

Statement of the outgoing PBC Chair_ Formal Meeting of 28 January 2019

Excellencies, dear colleagues,

I would like to start by expressing my gratitude to all of you, members of this Commission, for the collaboration and support I have enjoyed throughout my term as Chair of the PBC in 2018. I wish to thank, in particular, Germany and the Republic of Korea for their support as Vice-Chairs, and Brazil, Canada, Morocco, Sweden and Switzerland for their work as Chairs of Country-specific Configurations.

I was privileged to take the mantle at an exciting moment for peacebuilding and sustaining peace within the United Nations in general, and more specifically for the PBC. Building on the review of the peacebuilding architecture review adopted by the General Assembly and the Security Council on 27 April 2016, and thanks to the dynamic engagement of its membership, this Commission has continued to diversify its working methods to enhance its role and impact on country-specific, regional and cross-cutting peacebuilding challenges.

It has been an honour for me to lead this Commission's flexible engagement in support of peacebuilding in The Gambia, which started in early 2017 at the request of the Government. Our collaboration with The Gambia, grounded on the principle of national ownership and leadership, is an excellent illustration of the ways Member States can use the PBC platform in support of their national peacebuilding and sustaining peace efforts.

The work of the Commission through its sustained engagement with Burundi, the Central African Republic, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia and Sierra Leon also deserves high praise. In addition to bringing coherence to UN system-wide and international efforts to build and sustain peace in these countries, the Commission enhanced its advisory role to the Council, providing timely and relevant advice on key peacebuilding priorities. I

encourage this body to further align its calendar of work with that of the Council.

Another illustration of the increasingly relevant role of the PBC is its engagement on regional, cross-border and transnational peacebuilding challenges. In January 2017, the Security Council issued a Presidential Statement emphasizing the importance of the convening role of the Peacebuilding Commission to mobilize deeper commitment and partnership between the UN system, the countries of the Sahel and other international and regional partners with the view to advancing the implementation of the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel. Following up on the work of my predecessor, Ambassador Cho Tae-yul, and with the support of its members, the PBC has continued to use its platform to foster greater coordination and coherence, contribute to breaking silos and building stronger partnerships between the various national, regional and international actors in the Sahel region. In this connection, the 2018 PBC Annual Session focused on the Sahel.

The flexibility of the PBC also provided an opportunity to focus the 2018 joint meeting of ECOSOC and PBC on "Linkages between climate change and challenges to peacebuilding and sustaining peace in the Sahel", and I am very grateful that you, and the ECOSOC member states agreed to the initiative of putting this very important topic on the agenda of the joint meeting. The meeting: i) raised awareness of the possible adverse effects of climate change on the stability in the Sahel; ii) showcased mitigation and addressed adaptation measures to the linkages between climate change and the challenges to peacebuilding and sustaining peace in the Sahel; and iii) deliberated on ways to enhance coherence, cooperation and coordination in strengthening Sahelian countries' resilience to climate change.

The focus on the Sahel region, one of the priorities of PBC in 2018, has a special meaning for me, having gained a deep understanding of the multidimensional root causes of insecurity in the region during the field visits I participated to. In March last year, I have joined the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for West Africa and the Sahel, Mr. Mohamed Ibn Chambas, the Assistant-Secretary-General for Peacebuilding Support, Mr. Oscar Fernandez-Taranco to a visit in Chad. In October 2018, I once again joined the High-Level UN delegation on a regional visit to West Africa and the Sahel, to Cote d'Ivoire, The Gambia, Burkina Faso, and Senegal.

I was impressed seeing the results of the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) when visiting a PBF funded project at the border of Chad and Cameroon, attending the 6th meeting of the "*Ministerial Coordination Platform for the Sahel*", in Chad, witnessing the launching of the *Truth, Reconciliation and Reparations Commission* in The Gambia, and participating, in Senegal, to the launching of the Study on "*Pastoralism and Security in West Africa and The Sahel*", prepared by the Office of the United Nations for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS).

These visits gave me the occasion to meet with two Heads of State (the President of The Gambia and the President of Burkina Faso), a Vice-President (Cote d'Ivoire), over 25 ministers, UN regional and country directors and teams, diplomatic community, local communities and civil society organizations. These interactions and experiences allowed me to gain a better understanding on the peacebuilding priorities and of the real needs of the people on the ground and of the important role the Peacebuilding Commission can continue to play in support of these regions.

I would also like to highlight the importance of the strategic partnership and cooperation with the African Union. For several years now, this Commission has been working towards strengthening its partnership with the African Union Peace and Security Council (AUPSC). I was honoured to co-chair the PBC-AUPSC interactive dialogue on 18 July 2018 here in New York. I am grateful to the PBC membership to have accepted the proposal of an annual meeting of the PBC and AUPSC as part of the continued efforts to enhance the UN-AU partnership, and to ensure coordination and complementarity of their efforts in support of peacebuilding and sustaining peace in Africa.

The Commission continued this year to provide an important platform for Member States to engage on policy issues. This included convening a number of sessions to further discussion on the priorities of the Secretary-General contained in his 2018 report on peacebuilding and sustaining peace, as called for in the twin resolutions on peacebuilding and sustaining peace adopted by the Security Council and the General Assembly in April 2018. I am particularly grateful to the Secretary-General for his steadfast engagement with the Commission and for maintaining a regular dialogue with us on these salient issues.

I am pleased to note that the outcome of these sessions, which I transmitted to the Presidents of the General Assembly and the Security

Council, will allow for continuing discussion and stronger cooperation between the General Assembly and the PBC in the coming year.

Dear all,

I want to reiterate our deep commitment for the values of peacebuilding and sustaining peace, proved by our determination for accomplishing the PBC priorities during Romania's Chairmanship. I would also want to underscore the fact that we will continue to remain strongly engaged in the work of PBC, during our mandate as Vice-chair and beyond, and we will offer our support and expertise to the new Chairmanship.

I would like to express my gratitude to the Assistant Secretary-General for Peacebuilding Support, Mr. Oscar Fernandez-Taranco, and the entire team of the Peacebuilding Support Office for the quality of the strategic, technical and logistical support they have provided to the PBC over this year.

I thank you once again for the confidence and support.