

## Guinea-Bissau Configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission

### **Press Statement on the Upcoming Elections**

The Guinea-Bissau Configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) welcomes the successful conclusion of the voters' registration process in Guinea-Bissau, which allowed for a historical expansion of the national electorate, and renews its appreciation for Guinea-Bissau's international partners who have contributed to this important achievement. The Configuration acknowledges that funding and preparations for the upcoming presidential and legislative elections are well on track, thanks to the contributions of ECOWAS Member States, the ECOWAS Commission, Nigeria, Timor-Leste and donors into the UNDP Basket Fund, especially the European Union. UNIOGBIS's presence and activities and the leadership of SRSR Ramos-Horta have also been decisive in this process. With the voters registration successfully completed, political campaign in full swing, and financial requirements timely made available by various international partners, it is expected that general elections will be held on 13 April. No further delay is justifiable.

The Guinea-Bissau Configuration of the PBC expresses its concern about recent episodes of political violence and condemns any attempt to employ fear and intimidation as political tools, contrary to the exercise of fundamental political rights and the spirit of free and transparent elections desired by the people of Guinea-Bissau.

The Guinea-Bissau Configuration of the PBC stresses that the 2014 elections will take place in a different environment from that of 2012, with the registration process completed, an important security presence of ECOWAS on the ground, and improved coordination among Guinea-Bissau's main international partners.

The Guinea-Bissau Configuration of the PBC emphasizes that elections are only the first and fundamental step for the restoration of constitutional and democratic order in the country. Elections will need to be followed by the implementation of its results and by essential reforms to ensure lasting stability and democratic consolidation.

The Guinea-Bissau Configuration of the PBC reaffirms its readiness to serve as a coordinating platform to help devise medium and long-term resources mobilization strategies in support of nationally-led initiatives that advance key peacebuilding objectives, such as the completion of a full democratic cycle through a peaceful

transfer of power from democratically-elected authorities to their democratically-elected successors; significant advancements in social and economic development with a focus on food security and rural development; and tangible progress towards the modernization of the security sector, the strengthening of national institutions, and the combat against impunity.

Among the options for a renewed strategic engagement of the PBC with Guinea-Bissau, the Configuration takes note of SRSG Ramos-Horta's proposal of a Governance Efficacy Amelioration Program, and acknowledges the important leading role being played by ECOWAS in support of the modernization of the defense and security sector in Guinea-Bissau. The Configuration reiterates its readiness to continue to engage all partners (in particular ECOWAS, AU, CPLP, UN and EU) and work with elected authorities from day one in order to foster long-term stability in the country, on the basis of peacebuilding priorities agreed upon with such legitimate authorities.

At this historical juncture, the Guinea-Bissau Configuration of the PBC reaffirms its confidence in and solidarity with the people of Guinea-Bissau in their quest for stability, democracy and inclusive development. The Configuration calls upon all national stakeholders to live up to their historical responsibilities towards the people of Guinea-Bissau and cooperate in holding of free and fair elections on 13 April, with a view to inaugurating a chapter of lasting peace and development for their country.

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