



Security Council

Seventy-fourth year

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New York

Provisional

President: Mrs. Mele Colifa (Equatorial Guinea)

Members:

Belgium	Mr. Pecsteen de Buytswerve
China	Mr. Ma Zhaoxu
Côte d'Ivoire	Mr. Ipo
Dominican Republic	Mr. Singer Weisinger
France	Mr. Delattre
Germany	Mr. Heusgen
Indonesia	Mr. Djani
Kuwait	Mr. Alotaibi
Peru	Mr. Meza-Cuadra
Poland	Ms. Wronecka
Russian Federation	Mr. Polyanskiy
South Africa	Mr. Matjila
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Allen
United States of America	Mr. Cohen

Agenda

The situation in the Central African Republic

Report of the Secretary-General on the Central African Republic (S/2019/147)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Central African Republic

Report of the Secretary-General on the Central African Republic (S/2019/147)

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): 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.

On behalf of the Council, I welcome Her Excellency Ms. Sylvie Valérie Baïpo-Temon, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Central Africans Abroad of the Central African Republic.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Mr. Parfait Onanga-Anyanga, 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; Mr. Smaïl Chergui, African Union Commissioner for Peace and Security; Mr. Koen Vervaeke, Managing Director for Africa, European External Action Service; and His Excellency Mr. Omar Hilale, Permanent Representative of Morocco to the United Nations, in his capacity as the Chair of the Central African Republic configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission.

Mr. Vervaeke is joining today's meeting via video-conference from Brussels.

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/2019/147, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in the Central African Republic.

At this meeting, the Security Council will hear briefings by Mr. Onanga-Anyanga, Mr. Chergui, Mr. Vervaeke, Mr. Hilale and Ambassador Gbolié Desiré Wulfran Ipo, Deputy Permanent Representative of Côte d'Ivoire, speaking on behalf of the Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 2127 (2013), concerning the Central African Republic.

I now give the floor to Mr. Onanga-Anyanga.

Mr. Onanga-Anyanga (*spoke in French*): Before the Council is the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in the Central African Republic (S/2019/147), which I have the privilege to introduce today for the last time in my capacity as Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Central African Republic. I would like at the outset to express my deep gratitude to Secretary-General António Guterres for the confidence he has placed in me, and to all the members of the Security Council for their invaluable support throughout my tenure at the head of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA).

I come here today with mixed feelings — the optimism and satisfaction of a duty accomplished mixed with a certain apprehension. Divided parties came to Khartoum from all corners of the Central African Republic on 21 and 22 January for negotiations that promised to be difficult; the sons and daughters of that country, torn by years of fratricidal conflicts, came together on 6 February, two weeks later, to sign in Bangui the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic, marking their determination to collectively meet the challenges of their common destiny. The path that Central Africans have taken, not only during the Khartoum talks but at greater length over the past five years, thanks to the invaluable support of the Security Council, was not easy.

The signing on 6 February of the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation was the culmination of a long process. After a difficult transition that was crowned by the return to constitutional order, new legitimate and democratic institutions have been in place since 30 March 2016. Together we have patiently contributed day after day to creating the conditions for the gradual strengthening of State authority, facilitated the launching of the national disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme and supported security sector reform through support for the administration of justice, the fight against impunity and the progressive deployment of State security agents in the 16 prefectures, and defence and internal security forces. At the local level, peace and reconciliation agreements have helped to reduce the level of violence, while territorial integrity and republican institutions have been preserved and strengthened at the national level. Those multifaceted, joint efforts of the

Government, MINUSCA and all partners in the Central African Republic have paved the way for a gradual return to a certain normalcy.

The Government and the people of the Central African Republic, thanks to the commitment of President Touadera, signed on 6 February a peace agreement that, with the tireless support of the Security Council, could mark a turning point in the history of the country, although the dangers remain numerous. I stress that the agreement differs in several respects from the previous agreements signed in the Central African Republic.

First, it reaffirms from the outset the commitment of the signatory parties to fundamental principles, especially those derived from the country's Constitution, and it was sought and signed by a legitimate Government. Secondly, the Central African Government and the armed groups — the signatory parties — have, by undertaking concrete commitments, called on their fellow citizens, the region and the world to bear witness. In addition, the implementation of these commitments will be supervised by a certain number of inclusive monitoring mechanisms involving all forces in the country, including civil society, political parties, parliamentarians, women's organizations and young people, as well as representatives of religious denominations. Their deliberations will focus on security, political and legal issues at the national, prefectural and local levels. Presidential decrees establishing these mechanisms have already been published. The agreement also reflects the African Union's commitment to silencing the guns on the African continent.

Importantly, the 6 February agreement reinforces the Secretary-General's vision of the primacy of politics that must underpin any peace operation. In that spirit, the 6 February agreement clearly expresses the desire of Central Africans to renew their social contract, to reaffirm their deep desire to live together and in peace in their rich diversity, to ease tensions and to create the conditions for their country's recovery on more solid bases — a country where the use of violence as an instrument of conquest or the preservation of power will be banned forever.

Thus, the success of the 6 February political accord is first and foremost the expression of a deep desire of the Central African nation to regain control of its destiny in equity, justice and reconciliation and

with due compensation to the victims. This success, however, is also the culmination of a long process led by the African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic and supported by the United Nations. In that regard, I commend the commitment of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Mr. Moussa Faki Mahamat, to the cause of peace in Africa and in the Central African Republic in particular. I reiterate my gratitude and congratulations to the African Union Commissioner Peace and Security, Ambassador Smaïl Chergui — who is here with us today — for having deftly and resolutely facilitated the Khartoum dialogue, in close collaboration with the Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations, Jean-Pierre Lacroix, testifying to the fruitful and fruitful strategic partnership between the African Union and the United Nations. It was a great privilege for my team and me to contribute, alongside them, to the success of the dialogue among Central Africans.

I would also like to acknowledge the role of the countries of the region, which, in the framework of the panel of facilitators of the African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation — to whom I pay a well-deserved tribute — have made an important contribution to the preparatory phase of the dialogue. Lastly, let me commend the contribution of the Government and the people of the Sudan for their investment and the generous welcome they offered to all participants. My thanks also go to all the other partners, near and far, who played a discrete but decisive role towards the successful conclusion of the peace talks.

While we rightly welcome the fact that our multifaceted efforts have allowed this important political advance in the Central African Republic, we must remain clear-eyed and vigilant because the situation is still serious. The unbearable situation of displaced people and refugees — a reflection of the precarious humanitarian situation — the scenes of senseless violence and the numerous victims remind us painfully of that fact. All of us know — the Central Africans surely better than anyone — that through the signing of the agreement the country has taken just one step. It is a necessary and decisive step, certainly, but only one step. The hardest remains indeed to come. The real test will be in the full and good faith implementation of the agreement. I solemnly appeal to all parties to scrupulously honour all the commitments made under the agreement. I urge them not to betray their word and the trust placed in them by the Central

African people and all those who supported them in the peace process. Less than two years before the next elections, whose organization will require substantial support to consolidate the entrenchment of democracy, the country has a real opportunity to turn its back on its painful history once and for all.

I express the hope that, faced with differences that are inevitable in the process of implementing any peace agreement, the highest interests of the Central African people and their legitimate aspiration to live in peace will always be safeguarded in order to guarantee strict compliance with the agreement. I urge the parties to always favour dialogue in order to sustain the new political and social consensus promoted by the 6 February agreement. It will also be incumbent on the parties to promote national ownership of the peace accord through strategic communications to raise awareness of the content and scope of that important agreement, because what is at stake is the future of the entire Central African nation, which is entitled to believe that the agreement heralds the dawn of a new era. The role of the guarantors, especially the neighbouring countries and the region, and that of the facilitators will be decisive for the full realization of the agreement. The support of all partners will be equally essential.

In that regard, the recent visit to Bangui by the Chair of the Central African Republic configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission, Ambassador Omar Hilale, accompanied by Assistant Secretary-General Bintou Keita and Under-Secretary-General Oscar Fernández-Taranco, was most timely. I thank them very much and have no doubt that the analyses and recommendations they will make will be a major contribution to the indispensable effort to realign the targeted assistance that will be needed urgently to facilitate the implementation of the agreement and, more broadly, accelerate the recovery of the country through the realization of its strategic plan, the National Strategy for Recovery and Peace Consolidation. I welcome the joint initiative of the United Nations and the African Union to hold a meeting of the International Support Group on the Central African Republic as soon as tomorrow, because time is running out and we will have to remain engaged and to act quickly and in a concerted manner.

Finally, our faith remains strong that the Council will provide the necessary political support for the agreement and continue to support both the Government and democratic institutions of the Central African

Republic and the work of MINUSCA, in particular its new Head, my successor, Mr. Mankeur Ndiaye, whom I fraternally greet and wish every success in his noble mission.

(spoke in English)

Allow me to conclude with a few words to commemorate our fallen heroes. Too many peacekeepers have paid the ultimate sacrifice for peace to begin to take root in the Central African Republic. These peacekeepers gave their lives to help assist, protect and comfort the Central African people and support the country's young democratic institutions when they were under threat. Let us not doubt the value of their sacrifice, the criticality of our presence or the value of our contribution. Today, as the shadow of violence begins to lift, the people of the Central African Republic are growing more confident in their ability to bend the arc of their volatile history in a new direction. By turning their grievances into a powerful transformative force, they have new reason to hope for a brighter future.

The unified political support of the Council, the countries of the region and the international community will remain critical to the successful implementation of the 6 February peace agreement. Never before has the support of the international community and the region been so vital for the Government and the people of the Central African Republic. I have no doubt that, as they do their part, taking full ownership of the peace process, they can continue to count on the Security Council's unflagging backing.

The President *(spoke in Spanish)*: I thank Mr. Onanga-Anyanga for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Chergui.

Mr. Chergui *(spoke in French)*: At the outset, I would like to thank you, Madam President, for the opportunity to speak today to the Security Council and to congratulate you, on behalf of the African Union, on the way in which the sisterly Republic of Equatorial Guinea is presiding over the work of the Council this month.

As I am speaking after my brother, Mr. Parfait Onanga-Anyanga, I am not going to rehash a number of the relevant elements and analyses that he has already shared with the Council. However, I would like to begin by stressing the importance of the result achieved in Bangui on 6 February. It is the perfect expression of

the partnership between the United Nations and the African Union and should, we believe, be extended to all the crises on the continent. Indeed, alongside my friend Jean-Pierre Lacroix, we have undertaken to make this year the year of peace and stability in the Central African Republic.

We wanted the first act of the new year to visit Bangui and hold interviews there, from 8 to 11 January. Those interviews allowed us to establish that there is fertile ground for bringing together all the protagonists in the crisis. We were also pleased by the Sudan's offer to host those negotiations. The negotiations were conducted by the African Union and I was honoured to be the mediator, with the active support of Jean-Pierre Lacroix, Parfait Onanga-Anyanga and the entire United Nations team. I pay them sustained and heartfelt tribute for their work during that exercise, which, as I am sure the Council is aware, was not an easy one.

We met in Khartoum from 24 January to 5 February. For the first time, the Government was able to meet the 14 armed groups face to face and address the deep-rooted causes of the crisis in a calm and responsible way. The Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic reflects that approach in so far that we did not set aside any issue that we felt might be at the root of the very serious situation in the Central African Republic — be it a question of justice, fair distribution of national wealth, inclusivity in all State institutions or even the claim of some that they were compelled to drink the water set aside for animals in some regions of the country. What more powerful message could we hear from those suffered and sought to explain how they had arrived at the situation in which they found themselves?

We therefore felt the weight of responsibility in trying to lead the country towards a different situation. That was why we took the approach we did in relation to previous agreements. We decided to address all of these different aspects not only in a responsible way, but also in a way that was clearly established in the agreement. We also decided to establish a solid follow-up process on three levels so that the protagonists would be able to fulfil the commitments they had taken on. From the beginning of the negotiations until now, we have been pleased to see the cessation of hostilities respected by everybody. I think that is a very positive signal that should encourage us to move forward.

