



#1 PRIORITY

To: Mr. Nambiar,

Please find attached for your approval on behalf of the SG his first report on the activities of UNOCA.

The report is very factual and focuses on the travels and consultations of the SRSG. As it is the first report, and as the Office is still gearing up, it can be approved as is.

However, for future reports, we have encouraged DPA to strengthen the analysis on the situation in the region, more in line with what we have been able to achieve with the reports of UNOWA. We also note that the report mentions activities related to peace and security, as well as to development, but that there is no mention of the third UN pillar, i.e. human rights. We have suggested to DPA to balance future reports and include information about the third pillar.

You will note that although the note from Mr. Pascoe is dated from the 3rd of November, it was received by EOSG on the 8th late at night. The Political Unit received it on the 9th and only took one day to process it.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'N. Haysom'.

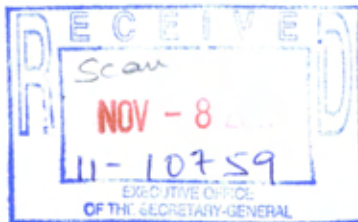
Nicholas Haysom
10 November 2011

Cc: KWS

11-10759

ACTION NH
COPY VN

W.
gend

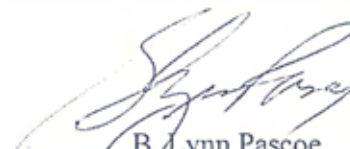


Unclassified

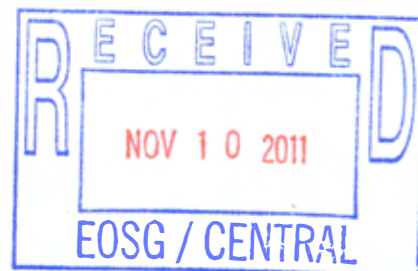
Note to Mr. Nambiar

**DRAFT REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ON THE ACTIVITIES OF
THE UNITED NATIONS OFFICE FOR CENTRAL AFRICA (UNOCA)**

1. I am forwarding herewith the draft text of the Secretary-General's first report to the Security Council on the activities of the recently established United Nations Office for Central Africa (UNOCA). The present report, which covers the period since the Office became fully operational in June 2011, is scheduled for the Security Council's consideration on 14 November 2011.
2. During the period under consideration, the Office effectively became operational and launched implementation of its mandate following the arrival of the SRSG and Head of the Office in Libreville, on 15 June 2011. The major efforts of the Office during this period included broad consultations with the leaders of the countries of the sub-region at the highest level and with sub-regional organizations, in order to understand their priorities and needs in the areas of peace and security. SRSG Moussa also held consultations and organized a meeting with United Nations presences in Central Africa, including Special Representatives of the Secretary-General, Resident Coordinators and representatives of UN sub-regional presences, to consider how the UN could enhance coordination in order to more effectively support efforts to find solutions to the peace and security challenges facing Central Africa.
3. In his observations and recommendations, the Secretary-General underscores the challenges, but also the promise of UNOCA, and appeals for continued financial and political support for the Office, to enable it fulfill its mandate. He also underscores the imperative of peace and security in Central Africa, considering its geostrategic and ecological importance to the world. In this connection, the Secretary-General draws attention to the need for the full potential of women and youth to be tapped, and expresses his conviction that the countries of the sub-region stand to benefit enormously through inclusive governance.
4. I should be grateful if you could secure the Secretary-General's approval of the draft report at his earliest convenience as it is scheduled to be issued on 5 November 2011.

