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HEADQUARTERS • SIEGENEW YORK, NY 10017

TEL.: 1 (212) 963 1234 • FAX: 1 (212) 963 4879

New York, 11 May 2020

Excellencies,

Dear colleagues,

In my capacity as Chair of the Burundi Configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), I wish to provide the members of the Configuration with a brief update on the latest developments concerning issues relevant to peacebuilding in Burundi. In light of the general impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the working methods at Headquarters in New York I have decided, after consulting with the Permanent Representative of Burundi, to provide this information in writing.

On 27 April 2020 the electoral campaign period for the presidency and the deputies and counsellors at the communal level has officially started. It will run for 21 days. The general elections are scheduled for 20 May 2020. The outgoing President Mr. Pierre NKURUNZIZA has respected his decision not to stand for another term.

I encourage the government, the independent national electoral commission, political parties and other stakeholders to work together so that the elections of May 20, 2020 are free, transparent, inclusive and peaceful and to guarantee a free media environment and the safety and security of all Burundians during the electoral process.

I further call on all actors to take a strong stance against any form of hate speech or intimidation, and to insist on zero tolerance for violence. Violent incidents and human rights violations must be properly investigated and those responsible held accountable under the law. Any electoral dispute must be resolved through existing national legal mechanisms.

The electoral period must not deflect attention from the importance of socioeconomic development. Reducing poverty and generating opportunities for youth through education and employment are key for the consolidation of peacebuilding gains in Burundi. The PBC continues to serve as a bridge between Burundi and its partners in mobilizing resources for the implementation of Burundi's National Development Plan.

To: All Members of the PBC Burundi Configuration



In addition to the global and regional impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, torrential rains, landslides and floods are affecting livelihoods and exacerbating needs of Burundians. I call on donors to increase their contributions to the relevant funding instruments, and I urge the Burundi authorities at all levels to facilitate cooperation with humanitarian partners on the ground throughout the country. The PBC will continue mobilizing international support, including with regard to the voluntary, safe and dignified return of refugees and their sustainable reintegration.

Finally, I encourage the Burundi authorities to continue to take all necessary measures against the health risks caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, as recommended by the national task force and the World Health Organization. Particular attention should be paid to the protection of the most vulnerable people, including older persons, returning refugees, host communities and frontline healthcare workers and first responders.

The Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) continues to support implementation of projects focused on strengthening social cohesion and preventing violence, including efforts led by women and grassroots organizations. The PBF is ready to consider, in consultation with the Resident Coordinator, project proposals that aim to scale up or replicate the peacebuilding work achieved by the women's mediation network. I call upon Member States to consider funding or co-funding such initiatives.

I wish to recognize the tireless engagement of the UN Country Team under the leadership of Resident Coordinator Garry Conille and thank them for their outstanding work in support of peacebuilding in Burundi. I thank the Government of Burundi for its cooperation and the members of the PBC Burundi Configuration for their continuous support and interest.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Lauber', written over a light blue horizontal line.

H.E. Mr. Jürg Lauber

Chair of the PBC Burundi Configuration