



Security Council

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Letter dated 20 February 2019 from the Chair of the Central African Republic configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission addressed to the President of the Security Council

It is my pleasure to share with you, in my capacity as Chair of the Central African Republic configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission, the report of the visit I undertook to Bangui, from 13 to 15 February 2019, with other members of the Peacebuilding Commission, together with the Assistant Secretary-General for Peacebuilding Support and the Assistant Secretary-General for Africa of the Department of Peace Operations and the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (see annex).

I remain at the disposal of the Security Council to provide further information and clarifications, as may be required. The Commission remains ready to accompany the Central African Republic and to inform the Council on peacebuilding-related developments, as appropriate.

I kindly request that the present letter and its annex be circulated to the members of the Security Council and issued as a document of the Council.

(Signed) Omar **Hilale**

Chair

Central African Republic configuration
of the Peacebuilding Commission



Annex to the letter dated 20 February 2019 from the Chair of the Central African Republic configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission addressed to the President of the Security Council

Visit of the Central African Republic configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission to Bangui

13 to 15 February 2019

Background and scope

1. In my capacity as Chair of the Central African Republic configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission, I visited Bangui from 13 to 15 February 2019. For the first time since Morocco was elected as Chair of the Commission in 2014, I was accompanied, by an expert-level delegation of Peacebuilding Commission members, namely, China, France, Italy, Republic of Korea and the Russian Federation. The Assistant Secretary-General for Peacebuilding Support and the Assistant Secretary-General for Africa of the single, shared regional political-operational structure of the Department of Peace Operations and the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and their respective teams also joined the visit. In addition, the Permanent Representative of the Central African Republic to the United Nations joined us and participated in the meetings with national authorities.

2. As set out in the terms of reference for the trip, endorsed by the members of the Peacebuilding Commission ahead of the visit, the focus was centred on the following four areas:

- Understanding recent developments regarding the African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation and the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic signed by the Government and 14 armed groups on 6 February;
- Supporting the implementation of the National Recovery and Peacebuilding Plan in the aftermath of the peace agreement, with a particular emphasis on identifying the challenges that continue to impede its implementation, including its rule of law components;
- Exploring how the Peacebuilding Commission can support timely preparations for the elections to be held in 2020–2021;
- Ensuring that the Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Fund are strategically and jointly utilized in support of national peacebuilding priorities and needs.

3. During the visit, the delegation met with President Faustin Archange Touadera, President of the National Assembly Laurent Ngon Baba, Minister for Foreign Affairs Sylvie Baipo-Temon, Minister of Justice Flavien Mbata, President of the National Electoral Commission Marie Madeleine N’Kouet-Hoornaert, Minister of Planning Felix Moloua, representative of the World Bank Robert Bou Jaoude, representative of the European Union Samuella Isopi, representative of the International Monetary Fund Olivier Benon, representatives of key rule of law donors and the United Nations country team.

4. Taking place only a few days after the signing of the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic in Bangui on 6 February, I emphasized with all my interlocutors that the composition of the delegation manifested the support of the United Nations, including Peacebuilding Commission members, for the implementation of the Agreement.

5. Overall, I sensed that the signature of the Agreement represented a historic moment for the Central African Republic and benefited from the broad support of the international community, in particular from the country's neighbours, the African Union and the United Nations. The Agreement opens a window of opportunity to overcome the crisis in the Central African Republic; at the same time, it is imperative to remain cognizant of the multiple and complex challenges ahead. Solutions should take into account existing foundations, such as the Constitution, the recommendations of the Bangui Forum on National Reconciliation of 2015 and the National Recovery and Peacebuilding Plan. There will need to be a prioritization of issues. It will be important for the population to derive rapid and concrete dividends from the Agreement, while attention is also maintained on medium-term and long-term peacebuilding and development needs.

6. A recurrent theme in the discussions was the need to continue to engage with regional actors, the members of the subregion and in particular with the neighbours of the Central African Republic, to ensure their continued support for the peace process by, for example, relaunching the bilateral mixed commissions and addressing issues related to refugees, transhumance and border control. Throughout the discussions, there was strong emphasis placed on the continued key role of the African Union. I also noted the strong call from civil society, in particular women and young people, to be involved in the implementation phase of the Agreement. Sustainable peace will require ownership and involvement of the entire population. Therefore, it is essential that a strong communication campaign reaches out to the population, to explain the Agreement, clarify any misunderstandings and to engage in dialogue, even on difficult issues. This would help to manage frustration and expectations.

