

To : Members of the PBC – Guinea-Bissau  
Configuration

**Ambassadorial-level meeting of the Peacebuilding Commission**

**Guinea-Bissau Configuration, 15 February 2017**

**Chair's Summary**

**Background**

On 15 February 2017, the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) Guinea-Bissau Configuration held an Ambassadorial-level meeting under the chairmanship of H.E. Mr. Mauro Vieira of Brazil to discuss the current situation in Guinea-Bissau and the role of the PBC.

Following the introductory statement by the Chair of the Guinea-Bissau Configuration, Mr. Modibo Touré (SRSG and Head of UNIOGBIS) briefed the Configuration on the latest situation in Guinea-Bissau; H.E. Mr. Lewis Brown (Permanent Representative of the Republic of Liberia to the UN) presented a statement on behalf of the Chairmanship of ECOWAS; Mr. Tanou Koné (Permanent Observer of ECOWAS) and Mr. Oscar Fernández-Taranco (Assistant-Secretary General for Peacebuilding Support) also presented statements. The PBC acknowledged the presence of Minister Soares Sambú of Guinea Bissau at the meeting who presented a statement on the current situation in Guinea-Bissau.

**Introductory Statement by the Chair**

1. In his introductory remarks, the Chair highlighted that one of our key priorities for 2017 was to strengthen coordination with the relevant international partners of Guinea-Bissau with a view to support their peacebuilding efforts. The Chair underlined that the Six Point Plan and the Conakry agreement provided the necessary steps to end the current stalemate. He called for maintaining the spirit of consensus and agreement brought by these agreements which should not be allowed to be overcome by suspicion, mistrust and mutual accusations.

2. The Chair also referred to the statement delivered by the PBC country configuration at the Security Council session the day before, which called for the international community's support to the implementation of the Conakry Agreement. The statement underlined that it was the people of Guinea-Bissau who were suffering the negative impacts of the political instability due to the lack of basic public services, particularly in the health and education sectors, and the overall socio-economic situation in the country. International partners had delivered a strong message to the Security Council in support of the ECOWAS-led process as a framework to resolve the political situation on the ground and to catalyse a conducive environment for stability, through the effective implementation of the Conakry agreement and the goodwill of both sides.
3. The Chair assured that the PBC would remain seized of developments in Guinea-Bissau. The constitutional deadline was nearing for the National Assembly to consider the government's plan as presented by PM Sissoko. There was some uncertainty as to the approval of the plan. The Chair underlined the importance of maintaining close coordination among ECOWAS, CPLP, EU, UA and UN. He also informed members that intended to travel to Guinea-Bissau to engage with all relevant stakeholders on behalf of the Configuration.

### **Other Speakers**

4. SRSR Modibo Touré emphasized the value of the PBC role in providing strategic guidance on the situation in Guinea-Bissau and as a convener with the capacity to bring about transformative impact, especially through its ability to build alliances and carryout resource mobilization. He expressed appreciation to the catalytic support of the PBSO and DPA in moving forward the process of the six-point road map and the Conakry agreement. Mr. Touré also noted the recent three-day symposium held in Bissau which set the foundation for reconciliation as part of the National Dialogue process. He informed members that he would be meeting with ASG Oscar Fernández-Taranco to discuss ways and means by which the PBF could continue to help Guinea-Bissau to break out of the political impasse. He also indicated that Guinea-Bissau could become a model for the PBC and underlined the need for sustained collective engagement with partners.
5. Mr. Koné encouraged further regional activities to end the long standing crisis in Guinea-Bissau. He expressed the need for the international community to continue to support the implementation of the six-point road map and the Conakry agreement. He noted the 30 June deadline for the withdrawal of ECOMIB and pointed to the difficulties in maintaining this force in Guinea-Bissau and expressed appreciation to the EU for its support. Mr. Koné stressed that national interest must be held as the priority to overcome political differences, and called for further support to Guinea-Bissau to help them reach a decision to end the crisis.

6. ASG Oscar Fernández-Taranco noted that the Peacebuilding Fund provides US\$10 million to support national dialogue, security sector reform, justice sector reform, and the empowerment of women and youth. He noted that the PBC could strengthen the implementation process of the six-point road map and the Conakry agreement. He commended the recent dialogue meeting held in Bissau on truth and reconciliation which included examples and lessons learned from Timor-Leste and Côte d'Ivoire. Following the recent Strategic Review Mission to Guinea-Bissau, he would discuss with the SRSG how PBF can best support the strategic restructuring of UNIOGBIS and the on-going mediation process led by ECOWAS.
  
7. H.E. Mr. Lewis Brown reassured that ECOWAS placed priority on the situation in Guinea Bissau as stability in the country was important to the sub-region. He informed that President Alpha Condé, as well as President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, intend to call on all stakeholders concerned to maintain the six-point road map and the Conakry agreement process.
  
