



Security Council

Sixty-seventh year

Provisional

6891st meeting

Tuesday, 18 December 2012, 3 p.m.

New York

President: Mr. Loulichki (Morocco)

Members:

Azerbaijan	Mr. Musayev
China	Mr. Wang Min
Colombia	Mr. Alzate
France	Mr. Bertoux
Germany	Mr. Wittig
Guatemala	Mr. Briz Gutiérrez
India	Mr. Hardeep Singh Puri
Pakistan	Mr. Masood Khan
Portugal	Mr. Cabral
Russian Federation	Mr. Iliichev
South Africa	Mr. Mashabane
Togo	Mr. Menan
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Parham
United States of America	Mr. DeLaurentis

Agenda

Central African region

Report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa and on the Lord's Resistance Army-affected areas (S/2012/923)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-506.

12-65327 (E)



Please recycle 

The meeting was called to order at 3.25 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Central African region

Report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa and on the Lord's Resistance Army-affected areas (S/2012/923)

The President: Under rule 39 of the Council's rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Abou Moussa, 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/2012/923, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa and on areas affected by the Lord's Resistance Army.

I now give the floor to Mr. Moussa.

Mr. Moussa (*spoke in French*): It is a signal honour and privilege for me to appear before the Council to present the third report of the Secretary-General (S/2012/923) on the situation in Central Africa and the work of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA).

As Council members know, my Office was established in March 2011. Since then, it has played an ever more significant role in helping the States of the subregion in their efforts to confront the challenges they face. As described in the Secretary-General's report, my Office has therefore focused on political governance, institutional capacity-building, preventive diplomacy — especially mediation and good offices — and developing a subregional strategy to fight terrorism and arms proliferation in Central Africa.

In that regard, allow me to thank my colleagues in the Policy and Mediation Division of the Department of Political Affairs and on the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force for their invaluable contribution to the implementation of several initiatives. Along the same lines, we have continued to build and maintain fruitful cooperation with a number of United

Nations country teams, as well as with diplomatic presences in the subregion. We have also strengthened our cooperation with the United Nations Office for West Africa (UNOWA) in the framework of our joint efforts to respond to the common, multidimensional challenges.

Moreover, my Office has continued to work in close cooperation with various stakeholders and partners — including the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa — in addressing the new threats represented by piracy at sea and armed or terrorist groups such as the Mouvement du 23 mars, the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) and Boko Haram. Indeed, safeguarding peace and security in our subregion requires us to coordinate our efforts even better in order to meet these challenges.

(spoke in English)

A critical element for the advent of sustainable peace and security in Central Africa is subregional integration. This explains why UNOCA has continued to work closely with the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) and other subregional entities, such as the Central African Economic and Monetary Community, as well as the highest political authorities of the subregion, in the pursuit of that goal.

While the overall peace and security situation remains stable and significant progress has been registered in curbing the activities of armed groups and negative forces, Central Africa continues to experience some challenges in this domain. Violence perpetrated by armed groups, including in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo and countries affected by the LRA, as well as a number of other developments with regional and cross-border consequences, greatly challenge our efforts to promote sustainable peace and stability in the sub-region.

However, as the Secretary-General's report shows, there is also good news coming out of Central Africa, particularly on the economic front, as countries continue to register significant growth rates. We have also noted the increasing confidence being placed in the conflict-prevention work of the United Nations, particularly UNOCA, by regional actors in Central Africa, including Governments, regional organizations, political leaders and representatives of civil society. Our growing interactions with those actors, and above all their multiple requests for support, show that there is a growing appreciation that establishing a regional

political office in Central Africa was both useful and timely. They increasingly acknowledge that the creation of UNOCA has filled a preventive-diplomacy gap.

The requests we received during the reporting period pertain to but are not limited to the following areas: mediation and facilitation of dialogue between opposition political parties and those in Government; support for capacity-building for regional organizations; mobilization of support and resources from the international community for actors in the subregion; and facilitation of workshops, seminars and training.

I would like to inform members of the Security Council that, during the period under consideration, political leaders at the highest level in Central Africa showed strong determination and commitment to supporting and facilitating the work that UNOCA is doing. This is the case with our efforts to address the impact of the activities of the LRA, which the Security Council, in its presidential statement S/PRST/2011/21, requested my Office to coordinate.

As requested by the Security Council, UNOCA is coordinating the implementation of the regional strategy to address the threat posed by the LRA. The challenges of doing so are numerous. However, perhaps the most urgent step revolves around the need to promptly finalize the LRA programmatic document and mobilize sufficient resources for its full implementation. Once the programmatic document is finalized, my Office, in partnership with the Office of the African Union Special Envoy for the LRA, plans to organize a resource mobilization forum early next year with the aim of raising funds for the most critical areas of the strategy.

Another example of political commitment demonstrated at the highest level by regional leaders is reflected in the ongoing efforts to organize a regional summit on piracy and armed robbery at sea in the Gulf of Guinea. It will be recalled that in its resolution 2039 (2012) of 29 February 2012, the Council requested the two regional offices, UNOWA and UNOCA, to support efforts towards the convening of a regional summit of Heads of State and Government of the Gulf of Guinea. UNOWA and UNOCA have been working closely with regional organizations, including ECCAS, the Economic Community of West African States and the Gulf of Guinea Commission, on the preparation of this summit.

As part of those efforts, on 7 December the Secretary-General of ECCAS delivered a special message from President Idriss Deby Itno of Chad, in his capacity as Chair of ECCAS, to President Paul Biya of Cameroon on the convening of that important summit. Another example of the collaborative spirit in the subregion is the chairing by President Denis Sassou Nguesso of Congo of the celebration, on 7 December in Brazzaville, of the twentieth anniversary of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa.

These are just a few examples of the level of political engagement and commitment among the political leadership in the subregion on issues of peace and security. I am glad to note that such mobilization points to a renewed sense of community and commitment on the part of the leaders and organizations in Central Africa. UNOCA will continue to play its role, as mandated, to mobilize all stakeholders in the subregion and help shore up these positive trends.

In spite of the some of the encouraging news coming out of Central Africa, the report before the Council also shows that actors in Central Africa, including UNOCA, continue to face critical challenges that hamper the effectiveness of our combined efforts. With increasing and competing priorities in the pursuit of its mandate, there is a clear disparity between the resources available to UNOCA and tasks that it is required to perform. This is all the more so as the expectations of regional actors regarding the potential role of UNOCA in addressing some of the peace and security challenges facing the subregion continue to grow. I have no doubt that members of the Security Council are aware of this pressing situation as we endeavour to cope with this predicament by strenuously trying to do more with less, as recommended by the Secretary-General.