Meetings on the African Initiative and the Peace Agreement

7. Meetings with the President, the President of the National Assembly and the Minister for Foreign Affairs and a working lunch with the Group of Five for the Sahel focused on developments regarding the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic, between the Government and 14 armed groups, and potential opportunities and challenges with regard to its implementation. There was overall recognition that the newly signed Agreement was different from previous peace agreements, given the strong commitment of the Government and key stakeholders to its success, and provided a sound basis for moving forward. The Government expressed its steadfast commitment to its rapid implementation. The leading role of the African Union, with the support of the United Nations, was crucial to achieving the Agreement. It is now time to move forward with implementation. In the immediate future, there are three critical yet challenging provisions:

- (a) Establishing special mixed units composed of national defence and internal security forces and armed group elements;
- (b) Launching an inclusive commission, composed of government and armed group representatives, which is to submit a report with proposed actions with regard to justice to the Commission on Truth, Justice, Reparation and Reconciliation, the latter of which is scheduled to become operational three months from the signing of the Agreement;
- (c) Enabling eligible armed groups to form political parties or movements ahead of the elections to be held in 2020–2021.

One challenge will be implementing those provisions within the strict timelines. Success will ultimately depend on the peace dividends that the Agreement delivers to the wider population. Ensuring the continued support of regional actors, in particular the neighbours of the Central African Republic, will be critical. In the face of glaring

capacity and resource gaps, the continuation of political and financial support from the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA), the Peacebuilding Fund, the broader United Nations system and the international community for the implementation of the agreement remains essential.

8. The delegation congratulated the Government on the Agreement, expressed the hope that it would pave the way for a return to enduring peace and stability and stressed that the Peacebuilding Commission would remain at the disposal of the Central African Republic to support the implementation of the Agreement. The delegation underscored the importance of ensuring inclusivity, in particular of women and young people, during the implementation phase and safeguarding the needs of all segments of society and proposed building on the lessons learned in the context of the public consultations during the Bangui Forum. The delegation underlined that the convening role of the Peacebuilding Commission could be utilized to bring coherence to international efforts in support of the peace agreement and explained that the Peacebuilding Fund had invested over \$16 million over the past year in key areas such as implementation of the National Recovery and Peacebuilding Plan and mediation support to the African Initiative.

9. The President underscored that he was personally invested in the success of the Agreement. While reaching a peace agreement with armed groups was important, ensuring their constructive participation in reconstruction would remain a challenge and required international assistance at many levels, including in the provision of expertise and of political and financial support. Continuing the implementation of the National Recovery and Peacebuilding Plan and reinforcing the National Recovery and Peacebuilding Plan secretariat to help to expand absorption capacity was key. An immediate priority was explaining the Agreement to the population throughout the country to ensure buy-in and prevent misinformation. MINUSCA support to the peace process had been vital, in particular after the renewal of its mandate. Moving forward, the mission's support to the implementation of the complex elements of the peace agreement, in particular regarding the mixed units and accountability and justice issues, would be critical. The President called upon the Security Council to review the mandate of MINUSCA to support the implementation of the peace agreement, including the formation of the mixed units and moving forward on disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and transitional justice issues. It would be useful for the United Nations and the international community to support the Government's engagement with neighbouring countries on sensitive issues, such as transhumance, arms trafficking and other cross-border matters. At the recent African Union Summit in Addis Ababa, the President had held useful discussions with several neighbouring countries on restoring bilateral mixed commissions. The importance of the national authorities elaborating an action plan that also identified funding needs was discussed. The swift completion of such a plan could contribute to resource mobilization for the implementation of the peace agreement. The President highlighted the need for expertise in developing this plan. In response to questions, he expressed his commitment to ensuring inclusivity of the political processes.

10. The President of the National Assembly explained that the next ordinary session of the National Assembly would begin on 1 March and stressed its central role in preparing the legal framework to support the implementation of the peace agreement, including on legislation on decentralization, equal distribution of resources and the status of former Heads of State. Setting up mixed units and ensuring the representation of eligible armed groups in governance arrangements was an opportunity to enhance social cohesion, but would be a challenge. Parliamentarians could play a key role in keeping their constituencies informed on the content and implementation of the peace agreement, noting that a large part of the country has

remained barely accessible. He called upon MINUSCA to continue supporting the transportation of parliamentarians to their respective constituencies to facilitate communication and outreach. He added that the National Assembly would organize working sessions for its members to define a strategy on involving their constituencies in the implementation of the peace agreement. While the National Assembly had approved the national budget in December, they would need to consider the need for additional resources for the implementation of the Agreement. He further underscored the importance of inclusivity of the peace process.

