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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 fifty-sixth meeting in Kigali, from 20 to 24 November 2023, and its fifty-seventh meeting in Luanda, from 20 to 24 May 2024. As the secretariat to the Committee, the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa supported the organization of the meetings.

The Committee continued to provide a forum for its member States to review peace and security dynamics in the subregion, identify common challenges and make proposals for responding to identified threats to regional peace and stability.

During the two meetings, the Committee reviewed the situation pertaining to peace and security in Central Africa, including trends, challenges and opportunities for conflict prevention and resolution and sustaining peace in the subregion. The Committee discussed collaboration with the Economic Community of Central African States, regional peace and security, mediation, unconstitutional changes of Government, the humanitarian situation, violent extremism and terrorism, human rights, hate speech, maritime safety and security in the Gulf of Guinea, climate, peace and security, children in armed conflict, the youth and peace and security agenda and the women and peace and security agenda in Central Africa.

During both meetings, ministerial declarations were adopted, including declarations on the prevention of unconstitutional changes of Government, the humanitarian situation, hate speech and regional mediation initiatives in Central Africa.

\* A/79/150.



## I. Introduction

1. In its resolution [78/59](#), entitled “Regional confidence-building measures: activities of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa”, the General Assembly welcomed and encouraged the initiative of the States members of the Standing Advisory Committee to further develop collaboration and synergies with the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS). The General Assembly invited the Committee and ECCAS to continue discussions on the relationship between the two entities in the light of the institutional reform of ECCAS and urged them to consider how to harmonize their views and actions so as to avoid overlap and duplication in the implementation of their respective mandates. The Assembly encouraged the Committee, in view of the repositioning of ECCAS and the strengthening of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA), to continue to serve within the United Nations as a high-level body for continuous monitoring, reflection and the fostering of solutions, regarding the concerns and needs of the Central African subregion in the area of peace and security.
2. In the same resolution, the General Assembly expressed its satisfaction to the Secretary-General for his support to the Committee and expressed appreciation for the role played by UNOCA. The Assembly strongly encouraged the member States of the Committee and international partners to support the work of UNOCA. The Assembly expressed its satisfaction to the Secretary-General for his support for the revitalization of the activities of the Committee and requested him to continue to provide the assistance needed to ensure the success of its regular meetings. The Assembly called upon the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly, at its seventy-ninth session, a report on the implementation of resolution [78/59](#).
3. The present report is submitted in response to the above request and covers the activities carried out by the Committee from July 2023 to June 2024.

## II. Activities of the Committee

4. During the reporting period, the Committee held two meetings. The fifty-sixth meeting of the Committee was held in Kigali, from 20 to 24 November 2023. The fifty-seventh meeting of the Committee took place in Luanda, from 20 to 24 May 2024. All Committee members participated in both meetings, namely, Angola, Burundi, Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Chad, the Congo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Rwanda and São Tomé and Príncipe.
5. In both meetings, representatives of the following entities participated as observers: the Central African Economic and Monetary Community, ECCAS, the Economic Community of West African States, the Gulf of Guinea Commission, the Lake Chad Basin Commission, the Multinational Joint Task Force, the Interregional Coordination Centre for Maritime Safety and Security in the Gulf of Guinea, the Organisation internationale de la francophonie, the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region and the Coalition for Youth and Peace and Security in Central Africa.
6. The following United Nations system entities participated as observers in the meetings: the Subregional Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Central Africa, the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA), the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS), the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region, the United Nations Office to the

African Union, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Population Fund, the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children in Armed Conflict and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime.

