

Peacebuilding Commission, Burundi Configuration – Meeting of the Steering Group, 07 July 2011

On Thursday, 7 July, the Steering Group of the Burundi Configuration of the PBC held a meeting at the Permanent Mission Switzerland to the UN. Present were Burundi, Belgium, China, France, Japan, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, European Union, DPA, PBSO and UNDP. The meeting was entirely dedicated to the issues of resource mobilization, including a possible meeting of donors meeting later this year and the funding gap concerning the socio-economic reintegration program proposal of the Government of Burundi (GoB) and BNUB. For this purpose the Chair of the Burundi Configuration had invited his colleague Ambassador Jan Grauls, Chairman of the PBC Central Africa Republic Configuration, to share with the Steering Group their recent experience with the Round Table organized for CAR.

Belgium/CAR lessons learned

Belgium, whose PR, Ambassador Jan Grauls, chairs the Central African Republic (CAR) configuration of the PBC, recently hosted a donors/partners roundtable on CAR in Brussels. Ambassador Grauls gave an overview of the genesis and the outcome of that meeting in which more than 30 governments, plus regional and other institutions, foundations and private sector representatives participated. The goal of the Brussels roundtable was to provide a platform for the government of CAR to explain the new Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) and to sensitize the international community to the need for resources for its implementation. For logistical reasons, the meeting was held outside of CAR. It was convened by the government of CAR, hosted by the government of Belgium, co-organized by the World Bank, the African Development Bank and UNDP and strongly supported by the African Union and the European Union. Ambassador Grauls stressed that the meeting was not a pledging conference. The outcome of the meeting is a clear and broadly shared understanding of what the peacebuilding-related priorities in the new PRSP should be (stabilization of the security situation and reintegration of demobilized combatants). The preparation of the meeting followed a division of labor, whereby the World Bank reached out to international institutions and foundations, the African Development Bank reached out to regional organizations and the Configuration chair reached out to governments.

Critical elements for the success of the meeting were:

- 1) Partnership with the World Bank, which was offered by Ms. Obiageli Katryn Ezekwesili, Vice President for Africa to the Chair after they met in Bangui;
- 2) Solid documentation. CAR produced a PRSP of very high quality
- 3) Broad outreach. Ambassador Grauls personally called on more than 30 Permanent Missions in New York.
- 4) Realistic financial expectations
- 5) The meeting was convened on the basis of a final draft of the PRSP but before its finalization which provided for the possibility of changes and corrections

Ambassador Grauls considered that this event was successful but he stressed that the real work begins after the conference with the follow up that should be done on a bilateral basis.

Status of Burundi PRSP-2 and tentative schedule

Burundi informed the Steering Group on the status of the preparation of the new PRSP (PRSP-2). By the end of July, a first version will be made available to partners in Bujumbura. A final draft will be produced by the end of September, to be discussed with partners in October. In the view of the government of Burundi, a donors roundtable could take place in November or December. Burundi expects such a meeting to produce new resources.

Regarding the role of the PBC in this context, Burundi stated that the PBC should remain in an advocacy mode, and that it was too early to ascertain whether the PBC would be asked to have a role in the organization of such a donors 'meeting' . .

In the discussion, several members of the Steering Group underlined the importance of a solid PRSP, of national ownership, of clear priorities and realistic budgets. It was said that donors 'meetings could only be successful if there was agreement on scope and purpose among all

participants. Some members pointed to the fact that some donors work in long aid cycles and have committed most funds available to Burundi already.

Some points warranting additional clarification were identified.

- 1) The relationship between a donors roundtable and a “consultative group meeting” organized under the auspices of the World Bank
- 2) The relationship between the eventual resource needs for implementing PRSP-2, the resource needs specified for implementing the national action plan for socio-economic reintegration (263 Mio US Dollar) and the 24 Mio US Dollar needed to implement the reintegration program put forward by BNUB/GoB in April.
- 3) The role of the PBC Burundi Configuration as a champion for resourcemobilization for the peacebuilding-relevant elements of PRSP-2
- 4) The venue of a possible donors ‘meeting’.

The chair will take up these questions as soon as possible with BNUB and the World Bank regional director (note a change in this position: Regional Director John McIntire has retired, and Bujumbura-based Mercy Tembon is regional director a.i.)

Next Steps

The next meeting of the Steering Group Burundi is tentatively scheduled for the first week of September. At that time, the Government of Burundi could present a draft of PRSP-2.

A meeting of the full CSM Burundi is envisaged as soon as the PRSP-2 is finalized, i.e. at the end of September. The purpose of that meeting would be to a) present the PRSP-2 and discuss preparation of an eventual donors’ meeting and b) present the findings of the technical committee on Transitional Justice which is to present its report at the end of September.