

UNSC Sept 2013/Lib

Briefing by Ambassador Staffan Tillander

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Meeting of the Security Council on Liberia

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First, let me express my appreciation for the invitation to give the PBC's perspectives on key peacebuilding challenges facing Liberia.

The PBC Country Configuration for Liberia – with its around 40 member states – offers support based on the Statement of Mutual Commitments (SMC), and in close collaboration with the SRSG and UNMIL. The Liberian Agenda for Transformation, together with the Government's commitment to the new deal, and the forthcoming compact, provide focus on state- and peacebuilding goals with which the SMC should be aligned.

In line with the Council's request to PBC in Resolution 2066, op 16, I will first discuss how progress can be accelerated on National reconciliation, and then on the security sector and rule of law. After that, some remarks on other peacebuilding challenges.

National reconciliation is recognized as a core peace building priority and a critical component of Liberia's Agenda for Transformation. This includes mending relations between the State and society, among communities and individuals. Ten years after the civil war ended, Liberia needs to deal with these issues and embark on the reconciliation process without further delay. PBC has interacted frequently and continuously with the responsible Minister and other actors, to support implementation. Since March, when I touched upon this issue in my briefing to the Council, only limited progress has been made. As I said then, this is an area where there is need for leadership and resolve. Time has now come for the Government to translate its political commitment into a priority for implementation and action. The activities contained in the Road Map for National Healing and Reconciliation are ready, the Road Map has been launched, roles and responsibilities are clarified, and the activities should be implemented in an inclusive and coordinated manner without further delay.

The Government has the primary responsibility for financing the reconciliation process. While funds allocated in last year's budget were widely recognized as an important commitment, it was in most part not released and implementation was delayed. Translating the commitment into action, including appropriate levels of funding in the national budget, and releasing the necessary funds would represent an important signal to the Liberian people and the international community.

I welcome the preparedness of UN Agencies to support the reconciliation process and Government efforts. UN agencies such as the UNDP, UNICEF and UN Women have allocated funds to important aspects such as the Palava Hut process and PBF is providing flexible financing. Bilateral partners should

do the same, on the basis of an effectively managed, coordinated and implemented road map for national reconciliation.

On security sector reform and rule of law, the challenges are considerable, and in view of ensuring a seamless UNMIL transition, accelerating progress is vital. Next week, I will have the opportunity to take part in the SSR retreat in Monrovia, mentioned by the SRSB. As pointed out in the Report by the Secretary General, lack of Liberian police capacity, mobility, professional management and limited resources hamper necessary progress required in keeping step with the UNMIL transition. Also in terms of numbers, police strength has increased only marginally, as detailed by SRSB Landgren. Progress has also been slow in reforming and strengthening the judiciary. However, the appointment of a new Chief Justice presents an opportunity to press ahead and accelerate progress. We should make sure this opportunity is fully supported and utilized.

The responsibility for speeding up progress in justice and security is shared among all of us. But first and foremost, the Government's commitment is key when it comes to reforms, implementation, in the allocation of sufficient resources and in ensuring the timely disbursement of allocated funds. To accelerate progress, the Government's efforts need to be stepped up in these regards.

The UN system has an important supportive role to play. The PBC fully supports the efforts of UNMIL in all aspects. The creative approaches used by DPKO and UNMIL to fill specialized police posts are useful examples of how different UN tools can be used to strengthen UN work on the ground.

The UN system needs to perform effectively the tasks it takes upon itself, including delivering as one as well as providing program support and managing funding mechanisms. The independent review of the Justice and Security Joint Programme, including the Trust Fund, should offer a basis for strengthening such mechanisms. UNDP has proposed measures aimed at improving its contribution, in particular in the programming support and the management of the trust fund. The SSR retreat next week will offer an opportunity for the UN system and bilateral partners to consult with the Government on rapid implementation.

