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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

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

During the reporting period, the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa held its forty-ninth meeting in Luanda from 25 to 29 November 2019. The United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa, in its capacity as secretariat to the Committee, provided technical, administrative and logistical support to the meeting. In the light of the current situation related to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, the secretariat worked with the Bureau of the Committee to identify new dates and modalities for holding its next regular statutory meeting.

The Committee continued to provide Central African countries with a valuable platform for subregional dialogue and exchange on key issues related to peace and security, as well as for identifying emerging challenges and areas for further collaboration.

The Committee welcomed the progress made in the ongoing institutional reform process of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS). Member States called for strengthening cooperation between international and regional organizations in Central and West Africa, including within the framework of the Lomé Declaration on Peace, Security, Stability and the Fight against Terrorism and Violent Extremism, adopted at the first joint ECCAS-Economic Community of West African States summit, held in July 2018.

At the forty-ninth meeting, experts held a thematic debate on the impact of climate change on peace and security in Central Africa. The Committee adopted a ministerial declaration affirming the need to address the impact of climate change on

* [A/75/150](#).



peace and security in Central Africa. In the declaration, the Committee emphasized the need for inclusive dialogue between Governments and non-governmental actors, including local communities, on sustainable natural resources management.

The Committee continued to be concerned about the persistence of activities by illegal armed groups in several countries of the subregion, including the use of illicit trafficking in natural resources to fund those groups, and about the alleged ties between some of those groups and international terrorist networks.

The Committee reaffirmed its commitment to the control of arms in the subregion, including through the implementation of 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 (Kinshasa Convention), to which eight members of the Committee are now parties.

The Committee recalled that women have a key role to play in peace and security. Member States reiterated their commitment to promoting the greater participation of women in political and peace processes, including through the adoption and implementation of national action plans pursuant to Security Council resolution [1325 \(2000\)](#).

The fiftieth meeting of the Committee will be held at a time deemed feasible according to member States, and guided by the assessments of the World Health Organization and host country authorities.

I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 74/73 entitled “Regional confidence-building measures: activities of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa”, the General Assembly encouraged the Committee to further develop collaboration and synergies with the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), and reaffirmed its support for efforts aimed at promoting confidence-building measures at the regional and subregional levels in order to ease tensions and conflicts in Central Africa and to further sustainable peace, stability and development in the subregion.
2. In the same resolution, the General Assembly also expressed its satisfaction to the Secretary-General for his support to the Committee and its appreciation for the role played by the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA), in its capacity as secretariat to the Committee, welcomed the strengthening of the Office and strongly encouraged the States members of the Committee and international partners to support the work of UNOCA. The Assembly requested the Secretary-General to continue to provide the assistance needed by the Committee to ensure the success of its regular biannual meetings. It also called upon the Secretary-General to submit to the Assembly at its seventy-fifth session a report on the implementation of the resolution.
3. The present report is submitted in response to the above request and covers the activities carried out by the Committee from September 2019 to August 2020.

II. Activities of the Committee

4. During the reporting period, the Committee held one meeting. The forty-ninth ministerial meeting of the Committee was held in Luanda on 29 November 2019, preceded by a meeting of national focal points on 25 November and a meeting of experts from 26 to 28 November. All the States members of the Committee participated in the meetings, namely, Angola, Burundi, Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Chad, the Congo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Rwanda and Sao Tome and Principe.
5. Representatives of the following entities also participated as observers at the forty-ninth meeting: ECCAS; Central African Economic and Monetary Community; Lake Chad Basin Commission; Multinational Joint Task Force; Interregional Coordination Centre for the Implementation of the Regional Strategy for Maritime Safety and Security in Central and West Africa; Gulf of Guinea Commission; and International Organization of la Francophonie.
6. The following United Nations entities also participated as observers at the forty-ninth meeting: United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa; Subregional Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Central Africa; United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic; United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo; United Nations Office to the African Union; United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel; Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region; United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women); United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP); United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization; and Office of the United Nations Resident Coordinator in Angola.
7. From 21 to 24 October 2019, the Bureau of the Committee undertook a field mission to Chad, including to the Lac Province, in order to inform the Committee on

the crisis in the Lake Chad basin, in particular the areas in which advocacy for stronger regional and international cooperation was needed. The Bureau reported to the Committee on the security, humanitarian, socioeconomic and environmental situation, including the effects of climate change, and assessed implementation of the Regional Stabilization, Recovery and Resilience Strategy for Areas Affected by Boko Haram in the Lake Chad Basin Region.