7. During the fifty-sixth meeting, the Committee adopted two declarations. In the first declaration (see annex I), the Committee called for the prevention of unconstitutional changes of Government in Central Africa. While the Committee welcomed efforts undertaken by ECCAS and the African Union, it called on ECCAS to adopt a protocol on democracy, governance and human rights in Central Africa. It further encouraged the meaningful participation of women and young people in peace processes at the national, regional and continental levels. It also called for greater synergies and collaboration between the African Union and ECCAS in addressing unconstitutional changes of Government. It called on ECCAS to continue to consolidate good governance and national early warning and prevention mechanisms. The Committee also called for regional support to countries undergoing transitions to establish democratic governance and build sustainable peace. In the second declaration (see annex II), the Committee called for regional engagement on the humanitarian situation in Central Africa. The Committee encouraged the strengthening of the regional and normative framework related to the management of humanitarian crises, as well as the development of a regional humanitarian policy. It further called for the creation of a regional humanitarian action and coordination agency, as well as a regional humanitarian solidarity fund, in line with previous recommendations of the Heads of State and Government of ECCAS.

8. During its fifty-seventh meeting, the Committee adopted two declarations. In the first declaration (see annex III), the Committee addressed regional mediation initiatives. It encouraged a continued engagement of the subregion to advance mediation initiatives in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, including under the leadership of the President of Angola, João Manuel Gonçalves Lourenço. It further called for the organization of a regional conference on mediation by Angola during the country's presidency of the Standing Advisory Committee. The Committee called on ECCAS to develop a regional mediation and preventive diplomacy framework, with the support of UNOCA. In the second declaration (see annex IV), the Committee reiterated its commitment to the fight against hate speech. The Committee further called on member States to work on the final adoption of the regional strategy and action plan on the fight against hate speech, as well as their implementation.

9. From 25 to 29 September 2023, the Bureau of the Committee carried out a field visit to São Tomé and Príncipe to gather information on the impact of climate change on peacebuilding, security and stability, as well as to identify good practices, including on a sustainable, subregional approach to mitigating the effects of climate change. Participants identified the impact of climate change on livelihoods and economic security in São Tomé and Príncipe, while also highlighting good practices in addressing those challenges. Participants expressed the need for continued efforts in sustainable development, sharing best practices across the region, enhancing disaster management capabilities and advocating for regional strategies to address climate security and establish a solidarity fund for natural disaster responses.

10. From 4 to 8 March 2024, the Bureau of the Committee carried out a field visit to Rwanda to gather information on disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes, as well as other related issues, such as the situation of refugees and hate speech. Participants also aimed to better understand the dynamics to identify best practices and contribute to efforts in peacebuilding, security and collective stability in the subregion. Regarding the situation of refugees, the visit to the camps revealed that the refugee situation remained unresolved, with some having been living in the Kiziba camp for 28 years, mainly owing to the ongoing conflict in eastern Democratic

Republic of the Congo. On the border situation, the participants noted that various policies had hindered the free movement of people and goods between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda, in particular at the Goma-Gisenyi border, affecting local communities reliant on cross-border trade. With regards to disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, the participants noted that existing mechanisms had not found sustainable solutions for the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of armed groups, but the need for demobilization persisted owing to numerous conflicts. Moreover, the visit exposed the need to improve the management of refugee populations, which are another result of ongoing conflicts.

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

11. During the two meetings the Committee held during the reporting period, the ECCAS Commission provided a comprehensive geopolitical and security review of Central Africa, covering current developments and challenges in the areas of political governance, peace, security and stability within the States members of the Committee.

12. In its geopolitical review, the ECCAS Commission highlighted that political stability in Central Africa was generally maintained despite ongoing security concerns in some member States. Significant progress was noted, including through various ECCAS sessions and mediation initiatives between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda. The ECCAS Commission noted, however, that the subregion continued to face challenges, such as diplomatic tensions, increased armed group activity and exacerbated economic, security and humanitarian crises.

13. In terms of political and institutional developments, the ECCAS Commission highlighted its support to the political transition processes in Chad and Gabon, the efforts of Cameroon to rebuild its regions that were affected by separatism and the withdrawal of Angola from the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries. The formation of a new Government in the Central African Republic following a constitutional referendum, elections in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and an inclusive national dialogue in Gabon also illustrated the subregion's political dynamics, according to the ECCAS Commission.

