

**Peacebuilding Commission**  
**Ambassadorial-Level Meeting on Guinea-Bissau**  
**29 November 2022**

**Chair's Summary**

1. On 29 November 2022, the Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission's (PBC) Guinea-Bissau Configuration, H.E. Mr. Ronaldo Costa Filho, convened an Ambassadorial-level meeting to update Member States on the political and socio-economic situation in Guinea-Bissau, and to discuss priority areas and related actions in the areas of peacebuilding and socio-economic development.

2. In his introductory remarks, the Chair informed about the political and electoral developments since his last report to the PBC in June 2022. He noted the political consultations led by the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Decentralization, resulting in a proposal to postpone the legislative elections scheduled for December 2022, to May 2023, which is yet pending on the approval of the President Embaló. He addressed the key gaps on the legislative electoral process, including a timely voter registration process and the lack of financial resources, while highlighting the need to enhance meaningful political participation of women. He noted with concern the deteriorating socio-economic situation in the country, due to the Covid-19 pandemic and disruption of global supply chains, informing of the negative impact on imports and exports and the cost of living. He further noted that strikes in the social sectors affected the delivery of basic services. Given the modest level of development-oriented projects, he encouraged the PBC to mobilize support to foster economic opportunities and employment in Guinea-Bissau, as well as to consider opportunities for South-South and triangular cooperation (SSTC).

3. The Minister of Foreign Affairs, International Cooperation and Communities of Guinea-Bissau, H.E. Ms. Suzi Carla Barbosa, welcomed the continued PBC engagement with Guinea-Bissau and the international community's support for stability and development in the country. She briefed on the country's current priorities, including creating a conducive environment for inclusive, free and fair legislative elections. She informed about the emerging consensus on holding the elections in May 2023, as well as on the on-going dialogue on the legitimacy of the National Electoral Commission (NEC). The Minister informed that the budget for the electoral process was over \$12 million, of which the Government has been able to mobilize \$7 million. She underscored the need for enhancing the participation of women and youth in the process and recognized the need to secure the minimum 36% quota of women parliamentarians in the National Popular Assembly (NPA). Further, she expressed the Government's commitment to creating an enabling socio-economic environment for poverty reduction, and youth and women's economic empowerment, in line with the Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda commitments. In this respect, she welcomed the IMF commitment to release \$36.3 million under the Extended Credit Facility,

which will enhance economic recovery efforts and create budgetary space for sustainable inclusive growth. Lastly, she highlighted the critical role of the PBC to help mobilizing regional and international support to further strengthen the work on the Government's priority areas, such as institutional reform, confidence building, inclusive dialogue, women and youth empowerment, and drug trafficking and transnational organized crime.

4. Officer-in-Charge and DSRSG of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS), Ms. Giovanie Biha, commended the continued engagement of the PBC on Guinea-Bissau. She informed that the Government would start the new 3-month long voter registration on 10 December. However, the stakeholders remain divided on the legality of the NEC, since the mandate expired in April 2022. Therefore, a consensual political solution would be required to capacitate the NEC in the absence of a parliament to appoint a new executive. Thus, she underscored the need to focus on dialogue to address the challenges ahead of the legislative poll. The DSRSG underscored the importance of a peaceful legislative election in terms of advancing vital state reforms, such as the constitutional review, political parties' law, electoral code, and justice, security, and defense reforms. Going forward, she encouraged strengthening assistance to addressing security challenges, such as drug trafficking and to continue liaising with ECOWAS to work with national defense and security institutions. She recommended focusing also on regional and cross-border opportunities to strengthen peace, stability, and development in Guinea-Bissau, and highlighted the important work of the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) in this regard.

5. The UN Resident Coordinator in Guinea-Bissau, Mr. Anthony Ohemeng-Boamah, informed that despite the country's economic recovery, the estimated economic growth of 3.5% is substantially lower than pre-pandemic. He noted the progress on the IMF Extended Credit Facility programme and recommended to implement a reform programme that protects spending on social sectors and maintains service delivery, human capital growth and social cohesion. He informed that Guinea-Bissau undertook its first Voluntary National Review, which showed limited progress across the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). He emphasized that climate and environmental changes continue to undermine human security and social cohesion, as land degradation due to drought and the fall in forage production are adding more pressure on the renewal of natural resources and pastures. Further, he informed that the UN Cooperation Framework—the primary instrument for supporting the government-led national development priorities—focuses on: 1) transformational and inclusive governance; 2) structural economic transformation and inclusive green and resilient growth; and 3) human capital development. He emphasized that the PBF-funded interventions reinforce complementarity and will soon consist of ten projects with a budget of \$22,865,154, and will play a key role in preventing conflicts, and increasing citizen participation. Lastly, he underscored the interlinkages between the fight against drug trafficking, security sector reform and a strong good governance regime in reinforcing peace and preventing violence. He welcomed the PBC's engagement and support to these strategic areas as well as to socio-economic development.

