



NEWS RELEASE

International Partners Pledge Continued Support in Recognition of Burundi's Achievements and Commitments

NEW YORK, November 16, 2012 – At today's meeting of the Burundi Configuration of the UN Peace Building Commission in New York, the African Development Bank, the European Union, the International Monetary Fund, the United Nations Development Program, and the World Bank pledged their continued support to the country's achievements and commitments.

The statement by the five institutions comes shortly after the Conference of Burundi's Development Partners, held in Geneva, and attended by representatives of more than 100 countries and international organizations. During the October 29-30, 2012 conference, the Government of Burundi outlined its plans for development in the framework of its second Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, adopted earlier in the year after extensive consultations.

The country's development partners noted significant progress in recent years, notably in terms of restoring peace and stability following a lengthy civil war, while demobilizing former combatants and reintegrating them into communities. The partners also recognized progress in economic growth rates, advances in the delivery of basic social services to the population (in particular, by expanding health care and education for children and offering free maternal health care), improvements in the "doing business" climate, progress in public financial management, and addressing incidents of corruption. In addition, the development partners saluted Burundi's important contribution to stability in Somalia by contributing troops to AMISOM.

While recognizing the significant progress the country has made, the five international organizations and others also noted the many challenges that Burundi continues to face. These include an on-going and severe deficit in energy, an under-performing agricultural sector with threats of food insecurity and malnutrition, unchecked population growth, the need to strengthen capacity in a number of government administrations, and the need to continue to focus on poverty reduction and reach those who have yet to benefit fully from the dividends of peace.

The partners noted with appreciation the 2nd Vice President's commitment to the fight against corruption and impunity, and all incidents of violence, as well as to the orderly return of refugees. And, they noted the government's intention to reinforce gender equality.

The five organizations and donor countries also singled out the need to further intensify the fight against corruption and impunity, and to ensure an open dialogue with all actors in society. They noted with appreciation the commitments made by the Government of Burundi on these fronts, and requested that progress be monitored and reported along with the implementation of other priority reform programs of the country's new Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper.

The **African Development Bank, represented by Vice-President Zondo Sakala**, commended the Government of Burundi for the significant progress made over the past decade on the political, economic, and social fronts. However, it noted that Burundi still faces considerable risks as a post-conflict country,

as well as from external shocks. Therefore, as confirmed by the Burundi Second Vice President, reforms undertaken must be consolidated and deepened. For their part, the development partners should respond positively, timely, and in a coordinated manner in support of the government's growth and poverty reduction strategy.

The European Union, represented at the Geneva conference by Commissioner for Development Andris Piebalgs, said *"We welcome the progress achieved by Burundi. The country is now at peace, even if this peace remains fragile. The security situation has been stabilized. Progress has been accomplished in developing the country, and the democratic process made an important step forward with the 2010 elections. At the same time, it is clear that substantial challenges remain, notably in the field of justice, and economic and political governance. This Conference highlighted the shared determination by the Burundi Government and its partners to address the challenges. The European Union intends to remain one of Burundi's most important partners, in close cooperation with its Government, in the clear framework of mutual commitments."*

For the **United Nations Development Programme, Jordan Ryan, Assistant Administrator, Director, Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery,** said *"we believe that the commitment to reform cannot wane. The Government, the people, and the partners of Burundi must not let it. The risk of a slowing down or a reversal of progress still exists – as long as ordinary people face insecurity and poverty. But this means that the attention of international partners should not be diverted from Burundi. Now, more than ever, is the time for continued support for a smooth transition from post-conflict recovery to the longer-term goal of poverty reduction."*

"Likewise," he added, *"Burundi's national and international partners have to collaborate in ways that provide even more effective, efficient, and timely support of transiting from conflict to peace and development. This requires squarely facing the challenge of aid coordination, and providing coherent support to the Government in its leadership role. UNDP stands ready, to engage with others, to provide state of the art assistance in this regard."*

The **World Bank Country Director for Burundi, Tanzania, and Uganda, Philippe Dongier,** said *"the Geneva conference showed a mutual commitment by Burundi and its development partners to continue to work together to ensure the success of the country's development plans. This is not the time to hesitate in supporting Burundi, which needs this support more than ever. The government has shown it can achieve success in its efforts to promote growth and reduce poverty, despite many obstacles that hinder its efforts. Our new Country Assistance Strategy (CAS) for Burundi shows that we are prepared to support the country to achieve its development objectives."*

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