

Peacebuilding Commission Meeting on Guinea-Bissau

22 February 2022

Chair's Summary

On 22 February, the Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission's Guinea-Bissau Configuration, H.E. Mr. Ronaldo Costa Filho, convened a virtual Ambassadorial-level meeting to provide an opportunity for Member States to receive an update on the political situation in Guinea-Bissau and to hear from UN representatives about the status of the country's peacebuilding priorities and its related funding needs.

In his opening remarks, the Chair recalled the 1 February events in Guinea-Bissau and condemned the attempted coup against President Umaro Sissoco Embaló and his cabinet. He noted that Guinea-Bissau's political stability remains fragile, and warrants continued international support and UN engagement. He encouraged Member States to renew their commitment to the country and to consider additional support to the country's peacebuilding priorities.

Secretary of State for Communities Ms. Salomé dos Santos Allouche, on behalf of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, International Cooperation and Communities of Guinea-Bissau, briefed the Commission on the political situation in country and provided further details about the coup attempt. She informed that the Government had started investigations on the foiled coup attempt to identify the perpetrators and bring them to justice. She also vehemently condemned the attack by a group of people on Capital FM radio in Bissau the following week. The State Secretary acknowledged that ECOWAS would be deploying a force to help stabilize Guinea-Bissau. Regarding development matters, she noted that the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic continued to aggravate the country's economic development. She informed that the government intends to submit its voluntary national review (VNR) of the 2030 commitments to the High-Level Political Forum in July and reaffirmed the government's strong commitment to 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as well as the African Union's Agenda 2063. Regarding the peacebuilding priorities, the State Secretary emphasized the importance of the fight against drug trafficking and the operationalization of transitional justice and thanked the PBC and the PBF for their continued support for the government's priorities.

Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General (DSRSG) for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS) Ms. Giovannie Biha welcomed the timeliness of the meeting and commended the Commission's continuing strong commitment to Guinea-Bissau. Regarding the coup attempt, the DSRSG informed that reactions from political actors regarding the motives behind the attack and the Government response have been divided along partisan lines. She noted that three investigations into the 1 February events were underway, respectively by an inter-ministerial

commission of inquiry headed by the Minister of Interior, the Prosecutor-General as requested by the President, and an operational investigation by the armed forces. She recalled that the attack on Capital FM radio on 7 February as a further sign of insecurity and recalled that the assault took place during an on-air debate criticizing ECOWAS' decision to deploy troops. The DSRSG briefed that, as part of ongoing UN good offices efforts to help stabilize the situation, UNOWAS Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Mahamat Saleh Annadif travelled to Bissau on 11 February, where he met with President Embaló and reiterated the UN's condemnation of the attempted coup and stressed the need for the authorities to carry out transparent investigations to ensure accountability and justice with due process. The SRSRSG also virtually met with PAIGC opposition leader, Domingos Simões Pereira to further understand the 1 February events, and to further assist with dialogue efforts. The DSRSG noted the increasing rupture of dialogue between the MADEM-led majority coalition and the PAIGC-led minority in the National Assembly, emphasizing an urgent need to de-escalate tensions through dialogue. She stressed that, in the absence of genuine dialogue, implementing the identified peacebuilding priorities would be difficult to envisage. She concluded by noting the start of the implementation of the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) (2022-2026), which incorporates the eight identified peacebuilding priorities, and encouraged the generous support of Member States to enable the UN Country Team (UNCT) to continue supporting the peacebuilding and development needs of Guinea-Bissau.

UN Resident Coordinator a.i. Mr. Jean Marie Kipela noted that the events of 1 February were a stark reminder of the challenges to peacebuilding in Guinea-Bissau and called for the redoubling of efforts and the long-term commitment of partners in promoting peace and supporting peacebuilding and development. Regarding the UN transition, he informed that the UN presence in Guinea-Bissau had commenced working with the Government and development partners since May 2019 to ensure that the UN transition and closure of UNIOGBIS were anchored in the UNSCDF and the country's National Development Plan (NDP), and that the UNCT had achieved all the transition milestones. He noted the strong momentum generated by the identification of the eight peacebuilding priorities and the revival of the PBF Joint Steering Committee and appealed to Member States to support the country in marshalling financial resources for the delivery of the peacebuilding priorities. He further encouraged the organization of a donor pledging conference to support the wider development needs of the country. In closing, the Resident Coordinator a.i. applauded the joint efforts of the UNCT, the PBF and development partners in support of peacebuilding in Guinea-Bissau and welcomed greater international support and cooperation.

