

**Peacebuilding Commission
Ambassadorial-Level Meeting on Burundi
30 November 2022**

Chair's summary

1. On 30 November 2022, the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) held an Ambassadorial-level meeting on Burundi chaired by H.E. Ms. Pascale Baeriswyl, Chair of the PBC Burundi Configuration. The purpose of the meeting was to conclude Burundi's engagement with the PBC in the framework of a country-specific configuration and mark its transition to more flexible engagement. Additionally, the meeting provided an opportunity for Burundi to highlight efforts to advance women's empowerment and for the PBC to explore additional priorities for future cooperation between Burundi and the international community.
2. In her opening remarks, the Chair commended the efforts of the Burundian people in consolidating and building upon the country's peace gains. She noted that Burundi was one of the first countries to benefit from PBC accompaniment and that since 2006, the PBC has served as a platform to present its progress and plans to bilateral and multilateral partners. She recalled that the PBC brought together various stakeholders, including the UN, regional actors, IFIs, parliamentary representatives and civil society members. and noted the milestones of the PBC's engagement, including the support of the 2020 electoral process, mobilization of partners around socio-economic challenges, and accompaniment of the first work of Burundi's Independent National Commission on Human Rights. Recognizing Burundi's progress in areas such as civil liberties and political rights, she underscored how the Configuration contributed to integrating the perspectives of various national stakeholders, including political opponents and civil society. The Chair announced the closure of the Burundi configuration by the end of 2022 but encouraged the Commission and Burundi to continue their exchange on an integrated approach to peacebuilding. She invited the members of the Commission to provide input on possible forms of future cooperation and reiterated the importance of women's empowerment in this regard.
3. The Permanent Representative of Burundi to the United Nations, H.E. Mr. Zéphyrin Maniratanga thanked the Commission for positively contributing to Burundi's process of socio-economic development throughout the years and pointed to the country's progress resulting from the government's new domestic and foreign policy. He underlined the country's advances in capitalizing peace and working towards democracy despite the socio-economic challenges. He highlighted the government's policy that has facilitated the return of refugees and political opponents to Burundi and emphasized the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission to support national dialogue and reconciliation. The Ambassador further informed about the government's commitment to normalize and

consolidate cooperative relations with its bilateral and multilateral partners, facilitated by the lifting of sanctions against Burundi and its withdrawal from the UN Security Council agenda, among others. He stressed the government's efforts to protect and promote human rights, fight against impunity and corruption, and facilitate the work of national mechanisms for protecting human rights, especially the Independent Human Rights Commission. Concerning the country's socio-economic progress, he noted the adoption of a National Development Plan by the government constituting the country's main guideline for sustainable development in 2030. With regard to future cooperation between the PBC and Burundi, he stressed the Burundian government's aim to focus engagement on economic recovery guided by the government's six priority areas and environmental protection.

4. The United Nations Resident Coordinator in Burundi, Mr. Damien Mama, noted how Burundi has benefited from sustained support by Peacebuilding Fund throughout the years of Burundi's engagement with the PBC, and also thanked Member States for investing in the country. He referred to Burundi's goal of becoming an emerging country by 2040 and stressed that the country can only achieve its development goals if there is lasting peace and stability. Mr. Mama announced the signing of the new UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (2023-2027) highlighting the ongoing partnership between Burundi and the UN and the continued support of the UN system to work together with Burundi in achieving its development goals outlined in the country's National Development Plan (2018-2027) and the SDGs. Mr. Mama presented the five priorities of the Cooperation Framework, namely the transformation of the food system, inclusive economic growth, social protection for the most vulnerable, access to social services for the most vulnerable, and resilience against human made or natural shocks. In relation to natural disasters, he underlined that Burundi faces consequences of climate change without being a major greenhouse admitter. Stressing the need for more support to achieve the country's development goals ambitions, he concluded by urging the Member States to continue to support Burundi after the close of the configuration.
5. The President of the Burundian Red Cross, Ms. Christine Ntahe, recalled how the international community has accompanied Burundi from its immediate post-conflict phase until now, and recognized that these efforts contributed to create a more tolerant society that is better informed about the principles of governance and civic political participation, and sensitive to the "gender" dimension in all aspects of life. She stressed the important, yet little-known role women played in rebuilding Burundi's social fabric after the civil war and highlighted the contributions of Burundian women, especially at the grassroots level, in strengthening the country's governance and economic development. She highlighted that women's economic support needs to be accompanied by further promotion of women's access to political decision-making positions and civic engagement. Ms. Ntahe shared that the Burundian Red Cross is implementing a Strategic Plan (2022-2026) that comprises four programmatic areas of intervention, including one whose activities target to strengthen social cohesion and peaceful coexistence within communities by creating peaceful conflict

management centers and organizing sports and cultural activities for youth around the theme of peace and social cohesion. In closing, Ms. Ntahe reiterated her call to the PBC to support women's grassroots initiatives in Burundi.