14. Regarding internal and cross-border security, the ECCAS Commission noted that, despite a generally stable situation, specific incidents, such as terrorist attacks by Boko Haram and Islamic State West Africa Province in the Lake Chad Basin, and activities by the Allied Democratic Forces and the Lord's Resistance Army in the Great Lakes Region, indicated that terrorism remained a serious threat. In addition, inter-community conflicts, exacerbated by climate change and political manipulation, as well as catastrophic flooding in several countries, highlighted ongoing security and environmental challenges.

## **B. Unconstitutional changes of Government in Central Africa**

15. During the fifty-sixth meeting, the Committee addressed, for the first time, the root causes, triggers and means to prevent and fight against unconstitutional changes of Government. Participants highlighted the need to reinforce early warning and prevention mechanisms at the regional level and to strengthen governance, the rule of law and justice. One of the recommendations that emerged from the meeting was to organize a regional conference on unconstitutional changes of Government, bringing together academia and civil society, including women's and youth groups and think tanks, among others. From 1 to 2 July, São Tomé and Príncipe subsequently hosted a conference on unconstitutional changes of Government in Central Africa. At the conference, participants evaluated legal frameworks at the regional and

continental level, as well as root causes and the management of unconstitutional changes of Government. A comparative analysis with West Africa was also made. São Tomé and Príncipe provided conclusions of the conference that will be presented to member States at the fifty-eighth meeting of the Committee, which will take place in the Central African Republic in November 2024. The outcome document includes recommendations, such as the reinforcement of structural prevention through the ratification of governance protocols and the elaboration of a related legal framework for Central Africa, as well as of a framework for the accompaniment of transitions.

### **C. Humanitarian situation in Central Africa**

16. During the fifty-sixth meeting, UNHCR, on behalf of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), provided an overview of the humanitarian situation in Central Africa. UNHCR informed the Committee that the humanitarian needs had reached unprecedented levels, with more than 42 million people in need of humanitarian assistance by October 2023. Meanwhile, resources had become increasingly scarce, with only 7.2 million people having received humanitarian assistance by October 2023. The Committee welcomed a proposal by ECCAS and UNOCA to organize a humanitarian conference for Central Africa.

17. During the fifty-seventh meeting, States members of the Committee recalled their commitment to the organization of a regional conference on the humanitarian situation. With regards to the humanitarian situation in Chad, the Committee recommended the organization of a regional resource mobilization conference to address the humanitarian challenges resulting from the crisis in the Sudan.

18. The ECCAS Commission noted that the humanitarian situation remained critical, with a high number of refugees and internally displaced persons in countries such as Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Chad and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The ECCAS Commission concluded that the humanitarian situation, worsened by conflicts and the impact of climate change, required enhanced institutional and financial mechanisms to alleviate the suffering of the affected populations.

### **D. Mediation initiatives in Central Africa**

19. During the fifty-seventh meeting, member States extensively discussed the situation in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. They reiterated the urgency of a peaceful resolution of the situation and encouraged diplomatic initiatives taken by the President of Angola, calling on all stakeholders to commit to their engagements for the process to succeed. The Committee called for a continuation of the quadripartite initiative of the East African Community, the Southern African Development Community, the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region and ECCAS under the auspices of the African Union and with the participation of the United Nations.

### **E. 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 (the Kinshasa Convention)**

20. During the fifty-seventh meeting, the Committee discussed the implementation of the Kinshasa Convention. As the host of the first conference of signatories of the Convention, which took place in Yaoundé in 2018, Cameroon provided an update on

progress towards its implementation. It encouraged the organization of the second conference, which had been planned to be held in the Congo in 2020 but was postponed owing to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. The delegation of the Congo reaffirmed the country's commitment to hosting the second conference, in collaboration with ECCAS and UNOCA. Several countries, including Equatorial Guinea and Gabon, gave a reminder of their pending requests to ECCAS to support the creation of their Small Arms and Light Weapons Commissions.

