

**Statement by the Chair of the PBC Liberia Configuration at  
the Security Council Briefing on Liberia, Thursday 17 March 2016  
(as delivered)**

Mr. President,

Thank you for the invitation to brief the Security Council on behalf the Peacebuilding Commission. Today, I will focus my remarks on the ongoing security transition, and the priorities of the Peacebuilding Commission for its engagement with Liberia over the coming years.

Mr. President,

There are many lessons to be learned from previous transitions. This is now a great opportunity to plan for a smooth transition that puts Liberia on a robust path towards further consolidation of peace. There are no excuses for a fragmented approach from the UN System, nor from the international community.

We also have a collective responsibility to avoid the financial cliff that has sometimes characterized the drawdown of UN peacekeeping operations in the past. Sustained international attention is imperative, both in terms of financial support and political accompaniment. The PBC looks forward to playing its part.

Mr. President,

Let me now turn to the PBC's statement of mutual commitments with the government of Liberia. In light of the several transitions underway, our configuration has undertaken to review our engagement, to ensure it is aligned with, and adding real value to, the government's current efforts.

A technical level mission comprised of representatives of DPKO, PBSO, UNDP and DPA, and the chair of the Liberia Configuration, visited Monrovia at the end of January. They met with a wide range of government interlocutors, civil society, UNMIL, the UN country

team and the donor community for constructive discussions on peacebuilding needs in Liberia and the role of the Peacebuilding Commission going forward. The mission has reported a widely shared vision of what peacebuilding efforts are needed, and clear views of how and where the PBC can play an important role.

At the same time, mission noted some cause of concern. The difficult budgetary situation puts a strain on the government's ability to roll out key peacebuilding programs it has identified as priorities. In addition, interlocutors on the ground reported on the public apprehension about the drawdown of the UNMIL presence. Clear communication to the public, and perception management will be important in this regard, as well as reassuring the enduring commitment of the international community, including the UN, to the people of Liberia.

Building on wide consultations, the Peacebuilding Commission affirmed that the priority areas of our engagement remain valid. Let me briefly touch upon them:

### **1) Security sector reform**

In light of the upcoming drawdown of UNMIL, pursuant to Security Council resolution 2239 (2015), the PBC will work in support of the Liberian government's efforts to strengthen operational efficiency of the security agencies in the country, by assisting the government to address structural challenges and the provision of justice and security to all Liberians. It will be vital to ensure that priority activities within the Government of Liberia Plan for UNMIL Transition are completed on time.

### **2) Rule of law**

In order to build the effectiveness and integrity of legal institutions, increase equitable access to justice and strengthen the rule of law, the PBC will support the government's efforts to address systematic weaknesses in the criminal justice system and weak administrative procedures, and ensure adequate budgetary allocations to capacitate institutions central to security and the rule of law. The PBC will also help advance the constitutional reform process in a timely manner, ensuring robust civic education and civil society engagement.

### **3) Reconciliation**

As articulated by the government, reconciliation in Liberia is a multidimensional process of overcoming social, political, and religious cleavages; healing the physical and psychological wounds from the civil war; and confronting and addressing historical and structural wrongs, in particular root causes of conflict. The PBC will strengthen its efforts to expedite the reconciliation process in close consultation with local actors in Liberia.

### **4) Elections**

In addition, the PBC will focus its work on the upcoming 2017 elections, which represents a significant opportunity for further democratic consolidation. We will support the efforts by the government and the National Elections Commission to ensure that elections are successfully conducted and further contribute to improving governance, reconciliation and stability in the country. This will depend on the efforts to enable the widest possible public awareness and participation as well as deployment of preventive measures, ranging from formal mechanisms for electoral dispute resolution to regular channels for dialogue between the security forces and the population.

Last but not least, Mr. President, the PBC has a responsibility to highlight socioeconomic needs, fundamental for building sustainable peace. As Liberia is still recovering from the economic effects of the Ebola virus disease and the severe impacts of the drop of commodity prices on raw materials, there is need to reinvigorate the economy by strengthening the private sector, create jobs, and build capacity for domestic revenue generation. We will work to strengthen our engagement with the international financial institutions in this regard. The decentralization process – which is a crosscutting issue in our work – will be important not only to strengthen state presence and authority outside of Monrovia, but also to extend the provision of basic social services. I look forward to highlighting such issues over the coming 12 months.

Mr. President,

Through our Statement of Mutual Commitments we seek to align the work of the commission behind existing commitments, rather than duplicating efforts by creating new ones. We will work to draw attention to, and rally international support around commitments made in strategic frameworks such as “Liberia Rising: Vision 2030,” the Agenda for Transformation (2013-2017); the Strategic Roadmap for National Healing, Peacebuilding and Reconciliation; and equally important around the constitutional review process; the draft legislation related to land rights and administration, local governance, decentralization and civil service reform. These important pieces of legislation cut to the core of peace- and state building and have the potential to transform state and society relations in Liberia provided they move forward.

The Peacebuilding Commission commits to undertake political advocacy and accompaniment, advocating for generating necessary resources and fostering coordinated actions among all relevant stakeholders. The PBC will continue to promote an integrated, strategic and coherent approach to peacebuilding and serve as a forum for dialogue for all relevant actors. In particular, the configuration will draw and sustain international attention and support for the preparations for 2017 elections; and continue to highlight peacebuilding issues during the ongoing security transition.

Before concluding – let me make a few recommendations:

In light of the upcoming drawdown of UNMIL we encourage – to the widest extent possible – that the UN system engages in joint strategic planning for a well-managed transition and for meeting the long-term peacebuilding needs during and beyond the transition.

In addition, we emphasize the need to take into account regional dimensions of peacebuilding, and the importance of working together with ECOWAS and MRU building on successful regional initiatives.

Lastly, Mr. President,

We make the case for including women and youth of Liberia in all peacebuilding efforts as we move forward, operationalizing Security Council resolution 2250. Let's engage the large youth population for peace, as they constitute one of the country's greatest assets for the work to consolidation of peace.

In conclusion, Mr. President,

The peacebuilding commission is determined to advance Liberia's peacebuilding agenda, as outlined by the government, and is reinvigorated by the renewed commitment showed by all actors through the process of revising our strategy of engagement. We look forward to supporting the efforts by the Security Council in ensuring a well-managed drawdown.

I thank you.