



Security Council

Seventy-fourth year

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Provisional

President: Mr. Alotaibi (Kuwait)

Members:

Belgium	Mr. Pecsteen de Buytswerve
China	Mr. Yao Shaojun
Côte d'Ivoire	Mr. Adom
Dominican Republic	Ms. Morrison González
Equatorial Guinea	Mr. Sipaco Ribala
France	Mrs. Gueguen
Germany	Mr. Heusgen
Indonesia	Mr. Soemirat
Peru	Mr. Meza-Cuadra
Poland	Ms. Wronecka
Russian Federation	Mr. Polyanskiy
South Africa	Mr. Matjila
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Allen
United States of America	Mr. Hunter

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/2019/430)

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The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

Expression of thanks to the outgoing President

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I should like to take this opportunity to pay tribute, on behalf of the Council, to His Excellency Mr. Dian Triansyah Djani, Permanent Representative of Indonesia, for his service as President of the Council for the month of May. I am sure I speak for all the members of the Council in expressing our deep appreciation to Ambassador Djani and his team for the great diplomatic skill with which they conducted the Council's business last month.

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/2019/430)

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): 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/2019/430, 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: I thank you, Mr. President, for this opportunity to brief the Security Council on the situation in Central Africa and the activities of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA).

Since my last briefing (see S/PV.8421), the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) has made noticeable progress with regard to the reform process. Following the finalization of the reform documents in January, the ECCAS Council of Ministers is expected to convene on 21 June to validate

these documents. It is our hope that the Assembly of ECCAS Heads of State and Government will endorse the documents before the end of this year. This reform process should contribute to the transformation of ECCAS into a more effective organization for regional integration, conflict prevention and resolution, as well as peacebuilding. UNOCA remains committed to helping to enhance these capacities, building on the valuable expertise already available. The reform should also provide the organization with a more adequate mandate and tools, as well as the means to carry out such a mandate. I appeal to ECCAS member States to enhance their support to this process so as to ensure its timely completion and the launch of a reformed ECCAS for the benefit of regional peace, stability and integration.

To date, the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa (UNSAC) remains the primary platform where ECCAS member States meet regularly to discuss peace and security in Central Africa and recommend actions to address threats to regional stability. I have just arrived from Kinshasa, where the Committee held its forty-eighth ministerial meeting on 31 May, which focused on the political and security situation in Central Africa. Members of UNSAC took note of the holding of elections in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, on 30 December 2018, which enabled the country to experience a peaceful alternation of power. They also welcomed the signing of the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic and expressed their support for efforts to advocate the complete lifting of the arms embargo. They took note of the efforts of the Government of Cameroon to find a lasting solution to the crisis in the North-West and South-West regions, and encouraged the Government to pursue dialogue to that end. Following a closed session on the financing of regional institutions and cross-border transhumance, the members of UNSAC, inter alia, first, invited the ECCAS general secretariat to conclude the process of drafting a community regulation on pastoralism and transhumance; secondly, called for the holding of a high-level conference on this issue; thirdly, encouraged ECCAS member States to participate in meetings dedicated to the reform of the organization; and fourthly, emphasized the importance of setting up mechanisms to ensure the regular payment of financial contributions.

Recurrent and often deadly clashes between pastoralists and farmers in several countries continue to be a source of serious concern and a threat to regional security and integration. Recent intercommunal tensions in eastern Chad, opposing nomadic herders and sedentary farmers, as well as the attacks against villages in the Central African Republic on 21 May, remind us of the urgent need to address the issue of pastoralism and transhumance. I am pleased that this is receiving increasing attention in Central Africa, and I welcome the conclusions of the workshop organized on 27 and 28 May in Kinshasa, which finalized a draft regulation instrument on pastoralism and transhumance. UNOCA will continue to support the efforts of ECCAS in this area and to promote, together with UNOWAS, cooperation and the exchange of good practices between Central, East and West Africa on the issue, given the interregional dimension of the phenomenon.

(spoke in French)

Boko Haram has intensified its attacks on Cameroon and Chad since late 2018, killing nearly 100 civilians and members of the defence and security forces. Despite the commendable efforts of the affected countries and the Lake Chad Basin Commission, the terrorist group continues to pose a security threat to Central Africa and beyond. This situation calls for enhanced cooperation and better sharing of experiences and lessons learned between the affected countries and the Multinational Joint Task Force, as well as greater and more sustained international assistance to defeat Boko Haram, address the humanitarian needs of the affected populations and tackle the root causes of the conflict.

The regional strategy for the stabilization, recovery and resilience of the areas of the Lake Chad Basin affected by Boko Haram activities, adopted in August 2018, therefore represents a source of hope for the people living in those zones. I continue to work hand in hand with Mr. Chambas, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of UNOWAS to raise awareness among partners of the need to remain committed to the fight against Boko Haram. I take this opportunity to call once again on the States concerned to intensify their efforts for the implementation of the regional strategy at the national level, and I call on international partners to support these efforts.

I note that the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) continues to pose a threat to peace and security in Central Africa, particularly in the Central African

Republic and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. I encourage the Governments of the subregion and the members of the Security Council to support the efforts of the African Union Commission to establish alternative security mechanisms for the elimination of the LRA, in the framework of regional cooperation and the African Standby Force.

Regarding the situation in the North-West and South-West regions of Cameroon, we note several high-level visits to the country and a series of public statements from key partners, who all expressed their concerns on the issues of protection and called for an inclusive and sincere dialogue. On 9 May, Prime Minister Joseph Dion Ngute announced that President Paul Biya was ready to engage in dialogue on all issues, except those relating to separation and secession, in order to find a lasting solution to the crisis. This is an encouraging step in the right direction. In a statement on the sociopolitical situation in Cameroon, published on 28 May, the Government recalled the efforts made to date to manage the humanitarian situation and engage in dialogue with all stakeholders. He also underscored his commitment to cooperating with members of the Human Rights Council, other Member States, United Nations agencies and other bilateral actors.

I recall the statement made by the Secretary-General on the importance of upholding the unity and territorial integrity of Cameroon. It is also important to stress that the search for solutions to the crisis must be guided by the Government. Conducting inclusive dialogue is the best way to preserve the stability of the country, which is vital to the entire subregion. I therefore encourage the Cameroonian authorities to continue their dialogue efforts and to advance the process of decentralization. I reiterate the availability of the United Nations to work with Cameroon in this and other key tasks, such as disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and peacebuilding, through the Peacebuilding Fund, among other sources of funding.

Despite these positive developments, the situation on the ground continues to deteriorate, with frequent clashes between secessionist armed groups and national defence and security forces. Civilians remain the main victims of the conflict. Many have lost their lives, while about 530,000 are internally displaced in the North-West, South-West and Littoral regions, and more than 30,000 have taken refuge in Nigeria. Affected populations are in urgent need of assistance, while humanitarian access in the North-West and

South-West regions remains a challenge due to security concerns. In addition, Cameroon is hosting 278,000 refugees from the Central African Republic and 104,000 Nigerian refugees in the far northern region. I commend the provision of humanitarian assistance by the Government and note that only 13 per cent of the United Nations humanitarian response plan has been funded to date. I call on international partners to consider financial assistance to enable the provision of all the humanitarian assistance that vulnerable populations greatly need.

While the implementation of the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic raises several challenges, it remains an effective instrument for contributing to the achievement of lasting peace in the country. It is crucial that the subregion and the States members of ECCAS play their part in the success of the agreement. To this end, I welcome the reactivation of the joint commission between Cameroon and the Central African Republic in Bangui last month. I encourage the Central African Republic and other neighbouring States to reactivate their bilateral joint commissions, which should facilitate discussions on border management and common security challenges.

I welcome the announcement of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) on 9 May that its mission had completed discussions with the Republic of the Congo and had reached an agreement, *ad referendum*, that could be supported by a programme under the Extended Credit Facility. This favourable development comes after two years of negotiations.

