

PBC Statement
The visit of the Peacebuilding Commission to Sierra Leone
New York – 10 January 2018

The Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) held a meeting on 10 January 2018 to update on preparations for the presidential, legislative, and local elections scheduled for 7 March 2018 and to explore the political accompaniment and advocacy role the PBC can play in supporting Sierra Leone to hold free, fair, credible and peaceful elections. The PBC Sierra Leone Configuration Chair briefed members of the Configuration on his mission to Sierra Leone from 11 to 13 December 2017. Dr. Mohamed Ibn Chambas, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for West Africa and the Sahel, briefed on his joint visit with the African Union and ECOWAS last November and UN support to the elections. Mr. Sunil Saigal, the Resident Coordinator for Sierra Leone, provided an update on developments since the two missions and ongoing support by the UN Country Team.

The Peacebuilding Commission reiterates its full support to Sierra Leone in accomplishing the delivery of free, fair, transparent, peaceful, and credible elections in March 2018. The Commission congratulates the National Electoral Commission for meeting all planned deadlines, and commends the Government of Sierra Leone for meeting its financial commitments to ensure the completion of the electoral process, and urges that all stakeholders continue to make efforts to ensure that the electoral process remains on track.

The Peacebuilding Commission notes the progress in reforming the security sector and recognized the preparations made to address security during the upcoming elections, and calls upon the security services of Sierra Leone, in particular, the Sierra Leone Police force, to continue fulfilling their responsibilities with professionalism and impartiality, and to provide security for the electoral process as well as for the presidential candidates. The Commission also encourages all stakeholders to continue dialogue and open communication related to the electoral process; urges all parties to make use of existing legal and alternative dispute settlement mechanisms; and calls on the Sierra Leone Judiciary to ensure prompt, fair and timely adjudication of electoral grievances and offences.

The Peacebuilding Commission underscores that the Sierra Leone elections come after a series of successful elections recently held in West Africa, and calls upon all political parties and their leaders as well as all other stakeholders to sustain their efforts to ensure that the country maintains this successful trend in the region.

The Peacebuilding Commission urges all stakeholders to exercise restraint and refrain from incitement, hate speech and any attempt of politicizing religion, and encourage continuous dialogue amongst political parties and all other electoral stakeholders.

The Peacebuilding Commission equally urges civil society, the private sector, and the media to be aware of their important and responsible roles, and calls upon youth and women to engage and participate actively in the entire process; in particular, encourages all political parties to redouble efforts to identify qualified female candidates to stand for political positions.

The Peacebuilding Commission assures His Excellency the President and all national stakeholders of its commitment to continue its political accompaniment and advocacy role, and to provide all possible support to Sierra Leone during and after the elections.