The Council will see that we also have security provisions in the agreement. We have tried to be innovative in order to transform those who bear weapons today into people who will serve the security of the country's institutions. In that regard, there are provisions which we would like to see included in the mandate of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA), which has done a remarkable job so far. I thank and congratulate once again the Head of the Mission, who is in attendance at this meeting, for the work that has been done and the sacrifices that have been made. I also associate myself with the tribute to those who have paid the highest price for the stability and security of the country.

We will therefore require the support of the Council to adopt the MINUSCA mandate, as I would not like to see analogous situations arise on the ground tomorrow. We want the work of the Mission's specialized units to fall under the authority of the Government, as well as under the direct and daily control of MINUSCA so as to avoid any unnecessary incident on the ground. In that regard, I thank President Touadera for the measures that he has just taken in signing executive orders and implementing certain provisions of the agreement. I believe that his commitment is to be welcomed. We are in almost daily contact with the Government, as well as with all the armed groups, so as to ensure not only that the ceasefire is respected, but also that the parties honour the agreement.

Once again, I thank and welcome the commitment of the countries of the region. It is an additional aspect that makes this agreement different from those of the past. If, for example, we seek to implement the provisions related to transhumance and all the ensuing problems in the area of security, I believe that we cannot do so without the countries of the region. I therefore commend the commitment of each Head of State who, in Addis Ababa, officially and solemnly provided their signatures to support the agreement and express their readiness to re-establish the respective bilateral mixed commissions of their countries with the Central African Republic. I believe that such very important elements will help us move forward to implement the Agreement.

We are under no illusions. Clearly, the entire approach will remain insufficient if the friends and partners of the brotherly country of the Central African Republic fail to pool their efforts in response to what I believe to be most important, as the real work will begin

now that the agreement has been signed. The question is how to respond to the needs of those in certain parts of the country that, as I said earlier, are unfamiliar with civilization, including roads, health care or hospitals.

To that end, I solemnly call on the Security Council and all regional friends of the Central African Republic to help us, starting tomorrow. Jean-Pierre Lacroix and myself took the initiative to gather all the partners of the Central African Republic here in New York so as to open the way towards facilitating the means to act immediately — I repeat, immediately — to implement the agreement and, above all, to provide hope. Given the level of suffering and the very difficult humanitarian situation in the country, I believe that hope is the word of the day. We must give hope and demonstrate our solidarity with the brotherly people of the Central African Republic.

I will not expand further because, as I said earlier, my brother Parfait Onanga-Anyanga has already expounded upon the guiding principles of agreement, chief among which is the need to respect the territorial integrity and the unity of the country and to shield it from all ethnic, religious or other clashes so that it can move forward in solidarity and confront its major enemy, which is poverty and the lack of development.

It is important for the Council to stress the need for the comprehensive and genuine implementation of the agreement, but I would like to conclude by underscoring that, in a way, the peace agreement is the successful result of multilateralism and the renewed resolve of the United Nations and African Union leadership to weigh in together and in solidarity to silence the guns and foster dialogue and reconciliation. To that end, we need the support of the Security Council now more than ever.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Mr. Chergui for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Ambassador Hilale.

Mr. Hilale (*spoke in French*): At the outset, on behalf of the Peacebuilding Commission, in my capacity as Chair of the Central African Republic configuration I thank the members of the Security Council for having invited me to brief the Security Council on my visit to Bangui from 13 to 15 February. A detailed report of that visit was sent to members this morning.

I take this opportunity to commend Mr. Parfait Onanga-Anyanga, 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), on his detailed briefing on the situation in the Central African Republic and to warmly thank him and his entire team for their welcome and support during our visit. I also commend all the other speakers for their statements and would ask the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Central African Republic to convey to His Excellency President Touadera our heartfelt thanks for the welcome we received in their country.

My fourth visit to the country in my capacity as Chair of the Central African Republic configuration stands out from previous visits. I had the pleasure of being accompanied this time by Assistant Secretary-General for Africa Bintou Keita, Assistant Secretary-General for Peacebuilding Support Oscar Fernández-Taranco and their respective teams, as well as the representatives of several members of the configuration, namely, China, the Republic of Korea, France, Italy and Russia. Our diverse delegation enjoyed the benefit of being able to send a strong message conveying the unflinching commitment of the international community in support of the Central African Republic to all our interlocutors in Bangui.

The visit took place the day after the signing of the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic between the Central African Government and the 14 armed groups in Bangui on 6 February. The Agreement, described as historic, is a first step towards the restoration of peace and stability in the country. It offers a unique window of opportunity to end the conflict, which has lasted too long, and lays the foundations for a truly inclusive reconstruction of the country.

During the audience that he accorded to our delegation, His Excellency Mr. Archange Touadera, President of the Central African Republic, informed us of his personal commitment and determination to spare no effort in swiftly implementing the provisions of the Agreement. Aware of the enormous difficulties and expectations of the population, he appealed to the international community to support the implementation of the Agreement. The President also expressed his wish that the Security Council adjust the mandate of MINUSCA to allow adequate support for the Mission, in particular the deployment of joint patrols.

The same determination and willingness to be part of the peace process was demonstrated by all the Central African authorities, including the President of the National Assembly as well as the Ministers for Foreign Affairs, Justice and Planning.

In addition, during its exchanges with representatives of civil society, in particular women and young people, the delegation sensed a strong desire for peace and justice, as well as tremendous hope for a better future. Such aspirations underline the importance not only of strong symbolic acts in the coming days and weeks but also of actions that will enable the population to have a lasting benefit from the peace dividends in the very short term.

During our exchanges with the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, they informed us that they had significantly increased their involvement in the country, in particular in the context of the implementation of the National Recovery and Peacebuilding Plan (RCPCA). The delegation also met with the United Nations country team and humanitarian actors. All the representatives present responded positively to my appeal encouraging them to step up their efforts in carrying out their respective mandates despite the very difficult working conditions. However, they emphasized that the support necessary for the implementation of the peace agreement would require additional funding to be made available quickly.

In that regard, following the launch of the 2019 humanitarian response plan for the Central African Republic on 7 January and given the prevailing humanitarian emergency in the country, in my capacity as President of the humanitarian affairs segment of the United Nations Economic and Social Council, I extended an invitation to the President of the Central African Republic to participate in the annual high-level meeting of that organ, to be held in Geneva in June. President Touadera's participation will provide the ideal opportunity to advocate the Central African Republic's cause, particularly with regard to its humanitarian needs.

The improvement of the security situation, as well as the redeployment of State authority throughout the entire territory, will allow all those stakeholders to become more involved in the recovery of the country and the implementation of the peace agreement. The delegation was also able to discuss the implementation of the National Recovery and Peacebuilding Plan.

The talks allowed us to note a certain momentum, strengthened by the signing of the Agreement.

While \$2.6 billion had been announced at the Brussels Conference for the Central African Republic, the implementation rate of ongoing projects for which funding had already been obtained was only 16 per cent in 2017. That rate significantly increased to reach 54 per cent in 2018, demonstrating that the accelerated implementation of the RCPCA is well and truly under way.

On the justice front, we were pleased to see progress on the reform of the justice and corrections sector. The main donors have informed us that the justice sector policy being developed will be an essential step in guiding their priorities for action. Despite that progress, there are ongoing financial needs that require the sustained attention of the international community, in particular for the establishment of the truth, justice, reconciliation and reparation commission and a trust fund for victims, as provided for in the peace agreement.

With regard to support for the upcoming elections, the configuration will continue to mobilize the international community to ensure a free, transparent and inclusive election that can free the Central African Republic from the cycle of instability and violence and start the recovery on a democratic basis, as was the case with the last elections.

Finally, on the way to Bangui, I made a stopover in Paris to meet the senior officials of the International Organization of la Francophonie (OIF). I called on them to work for the implementation of the peace agreement and to strengthen their support for the Central African Republic. I intend to soon contact Ms. Louise Mushikiwabo, Secretary-General of the OIF, to seek the support of her organization for trilateral cooperation regarding the Central African Republic, in particular to mobilize the human resources potential of the Central African diaspora and other francophone expertise to support the country in implementing the RCPCA and, ultimately, to strengthen the implementation of the peace agreement.

Allow me now to share the main observations that emerged from our visit to Bangui. First, the Central African Republic needs the support and assistance of the Security Council more than ever. Government officials and the population expect a strong commitment to implementing and supporting the Agreement, in particular since the window of opportunity created by

its signing is likely to quickly close due to the upcoming presidential and legislative elections of 2020-2021.

Secondly, MINUSCA must be able to communicate rapidly on the actions that it intends to undertake in support of the Agreement and must continue its efforts to raise awareness among the various political and community stakeholders in support of the Central African authorities. The latter, at the highest level, also expressed their desire to see MINUSCA fully support the implementation of the Agreement, in particular the deployment of joint patrols.

Thirdly, communication on the content and the challenges of the Agreement is very important and will be crucial to its success. An urgent first step will be to translate the Agreement into Sango, the national language, in order to facilitate the people's ownership of the document. In addition, better communication on the Agreement will help to prevent rumours from spreading about its content.

Fourthly, the partners of the Central African Republic are urged to show flexibility and adaptability in executing their programmes, since without the rapid disbursement of funds, the implementation of the Agreement, in particular its economic component, could be jeopardized and deprive the population of the long-awaited peace dividends.

Fifthly, neighbouring countries are called on more than ever to support and assist the Central African Republic in implementing the peace agreement. They participated constructively in the talks in Khartoum and are part of the solution in getting the Central African Republic out of the crisis. That indispensable support was also raised by the President of the Republic, who made it one of the conditions for the success of the Agreement. Their commitment will be decisive.

Sixthly, MINUSCA is not intended to remain in the Central African Republic indefinitely. It is therefore conceivable that tailored and, as the Special Representative of the Secretary-General said, targeted assistance towards implementing the peace agreement would help it to fulfil its mandate, thereby strengthening the exit strategy for peace operation so strongly supported within the Security Council.

Finally, in conclusion, I would like to pay a warm tribute to Mr. Parfait Onanga-Anyanga, Special Representative of the Secretary-General, who arrived in the Central African Republic under difficult conditions,

leading a multidimensional mission that faced many challenges. His seriousness, self-sacrifice and frankness, which is always constructive, have enabled him to successfully meet many of those challenges. He can leave Bangui with a sense of accomplishment.

My tribute also goes to the Deputy Special Representative, Ms. Najat Rochdi, who during her tenure has consistently drawn attention to the humanitarian situation in the country and worked tirelessly for better coordination and complementarity between the country team and MINUSCA.

Lastly, the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Mankeur Ndiaye, takes over the leadership of MINUSCA at a pivotal moment for the country's future. With his extensive experience, Mr. Ndiaye will be able to count on a strong and competent management team within MINUSCA. He will also be able to count on my full support, as well as that of all the members of the configuration.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Ambassador Hilale for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Vervaeke.

Mr. Vervaeke: I am honoured to brief the Security Council on behalf of the European Union (EU), in the presence of Special Representative of the Secretary-General Parfait Onanga-Anyanga, as well as African Union Commissioner Smaïl Chergui and Ambassador Omar Hilale.

The Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic, which was signed on 6 February in Bangui, is a genuine chance for the recovery of the country from an enduring crisis. We are hopeful because the agreement starts with the right foundation, based on the Libreville road map, while respecting the primacy of the rule of law, following the recommendations of the Bangui Forum on National Reconciliation, recognizing the democratically elected institutions and putting at its centre the fight against impunity and promoting justice as a means of achieving national reconciliation. There is also a follow-up mechanism, and sanctions are foreseen in the case of violations of the agreement.

Throughout the process, the European Union lent its full political support and expertise to make the peace agreement happen. I would like first to express our particular thanks to the African Union. From the outset, the African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation in the

Central African Republic has been the only framework for the European Union, and it has delivered. Most important were the tireless efforts and leadership of Commissioner Chergui. His commitment was essential for a successful outcome of the negotiations. Let me also praise the leadership of the Central African Republic — the country itself. President Touadera's vision and ownership made the difference. Lastly, I would like to say a very special word to the United Nations, and in particular to Special Representative of the Secretary-General Parfait Onanga-Anyanga for his strong personal commitment to peace in the Central African Republic and the indispensable role he played in leading the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) over the past years.