6. The Administrator Director-General of the Women's Investment and Development Bank (BIDF) in Burundi, Ms. Marie Salomé Ndashyamba, informed that the BIDF was established by the Burundian government in March 2022 to strengthen women's economic empowerment and contribute to Burundi's sustainable economic development through financing economic projects initiated by women in cooperatives, associations, businesses or as individuals. She reported that the BIDF has opened more than 1200 accounts, covering more than 9200 women in cooperatives and around 800 individual women and has provided more than FBU 1.5 million in loans. She raised existing challenges, such as accessibility in rural areas and informed of BIDF plans to become more decentralized. She reiterated that through the BIDF, the Burundian government provides opportunities for women to participate and develop economically, contributing to the economic development of their families and the country.
7. Dr. Éline Niyonzima, representing "Femmes Lumières de l'Agro-Business" – a cooperative of three women-led companies – informed of the cooperative's agricultural and animal husbandry activities and described how the cooperative has benefitted from a BIDF loan. Dr. Niyonzima noted that the business aims to improve the quality and resilience of products through innovation. She reported that the cooperative faced various difficulties in the past, including insufficient financial resources to feed the livestock and pay the staff, until they received a loan from the BIDF in August 2022. Dr. Niyonzima presented a ten-year development plan that will expand the agricultural activities of the cooperation, including the creation of a meat processing unit, that will contribute to the country's development by exporting pork products. She stressed the importance of robust partnerships with different stakeholders for realizing the projects and developing the company, including state partners such as Burundian banks like the BIDF, and international financial banks and donors.
8. The members of the Commission welcomed the briefings and made the following observations:
 - They congratulated Burundi for its achievements on the country's path to peace, stability and development. Member States applauded Burundi's regional engagement, including its leadership role as Chair of the East African Community and its assistance to other conflict-affected countries through the deployment of peacekeeping troops.
 - The Member States noted the PBC's 16-year accompaniment guided by national ownership and thanked Switzerland and Norway for chairing the Configuration in a trust-based, long-term partnership. They underscored the importance of PBF funding in supporting peacebuilding efforts in Burundi and pointed to the need for continued

support to the country's peacebuilding priorities, including support to women and youth.

- Acknowledging Burundi's accomplishments during the last years, they supported the transition to a flexible PBC engagement and appealed to the international community to continue supporting Burundi in its efforts to capitalize on peace and stability and achieve the country's socio-economic priorities. Some Member States emphasized the importance of South-South and Triangular Cooperation in this context.
 - They emphasized the need for a long-term, holistic, and coordinated approach to support Burundi's national development efforts, highlighting the area of women's and youth empowerment. Member States encouraged Burundi to continue to use the PBC platform in the future, including to share its lessons learned and good practices.
9. UN Assistant Secretary-General for Peacebuilding Support, Ms. Elizabeth Spehar, congratulated Burundi for its achievements and welcomed the mutual interest of Burundi and the Commission to further engage and work together on the country's socio-economic development. She highlighted the country's efforts to promote youth and women's empowerment and encouraged Burundi to continue investing in women's leadership and their meaningful political participation at all levels. She recalled that since 2006, the PBF has invested USD 93 million in Burundi's peacebuilding efforts and informed that Burundi remains eligible for PBF funding for additional five years. She further stressed the need for increased cross-border investments in the Great Lakes Region to effectively address the multifaceted regional challenges. Finally, Ms. Spehar highlighted the PBC as a platform for sharing experiences and lessons learned and encouraged Burundi to leverage opportunities for South-South and Triangular Cooperation and peer-to-peer exchange in this regard.
10. In her closing remarks, the Chair of the Burundi Configuration, H.E. Ms. Pascale Baeriswyl, thanked all the briefers and welcomed the Commission's commitment to build lasting peace in Burundi. She encouraged the Commission and Burundi to pursue their cooperation on issues of sustainable peace and development in Burundi and emphasized the area of women's empowerment. In view of Switzerland's upcoming membership in the Security Council, the Chair mentioned that Switzerland will leverage the experiences of the partnership to strengthen ties of cooperation between the Security Council and the Commission. She concluded by underscoring the importance of continued commitment to ensure the consolidation of peace in Burundi.