8. In the light of the current situation related to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, and guided by the assessments of the World Health Organization and host country authorities, the Bureau of the Committee remained in close contact with the secretariat in order to identify new dates and modalities for holding its next regular statutory meeting in Equatorial Guinea, as well as a subsequent field mission by members of the Bureau and any online meetings, as recommended by the Chair of the Committee. The main issues on the agenda of the Committee and its activities during the period under review are set out below.

A. Review of the geopolitical and security situation in Central Africa

9. The Committee continued to provide a platform for dialogue at the subregional level that allowed member States to share experiences and identify key areas for collective action. Underpinning the Committee's discussions at its forty-ninth meeting, and notwithstanding the subsequent impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the region, the ECCAS-led Central African Early Warning Mechanism presented the Committee with a review of the geopolitical and security situation across Central Africa.

10. It was noted during the review by the Central African Early Warning Mechanism that, since the Committee's previous review and prior to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, the socioeconomic situation in Central Africa remained generally stable, despite a difficult external macroeconomic environment. Until November 2019, when the review was presented, the subregion enjoyed the effects of steadily increasing prices of raw materials, offering prospects for improved economic conditions and new exploration contracts, and international financial institutions reported positive returns on investments. However, levels of public debt increased across the subregion, limiting fiscal policy space for achieving necessary longer-term development goals and potentially exacerbating social tensions. The region continued to face multiple security threats, the recurrent effects of climate change, and socioeconomic conditions that challenge Governments' ability to embrace policies necessary for free movement and the achievement of regional integration.

11. With regard to political and institutional developments, the region achieved progress towards the institutional reform of ECCAS, clearing the path for convening another ordinary session of the Assembly of ECCAS Heads of State and Government. The Committee noted the establishment of a coalition Government in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the holding of the Major National Dialogue in Cameroon, the ongoing peace process in the Central African Republic, discussions in the Congo on the opening of a national dialogue, discussions between the Government of Chad and local groups based in the north of the country, and electoral developments in Cameroon, the Central African Republic and Chad.

12. On the security front, the Committee noted persistent challenges in the area of small arms and light weapons control, transnational crime and trafficking, the illegal exploitation of natural resources, piracy in the Gulf of Guinea, and terrorism and violent extremism extending beyond the Central African subregion.

13. In the area of governance, the Committee noted that Central African countries demonstrated a firm commitment to electoral processes set in accordance with

pre-established timetables, and observed that recourse to political dialogue remained a primary norm for resolving disputes and maintaining commitment to political agreements.

14. The Committee noted that the humanitarian situation in Central Africa remained worrying, as evidenced by the presence of internally displaced persons and refugees in Angola, Burundi, Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Chad, the Congo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda. Some of the displacements were caused by natural disasters such as floods, while others were the result of insecurity, often at the hand of armed groups and terrorist organizations. Meanwhile, resources for humanitarian action were found to be increasingly scarce.

B. Disarmament and arms control

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 Arms Trade Treaty

15. 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 (Kinshasa Convention) has been ratified by 8 of the 11 Central African countries. The Convention entered into force in Equatorial Guinea on 23 January 2020, one month after the Government had deposited its instrument of ratification with the United Nations.

16. The secretariat of ECCAS continued to support countries in establishing national commissions on small arms and light weapons, a key institutional arrangement for implementation of the Kinshasa Convention. In October, the Congo established its national commission. On 26 and 27 June 2019, ECCAS supported a capacity-building workshop for members of the Chadian national commission and the Cameroon Youth and Students Forum for Peace. Cameroon set up a coordination unit within its national commission to bring together different actors in the area of small arms and light weapons control. In accordance with the provisions of article 31 of the Convention, the ECCAS secretariat prepared a five-year action plan (2019–2023) for the implementation of the Convention and began preparations for holding a second conference of States parties to the Convention in Brazzaville in June 2020, which was delayed owing to the COVID-19 pandemic.