## **F. Human rights**

21. During both meetings, the Committee discussed the human rights situation in the Central Africa subregion, including with a focus on the twentieth anniversary of the Subregional Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Central Africa and on the right to development. The Committee highlighted that the operationalization of the right to development requires States to create an environment conducive to inclusive economic growth. During the fifty-seventh meeting, the Subregional Centre presented an overview of the right to development, and other human rights, and their intersection with security. It outlined challenges, such as corruption, low institutional capacity and security crises, which continued to hinder development efforts. Subregional integration and addressing new security threats were highlighted as crucial to overcoming these obstacles. Good governance, the strengthening of relevant national institutions, transparency in natural resource management and the reduction of socioeconomic inequalities were also highlighted. The Subregional Centre noted that the upcoming Summit of the Future was an opportunity to develop a collective path to a prosperous future for all, with the commitment to promoting human rights-based actions.

## **G. Hate speech**

22. During the fifty-seventh meeting, the delegation of Cameroon reported on efforts to combat hate speech in Central Africa, highlighting the forum on the topic, which took place in Bangui on 30 and 31 January 2024. Under the patronage of the President of the Central African Republic, Faustin Archange Touadéra, participants in the forum reviewed and pre-validated a regional strategy and action plan for addressing hate speech in the media. Representatives from all ECCAS countries and partners such as UNOCA; MINUSCA; the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO); and the Subregional Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Central Africa attended. Key recommendations included launching an annual forum for ministers for communication and media by 2025, with Burundi hosting the first forum in Bujumbura, and translating documents into all official languages of the Standing Advisory Committee and ECCAS. A declaration was adopted, and ECCAS outlined steps for political approval of the strategy and action plan, integrating the initiatives contained in the action plan into the decision-making process of the Council for Peace and Security in Central Africa.

## **H. Children and armed conflict**

23. During the fifty-sixth meeting, the Committee discussed for the first time the issue of children and armed conflict. The topic was introduced by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, Virginia Gamba, who informed participants that child protection was deteriorating worldwide, with a significant increase in attacks on schools and hospitals. She outlined trends and patterns of grave violations in Central Africa, expressing concern over the high

number of children recruited and used, killed and maimed, and abducted by parties to conflict, as well as over rape and other forms of sexual violence against children. She noted that some positive efforts towards preventing grave violations against children, including the recruitment and use of children by armed forces and armed groups, had been successfully implemented in several countries in Central Africa, notably in Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Chad and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The Special Representative submitted to the Committee a comprehensive list of prevention measures that could improve the protection of conflict-affected children. The Committee recommended the organization of a regional conference on children in armed conflict to strengthen regional prevention efforts.

## **I. Climate security**

24. During the fifty-sixth meeting, the delegation of São Tomé and Príncipe presented the report of the field visit by the Bureau of the Committee to São Tomé and Príncipe from 25 to 29 September 2023. The delegation noted that participants had explored the particularities of an island State and good practices with regards to preventing and adapting to the impact of climate change. The Committee encouraged ECCAS to advance on the development of a regional prevention strategy on the impacts of climate change on security and member States to share good practices and strengthen regional solidarity by establishing a solidarity fund.

25. During the fifty-seventh meeting, several delegations highlighted farmer-herder conflicts in the subregion and their exacerbation because of climate change. The protection of national parks was also highlighted, notably in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo in the context of continued insecurity. Several countries highlighted their commitment to environmental protection and recommended to strengthen cross-border cooperation and the development of regional policies to address persisting challenges. In its presentation, UNOCA suggested the creation of an interministerial coordination mechanism to strengthen multisectoral coordination at the regional and international levels.