UNDP Resident Representative Guinea-Bissau, Mr. Tjark Egenhoff briefed that several UN agencies, funds, and programmes in Guinea-Bissau have been implementing peacebuilding programmes which included support to national counterparts, both in government and civil society, in implementing the reforms outlined in the ECOWAS roadmap and Conakry

Agreement of 2016, among other examples. He underscored that to sustain and expand this and other peacebuilding efforts, financial support from the international community was necessary for the next three to five years. He noted that the UNCT prioritized five of the eight peacebuilding priorities, with the sixth priority on gender equity and women's empowerment mainstreamed across, while the remaining priority on the civilian oversight of security and defense reforms, needed to be addressed once conditions were met, emphasizing that ECOWAS had the lead on these reforms. He further, detailed that the UNCT will aim for the following: 1) inclusive and meaningful political dialogue and support to the implementation of the urgent reforms (focusing on the review of the constitution, electoral law and political parties law) outlined in the Stability Pact and the Conakry Agreement, with the added of strengthening of CSOs; 2) support to the government in its fight against drug trafficking and transnational organized crime and their National Strategy Plan, through capacity-building and implementing the National Anti-Corruption Strategy; 3) support the resilience of democratic accountable institutions through strengthening core government functions, local governance structures and community-based cohesion and resilience building mechanisms with the aim of providing for effective service delivery to citizens; 4) the creation of an enabling environment to expand socio-economic opportunities and inclusiveness as well as environmental protection, along with poverty reduction, youth and women economic empowerment and new interventions to promote financial inclusion; and 5) to promote the rule of law and assist in setting up effective human rights protection systems to address impunity and protecting the rights of the citizens, including support to traditional justice systems, and a justice system with a regional reach to boost judicial service delivery. The Resident Representative detailed the financial ask for each of the priorities totaling USD 39.8 million for the next three to five years, including support for the first two priorities which have interventions set to end in mid-2022.

Member States welcomed the briefings and made the following observations:

- They expressed concern about recent security developments and, echoing statements made by the African Union and ECOWAS, condemned the attempted coup d'état as well as the recent attack on media outlets and journalists. They reiterated the Secretary-General's call for the full respect of the country's democratic institutions and welcomed efforts by ECOWAS to ensure stability.
- In view of recent events, they stressed the importance of inclusive and meaningful dialogue for urgently needed reforms as stated in the 2019 Stability Pact and the 2016 Conakry Agreement. They further emphasized the need to reinforce the capacity building and strengthening of national institutions, including those in the fight against drug trafficking and organized crime.
- They expressed support for the peacebuilding priorities endorsed by Guinea-Bissau and noted the need to address the funding gap to support the UNCT to continue implementing

programmes in support of these priorities. They encouraged the exploration of new avenues for funding and stressed the importance of partnerships with international financial institutions (IFIs).

- Several member states highlighted the importance of advancing the Women, Peace, and Security agenda in Guinea-Bissau and encouraged more inclusive policies as well as the continued support for women's economic and political empowerment, including the National Action Plan on WPS. They thanked the UNCT for increasing emphasis on gender equality and women's empowerment and acknowledged the role of PBF-funded projects.
- They underscored the need for the PBC to continue providing a platform for furthering system-wide coherence and coordination between the UN, Guinea-Bissau, and its partners.

In closing remarks, the **UN Assistant Secretary-General (ASG) for Peacebuilding Support Ms. Elizabeth Spehar** emphasized the Commission's demonstrated whole-of-system approach, recalling that the Security Council's resolution on transitions acknowledged the important role the Commission can play in convening stakeholders to assist the longer-term needs of peacebuilding and sustaining peace in UN transition contexts such as Guinea-Bissau. She informed that the Peacebuilding Fund remains fully committed to Guinea-Bissau and is prepared to continue investing in inclusive civic spaces and reforms through dialogue, and in the fight against drugs and organized crime. The ASG encouraged Member States to consider additional financing to the UN country team in support of the country's peacebuilding priorities. In addition, she recognized and expressed deep appreciation for Ms. Luana Natali, the former Head of UNDP's Governance and Rule of Law unit in Bissau, who tragically passed away in January, for her dedication and efforts in the development of the narrative document and financial matrix for the peacebuilding priorities.

In his closing remarks, the Chair reiterated the need for the PBC to continue providing a platform for furthering system-wide coherence and coordination between the UN, Guinea-Bissau, and its partners. He committed to convening meetings of the Configuration this year for more in-depth discussions on the peacebuilding priorities, including the fight against drug trafficking and organized crime, political dialogue and key reforms. He emphasized the importance of inviting civil society and international financial institutions (IFIs) to subsequent meetings. The Chair appealed to Member States to provide support to the UN Country Team to continue implementing fully and effectively the country's peacebuilding priorities. He informed of the possibility of providing advice to the Security Council on the transition in Guinea-Bissau, when they consider the Secretary-General's Report on Transitions in July and looked forward to

collaboration in this regard. He concluded by noting that Guinea-Bissau had endured another threat to institutional stability and encouraged greater support to the country by the Commission.