11. The Minister for Foreign Affairs emphasized that, while the signature of the Agreement represented an unprecedented opportunity for the Central African Republic, the country would need to swiftly move towards translating it into reality by focusing on reconciliation, the rule of law, justice and communicating with the broader population. She listed the training of civil servants in order to address some of the glaring capacity gaps, operationalizing the inclusive commission to report to the Commission on Truth, Justice, Reparation and Reconciliation and addressing equitable distribution of resources, including through ensuring balanced taxation, as immediate priorities. She provided a briefing on her engagements to restore the bilateral mixed commissions. She had met with the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Sudan in Khartoum on 8 January and held discussions with her counterparts from Chad, the Congo and Gabon in the margins of the African Union Summit. She planned to tour the subregion soon for further bilateral discussions on ways and means to strengthen exchanges with neighbouring countries.

12. A working lunch with the Group of Five for the Sahel was attended by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Central African Republic, the ambassadors of China, France and the United States of America and the representatives of the Russian Federation, the African Union, the Economic Community of Central African States, the European Union and the World Bank. All interlocutors stressed that the peace agreement was timely, unique and offered a good basis to build upon. The African Union stressed the need to remobilize all relevant actors in support of the peace agreement; it would continue to play a strong role, in particular in mobilizing the neighbours of the Central African Republic and in the subregion as enablers of the agreement. The European Union was ready to provide further support and technical assistance towards the implementation of the agreement and enhancing government capacity for the implementation of the National Recovery and Peacebuilding Plan, noting also the importance of continued support from the Peacebuilding Fund. The World Bank would continue working on the restoration of basic services and infrastructure throughout the country to ensure that all segments of society could benefit from development dividends. France emphasized the need for the population to see concrete benefits of the peace agreement. The African Union and the Economic Community of Central African States stressed the importance of devising a good public communications strategy on the peace agreement.

13. During the meeting with civil society representatives, the delegation listened to concerns related to inclusivity during negotiations leading to the peace agreement and the need to communicate the contents of the agreement to the broader population to prevent misinformation. They were of the view that people were tired of the conflict, and were not seeing any concrete peace or development dividends. For a successful outcome, the implementation of the peace agreement would have to be inclusive, in particular of women and young people, and prioritize the needs of victims. This must be matched with an inclusive electoral process. Young people deserved special attention in the Central African Republic; the delegation was told that up to 90 per cent of armed groups were composed of young people, and finding ways to include them in social, economic and political life would be crucial for sustaining peace. In response, the delegation underscored the importance of civil society and

local actors in the implementation of the peace agreement, stressed that social cohesion was possible only through the active participation of all segments of society and provided details with regard to Peacebuilding Fund support for durable solutions and social inclusion.

Meeting on the National Recovery and Peacebuilding Plan

14. With the Minister of Planning, the delegation explained the Peacebuilding Commission's role in providing accompaniment to the implementation of the National Recovery and Peacebuilding Plan and following up on commitments made at the Brussels Conference for the Central African Republic. The delegation emphasized that the peace agreement could be a turning point for peacebuilding and reconstruction in the Central African Republic and asked how it would likely influence the implementation of the National Recovery and Peacebuilding Plan. Given that apparently 90 per cent of armed groups were composed of young people, the delegation asked about efforts to disarm them and integrate them into society.

15. The Minister explained that the sustainability of the peace agreement would depend on its ability to bring peace and development dividends to the population. This was the underlying logic behind the National Recovery and Peacebuilding Plan, and its implementation would have a critical impact on the sustainability of peace. There had been notable improvements in the implementation of the National Recovery and Peacebuilding Plan in 2018, but the Government continued to have difficulties with absorption and delivery capacity, in particular due to the absence of the State. The signature of the Agreement required a greater focus on the implementation of the National Recovery and Peacebuilding Plan as a way of strengthening the capacity of the State. The Minister was conscious of the high expectations that the peace agreement would generate and that the Government would need to act swiftly and with great impact. A retreat was being organized to evaluate the impact of the peace agreement on the National Recovery and Peacebuilding Plan and the type of support that would be required from partners. Strengthening the National Recovery and Peacebuilding Plan secretariat would be a critical first step to ensuring better coordination of efforts, working with all actors, better communication with the population and mapping progress. In the long run, the focus would need to be on diversifying the economy and creating favourable conditions for investment that would bring jobs to the periphery, in particular for young people. Programmes such as "cash for work" were already producing favourable results. Galvanizing private sector engagement, which was currently very limited, would be necessary, but this would require adjusting legal frameworks, building infrastructure and developing sectoral and geographical strategies. The Minister asked for "more flexibility and less bureaucracy" from partners and donors in their support to the Central African Republic, because complicated procedures made it difficult to obtain results. He also proposed public-private partnerships as an efficient way to resolving some of the challenges. The delegation suggested building on multiple partnerships in support of the National Recovery and Peacebuilding Plan.

