

28 January 2010

To : Members of the PBC - Burundi Configuration

**Informal meeting of the Country Specific
Configuration of the PBC on Burundi
New York, 25 January 2010, 10.10-11.05 - Conference
Room 4**

Chair's summary

On Monday, 25 January 2010, from 10:10 to 11:05 am, in the Conference Room 4, an informal meeting of the Country Specific Configuration of the PBC on Burundi was chaired by H.E. Mr. Peter Maurer, Chairperson of the PBC Country-Specific Configuration of Burundi. The purpose of the meeting was to inform members on a change in the chairmanship of the PBC Country-Specific Configuration of Burundi to be expected in the coming months, to provide an update on the preparation of the 2010 elections and to initiate the preparation of the upcoming PBC field visit to Burundi

1. Transition

The Chair informed members of the Configuration that he will be leaving New York and his functions as Chair following his appointment to a new position by the Swiss Government. He assured members that he will see to a smooth transition in the chairmanship. Consultations with the government of Burundi are under way. If there is a preference for a Swiss continuation, and if no other member expresses an interest in the chair, the successor of Ambassador Maurer as Permanent Representative of Switzerland is ready to present his candidacy for the office. Members interested in assuming the chair of the Burundi Configuration should express their interest as soon as possible.

2. Update on elections and other recent developments

An update was provided by the Delegate of the Government of Burundi, complemented by the representatives of the

Department of Political Affairs, Africa I and Electoral Assistance Division.

They both highlighted significant progress achieved towards successful elections in 2010. The electoral calendar is decreed as follows: elections for the communal councils will take place on 21 May; presidential elections on 28 June; legislative elections on 23 July; senatorial elections on 28 July; and elections "collinaires" [representatives for the "hillside" communities] on 7 September 2010.

International partners have contributed significantly to the financial resources required for holding the elections. However, there remains a gap of USD 13 Million to cover the budget of the elections.

Other challenges highlighted by the presentations are the security implications of small arms among the civilian population and the demobilized and the activities of youth groups affiliated with political parties in the electoral process.

The delegate of Burundi recalled the need to keep in mind the economic recovery as the other priority that needs sustained attention by the Peacebuilding Commission in parallel to support to the elections.

On the request made by the Government of Burundi asking the Secretary-General to replace the replacement of his Executive Representative in Burundi, participants were informed that that the Secretary-General is making efforts to appoint a new ERSG as swiftly as possible.

3. PBC visit to Burundi

The Delegate of Burundi informed members of the Configuration that the initial dates for the field visit were conflicting with the African Union Summit and that his Government has agreed with the new dates, 25-28 February 2010.

For planning purposes, the Chair suggested the period of 23 February - 01 March, including the travel days. He welcomed the enthusiasm of members to join him for this visit. He reminded the logistical and protocol constraints limiting the size of the delegation to one representative

from each regional group. He encouraged the Chairs of the Regional Groups to facilitate the selection of their representative.

4. Statements by members of the Configuration

The European Union, Benin, Belgium, the United Kingdom, Netherlands, the United States of America, Uganda, France, South Africa and Japan took the floor.

They all congratulated Ambassador Peter Maurer for his leadership and successful achievements as Chair of the Burundi Configuration of the Peacebuilding and wished him success in his new assignment. Belgium recommended that Switzerland should continue to chair the Burundi Configuration.

All speakers reaffirmed their support to the success of the 2010 elections and the need to remain vigilant with related challenges and risks. Most insisted on dialogue and trust as key factors for the success of the elections. Many expressed regrets about the decision of the Government of Burundi to request the replacement of the Executive Representative of the Secretary-General at a critical juncture, and they expressed a wish for the appointment of a new ERSG as soon as possible. Others insisted on the need to respect national sovereignty and ownership and to keep the medium and long term goals of the Burundi peacebuilding process in mind.