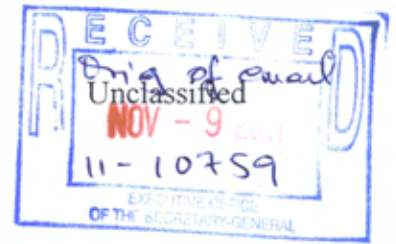

B. Lynn Pascoe
3 November 2011

cc: Ms. Malcorra
Mr. Ladsous



POL/04/006

Central

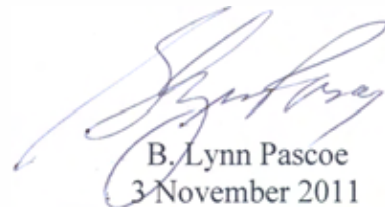


Note to Mr. Nambiar

**DRAFT REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ON THE ACTIVITIES OF
THE UNITED NATIONS OFFICE FOR CENTRAL AFRICA (UNOCA)**

3/11/11


1. I am forwarding herewith the draft text of the Secretary-General's first report to the Security Council on the activities of the recently established United Nations Office for Central Africa (UNOCA). The present report, which covers the period since the Office became fully operational in June 2011, is scheduled for the Security Council's consideration on 14 November 2011.
2. During the period under consideration, the Office effectively became operational and launched implementation of its mandate following the arrival of the SRSG and Head of the Office in Libreville, on 15 June 2011. The major efforts of the Office during this period included broad consultations with the leaders of the countries of the sub-region at the highest level and with sub-regional organizations, in order to understand their priorities and needs in the areas of peace and security. SRSG Moussa also held consultations and organized a meeting with United Nations presences in Central Africa, including Special Representatives of the Secretary-General, Resident Coordinators and representatives of UN sub-regional presences, to consider how the UN could enhance coordination in order to more effectively support efforts to find solutions to the peace and security challenges facing Central Africa.
3. In his observations and recommendations, the Secretary-General underscores the challenges, but also the promise of UNOCA, and appeals for continued financial and political support for the Office, to enable it fulfill its mandate. He also underscores the imperative of peace and security in Central Africa, considering its geostrategic and ecological importance to the world. In this connection, the Secretary-General draws attention to the need for the full potential of women and youth to be tapped, and expresses his conviction that the countries of the sub-region stand to benefit enormously through inclusive governance.
4. I should be grateful if you could secure the Secretary-General's approval of the draft report at his earliest convenience as it is scheduled to be issued on 5 November 2011.


B. Lynn Pascoe
3 November 2011

cc: Ms. Malcorra
Mr. Ladsous



POL/24/006


Vijay Nambiar

DRAFT

**First Report of the Secretary-General on
the Activities of the United Nations Office for Central Africa (UNOCA)**

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to the request contained in the letter of the President of the Security Council to me dated 30 August 2010 (S/2010/457), in which the Council welcomed my intention to establish the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA), and requested regular information on the activities of the Office, including an initial report six months after the Office became fully operational. The report provides an overview of the activities of UNOCA following its official inauguration in March 2011 and assumption of Office by my Special Representative for Central Africa and Head of UNOCA, Mr. Abou Moussa, in June 2011. The report builds on his informal briefing and interaction with the Security Council on 18 August 2011.

2. Over the past two decades, the United Nations has enhanced its close cooperation with regional and sub-regional arrangements in Africa on management and resolution of major crises on the continent through preventive diplomacy, good offices, the deployment of peace missions and assistance in peacebuilding. Pursuant to the request of the Security Council contained in its Presidential Statement (S/PRST/2002/31), of 31 October 2002 on *Strengthening cooperation between the United Nations system and the Central African region in the maintenance of peace and security*, the Secretary-General dispatched a United Nations multidisciplinary assessment mission to Central Africa in 2003, to review the priority needs and challenges confronting the sub-region, and define appropriate strategies to address them. The countries visited by the

mission called for a sub-regional United Nations political presence, through the establishment of a regional office in Central Africa, to facilitate the implementation of a comprehensive and integrated approach to the issues of peace, security and development in the sub-region. This was reiterated in a number of subsequent letters from the Member States of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) to the Secretary-General. The mission, in its findings, concluded that, given the conflict in the sub-region, a holistic and integrated sub-regional approach was needed to address cross-border and cross-cutting challenges, and to enhance the conflict prevention and peacebuilding efforts of local actors (S/2003/653).

