

News bulletin

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Highlights

- Peace-Building Fund allocates \$5.7 million to 11 reconciliation and community projects
- 109 craftsmen trained and two women groups supported in Paoua
- UNICEF helps children and communities to access water
- Campaign for displaced people planned in Bangui on 8 October

Background and security

Reservations about the amnesty law

The amnesty law, adopted by the Central African parliament on 29 September, was met with reservation by two of the key stakeholders in the dialogue process, the coalition of opposition parties *Union des Forces Vives de la Nation* (UFVN), and the *Popular Army for the Restoration of Democracy* (APRD). Jean-Jacques Démafouth of the APRD said that the two months' timeframe for cantonment, demobilization and disarmament of his rebel forces was not realistic. The UFVN threatened to withdraw from the peace process in protest against the rigid conditions of the amnesty law.

François Lonseny Fall, United Nations Special Representative in CAR, called for an extraordinary meeting of the global peace accord monitoring committee to ensure that all stakeholders in the dialogue remain on board. He called for the meeting during the third session of the "Central African Republic configuration" of the Peace-Building Commission, which met on 8 October in New York. At the same meeting, Sylvain Maliko, State Minister of Planning, Economy and International Cooperation, spoke of the country's priorities, which are a necessary condition for the strengthening of peace and stability in CAR.

Current events

\$ 5.7 million allocated by Peace Fund

The Steering Committee of the Peace Building Fund in CAR allocated \$5.7 million to 11 projects as follows: demobilization, disarmament and

reintegration of child soldiers (\$2 million); women-led projects strengthening communities (\$1.4 million); community-based food security projects (\$600,000); and reconciliation support in the North-West (\$1.7 million).

The remaining \$4.3 million from the \$10 million grant for 2008 will be allocated to security sector reform, justice and good governance projects during the next committee meeting in two weeks' time.

Support to craftsmen and women in Paoua

As part of its support program to the socio-economic revival of the sub-province of Paoua, the *Danish Refugee Council* (DRC) trained young craftsmen who want to restart their activities, after conducting a study on productive activities in the region.

From 11 August to 26 September, 109 young people benefited from theoretical and practical training to upgrade their knowledge in the areas of carpentry, masonry, welding and ironworks. DRC requested the expertise of trainers from local organizations, such as the *Union of technicians for unemployed youth* (UTEFAJEDE) and Don Bosco, an education and vocational training centre. The courses were funded by the *United Nations High Commission for Refugees* (UNHCR), the *United Nations Development Programme* (UNDP) and the *Danish Cooperation* (DANIDA). The *World Food Programme* (WFP) provided food to the craftsmen during the training. These young men will soon receive toolkits and raw materials in order to restart their cooperative workshops or individual micro-enterprises.



Future carpenters in training

In parallel, DRC supports a dozen women's groups to improve their traditional savings/credit and insurance systems. To date, two pilot groups of 108 women have implemented the "Improved Tontines/Kelemba" which enabled them to save 530,000

FCFA, to grant six credits and to assist in 11 cases of illness in two months. This initiative demonstrates that the local women have the capacity to generate savings and to transform them into credit, while also providing assistance in emergencies.

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Access to water for children

The *United Nations Children's Fund* (UNICEF) constructed 35 boreholes in Ouham and Nana-Gribizi and equipped them with hand pumps, financed by the European Union. In collaboration with the *General Water Management* (DGH) and the *International Rescue Committee* (IRC), boreholes were also built in the three health centres of Ouandago, Patch and Nana Outta. Fifteen new boreholes in as many primary schools in Nana-Gribizi and Kémo provide safe water to about 6,000 children and 5,000 additional community members.

Pump mechanics in Birao received a two week training course to ensure that all new hand pumps can be properly maintained. More than 100 village water committees and pump mechanics were also trained in Ouham, and 80 hand pumps were repaired in recent months.

As part of UNICEF's efforts to educate Central Africans on the importance of sanitation, 160,000 people from 400 villages in the Bossangoa region were sensitized on basic hygiene practices. In the context of the same programme, 11,000 beneficiaries in Bocaranga in the extreme north-west of the country received buckets, soap and impregnated mosquito nets. The distribution was done in collaboration with IRC.

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Familiarization with the dialogue in CAR

The *United Nations Office in CAR* (BONUCA), in partnership with the Ministry of Communication, Civism, Dialogue and National Reconciliation, conducted a mission to several towns in the center of the country, notably Dékoa, Sibut, Ndjoukou, Damara, Yaloké, Bossembélé and Boali. The mission aimed at familiarizing the people of the interior with the process of the Inclusive Political Dialogue and to understand their expectations and their concerns with regard to the peace process.

With this awareness-raising campaign, Francois Lonseny Fall hopes that people will better understand their rights and their duties. Cyriaque Gonda, Minister of Communication, considers that a

lasting peace, which would guarantee welfare, respect of the law and freedom for all, requires dialogue and national reconciliation. The population expressed their wish for a permanent return of peace in CAR so as to enable them to heal their wounds and peacefully go about their livelihoods.

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Coordination

Campaign for displaced people in CAR

About 15 participants, representatives of displaced communities and members of the protection cluster and the United Nations communications group, met in Bangui on 8 October to plan an advocacy campaign for internally displaced people in CAR. The meeting resulted in the formulation of campaign objectives and activities, which aim to strengthen the advocacy skills of the displaced themselves, to train national and local authorities and armed groups on the rights of displaced people, and to mobilize international support for protection and aid programmes.

The campaign is supported by the *Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs* (OCHA) under the leadership of the *Humanitarian and Development Partnership Team* (HDPT). The strategy and action plan will be finalized by the end of October, so that campaign activities can start in November.

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