16. With the Minister of Justice, the delegation discussed efforts from the Central African Republic authorities to fight impunity. There were positive developments; the Government was working closely with the International Criminal Court and the Special Criminal Court was now operational. However, the regular justice system throughout the country was broken, due to the lack of infrastructure, combined with difficulties in deploying judicial personnel to rural areas. The Minister provided a briefing on efforts to strengthen judicial institutions, including the deployment of judicial personnel throughout the country and recruitment of penitentiary agents and court registrars. Recruiting highly qualified personnel was also important, and with United Nations support, capacity-building and training programmes were under way.

A decree establishing the inclusive commission stipulated by the peace agreement, which would review all aspects related to the conflict and submit its report to the Commission on Truth, Justice, Reparation and Reconciliation, had been issued. He added that the peace agreement included a provision on setting up a trust fund for victims, but that this might take time to materialize. The Ministry was preparing a sectoral justice policy that would help to focus on priority issues such as transitional justice, the Special Criminal Court and the demilitarization of prisons. With support from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), a bill on legal aid had been developed and would soon be submitted to the Council of Ministers. Military justice was another priority area. In a separate meeting with various rule of law donors, the delegation heard that there were concerns regarding the lack of clarity on the process leading to the operationalization of the Commission on Truth, Justice, Reparation and Reconciliation, including the amount of resources that would be required. There were similar concerns regarding resources for the trust fund for victims. Donors supported the sectoral justice policy that was under preparation as an important step that would help to inform their priorities.

17. In the discussions, the delegation stressed that access to justice must be extended to vulnerable communities, in particular women and young people, and include community justice mechanisms and noted that the development of the sectoral justice policy, which will identify priority areas for justice reform in the Central African Republic, could help to mobilize resources. The Peacebuilding Commission would be ready to help to communicate priorities and needs. The delegation stressed the importance of symbolic gestures towards victims, even if the trust fund for victims took longer to be established and resourced, and emphasized that efforts leading to the establishment of the trust fund should be linked to the overall framework regarding reparations for victims.

18. With the representative of the World Bank, the delegation discussed current challenges and resource gaps that continued to hamper the implementation of the National Recovery and Peacebuilding Plan. The representative pointed out that, despite improvements in the implementation of the National Recovery and Peacebuilding Plan, the difficulties in deploying the government presence outside of the capital, due to a lack of services and security, combined with the low absorption capacity of the Government of the Central African Republic, continued to hamper effective and speedy delivery. The World Bank in the Central African Republic, however, wanted to avoid channeling all investments to secure areas. It was involved in a broad range of activities in support of the National Recovery and Peacebuilding Plan, including the second phase of the “cash for work” project that provided for temporary employment in conflict-prone areas, the renovation of official buildings and health centers, the construction of main roads, a sizable programme for cash transfers and a comprehensive energy project that would begin generating electricity in Bangui in the coming two years. The Bank was able to prioritize community development and, through its flexible instruments, had several projects in the pipeline to support communities that needed water, electricity and infrastructure, through small-scale interventions. The peace agreement was an important opportunity for the Bank to help to build trust; if the security situation stabilized, some of the projects could rapidly deliver results on the ground, showcasing the positive impact of the peace agreement to populations in need. In addition to several reintegration projects, the Bank was also considering supporting communities with a high concentration of armed groups and ex-combatants. The projects could potentially begin as early as March or April 2019. He informed the delegation that the Bank’s new Vice-President for Africa would come to the Central African Republic in the weeks that followed to undertake several field visits to explore opportunities to support the peace agreement.

