



# Security Council

Seventy-sixth year

**8933**<sup>rd</sup> meeting

Wednesday, 15 December 2021, 3.15 p.m.

New York

*Provisional*

---

<i>President:</i>	Mr. Abarry . . . . .	(Niger)
<i>Members:</i>	China . . . . .	Mr. Sun Zhiqiang
	Estonia . . . . .	Mr. Lipand
	France . . . . .	Mrs. Gasri
	India . . . . .	Mr. Raguttahalli
	Ireland . . . . .	Ms. Byrne Nason
	Kenya . . . . .	Mr. Olanda
	Mexico . . . . .	Mr. Gómez Robledo Verduzco
	Norway . . . . .	Mr. Heines
	Russian Federation . . . . .	Ms. Evstigneeva
	Saint Vincent and the Grenadines . . . . .	Ms. Mark
	Tunisia . . . . .	Mr. Ben Lagha
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . . . . .	Mr. Roscoe
	United States of America . . . . .	Mr. Mills
	Viet Nam . . . . .	Mr. Pham

## Agenda

### Central African region

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Central Africa and the activities of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (S/2021/975)

---

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the translation of speeches delivered in other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-0506 (verbatimrecords@un.org). Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (<http://documents.un.org>).

21-39623 (E)



Accessible document

Please recycle



*The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.*

### **Adoption of the agenda**

*The agenda was adopted.*

### **Central African region**

#### **Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Central Africa and the activities of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (S/2021/975)**

**The President** (*spoke in French*): In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. François Louncény Fall, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa, to participate in this meeting.

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/2021/975, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Central Africa and the activities of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa.

I now give the floor to Mr. Fall.

**Mr. Fall** (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I welcome the fact that today's briefing on the report on the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA) is taking place under your presidency, Mr. President. It is my great fortune to have this opportunity to pay a well-deserved tribute to your country as its mandate on the Security Council draws to a close. Your term at this post of high diplomacy, your mandate for world peace, including in Central Africa, and the themes you have chosen over the past two years — specifically, the situations in the Sahel and the Lake Chad basin and climate security — are of great interest to the region.

(*spoke in English*)

It is my pleasure to brief the Security Council today on the situation in Central Africa and the activities of UNOCA.

Central Africa has continued to grapple with a worsening situation related to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. The vaccination campaign in the subregion has remained generally slow and asymmetric. According to official data, as of 16 November, nearly

3 per cent of people have been vaccinated across Central Africa. Meanwhile, 438,000 cases have been reported, including 7,047 people who have lost their lives since the beginning of the pandemic — a 100 per cent increase, compared to the situation in June. I call upon the international community to continue supporting Central Africa in its efforts to contain the pandemic and mitigate its impact.

After a severe economic recession, I am encouraged by the prevailing optimism, as countries embark on economic recovery. I commend regional, continental and international financial institutions, which, through their renewed and generous financial and technical commitment, have been supporting the countries of the region to address the impact of the dual health and economic crisis.

While showing the resilience of the States of Central Africa, the management of COVID-19 has also exposed some protracted governance challenges that need to be addressed for the subregion to prevent, mitigate and successfully resolve future crises. Indeed, governance gaps continue to hamper subregional efforts to chart a course for sustainable peace and development.

Elections remain a key feature of governance. Since my last briefing (see S/PV.8787), a peaceful and orderly presidential election took place in Sao Tome and Principe, further consolidating the country's track record of democratic transitions. I would like to commend the people of Sao Tome and Principe and their political leaders for placing the national interest before partisan politics during the presidential election. However, sustaining democratic gains would entail helping the political class to implement key governance and electoral reforms and providing the country with the resources that would enable it to achieve key development objectives so that the population could harness the "democratic dividend".

As the subregion prepares for crucial elections in 2022 and 2023, including in Angola, Chad, the Congo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon and Sao Tome and Principe, renewed commitment to peaceful and democratic electoral processes remains paramount for regional stability. This requires the timely provision of adequate support to enable the creation of conditions conducive for credible, inclusive and peaceful elections, and to prevent election-related violence. I will pursue good offices on behalf of the Secretary-General, wherever required, to

encourage inclusive and meaningful political dialogue in countries preparing for elections. The support of the Security Council will be crucial in that regard.

The Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) has stayed the course in the implementation of its institutional reform, including through the operationalization of the newly established Committee of Permanent Representatives and the regular convening of statutory meetings. I would like to commend ECCAS for its continued engagement in Chad and the Central African Republic, and its support for the electoral process in Sao Tome and Principe. I am also encouraged by efforts undertaken by ECCAS to tackle governance issues. In cooperation with the African Union, and with the support of UNOCA, ECCAS has been working towards the establishment of a subregional governance architecture. UNOCA will continue to mobilize the entire United Nations system to support ECCAS in consolidating its role as the primary regional peace and security actor in Central Africa.

A strong ECCAS is needed to help its member States address the many challenges facing Central Africa. These include, inter alia, terrorism and violent extremism, particularly in the Lake Chad Basin, maritime insecurity in the Gulf of Guinea, the weak participation of women in peace and political processes, and the impact of climate change on peace and security.

The activities of terrorist groups in the Lake Chad Basin, including Boko Haram and the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP), has remained a source of great concern. During a joint high-level visit that I recently undertook to the Lake Chad Basin with Special Representative of the Secretary-General Annadif of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS), we were informed that security and humanitarian dynamics were evolving rapidly, owing to the reconfiguration of Boko Haram and ISWAP, and leading to additional threats to the populations.

As a result of the intensification of military operations by the armies of the affected countries, the terrorist groups have adapted their modus operandi, resorting to more sophisticated and deadlier methods of warfare. As Boko Haram and ISWAP seem to have been weakened by military operations and their own infighting, it is the right moment to increase international support for national and regional efforts aimed at defeating these groups. The Multinational Joint Task Force and the concerned national armies

are in dire need of technical and material assistance, particularly in the clearance and disposal of improvised explosive devices, which have become one of the main causes of death in their ranks. International support is also needed in disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, as the weakening of Boko Haram and the death of its leader Abubakar Shekau have resulted in the defection of thousands of former associates.

Furthermore, ISWAP, which seems to have gained the upper hand over Boko Haram, mainly targets defence and security forces while also trying to win the hearts and minds of the local populations through preaching and providing some basic social services to fill the gap created by the absence of State authorities. It is therefore equally urgent to scale up international support for the implementation of the Regional Strategy for the Stabilization, Recovery and Resilience of the Boko Haram-affected Areas of the Lake Chad Basin Region, which addresses the root causes of the crisis and responds to the needs of the affected communities, including women and youth, to prevent their radicalization and enrolment into terrorist groups.

