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Item 67 (h) of the provisional agenda*

**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**

**Security Council
Fifty-ninth year**

**Letter dated 14 July 2004 from the Permanent Representative of
Equatorial Guinea to the United Nations addressed to the
Secretary-General**

On behalf of the Chairman of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, I have the honour to transmit to you herewith the report of the 21st ministerial meeting of the Committee, held from 21 to 25 June 2004 in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under item 67 (h) of the provisional agenda, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Lino Sima **Ekua Avomo**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

* A/59/150.

Annex to the letter dated 14 July 2004 from the Permanent Representative of Equatorial Guinea to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Report of the 21st ministerial meeting of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa

Introduction

The 21st ministerial meeting of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa was held in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea, from 27 to 31 October 2003.

All member States, with the exception of Angola, the Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, took part in the meeting: Burundi, Cameroon, Chad, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, the Republic of the Congo, Rwanda, and Sao Tome and Principe.

The opening ceremony featured:

- A message from the Secretary-General of the United Nations, read by the Representative of the Secretary-General in the Central African Republic, General Lamine Cissé.

The inaugural speech was delivered by H.E. Mr. Miguel Abia Biteo, Prime Minister of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea, and the closing speech was delivered by H.E. Mr. Jose Esono Micha Akeng, Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs, International Cooperation and la Francophonie of Equatorial Guinea.

Conduct of work

I. Adoption of the agenda

The Committee adopted the following agenda:

1. Adoption of the agenda of the 21st ministerial meeting.
2. The geopolitical and security situation in some member States:
 - Burundi, Central African Republic, Chad, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Sao Tome and Principe.
3. Cooperation between the United Nations and ECCAS:
 - Implementation of the interim report of the Secretary-General on the multidisciplinary assessment mission in Central Africa.
 - Preparations for the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region.
4. The future of the Committee:
 - Critical discussion of the way in which the Committee functions.

- Relationship between the Committee and the Council for Peace and Security in Central Africa (COPAX).
- 5. Consideration and adoption of the draft resolution on the activities of the Committee.
- 6. Other matters.

II. The geopolitical and security situation in some member States

Burundi

The Committee welcomed the progress made in the development of the situation in Burundi, particularly:

- The signing on 16 November 2003 of the Global Ceasefire Agreement between the Transitional Government of Burundi and the National Council for the Defence of Democracy — Forces for Defence of Democracy (CNDD-FDD);
- The effective integration of CNDD-FDD into the Transitional Government and the new Burundi National Defence Force.

The Committee nevertheless remained deeply concerned about the lack of adequate financial resources for effective initiation of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) process, the delay in which threatened to undermine the entire peace process. It condemned the obstinacy of the Palipehutu/FNL movement in remaining outside the peace process despite the efforts of the Transitional Government and the international community. The Committee was further concerned about the weak involvement of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) with the search for a solution to the crisis in Burundi.

In the quest for a lasting solution to the crisis that Burundi is experiencing, the Committee reaffirmed the importance it attached to strict implementation of the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement for Burundi, signed in August 2000, and expressed its support for the decisions taken on 5 June 2004 in Dar es Salaam, United Republic of Tanzania, by the Summit of Heads of State of the Great Lakes Regional Peace Initiative on Burundi. It welcomed the sending by the Security Council of a United Nations Operation in Burundi, with effect from 1 June, and called upon all the parties concerned to facilitate and support the work of that operation.

It also launched an appeal:

- To the Palipehutu/FNL movement to immediately sign a ceasefire agreement with the Transitional Government of Burundi and to join the peace process initiated and ongoing within the framework of the Arusha Agreement;
- To the Transitional Government of Burundi to proceed with disarming the civilian population;
- To the international community to provide the necessary financial support for DDR, the effective launching and success of which are crucial to the observance of the electoral timetable as stipulated in the Arusha Agreement;

The Committee recommended:

- The establishment of an electoral and political system which encourages compromise;
- The search for consensus as a way of facilitating peaceful coexistence and national reconciliation;
- The observance of the electoral timetable stipulated in the Arusha Agreement.

The Committee further called upon ECCAS to become more involved with the search for a lasting solution to the crisis in Burundi. To that end, the Committee requested the secretariat and the Chairman of ECCAS to align themselves with the Great Lakes Regional Peace Initiative in order to jointly define the actions to be carried out for the lasting return of peace to Burundi.

Central African Republic

The Committee welcomed the efforts of the Transitional Government to implement the recommendations of the National Dialogue concluded on 27 October 2003 and the political consensus which continues to reign in the country.

While welcoming the commitment of the Transitional Government to observe the electoral timetable, the Committee expressed its deep concern about the generally precarious economic and security situation. It welcomed the joint efforts of the Transitional Government, the Central African Economic and Monetary Community (CAEMC) Force and the logistic support provided by the French Army to restore security throughout the territory.