17. On 20 and 21 November 2019, a regional conference was held in Kinshasa on aligning national laws with the Kinshasa Convention and the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. The conference brought together States parties and signatories to the Convention to identify mechanisms and synergies between stakeholders at the national, regional and international levels in the area of firearms legislation.

18. The Arms Trade Treaty was signed by all States members of the Committee, with the exception of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Equatorial Guinea. The Treaty has been ratified by Cameroon, the Central African Republic and Chad. From 26 to 30 August 2019, the Sixth Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty was held in Geneva, during which issues related to transparency and reporting, universalization and gender were addressed. The Committee noted a need to advance progress related to compliance with treaty obligations, in particular the stipulation that arms exports are prohibited when they are likely to contribute to human rights violations.

19. The Committee noted that the Arms Trade Treaty and the Kinshasa Convention were complementary instruments that should contribute to controlling illicit trade and the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, thus improving human security in Central Africa. Specific areas of complementarity include coordination mechanisms, such as through national focal points and national commissions; operational mechanisms, such as marking, tracing and cross-border cooperation; harmonization of national legislation; technical assistance; and confidence-building and transparency measures.

Update on the activities of the Office for Disarmament Affairs

20. The United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa briefed the Committee on the status of a joint project with the secretariat of ECCAS and UNOCA to support implementation of the Kinshasa Convention, in alignment with the African Union-led “Silencing the Guns” initiative. The Regional Centre held technical and legal capacity-building workshops, developed a manual to guide countries at the national level and supported cross-cutting advocacy aimed at encouraging all States parties to ratify the Convention. In that regard, the Regional Centre held a workshop in Malabo from 25 to 27 September to provide legal assistance to States parties to the Convention with regard to aligning national laws with the Convention.

C. Armed violence and terrorism in Central Africa

Regional strategy on counter-terrorism and the non-proliferation of small arms and light weapons in Central Africa

21. The Committee continued to consider the regional strategy on counter-terrorism and the non-proliferation of small arms and light weapons in Central Africa, including ways to develop further collaboration and synergies with ECCAS towards its implementation. In line with the Committee’s recommendation at its forty-sixth meeting, held in Brazzaville from 29 May to 1 June 2018, the regional strategy remains on the agenda of the relevant peace and security organs of ECCAS for endorsement by the Assembly of ECCAS Heads of State and Government at its next ordinary session, so as to enable the secretariat of ECCAS to follow-up on its implementation, which remains the responsibility of member States.

Boko Haram

22. The secretariat of the Lake Chad Basin Commission briefed the Committee on the implementation of the Regional Stabilization, Recovery and Resilience Strategy for Areas Affected by Boko Haram in the Lake Chad Basin Region, adopted in August 2018 and endorsed by the Peace and Security Council of the African Union in December 2018. The cost of implementation of the Strategy was estimated at around \$12 billion. In July 2019, a \$100 million regional stabilization facility for the Lake Chad region was launched by the United Nations Development Programme at the Second Meeting of the Lake Chad Basin Governors’ Forum for Regional Cooperation on Stabilization, Peacebuilding and Sustainable Development, held in Niamey on 17 and 18 July 2019.

23. The Multinational Joint Task Force briefed the Committee on progress in the fight against Boko Haram and its various factions, owed largely to combined efforts of national, bilateral and regional military operations. The operations, concentrated on the islands of Lake Chad and along the Cameroon-Nigeria border, saw several challenges in the areas of coordination, handling of people associated with Boko Haram, and the proliferation of small arms and light weapons and improvised

explosive devices. The Force also continued to face capacity challenges related to air, amphibian and anti-drone support, and called for more international assistance in those areas.

24. UNOCA updated the Committee on the implementation of Security Council resolution [2349 \(2017\)](#) on the situation in the Lake Chad basin region. The United Nations system remained fully mobilized, including to support the regional strategy, with a particular focus on enhancing the role of women and young people in implementing the regional strategy, as well as on maintaining space for humanitarian activity. From 19 to 23 November 2019, the Special Representatives of the Secretary-General for Central Africa and for West Africa and the Sahel, accompanied by the European Union Special Representative for the Sahel, conducted a joint visit to Nigeria after concluding similar visits to Cameroon, Chad and the Niger during the first half of 2019.

