



Security Council

Sixty-sixth year

Provisional

6601st meeting

Thursday, 18 August 2011, 10 a.m.

New York

<i>President:</i>	Mr. Hardeep Singh Puri	(India)
<i>Members:</i>	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Mr. Durmić
	Brazil	Mr. Fernandes
	China	Mr. Yang Tao
	Colombia	Mr. Osorio
	France	Mr. Briens
	Gabon	Mr. Messone
	Germany	Mr. Huth
	Lebanon	Mr. Jaber
	Nigeria	Mrs. Ogwu
	Portugal	Mr. Cabral
	Russian Federation	Mr. Zhukov
	South Africa	Mr. Laher
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Tatham
	United States of America	Mr. DeLaurentis

Agenda

Central African region

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

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Central African region

The President: Under rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Abou Moussa, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa, to participate in this meeting.

I welcome Mr. Moussa, who is joining today's meeting via video teleconference from Libreville.

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

I now give the floor to Mr. Abou Moussa.

Mr. Moussa: First of all, I wish to take this opportunity to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the Council presidency this month, and to wish you full success.

I am honoured to address the Council in my new capacity as the first Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Central African region and Head of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA). Sitting next to me is my senior political advisor, Mr. Paul Zoumanigui.

I am grateful for the spontaneous and warm welcome extended to me since my arrival in Libreville on 15 June by States of the Central African subregion, the United Nations country team and in particular our hosts, the Government Gabon and its people, whose continued and generous support has greatly facilitated the successful establishment of UNOCA.

Cognizant of the fact that responsibility for conflict prevention rests with national Governments and other local actors, as reiterated by the Security Council, we launched our work with ongoing courtesy visits to States of the region. We did so with a view to establishing contact with Government leaders, the United Nations country teams, members of diplomatic corps and representatives of regional organizations present in the subregion in order to familiarize ourselves with developments in the region and the priorities of the leaders, particularly those relating to assistance for national Governments and their local stakeholders in finding lasting solutions to their

problems, and to support for the development of national and regional capacities for early warning, conflict prevention and long-term peacebuilding.

During our visits paid to Chad, Equatorial Guinea, Cameroon and the Central African Republic, coupled with our discussions with the authorities in Libreville, we discussed issues pertaining to cooperation between UNOCA and leaders of these Member States, United Nations country teams and other international partners represented in these countries for the promotion of greater peace, security and development in the Central African subregion. Through interaction thus far with United Nations country teams, the United Nations special political missions on the ground, in particular the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in the Central African Republic and the United Nations Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Central Africa, we are laying the basis for framing an effective coordination mechanism for the United Nations presence in the subregion.

We intend to pursue and complete the courtesy visits to Member States in the coming weeks. However, our preliminary observations from the discussions during the visits conducted thus far reconfirm the initial assessments of Member States and the United Nations that warranted the establishment of UNOCA. These include the need for enhanced United Nations support in the subregion to help Member States address security, peacebuilding and conflict-prevention challenges; the need to strengthen United Nations support for internal political dialogue within relevant Member States as a conflict-prevention measure; and the need to support the capacity-building of subregional institutions, including the Economic Community of Central African States and the Gulf of Guinea Commission.

Most recently, the need to build capacity for tackling specific trans-border security challenges, such as piracy in the Gulf of Guinea and the threats posed by such rebel groups as the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) and Baba Ladde in the Central African Republic, has become a shared concern of the United Nations, the African Union and the subregion. UNOCA has assumed the responsibility for the coordination of the efforts of United Nations family on the ground with a view to supporting existing efforts initiated by the African Union.

In this regard, I intend to visit Addis Ababa as soon as possible for discussions with the African Union on the issue of the LRA and other pertinent subregional matters of common concern. To this effect, we intend to convene a meeting of the Special Representatives of the Secretary-General and all the resident coordinators in the subregion once we complete our courtesy visits.

I would, in particular, like to draw the attention of the Council to the fallout of the situation in Libya, which presents new challenges for neighbouring countries in the Central African subregion. So far, reports are that, of the more than 500,000 Chadians estimated to be living in Libya prior to the current conflict, close to 80,000 had returned home by the end of July. Their return presents several challenges for Chad, particularly the loss of remittances. The vulnerability of returnees to the pervasive illicit trafficking and the circulation of small arms and light weapons by armed groups, including the LRA, are increasingly worrying for the Governments of Chad and the Central African Republic.

It is also not inconceivable that some returnees, particularly those who may have participated in military or security operations in Libya, could be recruited as mercenaries or even as fighters for armed groups in the Central African subregion. It is feared that stolen weapons from Libya, which may be moved into the porous areas in the subregion, could fuel criminality and undermine recent developments designed to enhance cooperation and security between Chad, the Sudan and the Central African Republic.