The Committee nonetheless affirmed that improving the economic and security situation in the Central African Republic would make it easier to meet the various electoral deadlines under the best conditions and would consolidate the positive political developments under way in the country. From this standpoint, the Committee launched an appeal:

- To the bilateral and multilateral donors and the international financial institutions to pay special attention to the economic and financial situation of the Central African Republic and provide it with the necessary support;
- To the States members of CAEMC to maintain and strengthen, as far as possible, their efforts to ensure security in the country, particularly general and complete disarmament and restructuring of the defence and security forces;
- To the other ECCAS countries and the international community to contribute to the ongoing efforts to ensure security in the Central African Republic.

Lastly, the Committee called upon the General Secretariat of ECCAS to become actively involved with the ongoing electoral process in the Central African Republic.

Democratic Republic of the Congo

The Committee expressed its concern about the various threats looming over the institutions and the transition process in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

It launched an appeal to all political actors in the Democratic Republic of the Congo to abide strictly by the provisions of the Global and All-Inclusive Agreement on the Transition.

The Committee welcomed the efforts of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) and requested the United Nations to continue to support the ongoing peace process in the country.

Lastly, it called upon the international community to support the efforts of the Congolese people in the area of reconstruction, national reconciliation and election preparations.

Equatorial Guinea

The Committee noted with satisfaction the climate in which the legislative and municipal elections had been held in April 2004 and welcomed the desire for liberalization and political opening, characterized by the formation of a new, enlarged government, with the participation of political parties other than the Democratic Party of Equatorial Guinea.

The Committee strongly condemned the attempts to overturn the democratically elected institutions by force and welcomed the support given by the States in the subregion to the Government of Equatorial Guinea during those painful events.

The Committee recalled its firm and unambiguous condemnation of all methods of taking power by force, including the use of mercenaries. In view of the magnitude of the problems relating to mercenary activities, the Committee decided to include the issue in the agenda of its 22nd ministerial meeting so that it could be studied in depth.

Lastly, the Committee encouraged the Government of Equatorial Guinea and that of Cameroon to implement the decisions taken in the framework of the ad hoc joint commission on security questions between the two countries, which met in Malabo in June 2004.

Sao Tome and Principe

The Committee welcomed the efforts of all political actors in Sao Tome and Principe to find a consensus-based and peaceful solution to the political crisis in the country, and encouraged the Government to continue its efforts at restructuring and training the country's security forces.

It further welcomed the information mission sent by ECCAS in March 2004.

Lastly, the Committee welcomed the launching of the National Forum provided for in the Memorandum of Understanding of 23 July 2000. It expressed the hope that the conclusions of the Forum would lead to the strengthening of national unity and democracy in Sao Tome and Principe.

Chad

The Committee firmly condemned the attempted coup of 16 May 2004 aimed at overturning the democratically established institutions and reaffirmed its strong and unambiguous opposition to all methods of seizing power by force.

The Committee further expressed its concern about the general situation on the border between Chad and the Sudan and welcomed the mediation efforts led by President Idriss Déby with a view to finding a solution to the problems arising from the rebellion in Darfur. The Committee further supported the initiatives already taken by the United Nations and the African Union aimed at normalizing the situation.

Lastly, it requested member States to pay particular attention to the development of the situation.

III. Cooperation between ECCAS and the United Nations

In the framework of cooperation between ECCAS and the United Nations, the Committee considered:

- The implementation of the interim report of the Secretary-General on the recommendations of the United Nations multidisciplinary mission in Central Africa;
- Preparations for the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region.

Recalling the wish reiterated at its 20th ministerial meeting that the United Nations should establish a subregional bureau for Central Africa, the Committee welcomed the efforts made in that regard by the Chairman of ECCAS vis-à-vis the Secretary-General of the United Nations. The Committee noted with satisfaction the decision of the Secretary-General to carry out an in-depth study in order to make an exhaustive assessment of all aspects of the question.

The Committee called upon ECCAS to undertake and coordinate discussions with the United Nations system on the best strategy for effectively and efficiently implementing the important recommendations made by the Secretary-General on the conclusion of the United Nations multidisciplinary mission which he sent to the Central African countries from 8 to 22 June 2003.

The Committee took note of the report of the Secretary-General on the preparations for the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region and the supplementary information provided by the delegations of Burundi, the Republic of the Congo and Rwanda. It held lengthy discussions of the preparations for the Conference and raised questions about the delays seen in those preparations.

Taking note of the desire expressed by some member States to attend and participate in the Conference, the Committee recommended to the Chairman of ECCAS to take the necessary steps to allow all States members of the Community to participate, in accordance with their wishes, in the forthcoming International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, including in the preparatory process.

IV. The future of the Committee

The Committee undertook a thoroughgoing and serious discussion of its own future based on a critical examination of the way in which it functions and an analysis of its relationship with the Council for Peace and Security in Central Africa (COPAX). That discussion, like all the deliberations of the 21st ministerial meeting, was held in a fine spirit of openness and determination to take and implement the

decisions needed to tackle effectively the recurring problems of security and stability that are undermining development efforts in the subregion.