D. Poaching, the use of mercenaries and transnational organized crime

25. The Committee noted that the porous borders of the Central African subregion presented significant challenges for the eradication of poaching, the use of mercenaries and transnational organized crime. Furthermore, those issues intersected with various dimensions of small arms and light weapons control, illegal exploitation of natural resources, maritime security and terrorism and violent extremism.

26. The Committee was briefed on the fifth session of the joint commission between the Central African Republic and the Congo, held in Bangui on 5 and 6 August 2019, which resulted in several bilateral agreements on defence and border control. The two countries agreed to establish a coordination structure to examine cross-border transhumance, illegal exploitation of natural resources, poaching, irregular migration, and small arms and light weapons control.

27. The Committee was also briefed on the situation in the north of Chad, where authorities were mediating between artisanal miners and local communities in the Tibesti region. As the area is prone to regular armed clashes, on 11 November 2019 an agreement was signed with armed groups operating in the area of Miski, with the aim of bringing an end to the violence that was linked with the presence of mercenaries, drug traffickers and terrorists active along the Libyan border.

E. Maritime security in the Gulf of Guinea

28. The secretariat of ECCAS and the Gulf of Guinea Commission gave presentations to the Committee on maritime security in the subregion. On 3 and 4 October 2019 in Abidjan, heads of the Regional Coordination Centre for Maritime Security in Central Africa and the Interregional Coordination Centre for the Implementation of the Regional Strategy for Maritime Safety and Security in Central and West Africa, with the support of the Gulf of Guinea Interregional Network, met to take stock of activities intended to strengthen cooperation between countries in Central Africa. They highlighted the importance of sharing information, pooling resources and identifying appropriate institutional synergies. Funding for those activities remains a central challenge where further interregional consultations between West and Central Africa could be useful. Member States were encouraged to appoint national focal points for the implementation of the regional strategy on combating piracy and maritime security.

29. The Group of Seven Group of Friends of the Gulf of Guinea continued to meet regularly throughout the reporting period. An international forum on the state of implementation of the Declaration of the Heads of State and Government of Central and West African States on Maritime Safety and Security in Their Common Maritime Domain was held in Pointe Noire, the Congo, from 23 to 27 September 2019, and the Global Maritime Security Conference was held in Abuja from 7 to 9 October 2019. At both meetings, the Interregional Coordination Centre urged member States to facilitate the exchange of information in ECCAS operational maritime centres and to activate the southern ECCAS maritime area (known as Zone A) as soon as possible to complete the regional security system. The Interregional Coordination Centre also called for more air support to the naval group located in the northern ECCAS maritime area (known as Zone D), as well as the provision of more advanced detection and alert capabilities.

F. Implementation of the women and peace and security agenda in Central Africa

30. UN-Women briefed the Committee on the status of implementation of Security Council resolution [1325 \(2000\)](#), noting that the women and peace and security agenda was underpinned by the four pillars of prevention, participation, protection and promotion, as well as recognition that conflict impacts men and women differently. The Committee noted that women continued to be excluded from peace negotiations, despite the essential roles they play at the head of peaceful social movements and at the heart of post-conflict community recovery.

31. UN-Women encouraged Chad, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon and Sao Tome and Principe to develop national action plans for the implementation of resolution [1325 \(2000\)](#) without delay. In June 2019, ECCAS adopted a regional action plan for the implementation of the resolution.

G. Human rights

32. The United Nations Subregional Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Central Africa briefed the Committee on the human rights situation in Central Africa. The Centre urged States to ratify the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, as well as the 2002 Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. The Centre noted that Rwanda had established a national mechanism for the prevention of torture, in line with the Optional Protocol and that similar efforts were under way in Cameroon and Gabon. The Centre stressed that States' obligations to human rights instruments should be reflected in the implementation of recommendations from the appropriate treaty bodies and encouraged countries to allocate appropriate resources to the interministerial bodies responsible for monitoring such implementation.

