Report of the Chair's visit to Central African Republic (CAR)

political parties to seek their support for the proposed calendar[1]. The IEC would then present the new timetable to President Bozizé for the issuance of a presidential decree. In the new timetable it is envisaged that a full national census be conducted (as opposed to the revision of the 2005 electoral lists).

6.   The President of the IEC stressed that the IEC had worked tirelessly to finalize the new calendar before the departure from Bangui of the Chair of the PBC. The President stressed that while the political inclusiveness of the IEC was a strength and a benefit, it was also its main handicap, resulting in a body lacking the technical expertise needed to prepare for and organise proper elections. The contribution of expertise by international experts had a considerable impact on the preparation of the elections.

7.   During his visit the Chair heard repeatedly that the support by the international community of the demands of the opposition had led to the postponement of the elections. This had resulted at the highest level of the State in a sense that the international community had taken sides with the opposition parties. The Chair forcefully stressed that the holding of national elections, including the setting of dates, was a matter of national sovereignty, and that the international community could only play a supporting role in the provision of technical and financial assistance. The repeated postponements of the elections date in CAR were based on reports from the IEC that preparations were not sufficiently advanced, a claim echoed by other national stakeholders. It was the role of the international community to support the national electoral process.

8.   During his meeting with the Prime Minister, the Chair was informed that President Bozizé would condition the issuance of a presidential decree sanctioning the new electoral calendar on the funding of the elections by the international community. The government had already spent over and above the FCFA 2.5 billion provisions in the 2009 and 2010 budgets. According to the Government of CAR, a total of FCFA 3.5 billion have been spent on preparations for the elections.[2]. The European Union, potentially the largest contributor to the elections with a pledge of 6.5 million Euro, has for its part conditioned its disbursement on the signing of the presidential decree validating the new electoral calendar, as developed by the IEC. An audit of the Government of CAR contribution is being prepared. The total budget for the elections now stands at US$ 19.3 million. The budget gap remains around US$ 6 to 7 million.

9.   BINUCA advocated strongly for the urgent support from the international community to fill the budgetary gap for the elections as soon as possible, with a view to ensuring that preparations for the elections can start without further delays. The SRSG, seconded by a large number of other interlocutors, stressed repeatedly the need to ensure that elections can be held in a free, fair and transparent manner, which would constitute a further milestone on the country's peacebuilding path.

III.   Security Sector Reform and Disarmament Demobilisation and Reintegration

10.   The country's SSR process has all but stalled due to a series of factors:

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[1] Subsequent to the departure of the mission, the following dates were put forward for the elections, envisaging a first round on 24 October, followed by a second round on 19 December. The final results are to be announced on 4 January 2010.
[2] Total Government contribution to date: FCFA 3.5 billion = US$ 7 million

a. decreased attention and political will of national authorities to the implementation of the recommendations of the Inclusive Political Dialogue of December 2008;
b. the disappointing outcome of the SSR Round Table of October 2009;
c. the departure of the UNDP/EU multi-disciplinary team (last elements departed in the

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15.   The imminent start of the rainy season is likely to further delay DDR activities in large parts of the country. The Chair advocated for a start of a DDR in those zones where security and weather conditions allow, notably APRD controlled areas in the North-West of the country. This suggestion was received positively by Government and the United Nations alike. It would have to be discussed in the DDR Steering Committee, chaired by the Special Representative of the Secretary General in CAR, who supported this suggestion.

16.   Still on DDR questions remain with respect to the reintegration component of the programme. The funding provided by the international community through the UNDP Trust Fund covers the costs of disarmament and demobilisation (DD). The Government has firmly committed itself to fund the reintegration element of the programme including by using the financial support received from CEMAC regional organisation. The government has however not yet articulated or developed a vision/plan for its reintegration activities, which constitutes a serious impediment to the start of DDR. Socio-economic studies conducted by UNDP in the context of the DD could serve as the basis for identifying the needs of communities affected by conflict and rebels alike. The government has said that the outcome of theses studies would allow them to start thinking about R.

17.   As a contribution to solving this problem, reinsertion and reintegration should be considered more broadly under a development perspective and be one component of a larger range of activities aimed at supporting communities affected by conflict. Such a "DDDr approach" (Disarmament, Demobilisation, Development, reintegration) should include relevant elements of the development hubs concept of the CAR authorities, supported by the EU. A concept note mapping the respective activities of EU and WB in this field is currently been drafted by the EU Delegation in Bangui. It was proposed to share this document in order to reinforce coordination with other on-going and planned activities by national and international partners to reinvigorate host communities and communities affected by conflict, thus going beyond the benefits for ex-rebels. This document could serve as a further basis for the government to contribute its own planned and ongoing activities, including those to be funded by CEMAC moneys.

IV.   Rule of law and good governance

18.   Similarly to the mapping document on ongoing and planned activities in development of communities affected by conflict, it was agreed with the Minister of Justice that the same would be done for ongoing and planned activities in the area of rule of law and justice. In this context, the Government of CAR has already elaborated a 10-year plan for the reform of the justice sector (programme décennal de réforme de la justice), UNDP runs a multi-year rule of law project (Projet de Renforcement de l'Etat de Droit – PRED), and other activities by the EU, Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie (OIF), France and BINUCA. The purpose of the mapping document is to ensure coordination and coherence of actions in the area of justice and rule of law. It would also allow for the identification of gaps and ensuring that potential new actors in the field insert thee2urd014

20.   The Chair also met representatives of women's organizations and stressed in all his contacts the importance of integrating a gender dimension in their activities. He specifically pleaded for more female representation in the political institutions of the country and for representatives of women's organizations to be allowed to participate as observers in the deliberations of the IEC.

Annex II: Programme of Visit

Time	Activity
Wednesday, 9 June 2010	
19:30	*Meeting with SRSG Sahle-Work Zewde*
Thursday, 10 June 2010	
8:30 – 9:15	*Meeting with representatives of women's organizations*
9:30 – 10:30	*Meeting with the UN Country Team*
█████████	*Meeting with the international partners group (COPESPOD)*
12:30	*Working lunch with representatives of the international community*
14:30 – 15:30	*Meeting with the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC)*

15:45 – 16:25   Meeting with the World Bank representative

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