

## **Briefing by the Chair of the Liberia Configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission**

### *Meeting of the Security Council on Liberia*

September 11, 2012

Mr. President, thank you for inviting me to contribute to the Council's deliberations today on Liberia. I am pleased to be here together with SRSO Landgren and I appreciate all the support the SRSO and UNMIL have given me in my work. I appreciate the guidance given by the President of the Council for today's briefing, and I will focus my remarks on the three issues; the political agenda; UNMIL transition; and Liberian National Police; and in particular how PBC will engage and provide support on those issues.

#### **First, on moving forward the political agenda.**

Coherent and inclusive national reconciliation should be at the center of the Liberian peace process. This is a core peace building priority in the Statement of Mutual Commitments (the SMC), which is the compact between the PBC and the Government of Liberia. Part of this process entails mending relations between the State and society, between communities, and between individuals. This includes reformulating the Liberian historical narrative including giving recognition to past persecution, discrimination and marginalization. Reconciliation is also linked to processes of constitutional review, decentralization and electoral reform, all essential parts of the broader peace building process in Liberia. These are transformative changes and a critical factor for success will be the inclusivity of the processes.

One of the main challenges to the reconciliation process so far has been to ensure a comprehensive and coordinated approach. Since last year, the PBC has urged national actors to develop a road map on reconciliation. This roadmap has now been developed. The validation process has been initiated and, if inclusive, it will generate national ownership for the Road Map.

Later this month, PBC will engage in discussions with Internal Affairs Minister Nelson, who is responsible for coordinating the reconciliation and decentralization processes. It is my ambition to keep the PBC Configuration informed and engaged in a regular dialogue. Maintaining political will is essential and in this respect, the SMC serves as a useful accountability tool.

Also needed are financial resources, in addition to the Liberian Government's allocation of 5 million USD. We have a responsibility in this respect. PBC pushed for the Roadmap and we now need to consider ways to support its implementation, financially as well as with in-kind resources that might be required.

A vibrant civil society acts as an important source for civic engagement and it will also be vital to national ownership of reconciliation. Yet, in Liberia these actors are constrained by capacity limitations. We need to find ways to encourage their work and strengthen civil society including by building their core capacities. The PBC will maintain focus on this issue and I will continue to meet with representatives of civil society during my visits.

Throughout, the PBC will liaise closely with the SRSG to ensure that our efforts are fully coherent with those of the UN. UNMIL, with support of the UN Country Team, has a vital role to play in reconciliation. The PBC fully supports the suggestion that this should be reflected in UNMIL's mandate.

**On the second issue: PBC support to UNMIL and the Liberian government to prepare for the transition.**

Strengthening rule of law and security sector reform are key in this context and are also priorities for the PBC. While there has been progress, there are still some significant capacity gaps, as regards justice actors, the security actors and in particular the LNP. Oversight and accountability mechanisms also need to be firmly established.

As part of the SMC, the Liberian Government is committed to increase the budget for justice and security. PBC will continue to watch this as part of our ongoing dialogue on the SMC. We will also benefit from the Public Expenditure Review carried out by the World Bank and the UN. This Review offers advice on what costs the Government needs to assume and how to gradually incorporate transition costs into the national budget. Later this week, I will have an opportunity to discuss the follow up to this review with the World Bank, as well as funding directed to critical peace building priorities within the international envelop for development.

The Review also shows a considerable funding gap over the next several years. As the transition advances, the international community must step up its efforts to support a smooth transition. The message should be that the UN, the IFIs and the bilateral partners will continue to engage and support Liberia. The UN Country Team, I am told, will be stepping up its efforts in the coming UNDAF. UNICEF will be adding extra resources to its country program and I encourage other UN agencies to do the same. As Chair, I will work with Configuration members to enhance our efforts.

Key to resource mobilization is a coordinated approach based on government priorities. The Justice and Security Board and its annual Work Plan offer a comprehensive and coordinated basis, which is also aligned with the work of the PBC, the Liberia Peacebuilding Program and the

SMC. But efforts must be made to enhance the functioning of the Trust Fund for Justice and Security. Bilateral partners are presently working closely with UNDP to this end. A similar set up is being discussed for support to reconciliation activities, and it must work without flaws and delays.

A key project already under way is the Regional Justice and Security Hubs. The Hubs should facilitate the establishment of an effective and accountable State presence throughout the country. This will also contribute to closing gaps and avoiding any appearance of a vacuum. However, delays in the construction of the first Hub, generated valid questions about its viability. The response can best be provided through action on the ground, by completing the establishment of the Hub and showing its impact. As we begin to assess the impact on the surrounding communities, and if security is enhanced and access to justice increased, the PBC will have a persuasive presentation for resource mobilization for the next Hubs.

There are several lessons that have already been identified. The UN system must be able to more effectively coordinate its efforts amongst themselves as well as with the Government. Time frames must be adhered to. The design of the Hubs needs to be adjusted according to the circumstances of each region. If the lessons are effectively applied, it should be possible to complete the next four Hubs within tight time frames. The PBC will continue to monitor the implementation of the Hub, and we will continue to draw attention to shortcomings when necessary.

### **The third point; on PBC support for capacity building of the Liberian National Police.**

I have already touched upon some aspects of police but would like to add the following.

After a request by the President of Liberia, the PBC facilitated consultations on how to strengthen and coordinate training support to LNP. The outcome was an understanding that focus should continue on Government ownership, building on UNMIL accomplishments and its overarching role. But it is also clear that to ensure a smooth transition, we must explore modalities for closer cooperation between UNMIL, bilateral partners and the UNCT, with the purpose of improving LNP quality and quantity.

PBC will continue to encourage partners to get involved, increase support and enhance coordination. This should include increasing their role in coordinating efforts and leading in specific areas. The PBC will explore how it can contribute to creative approaches to deploying highly skilled officers to specific professional posts, an issue raised by the SRSB at the briefing of the Troop and Police Contributing Countries on September 6.

PBC is in the process of finalizing a resource mobilization strategy and a corresponding work plan. We will work closely with the Government and UNMIL. The intention is to be a support to the Liberian government and its resource mobilization efforts. How to build on the investment of the PBF, and its catalytic role, will be a primary consideration. There is much potential and good examples, such as Australian support to PBF funded youth empowerment and partner support to the PBF funded UN Habitat work on land conflict resolution.

Later this month, we will meet with the Minister of Finance, Mr. Konneh, and other key PBC counterparts, who will brief the PBC on progress on Government commitments. As previously indicated, the SMC is a valuable accountability tool for both the Government and members of the Configuration. We will continue to use it to its full potential and keep you informed on the outcome of our second review.

Thank you for allowing the PBC to share its views. We remain at the Council's disposal for any questions now as well as in the future.

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