In the Gulf of Guinea, organized maritime crime has remained a threat to State and human security, despite an overall decrease in piracy incidents. UNOCA and UNOWAS will continue to prioritize maritime security in their joint engagement and cooperation. In this regard, I welcome the commitment reiterated by stakeholders during the conference of the Group of Seven Friends of the Gulf of Guinea Group, held in November, to enhance regional and international cooperation and partnerships in order to promote free trade and fight maritime insecurity in the Gulf of Guinea.

The women and peace and security agenda remains a key regional priority. The participation of women in political and peace processes remains limited despite recent progress and the relevant political will in parts of the subregion. Meanwhile, States have pursued efforts to adopt and roll out their respective national action plans for the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), while also launching national chapters of the African Women Leaders Network. UNOCA and ECCAS will continue to bolster their support for countries in those endeavours.

As highlighted at the twenty-sixth Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, held in Glasgow, the impact of

climate change requires us all to make bold and robust commitments. In Central Africa, the impact of climate change is exacerbating tensions among communities as competition for ever-depleting natural resources is causing more frequent and lethal conflicts.

I am encouraged by the commitment of the subregion to address climate security challenges, as was reiterated during the fifty-second ministerial meeting of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa (UNSAC), held in Libreville last month. UNOCA will continue to devote its attention to this global priority and its linkages to peace and security, in partnership with the African Union, ECCAS, Governments, the relevant United Nations entities and other actors in the subregion.

*(spoke in French)*

Several countries in Central Africa have continued to face political and security challenges with actual or potential negative impacts on neighbouring countries and regional stability. Chad has made significant progress in reaching key transitional milestones despite significant challenges. I welcome the statement published at the outcome of the fifty-second UNSAC ministerial meeting, which reaffirmed the Committee's unwavering support for Chad's efforts to complete a peaceful and democratic transition within 18 months.

The strong support expressed by the Peacebuilding Commission at its meeting on Chad's transition, held on 2 December, is also encouraging, as it helps garner international support for a peaceful, inclusive and rapid completion of the transition. That sends a strong message to both Chadian stakeholders and international partners, as the contribution of all is needed for ensuring a successful transition that will also lay the foundation for a lasting peace.

The transition authorities decided two weeks ago to grant amnesty to certain members of armed groups within the framework of efforts to encourage them to participate in the dialogue and reconciliation processes, which will strengthen their inclusive nature. The proposed inclusive national dialogue also represents a historic opportunity. We hope that it will be fully inclusive, meaningful and transparent, and I wholeheartedly commend all the efforts of the Chadian stakeholders in that regard.

The next steps of the transition — the national dialogue, the elections and the disarmament,

demobilization and reintegration envisioned for Chadian combatants returning to their country — will require significant additional international support, especially as Chad continues to struggle with a dire socioeconomic situation. It will also be important to step up efforts to strengthen the social contract and fabric in the context of the transition and beyond.

Concerning the situation in the Central African Republic, my consultations with national authorities and international partners, in close coordination with the Special Representative for the Central African Republic and Head of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA), Mr. Mankeur Ndiaye, on the regional dimension of the conflict highlighted the region's continued efforts to help the country chart a path leading towards lasting peace. I am convinced that concerted, coherent and coordinated regional engagement, particularly within the framework of the road map adopted in Luanda in September, is imperative to supporting the effective implementation of the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic, which remains the only viable path to lasting stability.

In Cameroon, violence has continued in the North-West and South-West regions of the country, including against civilian targets. The conflict is increasingly taking on a regional dimension, with non-State armed groups that are reportedly forging alliances with foreign entities and deploying more sophisticated weapons and tactics. Unfortunately, initiatives to resolve the conflict peacefully have made limited progress.

In that context, I welcome new local initiatives to promote a bottom-up approach that should ultimately help create an environment conducive to resolving the crisis through dialogue. I also call on all parties to take genuine and decisive steps towards a negotiated political solution. We encourage the country's key actors and the diaspora to act on the need for further constructive dialogue in complementarity with the recommendations of the major national dialogue to achieve a peaceful and lasting resolution to the crisis. Consistent and coordinated international support will continue to be crucial to that end.

I would like to conclude by saying that this is my first time briefing before the Council since the renewal of the UNOCA mandate. I am convinced that the Office, which celebrated its tenth anniversary this year, can,

with the Council's support, continue to help Central Africa overcome its multiple security, political and economic challenges, which have been compounded by the impact of COVID-19, and contribute to creating the necessary conditions for creating lasting regional peace and stability.

**The President** (*spoke in French*): I thank Mr. Fall for his briefing.

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

**Mr. Roscoe** (United Kingdom): I want to begin by expressing our heartfelt thanks to Special Representative of the Secretary-General Fall for his insightful briefing today and, more significantly, for his continued efforts to support peace, stability and security in Central Africa. Although your modesty will not appreciate this, Sir, I want to join Mr. Fall in his tribute to you with regard to your own commitment and leadership in the work of the Security Council and beyond on these issues and in the region.

In terms of the work of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA) itself, we particularly welcome the collaboration between the Office and the recently established Economic Community of Central African States Commission, which, I know, has been incredibly constructive for Special Representative of the Secretary-General Fall during the recent reporting period. We are also very encouraged by the links between Mr. Fall's Office and the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel and other major United Nations Offices in the region.

As Special Representative of the Secretary-General Fall has set out today, Central Africa continues to face serious political, economic, humanitarian and security challenges. It therefore remains important that the countries in the region work together with the support of the United Nations to strengthen regional peace and security, protect civilians in conflict and promote human rights and resilient economic recovery.

In that regard, I commend UNOCA's ongoing work on conflict prevention, and particularly Mr. Fall's mediation efforts across Central Africa. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General's work to highlight and support inclusive and meaningful dialogue in countries preparing for elections is particularly welcome. We welcome and encourage even greater coordination between UNOCA and

United Nations country teams in the subregion. We know that Special Representative Fall is doing that and is working to convene them, but we think a particular focus on the delivery of agreed plans and strategies and encouragement in that regard could be incredibly helpful.

