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STATEMENT

By

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Chair of the Peace Building Commission's Country-Specific Configuration for Liberia

Before

The Security Council

Agenda Item: The Situation in Liberia

13 September 2011

Mr. President,

It has been almost a year since I assumed my role as Chairman of the Liberia Configuration and, after three visits there, and countless discussions here, as well as in Washington and in Brussels, and numerous meetings attended via VTC with colleagues in Monrovia, I wish to share with you my

thoughts about the prospects for a non-return to the sort of violence that has marked so much of Liberia's recent history.

In other words, given what we know about the state of the state of Liberia now and the security and justice needs that remain extant, what are the prospects Liberia will survive peacefully and flourish once UNMIL has departed? Or, ultimately, will the time and effort invested by the UN's peacekeepers, led currently by a remarkable and talented SRSG, operating according to mandates established by the Council, be in the end for something or nothing?

Mr. President, to answer bluntly, I believe if we, as governments, had the same confidence the world of the private sector possesses, given the latter's recent preparedness to invest in the range of \$16 billion in Liberia over the next two decades or so – with almost two thirds of the investing companies coming from 8 countries presently represented on the Security Council -- then Liberia will succeed, and it will succeed very well. The Liberians have the talent, and the desire to retire their country from war not temporarily this time, but permanently. The true question for Liberia, it would seem to me, lies not entirely with them, but to some extent with us: do we, as the representatives of governments, acting individually, or collectively here at the UN, have the same confidence in Liberia as is shown by the private sector globally?

The test will come soon enough in the form of money of course. The Peace Building Fund, whose top donor is also a member of the Council, will finance the first of the justice and security hubs in its entirety; that being the one in Gbarnga. We expect to have the entire compound ready with buildings built by the end of the year and we are working with specific partners in the international community to explore the possibility of having key, technical, personnel trained to be able to provide a creditable service out of the hub to the peoples of Bong, Lofa and Nimba.

The four other hubs, and their specific locations are just being finalized now, will be financed by the PBF at the level of \$2 million each, roughly half their cost, with the PBC mobilizing funds outside of the PBF to foot the balance. This money must be found soon, if our endeavours in Liberia are to prove successful, and that is not all. The Liberia Peacebuilding Programme (the LPP) contains a number of other important projects of a critical nature to the judiciary, the police and national reconciliation, agreed to by all the partners: the Liberian Government, the donor community and the UN, and, after some painstaking negotiations, now has a total value of almost \$72

million. Once the Government has finalized the levels of expenditure on security and justice and, knowing how much we will expect from the Peace Building Fund (an initial contribution of close to \$21 million), we will expect to have to raise around \$30-\$50 million. Some part of this may be offset by donor allocations already approved to some of the very sectors covered by the LPP.

The early signs, from exploratory contacts with some member states, are not promising, however, where the PBC slice is concerned. The remaining money for the hubs and indeed the LPP may indeed be hard to come by.

Yet, in the meantime, it was clear to all members of the PBC delegation visiting Liberia from 12-17 June – and here I am very grateful to the colleagues from the United States, the United Kingdom, Nigeria and the Ukraine for their commitment -- the LNP, notwithstanding some very notable improvements in training and some infrastructure, will not be ready any time soon to cope with either a possible increase in the levels of organized crime, nor with any sudden spasms of widespread violence, unless it is more robustly supported. And, once again, we face this rather bizarre situation of having sufficient money to pay for our peacekeepers, but once our peacekeepers are withdrawn, not even a small percentage of what was previously spent on them, could we then redirect to the national police as they assume virtually all the security tasks hitherto carried out by the UN.

Or, to present this point perhaps more graphically, there is something remarkable happening to common sense, when we the PBC weave our way through the middle of Liberia, from one police station to another in a 13-vehicle UN convoy, carrying us, the delegation, senior Liberian officials, our colleagues from UNMIL and our security, only for us to discover time and again each police station visited had barely, if any, fuel sufficient to keep even one vehicle on the road.

The deficit separating what we, the UN, can accomplish in critical areas, like transportation, and what we, the UN, would hope the Liberian National Police will soon accomplish in all areas, including not only transportation but in stemming the growth of transnational organized crime, remains numbing. That we must therefore invest more in them, directly, and urgently, is all the more obvious to those who spend time in Liberia.

Naturally, not everything needed in the three areas falling within the PBC's portfolio: Rule of Law, Security Sector Reform and National Reconciliation, ought to come in the form of money. Liberia's judiciary, for

example, requires a court management system, with oversight to ensure the efficient conduct of trials, and the Liberians are attempting commendably to do this on their own, but here we, the member states, could do much to help them simply by providing some advice.

Similarly, while funding from the international community was used over the last two years to finance platforms for dialogue, falling the general rubric of national reconciliation, following the PBC's discussions in June with the senior leadership in Liberia, including with Her Excellency the President – and prompted by the acute observations of Ambassador Marjon Kamara – it was agreed this would end, for now at least, until a clearer strategy was formulated.

Yet these examples of the nimble approach adopted by the PBC in addressing Liberia's needs do not vitiate the urgent need for financial support in other equally important areas. More to the point, if the investment by us, collectively, both in time and in money, could be intensified significantly in the several months following the upcoming elections, particularly where the hubs and the LNP are concerned, we, and more importantly they, the Liberians, will be successful. I have no doubt about this.

Should we not be able to pull together the resources and resolve to do this decisively, including by urging the Liberian authorities to devote more funding to their justice and security sectors, the Council will have had, in UNMIL, a successful peacekeeping mission, yes, but one that would likely depart a still very crippled country. The possible, maybe even probable, onset of widespread organized crime and the ensuing violence it would bring, would overwhelm Liberia soon enough. In such a scenario, we would all, but especially the people of Liberia, bitterly lament the end of UNMIL – a terrible outcome in view of the extraordinary services rendered by the tens of thousands of UN peacekeepers who lived with, and work for, the Liberian people. I sincerely hope, Mr. President, this will not come to be, it can be avoided.

I thank you Mr. President.