As we stand on the threshold of a new year, UNOCA will place a premium on building on and consolidating the achievements registered during the current year. This will include redoubling our efforts to accelerate the operationalization of the regional strategy to address the threat posed by the LRA through the early finalization of the relevant programmatic document, the pursuit of ongoing efforts to organize the regional summit on piracy in the Gulf of Guinea, as recommended by this organ in its resolution 2039 (2012), and enhancing our capacity-building and institutional strengthening in support of subregional organizations, particularly ECCAS. We will also continue to focus our attention on

the development and finalization of a regional strategy to fight against terrorism and the proliferation of arms in Central Africa, pursuant to the Bangui Declaration adopted by Standing Advisory Committee at its 33rd ministerial meeting.

I thank the members of the Security Council for their strong and continued support to UNOCA.

The President: I thank Mr. Moussa for his briefing.

I shall now give the floor to the members of the Council.

Mr. Parham (United Kingdom): I should like to thank Special Representative Moussa for his statement and for his continued work on the issues under consideration.

For over 20 years, the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) has blighted the heart of Africa. Led by the odious Joseph Kony, the LRA remains a murderous band of criminals that preys on civilians, targets women and children and terrorizes communities across Central Africa. But an end to that scourge is in sight. The concerted efforts of the countries affected, the African Union (AU), the United Nations and other partners have substantially weakened the LRA. Permanently eradicating the threat it poses is now within our reach. But that can be achieved only through sustained focus and by creating and consolidating security and stability in the affected countries.

The release of the United Nations regional strategy on the LRA was a welcome step towards achieving that aim. The United Kingdom welcomes the progress already made in putting the strategy into effect. However, for further progress to be made, we need the LRA-affected countries, the African Union and the United Nations political, development, humanitarian and peacekeeping missions in those countries to deliver fully on all the pillars of the strategy. In that regard, the United Kingdom believes that the development of an implementation plan for the strategy will be the key to success. Such a plan should outline the priority actions, articulate key milestones and outcomes and be fully costed. It should also identify and articulate underfunded parts of the strategy to the broader donor community.

The United Kingdom also urges the Governments of the LRA-affected countries to renew and strengthen their collaboration to end the threat posed by the LRA to thousands of innocent civilians. I encourage the heads

of State of those countries, alongside the United Nations and the African Union, to convene a high-level meeting to discuss how to implement successfully the African Union Regional Cooperation Initiative. Furthermore, the United Kingdom urges the LRA-affected countries to develop and agree their concept of operations for the AU Regional Task Force. That will significantly improve tactical coordination, information-sharing and joint planning among the relevant militaries.

Alongside the efforts of regional countries, the United Kingdom believes that the international community also has a responsibility to support the region. That is why the United Kingdom is proud to have pledged recently £500,000, over a period of two years, to a UNICEF programme that will ensure that the Regional Task Force is trained in best international practice to improve the care and handling of children. We urge other members of the international community likewise to contribute resources.

The United Kingdom commends the increased cross-border cooperation of the United Nations peacekeeping missions in the LRA-affected countries, in particular the development of region-wide disarmament, demobilization, repatriation, resettlement and reintegration initiatives.

I would now like to comment on the broader role in the region of the United Nations Office in Central Africa (UNOCA). UNOCA's ultimate aim should be to play a strong and constructive regional coordination role. The United Kingdom therefore welcomes UNOCA's recent efforts to facilitate and encourage closer regional cooperation in Central Africa. UNOCA's work with other regional bodies, such as the Economic Community of Central African States, has helped to improve cooperation in areas such as conflict prevention and governance.

The United Kingdom remains concerned by the threats to maritime security on Africa's western seaboard. We welcome the leadership shown by the United Nations on this issue. UNOCA has an important role to play in ensuring that the international community works together to build maritime capability. A regional response is essential in order to minimize the impact on economic development and stability. Successful maritime policing could bring real benefits to the region, including through fishing revenues and increased regional trade.

Mr. Wang Min (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I would like to thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Abou Moussa for his briefing.

Most Central African States have maintained overall stability and achieved economic development. The regional integration process is proceeding steadily. China is pleased with those developments.

We take note of the fact that the spillover effect of the crisis in the Sahel, the re-emergence of conflict in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the lingering threat posed by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) and the serious problem of piracy in the Gulf of Guinea have had a negative impact on the security situation in the region. The countries of the region continue to face many challenges in achieving lasting peace. China expresses its concern about that situation.

We support the countries of the region in strengthening cooperation in order to address the threats and challenges I have mentioned. We hope that the international community will continue to pay attention to the Central African region and, on the basis of respect for the sovereignty of the countries of the region, provide concrete support to countries and regional organizations.

China strongly condemns the continued movement and activities of the LRA in various countries. We are deeply concerned about the humanitarian issues generated by that. We demand that the LRA immediately lay down its weapons, halt all hostilities and violence and disarm.

China appreciates the efforts made by the countries of the region to combat the LRA. We support the African Union in its efforts to continue to implement its Regional Cooperation Initiative. We welcome the United Nations cooperation with the AU and look forward to the effective implementation of the United Nations regional strategy for the LRA.

China calls upon the members of the international community to strengthen coordination and communication in order to vigorously support the efforts by the countries of the region.

Since its inception, the United Nations Office in Central Africa (UNOCA) has conscientiously implemented the mandate of the Security Council and made positive efforts aimed at the maintenance of international peace and security. China appreciates

that and hopes that UNOCA will continue to effectively carry out its communication and coordination efforts and promote synergy among the efforts of the United Nations system, regional organizations and the countries in the region, so as to make its contribution to the achievement of lasting peace and security in the region.

China will continue to support the work of UNOCA and Special Representative of the Secretary-General Moussa.

Mr. Hardeep Singh Puri (India): At the outset, I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for organizing this meeting to discuss the activities of the United Nations Regional Office in Central Africa (UNOCA) in the implementation of its mandate. I would also like to thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Abou Moussa for his comprehensive briefing. Our thanks are also due to him for the report of the Secretary-General on UNOCA and the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) (S/2012/923).

We appreciate the efforts of countries in Central Africa to overcome the negative effects of decades of instability and conflict, including through bilateral and regional cooperation. UNOCA has been effectively coordinating those efforts and has facilitated a number of meetings and promoted greater international attention on the region. We welcome and support those activities.

We have noted that the region has enjoyed overall political stability and that successful elections were held in two countries during the reporting period. However, socioeconomic trends present a mixed picture. The region as a whole has a high incidence of youth unemployment and poverty. Limited progress has been registered in the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. The region continues to face serious challenges, such as the proliferation of weapons, transnational organized crime, illicit drug trafficking and terrorism. There has been an alarming increase in incidents of piracy and armed robbery at sea in the Gulf of Guinea. The deteriorating situation in the Sahel region has also aggravated problems for the Central African region. Unless they are addressed seriously, those problems have the potential to derail the gains made thus far, as well as to threaten peace, security and stability in the region.

The Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) also continues to remain active in the region, in particular in the

Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Central African Republic. It is also reported that it has established bases along the Central African Republic-South Sudan border areas.

