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**Review and Implementation of the Concluding Document  
of the Twelfth Special Session of the General Assembly:  
regional confidence-building measures: activities of the  
United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security  
Questions in Central Africa**

**Activities of the United Nations Standing Advisory  
Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa**

**Report of the Secretary-General\*\***

*Summary*

Since its establishment in May 1992, the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa has been carrying out a series of activities aimed at fostering and strengthening peace, security and stability in the Central African region, through confidence-building measures. In this connection, during the period under review, in addition to its two ministerial meetings, the Committee organized a subregional conference on the proliferation of and illicit traffic in small arms in Central Africa. The conference was seen as an opportunity for the Central African States to develop a plan of action that would assist them to effectively address this problem. Central African States are ranked among the worst affected countries in the world. However, owing to the ongoing armed conflicts within some of the member States of the Committee, the conference was not able to devise a plan of action. Instead, it made a number of recommendations of measures that could be implemented at the national and regional levels.

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\* A/55/150.

\*\* This report covers the activities undertaken by the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa from September 1999 to June 2000.

While the conference failed to achieve its primary objective, it is encouraging to note that some of the countries in the region, notably Cameroon, the Central African Republic and Chad, are working on a joint project to address this problem along their common borders. On the other hand, countries such as the Congo have sought the assistance of the United Nations with the collection and destruction of illicit small arms on their territory.

Following the decision of the Heads of State and Government of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), in June 1999, to establish a Supreme Council for Peace and Security in Central Africa (COPAX), the Committee has been working very closely with the secretariat of ECCAS to ensure the implementation of that decision. In this connection, in February 2000, the Committee, through its Trust Fund, financed a meeting of experts that was tasked with revising the text of the Treaty establishing ECCAS with a view to integrating COPAX into the structures of ECCAS. The Committee also followed developments in individual member States and lent its support, wherever needed.

## I. Introduction

1. In 1991, noting the devastation that decades of continued armed and political conflicts were wreaking on their communities and economies and following the decision taken at their seminar-workshop on confidence-building measures, security, disarmament and development in the Central African subregion, held in Yaoundé from 17 to 21 June 1991 (see A/46/307-S/22805), the Governments of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) sought the assistance and support of the General Assembly to establish a mechanism for dialogue and confidence-building that would allow them to build peace and security and foster economic development in their region.

2. Accordingly, on 6 December 1991, the General Assembly adopted resolution 46/37 B, in which it welcomed the initiative taken by the States members of ECCAS with a view to developing confidence-building measures, disarmament and development in their subregion, by, in particular, the creation, under the auspices of the United Nations, of a standing advisory committee on security questions in Central Africa. Subsequently, on 28 May 1992, the Secretary-General established the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa. Since its creation, the Standing Advisory Committee has been involved in developing and promoting measures in the fields of preventive diplomacy, peacemaking and peace-building. Every year, the Secretary-General is requested to submit a report on the activities of the Committee to the General Assembly.

3. In its resolution 54/55 A of 1 December 1999, on the activities of the Standing Advisory Committee, the General Assembly, *inter alia*, reaffirmed its support for efforts aimed at promoting confidence-building measures in order to ease tensions and conflicts and to further peace, stability and sustainable development in Central Africa. It welcomed the creation on 25 February 1999, by the Heads of State and Government of the Central African countries, of a mechanism for the promotion, maintenance and consolidation of peace and security in Central Africa called the Council for Peace and Security in Central Africa and code-named COPAX (see A/53/868-S/1999/303). In this connection, the Assembly emphasized the importance of providing the States members of the Committee with

the necessary support to allow them to fully carry out their activities. By the same resolution, the Assembly also requested the Secretary-General and the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to lend their support to the establishment of a subregional centre for human rights and democracy in Central Africa and to provide the necessary support to the States members of the Standing Advisory Committee in making operational the recently established early-warning mechanism. Furthermore, it requested the Secretary-General to continue to provide the States members of the Committee with assistance and to report to the Assembly at its fifty-fifth session on the implementation of that resolution.

4. The present report is therefore submitted pursuant to resolution 54/55 A. It covers the activities undertaken by the United Nations and the Standing Advisory Committee since the submission of the last report of the Secretary-General (A/54/364). During the reporting period, the Secretary-General closely followed developments in the region and continued to provide the Committee and its member States with all the necessary support to allow them to carry out their primary objective, that of strengthening national and regional peace and security through confidence-building measures in the region.

## II. Action by the United Nations

5. At its fourth ministerial meeting, held in Yaoundé, Cameroon, in April 1994, the Standing Advisory Committee decided to establish under the auspices of the United Nations, a Subregional Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Central Africa and designated Cameroon as the seat of that centre. Pursuant to that decision in November 1998, the General Assembly adopted resolution 53/78 A of 4 December 1998 by which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General and the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to lend their support to the establishment of the centre. That request was reiterated in General Assembly resolution 54/55A of 1 December 1999.