19. The delegation referred to the joint United Nations-World Bank study on prevention and its emphasis on the need to address marginalization, exclusion and grievances for sustainable peace. The Bank's Statebuilding and Peacebuilding Fund was working with the Peacebuilding Fund to find common entry points in the Central African Republic on the basis of their comparative advantages. The delegation asked the representative of the World Bank about attempts in 2018 to provide mobile data and payment services in cities outside of Bangui in order to facilitate the deployment of government services by facilitating the payment of salaries to government officials in their respective locations. He explained that, given that the mobile data network throughout the country was unreliable, the Government did not want to move forward with the project at the present stage, but other stakeholders were already exploring similar types of innovative approaches. It was concluded that the provision of banking services had been a trigger for development in Africa and, while the sanctions regime complicated this, options for moving forward on this issue should be explored.

20. The delegation learned that the International Monetary Fund supports the economic and financial programme of the Central African Republic through the Extended Credit Facility arrangement. In particular, it supports the strengthening of governance and transparency and structural reforms aimed at improving the business climate. The improvement of the security situation and the redeployment of State authority throughout the country will allow those institutions to invest more in the rehabilitation of the country and the implementation of the peace agreement.

21. In a meeting with the United Nations country team (United Nations Children's Fund, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, International Organization for Migration, World Food Programme, Department of Safety and Security, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, World Health Organization and United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women)), the difficult humanitarian situation and the continued extent of displacement in the country was underscored. Provision of education and health services and the overall lack of infrastructure posed major challenges. Addressing vulnerabilities and funding durable solutions was at the heart of the work of the country team. The acting resident coordinator stressed the need to act very quickly on programming following the signature of the peace agreement, in order to bring concrete peace and development dividends to communities in the light of rising expectations. The delegation recommended that the country team prepare to scale up their capacities and to support the implementation of the peace agreement, in particular given the tight timelines.

Meetings on elections

22. The National Electoral Commission provided the delegation with a briefing on preparations for the elections to be held in 2020–2021, including through the development of timelines for the holding of the general and legislative elections, preparing the budgets for the national elections (\$33 million) and local elections (\$9 million), and the action plan for 2019, which was focused on mapping polling stations and ordering election materials. The Commission noted, in particular, the challenge inherent in the transformation from armed groups to political parties and political movements, which was exacerbated by the requirement of a clean criminal record for eligibility to stand in the elections. The delegation stressed that the elections to be held in 2020–2021 represented a milestone for the democratic process in the Central African Republic and that the Peacebuilding Commission would continue to support the process.

23. The President of the National Assembly explained that the National Assembly was already reviewing the draft electoral code, which would improve the inclusivity

of the electoral process. Key rule of law donors underscored the need for the National Assembly to move forward on the decentralization law, as a prerequisite for successful local elections. The National Electoral Commission informed the delegation that the draft electoral code included provisions to extend the number of commissioners and a quota for the minimum number of women commissioners. The delegation met with women parliamentarians, in the context of the visit to the Peacebuilding Fund project on gender-related issues, and discussed their potential role in improving the involvement of women in the electoral process.

Peacebuilding Fund projects on gender and support to police and gendarmerie

24. The two resolutions on peacebuilding and sustaining peace call for better synergies between the Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Fund, in support of a strategic approach for sustaining peace. The work plan of the configuration is mostly aligned with the Peacebuilding Fund portfolio in the Central African Republic, with both instruments prioritizing support to the National Recovery and Peacebuilding Plan, elections, issues concerning women and young people and mediation. During the visit to the Central African Republic, the delegation had the opportunity to visit two Peacebuilding Fund projects, a UN-Women-UNDP-led project on promoting the political participation and engagement of women in national dialogue processes and a joint UNDP-MINUSCA project on providing support to police and gendarmerie, as critical pillars of security, rule of law, justice and peace in the Central African Republic. The delegation observed with satisfaction the ability of the Fund to provide support to such critical areas at key moments of transition and to generate coherence between the activities of the United Nations country team and MINUSCA. Furthermore, with relatively small investments, the Fund has had a catalytic and far-reaching effect: the women parliamentarians whose political engagement had been supported by the project were now exploring ways to ensure the equal participation of women in the implementation of the peace process and in the elections to be held in 2020–2021, and the project supporting the police and gendarmerie had allowed for the establishment of training facilities with a curriculum that could reinforce the ongoing training of future recruits and existing police officers. The Peacebuilding Fund has approved more than \$75 million for the Central African Republic since 2009.