It is in that overall context of the situation in the region that the activities of the United Nations Office in Central Africa (UNOCA) take on significance, in particular in the areas of conflict prevention, early warning and partnering with countries to achieve their socioeconomic development goals. UNOCA should promote regional strategies to comprehensively address the challenges facing the region. UNOCA should further strengthen this collaboration with the United Nations Office in West Africa, the Economic Community of Central African States and other United Nations offices and assist the efforts of Governments and regional and subregional organizations.

With respect to the LRA, we welcome the steps taken by UNOCA and the African Union (AU) towards the implementation of the LRA regional strategy. We have noted that Special Representative of the Secretary-General Moussa convened a meeting with national, regional and international partners in July to develop a joint road map, and that the participants agreed to convene a general coordination meeting every six months to assess the progress made in the implementation of the regional strategy, in particular the five strategic objectives. We welcome the decision stating that UNOCA and the AU will organize a joint resource-mobilization forum to raise additional funds for the implementation of the strategy.

The focus of the Council should lead to galvanizing the international community to provide adequate resources for national and regional endeavours, particularly in the strengthening of national capacities, with regard to civilian administration; police and security forces; security sector reform and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration processes; and socioeconomic development.

Given the fragility of political institutions in several countries, it is also important for the national and regional authorities to pay attention to the need for inclusive political processes, including electoral reforms. In that connection, it is important that United Nations missions in the region not be burdened further without augmentation of their resources.

In conclusion, India stands ready to support and contribute to the efforts of the African Union and the

United Nations to address the challenges facing the countries of the Central African region, particularly in the fields of capacity-building and human-resource and socioeconomic development.

Mr. DeLaurentis (United States of America): I wish to thank Special Representative Moussa for his briefing today.

The Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) remains a vicious and persistent menace to the people of Central and East Africa. Although its capacity is diminished and it is on the run, the LRA's brutal attacks and abductions continue. We must put an end to this horrific organization and its atrocities.

The United States commends the Governments of Uganda, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and South Sudan for their steadfast efforts to do so. The United States is taking action in partnership with the African Union and the United Nations to provide wide-ranging support to regional efforts to counter the threat posed by the LRA. We also support the International Criminal Court cases against Joseph Kony, Okot Odhiambo and Dominic Ongwen, who must be held accountable.

Despite significant challenges, the region is making progress. The LRA has been weakened and pushed out of many areas. Communities at risk are better connected and sharing information. Defections from the LRA are rising, and the United States is working with the region's Governments, United Nations missions and non-governmental organizations to encourage more defections by air-dropping more leaflets, expanding radio broadcasts and establishing safe reporting sites.

Our collective efforts have made an impact, and yet the LRA continues to sow fear and victimize populations across the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and South Sudan. According to the Secretary-General's report (S/2012/923), the LRA continues to perpetrate attacks in the Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of the Congo and has displaced an estimated 443,000 people.

Clearly, more must be done to protect civilians, to improve the flow of information on LRA activities and to increase humanitarian access. The United Nations has a critical role to play in each of those areas.

The United States fully supports the United Nations comprehensive regional strategy to counter the LRA. We welcome the efforts made by Special

Representative of the Secretary-General Moussa and the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA) to implement the United Nations strategy and urge a continued push for implementation.

As we said in June, the real test of the strategy is how it translates into action on the ground and the results it produces. The United Nations strategy rightly emphasizes the protection of civilians. Both the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the United Nations Mission in South Sudan have mandates to help protect civilians from LRA attacks, which we encourage them to pursue aggressively, including via targeted patrols in LRA-affected areas.

Strengthening civilian protection requires affected communities to become more resilient. Thus the United States is funding programmes to help LRA-affected communities develop protection plans and better communicate with other communities.

Expediting and enhancing the flow of information about LRA activities is essential to protecting civilians and hunting down the LRA's top leaders. The Secretary-General's report expresses concern about a possible LRA presence in and around the disputed area of Kafia Kingi, along the Sudan-South Sudan border. Earlier this year, the LRA carried out attacks farther west than ever before, near Bangassou, Central African Republic. There are credible reports of the LRA poaching elephants in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and illegally trafficking ivory.

With United Nations leadership, we must together develop a common operating picture of the LRA's positions in the region and target its logistics networks.

The Security Council has directed four United Nations missions in the LRA-affected regions, including the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur, to share information on the LRA and cooperate on efforts to combat it. Designating a focal point in each mission for that purpose would improve such cooperation and help to facilitate a truly regional response to this menace.

Finally, we must continue providing for the humanitarian needs of local populations. We commend the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and its partners for expanding the delivery of humanitarian aid to LRA-affected communities.

But many LRA-affected areas in the Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of the Congo are still inaccessible owing to poor infrastructure and insecurity. Increasing humanitarian access must remain a priority for all stakeholders. We urge UNOCA to work with United Nations missions in the region to facilitate better access by humanitarian actors to vulnerable populations in remote areas affected by the LRA.

Eliminating the LRA threat in Central Africa depends on the unwavering resolve of the Governments in the region, which have the primary responsibility for protecting their citizens. The African Union can solidify regional cooperation through its Regional Task Force. We hope that the United Nations will do all it can to help the African Union's initiative succeed.

Countering the LRA is a critical part of UNOCA's agenda, but the United States also welcomes UNOCA's support for regional coordination and capacity-building to combat terrorism as well as piracy and maritime armed robbery in the Gulf of Guinea. UNOCA's preventative diplomacy and peacebuilding efforts contribute to regional stability.

We share the Secretary-General's concerns about the challenges faced by women and girls in the subregion, including female genital mutilation, early forced marriage, denial of access to education and low political participation. We urge UNOCA's continued attention to those priorities and ongoing efforts to advance human rights, media freedom and peaceful, free elections.

Central Africa is beset by problems but filled with promise, which it cannot realize fully until the LRA is no more. From the countries of the region to New York and Addis to the capitals of those sitting around this table, we share a common interest in bringing about the demise of the LRA. We all want those whom the LRA has displaced to return home and the communities it has plagued to heal.

We seek lasting security and economic development for the people of Central Africa. We demand that those who commit atrocities and terrorize innocent civilians be brought to justice. Those goals are worthy, they are possible, and the United States will not rest until they are achieved.

Mr. Mashabane (South Africa): Mr. President, we would like to thank your delegation for having organized this discussion today. My delegation wishes to thank

the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Abou Moussa, for his comprehensive briefing on the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA) and the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA).

The political, economic and security situation in Central Africa continues to improve. During the past few months, we have witnessed successful and peaceful elections in certain countries of the region. There have also been electoral reforms in countries of the region aimed at ensuring credible and transparent elections. As noted by the Secretary-General in his report (S/2012/923), the concern remains that election-related violence could be a source of instability in the absence of transparent legal, participatory and inclusive processes.

South Africa commends the excellent economic growth rate of over 5 per cent that has been registered by many countries in the region despite the current difficult economic and financial climate. That notwithstanding, efforts must be employed to translate that growth rate into the alleviation of poverty in order to benefit the majority of the vulnerable and marginalized communities.

