



## Security Council

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### Letter dated 5 December 2017 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to refer to my letter dated 23 January 2017 (S/2017/78), in which I informed the President of the Security Council of the progress made by the Cameroon-Nigeria Mixed Commission, and to his reply dated 26 January (S/2017/79), in which he took note of my intention to continue the activities of the United Nations support team to the Mixed Commission, with funding from the regular budget. In this regard, I would like to inform you of the latest achievements and activities of the Mixed Commission.

As you know, the United Nations established the Mixed Commission to facilitate the implementation of the judgment of the International Court of Justice of 10 October 2002 on the Cameroon-Nigeria boundary and territorial dispute. Through my good offices, and with the support of the Secretariat, I have continued to facilitate the implementation of the judgment.

The mandate of the Mixed Commission includes supporting the demarcation of the land boundary and delineation of the maritime boundary, facilitating the withdrawal and transfer of authority, addressing the situation of affected populations and making recommendations on confidence-building measures. Achievements to date in the implementation of the judgment of the Court include the withdrawal of Nigeria and the transfer of authority to Cameroon in the Lake Chad area (December 2003), along the land boundary (July 2004) and on the Bakassi Peninsula (a process that began in June 2006 and was completed in August 2008); the delineation of the maritime boundary (May 2007); the end of the special transitional regime of five years, established under the Greentree Agreement in June 2006, and the exercise by Cameroon of its full right of sovereignty over the Bakassi zone (August 2013). The Mixed Commission also approved the recommendations of the Working Group on the Maritime Boundary, including the provisions for cross-border cooperation on hydrocarbon deposits straddling the maritime boundary (March 2011).

In 2017, the Mixed Commission continued its mandated activities. However, insecurity in north-eastern Nigeria, mainly resulting from attacks carried out by Boko Haram and increased criminality, continued to disrupt the work of the Mixed Commission and impede progress. Tragically, on 31 January, a group of unidentified armed individuals ambushed a Mixed Commission technical monitoring team working on border demarcation and pillar construction in the Adamaoua region of Cameroon, where security risks had been deemed to be low. Five team members were killed, including a United Nations international consultant. Pillar construction and field missions were immediately discontinued pending the reinforcement of security arrangements. The Governments of Cameroon and Nigeria, assisted by the United Nations support team, have since reviewed and reinforced security protocols for the



continuation of fieldwork, leading to the resumption of pillar construction in December 2017.

Notwithstanding the commitment made by the heads of delegation of Cameroon and Nigeria to rely on an in-office cartographic methodology to expedite the demarcation process, progress remains limited since the parties have not been able to reconcile their competing interpretations of a number of provisions of the judgment. Consequently, there are several gaps, amounting to 94 km along the land boundary, that still need to be defined. Despite these shortcomings, the parties remain committed to an in-office cartographic methodology and have renewed efforts towards reconciling their positions. Several working sessions were held in August and September 2017, giving rise to compromise solutions that are in the process of being approved and ratified by the respective political authorities of the two countries. The parties have undertaken to review their preliminary proposals at the highest political levels in the months ahead and are expected to continue discussions with a view to formalizing their agreement in additional working sessions, which will continue through early 2018.

To date, the parties have agreed on the demarcation of 2,005 km of an estimated 2,100 km of land boundary. In May and June 2017, the United Nations support team held joint working sessions with delegations from both parties to reconcile, consolidate and confirm toponyms for the final mapping. That exercise will continue in a follow-up session, anticipated to be held in the first quarter of 2018, with support and guidance from the Geospatial Information Section of the Department of Field Support in New York.

Meanwhile, the construction and emplacement of pillars to physically mark the land boundary have continued. Of the estimated 2,696 boundary pillars that will be required, a total of 991 have been successfully constructed. In line with the completion strategy of the Mixed Commission for the period 2015–2017, the construction and emplacement of 163 pillars was anticipated in lot 4A, which was supposed to commence in November 2016 and end by mid-2017. Eighty-eight of those pillars had been constructed prior to the deadly ambush in January 2017, which brought fieldwork to a standstill. The 75 outstanding pillars in lot 4A are now part of lot 4B, for which the construction of 335 pillars in three segments along the land boundary is envisaged.