In Gabon, the IMF recently noted the stabilization of the macroeconomic situation. In the meantime, President Ali Bongo Ondimba is recovering in Libreville from his health problems. Since May, he has received visits from Presidents Faure Essozimna Gnassingbé of Togo, Alassane Ouattara of Côte d'Ivoire and Macky Sall of Senegal, as well as the Secretary General of the International Organization of la Francophonie, Louise Mushikiwabo. Other Heads of State are expected in the coming days.

I note the efforts of the Chadian authorities to hold parliamentary elections before end of the year, and I call on all national and international actors to contribute to the organization of credible, inclusive and peaceful elections within the envisaged deadlines.

In the face of all these challenges, UNOCA remains firmly committed to regional capacity-building in the areas of crisis prevention and crisis and conflict management, including support for ECCAS and its member States. We are confident that the findings of the ongoing UNOCA strategic review will contribute to enhancing the effectiveness of the Office and its role as a key United Nations tool for preventive diplomacy and peacebuilding, in close cooperation with the relevant United Nations entities. We will continue to make every effort to improve coherence and coordination between these entities, in particular in matters of peace and security. I thank the Council for its attention and continued support.

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

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

Mr. Allen (United Kingdom): I thank Mr. Fall for what he has had to say and for his efforts.

We very much welcome the continued support of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA) to tackle the underlying root causes of conflict in the region, and we believe that national, regional and international cooperation remains key to resolving those challenges. With that in mind, I was pleased to hear and read about the support that Special Representative Fall has been giving to the States members of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) and to its secretariat as they develop their own action plan for reform. I and my colleagues certainly look forward to being updated on that as it approaches finalization and implementation over the rest of the year. I thank Mr. Fall for what he has done in that regard.

The Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic is an example of how the United Nations, African Union and national efforts can deliver progress towards peace. In that context, the meeting of the Central African Republic-Cameroon bilateral joint commission in Bangui on 6 and 7 May was very welcome. We encourage neighbouring Governments to support implementation of the agreement.

The United Kingdom is a long-standing friend and partner of Cameroon. We very much appreciate Cameroon's generosity towards refugees from the Lake

Chad Basin and the Central African Republic. We work with Cameroon on tackling the threat from Boko Haram and the Islamic State in West Africa. Nevertheless, we very much share the concerns expressed by the Secretary-General in his report (S/2019/430) and we all discussed those concerns at our Arria Formula meeting on 13 May, when we heard testimony from those on the ground, the humanitarian agencies and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs on the worsening humanitarian situation in Cameroon, which is rapidly reaching a crisis point. I recall that the Anglophone crisis has driven more than 560,000 Cameroonians from their homes, including 32,000 refugees into Nigeria. Some 4.3 million people, including some 2.3 million children, are in need of humanitarian assistance. It is the trend that is particularly concerning. As we learned from our humanitarian briefers on 13 May, there has been a huge increase in those numbers over the past year. We are dealing with a situation that is deteriorating rapidly.

There are also reports of human rights violations and abuses by both the security forces of Cameroon and armed separatists and the denial of humanitarian access, which are cause for real concern. We are deeply troubled by reports of the targeting of health facilities and health-care workers, which must stop. We remind all parties that any deliberate targeting of health facilities or health-care workers is a violation of international humanitarian law. We very much welcome the visit by Michele Bachelet, High Commissioner for Human Rights. It is now important that access be achieved for her human rights officials to the affected regions.

There is a real risk of a long-term, intractable conflict in Cameroon, which could have a negative impact on fragile regional stability, with implications for wider international peace and security. We underline the importance of Cameroon's unity and territorial integrity and we believe that our African partners have an important role to play in supporting a sustainable solution to the crisis, including through ECCAS and African Union leadership. We continue to urge the Government of Cameroon to establish a credible, inclusive and purposeful political dialogue. There has been a number of welcome announcements by the Government of Cameroon, but we have to see those turn into reality on the ground. The Peacebuilding Fund provides a real opportunity for the Government of Cameroon to get expert support for its proposals and initiatives.

As the Secretary-General's report makes clear, the shrinking space for political opposition, civil society and free and independent media is a concern with respect not only to Cameroon but also to Chad, the Central African Republic and the Republic of the Congo. We urge the Governments of those countries to take constructive steps to ensure the protection of civil space and civil and political rights, given that they are the fundamental building blocks of long-term stability.

The United Kingdom also remains deeply concerned about the humanitarian and security situation in the wider Lake Chad basin, caused by the conflict with and actions of Boko Haram and the Islamic State in West Africa. We utterly condemn the violence wreaked by those groups on civilian populations and recognize the sacrifices made by the armed forces of the countries of the Lake Chad basin in the fight against terrorism. The United Kingdom remains committed to its support for efforts to tackle that crisis. It is right that a coordinated, coherent response should be led first and foremost by the Governments of the affected countries themselves, but with support from regional partners, the United Nations and the international community, including, of course, the United Kingdom.

I very much welcome the joint visits that Special Representative Fall has been undertaking with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for West Africa and the Sahel, Mr. Chambas, to the countries of the region. I very much look forward to the Council receiving their joint report once they have been to all those countries. I think that that would be a good opportunity for us then to come back to the issue and discuss it among ourselves.

Finally, let me say that we remain very concerned about the current Ebola outbreak in north-eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. It is crucial that the international community provide the necessary technical and financial support to the response led by the Congolese Government and the United Nations. We very much welcome the recent appointment of a senior United Nations Emergency Ebola Response Coordinator, based in Butembo.

Ms. Wronecka (Poland): Allow me, at the outset, to congratulate Ambassador Djani and his team on a very successful presidency and their great achievements. At the same time, I would like to congratulate you, Mr. President, on assuming the presidency of the Security Council during the month of June. I am sure

that you will lead the work of the Council with great skill, smooth diplomacy and your vast experience.

(spoke in Arabic)

I wish you all the best.

(spoke in English)

First, I would like to thank Special Representative Mr. François Louncény Fall for his comprehensive briefing and efforts in the region.

I would like to focus my statement on three critical issues: first, the security situation; secondly, humanitarian aspects and human rights challenges; and, thirdly, the role of regional organizations.

The security situation in the region remains fragile. As electoral processes remain an important factor for stability in Central Africa, we commend some positive developments towards the consolidation of democratic governance. We underscore that if such consolidation is to be sustainable, women should engage their experience and competencies in any peace dialogue and negotiations taking place in the region. Nevertheless, we further encourage the authorities of the countries of the region to continue building trust among all stakeholders and to enable inclusive dialogue as a precondition for the establishment of a stable and constructive political environment. In that context, we praise the important work carried out by the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA) in terms of good offices, mediation and preventive diplomacy.

At the same time, Poland condemns the persistent acts of violence committed by armed and terrorist groups in the Lake Chad basin, the Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which continue to destabilize the whole region. We emphasize that further the support of international partners to the Multinational Joint Task Force in the Lake Chad basin and the Regional Cooperation Initiative for the Elimination of Lord's Resistance Army is necessary.

Poland is concerned about the fact that institutional fragility, poverty and environmental degradation, exacerbated by climate change, continue to contribute to humanitarian crises and economic downturn. We are also deeply worried about reports regarding human rights violations, including killings, forced disappearances, arbitrary arrests and detentions, restrictions on the freedom of association, expression and movement, as well as sexual and gender-based violence. Poland is

particularly concerned about the situation in Cameroon and Burundi in that regard. We call upon the authorities of those countries to take immediate steps to prevent further human rights violations and abuses and to ensure respect for fundamental freedoms, including the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, for all citizens.