It has been said that the peace agreement is a major achievement. It opens a new chapter. Its implementation is first and foremost the joint responsibility of its signatories. But there is no reason to sit back. We collectively need to engage more, not less. We, the European Union, are mindful of our responsibility to help the country achieve lasting peace and stability.

The first priority, in our view, is to rapidly put in place the follow-up mechanisms. All Central African Republic actors will need to be genuinely committed. We are pleased to see that President Touadera has already launched concrete steps in that regard. Winning the people's hearts and minds will be essential. Spreading the word on the ground about the peace agreement should therefore be another urgent priority.

Inclusiveness will also be central for the success of the agreement, including making the Government more inclusive and reflecting the various strands of society and the country. Likewise, the National Assembly and civil society will have a key role to play, notably in giving a voice to victims, youth and women. Similarly, justice and reconciliation require attention. Work needs to rapidly take shape at both the national and local levels, be it with the temporary inclusive justice and reconciliation commission foreseen by the agreement, the upcoming commission on truth, justice, reparation and reconciliation or the local peace committees.

On the security side, which was already mentioned, the mixed units can play a useful role as a confidence-building measure, under the command of national defence, with a clear mandate and specifically marked geographic areas of operation, like the

transhumance corridors. They will require vetting and monitoring, and their establishment should be compliant with the principles and the spirit of the disarmament, demobilization, repatriation and reintegration process.

But the peace agreement should not let us forget that the situation on the ground, as it still prevails today, demonstrates the structural weakness of the State, fragility and instability, together with a severe and protracted humanitarian crisis. That will not disappear overnight, as Special Representative Onanga-Anyanga reminded us. That is where the European Union remains committed, and it will continue to play its role during the implementation of the agreement. We are currently already looking at ways and means to sustain, and even increase, our support. Tomorrow, at the special meeting of partners in New York, we will play our role. Our priorities are in the following sectors.

First, reforming the security sector remains a top priority. The European Union Military Training Mission, which is 200-staff members strong, will continue to play the leading role in defence sector reform, for which it has been given a mandate. Upon the request of the Government, we are expanding the Mission to also include a civilian element. The Mission will continue to work hand in hand with MINUSCA, which provides the umbrella for the deployment of European Union-trained Forces armées centrafricaines.

Secondly, we will continue to support the Government with regard to the redeployment of State authority at the local level, which is indispensable for its functioning and the delivery of social services to the population. Under the Bêkou trust fund, which we set up, in total, €240 million is currently being implemented. We are working on a €50-million extension, as well as potential additional support from our EU member States. Those actions provide social services and infrastructure that help in the reconciliation and development of communities, including through labour-intensive projects.

Finally, let me also stress that neighbours and countries in the region will have an important role to play. Their engagement with the Central African Republic remains essential to achieve regional stability. In that regard, the relaunch of bilateral joint commissions, notably on transhumance, security and cross-border issues, will contribute to a secure framework.

The true challenges of the peace agreement are political, and not necessarily a question of additional

budgets, however important they might be. The European Union and the Central African Republic will continue to work very closely in political dialogue. We will also expand our dialogue with our partners in the region in support of the peace agreement.

Let me end by reassuring the Council that the European Union will continue to work with all partners in the African Union, the United Nations and the region. At a time of a unique opportunity to help the Central African Republic emerge from its difficult history, we will maintain, or even increase, our substantial engagement. Together with the Government and the parties to the agreement, with a strong civil society and along with the neighbours in the region, we can make the peace agreement the basis for a better future for the Central African Republic. The European Union is fully committed to that.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Mr. Vervaeke for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Ambassador Ipo.

Mr. Ipo (Côte d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, allow me to express the regrets of Ambassador Adom, Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 2127 (2013), for being unable to attend today's meeting. I will make this statement on his behalf.

"I have the honour to address the members of the Security Council in my capacity as Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 2127 (2013), concerning the Central African Republic, to review the activities of the Committee since my previous briefing to the Council, on 23 October 2018 (see S/PV.8378).

"During 2018, the Central African Republic saw some encouraging changes, including the signing of the peace agreement between the Government and 14 armed groups, thanks to the sustained efforts of the African Union through the African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic, supported by the United Nations and other regional and international actors. The Committee is committed to providing all possible support within its mandate to ensure the implementation of this Agreement, as well as compliance with its provisions by the Central African Republic's stakeholders, including, where

appropriate, through the Security Council measures mentioned in the peace agreement.

"As we all know, given the current context, the level of violence in the Central African Republic has not decreased. The number of internally displaced persons and refugees continues to increase, and civilians, peacekeepers and humanitarian workers have been regularly attacked by destructive armed groups that are guilty of acts subject to sanctions.

"Since my previous briefing to the Council, in October 2018, the Committee has held four meetings: on 12 November and 7 December 2018 and on 21 and 29 January 2019. The Committee also intends to meet on 22 February to discuss the Panel of Expert's findings. Press releases on these meetings are available on the Committee's website.

"The Committee held these meetings with the aim of advancing the implementation of sanctions and working more closely with key partners and stakeholders. On 12 November, I convened a meeting of the Committee to present the report of my visit to the Central African Republic from 2 to 5 October 2018. This visit allowed me to continue discussions with the Central African authorities on a number of issues of importance to both the Government and the Committee.

"As I indicated in my report, one of the main concerns of the Central African Government is the arms embargo imposed on it and which it demands be lifted. This point was raised by the President and the Prime Minister and by others we met, including representatives of civil society. In essence, these representatives requested that the import of arms and related materiel by the Government should no longer be subject to the Committee's approval.

"I have taken the opportunity of my meetings with members of the Government to express to them the concerns raised by the relevant actors about the Central African Republic's difficulties in ensuring the proper management of arms and ammunition on its territory, and the fact that the lifting of the arms embargo could facilitate the proliferation of arms in the country. I also discussed with the national authorities the applicable exemption procedures and visited the capital's weapons and ammunition storage sites to get an idea of the country's current arms management efforts.

“On 7 December 2018, I held informal consultations of the Committee to discuss the final report of the Panel of Experts before it was sent to the President of the Council on 14 December and issued as a Council document (S/2018/1119). During the meeting, the Panel of Experts provided an overview of its report and informed the Committee of developments since its issuance. While welcoming the African Union Initiative, the Panel expressed concern about the continuing violence and violations of the sanctions regime in the Central African Republic. The Panel also reported that armed groups continue to benefit from the country’s natural resources, and that livestock transhumance and trade play a central role in the financing strategies of some of these groups.

“On 21 January, at the request of the Central African authorities, I convened a meeting of the Committee from Bangui by video tele-conference to discuss concerns regarding the arms embargo with a Central African delegation led by the Minister of Defence. During that meeting, Government representatives informed the Committee of the challenges that the arms embargo created for the country, highlighted the progress made in the management of arms and ammunition, and reiterated their call for the Government to be exempted from the arms embargo in order to protect the population. The members of the Committee welcomed the progress announced by the Central African Republic, which delegations took into account in the preparations for the negotiations on the renewal of the sanctions regime by the members of the Security Council.

“As Council members know, the Council took action in this regard by adopting, on 31 January, resolution 2454 (2019), in which it expressed, for example, its intention to review, before 30 September 2019, the arms embargo measures imposed on the Government of the Central African Republic, in the light of the benchmarks to be defined and the assessments that will be conducted.

“Finally, on 29 January, in accordance with established practice to strengthen cooperation with States in the region, I invited them, together with all other interested States, to a briefing of the Committee on the final report of the Panel of Experts. During the meeting, the Coordinator of the Panel of Experts presented an overview of the

report and its recommendations, and the States present expressed their views.

“In conclusion, I announce my intention to visit the Central African Republic again this year in order to engage directly in a frank and open dialogue with the relevant interlocutors on the ground, to communicate the importance of full implementation of sanctions, to stress that any sanctions regime should be reviewed and adapted periodically, according to the situation on the ground, and to define the applicable exemption procedures.”

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Ambassador Ipo for his briefing.

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements.

Mr. Delattre (France) (*spoke in French*): I thank the Equatorial Guinean presidency for organizing today’s meeting, which comes at a particularly important time for the Central African Republic, two weeks after the signing of the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic, on 6 February. I would also like to extend a special welcome to the important and appreciated presence of the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Central Africans Abroad of the Central African Republic, and thank all our speakers for their very informative briefings.

I would also like to express our warm and heartfelt thanks to Special Representative Parfait Onanga-Anyanga for his exemplary and multifaceted commitment to the outstanding work he has done for nearly three and a half years at the helm of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA). On behalf of France, I would like to express to him our deep gratitude. Allow me also to express our gratitude to Commissioner Smaïl Chergui, not only for his presence here today but for his important contribution to the conclusion of the peace agreement.

France welcomes the signing of the peace agreement between the Central African Government and the 14 armed groups in Bangui on 6 February after two weeks of negotiations in Khartoum within the framework of the African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation, under the auspices of the African Union and with the support of the United Nations. This Agreement is an important step towards lasting peace in the Central

African Republic and the restoration of State authority throughout the Central African Republic. In other words, this agreement can and must mark a new beginning for the Central African Republic. In this context, France welcomes the commitment of the Central African parties to the negotiations, and commends the decisive role played by the African Union and the United Nations, whose exemplary partnership has once again proved its full effectiveness, as well as the support provided by the countries of the region.

We are already hearing sceptics claiming that many other agreements have already gone unheeded. But the main difference with the other agreements is the unanimous commitment of the Central African actors and the Central African Republic's partners in support of the agreement. The political will is there; it is strong, and it is a tremendous reason for hope, even if it is obviously not a question of underestimating the difficulties that remain on the way ahead. The challenge of the coming period is therefore to seize this historic opportunity.

The signing of this peace agreement is a decisive first step on the road to peace. All efforts must now focus on its full implementation. That is why it is essential for Central African parties, and in particular the armed groups, to honour their commitments immediately and in good faith. We see three immediate priorities in that regard.

The first test will be ending the violence committed by armed groups against civilians, humanitarian personnel and MINUSCA. The abuses committed by armed groups since last October, which have left more than 100 people dead in Alindao, Bakouma and Ippy, are unacceptable. The attacks against the Central African defence and security forces and MINUSCA in Bambari, during which French forces were compelled to use force at the request of the United Nations, are also unjustifiable. Armed groups must therefore lay down their weapons, cease all forms of destabilizing activities, including the recruitment and use of children, and be held accountable for violence, including sexual violence, before the courts, in particular the Special Criminal Court. In that regard, I welcome cooperation between the Central African Republic and the International Criminal Court.

We also hope that the implementation of the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic will make it possible to

meet the aspirations expressed by the Central African people at the Bangui Forum in May 2015, in particular with regard to demands for justice, inclusiveness and national reconciliation. We welcome the commitments made by President Touadera and the establishment of a mechanism to monitor the implementation of the agreement at the national and local levels, which is an important innovation compared to previous peace agreements signed in the Central African Republic. It is essential — and I would like to underscore this point — that women be able to participate fully.

Lastly, the role of the international community in supporting the implementation of the agreement will be decisive, politically, financially and technically. France reiterates its full support for President Faustin-Archange Touadera and will remain fully committed, alongside the Central African Republic, to supporting the implementation of the agreement. In that regard, France has decided to increase its bilateral aid contributions to the Central African Republic, including through the funding of quick-impact projects for the benefit of the people in Central Africa. It is essential that the people concerned quickly see some initial tangible benefits of the new peace agreement. It is vital that the countries of the region support and assist with the implementation of the agreement. Finally, it is absolutely necessary for all partners of the Central African Republic to coordinate their actions on the ground and act in a transparent manner to ensure that peace is achieved.

