

ACP working visit to Central African Republic

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Brussels 15 July 2019/ACP: The Secretary-General of the ACP Group of States, Dr. Patrick Gomes, was in Bangui, Central African Republic, from 2 to 5 July 2019, at the invitation of the Government, for a working visit. He was accompanied by Ambassador Léonard Emile Ognimba, Assistant Secretary-General in charge of the Department of Political Affairs and Human Development.

During his working visit, the Secretary-General of the ACP Group was granted an audience with:

- His Excellency Professor Faustin Archange Touadera, President of the Republic and Head of State;
- The Honourable Jean Symphorien Mapeenzi, First Vice-President of the National Assembly;
- Mr. Firmin Ngrebada, Prime Minister and Head of Government;
- Mr. Felix Moloua, Minister of the Economy, Authorising Officer for the European Development Fund (EDF);
- Mrs. Marie Noëlle Koyara, Minister of National Defence and Reconstruction of the Army;
- Mr. Chancel Sekode Ndeugbayi, Minister of State in charge of Francophonie and State Protocol.

The Secretary-General also met with international partners, including the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) and the European Union delegation in Bangui. A work session was also held with the Central African private sector.

A field visit was also organised to Camp Kassai. The exchanges focused on:

- the implementation of the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic signed on 6 February 2016;
- the embargo issue;
- the next Summit of Heads of State and Government of the ACP Group of States;
- the implementation of the Central African Republic's National Recovery and Peacebuilding Plan [Plan de relèvement et de consolidation de la paix en République Centrafricaine (RCPCA)];
- the modalities for the ACP Group's provision of support to the Central African Republic using intra-ACP funds;
- the Reform of the Security Sector (RSS); and
- the issues and challenges facing the Central African Armed Forces [Forces Armées Centrafricaines (FACA)].

The following are the outcomes of the exchanges:

- the Central African Republic reaffirmed its commitment to the ACP Group of States;
- the Central African Republic and the General Secretariat of the ACP Group of States reaffirmed their commitment to maintaining and strengthening the cooperation ties between them;
- the Central African Republic and the General Secretariat of the ACP Group of States reaffirmed their commitment to supporting the implementation process of the Bangui Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation;
- they condemned all the atrocities committed against civil populations, in violation of their Human Rights;
- the ACP Group welcomed the desire expressed by the Central African authorities to restore peace, security, and stability in the Central African Republic, through peaceful and sustained dialogue;
- the two Parties underscored the close ties between peace and development, and committed to accelerating the implementation process of the Bangui Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation, in order to create favourable conditions for restoring peace and security, with a view to the development of the Central African Republic. The ACP Group plans to work with the States of the region, regional organisations, the African Union, and the United Nations to this end; and
- the ACP Group expressed its deep concern about the continuation of the embargo imposed on the Central African Republic, which penalises the Central African Armed Forces (FACA) in the carrying out of their job of protecting the population and territorial integrity.

The two Parties committed to:

- jointly lobby, in regional and international bodies, and with other Member States of the ACP Group of States, for a complete lifting of the embargo on arms, which is affecting the deployment of the FACA across the entire national territory, in keeping with the relevant resolutions of the United Nations Security Council;
- support, using any befitting action, the implementation of the Peace Agreement, and particularly the Disarmament, Demobilisation, Reintegration, and Repatriation (DDRR) process;
- facilitate the Central African Republic's access to intra-ACP resources and to the resources of the Investment Facility managed by the European Investment Bank, through actions aimed at raising awareness, informing, and training, about the rules and procedures governing EDF funds, with a view to supporting the implementation of the RCPCA;
- review and formulate, in consultation with the line ministries concerned, a concrete response – with the appropriate financial means – to the priority projects submitted by the Central African Government to the Secretariat of the ACP Group, especially those relating to private sector development and job creation for young people; and

- take note of the state of play of ongoing post-Cotonou negotiations and support the ACP Group's positions, in keeping with the Negotiating Mandate adopted at the 107th session of the ACP Council of Ministers;

The two Parties welcomed the future convening of the Summit of ACP Heads of State and Government, which will be held in Nairobi, Kenya, before the end of 2019, and the Central African Republic's intention to attend at a very high level.

They also welcomed the Secretary-General's visit to the Central African Republic and looked forward to the outcome of the fruitful exchanges that took place during this official visit, and to the process of finalising a post-Cotonou agreement, which will enter into force in February 2020.

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