## **III. Conclusions and recommendations**

26. The United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa is a valuable platform for facilitating subregional dialogue and cooperation on crucial issues of peace and stability. The Committee recognizes that the Central Africa subregion is still confronted with significant ongoing and emerging challenges to its stability. I commend the commitment of the States of the subregion to address these challenges, as evidenced by the constructive discussions held during the fifty-sixth and fifty-seventh ministerial meetings of the Committee.

27. Good governance, inclusive elections and political participation, the protection and promotion of rights and freedoms for all are inextricably linked to economic development and prosperity. I encourage all States in the subregion to pursue these goals consistently. I acknowledge the progress in the countries undergoing transitions, notably the return to constitutional order in Chad and the efforts of transitional authorities in Gabon to comply with the transition timeline, while encouraging continued efforts for inclusive governance and the respect for human rights. I welcome the engagement of the subregion to explore ways of preventing unconstitutional changes of Government, as reflected in the declaration of the fifty-sixth meeting of the Committee, as well as in the regional conference on the subject, which was hosted by São Tomé and Príncipe on 1 and 2 July 2024.

28. In the face of a rapidly escalating armed conflict in the Sudan and the humanitarian consequences for the Central Africa subregion, I wish to commend Central African States, most notably Chad and the Central African Republic, for their continued engagement in favour of civilians fleeing the conflict and the efforts undertaken to support those in need. I encourage all member States to support peace efforts in the Sudan. I also welcome the declaration of the fifty-sixth meeting of the Committee on the humanitarian situation in the Central Africa subregion and the call for greater regional solidarity and the establishment of a regional humanitarian fund.

29. I welcome the discussion by the Committee, during its fifty-sixth meeting and for the first time, of the issue of children in armed conflict. I note the interest of member States in reinforcing preventive action and I encourage them to implement the measures presented by my Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict at the regional and national levels.

30. I remain concerned about the situation in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo and welcome the call, during the fifty-seventh meeting of the Committee, for reinforced mediation efforts in the region, including under the leadership of President João Lourenço of Angola. I also welcome the proposal brought forward by Angola to organize a conference on regional mediation efforts during the Angolan presidency of the Committee. I urge all stakeholders to commit to work towards political solutions to the conflicts in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo.

31. I express my gratitude to the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, UNOCA and my Special Representative for Central Africa and Head of UNOCA for their support to the Committee. I also commend other United Nations entities for their specialized contributions that have greatly enriched the work of the Committee. I look forward to the discussions and outcomes of the Committee at its fifty-eighth meeting.



## Annex I

[Original: French]

## **Kigali declaration on the prevention and combating of unconstitutional changes in Central Africa**

We, the Ministers and heads of delegation of the States members of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, meeting in Kigali on 24 November 2023, on the occasion of the fifty-sixth ministerial meeting of the Committee,

*Guided* by the existing legal instruments of the African Union, notably the Constitutive Act of the African Union, the Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union, the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance, the African Charter on Human and People's Rights, the Lomé Declaration on Unconstitutional Changes of Government and other relevant instruments of the African Union;

*Considering* the need to promote peace, security and stability as a prerequisite for the implementation of Agenda 2063 of the African Union, including the "Silencing the Guns in Africa by 2030" project; the Revised Protocol on the Council for Peace and Security in Central Africa, adopted in Libreville on 18 December 2019, and its two annexes, the Non-Aggression Pact between the States members of the Committee of 8 July 1996 and the Mutual Assistance Pact between the States members of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) of 24 February 2000, as well as the outcome document on confidence-building measures, disarmament and development in our subregion, adopted by the States members of ECCAS in Yaoundé on 21 June 1991;

*Aware* of the importance of the contribution of the Committee as a mechanism for preventive diplomacy and of confidence-building measures between member States, and of the fact that Central Africa continues to face challenges of unconstitutional changes of government, despite the efforts of the African Union and ECCAS to prevent the phenomenon;

