

# **Peacebuilding Commission**

## **Informal meeting of the Organizational Committee**

### **7 September 2016**

#### **Chairperson's Summary of the Discussion**

##### **Background**

---

On 7 September 2016, the Peacebuilding Commission convened an informal meeting. The meeting was chaired by H.E. Mr. Macharia Kamau, Chair of the PBC, and addressed the following agenda items: 1) Peacebuilding opportunities in the Mano River Union in the post-Ebola recovery context; 2) PBC Gender Strategy; 3) Other matters.

##### **Peacebuilding opportunities in the Mano River Union in the post-Ebola recovery context**

1. The Chair opened the meeting presenting his report of the PBC visit to West Africa, which took place from 9 to 18 June 2016 and gave the chance to representatives of the Commission to explore the sub-regional peacebuilding opportunities and challenges in West Africa on the road to recovery after the Ebola outbreak. He informed that the delegation, which was composed by Chair, vice-Chairs, Chairs of the country-configurations, representatives of the countries concerned, as well as representatives of DPA, UNDP and PBSO, visited Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea and Senegal. In each country, the delegation met with senior representatives of Governments, civil society (including women and youth), political parties, the diplomatic community, IFIs and the UN Country Teams, UNMIL in Liberia and UNOWAS in Senegal, as well as regional and sub-regional organizations, in particular ECOWAS and the Mano River Union.
2. The Chair briefed on three key messages he delivered to partners during the visit: 1) The need for a more comprehensive and long-term investment in sustaining peace; 2) the primacy of politics to resolve conflicts: in this connection, he noted that there is a need to foster the political and preventive approach to enhance security instead of the use of military engagement; 3) the importance of women and youth participation in sustaining peace efforts. The Chair highlighted the opportunities of integrating the peacebuilding priorities with the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), while underscoring the linkages between the SDGs and national peacebuilding priorities. Finally, he stressed the importance of working with regional and sub-regional organizations in order to tackle cross-border challenges. In this connection, the Chair invited Ms. Hadja Saran Daraba Kaba, Secretary-General of the Mano River Union (MRU), to brief the Commission (via VTC) on the role of MRU in addressing peacebuilding challenges in the sub-region.
3. Ms. Kaba welcomed the opportunity to address the PBC and to strengthen the relationship between MRU and the Commission. She noted that the sub-region faced two decades of conflict, to which the United Nations responded sending peace operations that did not

address the root causes of conflict. She noted that, in view of the large percentage of youth in the sub-region, any discussion on how to address root causes of conflict should involve the youth and educate them to peace.

4. She also noted that capacity building represents an important priority for the sub-region and a key priority for the work of MRU. She invited the PBC and the UN to focus their attention to strengthen the capacities of both governmental and non-governmental actors (in particular women's groups).
5. Member States welcomed the briefings and the work of the Commission with regional organizations. In their interventions, delegations highlighted the following issues:
  - Coherence in the UN system, including the IFIs, must be ensured in order to have a more effective response to peacebuilding challenges. The PBC has an important role to play in this regard.
  - The strength and resilience of national and local institutions is a key requirement. There is a need to look at ways in which the PBC can support.
  - In view of its flexible way of working and inclusive membership, the PBC can play an important role in addressing regional challenges to peacebuilding. The way in which the Commission supported Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone during, and in the aftermath, of the Ebola outbreak represents a good practice.
  - The Peacebuilding Fund is an important instrument to tackle challenges at the regional and sub-regional levels. More predictable resources are required in order to be able to fully utilize the Fund. The Pledging Conference of 21 September represents an important event for Member States to re-commit to the Fund.
6. Mr. Oscar Fernandez-Taranco, Assistant Secretary-General for Peacebuilding Support, thanked the PBC Chair for leading the regional visit and providing another opportunity to put the resolutions on the Peacebuilding Architecture Review into practice. Mr. Fernandez-Taranco briefed Member States on the ways PBSO is supporting the countries of the MRU:
  - In Guinea, PBSO is in the process of initiating an independent external evaluation of the overall portfolio, which will draw lessons from Guinea and guide the reflection of the PBF future engagement. He noted that PBSO is also encouraging a review of the PBC engagement with Guinea: such review would highlight peacebuilding progress made by Guinea and reflect on the Government's views on its future engagement with the PBC. He also noted that the PBC collaboration with regional and sub-regional organizations, such as MRU, will be of great importance.
  - Sierra Leone, PBC and PBF have a long-standing history of coordination and cooperation that can serve as a model. He recalled how the PBC identified key challenges during the drawdown of the political mission in 2014 and how the PBF has been quick to provide the catalytic funding in key areas.
  - In Liberia, as the Security Council prepares to deliberate later this year on the future mandate of the UN presence in Liberia, he confirmed that PBSO stands ready to

support the PBC's engagement with the Council to help translate key peacebuilding priorities into the work of the UN.