Before concluding my statement, I would like to reiterate France's full support for MINUSCA and confirm our full support to the new Special Representative, Mr. Mankeur Ndiaye, as he carries out his important mandate. As we all know, MINUSCA operates in a difficult environment. That is another reason for us to be committed to supporting it and providing it with the necessary means to conduct its mission, as it plays an indispensable role in stabilizing the Central African Republic — in particular with regard to the protection of civilians, support for the delivery of humanitarian aid and support for the redeployment of the Central African Armed Forces, trained by the European Union Military Training Mission in the Central African Republic. I would again like to commend the work and central role played by the Mission in supporting security sector reform. The involvement of MINUSCA will also be decisive, alongside other partners of the Central African Republic, in supporting the implementation of the peace agreement.

Lastly, I would like to pay tribute to the Blue Helmets who have paid a heavy price for their commitment to the Central African Republic and commend all of the efforts undertaken by MINUSCA to increase its mobility, improve its operational performance, seek the full safety of its personnel through effective medical evacuation capabilities but also continue the work undertaken to prevent cases of sexual exploitation and abuse and ensure that they do not remain unpunished.

I would like to conclude my statement by reiterating that it is important for the Council and for the international community to remain mobilized and united in support of the Central African Republic and MINUSCA. That is the compass that guides France and that must guide each Council member.

Mr. Cohen (United States of America): I would like to extend a warm welcome to Foreign Minister Baïpo-Temon. I thank Special Representative Onanga-Anyanga for his briefing and, more important, for his stewardship of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) over the past three and a half challenging years. His leadership of MINUSCA during some particularly difficult moments, especially leading up to the historic presidential election, was enormously valuable. The United States deeply appreciated his consistent effort to make the most of MINUSCA's resources, his honesty in assessing the challenging circumstances in the Central African Republic and his positive and deeply respected leadership in the face of many crises. We wish him the very best as he transitions from Bangui.

I thank Commissioner Chergui for his briefing today and for the African Union's leadership over the past month in Khartoum in facilitating efforts and engagement that led to the 6 February Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic. We would also like to thank Ambassador Adom for his leadership as Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 2127 (2013) and Ambassador Hilale as Chair of the Central African Republic configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission, as well as for their insights into this particularly important moment in the Central African Republic. I would also like to thank Mr. Vervaeke.

Just over two months ago, as the Security Council renewed MINUSCA's mandate (see S/PV.8422), the

Council was deeply concerned about the sustained levels of violence and insecurity in the Central African Republic and cautious about prospects for long-term peace. Today the Central African Republic is just more than two weeks beyond the signing of a peace agreement between the Government and 14 armed groups. The United States welcomes the efforts of President Touadera and the authorities of the Central African Republic, the commitment of the leaders of the armed groups and the support of regional actors in reaching the agreement. These conversations about the future of the Central African Republic would have been unimaginable just last year.

Nonetheless, the agreement is built on trust and confidence — trust and confidence among the signatories and the supporting actors in the agreement and, most important, of the Central African people that their leaders will finally put an end to cycles of horrific violence that have plagued the Central African Republic for far too long. Unfortunately, trust and confidence have been in short supply over the past several years. The Central African people are well aware that previous peace agreements have failed to hold. The signatories of the present agreement must fully implement its content to earn the trust and confidence of the Central African people.

The United States is deeply committed to supporting the people of the Central African Republic as they work to build a peaceful and prosperous future. In the past several years, we have committed billions of dollars to life-saving humanitarian assistance to help displaced people and refugees build, rebuild and sustain their lives; to capacity-building efforts, particularly in the security and judicial sectors; and to the efforts of the United Nations in support of the long-term peace and stability of the Central African Republic. In particular, we wish to highlight the important language in the agreement pertaining to justice and accountability. For far too long, impunity has protected the perpetrators of the horrors of the past several years. In our view, justice and accountability are essential to achieving lasting peace and stability in the Central African Republic. We strongly support victims in seeking justice.

We commend the signatories to the agreement for acknowledging the need for justice and accountability, including the commitment to creating a commission on truth, justice, reparation and reconciliation. We hope such efforts will be built on an inclusive basis, like the Bangui Forum. We also urge all parties to fully support

and cooperate with the Special Criminal Court. We are grateful to now have on the Council South Africa, Côte d'Ivoire and Peru — three countries that have had their own truth and reconciliation commissions and know the challenges of such an effort. We expect the Council will gain from their experience and expertise as we address the situation in the Central African Republic going forward.

We look forward to working with other partners as well to support the Government in keeping its commitments under the peace agreement. We are under no illusion that it will be a fast process for this path to become easier, but it is the only path.

However, it will be essential that all partners uphold high standards so as to avoid undermining peace and security in the Central African Republic. In that context, we are deeply disturbed by reports of torture carried out by Central African troops and Russian trainers in Bambari. This is completely unacceptable. We urge the Central African authorities to investigate these allegations and hold accountable those responsible, as we have similarly called on them to investigate the murders of three Russian journalists in August 2018.

Any international support for the Government of the Central African Republic should be transparent, well coordinated and consistent with the highest standards of military conduct and the laws of the Central African Republic, including respect for human rights and a commitment to upholding them. It must also be consistent with Member States' obligations under the Security Council sanctions regime concerning the Central African Republic. We look forward to joining tomorrow's meeting with the United Nations, the African Union, the Government of the Central African Republic and other international partners to continue the conversation on how to support the implementation of the peace agreement.

Mr. Ma Zhaoxu (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I welcome Ms. Sylvie Valérie Baïpo-Temon, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Central Africans Abroad of the Central African Republic, to this meeting. I also thank Mr. Parfait Onanga-Anyanga, Special Representative of the Secretary-General; Ambassador Chergui, African Union Commissioner for Peace and Security; Ambassador Vervaeke, Managing Director for Africa, European External Action Service; Ambassador Hilale, Chair of the Central African Republic configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission; and Ambassador

Ipo, on behalf of the Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 2127 (2013), concerning the Central African Republic, for their briefings.

In the past month there have been breakthroughs on the issue of the Central African Republic. After more than two weeks of negotiations, all parties to the conflict officially signed a Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic in Bangui on 6 February. China welcomes this progress.

The peace agreement represents the political will of all parties to the conflict. It is also the result of a multi-stakeholder mediation process by the countries of the region, including the Sudan, as well as the African Union and the United Nations. It was not easy to achieve. The Central African Republic still faces difficult security, political and humanitarian situations, resulting in many practical difficulties in the implementation of the Agreement. All parties must honour their commitments thereunder, translate their political will into genuine action and effectively promote the peace and reconciliation process in the Central African Republic.

The follow-up monitoring mechanism must be established as soon as possible. The countries of the region and the international community must provide support for the implementation of the Agreement.

China commends the important role played by the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) in the promotion of peace and stability in the Central African Republic. We also support the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and MINUSCA in the active implementation of the Mission's mandate. China hopes that MINUSCA will continue to contribute efforts to enhancing the administrative capacity of the Government of the Central African Republic, promoting security-sector reform and implementing the disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and rehabilitation programme.

The additional 900 military personnel authorized by the Council are in place with special equipment and are performing their duties well. We trust that MINUSCA will take advantage of this window of opportunity, continue to carry out its work on the basis of its mandate and provide solid support for the implementation of the Agreement.

Long-term peace and stability in the Central African Republic will not be possible without sustained support from the United Nations, the African Union, the countries of the region and international partners. All parties must enhance their coordination with the Government of the Central African Republic, respect its leadership and, on the basis of the evolving situation and the needs on the ground, provide tailored support.

The priority at this moment is to assist the country in achieving peace and reconciliation. The Council must remain united and create the conditions necessary for the situation in the country to improve.

The imposition of sanctions on the Central African Republic is aimed at restoring national stability and social order in the country at an early date. Against that backdrop, when the situation there improves, China will support the Council in adjusting the relevant sanctions, in line with the situation on the ground and the wishes and needs of the Central African Republic.

Mr. Ipo (Côte d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): My delegation welcomes the presence here of Ms. Sylvie Valérie Baïpo-Temon, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Central Africans Abroad of the Central African Republic.

Côte d'Ivoire congratulates Mr. Parfait Onanga-Anyanga on his excellent briefing on the situation in the Central African Republic, which will be the last in his capacity as 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). My country takes this opportunity to pay strong tribute to him for his commitment and the excellent work that he has done as Head of MINUSCA, as well as for his exemplary cooperation with the authorities of the Central African Republic, which has allowed for significant progress to be made in resolving the crisis in the country.

My delegation also thanks Mr. Smaïl Chergui, African Union Commissioner for Peace and Security; Mr. Koen Vervaeke, Managing Director for Africa, European External Action Service; and Ambassador Omar Hilale, Permanent Representative of Morocco to the United Nations, in his capacity as the Chair of the Central African Republic configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission, for their enlightening briefings.

My delegation sees the signing on 6 February in Bangui of the comprehensive Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic — also known as the Khartoum Agreement — between the Government of the Central African Republic and armed groups in the framework of the African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation and under the auspices of the African Union, as a genuine source of hope for a lasting settlement of the conflict in that country.

In that respect, my delegation welcomes the leadership of the African Union, the decisive support of the United Nations and the commitment of the countries of the region, in particular the Sudan, regional organizations and civil society, which made it possible to reach this important agreement. The interest to which it has given rise among the people of the country gives us hope that this represents a major stride towards national reconciliation. That is why Côte d'Ivoire calls once again on all parties to abide by their commitments in the effective implementation of the provisions of the Agreement, with a view to bringing about lasting peace and stability in the Central African Republic.

My country believes that the spirit of transparency and inclusivity that characterized the negotiations on the Agreement must continue throughout its implementation. In that respect, proper ownership of the Agreement by all components of the Central African Republic Society is necessary.

My delegation would like to remind parties that the success of the Khartoum Agreement will require an effective end to all violence against peacekeepers, humanitarian personnel and civilians, in particular women and children. My country calls on the authorities of the country to speed up the implementation of the disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and rehabilitation programme, which remains a key element in the process of ending the crisis. It calls also for the establishment of the follow-up mechanism for the implementation of the Agreement, which should make it possible to support the parties in the process of meeting their commitments. It also hopes that the actions of the Commission on Truth, Justice, Reparation and Reconciliation, whose establishment is stipulated in the Agreement, will also promote lasting reconciliation in the Central African Republic.

Given these favourable trends, my country urges the international community to continue to support the

process of the complete restoration of State authority throughout the territory of the Central African Republic through the implementation of the relevant provisions of resolutions 2448 (2018) and 2454 (2019).

Finally, my country calls on neighbouring countries and international partners to support the implementation of the peace agreement and to coordinate their efforts to allow for the restoration of lasting peace and stability in the Central African Republic.

In conclusion, my delegation wishes to reiterate its support to President Touadera, his Government and to the people of the Central African Republic in their efforts to definitively end the crisis.

Finally, we congratulate Minister Mankeur Ndiaye on his appointment to the post of Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of MINUSCA and pledge our full support to him in the discharge of his mandate.

Mr. Matjila (South Africa): We are delighted, Madam President, to see you presiding over today's Council meeting, all the more so that something positive is coming from Africa, from your own region of Central Africa.

At the outset, let me join others in thanking the outgoing 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, and the African Union Commissioner for Peace and Security, His Excellency Ambassador Smaïl Chergui, for their comprehensive briefings. We also express our appreciation to the Managing Director for Africa, European External Action Service, Mr Koen Vervaeke.

Last but not least, we wish to thank the Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 2127 (2013), Ambassador Ipo of Côte d'Ivoire, as well as the Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission's Central African Republic configuration, the Permanent Representative of Morocco to the United Nations, our friend His Excellency Ambassador Mr. Omar Hilale, for their briefings and hard work.

I would also like to offer a special welcome to the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Central Africans Abroad of the Central African Republic, Her Excellency Ambassador Sylvie Valérie Baïpo-Temon, and to assure her that she can count on the support of South Africa

as she begins the journey towards a stable and peaceful Central African Republic.