*Reaffirming* our commitment to promoting constitutionalism, the principles of separation of powers and independence of the judiciary, and the promotion of political pluralism with the full participation of citizens, in accordance with the African Union Declaration on the Principles Governing Democratic Elections in Africa and the Declaration on Terrorism and Unconstitutional Changes of Government adopted at Malabo on 28 May 2022;

*Maintaining* that the African Charter of Values and Principles of Decentralization, Local Governance and Local Development is an important lever for the construction of a genuine African governance architecture, and that the reappropriation of State governance through African anthropology and building regional cooperation around common values linked with constitutional democracy are keys to stability and prosperity in Central Africa;

1. *Reiterate our determination* to strengthen the effectiveness and sustainability of the support to all States members of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) undergoing political transition and in post-conflict situations, in order to build lasting peace, entrench democratic culture and governance, and prevent the resumption of cycles of violence, in the context of the "Silencing the Guns in Africa by 2030" initiative;

2. *Welcome* the progress made by States members of ECCAS in the organization of free, fair, credible, inclusive and transparent elections despite the challenges posed by economic globalization, the democratization of the world and other contemporary factors;

3. *Encourage* ECCAS to develop and adopt a protocol on democracy, governance and human rights in Central Africa;

4. *Reaffirm* the commitment of our respective States to continuing the efforts designed to create an enabling environment for the effective participation of women and young people in peace and development processes at national, regional and continental levels, with a view to strengthening their important roles and contributions in the promotion of democracy, good governance, peace and sustainable security and development in our subregion;

5. *Recall* the principles of the Accra Declaration on Unconstitutional Changes of Government in Africa, which stresses the need for the African Union and the regional economic communities and regional mechanisms to promote synergy in addressing issues of unconstitutional changes of government, in line with the principles of subsidiarity and complementarity, provide common signals of early warning and subsequent effective response support to member States, including the use of good offices, the Panel of the Wise and existing regional mechanisms;

6. *Urge* ECCAS to continue its efforts to facilitate the consolidation of good governance, in particular constitutionalism and the rule of law, and of national and subregional early warning and conflict prevention mechanisms.

*Done at Kigali on 24 November 2023*

## Annex II

[Original: French]

**Kigali declaration on the humanitarian situation in Central Africa**

We, the Ministers and heads of delegation of the States members of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, meeting in Kigali on 24 November 2023, on the occasion of the fifty-sixth ministerial meeting of the Committee,

*Deeply concerned* at the worsening humanitarian situation in the subregion, resulting from conflicts and the consequences of the climate and environmental emergency; aware also that these protracted conflicts have led to the internal displacement of several million people in various countries, the same being the case for the refugees currently present in six countries, namely the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Republic of the Congo, the Republic of Chad, the Republic of Cameroon, the Central African Republic and the Republic of Rwanda;

*Taking note* of the deep concern expressed by the Heads of State and Government about the persistent humanitarian crisis in the subregion, as declared in February 2023 in Kinshasa, at the twenty-second ordinary session of the Conference of Heads of State and Government of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS);

*Taking note* of the decision to create a humanitarian agency of the African Union, as called for by the Heads of State and Government of the African Union at the Extraordinary Humanitarian Summit and Pledging Conference, held from 23 to 27 May 2022 in Malabo, Republic of Equatorial Guinea, with the participation of the international community and member States;

*Welcoming* the efforts of the international community and member States to address this issue, and welcoming in this regard the delivery of multi-sectoral humanitarian aid;

*Underscoring* the urgent need for close collaboration between member States and for strengthening partnerships with all stakeholders on security and development matters, in order to find lasting solutions to the humanitarian issues affecting the subregion;

*Taking into consideration* the fundamental principles of international humanitarian law, as set out in the four Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949 and their additional protocols of 1977 and 2005;

1. *Express our commitment* to strengthening the internal and subregional institutional and normative framework for addressing issues related to the humanitarian crisis, while encouraging socioeconomic development with the support of the international community;