3. In my report on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1625 (2005) (S/RES/1625) on conflicts prevention, particularly in Africa, I proposed to put in place additional regional tools for prevention and create more opportunities to support regional solutions, building on the experience of the United Nations Office for West Africa (UNOWA) and the Office of my former Special Representative for the Great Lakes Region. (S/2008/18). The purpose of such regional tools would be to strengthen and rationalize the United Nations' regional approach to preventive diplomacy, conflict resolution and peacebuilding in those sub-regions, and to enhance synergy between the United Nations missions and Offices in the region.

4. In my letter to the President of the Security Council dated 11 December 2009, I informed Council members of my intention to establish a United Nations Regional office for Central Africa in Libreville, Gabon. The office would, inter alia, be entrusted with an overall mandate to enhance the contribution of the United Nations towards the achievement of peace and security in the broader region, and would specifically perform the following functions:

DRAFT

First Report of the Secretary-General on the Activities of the United Nations Office for Central Africa (UNOCA)

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to the request contained in the letter of the President of the Security Council to me dated 30 August 2010 (S/2010/457), in which the Council welcomed my intention to establish the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA), and requested regular information on the activities of the Office, including an initial report six months after the Office became fully operational. The report provides an overview of the activities of UNOCA following its official inauguration in March 2011 and assumption of Office by my Special Representative for Central Africa and Head of UNOCA, Mr. Abou Moussa, in June 2011. The report builds on his informal briefing and interaction with the Security Council on 18 August 2011.

2. Over the past two decades, the United Nations has enhanced its close cooperation with regional and sub-regional arrangements in Africa on management and resolution of major crises on the continent through preventive diplomacy, good offices, the deployment of peace missions and assistance in peacebuilding. Pursuant to the request of the Security Council contained in its Presidential Statement (S/PRST/2002/31), of 31 October 2002 on *Strengthening cooperation between the United Nations system and the Central African region in the maintenance of peace and security*, the Secretary-General dispatched a United Nations multidisciplinary assessment mission to Central Africa in 2003, to review the priority needs and challenges confronting the sub-region, and define appropriate strategies to address them. The countries visited by the

mission called for a sub-regional United Nations political presence, through the establishment of a regional office in Central Africa, to facilitate the implementation of a comprehensive and integrated approach to the issues of peace, security and development in the sub-region. This was reiterated in a number of subsequent letters from the Member States of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) to the Secretary-General. The mission, in its findings, concluded that, given the conflict in the sub-region, a holistic and integrated sub-regional approach was needed to address cross-border and cross-cutting challenges, and to enhance the conflict prevention and peacebuilding efforts of local actors (S/2003/653).

3. In my report on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1625 (2005) (S/RES/1625) on conflicts prevention, particularly in Africa, I proposed to put in place additional regional tools for prevention and create more opportunities to support regional solutions, building on the experience of the United Nations Office for West Africa (UNOWA) and the Office of my former Special Representative for the Great Lakes Region. (S/2008/18). The purpose of such regional tools would be to strengthen and rationalize the United Nations' regional approach to preventive diplomacy, conflict resolution and peacebuilding in those sub-regions, and to enhance synergy between the United Nations missions and Offices in the region.

4. In my letter to the President of the Security Council dated 11 December 2009, I informed Council members of my intention to establish a United Nations Regional office for Central Africa in Libreville, Gabon. The office would, inter alia, be entrusted with an overall mandate to enhance the contribution of the United Nations towards the achievement of peace and security in the broader region, and would specifically perform the following functions:

- Provide an operational and analytical focal point for the engagement of the United Nations, and the Department of Political Affairs specifically, in contributing to peace and security;
- Help build institutional capacity in the countries/sub-region towards a harmonized sub-regional approach to peace and security; and
- Support regional efforts to address cross-cutting issues of concern.