33. From 5 to 27 September 2019, following up on the findings of a previous visit in May 2019, a technical evaluation team from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights visited Cameroon, including the north-west and south-west regions. In Burundi, authorities continued to collaborate with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner and the Subregional Centre, and held six capacity-building workshops between September and November 2019 with the

Ministry of Human Rights, Social Affairs and Gender, the Independent National Human Rights Commission and non-governmental organization partners.

H. Impact of climate change on peace and security in Central Africa

34. At the request of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, as Chair of the forty-eighth meeting of the Committee, experts held a thematic debate on the impact of climate change on peace and security in Central Africa. UNEP briefed the Committee on the situation in Central Africa and encouraged member States to adopt inclusive governance frameworks to address core issues related to natural resource management and the economic, social and environmental dimensions of conflict resolution.

35. The Committee adopted a ministerial declaration (see annex) in which it affirmed the need to address the impact of climate change on peace and security in Central Africa. It also reaffirmed the Sustainable Development Goals, the African Union-led “Silencing the Guns” initiative, and the common subregional position submitted to the Climate Summit in September 2019. In addition, it emphasized the need for inclusive dialogue between Governments and non-governmental actors, including local communities, on sustainable natural resources management. In the declaration, the Committee invited UNEP to continue holding consultations with member States in the context of the Committee, and to provide further support in the area of climate security.

I. Cooperation with international and regional organizations, with the support of United Nations entities

36. The Lomé Declaration was adopted on 30 July 2018 at the Joint Summit of ECOWAS and ECCAS Heads of State and Government on Peace, Security, Stability and the Fight against Terrorism and Violent Extremism. Its implementation on 30 July 2018, remains a key framework for cooperation between the two regional economic communities. In that regard, in July 2019, two consultants supported by the German Agency for International Cooperation developed a joint multi-year plan for adoption by a follow-up committee comprising ministers of the member States of ECOWAS and ECCAS. Areas for further elaboration include more concrete modalities on interregional police cooperation, including the establishment of a permanent regional mechanism for police cooperation within ECCAS.

37. Supporting the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic remains another key area of cooperation with international and regional organizations, including United Nations entities. To that end, ECCAS, UNOCA and the United Nations Office to the African Union reaffirmed their commitment to jointly support the Political Agreement, namely through the provision of technical assistance to the establishment of national early warning observatories that work in tandem with the Central African Early Warning Mechanism.

38. The Committee also received a briefing on the ECCAS institutional reform process. In July 2019, ministers approved a reform package, as well as a draft action plan and budget, for carrying out the reform. The package was adopted at the ninth extraordinary session of the ECCAS Conference of Heads of State and Government, held in Libreville from 16 to 18 December 2019. The package included the draft revised treaty establishing ECCAS, the draft revised organic framework for the future Commission of the Economic Community of Central African States, the draft revised ECCAS staff regulations, the draft revised ECCAS financial regulations and the draft revised Protocol of the Council for Peace and Security in Central Africa. It stipulated

that the future Commission would be composed of a President, a Vice-President and five commissioners. The members of the Commission would be appointed for non-renewable four-year terms on the principle of French alphabetical rotation. Other aspects of the reform also include devolution of power of the decision-making bodies along with strengthened powers of the Commission; a unified ECCAS prevention and stability architecture that affirms linkages between the Council for Peace and Security in Central Africa and other peace and security arrangements of the United Nations and the African Union; institutionalization of civil society and modalities for engagement with the Community; modernization of financial rules and regulations to promote good financial governance; and an overhaul of the staff rules and regulations and streamlined classification and recruitment processes.

III. Administrative and financial matters

39. The Committee expressed concern regarding the status of voluntary contributions to its trust fund. It reiterated its appeal to member States to make their contributions and requested the secretariat to send regular reminders to that effect. The Committee congratulated Rwanda on the regular payment of its contributions.