8. Minister Soares Sambú emphasized the excellent role played by international partners of Guinea-Bissau for the political stability in the country and for fostering dialogue with partners for development. Support from the international community was crucial to ensure efficient and in-depth response for peacebuilding needs in Guinea-Bissau as well as social stability. The Minister pointed out that political and social stability must go hand-in-hand. Attention to the most vulnerable groups of the population was important to national development. In this regard, he underlined key challenges such as youth unemployment, the fragility of governance and lack of social opportunities. The Minister expressed appreciation to the PBC for the opportunity to strengthen dialogue on the situation in Guinea-Bissau. He expressed his government's appreciation for the solidarity given to his country and for keeping Guinea-Bissau on the agenda of the international community.
  
9. On the political situation, the Minister presented a brief description of developments since the election in November 2016. He noted that the government programme presented by the Prime Minister was aimed at social and political stability. He expressed the view that despite disagreement on the interpretation of the Conakry agreement, his government was implementing the steps outlined. The Minister also highlighted that the six-point road map and the Conakry agreement were the key tools to meet expectations of the people. He stressed that the Government was committed to the six-point road map and the Conakry agreement and the inclusion of all parties to broaden the political basis for support. The Minister expressed appreciation to the UN system for its support for social and human development to alleviate the suffering of the people.

10. Member states took the floor to make comments and ask questions. Member States expressed concern about the ongoing stalemate and political impasse in Guinea-Bissau, which could increase the risk of instability and socio-economic deterioration in the country, and underlined that the implementation of the six-point road map and the Conakry agreement provided the framework for ending the crisis. Member States reaffirmed their commitment to supporting all efforts to end to the impasse. Regional commitment, including the collaboration between the AU and ECOWAS, was also appreciated.
11. Member States indicated that the ongoing political crisis could also have negative impacts on the security situation in the country and could breed the way for drug trafficking and international crime. They also underlined the need for the international community to seek ways to ease tension and facilitate dialogue amongst actors concerned. Coordination amongst the international community, including the P5 (AU, CPLP, ECOWAS, EU and UN), needed to be reinforced. Some delegations referred to the possibility of reconvening of the International Contact Group. Maintaining support for UNIOGBIS was also crucial in order for the mission to fulfil its mandate. Member-States agreed that a premature downsizing of UNIOGBIS would send the wrong political message and could affect the stabilization of Guinea-Bissau.
12. Member States also noted the sense of fatigue existing within international partners of Guinea-Bissau, triggered by the long-standing instability in the country. They stressed the fact that the responsibility for ending the crisis was in the hands of the national political actors. The Government should not be focusing on the 2018 elections at the expense of efforts to alleviate poverty and to provide support for basic services to the people. However, they did express the hope that efforts of the international community would not be overcome by pessimism. Collective commitment to long-term engagement and prevention efforts are needed. They emphasised the importance of the pledges made at the Brussels Donors Conference and the implementation of the Terra Ranka programme for the sustainable development. Despite the political crisis, there must be ongoing momentum for the peace process through seeking alternatives for involvement by engaging with civil society and government actors.
13. Member-States agreed to issuing a statement by the PBC underlining 1) the need for support for the implementation of the six-point road map and the Conakry agreement as the way out of the political crisis; 2) the important mediation role played by ECOWAS in the implementation of the six-point road map and the Conakry agreement; 3) the need for international community to remain united and to enhance the role of UNIOGBIS; 4) the need for maintaining the United Nations' presence in Guinea-Bissau; and 5) the role played by ECOMIB.
14. On the role of the PBC, Member States appreciated the convening role and the political accompaniment by the PBC, as well as its ongoing engagement with the Security Council. They supported the Chair's plan to visit Guinea-Bissau. Member States viewed

Guinea-Bissau as a test case for the PBC. Member States also called on the PBC to be more creative and proactive and to convey strong messages to stakeholders. The role of women and youth should also be highlighted by the PBC with the support of the PBSO. Member States also encouraged the PBC to work together with the AU on institutional capacity building and post-crisis reconstruction programmes. While the PBC played a positive role in consolidating peace in Guinea-Bissau, Member States underlined that it was the responsibility of the Bissau-Guinean authorities to work as one for the country's development and the wellbeing of its people.

## **Conclusion**

In his concluding remarks, the Chair summarized that the PBC remained committed to finding a solution to end the political impasse and to implement the six-point road map and the Conakry agreement. Responsibility to ending the crisis, however, lay in the hands of the Government and people of Guinea-Bissau themselves. The PBC also expressed appreciation for the ongoing efforts and leadership by ECOWAS, UNIOGBIS and the important role of ECOMIB. The PBC will issue a press statement as recommended by Member States, the draft of which will be circulated to the PBC shortly.

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