Turning to individual countries in the region, as the Special Representative has just done, the United Kingdom would like to reiterate its support to Chad as it undergoes its transition to civilian and constitutional rule. The United Kingdom joins the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in welcoming the positive steps towards that transition, including the appointment of a largely civilian Cabinet and ongoing talks with armed opposition groups. We encourage the Government of Chad to continue to lead an inclusive process to facilitate a peaceful and successful political transition.

The United Kingdom remains deeply concerned by the ongoing crisis and continued human rights violations in the North-West and South-West regions of Cameroon. The impacts on civilians continue to be profound, as we have heard. The conflict in that region has driven around 650,000 people from their homes and forced almost 70,000 people to seek refuge in neighbouring Nigeria. The continued closure of two thirds of schools, now for a fifth year, means 700,000 children are not receiving an education. We know what that means with regard to being a driver of conflict.

The United Kingdom has allocated a further \$6 million in humanitarian aid to Cameroon this year, which will provide vital assistance, including food, medical supplies and sanitation provisions. What Cameroon desperately needs is the dialogue that the Special Representative has just spoken about, which we hope he will do all he can to encourage, as will we.

The United Kingdom also strongly condemns the terrorist attacks on civilians in Cameroon's Far North region and across the wider Lake Chad basin area. We welcome the efforts of the Multinational Joint Task Force to tackle Boko Haram and the Islamic State West Africa Province in the region, but we have also heard just how complex that situation is. We need to continue to focus on that. The United Kingdom Government continues to support regional stabilization efforts through its support to the Regional Stabilization Facility for the Lake Chad Basin, working with international partners and Governments of the region.

Turning to Burundi, we welcome the efforts by the Government to re-engage with the international community and demonstrate a greater commitment to human rights. To that end, we continue to urge the Government of Burundi to engage with the United Nations human rights monitoring mechanisms, including the new Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Burundi, and to ensure that the needs and rights of refugees, other displaced people and host communities are recognized.

The United Kingdom remains concerned about the ongoing violence in the Central African Republic, which continues to take a distressing toll on the civilian population, compounding an already acute humanitarian situation. We commend President Touadera for his call for a unilateral ceasefire and continue to underline the importance of an inclusive peacebuilding process.

We regret to hear further reports that the Russian private military company Wagner Group continues to commit human rights abuses in the Central African Republic. The Wagner Group drives conflict and profits and capitalizes on instability for its own interests. It does not offer long-term security answers in the Central African Republic or elsewhere in Africa, while undermining the work of international peacekeepers.

May I conclude by thanking Special Representative Fall. We recognize the huge challenges across the region, and we are grateful to him for his energetic and personal commitment to help guide the efforts aimed at achieving peace and security in the region. We are fortunate to have him.

**Mr. Heines** (Norway): I thank Special Representative Fall for his comprehensive briefing. Even when the work of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA) is not very visible, we know it continues to play a key role in the region.

Let me start today on the coast, where the menace of piracy and armed robbery persists. Every year, piracy and armed robbery in the Gulf of Guinea has direct, indirect and opportunity costs for the surrounding regions — to the amount of almost \$2 billion. That figure was one of the findings of a Norwegian-funded, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime-supported cost analysis report for the coastal States launched last week.

If we add to that monetary cost the human cost of risks to seafarers, then maritime security in the Gulf

of Guinea clearly deserves more focus. To that end, Norway, in close cooperation and consultation with incoming members Ghana and Gabon and other regional countries, intends to introduce a draft resolution to address the issue.

The utility of such a draft resolution would be threefold: first, it would increase attention around that important issue in the region and beyond; secondly, it would encourage the ongoing and commendable national, regional and international efforts in that regard; and thirdly, as we approach the 10-year mark of the previous resolution (resolution 2018 (2011)) and the Yaoundé Code of Conduct, a new draft resolution is an opportunity to take stock of what works and what can be improved.

Moving onshore, let me highlight three other key issues, namely, preventative diplomacy, the protection of education and climate and security.

First, on preventive diplomacy and mediation, even when countries in the region are not formally on the Security Council's agenda, it is important that we heed the warning signs and use all our tools to act early to prevent them from ending up there. The Council's role cannot be reduced to that of a firefighter, rushing to scenes after the fact. Instead, we must make the best use of mitigating measures, including UNOCA's preventive tools, many of which are well described in the report of the Secretary-General (S/2021/975) and deserve our support. As always, one of the most effective ways to ensure ongoing sustainable peace is to ensure the inclusion of all stakeholders, not least women.

Secondly, as stressed in recently adopted resolution 2601 (2021), the destruction of educational facilities and denial of access to education have immediate and long-term negative impacts on the lives of children and young people, as well as their communities and societies. Norway strongly condemns the reported continued attacks against schools and education facilities in parts of Cameroon, as well as in other countries in the region. We are pleased that the recent extension of the mandate of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic includes strong language on the importance of protection and the continuation of education in conflict.

Thirdly, and finally, we can no longer ignore the fact that climate change increases security challenges, including in Central Africa. In Burundi, as of August, there were more than 96,000 internally displaced

persons due to natural disasters. In Cameroon and Chad, intercommunal clashes between herding and farming communities, compounded by climate change, led to deaths and injuries. While the Council continues to catch up to that reality, Norway will maintain its support for UNOCA's climate and security project. We are happy to see that that project has now moved into a second phase.

In conclusion, in an increasingly complex security landscape, the answers are often closer cooperation across borders and regional initiatives, which are all the more important in light of the coronavirus disease pandemic. On all of the issues I have mentioned today, UNOCA plays a key role in bringing actors like the Economic Community of Central African States, the African Union, the United Nations Office for West Africa and others together to act. Norway will continue to strongly support those efforts.

**Mrs. Gasri** (France) (*spoke in French*): I would also like to thank Mr. François Louncény Fall, Special Representative of the Secretary-General, for his briefing and for his concerted action as the Head of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA). I would like to underscore three points.

First, it is essential to support the political dialogues in the region.

In the Central African Republic, France welcomes the mediation efforts, in particular the commitment of Angola and Rwanda. With the work of the Special Representative in support of the Special Representative for the Central African Republic, those efforts should lead to a political settlement of the crisis. The "dialogue républicaine", announced at the beginning of the year, must begin as soon as possible and in a conducive environment.

In Chad, the steps taken since the adoption of a transitional road map at the end of July are encouraging. We welcome the consultation process with the inclusion of all active forces with a view to the timely launch of an inclusive national dialogue. It is important that the elections planned for September 2022 be held in a free, transparent and inclusive manner.

