

**Peacebuilding Commission
Working Group on Lessons Learned**

**Informal /Informal expert-level preparatory meeting on
“The Transition and Exit of UN Missions”
3 April 2014**

Chair’s Summary

I. Introduction

- On 3 April 2014, the Working Group on Lessons Learned (WGLL) of the Peacebuilding Commission convened an informal expert-level meeting to discuss the transition and exit of UN Missions. The first of a series of upcoming discussions organized by the WGLL for 2014, the objective of this specific meeting was to share the experiences of PBC Country Configurations and explore the role of the PBC during transitions and exits of UN missions.
- In order to share experiences of PBC Configurations where UN Missions are transitioning or downsizing - namely Sierra Leone, Burundi, and Liberia - the Chair invited the following panelists to make presentations:
 - On Sierra Leone: Mr. Saidu Nallo (Sierra Leone) and Mr. Michael Bonser (Canada, Chair of the Sierra Leone Configuration);
 - On Burundi: Mr. Luca Nicola (Switzerland, Chair of the Burundi Configuration); and
 - On Liberia: Mr. George Patten (Liberia) and Ambassador Staffan Tillander (Sweden, Chair of the Liberia Configuration).

II. Summary of Presentations by Panelists

- **Mr. Nallo** informed the meeting that the Government of Sierra Leone and the United Nations engagement in peacebuilding efforts was very successful. The country has come a long way and the people of Sierra Leone are committed to consolidating the gains it has achieved. He noted that the Government is well aware of the challenges which it will have to address after the recent closure of UNIPSIL. In particular, he underlined the importance of ensuring an inclusive political dialogue and peace dividends for all the population as well as the need to combat poverty, address youth unemployment and promote gender empowerment in the long-term. He emphasized the importance of ensuring resources to strengthen national capacities in the area of good governance, the National Human Rights Commission, democratic institutions and sustaining international attention on the country. Mr. Nallo stressed the need to monitor the political landscape and the need to address potential outbreak of violence. He referred to the country’s priorities as outlined in the Agenda for Prosperity, the new UNDAF and the goal of becoming a middle-income country by 2030 as an entry point for support that could further strengthen peace consolidation and peace and stability. He pointed out that the Agenda for prosperity is the blue print that will take Sierra Leone to the path of resilience and called on donors to scale up support for its

implementation. On sub-regional dimension, he informed that success in Sierra Leone alone will not be easily sustained if Liberia and Guinea remain behind in fragility, as events in one of them can have effect on the others. He therefore urged that Liberia and Guinea be given attention and support to address present and emerging challenges. Lastly, he informed that the President had stressed the importance of developing the energy sector could be a catalyst for achieving progress in other sectors such as health, revenue collection, addressing empowerment and employment of youths, increase in private sector investment, and delivery of services by Government. Sustainable energy, he continued, would enable the country to automate revenue collection which will address lapses in the present manual system, thus leading to the collection of more revenue that could support-national programmes as well.

- **Mr. Bonser** highlighted that the PBC transition in Sierra Leone, in the context of UNIPSIL's complete drawdown and transfer of residual tasks to a UNCT setting, sets a precedent and is the first of its kind. He said that the PBC founding resolutions provide limited guidance yet vast opportunities to break new ground for the PBC. Mr. Bonser highlighted three main challenges that need to be addressed through joint planning, human resources and effective communication:
 1. Maintaining political support, attention and advocacy, especially on the constitutional review process;
 2. Ensuring UNIPSIL's drawdown does not create gaps; and
 3. Supporting a seamless transfer of responsibilities from UNIPSIL to a UNCT.

- In responding to these challenges, he said that there are three main principles that will guide the PBC transition process in Sierra Leone: (1) Do no harm. The Commission should avoid duplication of work. (2) Focus on its comparative advantage of raising international attention and attention by providing political support. (3) Seek to provide specific responses to developments on the ground through targeted resource mobilization for transition needs.