However, the arrival of a new Resident Coordinator in Chad and the deployment of a peace and development adviser to his Office in N'djamena will be helpful in providing analyses of the evolution of the situation within Chad and along its borders with Libya, the Sudan and the Central African Republic. UNOCA will work closely with the United Nations country team to address peace consolidation opportunities that may arise.

We are also encouraged by the prevailing climate of renewed determination of countries of the subregion to work together to foster cooperation and diplomatic ties towards addressing common threats to peace and security in the subregion. In this connection, the establishment on 23 May by Chad, the Sudan and the Central African Republic at their tripartite summit meeting in Khartoum of a joint mechanism to promote

border security and stability and strengthen economic ties among themselves testifies to the positive posture and determination of leaders of the subregion to eliminate the persisting peace and security threats that have terrorized the people, including the activities of the Lord's Resistance Army and other criminal groups roaming the countryside in the Chad-Sudan-Central African Republic triangle.

In the same vein, despite its wealth, the Gulf of Guinea area is facing what is often referred to as the "natural resource curse" or the "paradox of plenty". The countries of the area continue to face low growth and persisting poverty as a result of multifaceted domestic, regional and international threats and vulnerabilities, such as the increasing threat of piracy. Border insecurity in the Gulf of Guinea is further aggravated by the perpetration of unlawful activities in the area by groups that use the area as a transit route, posing threats and committing criminal acts such as poaching of its rich water resources, piracy and related criminal attacks, and the use of the Gulf as a trafficking hub for the transshipment of narcotics.

The countries of the region have always recognized the wide-ranging benefits of enhanced cross-border security, and have initiated negotiations towards resolving cross-border security issues that arise and preventing the reoccurrence of related incidents in the future. It is no wonder that the Government of Gabon, at its fifty-first Independence Day celebration on 17 August, dedicated its military to "the participation of Gabon in the security of the Gulf of Guinea". In the coming period, we will be working to translate the mandate of UNOCA into cohesive subregional initiatives to facilitate coordination and information exchange between United Nations entities and other partners towards supporting such peacebuilding and preventive diplomacy initiatives in the subregion.

We are counting on the support of the Council in order to muster the requisite political will to promote preventive diplomacy as an effective tool for peace and security in the subregion through concrete activities with Member States and other partners in the subregion, which will demonstrate the early added value and relevance of UNOCA on the ground.

Following the establishment of UNOCA, and with a view to building synergies within the Central Africa subregion, the Secretary-General transferred the

secretariat functions of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Issues in Central Africa from the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa in the Office of Disarmament Affairs to the Department of Political Affairs, to be assumed by UNOCA. UNOCA is therefore pursuing preparations for the 33rd meeting of the Committee, to be held later this year in Bangui, the Central African Republic.

As we assume that important function, we will work with Member States, the Office for Disarmament Affairs, other United Nations entities and relevant international partners to ensure that the Standing Advisory Committee's important policy accomplishments in the area of disarmament in the subregion are implemented, and to facilitate the work of the Committee in addressing the items that it has listed on its agenda for greater peace and security. Those include the growing threat of piracy and maritime security in the Gulf of Guinea, the situation and activities of Mbororo nomads in the Central African subregion, climate change and conflict, cross-border security, small arms and light weapons, the link between the illegal exploitation of natural resources and conflict in Central Africa, human rights, in particular trafficking and child labour, and women and peace and security in the subregion.

To that end, I intend to organize a dedicated capacity for secretarial support to the Standing Advisory Committee in my Office in order not only to tackle the preparation of the biannual meetings of the Committee, but also to help Member States to translate the policy instruments that it has developed into national and cross-border initiatives for peacebuilding and conflict prevention. Such instruments include the Central African Convention for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons, Their Ammunition and All Parts and Components That Can Be Used for Their

Manufacture, Repair and Assembly, known as the Kinshasa Convention, adopted at the 31st ministerial meeting of the Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, held in Brazzaville, the Republic of Congo, in November 2010.

The Kinshasa Convention indeed represents a major legal breakthrough in the fight against the trafficking of small arms and light weapons in the subregion, which contribute to the prolongation and exacerbation of conflicts within the subregion. The Convention provides the States parties with a common reference point to coordinate their efforts and to end the uncontrolled proliferation of small arms and light weapons in Central Africa. We therefore intend to work with the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa, in collaboration with the ECCAS Secretary-General, in lending our support to the Committee for the ratification process with a view to ensuring the Convention's early entry into force and implementation.

Finally, we are grateful to the Council and to the various components of the Secretariat for their valuable support of efforts to establish the Office since its inauguration on 2 March. Tremendous progress has been achieved in that regard, with almost 80 per cent of its staff complement on board and continued improvement in its operational environment.

Yet, still more challenges lie ahead. Nevertheless, we trust that, with the Council's support, we will certainly be able to deliver on our mandate.

The President: I thank Mr. Moussa very much for his briefing.

There are no further speakers inscribed on my list. I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 10.25 a.m.