In Cameroon, France is pursuing its interaction with the authorities and its support for mediation initiatives in order to support the path of dialogue. That is how it will be possible to find a political solution to

the crisis in the North-West and South-West regions, where violence is increasing.

This brings me to my second point. Efforts must be redoubled to protect the population and respond to humanitarian needs.

In the Central African Republic, France calls on all actors to respect the ceasefire and to guarantee the safety of the population. Wagner must stop its abuses, predation and violation at the expense of Central Africans. France will continue to provide humanitarian support and recently allocated €6 million in humanitarian and food assistance.

France is maintaining its support to the populations in the North-West, South-West and Far North regions of Cameroon through humanitarian assistance and stabilization projects. Attacks on schools, humanitarian and medical personnel are unacceptable. France welcomes the assistance provided by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to displaced persons and those who fled to Chad following last week's communal violence in the Far North region of Cameroon.

France will continue to support the Multinational Joint Task Force of the States bordering Lake Chad, notably through the coordination and liaison unit, as well as with €50 million in financial support from Europe. We will continue our humanitarian and stabilization support to the Lake Chad basin.

Finally — and this is my last point — the States of the region must continue to mobilize, with the support of the UNOCA, in favour of inclusive governance. Elections continue to be a source of tension in Central Africa. Several States of the region, as the Special Representative of the Secretary-General mentioned, including Angola, Gabon, Equatorial Guinea, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Republic of the Congo and Sao Tome and Principe, will hold elections in the coming years. It is essential that these elections take place in a context that allows all actors to take part in them. We will pay particular attention to the full participation of women and young people as voters and candidates.

On all these aspects, UNOCA provides indispensable support, which France welcomes. Its work with regional and subregional organizations must be strengthened, in conjunction with the other

United Nations regional offices and all relevant Special Representatives and Special Envoys.

The Special Representative knows that he can continue to count on France's support to prevent conflicts and strengthen peace in the region.

**Mr. Lipand** (Estonia): I join others in thanking Special Representative Fall for his comprehensive briefing.

Estonia welcomes the efforts of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA) and countries across the Central African region towards establishing peace, security and stability in the region.

The region continues to confront several challenges at the political, economic and security levels. We note there is a need for consolidation of democracy. In this connection, we encourage Chad to continue its peaceful and civilian-led transition to democratic processes. We also underline the important role of further prioritizing peaceful, inclusive and credible electoral processes that would contribute to a greater representation of women in public life.

We remain concerned over the lack of improvement in the security situation this year. The number of incidents in Cameroon and Chad, the increased use of improvised explosive devices and attacks against civilians remain serious threats to the stability of the region. The targeted attacks on schools and schoolchildren, as well as United Nations personnel and humanitarian workers, are particularly alarming. That also applies to the Central African Republic, where Estonia strongly condemns these attacks and any hampering of the ability of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic to deliver its mandate in the country. The role of the Wagner group has been particularly destabilizing. In this regard, we call on the countries of the region to address accountability for these human rights violations and abuses and make further progress in the fight against impunity.

We firmly believe that greater cooperation and regional integration are vital to peace and development. Therefore, we underscore the continued improvements in bilateral and regional cooperation among the countries of the region in support of the peace processes. Cooperation is even more indispensable at the time of the coronavirus disease pandemic, as well as in addressing the effects of the climate change that

pose a serious threat to international peace and security and have magnified already complex consequences of the humanitarian situation.

I would like to conclude by commending the continued efforts of the Special Representative, in collaboration with other United Nations entities, key actors of the region and other international partners, in facilitating efforts towards durable peace and stability in the region.

**Mr. Pham** (Viet Nam) (*spoke in French*): I thank Mr. François Louncény Fall, Special Representative of the Secretary-General, for his briefing.

(*spoke in English*)

My delegation takes note with encouragement of the efforts of countries of the region in maintaining stability and promoting development, both nationally and regionally. However, the road to long-term peace and stability continues to face enormous security and socioeconomic challenges, which have been aggravated by the impact of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic for almost two years now.

Viet Nam shares the concerns over persistent insecurity due to the activities of armed groups and terrorists in certain parts of the region, particularly in the Lake Chad basin. We are also troubled by maritime insecurity in the Gulf of Guinea and especially the reported expansion of the Islamic State West Africa Province, which threatens stability in the wider region. The unceasing violence in the North-West and South-West regions of Cameroon necessitates renewed dialogue efforts towards finding a lasting solution.

As a result of conflict, epidemic, floods and climate change, the humanitarian situation in Central Africa remains dire. Civilians, particularly women, children and other vulnerable groups, are the ones who suffer the most. Generous support is much needed to fund the humanitarian response plans to alleviate the predicaments of people in the region, especially millions of displaced persons, as well as to ensure COVID-19 vaccination for all.

We also take this opportunity to reiterate our strong condemnation of attacks against civilians, as well as humanitarian personnel, and call on all parties to strictly comply with their obligations under international humanitarian law.

Long-term peace, stability and development can come only when underlying and deeply seated causes of instability are fully addressed. The current situation continues to require the enhancement of collective efforts to address security threats posed by armed groups and terrorists, strengthen the governance of natural resources, promote reconciliation at the national and regional levels and enhance integration to create economic opportunities for all people.

In this regard, we would like to highlight the importance of regional cooperation. We welcome the efforts of the regional countries to cope with political and security challenges. The Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) has made great efforts in advancing institutional reform and the implementation of strategic priorities for 2021-2025. The International Conference on the Great Lakes Region has made significant contribution in promoting the peace process in the Central African Republic; the ceasefire declared by President Touadera will be a critical step towards a dialogue in that country. We also welcome the efforts of the region in response to the impact of COVID-19, especially through the ECCAS regional response strategy.

The efforts of regional countries and organizations should be coupled with international assistance. We fully support the important contribution of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa and Special Representative of the Secretary-General Fall towards peace and stability in Central Africa through good offices, preventive diplomacy and mediation efforts. The fruitful and constructive collaboration between regional and subregional organizations and United Nations entities, including the Peacebuilding Commission, is always greatly beneficial in supporting efforts towards peace and stability. At the same time, my delegation calls on international partners to provide sustained technical and financial assistance to the countries in the region during this challenging time.

As this is Viet Nam's last statement on the Central African region during its current Security Council tenure, let me emphasize our strong support for peace, stability and development for the people of Central Africa. We will continue to follow and support all efforts to that end.