Poland highly appreciates all the efforts of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in the region, especially the recent visit of Commissioner Bachelet to Yaoundé. We call on the Cameroonian Government to allow the Office to conduct a human rights assessment mission and urge the authorities of the countries of the region to cooperate with all United Nations human rights mechanisms. Furthermore, we reiterate the obligations of all stakeholders on the ground to fully comply with their responsibilities under international humanitarian law and human rights law. We also emphasize the importance of allowing full access for humanitarian workers to vulnerable communities.

Poland recognizes the strategic role of regional organizations in reducing tensions on the ground. We hope that the African Union, the Economic Community of Central African States, the Central African Economic and Monetary Community, the Lake Chad Basin Commission and other subregional institutions will show even greater determination in supporting peace processes in the region. In that context, Poland recognizes the leading role of UNOCA in enhancing the coordination and coherence of measures taken, as well as in fostering synergies among all United Nations entities in the Central Africa.

I would like to conclude by expressing our full support to the Special Representative Fall.

Mrs. Gueguen (France) *(spoke in French)*: Allow me, first of all, Mr. President, to wish Eid Mubarak to you and your team and all those celebrating today. I would also like to congratulate you on your accession to the presidency of the Security Council during the month of June, throughout which you can count on France's full support.

I would also like to thank Special Representative François Louncény Fall for his briefing and for his work at the helm of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA). The situation in Central Africa continues to be marked by political situations that are often volatile, fragile post-electoral

circumstances and persisting abuses by Boko Haram, as well as violence related to transhumance and the predatory activities of certain armed groups.

In this context, the action taken by the Special Representative demonstrates the full added value of a regional approach to better understanding the dynamics of Central Africa and strengthening the preventive approach taken by the United Nations within the region. France therefore assures him of our full support, both in his missions of good offices and preventive diplomacy and in his missions to provide support to regional initiatives, particularly those of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS). We hope that the upcoming strategic review will help to reinforce the work of UNOCA on all fronts.

I would like to underscore three situations that we believe merit a particular mention today: the Central African Republic, Cameroon and Boko Haram.

First, regarding the Central African Republic, the signing of the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic on 6 February in Bangui laid the prospects for an end to the crisis and for lasting peace in the Central African Republic. It is therefore essential that the Central African parties implement the agreement in good faith and in a timely manner. The recent violence by the Return, Reclamation and Rehabilitation group in the Paoua region, leaving more than 50 civilians dead, must be particularly condemned. This constitutes a serious violation of the commitments made by that armed group, especially given it is a signatory to the peace agreement.

In this context, stopping the violence committed by such groups, as well as disarming and demobilizing them, in addition to the progressive restoration of State authority throughout the country, must be a priority in the implementation of the peace agreement. The Government must also initiate the process of adopting a law on decentralization and move to establish a truth, justice, reconciliation and reparations commission. The decentralization of transitional justice ensures that local administration is brought closer to the population and rendered more effective. This will also serve as a response to the demand for justice expressed by the people of the Central African Republic.

If the implementation of the peace agreement is to be successful, it is vital that the international community be fully engaged in a coordinated manner in the political

and financial contexts. As such, the African Union, ECCAS and the countries of the region, as guarantors of the agreement, have a particularly important role to play. We therefore encourage the African Union and ECCAS to pursue their efforts, in close cooperation with the United Nations, and encourage the countries of the region to engage even further.

I now turn to the situation in Cameroon, on which we align ourselves fully with the assessment of the Special Representative. As we have stated on previous occasions, France is incredibly concerned about the deterioration of the situation in the North-West and South-West regions of Cameroon. The human casualties have been heavy, the humanitarian situation is increasingly difficult and attacks on humanitarian and medical personnel, health-care infrastructure and schools are on the rise. The protection of civilians, including humanitarian and medical personnel, respect for international humanitarian law and human rights and the guarantee of humanitarian access throughout the country are, nevertheless, non-negotiable obligations that must be prioritized above all else.

In this context, France is pursuing its efforts to encourage the Cameroonian authorities to launch an inclusive political dialogue, to implement measures to reduce tensions and to entrench decentralization. France also calls on all stakeholders to end the violence, ensure the restoration of the rule of law and respect the territorial integrity of Cameroon, which cannot be questioned. To echo the point the Special Representative has just made, we believe that similar messages conveyed by the African Union and the region would be most useful in this regard. Moreover, we consider the recent visit of the Prime Minister to the North-West and South-West regions, his statements pertaining to the launching of dialogue and information on initial contacts with the parties concerned to be positive signs. These announcements must now be implemented as soon as possible.

Regarding my final point, concerning Boko Haram, we remain concerned about the group's activities in the Lake Chad basin region, despite the robust response of the countries of the region. Only the restoration of security will allow for the redeployment of basic services, the resumption of economic activity and longer-term development actions. France will therefore continue to support the Multinational Joint Task Force in its fight against terrorism. The reintegration of former combatants, reconciliation and the protection

of women and youth are also vital to sustainably stabilizing the region.

United Nations regional offices such as UNOCA, are essential to enhancing the effectiveness and efficiency of United Nations conflict prevention efforts. France will therefore continue to support the critical development of United Nations activities, in a spirit of strengthened partnership with African regional and subregional organizations.

Mr. Adom (Côte d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): Allow me to begin by wishing you, Mr. President, all the best for the presidency of the Security Council, which falls to your country for the month of June. I also congratulate Ambassador Djani and his entire team on the high quality of the Indonesian presidency, which led the work of the Council with transparency and fairness during the month of May.

I would also like to thank Mr. François Louncény Fall, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Central Africa and Head of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA), for his enlightening briefing on the sociopolitical and economic situation in Central Africa and the Lake Chad basin region, as well as the activities of UNOCA.

Côte d'Ivoire is satisfied to note the holding, in a generally peaceful environment, of elections in several countries of Central Africa. This relative success, however, cannot mask the persistence of multiple political and security challenges that are impacting the humanitarian situation in the region. Tensions caused by demands for natural resources, in addition to poverty, insecurity and the challenges of reconstruction, are all factors that exacerbate the security and humanitarian situation in a region so full of potential.

That is why my country welcomed the signing of the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic on 6 February, while noting with concern the lack of eagerness demonstrated by armed groups to translate the concrete commitments to which they have freely subscribed into concrete actions. In that regard, my country condemns the violence perpetrated by the armed groups that has resulted in the killing of more than 50 civilians in the north-west of the country in recent weeks. We also wish to express our profound indignation at the continuing attacks on schools, hospitals and humanitarian personnel.

In the face of these extremely serious facts, my delegation believes that the protection of civilians is of extreme urgency. We call for the full implementation of the peace agreement, including the provisions for the establishment of joint special security units; the implementation of a national programme of disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation; and upholding State authority throughout the national territory. In this regard, Côte d'Ivoire commends the efforts of President Faustin Touadera and expresses its full support following the launch of the activities of the Khartoum agreement follow-up committee on 15 May.

It is important that we underscore and welcome the support role of United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic, as well as the strengthening of cooperation among the States of the subregion, notably through the creation of joint cooperation commissions, which serve as framework to develop solutions to the challenges political, security and humanitarian issues they share. My delegation therefore welcomes the re-establishment of the Cameroon-Central African Republic joint commission on 6 May, and hopes that it will enable both countries to consider and find sustainable responses to their common challenges.

Turning to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Côte d'Ivoire joins the rest of the international community in duly appreciating the stable sociopolitical environment that has been established following the presidential, legislative and local elections and the appointment of the Prime Minister. We remain convinced that the Congolese Government and people have the ability to address the sociopolitical, security and humanitarian challenges before them.

My country therefore urges all Congolese political actors to work together to ensure that the prevailing calm endures over the long term and to promote national reconciliation, which is a guarantee of lasting peace. In that vein, my country encourages the Congolese Government to pursue its efforts, in conjunction with the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and multilateral partners, to resolve the thorny issue of the Ebola epidemic.