South Africa welcomes the signing of the new Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic on 6 February 2019, under the framework of the African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation in Central African Republic. In that regard, we would like to pay tribute to the President of the Sudan, His Excellency Field Marshal Omer Hassan A. Al-Bashir, and the President of Chad, His Excellency Mr. Idriss Deby Itno, for their leadership support and their role in the negotiations in assisting Ambassador Chergui and his team in negotiating the new peace agreement, thus contributing towards a peaceful neighbourhood in the Central African region.

We further congratulate the African Union Commissioner for Peace and Security for the role he played in facilitating and overseeing the negotiations with all relevant parties, including close cooperation with the United Nations, especially the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Mr. Jean-Pierre Lacroix, and Special Representative Onanga-Anyanga, Head of MINUSCA, who contributed to enhanced cooperation between the African Union and the United Nations.

South Africa encourages all stakeholders, including the Council, to fully support the peace and national reconciliation agenda for restoring durable peace, security and development to the Central African Republic and to implement the above-mentioned agreement. In that context, we welcome the efforts of President of Côte d'Ivoire, His Excellency Mr. Alassane Ouattara, towards the implementation of the agreement.

In our view, the peace and stability of the entire Central Africa region are critical if we are to achieve the Africa we want as outlined in the African Union's Agenda 2063. The recently held elections in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which were relatively calm and peaceful, coupled with the determination of the Central African Republic leadership during the negotiation of the peace agreement, no doubt represent very positive and welcome developments. The role of the Council and relevant regional organizations is to support the two countries in their path towards stability and long-lasting peace.

We also note with concern, however, the dire humanitarian situation in the Central African Republic, with more than 25 per cent of the population internally

displaced and millions of people in desperate need of humanitarian assistance. We urge the international community to support the ongoing efforts aimed at addressing the desperate humanitarian situation in the country.

South Africa wishes to underscore the importance of implementing disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation, as well as security sector reform. South Africa calls on MINUSCA to continue to assist with the above and to develop quick impact projects that would allow for the reintegration of demobilized elements of rebel groups into Central African Republic society.

South Africa supports the concerted efforts by the international community, through the African Union, the United Nations and regional and international partners, to continue engaging in post-conflict reconstruction and development efforts in the country, in particular for the establishment of critical State and institutional capacity in support of governance, judicial and security sector reform.

We remain concerned about the ongoing targeted violence by armed groups and criminal gangs perpetrated against the vulnerable civilian population in most parts of the Central African Republic. This is giving rise to a climate of human rights violations and a burgeoning humanitarian crisis that are of serious concern to South Africa. The scale of the challenge highlights the need for the Council to ensure that adequate funding and resources from United Nations assessed contributions is allocated to MINUSCA in the fulfilment and expansion of its current mandate.

South Africa would like to emphasize the importance of peacebuilding in order to ensure a sustainable peace and to kick-start the Central African Republic economy, which will prevent recourse to armed conflict. In that regard, we call on the Ambassador Hilale and the Peacebuilding Commission to coordinate its efforts with the African Union, development partners and regional mechanisms to support the post-conflict reconstruction and development efforts, especially the provision of basic services to the population.

South Africa stands ready to assist in moving the peace process forward through the promotion of reconciliation and supporting the road map, including towards the holding of elections and preparation of a new constitution. We aspire to a stable Central African region.

Mr. Meza-Cuadra (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): We appreciate the convening of this meeting and the briefings provided by the various briefers this morning. We would especially like to commend 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 his outstanding role as leader of MINUSCA for the past three and a half years, which was an extraordinarily difficult period.

We are also grateful to the African Union Commissioner for Peace and Security, His Excellency Ambassador Smaïl Chergui, for his prominent role in the process of negotiating the important Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic, which was recently concluded.

We are grateful as well to the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Central Africans Abroad of the Central African Republic, Her Excellency Ambassador Sylvie Valérie Baïpo-Temon, who has honoured us with her presence this morning.

Peru welcomes the recent progress made in the political sphere, which we consider to be encouraging. The signing of the peace agreement between the Government of the Central African Republic and the 14 armed groups, as a result of the dialogues initiated in Khartoum in January, is a sign of the determination of the people of the Central Africans to put an end to the more than five years of conflict in their country. It was significant that members of political parties, religious leaders, civil society, representatives of the victims of the conflict, women and young people also participated in the dialogues, since the process towards a sustainable peace is only possible if all Central Africans take ownership of the process.

At the same time, for the agreement to be truly successful, its results should be reflected in improvements in the security and socioeconomic development of the country, as well as in the relief of the grave humanitarian situation faced by its population. The parties should now focus, without delays, on the proper implementation and compliance with the agreed commitments. The support of the international community at this stage is fundamental. In that regard, we would like to refer to some aspects that we consider to be a priority in the implementation of the Political

Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic.

First, the disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation programme must be accelerated, based on compliance by the armed groups with the obligations assumed in the peace agreement. That is linked to the redeployment of national defence and internal security forces throughout the territory of the Central African Republic. We consider it of the utmost importance to strengthen the support that MINUSCA, together with the international community, has been providing in that area in order to allow for the establishment of mixed brigades and the integration of former members of armed groups into the national defence forces.

Secondly, the scope of sustainable peace requires institutions and capacities that guarantee access to justice and accountability for the crimes committed and, as a result, promote national reconciliation. To that end, we underscore the need for the establishment of the truth, justice, reconciliation and reparation commission, which will all allow for, among other things, providing assistance to victims of sexual violence and children recruited by armed groups. We recognize the efforts of the Central African authorities in the establishment and operationalization of their national judicial institutions, particularly the Special Criminal Court, as important steps in the fight against impunity.

Thirdly, it is important to increase State presence throughout the national territory. To that end, it will be essential that the Government of the Central African Republic work within a progressive process of decentralization that contributes to energizing the country's development, thereby improving the standard of living of the citizens. At the same time, it will allow for the involvement of communities that are marginalized by the conflict.

In conclusion, we would like to highlight the work carried out by the African Union and the United Nations in the search for a solution to the crisis in the Central African Republic. The coming months will be crucial. The international community should remain vigilant as to the implementation of the agreement and be involved in the monitoring mechanisms. For our part, we will continue to support the authorities and the people of the Central African Republic in their efforts to entrench State authority and achieve peace and national reconciliation.

Mr. Pecsteen de Buytswerve (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): I thank Special Representative Onanga-Anyanga, Commissioner Chergui, Director General for Africa of the European External Action Service Vervaeke, and my colleagues Ambassador Ipo and Ambassador Hilale. I also want to welcome the presence here today of the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Central Africans Abroad of the Central African Republic.

The comprehensive Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic, signed in Bangui on 6 February, is an opportunity that must be seized. The report (S/2019/147) of the Secretary-General reminds us of the urgent need to finally put an end to the violence, restore the presence of the State and create conditions for the return of displaced persons. We commend all those who contributed to the agreement, including the African Union, the United Nations and regional and international partners. We call on them to continue their support for the Central African Republic, in particular in the framework of the follow-up executive committee established by the peace agreement. We also commend the courage of the Government of President Touadera.

The agreement of 6 February will be truly historic provided that all the parties invest sincerely, fully and without delay in its implementation. First and foremost, of course, the armed groups must cease hostilities and lay down their weapons. As to the Government, President Touadera has committed to addressing the underlying causes of the conflict. In particular, the country will need an inclusive Administration and defence and security forces and must move towards greater decentralization.

The fight against impunity is an important dimension. We hope that the Special Criminal Court will soon be able to begin its work. Entrenching the culture of peace and reconciling Central Africans are possible. Other countries have done it. It is now the turn of the Central African Republic to put in place a transitional justice system to advance along the path of lasting peace.

In addition, the Security Council unanimously decided to renew the sanctions regime on the Central African Republic, including the arms embargo. That is obviously an important signal for those individuals who are responsible for significant impediments to the peace process. Sanctions are not an end in themselves,

but a means to contribute to the goal of peace in Central Africa.

I would like to turn now to the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA). In this early phase of the implementation of the peace agreement, MINUSCA must continue to fully implement the tasks of its mandate, including the protection of civilians, if necessary through vigorous action, as was the case last month in Bambari, and ensuring favourable conditions for the delivery of humanitarian aid. The Central African population is in great need of it. In the new context after 6 February, the task of supporting the peace process takes on new meaning. In addition, MINUSCA, supported by the European Union Training Mission and other partners, must continue to support security sector reform, the extension of State authority, and the disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation programme, which must now accelerate.

I cannot conclude without warmly thanking Special Representative Onanga-Anyanga for the outstanding work he has accomplished in his years with MINUSCA.

Mr. Singer Weisinger (Dominican Republic) (*spoke in Spanish*): First of all, I would like to thank the briefers for the information they provided and for the efforts they have made in support of peace and security in the Central African Republic.

The Central African Republic is experiencing a moment of change following the success in the negotiations between the Government and the 14 armed groups held in Khartoum, which resulted in the signing, at Bangui on 6 February, of the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic — a momentous event for the consolidation of peace and stability in that country. In that regard, we congratulate the Government, the African Union, the international partners, the United Nations, the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) and all the entities involved for the great efforts to make the agreement a reality.

We hope that the parties can fulfil their commitments in the implementation of the agreement. In addition, we highlight the role played by the Sudan in support of the agreement, as well as the commitment of neighbouring countries. We believe that implementing the peace agreement constitutes a great challenge, for which we urge the parties to do so in a transparent manner, with

the participation of civil society and the young people and women of the Central African Republic.

We view with optimism the beginning of the preparations for the elections scheduled for 2020-2021. We believe the elections will be a great challenge in upholding the commitments assumed. We call on MINUSCA and the international community to deploy logistical, financial and security efforts for the holding of the elections.

We express our deep concern about the vulnerability of the Central African Republic with regard to security. We urge armed groups to refrain from all forms of violence and destabilizing activities and to surrender their weapons, in accordance with the provisions of the peace agreement. In that connection, we welcome the Government's national disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation programme, which marks a step towards the reintegration of ex-combatants into society. We therefore encourage the parties to continue with the effective implementation of that programme.

The Dominican Republic condemns human rights violations perpetrated by armed groups, such as arbitrary killings and conflict-related sexual violence in camps for internally displaced persons, health centres and places of worship. In that regard, we urge the international community to continue to support the efforts of the Government of the Central African Republic to consolidate a judicial system that ensures due process of law in the fight against impunity, without prejudice to the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court over crimes committed in Central African territory. We highlight MINUSCA's efforts in that regard, as well as the implementation of the national disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation programme last December.

With regard to humanitarian access, we call on all parties to the armed conflict to ensure full, safe, sustainable and unhindered passage for the United Nations and its humanitarian partners, including child protection advocates, so as to enable them to provide timely humanitarian assistance to the affected population.

The recruitment of children by armed groups remains a major concern. Despite major efforts to separate children from such groups, there are still instances of rape and killings of children. Millions have been left without schools, and cases of malnutrition have been documented. Those circumstances make them

vulnerable to disease, abuse and exploitation, and many are displaced or take refuge in neighbouring nations. We urge the Central African Republic to criminalize the recruitment of children by armed groups under national law, in accordance with its obligation under the Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict. In that regard, we urge the international community to provide MINUSCA the necessary resources to carry out effective monitoring, reporting and response activities, and to increase dialogue with the parties to the conflict, with a view to ensuring the release of children and the development of action plans to prevent serious violations.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge and support the role of MINUSCA, the African Union and all the actors that are working alongside the Central African Republic to achieve lasting peace and stability.

Mr. Alotaibi (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I join previous speakers in thanking the briefers for their important presentations during this meeting. I would like to address three fundamental topics today.

I turn first to the political developments and the reconciliation agreement. The most important development since the Security Council's consultations on the situation in the Central African Republic, on 7 February, was the signing of a reconciliation agreement between the Government and 14 armed groups, as well as representatives of civil society. Like other speakers, I welcome the official signing of that agreement on 6 February under the auspices of the African Union and within the framework of the African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation, with the support and facilitation of the United Nations.

In that regard, we would like to express our thanks and gratitude for the tireless efforts by the Government of the Republic of the Sudan, which hosted the Khartoum negotiations from 24 January to 5 February. We hope that the agreement will end the armed conflict in the Central African Republic, which began in 2012. We also welcome the decision agreed by all parties to create a monitoring mechanism to supervise the effective implementation of the political agreement.