2. *Call* for the adoption of an ECCAS doctrine and policy on humanitarian affairs aimed at promoting human security in our subregion, including the adoption of an additional protocol to the Revised Treaty of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) which specifically provides for a regional mechanism to monitor its implementation, as well as the establishment of a regional agency for coordination and humanitarian action;

3. *Recommend* the establishment, with the support of member States, of a humanitarian solidarity fund, as a financial instrument of the ECCAS humanitarian response architecture, in accordance with the call made at the twenty-second ordinary

session of the ECCAS Conference of Heads of State and Government to create a solidarity fund for victims, financed by a special contribution from member States;

4. *Advocate* urgent action by the international community, calling on the various partners and donors to continue their support efforts and to make an additional contribution as a matter of urgency to meet the growing needs, while ensuring a balanced distribution of funds between the various sectors in order to meet these challenges;

5. *Call for* the protection of civilians and humanitarian personnel and encourage respect for international humanitarian law;

6. *Express* our gratitude to the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees for their support and guidance in the management of humanitarian affairs;

7. *Call for* the operationalization of the humanitarian agency of the African Union;

8. *Support* the proposal of ECCAS and the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa that a Central African humanitarian forum be convened to assess the various situations, policies, strategies and measures regarding refugees, asylum-seekers and displaced persons in our subregion and community;

9. *Welcome* the launch in Bangui, on 31 October 2023, of the platform for the protection of forcibly displaced persons in connection with the crisis in the Central African Republic and solutions to the crisis, on the occasion of an important ministerial meeting held under the patronage of Faustin Archange Touadéra, President of the Central African Republic; and express our support for this subregional mechanism, in line with the Yaoundé Declaration of April 2022 on the same subject.

*Done at Kigali on 24 November 2023*

## Annex III

[Original: French]

### Luanda declaration on mediation initiatives in Central Africa

We, the Ministers and heads of delegation of the States members of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, meeting on 24 May 2024 in Luanda, on the occasion of the fifty-seventh ministerial meeting of the Committee,

*Considering* that mediation is the instrument of choice in diplomacy for the peaceful resolution of conflicts, and considering that the United Nations, the African Union, the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) and other international players are working tirelessly to prevent conflicts and find solutions for peace and stability;

*Considering* the need to promote a climate of peace and stability in the Central African region through its legal instruments, including the Revised Protocol on the Council for Peace and Security in Central Africa, adopted on 18 December 2019 in Libreville, and its annexes, the Non-Aggression Pact between the States members of the Committee of 8 July 1996 and the Mutual Assistance Pact between the States members of ECCAS of 24 February 2000;

*Recognizing* the important role that the Committee plays as a mechanism for consultation and knowledge-sharing between member States and partners for peace and stability that contribute to the understanding of the factors at the root of conflicts in the region;

*Guided* by Article 33 of the Charter of the United Nations, article 4 of the Constitutive Act of the African Union, the Revised Treaty of the Economic Community of Central African States and other international legal instruments relevant to the peaceful resolution of conflicts;

1. *Reiterate* the strategic importance of conflict prevention, peaceful crisis resolution and peacebuilding in the Central African region, including through the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS);

2. *Welcome* the mediation and facilitation initiatives under way in the region, notably in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Chad and Gabon;

3. Given the complexity and urgency of finding a peaceful solution to the situation of instability in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, *encourage* the diplomatic actions undertaken by His Excellency João Manuel Gonçalves Lourenço, President of the Republic of Angola and African Union Champion for Peace and Reconciliation in Africa, as current Chairperson of the International Conference for the Great Lakes Region and mandated by the sixteenth extraordinary session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union on Terrorism and Unconstitutional Changes of Government in Africa, adopted in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea, on 28 May 2022; and call urgently on the parties concerned to fulfil the commitments they have made and to refrain from doing anything that might hinder the facilitation by His Excellency João Manuel Gonçalves Lourenço and its successful conclusion;