With regard to Cameroon, we wish to echo the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in welcoming the recent milestones reached by that

brotherly country's Government towards a lasting and inclusive agreement to the crisis with a view to maintaining its territorial integrity and national unity.

On the situation in Burundi, my delegation calls on all stakeholders in the crisis to prioritize dialogue to reach consensus solutions to all political and social challenges. We remain convinced that the international community, and the African Union and the Community of East African States in particular, can play a constructive role in the current situation. We therefore urge them to continue their efforts to find pressing solutions to humanitarian issues and organize the peaceful holding of elections in 2020.

Côte d'Ivoire also recalls the concerns repeatedly expressed by the Security Council on the security and humanitarian situation in the Lake Chad basin, where armed terrorist groups, such as Boko Haram, and cross-border criminal networks are operating. My country believes that the security approach taken by the States of the region, through the Multinational Joint Task Force, remains appropriate. It must be therefore supported by efforts for economic and social development and the fight against the effects of climate change.

Moreover, we note that despite the reduction in its operational capacity, the actions of the Lord's Resistance Army, including kidnappings, looting and killings, remain a threat to the safety and security of civilians, particularly in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Central African Republic. In that regard, we welcome the decision of the African Union Peace and Security Council to maintain the Regional Cooperation Initiative for the Elimination of the Lord's Resistance Army.

My country is convinced that, despite the ongoing manifold challenges in Central Africa, UNOCA remains a valuable tool for preventive diplomacy and coordination among the various United Nations agencies, the contribution of which to regional peace and stability is essential. That is why the Special Representative of the Secretary-General enjoys Côte d'Ivoire's ongoing support for his tireless and highly admirable commitment. We encourage him to continue to lead through his cooperation with the States of Central Africa in order to create a political, security and humanitarian subregional environment that is conducive to peace and development.

Mr. Pecsteen de Buytswerve (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I would like to wish you,

Mr. President, and your team every success in presiding over the Security Council. You can count on our full support. I would also like to thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General François Louncény Fall for his briefing and substantial work, as reflected in the Secretary-General's report (S/2019/430).

The work of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA) and its biannual reports are of an undeniable value because of their regional and thematic focus. The Council is regularly informed about the region or some of its member countries, but our biannual debates, such as today's, allow us to better understand the major developments and trends affecting the region as a whole, be it in terms of human rights or the humanitarian situation, the growing problem of transhumance management or the scourge of the illegal exploitation of natural resources.

The report also shows the extent to which certain security challenges and threats, because of their cross-border nature, make regional analysis not only desirable but also necessary. Issues initially perceived as local or national often require regional or subregional solutions, either to prevent and deal with armed groups, such as the Lord's Resistance Army or Boko Haram, which continue to operate in some countries in the region, or to consolidate and safeguard early gains, such as the recent Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic.

Another issue that needs to be addressed is the situation in Cameroon. We share the Secretary-General's concerns regarding the humanitarian, security and human rights situation, whose negative impact on the region is well known. We also endorse the solutions recommended in the report. Dialogue must prevail, humanitarian access must be guaranteed and international humanitarian law must be respected by all parties to the conflict. Given the comprehensive nature of the crisis, we all must respond to it at the level of the subregion, the region and the United Nations, as well as at the level of Member States and humanitarian, faith-based and civil society actors.

The United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa is a key instrument for conflict prevention and early warning. That function guides the good offices of the Special Representative. In that regard, the Office supports inclusive, transparent and credible elections as essential factors for regional stability.

In a few weeks' time, the Council will discuss a strategic review of UNOCA. The challenge will be to maximize the role of the Office in prevention, as I mentioned, while minimizing overlap with other United Nations activities in the region. We see that strategic review as a unique opportunity for the United Nations and the Council to deepen our means of action in early warning and response mechanisms.

Mr. Yao Shaojun (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I would like to begin by congratulating Kuwait on assuming the presidency of the Security Council for the month of June. China will fully support your work, Mr. President. I also wish to thank Indonesia for its extraordinary work during its presidency in May.

I would like to thank Mr. Fall, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Central Africa and Head of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA), for his briefing.

Progress has recently been made in the political processes of Central African countries. The Government of the Central African Republic has signed the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation with armed groups and many countries have successfully held presidential or parliamentary elections. New Governments and parliaments have been formed. The process of regional integration has continued to advance, and the Central African Economic and Monetary Community has adopted a common policy on emigration, immigration and border security. Central African countries and regional organizations have demonstrated greater willingness and ability to maintain peace and stability and to promote common development. China welcomes those developments.

At the same time, factors such as conflict, poverty and disease continue to constrain stability and development in Central African countries. The Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) and piracy in the Gulf of Guinea continue to threaten the countries of the region. The international community should pay greater attention to the situation in the region and step up its support for the countries there.

First, we should encourage the countries of Central Africa to continue to resolve their differences through political dialogue. The Council and the international community should play a constructive role in the political settlement of relevant issues in the region and, on the basis of respect for the sovereignty and leadership of the countries concerned, conduct mediation and

good offices to promote peaceful dialogue. Moreover, the international community should closely follow the impact of the situation in other parts of Africa on the Central African region and adopt an integrated approach to a joint response.

Secondly, we should help countries to enhance capacity-building. The international community should heed and respect the views of the countries concerned, work towards enhancing the ability of countries of the region to solve their problems independently and provide support that is tailored to their needs in the areas of poverty reduction, sustainable development, the improvement of the humanitarian situation and the combat against cross-border arms smuggling and drug trafficking.

Thirdly, we should continue to support countries of the region in maintaining security and stability. China commends the efforts of countries of the region to combat the LRA and other armed groups and terrorist organizations and supports the African Union (AU) in its ongoing implementation of relevant regional cooperation initiatives. We hope that the international community will strengthen cooperation with the countries of the region and the AU in that regard.

China supports Central African countries in bolstering their capacity to fight piracy in the Gulf of Guinea. Special Representative Fall and UNOCA have been closely engaged with regional and subregional organizations, carried out preventive diplomacy and good offices and promoted political dialogue in Central African countries in order to settle differences peaceably. China acknowledges those efforts. We support the greater role being played by the United Nations to achieve lasting peace in Central Africa and hope that UNOCA will continue to implement its mandate, as authorized by the Council, fully heed and respect the views of the countries concerned and strengthen coordination and coherence among the United Nations, regional organizations and relevant countries to forge the synergy necessary to maintain regional stability.

Finally, I would like to emphasize that the issues in the North-West and South-West regions of Cameroon are not on the Council's agenda. The situation there does not pose a threat to international or regional peace and security. The international community should respect the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Cameroon, acknowledge and support the recent

efforts of the Government of Cameroon to engage in dialogue and improve the humanitarian situation, among others.

Ms. Morrison González (Dominican Republic) (*spoke in Spanish*): We thank Mr. François Louncény Fall for his very detailed briefing.

We commend the progress achieved with respect to the holding of legislative elections in Chad, the peaceful transfer of power in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the signing of the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic. We hope that the pending political transitions will be carried out peacefully. We congratulate all actors that made possible the rapprochement between the parties in these conflicts. We hope that these peaceful processes will have a multiplier effect in the search for resolutions to the various conflicts in the region. In that regard, we urge all stakeholders to honour their commitments to the full implementation of the agreements, with a view to bringing peace to their countries and the region.

The political situation in Central Africa nevertheless continues to be characterized by instability and tensions caused by electoral processes, as well as by security and human rights issues. We regret that the security situation in some parts of the region remains precarious due to the activity of armed groups, ethnic conflicts and intercommunal violence between pastoralists and farmers. Boko Haram continues to bring instability, pain and death to civilians and members of the military in Chad and in Cameroon.