Some African conflicts have seen positive developments, such as in the Horn of Africa, where we have seen reconciliation efforts between Eritrea and Ethiopia and remarkable stability achieved in Somalia. In Central Africa, an agreement was reached in South Sudan and there have been improvements in

the situation in Darfur. There is also the first peaceful transition in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, as well as the signing of the reconciliation agreement in the Central African Republic between the Government and the armed groups. In addition, there are opportunities to restore peace in northern Libya.

Those favourable conditions are a glimmer of hope for Africa. They are the result of the efforts undertaken by the African Union and regional organizations, as well as the result of the will of the Governments of African States to achieve tangible progress in terms of development and security, with the support of the United Nations and through cooperation between the countries in the region. We hope that those efforts will last until we attain a sustained and comprehensive peace in all of Africa, which is rich in natural and human resources. The peoples of Africa can then enjoy security, stability and development — all the more as we move towards presidential elections in the Central African Republic in 2020.

Secondly, on the security situation, acts of violence in the Central African Republic continue to pose a significant challenge to the Government. Although the agreement was signed and political progress has been achieved, the security situation remains fragile in Bangui and other regions. Since acts of violence erupted in the Central African Republic in 2013 and 2014, we have had cause for concern about the security situation as a result of the escalation of violence between armed groups and the conflicting parties, incitement to religious and sectarian hatred and hate speech.

In that regard, we express our deep concern about the recurrent violations and acts aggression carried out by those extremist armed groups against personnel of the United Nations, the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) and other humanitarian workers. Attacks have also targeted Muslims, their religious symbols and places of worship. We condemn those attacks in the strongest possible terms, as we condemn any attack that targets people because of their religious beliefs or their places of worship, regardless of who carries them out.

We also support the efforts undertaken by the Central African Republic authorities to end such acts of armed violence and to raise awareness among communities to stop hate speech and establish peaceful coexistence among all communities. The Government must ensure

that the perpetrators of violence are brought to justice, end the culture of impunity, hold perpetrators of crimes against civilians accountable and bring them to justice without delay in order to preserve peace.

Thirdly, the humanitarian situation in the Central African Republic remains precarious. Half of the people need urgent humanitarian assistance. The number of those in need of humanitarian aid and protection has increased from 2.5 million to 2.9 million recently. That is an increase of 16 per cent compared to the same period in 2017. It is also worrisome to note that half of those who need humanitarian assistance are children.

We agree with what the Secretary-General indicated in his most recent report (S/2019/147), that the only way to end this crisis is through a peaceful solution reached by dialogue, in accordance with the Khartoum negotiations. Certainly, if the efforts to hold a dialogue are successful and a sustained consensus is reached among all the political parties, that would have a positive impact on the humanitarian, economic and development situations, as well as with regard to the return of internally displaced persons to their homelands and of refugees from neighbouring countries.

In conclusion, we would like to express our deep gratitude to Mr. Onanga-Anyanga for his tireless efforts since he assumed his post as Head of MINUSCA. We wish him every success in his future endeavours and assure his successor, Mr. Mankeur Ndiaye, of our support.

Ms. Wronecka (Poland): I would like to welcome Ms. Sylvie Valérie Baïpo-Temon, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Central Africans Abroad of the Central African Republic, and to express my thanks for their comprehensive briefings to Mr. Parfait Onanga-Anyanga, Special Representative of the Secretary-General; Mr. Smaïl Chergui, African Union Commissioner for Peace and Security; Mr. Koen Vervaeke, Managing Director for Africa of the European External Action Service; Ambassador Omar Hilale, Chair of the Central African Republic configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission; and Ambassador Gbolié Desiré Wulfran Ipo, Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 2127 (2013) concerning the Central African Republic. I will focus on four points.

With regard to the political process, Poland welcomes the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic, reached in Khartoum between the Central African Government and 14 armed

groups and signed in Bangui, as a positive and long-awaited step in the ongoing dialogue under the African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation. We hope it will enhance the country's peace process and pave the way for lasting stability there. We call on all the signatories to the Agreement, who are ultimately responsible for delivering concrete results for the people of the Central African Republic, to honour their obligations and ensure that the Agreement's implementation responds to the aspirations that the people have expressed. It will require strong engagement and good faith on both sides, and the upcoming elections in 2020 and 2021 will be a clear demonstration of adherence to the commitments made. It will be critical to ensure that the Agreement is implemented speedily, transparently and with the participation of representatives of civil society, including women and young people.

My second point concerns the extension of State authority. It is important to ensure that the reconciliation process goes hand in hand with an extension of State authority throughout the country. Poland welcomes the progress that has been made in deploying civil servants across the territory of the Central African Republic, but a far bigger presence of State institutions outside the capital is needed to support long-term stability. Ensuring that State authority and resources are gradually decentralized is a top priority, and we hope that the necessary related legislation will be enacted as soon as possible. Besides that, redeploying the national security forces remains a key element in the restoration of State authority. We greatly appreciate the work that the European Union Training Mission is doing to train and enhance their capacities, and we encourage them to further coordinate their efforts.

At the same time, Poland urges all the armed groups to immediately end their violence against civilians, United Nations peacekeepers and humanitarian personnel and engage effectively in the disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation programme. We also believe that the mixed security units will help to stabilize the situation in the areas worst affected by the conflict. It is reasonable for society in the Central African Republic to expect the reconciliation process to bring security and justice, among other things by holding those responsible for violations of international humanitarian law and violations and abuses of human rights to account. It is important to address the fight against impunity through

transitional justice mechanisms in a way that contributes to efforts to achieve sustainable national reconciliation.

With regard to the regional dimension, Poland believes that it was the genuine engagement of the international partners and the Central African Republic's close neighbours that made it possible to reach a comprehensive peace agreement, and we hope that commitment will continue. We encourage the African Union, the United Nations, the European Union and all other partners to give constructive support to its operationalization, especially the transitional security arrangements, participate actively in its follow-up mechanism and continue their cooperation in assisting the people of the Central African Republic. We also acknowledge the primary responsibility that the subregional partners and neighbouring countries have for stabilizing the Central African Republic by addressing cross-border challenges such as the smuggling of arms and natural resources, including gold and diamonds, trafficking, illegal trade networks and irregular migration, which have a critical impact on the whole region.

With regard to the socioeconomic situation, the political crisis has had a negative impact on the country's economy and humanitarian situation. We share the view that the peace agreement represents a possibility for expanding economic recovery and good governance throughout the country. Poland commends the Peacebuilding Commission's efforts to bring improvements to the lives of the people of the Central African Republic, as well as the progress made on the National Recovery and Peacebuilding Plan.

In conclusion, Poland commends the important work that the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) is doing to protect civilians and support the peace process in extremely difficult conditions on the ground. I would like to take this opportunity to express our special thanks to Special Representative Onanga-Anyanga for his valuable contribution to a better future for the Central African Republic during his term as Head of MINUSCA. We also welcome his successor, Mr. Mankeur Ndiaye, and wish him all the best in discharging his heavy responsibilities at this important stage of the political developments in the Central African Republic.

Mr. Polyanskiy (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We thank Mr. Parfait Onanga-Anyanga,

Special Representative of the Secretary-General; Mr. Smaïl Chergui, African Union Commissioner for Peace and Security; Mr. Koen Vervaeke, Managing Director for Africa of the European External Action Service; and Ambassadors Omar Hilale and Gbolié Ipo, the Permanent Representatives of Morocco and Côte d'Ivoire, for their briefings. We would also like to separately welcome Ms. Sylvie Valérie Baïpo-Temon, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Central Africans Abroad of the Central African Republic. We would particularly like to express our sincere gratitude to Mr. Onanga-Anyanga for his leadership of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA), in which he has shown himself someone who can maintain his self-control in any situation, however critical. It is difficult to overestimate his contribution to the work of stabilizing the Central African Republic. We hope that his experience and knowledge will be put to use in the United Nations system and we heartily wish him every success in his future endeavours.

We see the holding of direct negotiations between the Government of the Central African Republic and key armed groups in Khartoum, under the auspices of the African Union and with the support of the United Nations and regional and international partners, followed by the signing in Bangui on 6 February of the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic, as a milestone in the modern history of the country.

The forum was the result of efforts to harmonize every peace initiative related to the Central African Republic, affirming its international partners' determination to work together in the interests of the country's normalization for the long term. We want to emphasize that this important Agreement was made possible by, among other things, the talks between the armed groups held in Khartoum in August 2018 and mediated by Russia and the Sudan, which led to the decision to establish a united Central African opposition with the aim of achieving long-term, sustainable peace in the Central African Republic. Russia's collaboration in organizing the interactions in Khartoum was designed to align with the efforts of the African community, which is making a decisive contribution to unblocking crisis situations in Africa based on the African Union's principle of African solutions to African problems.

For our part, we should say that we have listened carefully to the Secretary-General's call in his report

(S/2019/147). Russia is ready to facilitate the process of national reconciliation in the Central African Republic in cooperation with the its leaders, the African Union and those of the country's international partners that are involved in the quest for ways to normalize its situation without hidden agendas or double standards. We will continue to support the Central African Republic's authorities in reforming the national security sector, including by strengthening its military capabilities and its armed forces' human resources. In a short period of time Russian military experts have been able to achieve significant results, training more than 1,000 Central African troops. We also intend to continue to expand our humanitarian assistance, particularly in providing the population with medical services.

We pay tribute to the bravery of the United Nations peacekeepers and to the memory of those who have given their lives for the Central African Republic and for Africa as a whole.

We have consistently advocated that the international community and especially the Security Council should support agreements that are reached through the mediation efforts of the African Union and other African frameworks, and should provide them with political, moral and material support. It is clear that the road to national reconciliation in the Central African Republic will not be an easy one, as its people are well aware. However, a critical first step has been taken to lay a foundation for developing solutions that can bring the country lasting peace. Supporting that initiative is our shared goal.

In our view, the current circumstances in the Central African Republic urgently need constructive cooperation from all international stakeholders. There, unfortunately, we have problems through no fault of ours. Despite the positive opinion of what we are doing from the country's authorities and people, attempts are being made to denigrate Russia's efforts in every possible way. We are sorry to say we saw an example of such flagrant double standards today in our American colleague's statement, and I cannot let two of his criticisms of Russia pass without comment. The Russian journalists who died in the Central African Republic were sent there by Mikhail Khodorkovsky, who found refuge in the West a number of years ago. He failed to provide them with the necessary protection, except for a large amount of cash. The Russian Embassy was not notified about their arrival and was unable to take the necessary steps with the Central African authorities.

The upshot was that they were robbed and murdered. What happened is clear and undeniable. However, we are continuing our investigation together with the Government authorities, and all who are interested in the incident will be informed of the results.

There is one more subject that we did not intend to talk about, but since our American colleagues touched on it, we feel compelled to. I will have to beg our French colleagues' pardon in advance. We did not bring it up. On 12 February, Radio France Internationale referred in a broadcast to a distorted interpretation of a United Nations report that Russian military instructors had allegedly tortured a 38-year-old Muslim market trader. The distorted facts were denied by the trader himself, Mahamat Nour Mamadou. He admitted that he was incited to this provocation by an internal security attaché at the French Embassy in Bangui named Jacques Razafindranali who was also employed in the General Directorate for External Security of France's Ministry of Defence. In his interview with journalists from Afrique Média, he was quoted as saying,

"I was a Séléka combatant. I lost my thumb in battle. After I was released, the French approached me and offered me a large sum of money to say that I had been tortured by Russians. They said that if I did not say it they would kill me. They came a number of times to check that I was saying everything right. They promised to take me to France".

Mamadou's words were confirmed by neighbours, who mentioned the official from the French Embassy among those who visited. I think no further comment is needed.

