



## Security Council Briefing on UNOCA (Central Africa)

5 June 2023

Malta Statement delivered by Ms Francesca Gatt

Deputy Permanent Representative of Malta to the United Nations, New York

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Thank you, President, and I also thank SRSG Abarry and ECCAS President Verissimo and Ms. Tamoifo for their insightful remarks.

At the outset, let me express Malta's regret for the pending adoption of a PRST on UNOCA, notwithstanding the Security Council's commitment to addressing the multiple challenges that threaten Central Africa. Malta hopes that an agreement on this product can be reached in a timely manner.

We commend the efforts of SRSG Abarry for ably steering the mandate and work of UNOCA, and for strategically addressing the challenges that individual countries and the region face. We welcome the ongoing coordination with MINUSCA, MONUSCO, the Special Envoy for the Great Lakes, and subregional organisations, such as the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS).

As we express concern about the significant developments that took place last November in São Tomé and Príncipe, we also welcome the request by President Vila Nova for the support of the UN and ECCAS in strengthening the country's security and justice sectors.



We are also concerned with the difficult path towards transition in Chad. Reports of arrests, transfers to a high-security prison, public hearings and convictions following the protests last October are deeply worrying. Malta acknowledges the findings published by the National Human Rights Commission in this regard.

As Cameroon is experiencing multiple crises from terrorism to competition for resources, to the refugee crisis, we encourage the continued efforts towards mediation by SRSO Abarry in support of Cameroonian Authorities.

President

Malta remains concerned with the shrinking civic space in certain countries and the repeated threats to the safety of journalists, which only fuels further violence and misinformation, increasing the human cost.

As violent extremism continues to pose a threat to entire communities, we condemn the recent killings of protesters and the closure of schools in the Lake Chad Basin Area. In this connection, Malta emphasises the importance of education. It is crucial for schools to remain accessible for children and youth, ensuring that their full potential is unlocked.

In welcoming the work of UNOCA in strengthening democracy in the region and in providing good offices and technical support on multiple aspects, we also commend the Office for its role in addressing cross-cutting issues that represent serious threats for the stability and development of Central Africa.



Existing humanitarian needs are compounded by a difficult socio-economic context in the region, with growing flows of displaced and refugees in multiple countries, now further worsened by the conflict in Sudan.

We also echo the findings of the Secretary-General's report that adverse climate impacts further intensify the root causes of conflict, triggering transhumance and inter-communal clashes, and thus, jeopardizing peace and security in the region.

Growing incidents of piracy in the Gulf of Guinea also remind us of the importance of advancing regional governance and in cooperation within the Yaoundé architecture, also funded by the European Union.

The full, equal and meaningful participation of women must stay at the forefront of our considerations. On this note, we welcome the latest efforts geared towards women's leadership in political offices, including in Equatorial Guinea and Gabon. These efforts, among others, represent positive and sustainable investments for the peace, security, and development of Central Africa.

President

To conclude, Malta continues to support efforts to spearhead inclusive dialogue between governments and citizens, partnerships with civil society and confidence-building measures. We support UNOCA and the countries of the region towards this path. I thank you.