We remain convinced that economic development and security are mutually reinforcing, and we therefore commend the work of UNOCA in supporting States of the region in strengthening conflict prevention, peacebuilding and dealing with cross-border threats. The proliferation of weapons and the spread of transnational organized crime and terrorist groups continue to pose a threat to the region's security. Insecurity in the Sahel region is of particular concern, because of its impact on peace and stability and on socioeconomic development in the Central African region.

The activities of the Lord's Resistance Army remain a grave threat to peace, security and stability in the region, with serious humanitarian consequences. South Africa is concerned about the devastating effects of the LRA and its continued activities in a number of African countries, including the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Uganda, South Sudan and the Central African Republic. The brutality of those activities continues to haunt thousands of innocent civilians, including women and children, and has resulted in the massive displacement of about 443,000 people and an acute humanitarian crisis. The African Union has declared the LRA a terrorist organization, and the Security Council should therefore deal with the LRA in the same manner. The five strategic areas of

intervention in the United Nations Regional Strategy to Address the Threat and Impact of the Activities of the LRA remain critical in the global efforts to combat the scourge of the LRA. Our energies should be focused on its full implementation.

South Africa commends the ongoing military cooperation between the countries affected by LRA activities in addressing that challenge. In that regard, my delegation welcomes the efforts of the Special Representative in convening a meeting with national, regional and international partners in Entebbe, Uganda, to develop a joint road map for the implementation of the Regional Strategy on the LRA in July 2014. That road map would, inter alia, strengthen the operational capabilities of the countries affected by the atrocities of the LRA and facilitate the delivery of humanitarian aid to affected areas. We also welcome the efforts by Uganda and South Sudan in contributing a total of 2,500 troops to the African Union Regional Task Force during September 2012.

In that regard, it is vital for the international community to support the African Union by mobilizing international assistance and by providing all necessary assistance for operationalizing the African Union Regional Cooperation Initiative against the LRA, particularly in logistical, financial and technical terms, so as to facilitate the effective functioning of the various components of the Initiative. It is also necessary to build the capacity of the armed and security forces of the affected countries. Inter-mission cooperation among the various United Nations peacekeeping operations in the region, such as the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the United Nations Mission in South Sudan, would also be a useful tool in the common approach to addressing the LRA issue.

We reaffirm that military action against the LRA should be conducted in a manner that minimizes civilian casualties and should be in compliance with applicable international law, including international humanitarian, human rights and refugee law. South Africa wishes to reiterate that those military operations should be part of a broader strategy that should include the granting of amnesty, policies for facilitating defections and reintegration, and the arrest of LRA commanders indicted by the International Criminal Court. In that respect, we call on all States to cooperate with Uganda and the International Criminal Court to effect the arrest warrants issued against LRA leaders.

Finally, my delegation wishes to express its appreciation for the work done by UNOCA under the leadership of Special Representative of the Secretary-General Abou Moussa. It must be emphasized that for UNOCA to be able to implement all of its plans and programmes for the region, it needs to be equipped with all of the resources it requires.

My delegation supports the presidential statement that will be adopted by Council later today.

Mr. Cabral (Portugal): I would like to thank you very much, Sir, and the delegation of Morocco for organizing this timely and necessary debate. I would also like to thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Abou Moussa for his very comprehensive briefing.

As was reaffirmed during the briefing of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) continues to pose a serious threat to civilians in four affected countries, in particular in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Central African Republic, countries where the LRA continues to perpetrate brutal attacks against the civil population, causing death and abductions and spreading fear, which has led, so far, to more than 443,000 displaced people in LRA-affected areas.

Portugal reiterates its strong condemnation of the continued violations of international humanitarian law and human rights law by the LRA, in particular those against women and children, including the recruitment and use of children, killing and maiming, rape, sexual violence and abductions. We firmly demand that the LRA cease those practices, release all abductees, disarm, demobilize and surrender. We also encourage all States to cooperate in implementing the arrest warrants of the International Criminal Court against Joseph Kony, Okot Odhiambo and Dominic Ongwen in order to bring them to justice.

Portugal commends the efforts that international and local organizations have been undertaking to provide humanitarian assistance to the civilian population in LRA-affected areas. However, we are deeply concerned by the fact that LRA attacks continue to impede humanitarian access to displaced persons and host communities, and we therefore reaffirm the need for all parties to promote safe and unhindered access for humanitarian organizations to the civilian population.

The international community is at a critical juncture with regard to the LRA problem. It is critical that, under the guidance of the United Nations and in coordination with the African Union (AU) and the LRA-affected countries, efforts be intensified to remove the threat posed by that armed group and build upon the institutional progress achieved over the past two years.

Portugal affirms its support for the United Nations Regional Strategy on the LRA and welcomes the current and future efforts in the five identified areas. In that regard and with a view to fulfilling the strategic goals set forth in that document, we encourage the Secretariat to pursue its ongoing efforts to draw up a prioritized and sequenced implementation plan to support the Strategy.

With respect to the first objective of the Strategy, we welcome the steps already taken by the four affected countries to operationalize the AU Regional Cooperation Initiative, especially the Regional Task Force, which remains instrumental for ending the LRA threat. In that context, we encourage the Governments of the affected countries to fulfil their commitments under the AU Regional Cooperation Initiative and strengthen their political and technical coordination under the auspices of the African Union and its Special Envoy, Francisco Madeira, so as to swiftly agree on a concept of operations for the Regional Task Force.

While noting that the affected States have the primary responsibility to protect civilians, we encourage the various United Nations bodies, especially the peacekeeping missions concerned, to continue to enhance coordination in that regard among themselves, as well as with the other relevant international and regional actors, in the fields of technical coordination, information-sharing and joint planning. In parallel, disarmament, demobilization, repatriation and reintegration initiatives, including those developed by the local civil society, must be robustly pursued and supported by the international community.

Let me now turn to the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA), whose work is of great importance for enhancing United Nations engagement in efforts to achieve peace and security in Central Africa, in close coordination with the relevant regional and subregional organizations and United Nations bodies, not only regarding the LRA threat, but also with regard to other crucial challenges, including security and terrorism, the fight against drug trafficking, piracy in the Gulf of Guinea and the illicit

flows of arms and fighters. We deplore the growing threats to the personal security of some United Nations personnel in Central Africa, and strongly condemn the fact that some of them were recently attacked and killed while carrying out their duties.

Let me conclude by referring to UNOCA. We reiterate our strong support for its innovative efforts, specifically those addressed to preventing the emergence of new conflicts, resolving existing ones by peaceful means and promoting democratic and accountable governance in the Central Africa subregion.

Let me briefly refer to the LRA, which is a topic to which my country attached the utmost importance during our current mandate on the Security Council. I would like to underline once again the need for the Council to remain closely engaged on this issue. In that regard, we firmly support the adoption of a Security Council presidential statement on the LRA as soon as possible. Portugal will continue to spare no effort to continue to mobilize the international community and to improve the United Nations response to that scourge.