PBC is prepared to do what we can to support the Government's efforts in the marshalling of resources for justice and security. But such efforts will be difficult if the Government's budget commitment for the sector is perceived as insufficient, if funds are not being released, if the funding mechanisms are not working effectively, and if justice and security Hubs are not providing services as expected. Support from partners is more likely to increase when concrete goals and benchmarks are in place and clearly communicated, when funding mechanisms are effectively managed, when there is an efficiently operating joint program for implementation and priority setting and when progress is accelerating.

The holistic context of a coordinated programme will also be necessary to facilitate the provision of justice and security related services around the country. The first Hub, in Gbarnga, is providing services and has an impact in a number of key areas, but it is still not functioning at the expected level of full operability. As I now understand it, the Court will be inaugurated only towards the end of the year. The repeated delays are troubling, and for the coming Hubs lessons must be learned and applied. For Hubs two and three, the intention is still to inaugurate and celebrate delivery of services in the spring of

2014. For this to be possible, UNDP and UNOPS as implementing partners must do their part, together with the Government, and thus show how the Hub concept can be effectively implemented. This will also make partners more willing to give the support needed for the full implementation of the planned five Justice and Security Hubs throughout Liberia.

Now to some other **peacebuilding challenges**. On **gender** related issues, Liberian grassroots and civil society have played a strong and constructive role and continue to do so. This role is even more important in view of the widespread sexual and gender based violence, including against children, and the shortcomings in taking legal action against perpetrators. In line with UNSC Resolution 2106 (2013), efforts need to be stepped up, both in terms of specific gender focused activities as well as actions to reform and strengthen the criminal justice system.

I am pleased to note that the proposal for PBF funding in Liberia for the coming years contains an increased allocation for gender focused activities, which would appropriately leave us with a funding level considerably above the 15% target set by the Secretary General. In upcoming PBC visits and in close cooperation with UNMIL and UN Women, I will continue the dialogue with the Minister of Gender on these issues, as well as with civil society organizations.

Women organizations and civil society were actively participating in the UNOWA initiated high level meeting on a sub-regional strategy for the Mano River Union (MRU), held in Dakar in the end of June. I salute UNOWA and SRSJ Djinnit on this initiative. Strengthening the MRU and the strategy, taking into account security as well as development, is an important contribution to conflict prevention and peacebuilding and we should all consider ways to lend our support.

As mentioned in the Report by the Secretary General, there are concerns about lack of oversight, revenue issues and corruption related to **land and natural resources**. During the last PBC visit to Liberia in May, I had the opportunity to participate in a conference on this topic, arranged by civil society, and with active government and business participation. This is an issue where civil society plays an important role and the conference offered a constructive opportunity for a frank and open dialogue.

The Government of Liberia has expressed its intention to fight corruption. Some actions have been taken, but progress remains slow. Further actions should be encouraged, measures should be implemented, oversight strengthened, and perpetrators taken to court and those guilty should be held responsible.

The international community needs to strengthen its coordinated support to Liberia in this area. I am pleased to note that the PBSO is currently considering a PBF contribution aimed at promoting concerted action by the World Bank, the AfDB, bilateral partners and the UN in support of Liberia in conflict sensitive and sustainable land and natural resources management.

Indeed, PBF could more proactively be employed to promote such cooperation between the IFIs and the UN system also in other areas. I will continue to make this point in my discussions with PBSO and with relevant actors in Liberia.

PBC welcomes the inclusion of fragility and peacebuilding in the strategies for Liberia recently adopted by the World Bank and the African Development Bank. It will be essential to maintain this fragility perspective in the implementation of the strategies. During the PBC visit to Liberia next week, I intend to continue the dialogue with the IFIs on how we can best work together to ensure synergies and mutual support.

Mr. President, the PBC visit next week will focus on SSR and national reconciliation, and I will also consult with the Government and partners on how we can best support Government efforts on resource mobilization. In preparing for the visit, I would welcome input and I am as always available for consultations. The visit should provide a basis for accelerated progress on key peacebuilding challenges and guide the support of the PBC on justice, security, reconciliation, gender issues, on land issues and natural resources.

Thank you.