6. On 18 February 2000, by its resolution 54/249 on questions relating to the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001, the Assembly decided to appropriate 1 million dollars to the Subregional Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Central Africa. Meanwhile, in accordance with paragraph 9 of

resolution 54/55, from 4 to 11 June 2000, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Department of Political Affairs, in cooperation with the UNDP Office and the United Nations Information Centre in Cameroon, carried out a joint needs assessment and project formulation mission in Yaoundé. The mission recommended, inter alia, the rapid deployment of a human rights adviser to be based in Yaoundé, with a view to assisting in the establishment of the Centre and to initiating a dialogue with the secretariat of ECCAS for the purpose of integrating human rights into its programmes and activities.

7. The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights developed a subregional strategy aimed at enhancing the promotion and protection of human rights in Central Africa and the Great Lakes region. Its implementation includes, inter alia: (a) dialogue with the secretariat of ECCAS with a view to integrating human rights into the work of its organs and strengthening ECCAS human rights capacities and developing a subregional plan of action for human rights; (b) establishment of a subregional Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Central Africa; (c) organization of a subregional Workshop on National Plans of Action in the field of human rights for Central African States; and (d) deployment of a regional human rights adviser for the subregion who will facilitate technical cooperation and develop cooperation in the field of human rights among the Central African States (November/December 2000).

8. The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights has approved a technical cooperation project to support these activities. It is planned that the Subregional Centre for Human Rights and Democracy will be launched in autumn 2000. The Centre will play a key role in the promotion of human rights at the subregional level. Among other things, it will assist the countries of the subregion in sharing expertise, promote good practices and link the efforts of the partners involved. The Centre will also help to train officials engaged in administering human rights matters, extend support to establishing or strengthening national human rights institutions and raise awareness about human rights norms.

9. In addition to the various initiatives mentioned above, during the reporting period, the Secretary-General was also invited to a number of meetings organized by the Standing Advisory Committee. For

instance, in October 1999, he sent his then Special Representative to the United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic (MINURCA), Mr. Oluyemi Adeniji, to represent him at the twelfth ministerial meeting of the Committee, which was held in N'Djamena, Chad, from 27 to 30 October 1999. In May 2000, he had the United Nations Resident Coordinator for Chad, Mr. Hamidou Diawara, deliver his message to the thirteenth ministerial meeting of the Committee, held in N'Djamena, Chad, from 2 to 6 May 2000.

### **III. Meetings of the Standing Advisory Committee**

10. During the reporting period, the Committee held two ministerial meetings, a subregional conference on the proliferation of and illicit traffic in small arms in Central Africa and co-organized with the secretariat of ECCAS a meeting of experts to examine the draft texts on integrating COPAX into the structures of ECCAS.

11. In response to the concerns repeatedly expressed at its various meetings regarding the devastating effects of excessive accumulation of small arms in Central Africa and their spread among the population, the Committee organized a subregional conference on the proliferation of and illicit traffic in small arms in Central Africa (see A/54/530-S/1999/1141). The Conference, which was held in N'Djamena, Chad, from 25 to 27 October 1999, brought together senior civilian members of government services, senior officers in the armed forces and senior police officers from the Central African States as well as experts from the International Criminal Police Organization (Interpol) and other subregional organizations in Africa and Latin America.

12. The Conference examined the magnitude of the problem in the region and its impact on the stability, security and development of the countries of the region and efforts being made at the national and subregional levels to address the problem. It also reviewed the experiences of other regions and the activities of international organizations. The Conference culminated with the adoption of a number of recommendations aimed at promoting national and subregional practical measures for combating the problem.

13. At its twelfth ministerial meeting, also held in N'Djamena, Chad, from 27 to 30 October, the Committee endorsed the recommendations of the

Conference and congratulated participants on the relevance and quality of their conclusions (see A/54/530-S/1999/1141). As is usual practice, during the course of the meeting, it reviewed the geopolitical and security situation in the Central African region. In that connection, it expressed concern over the continued refusal of the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) to comply with the terms of the 1994 Lusaka Protocol and of the relevant Security Council resolutions and urged member States of the Committee to ensure the implementation of the Security Council resolutions on Angola and, in particular, of the sanctions against UNITA.

14. With regard to the situation in Burundi, the Committee welcomed the positive developments in that country and, in particular, the Government's partnership with the country's political forces, and expressed the hope that that political understanding would be further strengthened. It appealed to the international community to resume its economic ties with Burundi. On the situation in Cameroon, the Committee expressed deep concern at the continuing incidents between Cameroon and Nigeria on the Bakassi Peninsula and called upon the two countries to refrain from any action that might heighten tensions while awaiting the decision of the International Court of Justice. With regard to the situation in the Congo, the Committee welcomed the gradual restoration of peace in that country and reiterated its appeal to the people of the Congo to strive for peace and national harmony. Regarding the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Committee expressed concern over the continued attacks on the national sovereignty and territorial integrity of that country. It welcomed the signing of the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement (S/1999/815, annex) and the progress made in the establishment of the various international mechanisms stipulated in the Agreement and urgently appealed to all parties involved to respect scrupulously the terms of the Agreement. Concerning the situation in the Central African Republic, the Committee welcomed the gradual restoration of peace and security to that country and the decision of the Security Council to extend the mandate of MINURCA until 15 February 2000.