The Dominican Republic condemns the violation of human rights, kidnappings and attacks against civilians perpetrated by the Lord's Resistance Army, and welcomes the decision of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union to maintain the Regional Cooperation Initiative for the Elimination of the Lord's Resistance Army. We cannot imagine stability and development in the Central African region until the armed groups are deprived of their means of subsistence. A multidimensional stability plan must be supplemented with national and regional plans in the short and long terms. Those initiatives must enjoy the support of the international community and should be focused on an open process of dialogue and a strengthened regional cooperation strategy within the framework of the Peacebuilding Fund and the resources that are crucial to disarmament, demobilization and

reintegration programmes. Those activities should be aimed at enabling combatants who are willing to abandon arms to find a means of subsistence and have an opportunity to be reintegrated into society, while protecting civilians and pursuing sustainable development in the region.

It is necessary to expand the presence of the State and to provide the assistance necessary for the improved training and equipping of the security forces. In that regard, we welcome the signing of the memorandum of understanding between the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa and the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA) with the secretariat of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) to jointly support the implementation of the Central African Convention for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons, their Ammunitions and Components. We also welcome the willingness of States to cooperate in efforts to regulate transhumance at the subregional level, in particular through the elaboration of a regulatory framework on pastoralism under ECCAS.

The effects of climate change, which have taken the form of more frequent and larger-scale droughts and floods, are a challenge for Central Africa and a continued source of great concern. Coupled with food insecurity caused largely by adverse weather conditions and the loss of crops and livestock, they cause high levels of hunger and malnutrition, thereby subjecting millions of people to extreme hardship. That is why we believe that UNOCA could play a key role in building regional climate resilience aimed at mitigating the adverse effects of climate change. Those effects, together with the humanitarian consequences of many years of conflict and the prevalence of armed groups and their terrible impact on the civilian population, have undermined institutional, social and economic development in Central Africa. Given the alarming number of people whose sole means of survival is humanitarian assistance, we must restate the need to guarantee safe, timely and unhindered access to much-needed assistance to the most vulnerable populations, including millions of internally displaced persons, in particular women.

With regard to Cameroon and regional organizations, mediation and dialogue between the parties, including civil society, should be intensified in order to build the confidence and the political will necessary to build a sustainable peace. The active participation of such

organizations as the African Union is a vital tool for reaching an inclusive peaceful solution to the conflict. Their leadership is essential for generating trust and the willingness of the parties to engage in a substantial dialogue for peace.

In conclusion, we commend the work done by Mr. François Fall in his efforts aimed at promoting a peaceful solution to the crisis in the region through political dialogue, as well as UNOCA and the Economic Community of Central African States for adopting a joint action plan for 2019. We urge all Central African countries to expand the democratic space and take concrete steps to improve the processes of dialogue with the various political and civil society actors, with a view to addressing the common problems that will allow a greater use of their human, social and natural resources and providing greater opportunities for socioeconomic development to each country in the region.

Mr. Matjila (South Africa): I wish an Eid Mubarak to you, Mr. President, and to the entire Kuwaiti team. We assure you, Sir, of our support during your tenure at the helm of the Security Council, following the very impressive Indonesian presidency in May.

We thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA), Mr. François Louncény Fall, and his team for the report on the situation in Central Africa and the activities of the Regional Office (S/2019/430).

South Africa recognizes the important role played by UNOCA in the promotion of peace and security in Central Africa. We therefore commend the efforts of Mr. Fall in discharging the Regional Office's mandate, particularly in terms of promoting stability in the region and in preventing or mitigating election-related crises.

South Africa welcomes the signing of the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic and the formation of an inclusive Government in that country. We further express the view that all parties should take this opportunity to implement the peace agreement so as to extricate the Central African Republic from its cycle of continued conflict. In this respect, it is of vital importance for the stakeholders in the Central African Republic to put the interests of the people and country first, above all other considerations, and work together towards bringing stability, peace, reconciliation and development to the country.

It is our conviction that elections are one of the most positive signs of the consolidation of democracy on the African continent. South Africa therefore commends the Democratic Republic of the Congo for holding its national elections in a relatively calm atmosphere, which resulted in the peaceful transfer of power in that country. We will assist the Congolese people and Government as they take on their new democratic project.

However, we express our concern over the attempted coup in Gabon in January. Our continent should strive towards eliminating unconstitutional changes of Government, which requires greater support for security sector reform and post-conflict institution-building. We therefore urge UNOCA to continue to assist countries in the region in the preparation and conduct of elections by creating conditions more conducive to peaceful, inclusive and credible elections. In a related context, we wish President Bongo Ondimba a speedy recovery.

South Africa is encouraged by the improving security situation in the Pool department and in the Republic of the Congo in general as well as the easing of social tensions in Chad. Although we remain concerned by the deteriorating humanitarian situation in Cameroon, we are encouraged by the efforts undertaken by the country's authorities to stabilize the situation. We call upon all parties to refrain from any actions that could lead to its further deterioration. We are especially encouraged by the Prime Minister's positive announcement on 9 May during his visit to the affected region. These encouraging steps should be consolidated.

We condemn the indiscriminate attacks against civilians and national security personnel by terrorist and armed groups in the region. We are equally concerned about the increase in piracy and armed robbery of ships in the Gulf of Guinea. We welcome the progress made in efforts to combat poaching and illicit trafficking in wildlife and natural resources as evidenced by the interceptions and arrests made by the Gabonese and Cameroonian authorities in terms of the illegal trade in Kevazingo wood, pangolin scales and elephant tusks.

South Africa notes with concern the number of people who are in need of humanitarian assistance in the region. We thank humanitarian partners and urge them to continue providing fundamental humanitarian assistance to all populations in need. We urge Governments to facilitate access for the delivery of

humanitarian assistance. We encourage the peaceful resolution of disputes and inclusive dialogue where it is required in the region, for example, in addressing the growing number of conflicts related to pastoralism and transhumance in the subregion, among other issues.

South Africa notes the cross-cutting nature of issues in the region. In this regard, we commend the efforts to enhance the coherence and coordination of the United Nations action in the region as evidenced by the close coordination among, inter alia, the African Union (AU), UNOCA, the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel. Among other things, this will contribute to stronger responses in assisting the Lake Chad Basin Commission in the context of fighting Boko Haram and the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), maritime security and conflicts between farmers and herders.

South Africa remains concerned about the security threat posed by the Lord's Resistance Army in the Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We therefore reaffirm the decision of the AU Peace and Security Council of 20 September 2018, to maintain the AU-led Regional Cooperation Initiative for the Elimination of the Lord's Resistance Army, pending the development of a strategy to progressively phase out the Initiative without leaving any security vacuum that the LRA could use to renew and intensify its destabilization activities in the affected areas.

In conclusion, it should be recalled that the Security Council, at its meeting on 10 August 2018 (see S/PV.8328), requested the Secretary-General to undertake a review of the mandate of UNOCA (S/PRST/2018/17). South Africa looks forward to receiving the outcomes emanating from the Secretary-General's strategic review of the scope of UNOCA's mandate and activities by 1 August, with a view to strengthening the role of this political office in the region. We will continue to support Special Representative Fall and his joint efforts with Mr. Chambas.

Mr. Heusgen (Germany): I would like first to congratulate you, Mr. President, on Kuwait's assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of June. I would also like to wish you, Sir, an Eid Mubarak. We also wish to extend our thanks to Indonesia for its presidency during the month of May.

I would like to start where my South Africa left off, namely, by praising the work of the United Nations

Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA) and of Special Representative of the Secretary-General Fall. We see him very much as a catalyst, in particular for regional cooperation. Many of my colleagues — notably, the representatives of France and Côte d'Ivoire — have emphasized the importance of regional cooperation because the problems that we face can be resolved only through such cooperation.