- In terms of PBC transition planning, Mr. Bonser informed the meeting that discussions on the PBC transition planning started as early as September 2012. This was followed by the joint mission of the PBC to Liberia and Sierra Leone in February 2013 which reflected the residual tasks of UNIPSIL and the UNCT identified by the DPA-led Technical Assessment Mission (TAM) to Sierra Leone during that time. In the summer of 2013, the PBC Chair had planned for a multi-country resource mobilization tour, which was deemed not necessary. The circumstances were not sufficiently advanced, he said. In November 2013, the first PBC-led Peacebuilding Assessment Mission (PAM), the first of its kind, was conducted drawing on established modalities of the UN. While the resident international community was far more positive of the UN transition, the PBC played an important role in promoting communication and managing expectations on the transition process and implications. A new approach was envisaged whereby the Configuration would adopt a lighter form of engagement, a focused approach on political accompaniment and establish an informal working group (steering group), as referred to the PAM report and subsequently in the PBC Chairs report. In March 2014, the PBC briefed the Security Council again and

informed on its continuous efforts to address the root causes of conflict in Sierra Leone and provided recommendations on the way forward for the PBC transition in Sierra Leone.

- In concluding, he reflected on two main lessons learned from the engagement of the PBC in Sierra Leone:
 1. The Commission must focus its activities around its added value and do what an inter-governmental body does best; and
 2. Be realistic about the limitations of the PBC. In Sierra Leone the PBC worked well. It supported the national government. It did not interfere with the UN transition planning processes. There was a need to liaise with the UN system, especially UNDP and DPA to provide the needed political support.
- **Mr. Nicola** said that the challenges Burundi will encounter during its transition phase are in line with the three identified by Mr. Bonser. In addition, Burundi faces a fourth challenge linked to the fact that the decision to drawdown BNUB (scheduled for December 2014) was not entirely based on a shared understanding of challenges on the ground.
- He highlighted the role of the PBC in Burundi. He noted that the Configuration will need to remain flexible throughout the transition and adapt to emerging needs. He stressed that there should be no duplication of efforts (UNCT, BNUB, etc.). The PBC should act in a supportive and complementary manner. As such, the Configuration will have a continued important role to play in political accompaniment and in advocacy, bringing together regional organizations, IFIs and the UN system (UNDP in particular). He particularly stressed the importance of an increased focus on the regional dimension during the transition process stating that the buy-in from regional organizations and neighboring States would be crucial to ensure sustainable peace in Burundi. He also referred to SCR 2137, whereby a Transitional Steering Group, of which the Configuration was a member, was to be established to provide strategic guidance to the transition process.
- He emphasized the priorities as stated in SCR 2137, ensuring, amongst other things, financial commitments and sustainability of mutual commitments taken at the Geneva Conference in October 2012. Moving forward, he noted that the Chair is planning to organize a round table in 2014 with the Government of Burundi and its main partners to take stock of the progress in implementing the national Poverty Reduction Strategy and of mutual commitments taken in Geneva. He mentioned that the Chair was working on a concept paper to this end.
- He also emphasized that in order to overcome key challenges regarding the transition of UN missions, what we call “mutual commitment,” or “mutual agreement,” or “compact” would be a good concept worth exploring in the future; the mutual commitment between host states and the international community will clarify the common goals and directions before and after the UN missions’ transition. These mutual commitments must be based on the national priority defined by host states. He added that the PBC can play a role in facilitating and

supporting the creation of this kind of mutual arrangement.

