

18. Strengthening cooperation between the United Nations system and the Central African region in the maintenance of peace and security

Initial proceedings

Decision of 31 October 2002 (4640th meeting): statement by the President

At its 4630th meeting, on 22 October 2002, the Security Council included in its agenda the item entitled "Strengthening cooperation between the United Nations system and the Central African region in the maintenance of peace and security" and a letter dated 21 October 2002 from the representative of Cameroon addressed to the President of the Security Council,¹ transmitting a background note for the meeting, which outlined, *inter alia*, the slow progress in economic and social development in the Central African region; the difficulties in developing structures for regional cooperation; and the problem of building peace, including the requirement for the mobilization of major resources to support the demobilization, disarmament and reintegration operations.

At the same meeting, the Council heard briefings by the Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, the Country Director for South Central Africa and the Great Lakes countries of the World Bank, the Director of the Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the President of the Economic and Social Council. Statements were made by all members of the Council, as well as the representatives of Burundi, the Central African Republic, Chad, the Republic of the Congo (on behalf of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS)), the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark (on behalf of the European Union²), Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Japan, the Permanent Observer of the African Union and the Deputy Secretary-General of ECCAS.³

The Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, expressing serious concern at the political, social, economic, security and humanitarian situation in several of the countries in the subregion, pointed out that the numerous armed conflicts in Central African States had undermined efforts to achieve sustainable development and stability. He stressed the need for both national and subregional efforts to address the cross-cutting challenges facing Central African countries. Noting that the United Nations had been deeply involved in assisting the region, notably by promoting the development of subregional capabilities for early warning and prevention, the dispatching of Special Envoys, the authorization of peacekeeping and peacebuilding operations and the creation of the Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, focusing on disarmament, he stressed the importance of the Central African States taking the lead and showing the necessary political will.⁴

The Country Director for South Central Africa and the Great Lakes countries of the World Bank stressed the interconnectedness of development and conflict, noting that political and economic development failures had been among the key roots of conflict in Central Africa, and that the consequences of these conflicts in turn were taking a heavy toll on development efforts. He pointed out that the World Bank was involved through a variety of instruments and approaches, paying particular attention to the political economy of recovery in post-conflict countries, but cautioned that political leadership was required to create the best possible environment for the World Bank contributions to be successful. Finally, he noted that the World Bank's Multi-Country Demobilization and Reintegration Programme for the greater Great Lakes region of Africa, which was seeking to operationalize the regional strategy for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, would complement the efforts of the United Nations.⁵

¹ S/2002/1179.

² Bulgaria, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia and Turkey aligned themselves with the statement.

³ The Central Africa Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea and Gabon were represented by their respective Ministers for Foreign Affairs.

⁴ S/PV.4630, pp. 4-5.

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 5-8.

The Director of the Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery of UNDP also stressed the interdependence between poverty and conflict, which required development programmes to contribute to consolidation of peace and prevention of resumed conflict. She stated that the parameters of the strategic framework for UNDP were conflict prevention, recovery, peacebuilding, and capacity-building of regional and subregional organizations. In that context, she outlined a number of regional and country-level UNDP activities in Central Africa, particularly in the areas of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of former combatants, capacity-building and awareness-raising at the community and State levels.⁶

The President of the Economic and the Social Council, noting that peacebuilding required a comprehensive approach, pointed out that the Economic and Social Council had a Charter-mandated role to play in addressing root causes of violence and assisting in peacebuilding processes. Recognizing the importance of cross-border influences, he stated that the Economic and Social Council would continue to advocate for the creation of a subregional United Nations coordinating capability in Central Africa. While welcoming recent progress in a number of Central African States, he deplored continued illegal exploitation of the region's natural resources. He believed that it was imperative for the countries of the subregion to own and lead their own reconstruction. He expressed the hope that the decision of the Economic and Social Council to establish, upon request, an ad hoc advisory group to examine humanitarian and economic needs would be successful.⁷

In their statements, participants covered a number of general topics, including the importance of African ownership of the peacebuilding processes; the development of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes; the fight against illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons; the need for international assistance as well as financial and material resources; the convening of an international conference on peace, security, democracy and development in the Great Lakes region; a proposal for the establishment of a United Nations regional office; and the coordination and coherence of the United Nations activities in Central Africa.