5. In the letter of the President of the Security Council to me on 30 August 2010 (S/2010/457), Council members took note of my proposal to establish the Office for an initial period of two years, with a review of its mandate after 18 months. Subsequently, in October 2010, the Department of Political Affairs (DPA) led an inter-departmental planning mission to Libreville, Gabon, the selected location of the Office, to assess and plan for the start-up technical and substantive needs of the Office.

6. The Office was established on 1 January 2011, and officially inaugurated on 2 March 2011 by the United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Mr. B. Lynn Pascoe, on my behalf. The inaugural ceremony in Libreville was attended by President Ali Bongo Ondimba of Gabon and by senior representatives of other Member States of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS). UNOCA covers the ten countries of the Central Africa sub-region which constitute the ECCAS, namely, Angola, Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, and São Tomé and Príncipe. Following consultations, on 11 March 2011, I appointed Mr.

About Moussa (Chad), my former Principal Deputy SRSG in Côte d'Ivoire, as my Special Representative for Central Africa and Head of UNOCA.

7. Meanwhile, following consultations on how best to enhance synergies in Central Africa, DPA and the Office for Disarmament Affairs agreed to transfer the secretariat functions of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa (UNSAC), from the Office of Disarmament Affairs (ODA) to DPA. Under the new arrangement, UNOCA has assumed secretariat functions for the Standing Advisory Committee, reporting to Headquarters through DPA. Accordingly, UNOCA has initiated preparations for the convening, from 5 to 9 December 2011 in Bangui, Central African Republic, of the 33rd Ministerial Meeting of the Committee. That meeting will undertake a geopolitical review of security-related developments in the sub-region, including efforts to curb the proliferation of illicit weapons in the area.

8. UNOCA is also mandated to work closely with other United Nations political and peacekeeping missions and United Nations Country Teams (UNCTs) in countries affected by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). In the Press Statement of the President of the Security Council of 21 July 2011 (SC/10335 - AFR/2215), UNOCA was requested, in coordination with the United Nations Office to the African Union (UNOAU), to engage with the African Union (AU) and facilitate cooperation between the United Nations and the AU on issues related to countering the threat posed by the LRA.

II. ACTIVITIES OF UNOCA

9. UNOCA has become fully operational and is working towards implementing its mandate.

The office launched its activities with broad consultations with the governments of the Central African states, and with the sub-region's main intergovernmental bodies, to assess key political and institutional security challenges facing the sub-region, and the leaders' expectations of the requirements for addressing these challenges. The Office also conducted consultations with other United Nations presences in the sub-region on how best to coordinate efforts in support of conflict prevention and peacebuilding initiatives in Central Africa.

A. Consultations with Member states of ECCAS and with sub-regional intergovernmental organizations.

11. Between July and October 2011, my Special Representative visited nine of the ten Member States of ECCAS for discussions on sub-regional peace and security priorities and how the United Nations could contribute to tackling the problems identified. He also visited the AU Commission in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, and the Economic and Monetary Community of Central African States (CEMAC) in Bangui, Central African Republic, to introduce the new Office and to explore areas of cooperation. These consultations began with his initial meeting with President Ali Bongo Ondimba of Gabon, the host of the Office. The consultations also built on the informal discussions my Special Representative held with members of the diplomatic community in Libreville, and on initial contacts with Foreign Ministers of ECCAS Member States and with the Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union in the margins of the 17th Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union (AU), held in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea, from 29 June to 1 July 2011.

12. Leaders of the sub-region, in their discussions with my Special Representative, underscored the need for peace and security as a prerequisite for development and for regional cooperation, including for the free movement of people and goods. While highlighting their national and sub-regional efforts to strengthen peace and prevent conflicts, the leaders appealed for greater international support both to confront new and recurrent threats, including piracy, cross-border movements of arms and fighters, drug trafficking and organized crime, youth unemployment, gender-based violence, the illegal exploitation of natural resources, and the impact on peace and stability in the sub-region. They also expressed the need for capacity-building assistance for the development of national and sub-regional mechanisms for early warning and conflict prevention.