4. *Commend* also His Excellency Faustin Archange Touadéra, President of the Central African Republic, on his role as facilitator of the transition in Gabon;

5. *Express* our profound indignation at and strongly condemn the attempt by a group of national and foreign terrorists to destabilize the democratic institutions of the Democratic Republic of the Congo on 19 May 2024;

6. *Recommend* that the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa provide technical assistance to ECCAS for the development of a policy framework on mediation and preventive diplomacy in the ECCAS zone and for the construction of a subsequent institutional architecture;

7. *Propose* the convening of a regional forum on conflict mediation during the current term of Angola as Chair of the Committee.

*Done at Luanda on 24 May 2024*

## Annex IV

[Original: French]

**Luanda declaration in support of the final adoption of the regional strategy and action plan for the prevention and combating of hate speech and incitement to violence in Central Africa**

We, the Ministers for Foreign Affairs and heads of delegation of the States members of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, meeting in Luanda on 24 May 2024, on the occasion of the fifty-seventh ministerial meeting of the Committee,

*Considering* the Kintélé declaration on hate speech in Central Africa of 16 January 2023, on the draft regional strategy and action plan for the prevention and combating of this scourge, which is increasingly exacerbated during election periods;

*Mindful* of the mandate entrusted to Cameroon at the fifty-fifth ministerial meeting, held from 15 to 19 May 2023 in Sao Tomé, to follow up on actions designed to lead to the political endorsement of the regional strategy and action plan for the prevention and combating of hate speech in Central Africa;

*Having listened with attention* and interest to the presentation on the efforts made in this regard and on the status of implementation of the recommendations related thereto;

1. *Note with great satisfaction* the outcomes of the fifth ministerial forum devoted to this crucial issue, held in Bangui on 30 and 31 January 2024 and chaired by the Prime Minister of the Central African Republic, including the Bangui declaration on the pre-validation of the regional strategy and action plan for the prevention and combating of hate speech and incitement to violence in Central Africa of 31 January 2024;

2. *Stress* the need to have that important document translated into English, Portuguese and Spanish, in order to facilitate its dissemination and effective appropriation by the member States and peoples of Central Africa;

3. *Commend* the Commission of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) on its fruitful contribution to that ministerial forum and express our appreciation for the insights provided as to the next stages of the process, notably the submission of the pre-validated version of the regional strategy and its action plan to the Specialized Technical Committee and to the Council of Ministers of ECCAS, prior to their consideration and endorsement by the Conference of Heads of State and Government;

4. *Request* the ECCAS Commission to provide an update on that issue at the next meeting of the Committee;

5. *Welcome* the steps already taken to implement some aspects of the action plan, in particular the launch of a regional prize for best content on combating hate speech and promoting peace in Central Africa, to reward media professionals engaged in the creation, production, publication and dissemination of content to combat rumours and disinformation, sources of incitement to hatred and violence;

6. *Renew* our trust in Cameroon to monitor the ongoing process and request it to coordinate the mobilization of actors who can help make that project a reality, and to strengthen awareness among all national stakeholders not only of the existence of the regional strategy but also of its content and the issues it raises;

7. *Express our gratitude* to United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa and other United Nations entities whose availability, commitment and multifaceted support have enabled us to achieve the current concrete results; also express our gratitude to all the other institutions and entities that have been present at one or more stages of the process since October 2021, including the Office for Central Africa of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the Subregional Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Central Africa, the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA), the United Nations Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), the United Nations Joint Human Rights Office in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect, and the International Organization of la Francophonie (OIF);

8. *Express the wish* that these institutions maintain their support for the efforts of the member States to develop and implement activities for the prevention and combating of hate speech in Central Africa, in accordance with the action plan of the regional strategy, the final adoption of which we wholeheartedly advocate.

*Done at Luanda on 24 May 2024*

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