

Peacebuilding Commission Meeting on Guinea-Bissau

29 June 2021

Chair's Summary

- On 29 June, the Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission's Guinea-Bissau Configuration, H.E. Mr. Ronaldo Costa Filho, convened a virtual Ambassadorial-level meeting to provide the Government of Guinea-Bissau, represented by its Minister of Foreign Affairs, International Cooperation and Commissions, H.E. Ms. Suzi Barbosa, the opportunity to brief PBC Member States on the government's plans and efforts to improve the socio-economic welfare of its citizens, as well as on the needs for additional support.
- In his opening remarks, the Chair reiterated the importance of the PBC's work in support of national priorities and noted that Guinea-Bissau is entering a new phase in which its focus will be the implementation of a set of development objectives as detailed in the country's Strategy for Development, Employment and Industrial Promotion 2020-2024 and in its National Development Plan 2020-2023. He underscored that the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated pre-existing vulnerabilities in countries all over the world and informed that, in this context, the government of Guinea-Bissau aims to transform this crisis into an opportunity to restructure its economic profile and advance the socio-economic welfare of its citizens. The Chair offered the PBC's cooperation and support to Guinea-Bissau in its path towards socio-economic development.
- H.E. Ms. Suzi Barboza thanked the PBC for the attention given to Guinea-Bissau over the years, especially during times of political and institutional crises. She recalled the political volatility of the past five years and noted that Guinea-Bissau now has a legitimate and inclusive government which has allowed for the development and adoption of a government programme and State budget. She highlighted the government's special attention given to State reforms, the rule of law, and the fight against corruption and drug trafficking. She made reference to the challenges in consolidating peace and good governance, underscoring the importance of the continued assistance of international partners. She informed that on 8 June, the Joint Steering Committee for the UN Peacebuilding Fund was re-established with the Minister and the UN Resident Coordinator as Co-Chairs. Ensuring alignment with the country's priorities, the Minister highlighted a number of investment areas for support, namely civil society and the media; security sector reform; and women's and youth participation and empowerment. Regarding the latter, the Minister stressed the women's community radio network as an important tool for women's participation in political dialogue and conflict resolution at the local and regional levels and emphasized that supporting women's livelihood projects was an investment in social cohesion and stability.

- The Minister recalled the negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on Bissau-Guineans, especially women, and underlined that the government is committed to improving the socio-economic welfare of its citizens. She highlighted nine priorities from the government's Strategy for Development, Employment and Industrial Promotion 2020-2024, or *Hora Tchiga*, namely: strengthening the government's capacity in the institutions of justice, defense, and security, and working towards their modernization; creating an enabling environment to expand socio-economic opportunities through technical and financial assistance to the government to ensure macro-economic stability, including the implementation of fiscal policy and accountability; strengthening the government's capacity to combat drug trafficking and organized crime; strengthening the judicial capacity and human rights system to fight against impunity and promote and protect human rights; supporting positive change in civil-military relations through technical assistance to the defense and security forces; promoting the full, meaningful and effective participation and representation of women at all levels; supporting the electoral system process and the creation of an identity data system; prioritizing peacebuilding; and modernizing and digitizing public administration records. She concluded by informing that these priorities were in alignment with Africa's Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals, in particular SDG 16.

- Member States welcomed the briefing by the Minister and made the following observations:
 - They commended the Government efforts to improve the socio-economic welfare of its citizens and welcomed the Strategy for Development, Employment and Industrial Promotion 2020-2024 or *Hora Tchiga* and the National Development Plan 2020-2023.

 - They expressed support for the successful implementation of the *Hora Tchiga* recognizing the necessity of strategic partnerships between Guinea-Bissau, the PBC, regional bodies and international financial institutions as well as international support aligned with the *Hora Tchiga*.

 - They underscored the need for the PBC to continue providing a platform for futhering system-wide coherence between the UN, Guinea-Bissau and its partners.

 - They welcomed Guinea-Bissau's readiness to implement the reforms' agenda as outlined in the ECOWAS Roadmap and Conakry Agreement, with particular reference to the reform of the Constitution and the reform of the defense and security sectors, with a view to creating a conducive environment for economic development. They also noted the importance of human rights and freedom of speech, and social cohesion for sustainable development.

- They expressed concern about the socio-economic challenges exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on women and youth. In this regard, they recalled the important investments of the PBF and stressed the importance of the PBC in mobilizing additional resources and support for women and youth.