I also see Special Representative Fall as a catalyst for bringing together the various United Nations actors in a coherent way. I therefore welcome what he said about cooperation with Mr. Chambas. I also see him as a catalyst for the transformation of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) into a more effective organization and praise what he has been doing in that regard. There are plans for ECCAS to be more effective. We really hope that that will become a reality because ECCAS is needed as a regional organization that can look at the conflict between herders and farmers that has been described and has been exacerbated by climate change, which has a significant impact on the region. I can only subscribe to what our colleague from the Dominican Republic just said on the issue.

We see the Special Representative as a catalyst for all the efforts with regard to disarmament and security sector reform in the region and in enabling the Peacebuilding Fund to become more engaged there. The Peacebuilding Fund is ready for that. We highlight the role of the Special Representative in furthering the participation of women in the various processes, which our Polish colleague mentioned. If I may suggest, in the next report of the Secretary-General there could perhaps be a section on the role that women play in the various organizations that UNOCA works with and the different processes that it follows.

I would also like to reiterate what my South African colleague said with regard to the cooperation between UNOCA and the African Union (AU) and the role that the AU plays. I would add — I think my South African colleague did not mention it — the cooperation with the European Union, which I believe to be very important.

With regard to the situation in the Central African Republic, I can only echo what my French colleague said earlier, namely, that we all hope that the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation remains in place. However, we are very alarmed about the attacks against civilians, which we condemn.

The humanitarian situation is dire in countries across the region — in the Central African Republic, the Lake Chad region, Cameroon, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Burundi. Germany has pledged \$100 million this year. It is important that humanitarian workers have access, and perhaps there is something that the Special Representative can do to that end.

Lastly, let me turn briefly to the situation in Cameroon. Our United Kingdom colleague mentioned the Arria Formula meeting that we held a couple of weeks ago, where the most important issues were discussed. I think that it was a very significant meeting that highlighted the conflicts and at which there was very good civil society representation. There is a need for a peaceful resolution and dialogue. The humanitarian situation, the effects of climate change and the terrorist activities all have an impact. There are reports of human rights violations. Political dialogue is needed. We appreciate that fact that the Prime Minister has offered to enter into a dialogue with the Anglophone communities. I welcome that offer but it is extremely important that those words be translated into actions and deeds.

Mr. Meza-Cuadra (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, I would like to congratulate Kuwait and you, Mr. President, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month. You can count on my delegation's support. We also thank Indonesia, Ambassador Djani and all his team for the excellent work during the previous month. We appreciate the convening of this meeting and thank Mr. François Louncény Fall for his briefing.

We would first like to highlight the extensive use of good offices and the work of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA) in bringing together and reaching agreement among the various stakeholders in support of the various peace processes under way, as well as its assistance in dealing with situations in a complex and fragile post-electoral context in several countries of the region. As part of those efforts, we commend the commitment of the Office to ensuring good coordination with regional organizations such as the African Union, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Gulf of Guinea Commission and the Economic Community of Central African States. We believe that the presence and involvement of those organizations in all such processes is essential in the current context.

We commend the progress made in the subregion, such as the implementation of the ceasefire agreement in the Congo, the consolidation of the democratic process in Sao Tome and Principe, the announcement by President Tshisekedi of the Democratic Republic of the Congo concerning the release of all political prisoners and the political agreement between the Government of the Central African Republic and the armed groups. However, that does not preclude the need to continue to pursue initiatives in all countries of the region aimed at promoting full respect for human rights as a prerequisite for building peace on the basis of adopting confidence-building measures and strengthening democratic institutions.

We are particularly concerned about the simmering conflict in the North-West and South-West Regions of Cameroon, where the escalation of violence also affects health and education services, contributes to political tension in the country and hampers the delivery of humanitarian aid. In that context, unrestricted access for humanitarian agencies is essential, as is the promotion of cooperation and the presence of regional organizations and international human rights bodies in order to ensure the protection of such rights and the fight against impunity.

Such a presence is also seen as the best way to resolve the political, social and security crisis in Burundi, which can be achieved only through an inclusive intra-Burundian dialogue.

In addition, we acknowledge the work of UNOCA in contributing to a determined fight against scourges that lead to instability, insecurity and violence in the subregion, such as the illicit trafficking in natural resources and wildlife and the activities of illegal armed groups, especially in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Central African Republic and Cameroon.

Similarly, strengthening cooperation between UNOCA and the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel in various complementary areas, such as the fight against Boko Haram, addressing the situation of transhumance corridors as lawless areas used for criminal activity and combating maritime piracy, to name but a few, is particularly noteworthy.

In that regard, we strongly condemn the attacks carried out by that terrorist group in the Lake Chad region and in several countries of the subregion, as well as those perpetrated by the so-called Lord's Resistance Army, whose source of financing is linked to trafficking

in natural resources such as gold and diamonds. That reminds us of the link between terrorism and transnational crime as an area of necessary international coordination and cooperation.

I conclude by stressing that the international community must increase its support in the Central African subregion in order to address the root causes of conflicts and humanitarian crises, with free and safe access for humanitarian and human rights agencies as a minimum prerequisite.

Mr. Sipaco Ribala (Equatorial Guinea) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to begin by congratulating the representative of Indonesia on his successful presidency of the Security Council in the month of May and to wish Kuwait an excellent presidency during the month of June. I would like to assure you, Sir, of the full support of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea.

I would like to thank Mr. François Louncény Fall, Special Representative and Head of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA), and his team for informing us in a comprehensive and illustrative way about UNOCA's activities, in compliance with the mandate that established the Office in order to strengthen the role of the United Nations in promoting peace and security in Central Africa, as well as the use of good offices, preventive diplomacy and mediation for conflict prevention, peacebuilding and the peaceful settlement of disputes.

The Republic of Equatorial Guinea, as a member of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), expresses its sincere congratulations and appreciation for the arduous and dynamic work being carried out by Mr. Fall as Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa. His tireless travels to the countries of the subregion enable him to keep abreast of the sociopolitical situations in each country. In that regard, we encourage Mr. Fall and his team to continue to pursue their political mission to strengthen the capacity of regional and subregional organizations to prevent conflicts in the Central African region and to push the parties to any dispute whose continuation might endanger the maintenance of international peace and security to seek, first and foremost, to settle their dispute by peaceful means.

Our Government will therefore continue to support UNOCA as it strives to foster synergies in order to promote bilateral cooperation among neighbouring

countries and to strengthen cooperation with regional and subregional organizations in the areas of peace, security and conflict prevention, in particular with the African Union, ECCAS, the Central African Economic and Monetary Community, and the Gulf of Guinea Commission.

With regard to the briefing by the Special Representative, we welcome the positive developments recently seen in the region, such as the holding of peaceful elections and the transfer of power in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and efforts to implement the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region. I take this opportunity to thank the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo for hosting the forty-eighth ministerial meeting of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, which took place from 27 to 31 May in Kinshasa.

We further welcome the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic, signed between the Government of that country and 14 armed groups, facilitated by the African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation, and the current return to normalcy in Burundi, whereby the country has adopted a new Constitution, put in place measures for the holding of elections by 2020 and made considerable contributions of troops to peacekeeping missions, all of which exemplify the spirit of reconciliation and tolerance prevailing in Burundi.

The Government of Equatorial Guinea issued a communiqué on 8 January in which it strongly condemned and rejected the attempted coup d'état and the acts of violence perpetrated in Libreville on 7 January.

We are aware that the humanitarian situation in Cameroon is aggravated by the influx of refugees as a result of the situation in some neighbouring countries and the subregion, including the persistent criminal activity of non-State actors. In that regard, we applaud the various measures that have been adopted by the Cameroonian authorities to address this humanitarian and security situation, including, among other measures, the emergency humanitarian plan to provide assistance to internally displaced persons and refugees in the country and the National Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Committee, which is

responsible for the integration of former members of armed groups in the country.

