mandate will be to ensure that the Central African Republic continues to be a top priority for the international community.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate that the country is at a critical juncture for its future. The Central African Republic has the potential to become a success story, after all the previous attempts that have failed to address the root causes of its instability. The gravity of the country's recent conflict is a strong incentive for the international community to rethink its engagement with the country in order to turn the page once and for all.

Lastly, the configuration welcomes the recommendations in the Secretary-General's report (S/2016/305) regarding the technical renewal of MINUSCA's mandate. The proposal makes sense in the context of the country's current situation and, as Mr. Ladsous just discussed, will give the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, which is about to conduct a strategic assessment of the Mission, enough time to engage fully with the new authorities. As we all know, the success of any long-term solution in a post-conflict situation requires strong national ownership. That is an absolute essential for the Central African Republic as much as it is an obligation for the configuration, the Security Council and the international community to help the country to achieve it.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank Mr. Hilale for his briefing.

I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 10.40 a.m.