Mr. Musayev (Azerbaijan): I would like to thank you, Sir, for having organized the present meeting, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Abou Moussa, for his briefing, and the Secretary-General for his report on the activities of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa and on the Lord's Resistance Army-affected areas (S/2012/923).

We take positive note of the progress observed during the reporting period in Central Africa, especially the successful and peaceful conduct of elections, the implementation of electoral reforms, and efforts to promote economic growth, regional integration and cooperation.

At the same time, cross-border challenges, the deteriorating crisis in the Sahel region, the flow of illegal arms and the activities of criminal and terrorist groups continue to threaten the security and stability of the region. It is important that countries in the Central Africa subregion continue to confront the cross-border and related security challenges together, as well as to strengthen partnership and promote peacebuilding initiatives to that end.

Maritime insecurity and piracy in the Gulf of Guinea are further aggravating the security situation and have a negative impact on the economic development of the countries concerned. In that regard, we commend

the efforts of regional stakeholders, with the support of the United Nations, to implement resolution 2018 (2012), on maritime security. We also look forward to a ministerial meeting on the Gulf of Guinea and a heads of State summit to be held next year.

The high poverty and unemployment rates are also matters of concern that require redoubled efforts from the countries in the subregion, with the support and assistance of the international community, with a view to achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

We commend the efforts of UNOCA to contribute to peace and security in Central Africa, including in such fields as conflict prevention, governance, mediation and good offices. In that regard, we stress the particular importance of the increased cooperation by the Office with regional and subregional institutions.

Despite the progress achieved in addressing the threat and impact of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), that group continues to destabilize the security situation in the region. We strongly condemn the ongoing brutal attacks and atrocities committed by the LRA, as well as its continued violations of international humanitarian law and abuses of human rights. We support the efforts aimed at bringing all those responsible for atrocious crimes to justice.

It is essential that the United Nations and the African Union continue their collaboration and work with the respective Governments in addressing the LRA threat. It is also important that the LRA-affected countries accelerate their efforts to implement the goals set out in the United Nations regional strategy on the LRA, as well as to make further progress towards the operationalization and implementation of the African Union Regional Cooperation Initiative against the LRA.

Furthermore, strengthening the response capacities of the affected countries, addressing the long-term development needs and providing humanitarian assistance in the affected areas require constant attention by the Governments concerned and international donor support. We also underline the importance of improving transport and telecommunications infrastructures in remote areas in order to better respond to the LRA threat.

It is also essential to further encourage the remaining LRA fighters to leave the group's ranks and participate in the disarmament, demobilization, repatriation, resettlement and reintegration process.

Last but not least, increased coordination and information-sharing between the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in the Central African Republic, the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the United Nations Mission in South Sudan are an important prerequisite for better anticipating LRA movements and threats of attack. Cooperation among those missions has proven to be relevant and useful, and we encourage them to further enhance their interaction.

Mr. Briz Gutiérrez (Guatemala) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation is grateful to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA), Mr. Abou Moussa, for his presentation updating us on the most recent developments and for the recently circulated report of the Secretary-General (S/2012/923).

The presence and action of UNOCA in facilitating regional and subregional initiatives has undeniably had a positive impact on the recently held electoral processes and in preventing conflicts in Central Africa. The work carried out by the Regional Office is a clear example of improved regional coordination that takes into account the major challenges facing the population and catalyzes initiatives of other regional actors, as well as of the United Nations itself, to tackle the principle challenges to development.

Despite the progress made, we are aware that new challenges are emerging, especially in terms of security. That is why we take a positive view of the role currently being played by UNOCA, jointly with the Economic Community of Central African States, the Economic Community of West African States and the United Nations Office for West Africa, in responding to the insecurity created by piracy in the Gulf of Guinea and to youth unemployment. In that regard, we hope that the recommendations of the joint meeting of the committee on maritime security of the Gulf of Guinea Commission, held in October, can be implemented, specifically with regard to the holding of a ministerial meeting in the month of February next year to address this topic.

With regard to the threat that the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) continues to pose, we reiterate our concern regarding the effects of that armed group and its activities on the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Central African Republic, South Sudan and

Uganda. Their acts of brutality continue to menace the lives of innocent civilians, particularly children. We condemn the atrocities that that group continues to commit, including kidnappings and the recruitment of minors for criminal activities, as well as the recent acts that resulted in the deaths of a number of humanitarian personnel.

Guatemala condemns in the most emphatic terms the constant violations of international law and of international human rights standards committed by the LRA. The group's campaign has the potential to trigger greater instability in the Central African region, as well as to make it more difficult for countries to move towards peace and security. It is important to eliminate the threat of the LRA in order to create and build a safer and more stable environment in the countries affected.

Our delegation commends the initiatives taken to implement the United Nations regional strategy to counter the LRA. Those initiatives are based on the framework for action provided by the five objectives established in the strategy, which incorporate priorities and mechanisms over the medium and long terms to reduce the threat posed by that group. We request the authorities of each of the affected countries to support and cooperate with the strategy, in the interests of the populations that have endured the scourge of that armed group for decades.

We call for the execution of the arrest warrants issued by the International Criminal Court for the three leaders of the Lord's Resistance Army on charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity, including murder, rape and child recruitment through kidnapping. We call on all States to cooperate with the Court in executing the warrants and to ensure that those responsible for such atrocities are brought to justice.

Finally, we express our support for the prompt adoption of a draft presidential statement on this matter.

Mr. Bertoux (France) (*spoke in French*): I thank Mr. Abou Moussa, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA), for coming to New York and for his briefing today. I also thank the Secretary-General for his report (S/2012/923) on the activities of UNOCA and on the progress made in the fight against the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA).

Many political and security challenges persist in Central Africa that require the joint cooperation of all

actors. We encourage UNOCA's efforts to strengthen its links with the Economic Community of Central African States and the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region.

On the security front, the fight against piracy in the Gulf of Guinea is a source of concern to the Council. We welcome the summit of Heads of States on piracy in the Gulf of Guinea planned for April 2013, with UNOCA's support. We also welcome UNOCA's active promotion 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, and its promotion of the road map for efforts to combat terrorism and for the non-proliferation of small arms and light weapons in Central Africa.

On the political front, we reiterate the need for free, transparent elections in order to ensure lasting peace in Central Africa, and encourage UNOCA to continue supporting national efforts in that area.

Among the peace and security challenges in Central Africa, the Lord's Resistance Army remains a major concern. The rebellion of the Mouvement du 23 mars (M23) in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo and tensions between the Sudan and South Sudan, as well as last week's escalation of attacks by rebel groups in eastern Central African Republic, are of serious concern. However, they must not cause us to forget the ongoing threat of the LRA in the subregion.

In the past year, at least 180 attacks were carried out against civilians by that armed group, causing 39 deaths. UNOCA has played a key role in formulating the United Nations regional strategy on the fight against the LRA. The strategy defines effective measures, based on five key pillars, aimed at strengthened coordination of the actions of all partners involved in the fight against the LRA.