I take this opportunity once again to recall the adoption of resolution 2457 (2019), which exemplified the commitment and support of the international community, through the Security Council, to Africa's efforts to achieve sustainable peace and stability. Achieving the objective of the Silencing the Guns in Africa by 2020 initiative would contribute significantly to saving successive generations from the scourge of war and to the African Union's efforts to ensure an integrated, peaceful, secure and prosperous Africa.

Building on the same vision, as we approach 2020, when we will commemorate the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Beijing Platform for Action, the tenth anniversary of the establishment of UN-Women and resolution 2457 (2019), aimed at Silencing the Guns in Africa by 2020, I call on Member States to make 2020 a turning point in the women and peace and security agenda.

In conclusion, we appreciate the measures implemented by the Governments of the region to address the humanitarian situation. However, the numbers of internally displaced persons, refugees and asylum-seekers in the region is worrisome. Displaced persons must be able to find sustainable means of subsistence, and the best solution to that end is to return to their homes, with due consideration given to their dignity and rights. Moreover, their plight is aggravated by the destabilizing activities of armed groups and the constant attacks on their communities, which remain exposed to severe climate change, malnutrition and Ebola, which require the provision of adequate technical, health and financial assistance.

Mr. Hunter (United States of America): Let me begin by joining my colleagues in congratulating Kuwait as it assumes its presidency of the Council. I thank Special Representative Fall for his briefing today and for the efforts he undertakes, which continue to play a central role towards strengthening the political, security and economic conditions of the countries of Central Africa. In Cameroon in particular, his work to promote a peaceful resolution of the crisis in the North-West and South-West regions is of singular importance.

The United States remains gravely concerned by the deteriorating humanitarian and human rights situation in Cameroon. The Office for the Coordination

of Humanitarian Affairs estimated in April that 4.3 million people in Cameroon — roughly 17 per cent of the population — need humanitarian assistance. We have heard disturbing reports of armed groups and Cameroonian authorities obstructing humanitarian aid delivery by establishing road checkpoints, ceasing supplies, demanding bribes and detaining personnel. Bureaucratic impediments and movement restrictions further exacerbate the situation. That must stop now. We call on all parties to enable unhindered humanitarian access to deliver life-saving assistance to all those in need and to respect international humanitarian law and international human rights law.

We welcome the Cameroonian Government's development of an emergency humanitarian assistance plan and coordination centre for the ongoing crisis in the North-West and South-West regions. However, we must underscore that for those efforts to be successful they must adhere to the humanitarian assistance principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence.

The international community, with the support of the Cameroonian Government, should continue implementing a coordinated and robust humanitarian response. Since the beginning of fiscal year 2018, the United States Government has contributed over \$87 million to provide humanitarian assistance to host communities, internally displaced persons and refugees in Cameroon. That aid is critical, but it is effective only when we have access to the vulnerable populations.

The human rights abuses and violations in the affected regions are also worrying. The continued reports of attacks on civilians, including extrajudicial killings, are extremely troubling. We urge all the parties to refrain from such abuses, and the Government of Cameroon to hold all responsible accountable through transparent and fair trials. We thank the United Nations and representatives of civil society for their brave reporting on the status of human rights, and call for all the parties to cease actions that could hinder human rights reporting in the two regions. The Government of Cameroon's recent decision to deny entry to a researcher from an international non-governmental organization is regrettable.

We are similarly concerned about the increasing restrictions on political pluralism. In late January, the Government arrested Maurice Kamto, the leader of the Cameroon Renaissance Movement, and hundreds of his followers, following peaceful demonstrations,

and on 1 June arrested more than 100 party members as they attempted to hold a peaceful march. Many of them remain in pretrial detention on dubious charges. We call on the Government to move trial proceedings for political detainees to civilian courts and to respect fair trial guarantees, in accordance with Cameroon's obligations under international law.

We welcome the Prime Minister's visit to the North-West and South-West regions to talk about the ongoing crisis with the parties affected, which we view as a very positive step. We welcome President Biya's instruction to speed up the decentralization mandated by the 1996 Constitution. The international community will support the Government of Cameroon in its efforts to open an inclusive dialogue with the separatists, and we encourage the Government to consider those options. Likewise, we strongly urge those supporting the separatist cause, particularly those living in the diaspora, to join talks without preconditions. We urge the African Union (AU) and the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) to play an even stronger role in promoting peace and security in Cameroon through dialogue. Our colleagues frequently remind us of the AU's leadership role in conflict prevention on the African continent, and we urge AU leaders to play a constructive role in trying to find a solution to the current political impasse that is causing this humanitarian crisis. One way to do that is by joining ECCAS and the United Nations in joint visits to engage all Cameroonian actors in supporting dialogue.

Finally, we look forward to the strategic review of the mandate of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA) later this year. We anticipate further discussions with Special Representative Fall and his staff in order to ensure that UNOCA's mandate is focused on the most pressing challenges in the Central African region, while coordinating strategically with other United Nations offices operating there as well.

Mr. Soemirat (Indonesia): On behalf of my delegation, I would like to begin by congratulating you and your team, Mr. President, on your assumption of the presidency of the Council for this month. I also want to assure you of our full support and readiness to work with you throughout your presidency. We would also like to thank all the members of the Council for their support to our delegation during Indonesia's presidency last month. And we wish you and all the Members of the United Nations *Eid Mubarak* — a happy holiday.

We thank Special Representative Fall for his briefing and for the work of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA) in supporting the countries of the region.

We have noted from his briefing and from the Secretary-General's latest report (S/2019/430) that the situation in Central Africa remained volatile and highly charged by political and security challenges. However, we cannot overlook the positive progress that has taken place in the region since the beginning of the year. The peaceful general elections and transfer of Power in the Democratic Republic of Congo and the signing of the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic are just a few of the highlights. There is no doubt that the region is currently in the international spotlight. We have heard over and over again that multilateral and bilateral efforts to support the region are being prepared and delivered. We must collectively seize this momentum in order to assist the countries of the region in their efforts to address their various challenges and achieve a better future for their region. I would like to focus my comments on a number of points.

First, the root causes of conflict should be comprehensively addressed. We share the Secretary-General's view that inclusive, genuine and credible electoral processes remain a key factor for the region. The Governments of the region must regain the trust of their peoples, especially after years of conflict and political distrust. Not only that, they must also gain one another's trust. Good neighbours create a good community. And the international community should work together to provide capacity that will enable the creation of that trust. In short, trust is important and partnership is key. Peace and stability remain fragile. The region is prey to threats from armed groups, the illicit exploitation and trafficking of natural resources, and communicable diseases. The violence committed by the Lord's Resistance Army and Boko Haram has significantly affected the region's stability. That must also stop.

Secondly, partnerships between regional and subregional organizations, in collaboration with the United Nations, are urgently needed. Indonesia believes in the principle that neighbours know best. As natural first responders, regional and subregional organizations play a very important role in enabling the region to resolve this crisis. We recognize the important efforts undertaken for the region by the African Union, the

Economic Community of Central African States, the Central African Economic and Monetary Community, the Lake Chad Basin Commission, the Gulf of Guinea Commission and other regional and subregional organizations, and we encourage them to continue their collaboration with the United Nations.

Indonesia also notes the significant importance of the region for the United Nations, which is apparent from the number of dedicated United Nations special envoys and representatives to the region and its countries. We welcome the efforts to enhance coherence and coordination between them, including the coordination and cooperation between UNOCA and the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel, as the Special Representative mentioned. This is in line with the current spirit of reform of the United Nations, including by breaking the silos between the branches of the United Nations system. We also urge them to include United Nations peacekeeping missions on the ground in their coordination efforts, as well as United Nations experts mandated by the Security Council.

In conclusion, it is clear that the challenges in the region persist, and as members of the Security Council, we are obliged to continue to provide support to the countries of the region in accordance with our mandate.