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 8-10.

⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 10-11.

Most speakers expressed concern at the proliferation and persistence of conflicts throughout Central Africa, and at the widespread poverty in a region of abundant natural resources. Many delegates emphasized that peacebuilding in Central Africa would require a regional and comprehensive approach, taking into account both the socio-economic, humanitarian, security and human rights dimensions.

The representative of Japan expressed support for the recommendation on strengthening the relationship between the Security Council and African regional and subregional organizations, put forward by the Council's newly established Ad Hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa.⁸ The Permanent Observer of the African Union believed that the partnership among the United Nations, regional and subregional organizations should be based on the principle of shared responsibility in peacekeeping operations.⁹

Meanwhile, the representative of Denmark, on behalf of the European Union, argued that an important prerequisite for consolidating regional peace, democracy and economic stability was the existence of a genuine political will to cooperate. If the Central African States expressed a genuine political will for cooperation then the United Nations should help to enhance the institutional capacities of the region.¹⁰ Moreover, the representative of the United States observed that regional cooperation required stable and healthy nation States, adding that effective international assistance could not be provided until each nation in the region was functioning and thriving.¹¹

A number of delegations expressed appreciation for the work of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa and its important role in reinvigorating ECCAS and in facilitating the establishment by ECCAS of a number of mechanisms, including the non-aggression pact among the States of ECCAS; the Council for Peace and Security in Central Africa; the Multinational Force for Central Africa; the early-warning mechanism for Central Africa; and a subregional centre for human rights and democracy in Central Africa. Meanwhile, a

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 27.

⁹ S/PV.4630 (Resumption 1), p. 5.

¹⁰ S/PV.4630, p. 24.

¹¹ S/PV.4630 (Resumption 1), p. 9.

few speakers deplored the fact that those instruments had not yet become fully operational.¹²

At its 4640th meeting, on 31 October 2002, the Council again included in its agenda the letter dated 21 October 2002 from the representative of Cameroon addressed to the President of the Security Council.¹ The President (Cameroon) made a statement on behalf of the Council,¹³ by which the Council, *inter alia*:

Welcomed subregional efforts to promote conflict prevention, management and resolution in Central Africa;

Recognized the important role that regional and subregional organizations could play in preventing the illicit traffic of small arms and light weapons and affirmed the need to promote and strengthen the partnership between the United Nations system and Central African States in relation to the maintenance of peace and security;

Also reaffirmed the importance of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes in the process of conflict resolution in Central Africa;

Recommended the inclusion, where appropriate, of support for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration in the mandates of peacekeeping and peacebuilding operations and emphasized the importance of a comprehensive, integrated, resolute and concerted approach to the issues of peace, security and development in Central Africa.

¹² S/PV.4630, p. 20 (Democratic Republic of the Congo); and p. 23 (Equatorial Guinea).

¹³ S/PRST/2002/31.

19. Letter dated 29 November 2002 from the Permanent Representative of Chad to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Initial proceedings

Deliberations of 9 December 2002 (4659th meeting)

By a letter dated 29 November 2002 addressed to the President of the Security Council, the representative of Chad informed the Council that, further to his letter relating to the transmission of the document concerning the position of Chad on the Central African crisis, the Government of Chad wished to address the Security Council.¹

At its 4659th meeting, held in private on 9 December 2002, the Security Council considered the item entitled "Letter dated 29 November 2002 from the Permanent Representative of Chad to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council". The members of the Council and the representative of Chad had a constructive discussion.

¹ S/2002/1317.