**Mr. Raguttahalli** (India): I thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General François Louncény Fall for his briefing on developments in the

Central Africa region and the activities of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA). I will focus my intervention broadly on three points, that is, the political, security and humanitarian situation in the region.

While some countries of the region, such as the Central African Republic and Chad, are currently facing uncertain political and security situations, overall the region has remained politically stable and peaceful. That positive trend shows that electoral democracy is gradually and firmly taking root in the region. That is also evident from the successful conduct of presidential elections in Sao Tome and Principe. We congratulate Sao Tome and Principe on consolidating the gains of the past years by holding peaceful elections.

The progress made in recent months in the Central African Republic also deserves the collective support of the international community. We hope that the unilateral ceasefire announced in October will further strengthen peace and stability and that all parties will work together to advance the implementation of the 2019 Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic. We also welcome the commitment of Chad and the Central African Republic to addressing the border tensions through dialogue. In Chad, there has been progress towards transitional milestones through the national dialogue process, the setting up of the National Transitional Council and with regard to holding elections. We welcome those positive developments, and we encourage the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic, UNOCA and the Economic Community of the Central African States (ECCAS) to continue assisting the State authorities.

Despite those positive trends, there exist challenges in the region. Inclusivity in governance and decision-making is the cornerstone of democracy, with dialogue and reconciliation as key ingredients. The countries of the region will need to persevere in finding lasting solutions to some of the persisting political challenges.

The complex intersection of challenges in the Central Africa region requires a multifaceted response, including an inclusive political process with electoral reforms and the strengthening of national capacities and local administrations to promote socioeconomic development. The international community must

support the countries of the region in their aspirations for economic growth.

On the security front, the continuing spread of terrorism in Central Africa, including in the Lake Chad basin, remains a matter of serious concern. The expansion of the Islamic State West Africa Province and the continued killings perpetrated by Boko Haram are worrisome signs and deserve our unequivocal condemnation. We commend regional efforts that contribute to tackling such matters — for example, the Multinational Joint Task Force and the quadripartite agreement among Chad, Libya, the Niger and the Sudan to secure the common border and resolve cross-border issues.

We welcome the convening of the third meeting of the Lake Chad Basin Governors' Forum and the launch of eight territorial action plans of the Regional Strategy for the Stabilization, Recovery and Resilience of the Boko Haram-affected Areas of the Lake Chad Basin Region. Local ownership and leadership will be key to the implementation of those territorial plans. The international community must continue to support those efforts.

Maritime security in the Gulf of Guinea continues to be a matter of serious concern. The Secretary-General's report (S/2021/975) mentions eight incidents in the Gulf of Guinea, with five of them in the ECCAS maritime space. There is an urgent need to increase surveillance for maritime security in the Gulf of Guinea through increased international collaboration to ensure that the problem is dealt with decisively.

It is evident that the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has halted some of the progress in the region, with resources being shifted to meet urgent pandemic response needs. We reiterate our call for the equitable distribution of COVID-19 vaccines, including to the countries of the Central Africa region. The international community must work collectively towards supporting initiatives that ensure the speedy and equitable distribution of vaccines to the most disadvantaged populations. India also recently announced that it stands ready to support affected countries in Africa in dealing with the Omicron variant.

India has cordial, friendly bilateral relations with countries in Central Africa. In recent years, India has further expanded its diplomatic footprint in the region. This year, we opened a resident mission in Sao Tome and Principe, continuing the initiatives that we took

in previous years, such as the opening of missions in Equatorial Guinea, Cameroon and the Republic of Congo. We will soon open our diplomatic mission in Chad. India has also extended development cooperation assistance by way of soft loans worth \$2 billion for projects in agriculture, transport, power and water supply. This year, India provided medicines to several countries of the region to fight the COVID-19 pandemic. India has also extended relief to Central African countries under the Debt Service Suspension Initiative of the Group of 20. We will continue to engage closely with Central Africa and be steadfast in our support for its peace and prosperity.

**Mr. Gómez Robledo Verduzco** (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): Like other speakers before me, I wish to thank Special Representative François Louncény Fall for his briefing.

My delegation acknowledges the positive steps taken in Chad to move towards a democratic transition. We welcome its commitment to adopting a new Constitution and to holding elections in 2022. The inclusion of women in the committee in charge of organizing the national dialogue is also good news. We hope that that is a first step towards an electoral process that is open to the participation of all sectors of Chadian society.

However, my country reiterates its concern about the violence that continues to claim victims in the North-West and South-West regions of Cameroon. We particularly condemn the attacks on schools and education personnel, as they deprive new generations of their right to education and perpetuate the cycle of violent conflict. We also view with alarm recent reports of alleged links between separatist groups in Cameroon and Nigeria. All that is detrimental to the territorial integrity of those States and the unity of the continent. We urge that dialogue be prioritized with the involvement of regional organizations and, of course, the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA). There is still time to prevent the effects of violence from spreading even further in an uncontrollable manner.

In the case of the Central African Republic, we call on UNOCA to resolutely support the implementation of the road map for peace adopted at the summit of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, which, fortunately, led to the unilateral declaration of a ceasefire last October. However, it is worrisome to learn

of the release of Hassan Bouba, accused of war crimes. States parties to the International Criminal Court must respect the principle of complementarity and must therefore investigate the alleged perpetration of such crimes, or hand over the accused to the International Criminal Court.

We believe that UNOCA can, and should, redouble its efforts to promote a regional approach in responding to the various challenges facing the region. My delegation would like to respectfully make some recommendations to UNOCA.

First, the proliferation and illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons remain a threat to civilians and the stability of the Governments. Despite the fact that most countries of the region are signatories or parties to the Arms Trade Treaty and 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, and despite the existence of various initiatives to address the problem, weapons continue to cross borders freely and indiscriminately and further deteriorate the security and humanitarian situation. UNOCA must play an active role in ensuring that a regional strategy is adopted to combine and harmonize existing efforts and make the international and regional commitments of the Central African States a reality.

Secondly, electoral processes are a recurrent source of political instability and conflict. In coordination with regional organizations, the institutional and legal scaffolding of Central African States in electoral matters should be strengthened. In that regard, we welcome the sending of an electoral observation mission by the African Union and the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) to São Tomé and Príncipe in July. We hope that this practice will be extended to other elections in 2022.

Finally, Mexico believes that prevention should be at the heart of UNOCA's priorities. In a context marked by numerous actors, the work of UNOCA should focus on strengthening regional governance by supporting existing institutions, in particular ECCAS and the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region.