Since pillar construction is financed exclusively through extrabudgetary voluntary contributions to a trust fund, progress in this area gradually depletes the trust fund, which must be replenished. Both parties have pledged to commit \$1.5 million to the trust fund. Additional fundraising initiatives have also been undertaken by my Special Representative for West Africa and the Sahel and Chair of the Mixed Commission, Mohamed Ibn Chambas, which have led to further commitments from Germany in January 2017 and from China in October.

Supplementary resources are still required to implement joint cross-border programmes in support of those affected by the demarcation, including for quick-impact projects for confidence-building among communities, with a particular focus on women and youth. The United Nations support team has worked with the United Nations country team in Nigeria to relaunch confidence-building initiatives aimed at ensuring the security and welfare of affected populations. Those initiatives include socioeconomic projects, which have been developed in collaboration with the United Nations support team and the United Nations country team in Nigeria. A programme document has been submitted to the Government of Nigeria (National Boundary Commission) for its endorsement. In Cameroon, projects have focused on food security and microcredit, access to drinking water, green energy, capacity-building for women and youth and the protection of civilians in the Bakassi zone and in the Far North region, where the projects have been modified at the request of the Government of Cameroon to reflect demographic changes caused by the activities of

Boko Haram. The Chair of the Mixed Commission will seek extrabudgetary resources to implement the confidence-building projects, consistent with the revised United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks for both countries.

Meanwhile, the United Nations technical teams of the Mixed Commission continue to work with the support of the Geospatial Information Section to produce maps to be annexed to a boundary statement. Over the past year, the technical teams have completed the collection of toponyms and anticipate the production of final maps during the next working session, planned for early 2018.

Overall, it is expected that the field assessment of the remaining areas of the boundary will be completed by mid-2018. That, in turn, will facilitate progress in the finalization of the demarcation process, the completion of pillar emplacement operations and the production of final maps and a boundary statement. Through the good offices of my Special Representative for West Africa and the Sahel, in his capacity as Chair of the Mixed Commission, the Presidents of Cameroon and Nigeria, in May 2016, pledged their commitment to completing the demarcation of their joint border. Completion of the bulk of the demarcation work is dependent on the willingness of the two parties to formalize an agreement on all outstanding issues.

The following activities are required to conclude the work of the Mixed Commission:

- (a) Agreement by the two parties on outstanding demarcation areas using an in-office, desktop evaluation and demarcation methodology;
- (b) Facilitation of the construction and emplacement of boundary pillars financed by the trust fund for demarcation activities;
- (c) Production of final maps and a boundary statement;
- (d) Promotion of cross-border cooperation, including maritime cooperation, and coordinated security monitoring along the land boundary;
- (e) Finalization of confidence-building initiatives for local communities affected by the demarcation;
- (f) Implementation of the completion strategy by progressively handing over the activities of the Mixed Commission to the Joint Bilateral Commission and other subregional structures.

I would like to recall that, until 2003, the Mixed Commission had been funded entirely from extrabudgetary funds. From 2004 to the present, its activities have been funded through the United Nations regular budget. The Governments of Austria, Bangladesh, Brazil, Canada, Italy, Norway, Pakistan, Sweden and Uruguay have provided in-kind contributions for the substantive and technical work of the Commission (military and legal experts). In addition, logistical support has been provided by the Governments of Cameroon and Nigeria, and voluntary contributions to the trust fund for demarcation activities have been made by both countries, as well by Canada, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the European Union.

As has been the case in recent years, and given the cost-effectiveness of the operation and the important tasks remaining at this juncture to help to advance the peaceful implementation of the judgment of the International Court of Justice, it is my intention to ask for resources from the regular budget for the United Nations support team to cover the year 2018.

I should be grateful if you would bring the present letter to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

*(Signed)* António **Guterres**