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**AFRICAN-LED INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT MISSION IN THE CENTRAL
AFRICAN REPUBLIC (MISCA)**

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PRESS STATEMENT

**MISCA REITERATES ITS COMMITMENT TO CONTINUE TO PROVIDE
SECURITY FOR HUMANITARIAN AND OTHER CONVOYS ALONG THE
CORRIDOR CONNECTING THE CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC TO THE
BORDER WITH CAMEROON**

Bangui, 15 February 2014: The African-led International Support Mission in the Central African Republic - CAR (MISCA) once again reaffirms that the Central African part of the corridor that connects the CAR to the port of Douala, in Cameroon, is completely secure. It stresses that this corridor can be used by the various humanitarian agencies providing assistance to those affected by the crisis in the CAR, as well as by traders and other users.

Since 18 January 2014, MISCA has put in place arrangements to escort vehicles that use this corridor according to the following schedule: Monday, Wednesday and Friday, from the area of Beloko, at the border with Cameroon, to Bangui; and Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday, from Bangui to the Cameroon border, to escort the vehicles that have unloaded their cargoes. With the consent of the Cameroonian authorities, whom MISCA would like to thank sincerely for their support and cooperation, elements of the Mission deploy in the town of Garoua Boulai, which is the final stage before crossing the border with the CAR, in order to group the vehicles to be escorted and reassure those drivers who, on the basis of the very fragmentary information at their disposal, misjudge the security situation along the corridor.

To date, MISCA has without any difficulty escorted four convoys along this corridor, comprising a total of four hundred and sixteen (416) trucks, ninety (90) of which belonging to the World Food Programme (WFP), while forty (40) were carrying equipment for the French operation Sangaris. Other trucks that recently arrived at the border between Cameroon and the CAR will be escorted by a MISCA unit, on 17 February 2014.

Having learnt through the press that the WFP has, since 12 February 2014, started airlifting food to the people affected by the crisis in the CAR on the ground that the road remains too unreliable, MISCA would like to reassure the humanitarian agencies that the military

component of the Mission is prepared to escort and protect all humanitarian convoys to the CAR, as it has already done recently to the satisfaction of the different actors concerned. MISCA is willing to assist the humanitarian agencies to avoid, as much as possible, resorting to highly expensive airlifts at a time when the limited resources available should be used as efficiently as possible to alleviate the suffering faced by the CAR people as a result of the crisis. In this regard, MISCA notes with deep concern that, despite all the efforts made, the actual financing of humanitarian action is still way below the current needs. Consequently, and while welcoming the generous support provided by several international partners, the Mission calls for a more active international solidarity with the people of the CAR, through the speedy disbursement of the pledges made and the mobilization of additional resources.

MISCA seizes this opportunity to reiterate its deep appreciation for the remarkable work being done by the WFP and other humanitarian agencies in particularly challenging conditions. It commends the dedication of their staff and their commitment to support the civilian population in the CAR.

By paying particular attention to the provision of security along the corridor that connects the CAR to the border with Cameroon, in accordance with the mandate given by the Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the African Union (AU) and the United Nations (UN) Security Council in resolution 2127 (2013) and its Concept of Operation, MISCA aims, in addition to facilitating the delivery of humanitarian assistance in the country, at attaining another objective, which is equally crucial for the stabilization of the CAR and its economic recovery: ensuring the flow of trade, as well as the control by the CAR State of its sources of income to enable it finance the activities related to the performance of its core functions. In this regard, MISCA has initiated consultations with the CAR Government to consider the possibility of the payment, in Douala, through a single window, of customs duties and related taxes on the goods and other items destined for the CAR. The effective implementation of this measure will also enhance transparency in the management of State revenues. It should be recalled that the former Seleka and other armed elements had set up many roadblocks on the CAR side of the corridor, illegally extorting taxes from the users and committing all sorts of abuses against civilians using this vital corridor for the CAR.

MISCA stresses that a stronger humanitarian response and an adequate and early socio-economic support, particularly through the provision of the resources needed for the payment of salary arrears owed to the civil servants and the pensions of retirees, will greatly contribute to the consolidation of the progress made by MISCA and the French operation Sangaris in stabilizing the security situation and, consequently, to the successful conclusion of the ongoing transition process.

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