**Mr. Sun Zhiqiang** (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General François Louncény Fall for his briefing.

For some time, countries in Central Africa have taken active measures to maintain political stability and restore socioeconomic development, demonstrating strong resilience and vitality. The stability of Central Africa bears on the overall security in Africa. The United Nations and the international community should heed the voices of the countries in the region, respect their wishes, support their efforts to strengthen unity and cooperation and work together towards regional prosperity and stability. In that connection, China would like to underline three points.

First, we must support countries of the region in taking a development path that fits their national conditions. This year, the President of the Central African Republic, Mr. Touadera, announced a unilateral ceasefire and continued efforts to improve the security situation. Chad adopted a transitional road map, established transitional national institutions and held a national dialogue, resulting in positive progress. The Government of Cameroon adopted important measures in areas such as decentralization; local institution-building; disarmament, demobilization and reintegration; and culture and education in order to firmly safeguard national unity and security and stability in the South-West and North-West regions. These examples clearly show that only development paths that suit national realities and historical, cultural, economic and social conditions can truly contribute to stability and development.

Importing democratic transformation, imposing development models or wilfully applying frequent pressure and sanctions will not only fail, but also backfire. Many Central African countries will hold elections next year. The international community must respect the sovereignty and ownership of those countries while providing electoral assistance. It must also encourage and support regional organizations in playing an important role.

Some countries turned a blind eye to the efforts and progress made by Burundi in the promotion and protection of human rights, ignored the strong views of the Government of Burundi and forced through the appointment of a Special Rapporteur to monitor the situation of human rights in Burundi. China expresses its strong rejection and calls on those countries to stop intervening in Burundi's internal affairs.

Secondly, we must support regional unity and cooperation. We welcome the nineteenth Conference

of Heads of State and Government of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), which adopted a series of important resolutions on regional connectivity, economic and trade integration, security-mechanism building and more. At the same time, it is concerning that the Islamic State West Africa Province and other terrorist groups continue to spread in the region. Maritime security in the Gulf of Guinea remains a pressing issue. The humanitarian situation in the region has deteriorated, with a spike in refugees and displaced persons. The international community should support the building of a regional security mechanism, enhance the region's capacity to maintain stability and counter terrorism and to address cross-border challenges such as piracy and drug smuggling in the Gulf of Guinea. We must help countries in Central Africa to improve their governance capacity, achieve sustainable development, promote social inclusion and cohesion and eliminate all potential breeding grounds for extremist forces and terrorism.

Thirdly, we must support the region's fight against the coronavirus disease pandemic. With the pandemic still raging worldwide and a low vaccination rate in the Central African region, we cannot ignore the pandemic's negative impact on the region's political, economic and social stability. This is the most pressing challenge for the countries in Central Africa. The international community should support those countries in their pandemic responses and step up assistance for early and broad access to safe and affordable vaccines. We call on countries to effectively honour their official development assistance commitments, scale up their assistance, actively provide finance, technology and capacity-building and help countries in the region to eradicate poverty, expand employment and improve their livelihoods.

At the recent eighth Ministerial Conference of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, President Xi Jinping announced nine projects of practical cooperation with Africa and set out policies and measures in that regard, such as providing 1 billion vaccines to Africa and promoting Africa's exports to China, debt relief, investment and climate response. That will inject new impetus to the pandemic response and post-pandemic recovery for African countries.

Through close cooperation with ECCAS and ongoing communication with the countries of the region, Special Representative Fall has helped the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa

carry out its work effectively. As he provides targeted help, we hope that he will consider the circumstances on the ground in the region and heed the wishes of the host countries, as mandated by the Security Council. China will continue to support his work.

**Ms. Byrne Nason** (Ireland): I would like to thank Special Representative Fall for his briefing today. I would also like to join other speakers in recognizing your contribution, Mr. President, on these issues during your term on the Security Council. Your efforts have been very important to our work here in the Council.

Ireland would like to commend the extensive activities being carried out by UNOCA to maintain and improve regional cooperation, including with the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) and other regional organizations. We applaud the efforts to pursue peace and security, to combat hate speech and to address the socioeconomic impact of the coronavirus disease pandemic by advancing vaccination campaigns.

Ireland would like to thank Special Representative Fall in particular for his participation in regional stabilization, peacebuilding and sustainable development meetings, and we greatly welcome his work during the joint visit to Cameroon, Chad and Nigeria, alongside Special Representative Annadif of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel. We know that Mr. Fall assessed the impact of the crisis in the Lake Chad basin in the course of that visit. For us, that is the type of practical cooperation between United Nations regional missions that is truly critical in addressing the many cross-border security and humanitarian challenges facing the region, which were mentioned throughout this meeting. We very much welcome that ongoing cooperation.

Earlier this week, Ireland and the Niger brought a draft resolution (S/2021/990) on climate and security to a vote at the Security Council (see S/PV.8926). The draft resolution attracted 113 co-sponsors from the Organization's membership. We believe that text would have been an important first step in establishing a strengthened framework for future action. Unfortunately, despite the broad support, the draft resolution was not adopted by the Council. We continue to see its value, not least in discussions like the one we are having here today.

We cannot ignore the reality and impact of climate-related security risks. Last week, the Council

heard from almost 60 Members of the United Nations (see S/PV.8923), who, under the able presidency of President Bazoum of the Niger, debated the topic of security in the context of terrorism and climate change. It was truly striking that the briefers referred to the interlinkages between the adverse impacts of climate change and recruitment by terrorist groups, including Boko Haram, particularly in the Sahel and Lake Chad basin. The activities of Boko Haram and the expansion of Islamic State West Africa Province are a concern. Ireland strongly supports efforts to address root causes of conflict and remains firmly committed to the implementation of a triple-nexus approach.

Intercommunal clashes around the Lake Chad basin are troubling. According to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, in recent decades, the climate crisis has heightened tensions along the tributaries of Lake Chad, where the reduction in water levels is sparking violent clashes between fishermen and herders. This fighting has caused the displacement of thousands of people to Cameroon and Chad. We are concerned that this displacement also has a disproportionate impact on the most vulnerable in society, namely, women and children, and is likely to further exacerbate existing tensions, and, as we have heard today, create new ones.

