

Peacebuilding Commission
Informal meeting of the Liberian Country Specific Configuration
27 October 2010

Chairperson's Summary of the Discussion

Background

On 27 October 2010, the Chairperson of the Country Configuration for Liberia, H.R.H. Prince Zeid Ra'ad Zeid Al Hussein, convened the second informal meeting of the Configuration. The Chairperson presided over the meeting. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss a revised version of the draft Statement of Mutual Commitments (SMC) prepared on the basis of comments, suggestions and inputs received from the Government of Liberia, members of the Configuration, UNMIL and other UN interlocutors.

Revised Version of the draft Statement of Mutual Commitments;

The Chairperson introduced the first agenda item recalling the aim to maintain the current momentum, which presently revolves around agreeing upon the SMC in order for the document to be translated in time for adoption during his upcoming trip to Liberia. He expressed appreciation to all members who contributed to the second draft version with particular gratitude to the Liberian Government. He then asked the Liberian Ambassador to share the Government's views on the revised version as well as update the members on the preparation of the Priority Plan.

1. Ambassador Kamara (Liberia), explained that at the Monrovia level, the Government of Liberia held internal discussions with concerned governmental bodies as well as consulted UNMIL and civil society actors on the first draft. No major changes were forwarded and they are satisfied with the revised version. On the Priority Plan, she advised that the document was in the process of being prepared. The document is planned be shared at a Joint Steering Committee meeting scheduled for 2 November 2010. In reviewing the draft of the first Priority Plan, the Joint Steering Committee will be expected, at a minimum, to agree on the key elements of the Priority Plan. The Committee will also discuss and agree upon a first project to start immediately. She suggested that the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Moustapfa Soumaré share his insights on the process.
2. Prior to asking the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Moustapfa Soumaré to provide an update from Monrovia on the preparations of the Priority Plan and opening the floor, the Chair explained his intention to draw up draft targets during his upcoming mission. The term targets was being used to ensure clarity between the specific activities of the PBC vis a vis UNMIL, which has established benchmarks for its draw-down. The targets would be distinct from UNMIL's benchmarks but complementary.
3. Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Moustapfa Soumaré, built upon the update provided by Ambassador Kamara, highlighting that the process of finalizing the Priority Plan and designing projects for PBF funding entails extensive consultation between the Liberian Government and the UN Country Team, which requires time. To maintain momentum, the Joint Steering Committee intends to reach consensus on key elements of the Priority Plan, which will

include a paragraph on immediately starting one project. UNMIL and the Government of Liberia plan to propose the Hub project that brings together security and justice sectors. The Joint Steering Committee will also agree on the way forward and set a date for elaborating the Priority Plan. The Chair will be part of the consultations with key stakeholders during his upcoming visit.

4. Subsequently, nine (9) member states took the floor. Interventions from member states revolved around seven (7) main themes:
 - a. Clarity needed on the linkages between the PBC and the PBF with an aim to ensuring their complementarity while also ensuring that this is not seen as a primary tool for the PBC;
 - b. The importance of the advisory role of the PBC to the Security Council and support for the first briefing to relate to the Chair's upcoming visit;
 - c. The value of a regional approach including engaging regional organizations, namely ECOWAS, in particular to address common challenges such as drug trafficking;
 - d. Need for setting clear, realistic targets that specify the activities of the PBC and the Liberian Government and include time lines;
 - e. Demand for clarification on the proposed periodic review at nine (9) month versus a six (6) month review;
 - f. Suggestion to have commitments on outreach to the public on rule of law and empowering civil society; and
 - g. Proposal that alongside the preparation of targets a mapping is carried out.
5. In commenting on the interventions, the Chair expressed his gratitude for all the comments. He proposed with regards to changes to the SMC for the paragraph on the PBF to be appropriately reinserted and for language to be included on public out reach. He recommended that the first review take place at nine (9) months rather than six (6) to avoid creating too much administrative burden on the Liberian Government and an appreciation of the various start-up challenges should be expected for these first months. The time frame for the review could be re-evaluated following the first review. The Chair acknowledged that the preparation of the targets would provide the opportunity to delve into the details of the PBC and Liberian Government's commitments. The Chair will initiate the preparation of targets during his upcoming mission and with respect to specific points raised will give a particular focus to legislative action, civil society empowerment, national reconciliation, and BIN reform.