Mr. Polyanskiy (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I would first like to thank our Indonesian colleagues for their active and productive work in the month of May, and to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your assumption of the presidency and to wish you every success and hopefully a more or less calm month of June, politically speaking.

We are grateful to Mr. François Louncény Fall, Special Representative of the Secretary-General, for his assessment of the situation in the Central African subregion. Russia supports the activities of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA) as an important tool for implementing preventive diplomacy. We share the view that the challenges facing the countries of the subregion are complex ones. In that context, it is especially important to ensure that the regions themselves take the leading role in preventing crises and resolving conflicts. For our part, we are ready to support their efforts.

We consider the Central African region key to combating the spread of terrorism on the continent as a whole. The penetration of radical and terrorist elements into Central Africa has been accompanied by illegal

trafficking in weapons and drugs and income from the exploitation of minerals. We appreciate all regional efforts to develop coherent approaches to combating any manifestations of terrorism, of which the activities of the regional multilateral armed forces are a good example. It will be crucial to ensure that it is adequately funded in order to enable the States of the Lake Chad basin to continue their joint operations aimed at pursuing and eliminating militants in transborder areas.

We note that there has been a certain amount of success in combating Boko Haram, with the support of the international community. However, Boko Haram still has fighting potential and is capable of conducting serious attacks. Its fighters are still active in Chad, including in the border areas with the Niger, Nigeria and Cameroon, where extremists have been attacking civilians, United Nations and non-governmental organizations' personnel, and Chadian military roadblocks.

We are seriously concerned about the substantial influx into Boko Haram of foreign terrorists, including fighters from the Islamic State. According to some estimates, it added around 2,000 new recruits to its ranks in 2018. We are ready to continue working actively in various platforms in order to eliminate the terrorist threat on the African continent. We are focusing in particular on identifying local terrorists' sources of financing for local terrorists and their contacts with other international radical groups.

Russia is closely monitoring the situation in the Central African Republic. We support President Touadera's efforts to start an inclusive political dialogue, launch security-sector reform as soon as possible and build the armed forces' capacity. The Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic, signed on 6 February, represents an important starting point for a future settlement of the country's situation. For our part, we will continue our firm support to the process of national reconciliation, coordinating our efforts with everyone involved in the quest to find pathways to normalizing the situation without hidden agendas.

Piracy in the Gulf of Guinea is one of the other factors creating instability in the Central African region. Regrettably, the armed-robbery attacks on foreign vessels have continued, and among others Russian sailors have been taken hostage. We have had a positive experience in participating in international

efforts to fight piracy in the north-western Indian Ocean as part of the Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia. We hope that experience can be useful in resolving similar problems in the Gulf of Guinea, including in the context of possibly expanding the geographic mandate of the Contact Group to include the Gulf of Guinea.

We are concerned about the continuing activities of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). While it has been marginalized in the past few years thanks to the successful efforts of armed forces of the region, it is still plundering and robbing in various areas of the Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and the States of Central Africa should keep the fight against the LRA in their sights. We hope that the concept for eradicating this threat, developed under the auspices of the Economic Community of Central African States, will bear fruit.

We are following the development of events in Cameroon. The problem of the Anglophone provinces is not new. The division of former colonies without regard for their religious, linguistic and ethnic differences has resulted in a number of hotbeds of tension in Africa, including Cameroon. We urge all the Cameroonian parties to show maximum restraint. Resolving the country's internal problems will be possible only at the negotiating table through substantive national dialogue, with respect for human rights and the rule of law.

In conclusion, I want to point out that the challenges and threats that the Central African region is facing today are inextricably linked, as are the States themselves. The destabilization of the situation in one country is capable of disturbing the entire subregion and undermining its neighbours' security, and it is therefore very important not to cross the line between prevention and meddling in domestic affairs.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of Kuwait.

At the outset, I would like to congratulate all Muslims around the world on the occasion of Eid Al-Fitr Al-Mubarak. We pray that all the peoples of the world would can continue to celebrate it in safety and security. I would also like to thank everyone for their congratulations on Kuwait's assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month and to commend the representative of Indonesia and his team for their successful and distinctive presidency of

the Council in May. Like everyone who has preceded me today, I would like to 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 valuable briefing and to commend the efforts and activities of the staff of UNOCA in implementing its mandate.

I will focus on three basic aspects of the issue under discussion. First, on the security and political fronts, the Secretary-General's recent report on the situation in Central Africa and the activities of UNOCA (S/2019/430) gives a detailed picture of the latest political, economic, social and security developments in the region and their impact on peace and security in Central Africa, as well as of the countries in the region that are dealing with a number of challenges.

On the political front, the Democratic Republic of the Congo witnessed a first peaceful transition of power on 24 January. In the wake of major efforts by many stakeholders, the Central African Republic witnessed the signing in February in its capital, Bangui, of the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation between the Government and 14 armed groups, under the auspices of the African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation and with the support of the African Union and the United Nations. We look forward to other political developments in the region, including local elections in Angola and presidential elections in Burundi in 2020. We hope that they will be held on time and include all political parties, with the participation of international observers and free of violent incidents. We want to emphasize that the holding of inclusive, free and credible elections and the implementation of political processes in any country in Central Africa are important steps towards ensuring the maintenance of peace and security that will contribute to the stability of the whole region. That also includes conducting a dialogue between Governments and all political parties, including opposition parties.

We want to point to the importance of cooperation between the Governments of the region and regional and international organizations such as the United Nations, the African Union, the Economic Community of Central African States, the Central African Economic and Monetary Community, the Lake Chad Basin Commission, the Gulf of Guinea Commission and other relevant active organizations. The aim is to achieve progress on the political, economic and security fronts,

which is a significant challenge facing the countries of Central Africa.

With regard to the security situation, we are very concerned about the violence and armed conflicts in the region that have tragically claimed the lives of many innocent civilians. It is vital to work to find radical solutions to such conflicts and to hold the perpetrators accountable. We also firmly condemn criminal acts, suicide bombings and recurring armed attacks, as well as the robberies and kidnappings carried out by Boko Haram and the Lord's Resistance Army in the region, all of which are obstacles to progress on the political, security and development fronts. It is everyone's responsibility to address those attacks and destructive acts through cooperation among the United Nations, the Security Council, regional and subregional organizations and all of the countries of the region.

We share the concerns of the Secretary-General about the deteriorating security and human rights situations in the North-West and South-West regions of Cameroon. We urge the Cameroonian Government to continue cooperating with regional and international organizations and to redouble its efforts to alleviate humanitarian suffering, prevent violent acts and armed conflict and stop the flow of refugees, in line with its obligations under international humanitarian law. We stress our respect for Cameroon's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity and for non-interference in its internal affairs. We call on all parties in Cameroon to cooperate and settle their differences through dialogue and to ensure unobstructed humanitarian access to all people in need.

Secondly, with regard to the humanitarian situation, we deplore the rise in the numbers of people in need of urgent humanitarian assistance, refugees and those internally displaced as a result of violence and spreading epidemics such as cholera and Ebola. We call once again for cooperation among the countries of the region and regional organizations in order to address the various threats and make progress on the humanitarian front so as to alleviate the suffering of the peoples of the region.

Thirdly, with regard to cooperation with UNOCA and other organizations, Central Africa is dealing with a number of issues, including conflicts related to transhumance, climate change, armed conflict and the spread of small arms and light weapons, as well as economic and social problems, all of which are challenges that require serious cooperation among the Governments of the countries of Central Africa and all the relevant regional and international organizations if they are to meet the aspirations of the peoples of the region to security, stability and well-being, especially considering that the region has a wealth of natural resources.

In conclusion, I would like to once again thank Mr. Fall and the staff of UNOCA for their extraordinary efforts.

I now resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

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

The meeting rose at 4.50 p.m.