Our American colleagues are evidently in a kind of provocationist frenzy, and after planning a flagrant and undeniable act of provocation on the Colombian-Venezuelan border for 23 February, they have now gone completely overboard and decided to traffic in insinuations and the dissemination of fake news right here in the Security Council. This situation is a clear illustration of the methods that our Western partners are using in the Central African Republic. As with Venezuela and Ukraine, it is not the countries they are worried about, it is the geopolitics.

Everything in our world is moving and changing. Only the methods that the United States and States that support it use to interfere in the affairs of other countries remain the same — overthrowing regimes they do not like and showing no aversion to stooping to

the dirtiest political provocations. Russia will never be resigned to that.

Mr. Heusgen (Germany) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I would like to acknowledge all of this morning's briefers, and in particular I want to thank Mr. Parfait Onanga-Anyanga for his work and to wish his successor good luck.

I would like to begin by underscoring something in Mr. Smaïl Chergui's briefing, in which he said that the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic of 6 February was a success for multilateralism. I would like to emphasize that and the examples he gave of the close cooperation between himself and Under-Secretary-General Jean-Pierre Lacroix and between the African Union and the United Nations generally. I believe that is extremely important and an example for all of our work in Africa. I also want to commend the cooperation between the European Union, the African Union and the United Nations. I believe that the work that the European Union is doing in training security forces is very important. Cooperation among the countries of the region is also crucial. All of that does indeed represent success for multilateralism.

Secondly, as Mr. Chergui stated with regard to the Agreement, we have completed only the first stage. That means that we must now truly move towards its comprehensive and genuine implementation. To that end, as all my colleagues have emphasized, it is very important that there now be a real cessation of hostilities and for disarmament, reintegration and repatriation to take place. I think that cooperation between the forces and the various armed groups, as well as joint patrols, are also very important. In that context, as colleagues said earlier, I would to emphasize that there must be an end to child recruitment.

Going forward, it is very important to have a robust follow-up process. As Mr. Koen Vervaeke said in his statement, I, too, would like to stress that the follow-up process must be inclusive and comprise all stakeholders, in particular women. In that context, I wish to congratulate the Central African Republic on having a woman Minister for Foreign Affairs. Women and civil society must be a part of the process.

My colleague Omar Hilale described in his briefing the strong desire for peace and justice among the population. I think that that is very significant, and I would like to pledge our full support for his recommendations, of which I would like to mention

one, namely, communication about the Agreement. Apparently, there are many rumours circulating in the country. The importance of truly communicating the substance of the Agreement to the entire country is therefore very important.

In terms of priorities, the implementation of the agreement is of course essential. However, in our view, the fight against impunity is also of great importance. I believe that to really succeed in a true reconciliation in the country, there must be justice. To that end, the establishment of the Special Criminal Court is highly relevant. I believe that it is vital that the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) support the work of the Court and its investigators.

With regard to MINUSCA, I would also like to thank all the troops and Blue Helmets for all that they have done and for what they have suffered in very difficult circumstances. The report of the Secretary-General (S/2019/147) mentions attacks in Batangafo and Alindao, in which there were many civilian victims. In that context, I would like to emphasize the importance for the Blue Helmets, in accordance with their mandate, to truly protect civilians, including children, and to combat sexual violence during the Central African conflict. Unfortunately, that is not the only case. There are too many women who have been victims of sexual violence.

I would like to thank France for supporting MINUSCA. We have just heard that the show of force by the French troops was significant. I do not want to get into the arguments made by our Russian colleague, but I would have liked to hear more about the activities of the Russian mercenary group Wagner, which is in the country.

Mr. Djani (Indonesia): Let me first join others in thanking the briefers, my brother Ambassador Omar Hilale, Mr. Smaïl Chergui and Mr. Koen Vervaeke, for their updates and in particular for their insights on the issue that we are discussing. I would also like to take this opportunity to express my appreciation for the work of Mr. Parfait Onanga-Anyanga in leading the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) since August 2015, and to welcome Mr. Mankeur Ndiaye and offer him the full support of my delegation. It would be remiss of me not to welcome

Minister Sylvie Valérie Baïpo-Temon of the Central African Republic to the Chamber.

Indonesia took note of the Secretary-General's report of 15 February, and echoes him in saying that "the only path out of crisis for the Central African Republic must be forged through political dialogue" (*S/2019/147, para. 75*). To that end, we see the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic, signed in Bangui on 6 February, as an important political milestone. However, I must recall that it will remain only a piece of paper if it is not duly implemented.

Indeed, the implementation of the Agreement will not be without challenges. It is therefore important to establish a follow-up mechanism for the effective implementation of the Agreement, have a sustained and constructive dialogue between the Government and the armed groups and, in that regard, ensure the full and solid support of the international community, including the Security Council. I appeal to all Council members to be united in trying to ensure that the implementation of the Agreement becomes a reality.

Indonesia would also like to commend the Sudan and Chad, as well as other neighbouring countries, and the African Union (AU) in its role in brokering peace. We have always believed that neighbours and regional organizations play an important role in settling disputes and in promoting dialogue. We also commend the closer cooperation of the United Nations with the AU in that regard.

I will focus my comments today on two pertinent points: first, the humanitarian situation in the Central African Republic and secondly, the role of MINUSCA in the Central African Republic.

First, while there is progress on the political aspect, we should not overlook the humanitarian aspect in the Central African Republic, which is equally important. We are still concerned about the violence in the country and the situation remains fragile. It is alarming to hear that the number of people in need of assistance and protection has increased to 2.9 million, which is 16 per cent higher than last year, and that there are more than 1,000 protection-related incidents on average each month. There are record levels of displacement, with more than 1 million people displaced internally and in neighbouring countries. Furthermore, we also hear reports that one out of three children suffers from severe malnutrition, and one out of two people does

not have access to safe drinking water. The people of the Central African Republic have suffered enough. I urge countries to continue their assistance and deliver on their commitments to the Central African Republic, as well as supporting the work being done by the Peacebuilding Commission.

In relation to the humanitarian situation, Indonesia notes the relatively positive result of the disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation (DDRR) programme. The programme works towards reintegrating ex-combatants into society and has succeeded in disarming 137 ex-combatants and in separating a total of 923 children from armed groups. Like others who spoke before me, using children as combatants in armed conflict is a crime. We need to work together in that regard. We urge the Central African Republic to continue its commitment to DDRR in order to truly silence the guns in the region, starting in its own backyard. At the same time, the Council should continue to support the DDRR process in the Central African Republic, as stipulated in the recently adopted resolution 2454 (2019) of 31 January. We also believe that peace is illusive without investment in development, with which the international community should assist.

Secondly, after hearing the updates from the briefers, it is more apparent that the role of the Mission is more important than ever. I note in the Secretary-General's report that MINUSCA has supported efforts to reduce violence, promote reconciliation among communities and increase the protection of civilians, as well as contribute to many other noble causes. MINUSCA's work in reinforcing the capacity of the Central African armed forces through training and technical and logistical support for recruitment is crucial in the security sector reform of the country.

The Mission's role also extends to justice and the rule of law by providing local authorities with technical support for investigations—important tools for enabling the Government to protect its people. The Mission is currently, on average, at 94.46 per cent of its total authorized strength; nevertheless, given its important role there is a need to optimize its performance through training and the use of up-to-standard equipment, and by ensuring the continuous support of the Council. It is important to enhance the Mission's accountability as the face of the United Nations on the ground.

Since 2013, Indonesia has contributed 200 engineering troops, who have contributed to the building of roads and bridges and, just recently, even contributed to the management of waste and landfills. This month Indonesia will increase its contribution by sending an additional 140 formed police units to the Mission, including 14 female police officers trained in community-based approaches.

While on the subject of MINUSCA, Indonesia also wishes to pay tribute to the many brave peacekeepers who have lost their lives in recent years in the Central African Republic, and to commend the countries that provided them.

In conclusion, we should maintain the momentum established by the agreement and continue to support its implementation and monitor its progress. Let this be the last agreement that will build a bridge to the path of peace, end conflict and silence the guns once and for all.

Mr. Allen (United Kingdom): Let me begin by thanking all those who briefed the Security Council today for their words of insight and their efforts towards bringing peace and stability to the Central African Republic. Let me also welcome to the Council Her Excellency Ms. Sylvie Valérie Baïpo-Temon, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Central Africans Abroad of the Central African Republic.

I would like to join others in extending particular thanks to Mr. Parfait Onanga-Anyanga, 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). His frankness, integrity and outstanding leadership over the past three and a half years have seen MINUSCA perform effectively and efficiently through the most challenging of times. On behalf of the United Kingdom, I would like to extend the most sincere commendations and warmest thanks to Mr. Onanga-Anyanga and wish him the very best for the future.

The United Kingdom has consistently backed the African Union-led African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic as the only — I repeat, the only — viable peace initiative. We are encouraged to see that it has yielded the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation, which is based on sustainable foundations of communication and compromise between the authorities of the Central

African Republic and all 14 major armed groups. We are hopeful for the future, and we commend Mr. Smail Chergui, African Union Commissioner for Peace and Security, and the African Union itself, as well as the Governments of the Central African Republic and the Sudan and regional partners in particular, for their efforts in bringing about the agreement.

The comprehensive briefing provided by His Excellency Mr. Omar Hilale, Permanent Representative of Morocco to the United Nations, in his capacity as the Chair of the Central African Republic configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission, as well as his recommendations for the implementation of the agreement, captured many themes that the United Kingdom can support — ownership of the agreement by the people of the Central African Republic; the inclusivity of the Agreement for women, youth and civil society; the need to combat impunity for the most serious crimes; the importance of communication by the Government of the Central African Republic to instil trust in the population; and the importance of sustained support by regional partners.

The United Kingdom also recognizes the need to set a pace that keeps up the momentum of the agreement and delivers the dividends of peace to the people. But the requirement for rapid implementation should not come at the cost of trust in the overall process. The excellent work of the European Union Military Training Mission has helped to build trust between the population and its armed forces and police. Members of armed groups will understandably have to work harder than most to gain that trust. Therefore, it is vital that demobilized members of armed groups are subjected to the same rigorous standards of vetting and training in human rights as regular members of the armed forces in the Central African Republic before they are integrated into those armed forces.

In that context, the recent allegations of torture and illegal detention by Central African troops and Russian trainers in Bambari are a matter of deep concern. The United Kingdom welcomes the United Nations investigation into those allegations, which should be rigorous and independent. If the allegations are found to be true, the United Kingdom calls on the authorities of the Central African Republic to hold those responsible to account. As my United States colleague said, international support for the Government of the Central African Republic should be transparent, well coordinated and consistent with the highest standards

of military conduct and law and with the obligations of Member States under the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 2127 (2013), concerning the Central African Republic.

My Russian colleague mentioned Ukraine, which is indeed a dangerous precedent — there we saw a classic Russian playbook on disinformation and media manipulation, sponsorship of military groups and the provision of arms, direct military intervention by Russian forces and the illegal annexation of Crimea in violation of the Charter of the United Nations and international treaties.

The sanctions regime, comprising the arms embargo, travel ban and assets freeze, is designed to hold to account those who would threaten the peace and security of the Central African Republic and prevent the proliferation of weapons in the wrong hands. The United Kingdom welcomes the efforts of the authorities of the Central African Republic in security sector reform and arms and weapons management, and urges the authorities to continue those efforts to allow the sanctions Committee to conduct a meaningful review of the arms embargo in September. The sanctions regime will continue to be an important tool in holding to account would-be spoilers of the agreement. In that regard, the effective implementation of sanctions measures by the authorities and regional partners will continue to be critical.

The United Kingdom has committed hundreds of millions of dollars to the Central African Republic since 2013 — to MINUSCA, to life-saving humanitarian assistance, to helping displaced people and refugees rebuild their lives, to capacity-building, particularly in the security and judicial sectors, and to United Nations efforts in support of the long-term peace and stability of the Central African Republic. The United Kingdom remains committed to supporting the people of the Central African Republic as they work towards building a peaceful and prosperous future.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of Equatorial Guinea.

