

**Summary of the informal meeting
of the Guinea Bissau configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission
with the participation of H.E. Domingos Simões Pereira, Prime Minister of Guinea-Bissau
16 July 2014.**

On 16 July, the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) configuration for Guinea Bissau held an informal meeting in which the newly-appointed Prime Minister of Guinea-Bissau, H.E. Mr. Domingos Simões Pereira was invited to brief by video conference on his government's strategy and strategic priorities to foster a democratic and prosperous Guinea Bissau. The configuration also sought the Prime Ministers' views on the role of the international partners in support to the Bissau Guinean government's objectives.

The tone of the meeting was set by the Chair of the configuration, Ambassador Antonio de Aguiar Patriota, who praised the Government of Guinea Bissau for its commitment to build upon the recent successful electoral process and work towards a stable, prosperous and democratic state. The Chair expressed that the PBC is honoured to be a partner of the people of Guinea Bissau and is committed to accompany the country through the transition period toward constitutional order and resumption of full-fledged cooperation with international stakeholders.

The Chair highlighted the challenging nature of the tasks ahead, which include important institutional reforms as well as social and economic development measures required urgently. Ambassador Patriota also encouraged the authorities to engage in an open dialogue with all sectors of civil society so as to help heal wounds of the past.

Prime Minister Simões Pereira expressed gratitude and satisfaction for the warm wishes of the members of the configuration and the political support he has received from the international community in the wake of the recent elections. The Prime Minister also acknowledged with appreciation the leadership of Assistant Secretary-General Judy Cheng-Hopkins and the Peacebuilding Support Office for supporting peacebuilding efforts through UNIOGBIS and the UN system in Guinea Bissau.

The Prime Minister emphasised that Guinea Bissau has experienced a period characterized by political tolerance and calm following the electoral process. He highlighted that PAIGC, the party that won the elections has reached an agreement with the main opposition party, PRS, to allow for the participation of members of the political opposition in his cabinet as well as the clear recognition that the government must improve basic service delivery before the end of this year in order to avoid any deterioration of the fragile social and political equilibrium.

Mr. Simões Pereira articulated his government's initial priorities in two phases; in the short term, through an emergency plan focused on the payment of salaries of civil servants, supporting the establishment of an agricultural cycle plan, including support to the cashew harvesting calendar, the completion of the 2013/2014 school year and preparations of the following year, and preparing the national health system against the threat of the Ebola virus. The Prime Minister noted the reliance on the international community's financial support to cover these priorities as well as key initiatives such as the government's Strategic Planning Agency and a coordination mechanism for the security sector reform.

Furthermore, on the medium to long-term objectives, Prime Minister Simões Pereira spoke about the need to review the Peacebuilding Strategic Framework to reflect the government's priorities, which in turn would feed into the Peacebuilding Priority Plan. This, he mentioned, is particularly important in light of preparations for a donor conference foreseen to take place before the end of this year. The Prime Minister urged the international community to be on the same page and work in a coordinated fashion. Starting in 2015, the Government of Guinea Bissau plans to establish a Budget Support Group to enable development partners to make contributions to the 2015 budget.

In reaction to the Prime Minister's briefing, several Member States took the floor to commend the encouraging efforts of the new Bissau Guinean authorities and the important electoral process. Nigeria and the European Union praised the inclusivity of the cabinet's composition while the latter recalled the recent resumption of cooperation between Guinea Bissau and the regional body. The EU, together with Spain, Luxembourg, Senegal and the African Union pledged to support to the Government priorities.

Luxembourg addressed the need to tackle the problems of impunity, corruption, illicit exploitation of natural resources, drug traffic and organized crime. Regarding the problem of poverty and the need for additional financial resources to enable the state to deliver basic services, the European Union, Nigeria, the African Union, Senegal and Mozambique, on behalf of the CPLP, supported the call for the holding of a donor conference with a sense of urgency and solidarity. Nigeria also called on other Member States to lend their support to help Guinea Bissau avoid a relapse into conflict. Furthermore, Portugal expressed that the Peacebuilding Commission could play a key role in supporting the government priorities, including the strengthening of national institutions. Finally, Portugal and Nigeria spoke about the important relationship between Guinea Bissau and the Security Council, which is due to discuss the renewal of UNIOGBIS mandate later this year.

Before concluding the session, Assistant Secretary-General for Peacebuilding, Mrs. Judy Cheng-Hopkins echoed the congratulatory expressions of Members States, and was deeply encouraged by the progress made by Guinea Bissau during and since the elections. Mrs. Cheng-Hopkins also pledged support from the Peacebuilding Support Office recalling that the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) had supported Guinea Bissau since 2008 with a diverse range of programmes in support of Guinea-Bissau's priorities. The Assistant Secretary-General urged the authorities to identify urgent and immediate peacebuilding needs which could be financed by Immediate Response Funds, such as the Strategic Planning Unit of the government. In terms of preparations for a new Priority Plan, she encouraged the Government and its partners to undertake a renewed conflict analysis to help inform its development.