A. Critical examination of the way in which the Committee functions

The Committee deemed it legitimate and timely to engage in a discussion of its own future, in view of the developments in the subregion since its establishment on 28 May 1992, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 46/37.

The Committee welcomed with satisfaction the working paper produced for that purpose by the secretariat and expressed its appreciation for the quality of the document, which describes the origin of the Committee, takes stock of it, and outlines the prospects and framework for future actions.

The Committee took stock of its work and assessed the tasks that had been assigned to it on the basis of its programme of work adopted at its first ministerial meeting, held in Yaoundé, Cameroon, from 27 to 31 July 1992.

While affirming the need for its continued existence, the Committee requested that those activities be adapted to the needs of the moment and to the current situation in Central Africa, which was marked by an effort to operationalize ECCAS and to implement a range of mechanisms, such as COPAX.

The Committee analysed the challenges facing it and concluded that there was a need for effective implementation of the decisions and recommendations which it was called upon to make.

On the basis of the challenges that had been identified, and convinced of the necessity of the Committee's existence, the States members explored and decided upon the following avenues for future action to revitalize the Committee and enhance the effectiveness of its functioning:

- The establishment by member States of follow-up and evaluation mechanisms where they do not exist. Such mechanisms could, for example, include the representatives of parliamentary defence and security committees, whose responsibilities would include control of the armed forces and security forces;
- The establishment of a system of regular consultations among the members of the Bureau;
- The holding of thematic meetings on issues of major concern. In that connection, the Committee could, through confidence-building measures, arms limitation and disarmament, redefine its goals in the area of promoting peace and security;
- The invitation to representatives of parliamentary defence and security committees and representatives of civil society, particularly women's organizations dealing with issues of peace and security, to attend meetings of the Committee at the expense of member States;
- The provision by the Committee of political support to its secretariat to ensure the effective mobilization of resources inasmuch as the Committee's activities are funded from voluntary contributions. Despite the financial difficulties facing the members of the Committee, a special effort is requested of them in the form of a contribution to the trust fund for the Committee;

- Lastly, greater involvement of the permanent representatives of member States to the United Nations with the activities of the Committee.

B. Relationship between the Committee and COPAX

The Committee felt that it had achieved one of its main objectives, namely, to accompany or assist ECCAS in establishing a mechanism for conflict prevention and management similar to those in other subregions, and that henceforth its efforts should be concentrated on assistance to ECCAS aimed at operationalizing COPAX and ensuring ownership of it by member States.

In this regard, the Committee strongly deplored the absence of the Secretary-General of ECCAS from the work of its 21st ministerial meeting, which was devoted, in particular, to discussion of the future of the Committee and on its relationship with COPAX.

The Committee nonetheless launched an appeal to the ECCAS secretariat to operationalize COPAX as soon as possible.

It further called upon member States to strengthen the capacity of the ECCAS secretariat, particularly that of the department of peace, security, stability and humanitarian affairs, so that it might fully play its role and better fulfil its mission.

The Committee launched an appeal to its secretariat and that of ECCAS to enhance their cooperation and collaboration in the search for peace and security in the subregion. To that end, the Committee requested the ECCAS secretariat to involve the Committee secretariat with its activities promoting peace and security and to participate more actively in helping to organize activities with the Committee, the better to implant the idea that the two organizations are working towards the same goal, and to avoid duplication of effort.

The Committee further launched an appeal to its secretariat to align its calendar with that of the COPAX Council of Ministers so as to allow for frank and close cooperation and collaboration between the two bodies.

Lastly, it expressed the hope that the ECCAS secretariat would, in the framework of the search for a solution to armed conflicts in the subregion, explore ways and means of ensuring close cooperation with the other subregional organizations of which some ECCAS countries are members.

V. Consideration and adoption of the draft resolution on the activities of the Committee

The Committee considered and adopted the draft resolution to be submitted to the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session and requested member States to instruct their missions in New York to support that resolution.

VI. Other matters

- The Committee decided to include the Spanish and Portuguese languages as its working languages as from its next meeting. To that end, it requested the

ECCAS secretariat to provide the Committee with interpretation and translation services in Portuguese.

- The Committee agreed to hold its 22nd ministerial meeting in the Republic of the Congo within a period of six months. The exact date will be communicated through the diplomatic channel.

Lastly, the participants welcomed the favourable climate that had prevailed throughout their deliberations and expressed their appreciation to H.E. Mr. Obiang Nguema Mbasogo, President of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea, Head of State and Founding President of the Democratic Party of Equatorial Guinea, and to the Government and people of Equatorial Guinea for the warm welcome and fraternal attentions paid to them during their stay in the Republic of Equatorial Guinea.

Malabo, 25 June 2004