Ireland is pleased to note that UNOCA has collaborated with the United Nations Climate Security Mechanism and other partners to conduct an analysis on the key security risks and threats aggravated by climate and environmental changes in the subregion, including a field visit to Cameroon. Ireland is a proud supporter of the Climate Security Mechanism, and we very much look forward to the presentation of the findings of this analysis, including its recommendations.

Ireland commends the holistic, regional, approach taken by UNOCA, ECCAS, the African Union and the Peacebuilding Fund in supporting the important transition process in Chad, but we remain concerned by the significant security, political and humanitarian challenges in the country and, indeed, their impact on the wider region. Ireland also commends the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region for its work leading to the adoption of the joint road map for peace in the Central African Republic and welcomes the subsequent ceasefire. However, we continue also to have concerns about the humanitarian and human rights situation in the country. We echo the Secretary-General's call for the ceasefire to be respected and

a return to the 2019 Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation.

We have heard again today of the dire humanitarian situation in Central Africa and the staggering numbers in need of humanitarian assistance. At the same time, attacks against humanitarian, health and education personnel and facilities continue with impunity. We condemn such attacks and call for the perpetrators of violations of international humanitarian law and of human rights abuses to be held accountable and brought to justice.

Finally, Ireland welcomes the work that UNOCA is carrying out to further the women and peace and security agenda across the region. The role of women in governance, mediation and peacebuilding processes is fundamental for advancing the stability and prosperity of the region. Engagement with women-led civil society and ensuring that those women are engaged directly in diplomatic and political processes — in the room and at the table, as I always say — is crucial to bringing about peace and security in Central Africa. We urge all of the Governments in the region to further embed this approach in their own work. It is the smart thing to do.

**Ms. Evstigneeva** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General François Louncény Fall for sharing his assessment of the situation in the Central African subregion.

Russia has unfailingly supported the activities of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa, which it considers to be an important instrument of preventive diplomacy. We believe that the good offices of Special Representative Fall are extremely useful.

The situation in Central Africa remains complex. The main threat emanates from the activities of numerous armed criminal groups and terrorist organizations, primarily Islamic State West Africa Province and Boko Haram. Fighters are maintaining their capacity and continue to carry out attacks on the militaries of Nigeria, Chad, the Niger and Cameroon and terrorize local populations. They are using rear bases in hard-to-reach areas to conduct raids deep into the territory of neighbouring States.

The low combat-capability of the armed forces of States in the region and insufficient military coordination, as well as a lack of reliable intelligence data, prevent them from effectively resisting well-

organized criminal groups, which use guerrilla-warfare tactics and often enjoy the support of local residents, who are forced to coexist with the militants. The ideology of radical Islam is gaining more and more popularity, especially among youth.

One particular feature of the region is its porous borders through which both peaceful civilians and goods, on the one hand, and militants and contraband goods, on the other hand, move freely. In this regard, we believe it is necessary to step up States' efforts to swiftly identify and block channels fuelling terrorists with ideological, logistical, financial and human resources. It is also necessary to strengthen cooperation with African partners on counter-terrorism issues both bilaterally and through international forums. For our part, we are ready to share our experience in this area and implement capacity-building projects to help the continent's States fight terrorism and extremism.

The socioeconomic situation of the local populations in the subregion is of grave concern. It can be described as close to critical. Hundreds of thousands of people have been left homeless, the number of refugees and temporarily displaced persons is growing, and there is an acute shortage of food and drinking water. The coronavirus, which has aggravated the already difficult socioeconomic situation of the populations, continues to persist in the region.

The safety of navigation in the Gulf of Guinea is also of great concern, in particular, the increasing number of cases of hostage-taking for ransom affecting merchant seamen. Establishing broad international cooperation, particularly for the purposes of regularly monitoring the situation at sea and creating a system for identifying and accompanying ships and providing early warning with regard to potentially hazardous objects on sea transport routes could help reduce the risks of pirate attacks.

We welcome the establishment in July this year of the Gulf of Guinea Maritime Collaboration Forum, a new platform for communication and coordination for antipiracy military operations. We are ready to take an active part in the work of this mechanism and provide assistance to our regional partners.

We note the activities of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime's Global Maritime Crime Programme, which has already made a significant contribution to collective efforts to normalize the situation off the Horn of Africa. This year, Russia

plans to make a voluntary contribution to the Global Programme's fund for technical assistance to Gabon and Equatorial Guinea, and, in 2020, Russia allocated a special contribution to provide technical assistance to the coast guards of Ghana and Nigeria.

In addition, in October this year, a detachment of ships of the northern fleet was on active duty in the waters of the Gulf of Guinea to carry out antipiracy exercises. We note the successful operation carried out by our navy to prevent pirates from seizing the vessel *MSC Lucia*. Taking into account the very significant regional differences in manifestations of piracy and related criminal activity, we advocate the swift implementation of President Vladimir Putin's initiative to establish a specialized universal entity under the auspices of the United Nations to address the entire range of issues of combating maritime crime in various regions.

With regard to the accusations voiced by a number of countries against Russia, there is absolutely nothing new in those attempts. We draw the Council's attention to the fact that all of the States that have spoken out and those that might touch upon this topic after me have a very sad history of destabilizing other countries — not only in Africa — committing mass crimes against entire peoples. Even today, they are far from being perfect in terms of human rights. As a result of their military interference, large numbers of civilians often die. Reports in the media on the topic are increasingly frequent.

We therefore cannot consider the statements concerning the Central African Republic by those colleagues on the Council as anything but a hypocritical, envious and coordinated information campaign. I recall that the main driver of instability in the Central African Republic is the activity of illegal armed groups and that the country, just like others in Africa and elsewhere, has every sovereign right to choose its partners to combat security threats.

**Mr. Mills** (United States of America): I thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Fall for his briefing.

Today I will raise four country-specific situations and two regional threats.

First, the United States would like to express its gratitude to the African Union for appointing a High Representative for Chad to encourage continued

reforms and steps towards a democratic transition. We support the High Representative's efforts and join the calls for a peaceful, timely and civilian-led transition to a democratically elected Government in 2022.

The report of the Secretary-General (S/2021/975) shows advancement on key milestones. We hope to see more progress towards a timely and inclusive national dialogue. To that end, we were heartened by the November 29 decision by the Transitional Military Council to grant amnesty to almost 300 members of armed groups, positioning them to constructively engage in the national dialogue. Women and civil society must be included in the dialogue. Moving forward, we hope to see a concrete plan and a timeline for legislative and executive elections. A representative and democratically elected Government is the best path to long-term prosperity and stability in Chad.

