



SECURITY COUNCIL

BRIEFING ON THE UNITED NATIONS INTEGRATED OFFICE IN GUINEA-BISSAU

5 February 2013

**Statement by
H. E. Ambassador Maria Luiza Ribeiro Viotti
Permanent Representative of Brazil to the United Nations**

**Chair of the Guinea-Bissau Configuration
of the Peacebuilding Commission**

(check against delivery)

Mr. President,

I thank you for convening this briefing and for inviting me to brief the Security Council in my capacity as Chair of the Guinea-Bissau Configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission.

[I welcome the Permanent Representative of Mozambique and Chair of the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries (CPLP), Ambassador António Gumende; the Permanent Representative of Côte d'Ivoire and Chair of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Ambassador Youssoufou Bamba; the Permanent Observer of the African

Union to the United Nations, Tété António; and the Permanent Representative of Guinea-Bissau, Ambassador João Soares da Gama.]

I also thank Assistant-Secretary-General Tayé-Brook Zerihoun for his briefing today. I take this opportunity to convey through him our appreciation for the excellent work carried out by the outgoing Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Guinea-Bissau, Mr. Joseph Mutaboba. I wish also to express our satisfaction at the nomination of Mr. José Ramos-Horta as SRSG for Guinea-Bissau. His wisdom, experience and political stature are invaluable assets for the work of the United Nations on the ground at this critical juncture. We look forward to a close cooperation with Mr. José Ramos-Horta.

Mr. President,

Almost ten months on from the coup d'État of 12 April, Guinea-Bissau continues to face significant challenges, which need to be addressed in 2013. Although it is the primary responsibility of Guinea-Bissau's political leaders and people to demonstrate the will to overcome the current situation and to move towards a rapid and sustainable return to constitutional order, the country will continue to need the assistance of the United Nations, including

the Peacebuilding Commission, in close coordination with Guinea-Bissau's international partners, to further those goals. Holding free, fair and transparent presidential and legislative elections in a timely manner and promoting the necessary reforms to sustain stability and spur development are urgent tasks that will require international support.

National ownership and mutual accountability are key principles for any country's engagement with the Peacebuilding Commission. Unfortunately, the 12 April coup d'État in Bissau has affected the work the PBC was carrying out. The progress that had been made on several fronts was interrupted. The absence of consensual national counterparts with whom the Configuration could interact on a regular basis has limited the Commission's work.

These difficulties notwithstanding, the Guinea-Bissau Configuration continues to follow closely the situation in the country. I have striven to facilitate dialogue among the main international partners, in particular ECOWAS and the CPLP, to enable concerted action in addressing the challenges in Guinea-Bissau. At the request of the Permanent Mission of Guinea-Bissau, a meeting of the Configuration took place on the margins of

the General Assembly, on 27 September, during which interim President Raimundo Pereira and Prime Minister Carlos Gomes Júnior briefed the Configuration on developments in Guinea-Bissau.

A further meeting of the Configuration is being planned for the second half of February in order to receive briefings on the UN-AU-ECOWAS-CPLP-EU joint assessment mission to Bissau in December 2012.

Mr. President,

The continued lack of civilian control over the military, drug trafficking, impunity, economic deterioration, and human rights violations are daunting challenges Guinea-Bissau currently faces. In the past few weeks, steps have been taken by the political parties to revise the Transitional Political Pact and the Political Agreement signed last May, and draft a new transitional regime pact, which would serve as the new framework for the return to constitutional order. Those are developments that may signal movement in a positive direction.

The UN-AU-ECOWAS-CPLP-EU joint assessment mission to Bissau last December was a welcome initiative. Those five partners also met on 26

January in Adis Ababa on the margins of the AU Summit to discuss the situation in Guinea-Bissau and the way forward. We hope such meetings will enable Guinea-Bissau's main international partners to get together on a common platform in order to help Guinea-Bissau move swiftly towards the restoration of constitutional order.

We sincerely hope that the recent dialogue among national stakeholders may lead to a more inclusive transitional arrangement. As it has been stated before, this arrangement should be inclusive and acceptable to all parties concerned in order to lead the country back to constitutional order, thus enabling the reengagement of international partners with Guinea-Bissau.

Finally, the appointment of Mr. José Ramos-Horta as Special Representative of the Secretary-General augurs well and brings new impetus to our common efforts to help Guinea-Bissau overcome the current crisis. I had the chance to exchange views with Mr. Ramos-Horta on the situation in Guinea-Bissau a few weeks ago. The Configuration looks forward to a productive cooperation and close interaction with him in the weeks and months to come.

Mr. President,

Finding a path out of the crisis in Guinea-Bissau requires that all national stakeholders solve their disputes through dialogue. National reconciliation has to take root domestically. Only then, can the international community fully and effectively reengage, confident that it is supporting a nationally owned and inclusive process. The UN, the PBC and the wider international community can only play a supporting role. The lead must come from legitimate authorities representing the Bissau-Guinean people as a whole.

But even then, huge challenges will remain and the road to sustainable peace and development will be arduous. The Guinea-Bissau Configuration remains committed to help the country on this path, with a view to achieving political stability, consolidating peace and furthering its social and economic development.

I thank you.