Six months after the adoption of the strategy, implementation of all of those pillars should be prioritized. In order to reinvigorate the momentum, we need a plan of action on implementing the strategy that sets timetables and specific goals for each United Nations entity involved. UNOCA could also promote a high-level meeting of the States involved in the fight against the LRA, aimed at increased cooperation on the next steps.

Today, it is critical for the African Union (AU) to launch coercive actions against the LRA. To that end, the AU's Regional Task Force against the LRA must take shape. In that respect, we commend the commitments of Uganda, South Sudan and the Central African Republic, which have already made contingents available to the Force. We encourage other States of the region to do the same. We call for the finalization of a concept of operations to define the chain of command and the modalities of the Force, which must be able to intervene in all areas affected by the LRA.

Civilian protection measures must be strengthened. That will entail increased sharing of information and intelligence among United Nations offices and operations in the region, as well as between the United Nations and the AU Regional Task Force. Radio and cellular early warning communications systems should also be developed in order to quickly locate groups associated with the LRA and to warn and protect civilians.

Defections by LRA members should be encouraged. Existing disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation or resettlement (DDRRR) programmes must be extended to all affected areas, with special emphasis on reintegration by establishing appropriate accommodation structures. It is important that the offices and missions of the United Nations develop a common DDRRR approach, and establish standard procedures for accepting deserters, in particular children who had been recruited.

At the same time, efforts under way to arrest and prosecute the primary leaders of the LRA, including Joseph Kony, should continue. We encourage the States involved to strengthen their cooperation with the International Criminal Court towards that goal.

France supports all of those efforts through its contributions to the European Union African Peace Facility. France also provides bilateral support to States affected by the LRA, inter alia through our ongoing and substantial cooperation with the Central African Republic in the military sector. To the four countries concerned, we also provide humanitarian assistance to civilians affected by the attacks, particularly through food assistance, and carry out socioeconomic reintegration programmes for child soldiers.

The States affected by the LRA have a major role to play. We encourage them to continue their efforts to put

an end to the threat of the LRA and thereby relieve the affected populations. We stand beside them.

Mr. Alzate (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation wishes to thank you, Sir, for convening this meeting, and Mr. Abou Moussa, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA), for his briefing and his leadership in heading that Office. We welcome the progress made by UNOCA in fulfilling its mandate and in strengthening the coordinating role of the United Nations presence in the region on the issues covered by its mandate.

In recent months, we have seen improvements in the democratic systems of the region. The general elections in Angola and parliamentary elections in Congo took place in a generally peaceful environment. Differences were expressed via the legal and institutional channels provided for that purpose, thereby demonstrating that democratic values and institutions are making progress in becoming the cornerstones of representative and legitimate power in the region. With a view to further progress, UNOCA must continue to support national authorities in strengthening national capacities through providing requested assistance to improve their electoral systems and legislation.

The progress made in the region has also materialized as major economic growth. Despite the complex global economic environment, the region has managed to maintain good levels of macroeconomic performance, and it is foreseen that growth rates will continue along those lines. Nevertheless, efforts must be pursued in order to ensure that the benefits of economic growth lead to improved living conditions of the population. The formulation of equitable macroeconomic policies aimed at achieving inclusive socioeconomic growth is a purpose for which the United Nations must support the States in the region through assistance with specialized training.

To facilitate consistent human rights action among the various United Nations actors in the region, we must focus on the priority creation and strengthening of national capacities and institutions in that context. In that respect and in order to carry out its mandate, UNOCA must promote closely coordinated, complementary efforts among the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, UN-Women and other relevant actors of the system so as to enable the States of the region to gradually and effectively achieve

and improve the enjoyment of and respect for all the rights and freedoms of the populations.

We welcome UNOCA's links with regional and subregional organizations and its efforts to closely coordinate work with them and to strengthen those institutions as a priority of its mandate. Activities aimed at implementing framework cooperation agreements must continue, and we encourage the Special Representative to pursue a fluid dialogue leading to a clear definition of priorities and goals for action, in which matters such as conflict prevention and the fight against illicit trafficking, terrorism, piracy and armed robbery in the Gulf of Guinea will be covered in a comprehensive and coordinated fashion.

The Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) continues to threaten the peace and stability of the countries of the region, and the effects of its activities continue to seriously harm the civilian population. There are hundreds of thousands of displaced persons and refugees. Violations of international humanitarian law and human rights continue to characterize the violent actions of that armed group. We welcome the progress made in the implementation of the United Nations regional strategy to address the threat and impact of the activities of the LRA, and towards the launching of the African Union-led Regional Cooperation Initiative against the Lord's Resistance Army.

The countries of Central Africa must respond to the many challenges to their security. The political will of the countries of the region must therefore be maintained and supported so that they can mount a sustained attack against the threat posed by the Lord's Resistance Army. Strategic, ongoing dialogue between the United Nations and the African Union is crucial if action against the LRA is to remain a priority and if firm steps are to be taken towards defining the pending elements of the African Union Regional Cooperation Initiative.

In order to achieve the implementation of the five goals established in the strategy, it is essential that sufficient resources be made available. All of the components of the strategy are equally important and mutually reinforcing. We therefore believe that a clear division of responsibilities, the definition of parameters and a timeline for their implementation will require an appropriate balance that takes into account the key importance of such aspects as the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process, care for the victims, and the effective improvement of the social and

economic conditions of the populations of the region affected by the presence of the Lord's Resistance Army.

I note the activities of UNOCA to strengthen coordination among the various agencies of the United Nations system, participation in peacekeeping operations, and support for the special political offices in the region. We must therefore continue to promote the coordinating role of UNOCA within the United Nations in the tasks assigned to it.

Finally, we express our willingness to adopt a draft presidential statement on this topic.

Mr. Menan (Togo) (*spoke in French*): Allow me first to thank Mr. Abou Moussa for his detailed briefing, and to reiterate our congratulations to the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA), the African Union (AU) and all United Nations missions in Central Africa for the tireless efforts they undertake every day to promote the maintenance, restoration and building of peace and security in that region.

Togo welcomes the progress made in recent months by most countries of the region in terms of political and economic governance. My country urges the leaders and all political players of the countries involved to continue their efforts by promoting dialogue and the tireless quest for consensus in order to preserve and build upon their democratic gains by strengthening, in particular, their democratic institutions. We also welcome efforts undertaken in coordination with UNOCA and the United Nations Office for West Africa to convene a summit of States of the region on the pressing issue of piracy in the Gulf of Guinea.

The fight against extreme poverty, youth unemployment, hunger and insecurity is clearly crucial to peacebuilding and the consolidation of democracy in the region. In that regard, we welcome the action pursued by most Governments of the countries of the region in these areas, and we call on them to invest more in the related sectors.