13. Regarding the threat of piracy in the Gulf of Guinea, an area which covers both West and Central Africa sub-regions, my Special Representative was informed that ECCAS Member States had begun to take specific measures at the national and sub-regional levels to respond to this growing challenge. To that end, they had adopted in 2009 in Kinshasa, DRC, the “Framework to Secure the Gulf of Guinea” and a Protocol creating the Regional Coordination Center for Maritime Security in Central Africa (CRESMAC), to be based in the Republic of Congo. It was also mentioned that for the purposes of facilitating responses to the threat of piracy, the Central Africa sub-region had been subdivided into zones. The Member States of Zone D (Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon and São Tomé and Príncipe), where significant acts of piracy and terrorism had been reported, had reached a technical agreement on the modalities of conducting maritime security operations and surveillance. The ECCAS Secretariat confirmed that Zone D was regularly patrolled given the recurrence of acts of piracy in the area.

14. The threat posed by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) to a number of countries in the Central Africa sub-region was also highlighted during my Special Representative's consultations with the regional leaders. I have addressed this specific issue in greater detail in a separate report to the Security Council XXX dated XXX.(to be updated once the LRA report is published)

15. Many leaders mentioned to my Special Representative that they were concerned that the Libyan crisis would impact negatively on peace and security in the sub-region. They were especially concerned that the illegal movements of weapons and fighters from Libya into some Central African states, in particular those sharing borders with Libya, could fuel or exacerbate tensions or conflicts. Some leaders felt that although the threat of terrorism was not a major concern for the sub-region as a whole, Al Qaeda in the Maghreb (AQMI) could become strengthened by acquiring additional weapons and supporters as a result of the Libyan conflict which could enable the terrorist group to spread its activities into the wider Central Africa sub-region.

16. It was further noted that the Libyan crisis had also generated worrying social and economic consequences for Central Africa, in particular those stemming from the return of tens of thousands of migrant workers. Apart from the loss of remittances, the unexpected arrival of thousands of returnees could become a destabilizing factor for many Central African countries which do not have the capacity or resources to address the immediate humanitarian and longer-term reintegration challenges created by such a significant and spontaneous movement of people. In a region already hosting large numbers of refugees and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs),

the recent arrival of returnees from Libya could increase the burden of, and heighten the risk of potential tensions within the displaced communities.

17. UNOCA has established strong working relationships with the ECCAS Secretariat which also has its Headquarters in Libreville. In that connection, the two offices have initiated regular meetings to discuss substantive as well as institutional issues of mutual interest and concern. Apart from meetings between my Special Representative and the Secretary-General of ECCAS, desk-to-desk meetings are also taking place bringing together experts from UNOCA and the ECCAS Secretariat to examine specific questions. In their recent discussions, ECCAS highlighted the same priorities that Member States had pointed out when they met with my Special Representative during his visits to their capitals. In addition, the two offices discussed the existing peace and security architecture in Central Africa, including the Peace and Security Commission (COPAX), the Central African Early Warning Mechanism (MARAC) and the Central African Multidimensional Force (FOMAC). ECCAS sought institutional cooperation with the United Nations to enhance the capacity of those regional mechanisms. ECCAS also expressed concerns to UNOCA over the growing incidents of election-related violence in the sub-region, and requested greater cooperation with the United Nations to tackle this worrying trend.

18. On the issue of maritime security, ECCAS informed UNOCA of its intention to launch a sub-regional monitoring centre on maritime security in 2012. In the meantime, ECCAS pointed out that Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon and São Tomé and Príncipe, have already set in motion a joint operational plan for maritime security known as SECMAR 2. ECCAS welcomed my intention, outlined to the Security Council in my statements on 30 August and 19 October

2011, to deploy a United Nations assessment mission to take stock of the threat of piracy in the Gulf of Guinea. UNOCA and ECCAS noted that since the Gulf of Guinea stretches from West to Central Africa, they would need to work closely together with the United Nations Office for West Africa (UNOWA) and with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), among other partners, to combat piracy in the area.