First of all, I would like to welcome Ms. Sylvie Valérie Baïpo-Temon, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Central Africans Abroad of the Central African Republic. I would also like to express my delegation's gratitude for the briefings on the latest news from

the Central African Republic provided by Mr. Smail Chergui, African Union Commissioner for Peace and Security; Mr. Koen Vervaeke, Managing Director for Africa, European Union External Action Service; His Excellency Mr. Omar Hilale, Permanent Representative of Morocco to the United Nations, Chair of the Central African Republic configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission; and Mr. Parfait Onanga-Anyanga, who is leaving his post after three years of excellent work as the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA).

The Republic of Equatorial Guinea takes this opportunity to pay well-deserved tribute to Mr. Onanga-Anyanga for his unwavering commitment in support of peace in the Central African Republic, especially during the 2014-2016 transition period, which culminated in the Bangui Forum on National Reconciliation and the 2016 elections, as well as for being one of the key actors that prompted the signing of the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation. His leadership, integrity, personal commitment and tireless efforts have been crucial. We wish him success in his future responsibilities and welcome his successor, Mr. Mankeur Ndiaye.

I would also like to express our great joy in coming together in this Chamber to celebrate a major event that until a few months ago seemed impossible. I am referring to the peace agreement signed on 6 February 2019 in the city of Bangui. The signing of this peace agreement between the Government of the Central African Republic and 14 armed groups, under the leadership of the African Union and with the support of the United Nations within the framework of the African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic, is undoubtedly an example of the excellent cooperation between the African Union and the United Nations. I also commend the Government of the Republic of the Sudan for its considerable diplomatic efforts to promote the signing of this historic joint agreement, and all other actors who, directly or indirectly, have made it possible for a flame of hope for peace in Central Africa to be lit, and we express our appreciation to all parties directly involved in the negotiation process.

In accordance with the communiqué of the African Union Peace and Security Council dated 9 February

2019, I would like to underline the primary responsibility of the signatory parties for the implementation of this Agreement. In this new context, it is necessary for the parties to exercise the same sense of responsibility in scrupulously respecting their commitments under the Agreement, including by complying with the deadlines set out in the timetable for its implementation, in particular the immediate cessation of all armed action and violence against the civilian population. We urge the member States of the African Union, as well as bilateral and multilateral partners, to provide the necessary support to the parties for its implementation, in good faith and in accordance with their commitments and obligations.

As emphasized in the report of the Secretary-General (S/2019/147), significant progress has been made in the peace process under the auspices of the African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation. Under the leadership of President Touadera, the Central African Government has undertaken to identify the root causes of the current crisis and promote genuine national reconciliation based on a social contract with the people.

As the experiences of other countries have shown, Central Africans must understand and assimilate that there can be no peace without a shared and inclusive vision, forgiveness and a process of national reconciliation. In this regard, we welcome the establishment of a Commission on Truth, Justice, Reparation and Reconciliation to corroborate and advance the dynamics of reconciliation.

On the other hand, it is worth highlighting the launch of the national programme on disarmament, demobilization, repatriation and reintegration in December 2018, which constitutes a milestone on the road towards the reintegration of former combatants into society. In addition, the Government is committed to putting in place, with the support of its partners, appropriate mechanisms to recruit civil servants and establish training programmes open to all.

The Government of my country — the Republic of Equatorial Guinea — is pleased that, with the support of MINUSCA, the Central African Government has established several local peace processes and dialogues to promote reconciliation among communities, reduce violence, improve social cohesion and generate support for the deployment of State institutions by campaigns

through local committees and joint awareness-raising activities in order to prepare for the safe and voluntary return of members of Muslim communities who had been forced to flee their neighbourhoods in May 2017.

We commend the fact that the armed groups have agreed to respect the legality of the country's democratic institutions, the constitutional order, the unity and territorial integrity of the Central African State, and that they have pledged to renounce the use of arms and violence to assert any form of claim and to proceed, by mutual agreement between the parties and partners, to the complete dissolution of the armed groups throughout the national territory.

With regard to security, we note that the Central African authorities plan to establish an efficient and equitable management system to make transhumance, which is essential for the harmonious economic development of shepherds and farmers, a safe and peaceful activity, and to that end that the signatory parties have undertaken to establish special mixed security units for an initial period of 24 months, under the supervision of the Chiefs of Staff of the Defence Forces, with technical support from MINUSCA,

The fight against impunity is a fundamental aspect if true national reconciliation is to take place. In this regard, several important milestones have been noted, including trials by ordinary national courts, the launching of investigations by the Special Criminal Court, continued progress in the prosecution of conflict-related crimes in the courts of appeal in Bangui and Bouar, and the recent surrender of two suspected criminals. This demonstrates the determination of the Central African Government to eradicate all that impedes the return to peace and stability. We invite it to maintain this attitude so as to promote the implementation of all measures necessary to achieve its objectives, in particular through the functioning of the local peace and reconciliation committees. However, despite this progress, we regret that civilians, especially women and children, continue to suffer the consequences of the conflict and are increasingly exposed to protection risks and urgent humanitarian needs, and that the number of people in need of assistance and protection has increased from 2.5 million to 2.9 million, an increase of 16 per cent over the same period in 2017.

The path to peace is not an easy one. After having suffered over the past six years all the horrors of a civil armed conflict — religious, ethnic and political violence, with devastating consequences, loss of human life, a humanitarian crisis, an economy with enormous difficulties — the Central African Republic has demonstrated that through various diplomatic efforts and inclusive dialogue, events of historic dimensions can be achieved that stand for a before and an after for this beautiful and immensely rich country.

There is still much to be done on the fragile road ahead that will require enormous sacrifices to achieve reconstruction and lasting stability in the country. It will be crucial for the Central African people to mobilize and take ownership of the final resolution of the conflict and for the resources required for the implementation, monitoring and verification of the Agreement serve to provide a renewed impetus towards national reconciliation.

It is important that all stakeholders honour their commitments during the implementation phase. The international community can play a key part, in particular in strengthening the role that the United Nations, the African Union, subregional entities such as the Economic Community of Central African States and the Central African Economic and Monetary Community, and neighbouring countries can play in the process. There is no doubt that the brotherly people of the Central African Republic long for lasting peace. They must therefore receive assistance in the peace process that is fully respectful of the sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity of the country and of other States in the region, as well as of the principle of non-interference in their internal affairs. We hope that the peace agreement will allow for the restoration of State authority throughout the country, including the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of armed group members.

In conclusion, the winds of hope generated by the successful elections held in the Democratic Republic of Congo on 30 December 2018 seem to have reached the Central African Republic. We therefore hope that our Central African subregion can enjoy the stability that peace provides and be able to maximize its immense potential.

I now resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

I call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Central Africans Abroad of the Central African Republic.

Ms. Baïpo-Temon (Central African Republic) (*spoke in French*): Madam President, before I update the Council on the situation in my country, the Central African Republic, I would like to congratulate you on your presidency and thank you for having convened today's meeting, which comes at a particularly important time for the Central African Republic.

Let me also take this opportunity to pay tribute to the memory of all of those who lost their lives in the Central African crisis and to express my sympathy in connection with the victims of a deadly conflict that has spared no one, from Central Africans to those who have come to their rescue in the name of peace — children, grandchildren, women, men, pensioners, young people, soldiers, animists, Muslims and Christians. I would also like to sincerely thank previous speakers for their excellent and comprehensive briefings.

Our combined efforts in the Central African Republic have led to the basis for peace. A peace agreement between the Central African authorities and the 14 armed groups — the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic — was signed on 6 February in Bangui. The Agreement, the outcome of the dialogue held in Khartoum on the initiative of the African Union, supported by the United Nations, came into being following a long common journey in the name of peace. This is yet another opportunity for me to sincerely thank all of the architects of the Agreement: Mr. Smail Chergui, African Union Commissioner for Peace and Security; Mr. Jean-Pierre Lacroix, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations; Mr. Parfait Onanga-Anyanga, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Central African Republic; all of our bilateral and multilateral partners; and President Omer Al-Bashir, who showed genuine generosity and provided a warm welcome as the leader of the host country talks.

I must also thank the entire panel of facilitators appointed by the Heads of State of neighbouring countries or by regional bodies for their involvement in the negotiations, in addition to the Heads of State of the subregion, for their commitment to the process of restoring and maintaining peace in the Central African Republic. Nor can I fail to thank the President of the

Republic and Head of State, Mr. Faustin Archange Touadera, for his firm determination to use dialogue as the only solution to the crisis in the Central African Republic, and his Government for working towards that goal.

The Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic, signed on 6 February, is symbolic, even historic, because the leaders of the 14 armed groups attended the talks in Khartoum and the Agreement was signed in Bangui, on the territory of the Central African Republic. A major step towards peace and national reconciliation has been taken. However, it remains tentative and will depend on the implementation by all parties of their commitments. Only if the Agreement is fulfilled, through the implementation of the mechanisms stipulated therein, will peace and social cohesion be restored. It is important to remember that considerable efforts have been made, with the sustained support of our partners.

The Government, with the support of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic, the European Union and all our partners, has made progress in extending State authority throughout the country through, for example, the redeployment of prefects and sub-prefects with a view to beginning the decentralization process; the implementation of national security and defence sector reform; the training of police officers and gendarmes, 500 of whom are currently operational; and through the launching by the President of the disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation programme in the north-western part of the country. These efforts, which have been made with current forms of support, must continue and be strengthened and ramped up and, above all, updated in order to adapt them to the current situation, with a view to restoring State authority. That achievement will enable us to confirm the historic character of the peace agreement.

The authorities of the Central African Republic have already taken measures for the implementation of the Agreement, in particular by issuing a decree to establish an inclusive commission tasked with conducting work related to transitional justice pending the establishment of the truth, justice, reparations and reconciliation commission. Other measures are also under way, including the creation of the steering and follow-up committees vital to ensuring the proper

implementation of the Agreement and a timetable for the resumption of joint commissions with the countries of the subregion. Furthermore, the Government is committed to continuing its dialogue with the armed groups in order to preserve the momentum that led to the signing of the Agreement. The first visit was made last week, on Friday, 15 February, when the Minister of Humanitarian Action and National Reconciliation went to Kaga Bandoro to discuss the issue of the treatment of displaced persons.

I would like to point out here that the entire process is part and parcel of continental and international partnerships, which reflect our commitment to major issues of common interest such as peace, security and governance. Combating insecurity is an ongoing challenge — indeed, our ongoing challenge — and requires greater effectiveness and a better harmonizing of our efforts. It is therefore important that our commitments be consistent with the values and principles that we promote — equality, equity, human rights, social justice, sovereignty, democracy and humanitarian law, to name but a few. Our partnerships must be mutual, strong and responsible, without discrimination of any kind. Our efforts must be comprehensive and meet all expectations and challenges, on the understanding that the goal of the Central African Republic is the restoration of the rule of law. Achieving that ultimate objective will open the way to a new era for Central Africa, in which the Central African Republic will learn to bind its wounds and accept its history, despite the many painful events that have marked it, in order to leave it further behind in the name of stability and national harmony.

The Central African Republic has taken note of the time frame issued by the Security Council in resolution 2454 (2019), which renewed the sanctions regime and provided for the establishment by the end of April of a road map that would pave the way, through agreed measures, to a relaxation of the arms embargo. While welcoming this opening of the Security Council, I recall that the sanctions regime, in particular with respect to the arms embargo and the Kimberley Process, must neither limit nor constrain the efforts and momentum undertaken by the Central African Republic in its quest for lasting peace, the restoration of State authority throughout the entire territory, and economic development. Like any State, the Central African State is mandated and duty-bound to protect its

population and its territory and ensure the social well-being of its population.

I cannot conclude without paying special tribute to Mr. Parfait Onanga-Anyanga, whose role in the search for peace in my country has been very important and undeniable. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General leaves us after a successfully completing a job that lasted more than three years. He was one of the architects of peace agreement, and the Central African Republic will remain indebted to him. I wish him every success in all his future endeavours, while hoping that

he will continue to have a thought for a country he cherished so dearly in fulfilling his mandate.

In conclusion, the Central African Republic welcomes the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Mankeur Ndiaye, and wishes him every success in his mission.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers.

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

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.