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30 October 2019

Mr. President,

I am writing in my capacity as Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) Guinea-Bissau Configuration. Recalling the advisory role of the PBC to the Security Council, I would like to share some observations from my visit to Guinea-Bissau from 22 to 24 October.

The objective of my visit was to explore how the Peacebuilding Commission could support the country in implementing its peacebuilding and development priorities as well as reforms outlined in the Conakry Agreement in the post electoral period.

During my visit, I met H.E. Mr. José Mário Vaz, President of Guinea-Bissau; H.E. Mr. Aristide Gomes, Prime Minister; H.E. Mr. Cipriano Cassamá, President of the People's National Assembly; H.E. Mr. Rui Nené, Acting President of the of the Supreme Court; Ministers with responsibilities in the areas of foreign affairs; internal affairs; territorial administration and electoral management; and human rights; representatives of central authorities, such as the National Commission for Elections (CNE) and the Technical Office for Electoral Support (GTAPE); the declared candidates for the upcoming presidential election; and representatives of political parties and civil society, including women and youth networks for peace and security, and the Organization Commission of the National Conference (OCNC).

In my interactions with authorities, I encouraged the holding of a free, fair, credible, transparent and peaceful presidential election on 24 November, so that the country can move forward with its peacebuilding agenda, and particularly with its efforts to consolidate democracy and strengthen its institutions. Government and civil society representatives stressed the need for continuous attention to Guinea-Bissau's national development agenda and the implementation of reforms outlined in the Conakry Agreement. They specifically requested continuous support for the implementation of the development programs identified in the government's 2015-2025 strategic development plan (Terra Ranka).

H.E. Mr. Jerry Matthews Matjila
President of the Security Council
New York

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Most interlocutors acknowledged the continuous engagement of the Peacebuilding Commission and the catalytic contributions of the Peacebuilding Fund in Guinea-Bissau, particularly in view of the drawdown of UNIOGBIS, and expressed appreciation for ongoing initiatives that aim to empower women and youth, especially infostering their participation in political advocacy and decision-making, as well as in peacebuilding and sustaining peace efforts.

These discussions occurred against the background of palpable tensions among political stakeholders in Guinea-Bissau. Upon my return from the visit, I was informed of President Vaz' dismissal of Prime Minister Gomes' government, less than a month before the expected election. In view of the upcoming elections I urge the political actors of Guinea-Bissau to show utmost restraint, to refrain from all forms of violence or incitement to hatred, and to resort to dialogue as the only means of resolving their differences and preserving peace and stability in their country, as well as to carry on with the preparations for the presidential election as scheduled to take place on 24 November.

The PBC Guinea-Bissau Configuration stands ready to continue serving as a platform for the mobilization of international support for the country's peacebuilding priorities, including for national dialogue, key institutional reforms and the reconciliation agenda. However, this mobilization cannot be successful unless and until there is a peaceful transition of power. The PBC takes note of the ECOWAS statement of 29 October on Guinea-Bissau. In this regard, the PBC would like to echo regional and international calls on Guinea-Bissau's political stakeholders to sustain the commitments assumed at the regional level and to proceed with the holding of elections on 24 November as previously agreed.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate that the PBC is determined to continue to support the international community, in consultation with the government, to consider ways to strengthen national institutional capacities to deliver peacebuilding and development objectives in Guinea-Bissau.


P/ Mauro Vieira
Chair
Peacebuilding Commission Guinea-Bissau
Configuration