- **Mr. Patten** thanked Japan for convening the meeting, and also thanked Ambassador Tillander for the many contributions he continues to make in support of post conflict reconstruction interventions in Liberia. He said Amb. Tallinder has made several visits to Liberia since assuming leadership of the Liberian configuration and held discussions with local authorities on moving the post conflict reconstruction processes forward. He said further that the transition program in Liberia was progressing smoothly and that Liberian authorities were assuming responsibilities in areas where UNMIL presence has been reduced. He said tremendous achievements have been recorded in increasing the numerical strength of security institutions in the country but that more needed to be done. He informed the meeting the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL) was now engaged in local training of recruits. He highlighted the challenges faced by Liberia in terms of capacity and resources. He thanked the PBC and PBSO for their continuous support and assistance provided in these areas.
- **Ambassador Tillander** reiterated the importance of being realistic about the role of the PBC. He emphasized that there is no operational role for the PBC in the countries on its agenda. It is to support SRSGs and heads of mission at the country level and work closely with all partners to marshal resources. He said that the Commission plays a supportive role for the Security Council, UNMIL, DPKO, Government and the UNCT, as well as the UN.
- As UNMIL was requested to downsize by September 2014, a few challenges were highlighted to the Security Council a few months ago: building the capacity of national institutions during the transition and reporting on the comparative advantage as well as the role of the UNCT. The Council advised to focus on justice, reconciliation and security sector.
- Ambassador Tillander stressed that the overall tasks for the PBC were to be used as a platform for ongoing dialogue, alert Member States and key stakeholders on the developments of the country concerned and link the field with New York. He states that the key challenges was focusing on the root causes of conflict, including reconciliation, justice, security and rule of law, which the PBF helped in these targeted areas. He also mentioned the supportive role played by UNOWA, particularly on cross-border and regional issues.
- He stated that the Configuration was supporting coherence in the UN and the UNCT by ensuring sustained political dialogue and improved coordination. He also mentioned the possible useful role of a common dialogue mechanism, based on the drafting of a New Deal Compact for Liberia. He stressed the need to support coordination efforts in the long-term to strengthen the areas of justice and reconciliation. Finally, the UNCT should step up efforts, focus attention on key conflict and peacebuilding related issues, work integrated with UNMIL and play an active role when UNMIL draws down. He saw a need for the PBC to have a close dialogue with UNMIL to see how best to support UN integration during the transition process.

He also emphasized that a “New Deal Compact” is being elaborated in Liberia, with the Government in the lead, and that it will most likely contain mutual commitments between Liberia and partners. If such a Compact is agreed, and assuming it covers the areas covered by the PBC SMC, the PBC should align its work with this New Deal Compact. It is critical for the PBC to align its work with mechanisms elaborated in the country, by the Government and partners, and thus continue supporting political dialogues among different stakeholders to enhance the mutual commitment and mutual engagement..

III. Responses

- **Mr. Kenneth Gluck (PBSO)** referred to the PBC SL Chair’s comments during the recent Configuration meeting, stating that peacebuilding – or better expressed as “Consolidation de la Paix”- is an ongoing effort which is conducted at many levels in a society. Discussions on transition of the UN’s presence in a country are only a small part of the overall transition that countries are attempting. The PBC and the UN need to focus on overall transition that countries are making from conflict to peace rather than only on the UN aspect of transitions. He stressed people in countries emerging from conflict will measure their transition by the degree of safety and security they enjoy, the degree to which their daily needs are met and the degree to which they can control their destinies and that of their country. He suggested that, within the WGLL, a discussion on UN transition should be considered as a part of a broader analysis of the transition processes in the countries affected by conflict. He hoped that the PBC can keep an eye on the larger picture, taking into perspective the challenges and gaps at the national, regional and UN levels.
- **Member States** welcomed the presentations and stressed the importance of a holistic transition process that focuses on the country and its people. Transitions represent a **critical phase in the peacebuilding process** in which the PBC can play an important supporting role. In particular, some Member States reiterated the importance for the PBC to provide the necessary and timely **political support** to country-led national strategies and priorities, inside and outside the UN system. One delegation noted the importance of focusing on **domestic resource mobilization** as a means to overcome financial gaps. The role of the **private sector** was also identified as a key element in this context.
- Overall, the **PBC was considered as a useful instrument** that can play an important role at different stages of a country in transition. It was also noted that the Commission can play a critical role in engaging actors at the **regional and sub-regional dimensions**.
- There was a general consensus that discussion on transitions should not be limited to only the UN transition but **include a broader perspective on the country which is undergoing a transition**.
- Several member states mentioned that the series of meetings of Working Group on Lessons Learned will be very useful process for the 2015 review of the UN peacebuilding architecture, as it mobilizes supports from key sections of the UN Secretariat such as PBSO, DPA, and DPKO as well as from member states

including the PBC agenda countries. The discussions on transitions and how this involves a broad range of actors in the UN on peacebuilding challenges also make it evident that the 2015 peacebuilding review must take a broad UN system wide approach.
