

15 May 2015

To : Members of the PBC – Burundi Configuration

**Informal meeting of the Burundi Specific Configuration of the
PBC, New York, 15 May 2015**

Chair's Summary

The PBC Burundi Configuration met on Friday, 15 May 2015, from 9.00 am to 10.00 am, to hear an update on the situation in Burundi by the Permanent Representative of Burundi, H.E. Ambassador Albert Shingiro, as well as by the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Mr. Jeffrey Feltman.

Ambassador Shingiro reported that the Government was under control of the situation and had arrested almost all coup plotters. He said that the country remained calm and reiterated his Government's commitment to resume political dialogue and to proceed with the electoral process. He emphasized that the divisions in Burundi were not of an ethnical nature, but purely political.

Mr. Feltman reported that the Secretary General's Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region, Mr. Saïd Djinnit, was back in Bujumbura and had immediately resumed his efforts to facilitate political dialogue after the attempted coup d'état. He noted that the Secretary General had spoken to Presidents Kikwete and Kagame on Thursday and was scheduled to speak to Presidents Nkurunziza and dos Santos (in view of the ICGLR Summit) over the course of the day. In his phone call with the President of Burundi, the Secretary-General was likely to repeat the messages that he had made in his public statement issued on Thursday, including the call to quickly establish conditions conducive for credible elections. Mr. Feltman underlined that the Secretary-General was also going to insist on the need for reconciliation efforts to take place in Burundi. The Under-Secretary-General further stressed that the UN's efforts were closely coordinated with the region, particularly with the EAC, the AU and the ICGLR.

The Chair of the PBC Burundi Configuration, H.E. Ambassador Paul Seger, noted that the next steps that were to be taken by Burundi would prove decisive. He spoke of two possible options. In a negative scenario, the Government would "strike a victor's pose", meaning that it would resort to retaliatory measures against participants of the uprising and demonstrators deepening the rift within Burundian society and hence, contribute to an environment that would not be conducive for reconciliation and elections. In contrast, the scenario he wished for would see the Government increasing dialogue and reconciliation with all Burundians in view of addressing the root causes of the current crisis. The Chair used the metaphor of a pressure cooker to describe the situation in

Burundi. He stressed that unless the underlying symptoms of the crisis were addressed, the lid was likely to come off again in the future, possibly with more serious consequences. The Chair further highlighted the importance of regional efforts, particularly through the EAC, the AU and the ICGLR, and welcomed their calls for reconciliation and dialogue. The Chair also commended SESG Djinnit's efforts and fully backed its mandate. He also stressed the importance of remaining in line with both the Constitution and Arusha, which he called two sides of the same medal. He warned about the danger of a "winner takes it all" mentality in Burundi.

Following the two briefers and the Chair, Tanzania, France, Brazil, Belgium, the USA, the African Union and the European Union took the floor. All delegations stressed the importance of dialogue and reconciliation among all Burundians to address the root causes of the current crisis. All commended and supported regional efforts underway to find a lasting solution to the situation, particularly through the EAC, the AU, and the ICGLR. There was also strong support for SESG Djinnit's ongoing dialogue efforts. Configuration members also urged the Government not to conflate the coup plotters and the demonstrators, calling for restraint in its response and respect human rights and public freedoms at all times. Some delegations called on actors outside Burundi not to unnecessarily exacerbate the situation by making statements that would risk undermining regional efforts. The African Union referred to the statement adopted by its Peace and Security Council and noted that it had dispatched two eminent persons, Prime Minister Kodjo (Togo) and Professor Fall (Senegal), to Bujumbura. The European Union noted that it was considering support to the AU's planned human rights observer mission to Burundi.

Some members suggested the Chair should draft a statement of the Configuration to call for dialogue and reconciliation, urge the need to establish conditions conducive for elections and express support to regional efforts and to SESG Djinnit. The statement was issued on Friday evening, 15 May 2015.

The Chair concluded the meeting reaffirming that the Configuration would remain actively seized of the matter and announcing his intention to reconvene the Configuration at short notice whenever necessary.
