

*Opening Segment*

*Check against delivery*

**Joint Meeting of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and the Peacebuilding  
Commission (PBC)  
on the Impact of Cross-border Transhumance on Sustainable Peace and Development  
in West Africa and the Sahel**

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**Remarks at the Opening Segment**

**H.E. Mona Juul**

**President of the Economic and Social Council**

**Tuesday, 3 December 2019, 10:00 am-1:00 pm**

Conference Room 2

**Your Excellency Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission**

**Excellencies,**

**Colleagues,**

**It is with great pleasure that I welcome you to the Joint Meeting of the Economic and Social Council and the Peacebuilding Commission. Our focus here today is “The Impact of Cross-border Transhumance on Sustainable Peace and Development in West Africa and the Sahel”.**

**For the past three years, our discussion has been dedicated to the Sahel. A region characterized by multidimensional and complex challenges.**

**ECOSOC provides overall guidance and coordination to United Nations entities dedicated to sustainable development. It is also a platform for discussing challenges of countries in special situations. And therefore is well placed to discuss the situation of the Sahel region, together with the Peacebuilding Commission.**

**This year, we have decided to focus our discussion on the specific issue of transhumance.**

**It is a time-honoured tradition, practiced peacefully in many parts of the world, to the benefit of both pastoralist and farming communities.**

**In Africa, around 268 million people practice some form of pastoralism. On average, they contribute to between 30 and 38% of the gross value of the agricultural commodities for the entire continent.**

**However, in recent years, conflicts between pastoralists and farmers in West Africa and the Sahel have become common.**

**This is primarily driven by increasing competition over diminishing land and water resources.**

**It takes place also against the backdrop of armed violence, due to the rise of: organized criminal groups, violent extremist, and terrorist groups.**

**Along with security challenges, other drivers of conflict include the impact of climate change and pressure on agricultural land.**

**Limited recognition of pastoral people's land rights, and inadequate natural resource management, combined with widespread poverty, and weaknesses in governance, also adds to this.**

**Given the multifaceted nature of transhumance-related challenges, it is of the utmost importance that we address the socio-economic and environmental root causes, at the local, national and regional levels.**

**Colleagues,**

**Ensuring the effective implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in West Africa and the Sahel is not only a matter of human rights. It can also provide a good entry point for addressing the long-term causes and drivers of conflicts between pastoralists and farmers.**

**Several Sustainable Development Goals are relevant in this effort:**

**SDG 1 to eradicate poverty.**

**SDG 2 on zero hunger.**

**SDG 15 to protect and restore life on land.**

**SDG 16 on peace, justice and strong institutions,**

**and SDG 17 on partnerships.**

**To achieve sustainable peace and development in West Africa and the Sahel, we need to discuss how the United Nations can ensure a more integrated, coherent and coordinated response to address the root causes of conflicts.**

**Colleagues,**

**Our meeting today is an opportunity to share successful initiatives to address transhumance-related challenges and identify action-oriented, integrated and sustainable solutions.**

**This month, the ECOSOC is expected to adopt a resolution on the Sahel aiming to help address the development challenges and root causes of regional instability. Including through better-coordinated and effective support by the United Nations and other actors.**

**This issue is a concrete example of how ECOSOC can effectively work with the Peacebuilding Commission. Together, ECOSOC and the PBC can address the peacebuilding and development implications in specific contexts.**

**When strategic coordination and integrated support by the United Nations system is required, ECOSOC can provide guidance through a resolution and follow up in a systematic way because of its Charter mandate.**

**I look forward to a rich discussion on an issue that has been ignored too long.**

**Thank you.**