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Security: UNSAC Member States in Yaoundé from 29 May to 02 June for their 44th Ministerial Meeting

Yaoundé (Cameroon), 27 May 2017 – The 44th Ministerial Meeting of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa (UNSAC) will take place from 29 May to 02 June 2017 in Yaoundé, the capital of Cameroon. It will start with the meeting of experts who, during three days, will assess the security and geopolitical situation in the eleven member states of the Committee (Angola, Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Democratic Republic of Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Rwanda, and Sao Tomé and Príncipe).

Discussions will focus on issues related to, inter alia, political governance and the multiple factors that threaten the peace and stability of the subregion. Participants will exchange views on the regional dimension of certain crises, including that of the Central African Republic. They will also deliberate on ways and means to strengthen the fight against phenomena such as armed violence and terrorism, maritime insecurity in the Gulf of Guinea, poaching and illicit trafficking in wildlife, electoral tensions, drug trafficking, transnational organized crime, and the proliferation of small arms and light weapons.

On the latter point, the 44th Meeting of the Committee will take place almost three months after the entry into force of the Central African Convention for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons, their Ammunition and all Parts and Components that can be used for their Manufacture, Repair and Assembly, also known as the Kinshasa Convention - adopted on 30 April 2010 at the 30th Meeting of the Committee in Kinshasa (Democratic Republic of Congo). This entry into force was facilitated by the deposit on 6 February 2017 of the sixth instrument of ratification by Angola (preceded a few years earlier by Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Chad, Congo and Gabon).

UNOCA expressed its satisfaction with this positive development, to which it has contributed through various advocacy actions with the member states of the Committee. "We will continue to support efforts of the subregion in its determination to prevent, to combat and to bring an end to the uncontrolled flow of arms in Central Africa," said Mr. François Louncény Fall, the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Central Africa and Head of UNOCA, encouraging countries that have not yet done so to ratify the Kinshasa Convention. "This would strengthen confidence among states and reassure the population, the main victims of this phenomenon, which is also a hindrance to the sustainable development of Central Africa," he explained.

The Special Representative will have the opportunity to raise this matter and many other crucial issues with heads of delegation to UNSAC. From 1 to 2 June, Mr. François Louncény Fall will take part in the Ministerial session, one of the highlights of which will be the reading of the message of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. António Guterres, at the official opening ceremony. The ceremony will also be marked by the establishment of a new Bureau of the Committee. The Minister of External Relations of Cameroon will hold the Presidency for a period of six months. He will succeed his counterpart of Sao Tomé and Príncipe, who hold this position since the 43rd Meeting of UNSAC - which took place from 28 November to 2 December 2016 in Sao Tomé.

Established on 28 May 1992 by the United Nations (at the request of ECCAS member States), the Committee, whose functioning has just been evaluated, is a valuable tool for preventive diplomacy. In keeping with the spirit of one of the founding workshops of this institution (UNSAC) organized in Yaoundé from 17 to 21 June 1991, the main mission of the Committee is to promote confidence-building measures at regional and subregional levels in order to mitigate tensions and advance the disarmament and non-proliferation of small arms and light weapons in Central Africa. Since its creation, the Cameroonian capital has already hosted several of its sessions. The last one dates back to the 26th Meeting held from 3 to 7 September 2007.