40. The Committee received an update on the revitalization measures adopted at its forty-fourth meeting, noting that the majority of measures had been implemented. However, the Committee indicated that it continued to face a critical financial situation as it maintains two statutory meetings per year – the cost of which has increased – funded by the United Nations regular budget. In the absence of a long-term solution, the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs is required to mobilize, on an exceptional basis, extrabudgetary resources intended for crisis response. Since 2016, the Committee has incurred an average deficit of over \$30,000 per meeting. In accordance with the Declaration on the Trust Fund of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa (Libreville Declaration) (see [A/64/85-S/2009/288](#), annex I) and as welcomed by the General Assembly in its resolution [64/61](#), members are required to make a minimum annual contribution of \$10,000 to the trust fund. The balance of the trust fund was replenished thanks to recent contributions from Angola and Burundi.

IV. Conclusions and recommendations

41. **The United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa continues to demonstrate its value as a platform for subregional dialogue and cooperation on critical issues of peace and stability. As highlighted by the Committee, the Central Africa subregion continues to face significant challenges in terms of stability. I welcome the commitment of the States of the subregion to overcoming these challenges, as evidenced by the openness of discussions during the forty-ninth meeting of the Committee.**

42. **I am encouraged by the region's commitment to supporting the ECCAS institutional reform process, and I have noted a willingness expressed by some member States to initiate dialogue on the future role of the Committee within this strengthened subregional peace and security architecture. Informed by the realities of achieving efficient and cost-effective working modalities, UNOCA, in its role as the secretariat of the Committee, will respond to the Committee's request, at its fiftieth meeting, for a report outlining scenarios for the future role of the Committee. I furthermore welcome steps taken by member States to address their arrears to the trust fund, which covers activities between the**

biannual statutory meetings of the Committee, such as field visits and other regional confidence-building measures.

43. I am concerned about the progression of the COVID-19 pandemic in Central Africa and its health, humanitarian and socioeconomic impact on the populations of the region, especially those who are most vulnerable. I commend all countries of the region for taking swift measures to prevent the spread of the virus, while simultaneously engaging institutions at the subregional level to address potential social and political tensions. I likewise congratulate ECCAS member States for their steadfast commitment to the institutional reform process, even as the subregion grapples with COVID-19, and continue to underscore that renewed political and financial engagement will be essential to revitalizing the institution.

44. Climate security emerged as a major theme on the Committee's agenda during the reporting period, highlighting concerns over how climate change affects the efficacy of peacebuilding, governance and the achievement of sustainable development. The growing recognition that climate change plays a role in exacerbating conflict risks should inform the regional conflict prevention agenda and support member States in building analytical and foresight capacity, maintaining focus on governance and inequalities, and bring climate security into broader peace and security discussions. I welcome further initiatives by the Committee to initiate discussion on regional responses and strengthen the base of knowledge and evidence around this topic, including by enhancing collaboration with UNEP.

45. The management of pastoralism and cross-border transhumance continues to be an important factor in achieving regional economic and social integration. It remains urgent for ECCAS member States to adopt a subregional framework for Central Africa that addresses socioeconomic and security dimensions, and which the Committee supported as an outcome of its forty-eighth meeting. I welcome all efforts towards achieving that goal within a reasonable time frame and reiterate the readiness of the United Nations, through UNOCA and other relevant entities, to support these efforts. A just, equitable and inclusive regional vision for the management of pastoralism and transhumance will provide States with a model for national policies and strengthened mechanisms to promote peaceful coexistence and cooperation between communities.

46. I remain deeply concerned by the continued activities of illegal armed groups in Central Africa, which constitute a serious threat to civilians and affect the stability of States, while heightening inter- and intra-State tensions. Of concern is the illicit trafficking in natural resources by armed groups in several countries of the subregion and a growing suspicion of collusion between some of these armed groups with international terrorist networks. I call upon Member States to collaborate urgently to address these issues in bilateral and multilateral forums. I remain concerned by the continued violence perpetrated by the Lord's Resistance Army and encourage the Peace and Security Council of the African Union to remain engaged through the Regional Cooperation Initiative for the Elimination of the Lord's Resistance Army.

47. The threat posed by the Boko Haram factions requires full implementation of the Regional Stabilization, Recovery and Resilience Strategy for Areas Affected by Boko Haram in the Lake Chad Basin Region. I strongly encourage the affected countries, as well as national and international partners, to invest in sustainable development for the Lake Chad basin, cross-border peacebuilding initiatives and non-military solutions to the conflict. I also commend the

commitment of countries contributing troops and resources to the Multinational Joint Task Force to rid the region of the scourge of terrorism.