6. Representative of Voz Di Paz, Ms. Santa Lima, briefed about the “No Ianda Djuntu” project, which was funded by the PBF. She informed that the project, which ended in August 2022, strengthened the role of youth in decision-making and their capacities to influence the democratic development of the country through an intergenerational approach. The project contributed to strengthening institutional collaboration between youth organizations and government institutions, as well as to improving the technical, advocacy, and facilitation skills of youth. Ms. Lima noted that the project created opportunities for youth to participate in the social and political life in Guinea-Bissau including by creating participation and advocacy opportunities for youth, enhancing the relationship between youth and representatives of traditional and formal institutions through local level dialogue, and encouraging debate at national level regarding the experience of young leaders. As a result, Ms. Lima informed, the project fostered the inclusion of youth in civic spaces and enhanced awareness of youth as change agents.

7. Member States welcomed the briefings and made the following observations:

- They commended the commitment of the President and the Government of Guinea-Bissau to organize free, fair, transparent, and inclusive legislative elections and welcomed the consultative political dialogue with the stakeholders. They recommended to further enhance inclusive political dialogue to create a conducive environment for the elections, as well as to solve the issues regarding the legitimacy of the NEC. They also recommended to develop a clear timeline for the legislative elections and noted the funding shortfall with concern.
- They underlined the importance of addressing root causes of peacebuilding challenges and acknowledged the UN Cooperation Framework as crucial in this regard. They emphasized the need for institutional and constitutional reforms, as well as enhancing national capacities to fight drug trafficking and transnational organized crime.
- They expressed concern over the human rights situation and stressed the need to prioritize strengthening the Rule of Law in the country, as an essential foundation to sustainable development and the full respect of human rights.
- They emphasized the importance of the ECOWAS Roadmap and the 2016 Conakry Agreement and noted the increased opportunities for regional support and partnerships, including with ECOWAS and the African Development Bank.
- They expressed concern regarding the socio-economic situation in the country and emphasized the need for economic diversification, poverty reduction, and social sector development, as well as to provide socio-economic opportunities especially for women and youth. Further, they noted the progress regarding the IMF Extended Credit Facility

arrangement with Guinea-Bissau and underlined the importance of further IFI engagement and support.

- They highlighted the importance of meaningful inclusion of women and youth in political processes and structures. In this regard, they welcomed the 36% quota for women in the National People's Assembly but noted the underrepresentation despite the quota. They encouraged the implementation of institutional and policy reforms to remove structural barriers of equal participation and representation.
- They stressed the need for sustainable, adequate, and predictable financing for peacebuilding and commended the PBF's support to Guinea-Bissau as valuable and catalytic.

8. In her closing remarks, Minister Barbosa thanked Member States for the support, and informed of current partnerships in support of peace and development in the country. She reiterated the commitment for inclusive and democratic elections, and noted the need to further develop infrastructure, transportation, and communications in view of regional integration. DSRSB Biha emphasized the importance of enhanced support to peaceful, transparent, and inclusive legislative elections, and acknowledged the commitment of UNOWAS to engage with all stakeholders to ensure peace and stability for sustainable development in Guinea-Bissau. The Resident Coordinator thanked Member States for the support and noted the importance of strengthening innovative and transformative programs in sustaining peace particularly in relation to socio-economic development.

9. In concluding remarks, Director and Deputy Head of the UN Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO), Ms. Awa Dabo, welcomed the PBC's strong engagement with Guinea-Bissau and commended the enhanced attention and support as the country advances towards national legislative elections amidst a challenging socio-economic situation. She recalled the PBC's commitment to promoting SSTC in addressing common challenges and creating space for a variety of stakeholders to seek opportunities that contribute to building peace and development. In this regard, she encouraged the PBC to enhance cooperation and coordination, sharing lessons learned, good practices and expertise, and to promote successful innovative solutions for peace and development. Further, she underscored the crucial need to scale up support for Bissau-Guinean women and youth and their meaningful participation in political processes and dialogue and called upon Member States and partners to support interventions that strengthen their participation and leadership in peacebuilding and governance. She highlighted that Guinea-Bissau is a priority country for the PBF, and informed that the PBF has supported initiatives in Guinea-Bissau since 2007 on youth and women's empowerment, inclusive land management, political stabilization, institutional reforms, and strengthening the national response to combatting drug trafficking and transnational organized crime. Looking forward, she reiterated the PBF's commitment to exploring potential support to other peacebuilding needs.

10. In his closing remarks, the Chair of the Guinea-Bissau Configuration underlined the need to enhance inclusive political dialogue to support sustaining peace. He also noted Guinea-Bissau's economic vulnerabilities, and emphasized the imperative to promote economic diversification, as well as inclusive economic empowerment and employment of women and youth. Further, he underlined the urgent need for justice, institutional, and security sector reforms. The Chair closed the meeting by emphasizing the value of regional partnerships in building durable peace, and in this regard welcomed the ongoing cooperation with ECOWAS.