B. Consultations and Coordination with other United Nations Presences in Central Africa.

19. Prior to assuming his functions in Libreville in June 2011, my Special Representative had visited Dakar, Senegal, to consult with my Special Representative for West Africa to share perspectives and explore areas of possible cooperation between the two Offices on cross-cutting issues, in particular on the threat of piracy in the Gulf of Guinea.

20. My Special Representative subsequently undertook broad consultations with other United Nations presences in the Central Africa sub-region with a view to determining the best ways in which the United Nations could work closely together to respond effectively to the challenges identified by Central African states and sub-regional intergovernmental organisations. To that end, he met with the United Nations Country Teams in the nine ECCAS Member States he visited. In addition, on 10 and 11 October 2011, he organized, at UNOCA Headquarters, a meeting with the Heads of United Nations Country Teams and United Nations Peacekeeping and Special Political Missions in Central Africa. Participants included, among others, my Special Representatives in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) and to the African Union (UNOAU), as well as my Deputy Special Representative in Burundi (BNUB). The meeting was also attended by the Head of the United Nations Sub-regional Centre for Human

Rights and Democracy in Central Africa, based in Yaoundé, Cameroon. The UN Women Central Africa Sub-Regional Office, based in Kigali, Rwanda, the Sub-Regional Office for Central Africa of the UN Economic Commission for Africa, based in Yaoundé, and the UN Regional Center for Peace and Disarmament, based in Lome, Togo, were also represented.

21. During the meeting UNOCA hosted on 10 and 11 October 2011, participants discussed ways of enhancing the Organisation's role in addressing sub-regional challenges in a manner that would ensure complementarity and synergy within the United Nations system present in Central Africa. UNOCA's role as focal point to facilitate a concerted United Nations response to the threat posed by the LRA was highlighted. The meeting also agreed on a coordinated approach under UNOCA's auspices to enhance the effectiveness of United Nations support for the efforts of ECCAS and other regional and subregional partners in the areas of early warning, conflict prevention and peacebuilding in Central Africa. In this connection, UNOCA was requested to undertake a mapping of early warning mechanisms in the sub-region, and to facilitate awareness and deeper understanding of how the United Nations could better support initiatives taken in this area.

22. From the various consultations, the representatives of the various United Nations presences in Central Africa or covering the sub-region discussed the issues of the distribution of responsibility among themselves and better coordination to enable the United Nations respond more effectively to regional challenges.

C. The situation concerning women, peace and security.

23. Following initial contacts with the UN Women Regional Representative for Central Africa based in Bujumbura, Burundi, who highlighted the special challenges faced by women in the area of peace and security, both as victims of conflicts and as actors for peace, UNOCA plans to devote increased attention and focus to this issue by strengthening better understanding and awareness of the various aspects of the problem, and facilitating the development and implementation of strategies to improve the response capacity of the United Nations and of regional states. Specifically, UNOCA has begun working with UN Women towards the improvement of the status of women in the sub-region, and towards the effective implementation of various Security Council resolutions regarding the situation of women in the context of peace and security.

D. Socio-economic challenges to peace and security.

24. UNOCA has initiated consultations with ECCAS and other intergovernmental organisations in Central Africa on the impact of economic challenges to peace and security in the region. Despite substantial endowments in natural resources, Central Africa remains vastly underdeveloped and its potential greatly under-exploited. As a result, the region faces high levels of unemployment, especially among the youth, who constitute the largest population group in the sub-region. Governments in the sub-region are increasingly concerned about the high risk of unemployed youth falling into illegal and destabilizing activities. UNOCA will increase working relationships with ECCAS Member States and intergovernmental institutions, as well as with other entities of the United Nations system to explore ways to foster targeted responses aimed at reducing the negative impact these economic pressures could have on peace and security.