48. I commend the Committee for its steadfast commitment to promoting stability in the Central African Republic, which is essential for achieving sustained and long-term peace throughout the region. I remain deeply concerned about the perpetuation of violence against civilians, humanitarians, national armed forces and peacekeepers by armed groups. The risk of deepening intercommunal tensions and fragmentation of some armed groups along ethnic lines would have broader repercussions throughout the subregion. In that regard, I welcome the continued support of the Committee in calling upon all stakeholders in the region to support the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic and redouble efforts to strengthen the participation of women and youth in dialogue, mediation and monitoring at all levels. I further welcome the resumption of several bilateral joint commissions between the Central African Republic and its neighbours, and encourage the Committee to enhance its exchanges with these important mechanisms.

49. Ongoing efforts by the Government of Cameroon to shed light on the human rights situation in the north-west and south-west regions should be encouraged through the work of the Committee. Furthermore, achieving tangible results in the implementation of the 2019 Major National Dialogue and its related outcomes would be a significant milestone for peace and security in Central Africa. Such progress requires greater efforts and commitment on the part of the Government, as well as concerted support from political actors and relevant stakeholders in the region.

50. The United Nations stands with the countries of Central Africa in their quest for lasting peace and sustainable development for all. Regular and strategic coordination between my Special Representatives and Special Envoys in the region will help ensure the delivery of coherent and value-added assistance to member States in the region.

51. I am grateful to the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, UNOCA and my Special Representative for providing the Committee with efficient technical, administrative and logistical backstopping. I also commend other United Nations entities, peacekeeping operations and special political missions for their specialized contributions to the work of the Committee. I look forward to the deliberations and conclusions of the Committee at its fiftieth meeting, to be hosted in the near future by Equatorial Guinea.

Annex**Luanda declaration on the impact of climate change on peace and security in Central Africa**

[Original: French]

We, the ministers and heads of delegation of the States members of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, gathered in Luanda on the occasion of the forty-ninth ministerial meeting of the Committee,

Reiterating our commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals, including Goal 13 on urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts, Goal 16 on the promotion of peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development and Goal 17 on partnerships to achieve the Goals,

Recalling the Climate Action Summit held under the auspices of the Secretary-General of the United Nations on 23 September 2019 and the Brazzaville ministerial declaration of 7 September 2019 on a common position of the Central African States on climate,

Deploring the humanitarian impact of climate change in Central Africa, in particular in the Congo basin and the Lake Chad basin, and stressing the links between this phenomenon and international peace and security,

Affirming our full support for the African Union initiative “Silencing the Guns by 2020”,

Stressing the importance of an inclusive dialogue between Governments, national non-governmental organizations, local communities and the private sector on the sustainable management of natural resources,

Recognizing the importance of collaboration between the Economic Community of Central African States, the Lake Chad Basin Commission, the African Union and the United Nations,

1. *Reiterate* the importance of the effective implementation of the Paris Agreement and the recommendations of the Climate Action Summit;

2. *Underline* the need to systematically integrate climate change and natural-resource management considerations into conflict prevention, mediation, peacebuilding and development processes;

3. *Call on* international and regional organizations, in particular the Economic Community of Central African States, to strengthen early warning mechanisms by integrating information and indicators related to climate change and natural resources;

4. *Urge* the member States of the subregion to continue their ongoing efforts to address the challenges they face in relation to climate change;

5. *Invite* the member States of the subregion to improve their coordination and take advantage of the assistance mechanisms provided for in the Paris Agreement in order to benefit from support for the implementation of national, subregional and regional projects and plans for adaptation to climate change;

6. *Request* the United Nations Environment Programme and the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa, in cooperation with United Nations system partners, to strengthen their engagement within the framework of the Committee in support of the efforts of member States to address the impact of climate

change on peace and security in Central Africa, and to provide an update thereon at the fiftieth meeting of the Committee, to be held in Malabo.

DONE at Luanda on 29 November 2019
