

Ensuring long-term stability in the Central African Republic

Thank you, Madam President, and thank you also to our briefers for their valuable insights. I was struck today as ever by the consensus in the contributions, both in terms of analysis but also in their prescriptions.

Madam President, I wish to begin by paying tribute to the dedication and courage of all the women and men serving in MINUSCA and to the memory of all those who have made the ultimate sacrifice. We condemn, in particular, the deadly attack against MINUSCA personnel in July of this year, just as we condemn attacks on all peacekeepers. And I also reiterate our solidarity with the government and the people of the Central African Republic in their pursuit of peace, stability and development.

Madam President, as we have said time and again, the 2019 Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation is the only viable framework for sustainable peace in the Central African Republic. The agreement must be protected, including through this Council's continued imposition of sanctions against violators. We call on all armed groups to end their violence against civilians. In particular, Madam President, we condemn the scale of conflict-related sexual violence against women and girls. Impunity for sexual assault, and all human rights abuses, must end.

Madam President, elections in the Central African Republic later this year offer a significant opportunity to consolidate constitutional order. All stakeholders have a role to play in supporting peaceful, inclusive and free elections. While we welcome the preparations made to hold elections on time in December, we regret that provision has not been made for all Central Africans to participate. All citizens deserve the right to be heard in both these and subsequent elections, including those internally displaced persons and refugees. We are trying to help, as announced by the UK's Minister for Africa at the Secretary-General's recent high level event, the United Kingdom is contributing well over \$500 million to the UNDP Elections Fund to promote the participation of women, youth and underrepresented groups, and we urge others to contribute to this fund.

Madam President, as others have said today, the scale of the humanitarian crisis in the Central African Republic underlines just how vital it is that all stakeholders fulfil their responsibilities in the coming months. Humanitarian needs have been exacerbated, as we heard again today, by Covid-19 with more than half the population now facing food insecurity. This year, the United Kingdom has committed approximately \$35 million to the humanitarian effort in the Central African Republic, including extra funding towards famine prevention and Ebola preparedness. We will continue to play our part and we join Germany in calling on others to do the same.

As we look ahead to the renewal of MINUSCA's mandate next month, highlighted by the Ambassador from France, I want to voice the United Kingdom's support

for maintaining a robust mandate with protection for civilians at its heart, alongside the provision of support to the peace agreement and the electoral process. A sustainable peace will not be won by MINUSCA alone, however, nor only through humanitarian support. The recommitment of all parties to full implementation of the peace agreement and to fair, inclusive and peaceful elections is the only way to assure long-term stability.

Thank you, Madam President.