While we welcome the encouraging progress made in peacebuilding by most of these countries, particularly Burundi and the Central African Republic, the current security and humanitarian situation in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo remains a key source of concern. In fact, the fragility and volatility of the situation in North Kivu continues to seriously threaten the stability of the country and the entire region. That is why we will continue to reiterate that

a negotiated political settlement to the crisis remains the key condition for easing the plight of civilians oppressed by more than a decade of insecurity.

My delegation remains deeply concerned by the serious threat posed by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) — a movement that has been declared a terrorist group by the African Union — to the civilian populations of the region. Even weakened as it is by the concerted and determined efforts of the countries of the region and the international community, that group retains the capacity to cause serious harm. The toll of its attacks is alarming. While all countries of the region and beyond are exposed to it, the Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of the Congo are particularly affected, and women and children are, unfortunately, the primary victims. This is tangible proof that the work ahead to meet the challenge of the LRA remains immense.

We therefore firmly support the Regional Cooperation Initiative against the Lord's Resistance Army, and commend the actions pursued in this context, in particular in recent months by UNOCA, the African Union and the countries of the region. The tracking down of LRA fighters must continue, and the capture of its leader, Joseph Kony, remains a priority. That individual, the principal leaders of the group and all those who have been accused of serious crimes must be held accountable for their acts before the international justice system. Togo urges all States to cooperate to this end.

From this standpoint, my country welcomes the holding in recent months of a number of meetings focused on the LRA. We also welcome the fact that, in September, Uganda and South Sudan made military units available to the AU that will become part of the Regional Task Force set up by the AU to fight that group. We urge other States of the region to follow the example of these two countries. The entire international community must step up its efforts, particularly on the financial and logistical fronts, in order to ensure an effective implementation of the regional strategy to counter that group.

In conclusion, my country supports the draft presidential statement presented by the United Kingdom, which the Council is prepared to adopt.

Mr. Wittig (Germany): At the outset, I, too, want to thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Moussa for his briefing.

Let me first refer to the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) and, secondly, comment on the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA).

The LRA continues to pose a serious threat to civilians, mainly in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Central African Republic and South Sudan, and of course children continue to bear the brunt of LRA attacks and atrocities. The conceptual tools are in place, namely, the African Union (AU) Regional Cooperation Initiative against the Lord's Resistance Army and the United Nations regional strategy. It is now critical to swiftly implement and follow up on the Regional Cooperation Initiative.

We welcome the progress made so far. We reiterate our call on the countries in the region to take the lead in resolving the LRA problem, to fully commit to the AU-led Regional Cooperation Initiative, to strengthen their cooperation at all levels, and to observe their primary responsibility to protect civilians. We call upon all States to cooperate with the Ugandan authorities in the International Criminal Court in order to implement the arrest warrants for LRA leaders.

We welcome the AU's leadership role in coordinating efforts against the LRA, and commend the close cooperation between Special Representative Moussa and the Special Envoy of the African Union for the LRA issue. Strengthening coordination, information-sharing and trust among the security and defence forces of the LRA-affected countries remains important. The African Union should also continue to persuade Khartoum to participate in the efforts to address the LRA threat.

We reiterate our encouragement to share the concept of the military planning of the African Union Initiative and to agree on a realistic concept of operations for the AU Regional Task Force. That is important in order to enable the United Nations and international partners to consider providing additional support, where feasible. In every military action, the protection of civilians needs to be a priority, well monitored and reviewed.

We appreciate UNOCA's leading role in coordinating the implementation of the United Nations regional strategy to address the LRA threat. We commend all United Nations actors for their contributions and welcome the progress achieved, notably in inter-mission and cross-border cooperation. But further efforts are needed. The successful implementation of the strategy requires the full commitment of all United Nations

actors and external partners. We encourage focusing on the protection of civilians; disarmament, demobilization and reintegration; and disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation or resettlement (DDRRR) efforts for former LRA members, ensuring humanitarian assistance and fostering peacebuilding and development activities in LRA-affected areas.

Germany remains committed to contributing to the implementation of the regional strategy. We provide continuous humanitarian assistance and have supported the expansion of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo's standard operating procedures for DDRRR across the region.

In order to enhance the protection of civilians, we have recently allocated \$1.3 million to a UNICEF project. The project aims at responding to the specific protection concerns of women and children arising from LRA operations. We encourage Special Representative Moussa and UNOCA to ensure close monitoring of the implementation process of the United Nations regional strategy, its elaboration and flexible adaptation of all actions to needs and developments on the ground.

Turning finally to UNOCA's overall mandate and activities, we commend UNOCA for prioritizing its work programme and for its focus on specific activities. We welcome UNOCA's contribution to strengthening the mediation capacities of the Economic Community of Central African States in the field. Enhancing early warning and early political action in the region should also be pursued. We encourage the development of the integrated counter-terrorism and small arms and light weapons control strategy for Central Africa, and hail UNOCA's assistance provided to the States members of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa in that context. We also commend UNOCA's contribution to implementing the recommendations of resolutions 2018 (2011) and 2039 (2012) on maritime security in the Gulf of Guinea, and encourage continued close cooperation with the United Nations Office for West Africa and regional organizations for the purpose of developing a regional strategy against piracy and other forms of maritime crime.

Allow me to conclude, Sir, by expressing our support for the work of Special Representative Moussa and the Regional Office. Their contribution to conflict prevention in Central Africa is important and much appreciated.

Mr. Iliichev (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Abou Moussa for his briefing, and we note the progress in consolidating the democratic processes in a number of States of Central Africa, including the peaceful holding of elections this summer in Angola and the Congo.

We welcome the efforts of the Central African countries to advance their integration processes and cross-border cooperation. We support the focus of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa on building partnerships with subregional bodies and assisting them in capacity-building. We note the growing engagement of the Office with the countries of the subregion on issues of counter-terrorism and the illegal trafficking of small arms and light weapons.

We are concerned by the growing threat of piracy in the Gulf of Guinea. Support must be maintained for the increasing efforts of Central and West African countries to implement the provisions of resolution 2018 (2011) on maritime security. An important step to that end will be the regional summit on counter-piracy issues to be held in April 2013 in Yaoundé.

We cannot help but be concerned by the ongoing activities of the Lord's Resistance Army. Because of those thugs, 450,000 people remain refugees and internally displaced persons. The activities of that group seriously destabilize the military, political and humanitarian situation in the affected countries, and undermine efforts towards their post-conflict recovery.

We advocate a comprehensive approach to addressing this challenge. In that regard, we support efforts to implement the comprehensive United Nations regional strategy to address the threat and impact of the activities of the Lord's Resistance Army. The priority tasks include assisting in the establishment of the African Union Regional Task Force. We share the view on the need to speed up its deployment and to promptly agree and adopt the concept of operations for the African Force. Of equal urgency is the implementation of tasks with regard to protecting civilians, the provision of humanitarian assistance, and the disarmament, demobilization, repatriation, resettlement and reintegration of LRA fighters, as well as providing the countries of the subregion with support in terms of peacebuilding and establishing Government authority in remote regions.

