

**Security Council meeting on West Africa and the Sahel**  
**Remarks by the Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission**

**7 July 2022**

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**Mr. President,**

Thank you for inviting me to share the Peacebuilding Commission's perspectives. I would like to express the Commission's full support for SRSG Annadif's good offices in West Africa and the Sahel, and the activities of UNOWAS. Drawing on the Commission's country-specific and regional engagements, I wish to bring following points to the Security Council's attention:

1. The Commission has consistently recognized the region's potential to yield peace and inclusive development for its nations and people and has advocated for scaled up efforts to achieve sustainable development goals to ensure shared prosperity and lasting peace in the region.
2. The Commission is concerned over the recent military takeovers in the region and echoes the calls made by the African Union (AU) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) for return to constitutional order. The Commission underscores the importance of strengthening democratic institutions in the countries under transition, and remains ready to help mobilize international support for their national peacebuilding priorities. For example, the transitional authorities in Burkina Faso have requested the Commission to convene a meeting to discuss areas in need of support in the country.
3. The Commission is gravely concerned at the persistence in violent incidents perpetrated by non-state armed groups as well as ISIL and Al-Qaida affiliated terrorist groups such as Islamic State in Greater Sahara (ISGS), Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) and Jama'at Nasr al-Islam wal Muslimin (JNIM). The expansion of these terrorist groups to the coastal countries, notably in the Gulf of Guinea and their growing nexus with organized criminal networks and pirates to facilitate trafficking of drugs, and arms and ammunitions, is another worrisome trend.
4. The Commission notes the precarious security situation in the Gulf of Guinea and notes that maritime insecurity in the Sahel remains a significant concern for the coastal countries. The Commission takes note of the adoption of the Security Council Resolution 2634 and reiterates its support to the efforts that aim to strengthen the regional maritime security architecture.
5. The Commission underscores the importance of political unity between and among the G5 Sahel countries to consolidate the gains achieved through its cooperative efforts. It is important to continue investing in efforts to address the root causes which aggravate the conflicts, instability and violence in the region. The Commission welcomes UNOWAS

efforts to reinvigorate the Ministerial Coordination Platform of Sahel Strategies as part of the responses to the challenging context. The Commission also welcomes the planned joint AU-UN-ECOWAS-G5 Sahel Strategic Assessment on the security and governance situation and response initiatives in the region and encourages timely follow-up and support. The Commission encourages greater support for the objectives of the G5 Sahel Priority Investment Program which incorporates climate change adaptation and governance reforms into it. In this regard, PBC underscores the pre-eminent role of UNFCCC to comprehensively address the issue of climate change.

6. The Commission expresses its concern over the unprecedented levels of insecurity, arising out of growing terrorism, consequent displacement and humanitarian needs threatening social cohesion in the Sahel, which are exacerbated by the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19 pandemic. It urges sustained and coordinated support by the United Nations system to build and sustain peace in the Sahel region, including through the implementation of UNISS and improved cooperation among UN Country Teams of the region, and between the UN Country Teams and UNOWAS. Particular attention is needed to combat terrorism and prevent violent extremism conducive to terrorism. The Commission also notes the Secretary General's calls for predictable and sustained financing for the counter terrorism operations in the region. The Commission also acknowledges the need to address the adverse effects of climate change, ecological changes, natural disasters, drought, desertification, land degradation, energy access as well as food insecurity. The Commission calls for the strengthening of conflict prevention and management mechanisms as well as food security interventions in the region.
7. The Commission stresses the need to increase support for the implementation of the Regional Strategy for the Stabilization, Recovery and Resilience of the Boko Haram affected Areas of the Lake Chad Basin Region, with a focus on the critical role of the Territorial Action Plans. It welcomes the expansion of the Lake Chad Basin Commission's support base to include humanitarian, development, and peace actors, and encourages sustained partnership between the Lake Chad Basin Commission, including its Governors' Forum, the African Union, the Economic Community of Central African States, the Economic Community of the West African States, the UN, and the Governors of the affected regions in implementing the regional strategy.
8. Drawing from its country specific engagements, the Commission welcomes the holding of peaceful parliamentary elections in The Gambia; however, it notes that more needs to be done to ensure equitable representation of women in the parliament and other decision-making spaces. The Commission also notes the release by the Government of its White Paper on the implementation of the recommendations contained in the report of the Truth Reconciliation and Reparations Commission and wishes to reiterate its commitment to support their timely and effective implementation.

In Guinea Bissau, the Commission wishes to stress the importance of inclusive dialogue for urgently needed reforms, as stated in the 2016 Conakry Agreement and the 2019 Stability Pact. The Commission encourages continuing support from the international community to the country's peacebuilding priorities, including for expanding socio-economic opportunities and implementing fiscal policy and accountability reforms, advancing the women, peace, and security agenda and strengthening national institutions, including those at the forefront of the fight against drug trafficking and organized crime. The PBC also welcomes the appointment of the President of Guinea-Bissau as chairman of ECOWAS.

9. The Commission has been supporting Liberia's peacebuilding efforts, including investments in social cohesion, national reconciliation, the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment, youth empowerment, as well as cross-border cooperation for peace and development. The Commission will also support efforts to ensure that the presidential and legislative elections scheduled to be held in 2023 are inclusive, peaceful, transparent, free and fair.
10. The Commission welcomes efforts to foster an inclusive dialogue in Sierra Leone in the run-up to the June 2023 general elections and expresses full support for ongoing efforts to increase women's participation including by reserving quotas for women. It encourages continuing action to consolidate democratic space, pursue policy and institutional reforms, and strengthen national and local institutional capacity.
11. In line with its gender strategy and action plan, the Commission expresses full support for efforts to strengthen regional frameworks in support of women, peace and security, and encourages UNOWAS to bring these to the attention of the Commission, in collaboration with ECOWAS and the G5 Sahel.
12. The PBC further encourages the adoption and implementation of national action plans on youth, peace and security across the region, in line with Security Council resolution 2250 (2015) and expresses readiness to support such efforts. The Commission highlights the importance of greater investment in the region to increase employment opportunities for the youth.
13. Finally, the Commission recognizes the critical support provided by the Peacebuilding Fund to countries in the region. With an active portfolio of over \$177 million USD, the Fund supports cross-border cooperation with emphasis on reducing farmer-herder conflicts and preventing the expansion of terrorist threats. Through its regular portfolio and annual dedicated Gender and Youth Promotion Initiative, the PBF supports national initiatives focusing on women and young people's participation in decision making process, as well as ensuring that women and youth voices are heard in all peacebuilding issues. PBF also supports targeted socio-economic initiatives linked to responses to community grievances or peace dividends.

14. The Commission therefore invites partners to explore how PBF support for addressing the root causes of crises in the region could be scaled-up, including through strengthened cooperation between the UN and regional and international financial institutions.

I thank you.

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