Secondly, like others, we remain concerned about the continued violence in Cameroon, including the Far North, North-West and South-West regions of the country. We agree with the Secretary-General's report that dialogue between the Government and armed separatists in the anglophone regions has not gained sufficient momentum. We support the role of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa in promoting inclusive political dialogue in Cameroon and call for the immediate cessation of attacks on United Nations convoys and humanitarian workers.

Thirdly, in the Central African Republic, we call on all parties to respect the ceasefire declared by President Touadera, as well as the February 2019 Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic and the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region road map. We again urge all security actors to coordinate their operations with the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic and to end human rights abuses.

Fourthly, in Burundi, the United States recognized positive developments by terminating its bilateral sanctions programme and related visa restrictions on 18 November. The United States remains concerned about reports of human rights violations and abuses that threaten to undermine progress, but our decision reflects changed circumstances in Burundi since 2015 and the President of Burundi's pursuit of reforms across multiple sectors. United States sanctions are responsive,

always, to the situation on the ground and were lifted in Burundi following concrete positive steps.

With regard to two regional situations, the United States condemns all attacks by Boko Haram and the Islamic State West Africa. The United States Government supports the efforts of the countries of the region to effectively address terrorism in support of a holistic approach to peace, stability and security.

Finally, the United States continues to offer a reward of up to \$5 million for any information that leads to the arrest, the transfer or the conviction of Lord's Resistance Army leader Joseph Kony. We urge anyone with knowledge of Kony's whereabouts to contact our War Crimes Rewards Program and help bring him to justice.

**The President** (*spoke in French*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of the Niger. I have the honour to make this statement on behalf of the three African members of the Security Council — Kenya, the Niger and Tunisia — as well as Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (A3+1).

We thank Mr. François Louncény Fall, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA), for his comprehensive and informative briefing. We commend his work in promoting peace through mediation and preventive diplomacy through support for electoral processes, conflict resolution, peacebuilding and the economic recovery of the region.

The political situation in the region is seeing significant positive progress, for which we commend the efforts of the UNOCA, together with the African Union and the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), as well as regional partners that continue to encourage concerted efforts to promote peace and stability in the region.

The work of the Office to promote strengthening and integrating peace and security in the region has had a visible impact. In that regard, we advocate the effective implementation of the decisions adopted at the nineteenth Conference of ECCAS Heads of State and Government, which was held in a virtual format, to advance regional integration and security and the initiatives that resulted from the outcome of the third mini-summit of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, held on 16 September. Both meetings contributed to the unilateral ceasefire

declaration made by President Touadera in the Central African Republic.

We reiterate that a truly inclusive national dialogue will be key to revitalizing the 2019 Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic. We therefore call for a coordinated and coherent regional process, with a view towards making concrete progress in the peace and reconciliation process in the country. In that regard, we welcome the good offices and political support of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic. Such a collaborative approach is critical to comprehensively addressing the issues, most of which are cross-cutting, affecting neighbouring States and regions.

One concrete example involves the issue of foreign fighters in the southern part of Libya and their potentially destabilizing effect on neighbouring States and regions. In order to address the situation with the priority it deserves, we encourage UNOCA to pursue its cooperation with the other regional United Nations Offices, including the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS) and the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region.

We welcome the progress in the transition process in Chad and encourage the country's authorities to spare no effort to further guarantee the inclusivity of the national dialogue process, including the process under way to adopt a new constitution. We encourage the momentum launched by the country's authorities in opening up democratic space to the political opposition and politico-military groups and in safeguarding the promising role of women in the process to restore peace and security.

Furthermore, the A3+1 welcome the assumption by the High Representative of the African Union and Special Representative of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission for Chad of his duties on 28 July and calls for support to the International Group of Partners for Support to the Transition in Chad, made up of Chad's major regional and international partners, to promote the process under way.

In Cameroon, we encourage pursuing the efforts made by the authorities to move forward the decentralization process, in accordance with the recommendations arising from the 2019 major national dialogue, which — we must say — has been delayed by

persistent violence on the ground. We encourage them to strengthen the role of women in political spaces to promote peace in line with Cameroon's first-ever Women's National Convention for Peace, which was held from 29-31 July. The good offices of the Special Representative in that regard are to be applauded.

We are deeply concerned by the deteriorating security climate in the region, marked by the activities of illegal terrorist and extremist armed groups in the Lake Chad basin. Likewise, we are extremely troubled by the suspected collusion between separatist armed groups in Cameroon and active armed groups in certain neighbouring countries.

We reiterate here our call for support for coordinated action among the countries in the region against persistent attacks from the Islamic State West Africa Province wing of Boko Haram, as well as for the joint action of UNOCA, UNOWAS and other United Nations entities. Support, analysis and advocacy must be provided to those joint programmes aimed at mitigating the impact of Boko Haram across the region.

We echo the Secretary-General's call for the expedited implementation of the Regional Stabilization, Recovery and Resilience Strategy for Areas Affected by Boko Haram in the Lake Chad Basin Region, so as to alleviate the suffering of the affected populations, in particular the most vulnerable, including women and young people.

We further support the recommendations of the Secretary-General in calling for urgent cooperation within multilateral and bilateral bodies to resolve the issue of maritime piracy in the Gulf of Guinea, which continues to pose an additional threat to global maritime security.

The humanitarian situation across the region remains worrisome due to persistent conflicts and natural disasters. Statistics provided by the United Nations have remained practically unchanged since the previous report in June (see S/2021/517). The same goes for this year's humanitarian response plan.

Violations of human rights and international humanitarian law, including the use of improvised explosive devices, attacks against schools and teachers and sexual and gender-based violence committed by armed groups remain alarming and are driving the displacement of hundreds of families.

Here, we call on international partners to support the efforts of the countries in the region, as well as UNOCA, to address the humanitarian situation. The United Nations Peacebuilding Commission also requires support in its work accompanying regional efforts in favour of economic cooperation, development and peacebuilding across the region.

In conclusion, the A3+1, which calls for the resumption of negotiations in order to achieve the swift adoption of a presidential statement on UNOCA, is encouraged by the developments in regional cooperation and diplomatic initiatives carried out by leaders in the region. At the same time, we welcome the efforts of the African Union and UNOCA to support

regional cooperation and call for support for the ECCAS Commission in its efforts to coordinate with the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region.

We warmly commend and encourage the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for his continued and active engagement to promote peace and security in the region.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers.

*The meeting rose at 4.45 p.m.*