- In Cote d'Ivoire, he informed that the PBF allocated USD 12 million in support of the government's efforts to reinforce state capacity to deliver basic social services, reform the security sector and foster national reconciliation, economic empowerment and social cohesion through intra-community dialogue. He also noted how PBSO is working with the Governments of Cote d'Ivoire and Liberia, the peacekeeping missions UNMIL and UNOCI, and the UNCTs in both countries to develop a PBF Cross-border Project that will soon be approved.
7. Referring to the briefing of the Chair, Mr. Fernandez-Taranco said that the visit highlighted a number of good practices, including the need to improve coordination in the UN system, to strengthen partnerships with IFIs, CSOs and regional organizations, and support the role of women and youth in peacebuilding. He also referred to the importance of providing options for increasing, restructuring and better prioritizing funding dedicated to UN peacebuilding activities with a view to ensuring sustainable financing for the consideration of Member States.

### **PBC Gender Strategy**

8. The Commission adopted the Gender Strategy and the Chair thanked all members for their engagement in the process of developing a very comprehensive and action oriented document. He also thanked PBSO and UN Women for their support. The Chair stated that the Strategy was a critical step in guiding the PBC's work on gender-responsive peacebuilding and the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women. He stressed the crucial importance of the integration of gender perspectives into the work of peacebuilding in order to achieve sustainable peace for all. Furthermore, he stated that the implementation of the PBC Gender Strategy was of highest importance and that the first substantive PBC meeting on gender-responsive peacebuilding should be convened before the end of the year. The Chair encouraged those members interested in fostering the PBC's engagement on gender through assuming the role of the PBC Gender Focal Point to approach the Chair and express their interest.
9. Mr. Fernandez-Taranco congratulated the PBC for the development and adoption of the PBC Gender Strategy and thanked the Chair for his strong leadership. He noted the tremendous significance of this step for the PBC as well as the UN system as a whole as the PBC Gender Strategy represents the first internal gender strategy of an intergovernmental body in the UN. He stressed that the adoption of the PBC Gender Strategy was also an important step of further strengthening the synergies between the PBC and the PBF. In that connection, he stated that the third PBF Gender Promotion Initiative was currently underway and noted that the PBF had been at the forefront of ensuring adequate resources for gender-responsive peacebuilding, finally reaching the 15 per cent target in 2015. He assured PBSO's readiness to further assist the PBC in the process of implementation of the PBC Gender Strategy.

10. Ms. Mehrotra, Director of Coordination Division of UN Women welcomed the adoption of the PBC Gender Strategy and thanked all parties involved for their engagement in a process that began in December 2015. She expressed UN Women's readiness in assisting with consultations as well as substantive input in order to make the input on gender as useful and strategic as possible. She stressed the importance of the commitment to increasing women's participation in peacebuilding as a key component of the sustaining peace agenda and stated that the PBC Gender Strategy was a crucial step in this regard.
11. Member States welcomed the adoption of the PBC Gender Strategy and commended the Chair for his leadership and efforts in strengthening the PBC's work on gender-responsive peacebuilding. Delegations stressed that in order to achieve sustainable peace and hold true to the commitment of leaving no one behind, the issue of gender inequality presented a major challenge. Members highlighted the important role of women as actors rather than merely as victims of conflict, and emphasized the need to address issues such as women's political empowerment, inclusive representation in decision-making processes and equal economic rights. They stated that women's participation and their empowerment is an end in itself and that it the focused needed to be on the preventive dimension of gender-responsive peacebuilding rather than the militarization of the Women, Peace and Security agenda. One delegation emphasized the catalytic role that the PBC could play together with civil society, including women's organizations and youth led organizations and highlighted the relevance of engaging men and boys in the process. One delegation stated that the nomination of the PBC Gender Focal Point should be of highest importance as this would strengthen the accountability of the PBC regarding the implementation of the PBC Gender Strategy.

#### **Other matters**

12. Mr. Fernandez-Taranco informed Member States that the World Bank and the United Nations have decided to work on a joint policy study on the role of development in efforts to prevent violent conflict. He noted that the study, conducted by a joint UN-World Bank core team with PBSO, DPA, DPKO and UNDP involved on the UN side, intends to improve the understanding of the potential role of development policies and programs in conflict prevention, and provide recommendations on how development actors can strengthen conflict prevention efforts. He also noted that, while consultations will be held at the regional level, the PBC could also be an important platform to bring the discussion forward. The study could also provide an opportunity for further consultations between the PBC and WB Executive Directors.
13. Mr. Bjorn Gillsater, Special Representative of the World Bank to the UN, welcomed the opportunity to brief the PBC on the study and expressed his interest in seeing stronger relationships between the UN and the Bank.

\*\*\*\*