

## **Peace and Security in Central Africa: the mandate of UNOCA extended until 31 August 2015**

**Libreville (Gabon), 20 February 2014** - The United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA) will continue its activities until 31 August 2015, an extension of another eighteen months after the expiry of its current mandate on 28 February 2014. Ambassador Raimonda Murmokaitė, Permanent Representative of Lithuania to the United Nations and President of the Security Council for the month of February, informed the UN Secretary-General last week.

On 10 February, Mr. Ban Ki-moon had indeed sought an extension of the mandate of UNOCA to allow the Office to continue to support regional efforts to promote peace and security. He underlined the significant results achieved so far, including concerning the strengthening of cooperation with subregional organizations and better coordination with other UN entities operating in Central Africa. In the area of preventive diplomacy, apart from the exercise of "good offices", supporting the work of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security questions in Central Africa (UNSAC) is one of the priorities that UNOCA should develop. As Secretariat of this Committee, the Regional Office has already organized five ministerial meetings, which were occasions to discuss important issues and make recommendations on ways to strengthen stability in the subregion. UNOCA is now preparing the 38<sup>th</sup> session scheduled to take place in Malabo (Equatorial Guinea) in May or June, during which the main lines of a strategy to fight against terrorist threats in Central Africa will be presented.

In addition, the UN Secretary-General has highlighted the key role of UNOCA in the implementation of the regional strategy against the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). The Meeting of stakeholders, organized jointly with the African Union from 13 to 14 February in Entebbe (Uganda), provided an opportunity to take stock on this issue, for which the United Nations attaches great importance.

UNOCA is also tasked with the United Nations Office for West Africa (UNOWA), to support the process of implementation of decisions of the Summit of Heads of State and Government on the maritime safety and security in the Gulf of Guinea that took place from 24 to 25 June 2013 in Yaoundé (Cameroon). In this perspective, the two UN representations are working closely with the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Gulf of Guinea Commission (GGC), among others, for the creation, in Cameroon, of the Inter-regional Coordination Center on the activities related to safety and security in the areas concerned.

UNOCA was officially launched in Libreville (Gabon) on 2 March 2011, two months after its creation on 1 January 2011 for an initial mandate of 18 months. It is headed by Mr. Abou Moussa, Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Central Africa. The Office is comprised of 27 national and international staff currently representing 15 nationalities and three continents (Africa, America and Europe).