25. The visit enabled the delegation to provide details regarding the contributions of the Peacebuilding Fund to the implementation of the National Recovery and Peacebuilding Plan, enhancing social cohesion, bringing peace dividends to the population, supporting mediation efforts and empowering women and young people. The Assistant Secretary-General for Peacebuilding Support explained that the Peacebuilding Fund was entering a new phase of programming which would take into account the peace agreement and aim to bring peace dividends to the people. The Peacebuilding Fund would aim to focus its support on the most vulnerable communities, with a view to supporting capacities that would help to extend State authority, support disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and community violence reduction and address issues related to transhumance. It is critical for the Peacebuilding Fund to maintain its flexible, risk-taking and catalytic role in support of the implementation of the agreement, in particular given the tight timelines and the need to rapidly showcase results. The Peacebuilding Commission would continue to be used as a platform to coordinate donor support to the agreement.

Observations and future steps

26. Peacebuilding continues to face numerous challenges in the Central African Republic. The security situation remains volatile. State authority remains absent in most parts of the country, limiting the provision of basic services and security. The

Central African Republic ranks second to last in the UNDP human development index, and more than half of the country's population, about 2.3 million people, are in urgent need of humanitarian assistance. Extreme poverty, inequality, impunity, marginalization and discrimination remain widespread, and economic recovery and development often seems elusive. Especially in the absence of a successful reconciliation process, divisions between national political actors and local communities tend to intensify, with the dire economic situation pitting the same groups against each other in a competition for resources. The often irregular, inconsistent and fragmented flows of aid and assistance to the country have not managed to solve those problems. However, while many of those dynamics have persisted since the deployment of MINUSCA, the delegation witnessed grounds for optimism during the visit.

27. Despite the risks and challenges, capacity and resource gaps and presence of various spoilers, I am hopeful that sustainable peace and reconciliation might finally be within reach. The peace agreement inspires great hopes. Over the past several years, the United Nations system and its partners have moved towards better coordination and integration in support of the Central African Republic. Strong appeals were made to the United Nations system and its partners to continue working together and to support the implementation of the peace agreement, including by preparing relevant and innovative projects that could be supported by donors and the Peacebuilding Fund. Despite initial setbacks, the disbursement of funds for National Recovery and Peacebuilding Plan continued to accelerate throughout 2018 and the financial delivery rate has reached 54 per cent, an increase from 38 per cent in September 2017. I was also pleased to observe the commitment to ensuring free, fair and inclusive elections in 2020–2021.

28. The Peacebuilding Commission will continue to play its part in support of the peacebuilding needs of the Central African Republic and will continue to support the peace process and provide accompaniment to the implementation of the peace agreement, as needed. Implementation will not be easy. It is essential now to maintain the momentum and preserve international and regional attention and support to the Central African Republic. **The Peacebuilding Commission can use its convening and bridging role to ensure continued conversations on the peacebuilding aspects of the peace agreement and support discussions around its more complex elements, with a view to building coherence between the Government of the Central African Republic, the United Nations and its Member States, regional and subregional organizations and international financial institutions.**

29. Support to the timely preparation and organization of the elections to be held in 2020–2021, and ensuring their inclusiveness, will be critical. **The Peacebuilding Commission will continue to follow developments as the electoral process in the Central African Republic unfolds and raise attention to outstanding risks and challenges**, while bringing together international and regional partners to foster attention to the opportunities and challenges surrounding the elections, and identify gaps and challenges from the previous electoral process, including those that relate to enhancing the participation of women. **I am planning to organize a session on the electoral process at an opportune time, in consultation with the Peacebuilding Support Office and other relevant parts of the United Nations system.**

30. **The Peacebuilding Commission will also continue to serve as a venue to follow up on the implementation of the National Recovery and Peacebuilding Plan, in particular in the light of the peace agreement. I intend to organize a special focus session on the rule of law and the Special Criminal Court**, with a view to providing information on progress, successes, challenges and capacity and resource gaps. **I will also continue to use the Peacebuilding Commission platform**

to discuss the United Nations partnership with the World Bank and other international financial institutions, including the International Monetary Fund. The Peacebuilding Commission will continue its practice of providing advice to the Security Council, in accordance with relevant General Assembly and Security Council resolutions, including in relation to the mandate of MINUSCA.

31. Following the launch on January 7 of the humanitarian action plan for the Central African Republic for 2019 and in the face of the unfolding humanitarian emergency, I also handed to the President of the Central African Republic an invitation, in my capacity as President of the humanitarian segment of the Economic and Social Council, to participate in the annual high-level meeting of the Council, to be held in June in Geneva. The participation of the President will be the ideal opportunity to appeal for the cause of the Central African Republic, especially with regard to its humanitarian needs.