We note the contribution of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa in the collective efforts to fight the Lord's Resistance Army, and its importance in preventing conflict, ensuring peace and security, and strengthening the coordination of United Nations activities and the regional and subregional organizations in Central Africa.

Mr. Masood Khan (Pakistan): We thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Abou Moussa, for his briefing and his important contribution as Head of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA). We support the important role of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa in addressing issues in the Central African subregion, in line with its mandate. The role of the Office in the areas of preventive diplomacy, conflict prevention and mediation remains crucial and needs to be further reinforced and strengthened.

An increase in the incidence of piracy in the Gulf of Guinea is a matter of grave concern and requires a comprehensive regional strategy specific to the regional circumstances. Such a regional strategy will strengthen the legal framework at the national and regional levels for criminalizing and prosecuting acts of piracy, developing mechanisms for cooperation and information-sharing between law enforcement agencies of the States of the region, and addressing the underlying causes of piracy. The early convening of the Heads of State summit of the Gulf of Guinea on piracy and maritime security, with the help of UNOCA, will be a crucial step towards forging a comprehensive regional and international response to the challenge of piracy.

The presence and activities of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) remain a major threat to the security and safety of civilians in the subregion. Addressing the scourge of the LRA will require a comprehensive approach aimed not only at eliminating and bringing to justice its remaining leadership, but also at strengthening the capacities of the relevant States. At the same time, it will be crucial to address the long-term development needs of the areas affected by the LRA.

Effective implementation of the United Nations regional strategy against the LRA, especially the early implementation of the African Union-led Regional Cooperation Initiative against the LRA, remains crucial to addressing this threat. We welcome the troop contributions made so far by the countries of the

region to the African Union Regional Task Force under the Initiative, and look forward to learning about its concept of operations. The international community should provide the necessary political, technical and financial support for the successful implementation of the Initiative, in line with the priorities identified by the African Union and the principle of national ownership.

We welcome the important role that UNOCA, the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in the Central African Republic and United Nations peacekeeping missions continue to play in the region in the fight against the LRA. In particular, we commend the important work of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The Mission's role, through training and capacity-building of the Forces armées de la République démocratique du Congo, support for the Joint Information Operations Centre, and implementation of the disarmament, demobilization, repatriation, resettlement and reintegration programmes remains an important and integral component of the international response to the LRA.

Pakistan remains committed to peace, security and stability in the Central African subregion. We hope that the region will continue to receive the full support of the international community and the Security Council to help it address the numerous challenges it is facing. Pakistan will continue to play its part in that regard.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I shall now make a statement in my national capacity.

I would first like to thank the Secretary-General for the report (S/2012/923), submitted pursuant to the request of the President of the Council in the presidential statement of 29 June 2012 (S/PRST/2012/18). I would also like to thank Mr. Abou Moussa, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA), for his briefing on UNOCA's activities and on areas affected by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA).

The situation in Central Africa has improved overall in terms of restoring peace and regional cooperation. We welcome the work and role of UNOCA to that effect, as well as Mr. Moussa's efforts to support the various Central African countries and subregional organizations, especially in the area of capacity-building. On that front, support for such organizations as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Economic Community of Central

African States (ECCAS) should remain a priority, particularly in the light of recent developments in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We welcome the framework agreement for cooperation among regional offices, as well as the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, in strengthening coordination in conflict prevention and mediation.

We also hope that the Regional Office and Mr. Moussa will continue to strengthen regional cooperation on an inter-State or interregional basis in order to respond to the many challenges the region is facing. We particularly welcome the cooperation between UNOCA and the United Nations Office for West Africa, aimed at responding to common challenges and threats, especially in the Sahel region and the Gulf of Guinea, such as transnational organized crime, the traffic in small arms and light weapons, and the fight against terrorism. Central Africa must rise to this challenge, and Morocco welcomes the efforts of the States of the region, as well as those of regional offices, to support interregional cooperation, particularly in responding to the challenges of terrorism and the traffic in small arms and light weapons in Central Africa.

As indicated in the report, piracy in the Gulf of Guinea has grown to considerable proportions in recent years, to the extent that it now threatens stability and development in the region. Piracy has even affected countries that are geographically distant from the Gulf, and its economic impact has been felt on an international level. In order to respond to this scourge — which is, unfortunately, spreading throughout Africa — we must take action, and that can be done only through regional coordination between ECOWAS and ECCAS, as well as the countries of the Gulf of Guinea region.

We welcome the efforts of the regional Office to facilitate organization of the regional summit on piracy in the Gulf of Guinea, to be held in April 2013. We also welcome the efforts of ECOWAS and ECCAS, as well as those of the Gulf of Guinea Commission. We invite Mr. Moussa to make the most of the opportunity offered by the NATO ministerial meeting to consider interregional cooperation and all the security challenges and respond to them.

Turning now to the Lord's Resistance Army, that group continues to threaten the stability and lives of thousands of men, women and children in the Central African region. We emphatically condemn its activities, which violate international humanitarian law and international human rights. In this context, we welcome

the regional strategy of the United Nations, with its five pillars and unified framework, aimed at responding to LRA atrocities. We further welcome the efforts of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo to respond to the LRA and to strengthen the armed capacity of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, as well as its efforts in the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration for former combatants.

Through its participation in peacekeeping forces in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Morocco will continue to provide protection for the civilian population, humanitarian aid and medical assistance. We will continue to support the countries of the region, especially in the areas of human development and capacity-building.

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

I give the floor to Mr. Moussa to respond to comments and questions raised by several members of the Council.

Mr. Moussa: Having listened to all the comments made by the members of the Security Council this afternoon, I would just like to indicate that the importance of those comments and suggestions on the early implementation of the Lord's Resistance Army strategy cannot be overemphasized.

I have also noted with attention all the comments made this afternoon, be they on regional coordination, joint planning or the need to strengthen collaboration. I have taken note as well of the need for further inter-mission cooperation and inter-region cooperation; the importance of the protection of civilians; the issue of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration;

human rights; and continued humanitarian support for affected populations.

I have further taken note of members' comments on elections. As much as we welcome what has happened, we should continue — and my Office should continue — to support the Governments of the region to make sure that the issue of governance continues to remain at the top of their agendas. I also note the issue of information-sharing and the response to piracy in the Gulf of Guinea.

I thank the Council for the comments I have heard about the work being carried out by my colleagues in the United Nations peacekeeping missions in the subregion.

I wish to say that I feel honoured and pleased to have received so many positive comments this afternoon, and I want to thank all the members of the Council. I will make sure that I share their comments and positive remarks on the work of my Office with all my colleagues, who are called upon on a daily basis to carry out these assignments.

I want to take this opportunity to wish the members of the Council in advance a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank Mr. Moussa for his response and for his comments. I also thank him on behalf of the Council for his participation in today's meeting. We wish him success in his efforts.

There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 5.05 p.m.