25. In its focus on the impact of socio-economic challenges to peace and security, UNOCA, working closely with other United Nations agencies, including WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA and UNDP, will also devote increased attention to health aspects in a sub-region where most countries are falling short of meeting their MDGs in the health sector, with infant mortality rates estimated at 16.7 deaths for every 1,000 persons, against 12.5 for the continent. Progress in these areas will contribute to overall stabilization objectives in the sub-region.

26. Climate change and environmental degradation also pose serious threats to stability in many Central African states. **With the continuing deterioration of the situation in the Lake Chad basin area which faces desertification, land degradation and shrinking water levels, the movement of large numbers of people from at least six countries who depend on the resources of the Lake could dangerously heighten inter-communal tensions.** It is therefore important to explore ways in which regional efforts could be supported to address the growing impact of climate change on peace, security and socio-economic development in Central Africa. In the discussions my Special Representative had with regional leaders during his recent visits to the capitals of ECCAS Members States, the need to pay greater attention to environmental issues was raised, with many leaders pointing to the special status of Central Africa as a region hosting one of the largest and richest ecosystems in the world, namely the Congo basin. The prevention of the illegal exploitation of the Congo basin's natural resources was highlighted so as to ensure the sustainability of the ecosystem and to avert communal tensions and violence related to the competition for the Congo basin's resources.

IV. OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

27. UNOCA has begun operating with a view to implementing the mandate entrusted to it by the Security Council in cooperation with Central African Member States. I would like to reiterate my appreciation to the Government and the people of Gabon for their generous hospitality and material assistance, which contributed significantly to facilitating the smooth installation and functioning of UNOCA. I also welcome the cooperation extended to my Special Representative by other Central African states as well as by intergovernmental organizations in the region, as well as the Security Council. Continued collaboration between UNOCA and regional stakeholders is vital for the successful operation of the Office.

28. I am concerned that the lack of dedicated air assets for UNOCA, in a region where commercial air transportation is extremely limited, has presented a major time consuming hurdle to the work of my Special Representative, who has to cover ten countries and meet regional leaders as well as represent me in various functions. While every attempt is made to make use of available air assets from peacekeeping operations in the sub-region, the often competing priorities of the missions and the limited flight options between the countries in the sub-region, make air transport extremely difficult in the region.

29. The past few months since UNOCA's inauguration have allowed us to take stock of the challenges and enormous opportunities for the Office to make important contributions to a more peaceful and prosperous future for the countries and people of Central Africa. At the same time, UNOCA will need continued financial and political support from the international community to fulfill its potential. Given the current budgetary limitations at a time of a global financial crisis, I call for increased voluntary contributions to support the important programme of activities which UNOCA has initiated. Peace and security in Central Africa is a necessity, not an option.

30. UNOCA's innovative efforts, in cooperation with countries of the sub-regions and other United Nations entities deserve support to prevent the emergence of new conflicts, to resolve existing ones by peaceful means and to promote democratic and accountable governance. The efforts of UNOCA and those of my Special Representative to reach out to all segments of society, in particular women and youth whose full potential is yet to be tapped throughout the sub-region are of crucial importance and need to be supported.

31. I welcome joint UNOWA – UNOCA efforts to tackle pressing security challenges, such as piracy in the Gulf of Guinea and the illicit flows of arms and fighters, which cut across the two sub-regions and could destabilize both areas. In the immediate term, UNOWA and UNOCA would also collaborate to promote an integrated United Nations response to the negative consequences of the Libyan conflict on West and Central Africa. The close cooperation with other UN peace operations in Central Africa has also been of great importance as UNOCA establishes itself as a regional office.

32. I would like to conclude by extending my gratitude to the various entities of the United Nations system present in Central Africa, including the Heads of Peace Missions and of United Nations Regional Offices, Country Teams and other United Nations presences for their dedication and cooperation with UNOCA. I would also like to thank my Special Representative, Mr. Abou Moussa, and the staff of UNOCA for the energetic and professional manner in which they have launched the operations of the Office to contribute towards greater peace and security in Central Africa.