15. In response to the decision taken by the Heads of State and Government of ECCAS at their Summit held in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea, on 24 June 1999, to integrate COPAX into the structures of ECCAS, the

Committee decided to convene, in cooperation with ECCAS, a special meeting of experts from the region with a view to preparing the draft texts for the integration of COPAX into the structures of ECCAS. The meeting, which was held in Malabo from 14 to 17 February 2000, drafted the Protocol on the Council for Peace and Security in Central Africa and the Mutual Assistance Pact between the Member States of ECCAS. The Heads of State and Government of ECCAS adopted the two documents at a subsequent summit, which was also held in Malabo, on 24 February 2000. In a communiqué issued at the end of that summit, the Heads of State and Government of the ECCAS countries, noting the importance and urgency of security questions in their region, committed themselves to the speedy ratification of the two documents so as to allow their entry into force as quickly as possible.

16. With COPAX now fully integrated into the structures of ECCAS, the Committee welcomed the adoption by the Heads of State and Government of the ECCAS countries of the Protocol concerning COPAX and the Mutual Assistance Pact at its thirteenth ministerial meeting, which was held in N'Djamena, Chad, from 2 to 6 May 2000 (see A/54/889-S/2000/506). To accelerate the process of rendering COPAX operational, the Committee decided to convene in Yaoundé, Cameroon, during the second half of June 2000, a meeting of experts from member States in order to consider the proposed legislative mandates of the various structures of COPAX, which include the early-warning mechanism, the Central African Multinational Force (FOMAC) and the Defence Commission for the Central African countries, for consideration at the next Summit meeting of the Heads of State and Government of ECCAS countries. However, the meeting was subsequently held under the auspices of ECCAS in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea, from 19 to 22 June.

17. Meanwhile, on 4 July 2000, the President of Equatorial Guinea, Mr. Obiang Nguema Mbasogo, current Chairman of ECCAS, addressed letters to the Secretary-General and the President of the General Assembly, requesting the inclusion in the agenda of the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly, of an item on cooperation between the United Nations and ECCAS, along the lines similar to those on cooperation between the United Nations and the Economic Community of West African States and between the

United Nations and the Southern African Development Community. Such cooperation would enable ECCAS to play a more prominent role in peace and security matters in its region as well as enhance its relations with the United Nations.

18. With regard to its programme of work for the period under review, the Committee has yet to convene the Subregional Conference on the Problem of Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons in the Central African Region or its fourteenth ministerial meeting, to be held concurrently in Bujumbura, Burundi, from 14 to 19 August 2000.

#### **IV. Programme and activities for 2000-2001**

19. While its programme of activities for the period 2000-2001 is being drawn up, the Committee will, as in the past, continue to work on the implementation of important decisions taken during previous years. In this connection, and given the importance that Heads of State and Government of ECCAS countries attach to the functioning of COPAX, priority will be given to assisting ECCAS to render the various structures of COPAX operational. It is expected that the full programme of activities for the period 2000-2001 will be elaborated at the fourteenth ministerial meeting.

#### **V. Administrative and financial matters**

20. While member States of the Committee would have preferred to have its secretariat located in one of the member States of the Committee, owing to lack of financial resources, the Department for Disarmament Affairs has continued to provide the Committee with secretariat services. With regard to the financial matters of the Committee, during the period under review, the General Assembly provided funding from the regular budget for the two ministerial meetings, while the subregional conference on the proliferation of and illicit traffic in small arms in Central Africa and the expert meeting held in February 2000 were financed from the Trust Fund of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, established by the Secretary-General in 1996. The Trust Fund, which relies on voluntary contributions from Member States and governmental

and non-governmental organizations as well as private individuals, did not receive any contributions during this reporting period. In this regard, the Secretary-General wishes to appeal to Member States, and to the international community as a whole, to contribute generously to the Trust Fund so as to facilitate the effective implementation of the programme of work of the Committee.

#### **VI. Conclusions and observations**

21. The Central African States have made significant progress in their efforts to build a viable subregional organization with unity of purpose, that of promoting durable peace and sustainable development in their region, as demonstrated by the recent integration of COPAX into ECCAS structures and the adoption of the Mutual Assistance Pact. It is hoped that, once the various structures of COPAX start functioning, the region will begin to reap the peace dividends. It is also encouraging to note the number of bilateral and multilateral initiatives undertaken to promote regional and intergovernmental cooperation in security matters, aimed, in particular, at lessening tensions and combating insecurity in the border areas, as well as making it possible to have exchanges between the various national structures dealing with these questions. There is a growing recognition among these States that, in order for their region to attain durable peace and sustainable development, they need to look at each other before turning to forces outside their region for assistance. At the international level, they have begun to present a joint position on issues that have a bearing on their region.

22. Notwithstanding the progress made, in order for them to consolidate the gains made so far, the Central African States will continue to need increased and sustained international support and assistance. In this connection, it is imperative that the international community extend to them all the necessary financial and technical assistance that they need in order to render COPAX operational. For his part, the Secretary-General will continue to provide all the assistance he can.