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PRESS RELEASE

MISCA Head of Mission discusses peace with CAR Women Leaders and calls for more Cooperation from Elites

Bangui, 1 April 2014 : In implementation of UN Resolution 1325 and the conclusions of the workshop for women leaders of the Central African Republic (CAR) held in Bangui on 12-14 March 2014, the Human Rights Protection and Gender Unit of the African-led International Support Mission in the Central African Republic (MISCA), in collaboration with the UN Integrated Office in the CAR (BINUCA), yesterday organized an open forum for CAR women leaders and the Special Representative of the Chairperson of the African Union (AU) Commission and Head of MISCA, Gen. Jean Marie Michel Mokoko. Under the umbrella of the Coalition of Central African Women for Peace and Reconstruction, the women's delegation represented a cross section of CAR civil society, including political leaders, women in the media, representatives of Muslim and Christian organizations, and leaders of women's peace building groups.

The women said that they had come as mothers, grandmothers, wives and sisters who are part of a society that is suffering in the current crises, to discuss with the Special Representative the situation in the country and jointly explore ways and means to get more CAR women involved in peace building. They expressed appreciation to the AU for its support to the efforts of the CAR people towards resolving the current crises and offered their condolences for the MISCA peacekeepers who have lost their lives on Central African soil.

The almost three-hour interactive session, which took the format of a Town Hall meeting, offered the MISCA Head of Mission an opportunity to brief the women on the mandate, achievements and challenges of the Mission. He urged all Central African women to use their influence within their families and communities to promote inclusive dialogue with a view to achieving sustainable peace, security, stability, democracy, Human Rights and development in the CAR.

The MISCA Head of Mission further stated: ***"The crises in this country are deep and multi-faceted. Security alone cannot resolve all the problems of the country. The people of the CAR need to think seriously about what kind of society and nation they want to build for their children. The elites of this country must rise to the call of history and make their voices heard, so that peace and security can quickly be restored and Central Africans with the help of the international community can begin to focus on the bigger developmental challenges of education, employment, healthcare, security sector reform, infrastructure development, governance and building state institutions and a democratic political culture. The international community is here to assist the Central African people. Therefore, all Central Africans, especially the elites, have a moral responsibility to actively support the international community's efforts to help the CAR. This is your country and we are here to help you save it."***