

May 9th, 2011

To : Members of the PBC – Guinea Configuration

**Informal meeting of the Country Specific Configuration
of the PBC on Guinea, New York 20 April 2011**

Chair's Summary

On Wednesday, 20 April 2011, from 10:00 am to 1:00 p.m., took place the first meeting of the Country-Specific Configuration on Guinea of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC Guinea Configuration) under the chair of H.E. Ambassador Sylvie Lucas. The Government of Guinea was represented by H.E. Ambassador Alpha Ibrahima Sow, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Guinea to the United Nations in New York.

The purpose of the meeting was to debrief members of the Configuration on the outcome of the Chair's first mission to Guinea, which took place from 3 to 10 April 2011 and to discuss with members on possible entry points for the PBC's engagement with Guinea and the PBF's support. During her visit to Guinea, Ambassador Lucas was accompanied by ASG for Peacebuilding Support, Ms. Judy Cheng-Hopkins. The written report had been circulated to Members before the meeting.

The Chair elaborated on the results of the mission as detailed in the written report. The mission's objectives had been largely achieved: during her stay in Guinea, the Chair had been able to familiarize herself with the political, economic and social situation in Guinea and initiated dialogue with a large number of Guinean and international interlocutors, State and non-State actors, the UN presence on the ground (UNCT) and in the sub-region (UNOWA), representatives of the international community and of regional and sub-regional organizations. The Chair drew the following key points and preliminary conclusions from her first round of meetings and discussions:

- a) The Chair noted a determination of the Government, of the other Guinean actors and of the international community to engage with the PBC.
- b) The main actors are ready to support and to work with the

Government in a spirit of dialogue and consultation. The Chair's interlocutors stressed the need for a true dialogue to be initiated. Guineans want to be fully involved in the process and in the establishment of new democratic structures.

- c) The Government is receptive and open to the advice that the PBC would provide.
- d) There is consensus that the three priority areas identified by the Government are relevant and urgent: national reconciliation, security sector reform and youth and women employment. Interlocutors unanimously indicated that although Guinea had not experienced an open conflict, the country was in a very fragile situation following the consecutive authoritarian regimes, the human rights violations, the interethnic tensions and the bad governance which had plagued Guinea over the past 52 years and which needed to be urgently addressed.
- e) There should be an integrated approach, given the links between the three priority areas as well as their potential for mutual reinforcement.

The Chair stressed the need for the Configuration to further discuss the most appropriate mechanisms to accompany peacebuilding efforts on the ground, particularly from the political angle. Given the pilot nature of the PBC's engagement with Guinea - the first country on the PBC agenda where there is neither a peacekeeping nor an integrated mission -, it will be important to discuss whether, and to what extent, the existing structures - the UN Country Team and UNOWA - are in a position to play that role .

The Chair asked whether one should set up a more permanent political presence, such as the SRSG or ERSG established in other countries on the PBC agenda, or whether it would be sufficient to strengthen the Country Team with experts in peacebuilding? The Chair was under the impression on the ground that there was a certain inclination in favour of a political presence, which could accompany the authorities and the peacebuilding stakeholders on a daily basis and give continuous support in the process of peacebuilding.

The Chair also noted the need to further discuss what interaction the PBC could have with the Group of Friends of Guinea established at the initiative of the President.

The Chair underscored the issue of the articulation between the

coordination mechanisms of the PBC and the PBF on the ground, including the role and scope of the current Joint Steering Committee. The Chair expressed her expectation of a close collaboration between the two structures, in order for the PBF to play its catalytic role for peacebuilding activities. In the same vein, and with a view to achieve a coherent and integrated approach, the implication of bilateral partners would have to be addressed.

Mr. Eloho Ejeviome Otobo, Director and Deputy Head of PBSO, delivered a message on behalf of ASG Cheng -Hopkins. Within the three peacebuilding areas, Ms. Cheng-Hopkins had identified some entry points that can constitute quick wins for the PBF and help laying a foundation for the PBC engagement. Within the SSR, development of an overarching security policy and development of capacity for civilian oversight of the army were possible entry points. Within the national reconciliation, support to the establishment of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission and supporting reparation efforts for the victims of the 28 September 2009 violence, with a focus on those with immediate and vital needs such as medical treatment were possible entry points. More homework needed to be done to further target these victims and identify what kind of assistance had been already made available. Another issue that needed further attention was a society that appears to be more and more divided along the ethnic lines. Within the youth employment sector, Ms. Cheng -Hopkins suggested conducting a comprehensive labour market survey in order to have a better knowledge of potential demand by key economic sectors and guide subsequent training policy and programs. Mr. Otobo indicated that these and additional ideas would be explored and discussed with the Government of Guinea and its partners during the technical mission.

Delegates from Portugal, the USA, Pakistan, Japan, the EU, Canada, Mali, Senegal, Turkey, OIF, Indonesia, Benin, France, South Africa, Guinea Bissau, Sierra Leone, Guatemala, Cape Verde, China, Nigeria and Guinea took the floor. They all commended Ambassador Lucas for demonstrating a strong commitment to her role as Chair of the Guinea Configuration and for the visit she had completed as well as her comprehensive mission report. Most underscored that the PBC engagement will provide an impetus for a new era in Guinea and accompany the country on its path towards sustainable peace and development. They expressed their support to the three peacebuilding areas defined as priorities and suggested that the PBC be guided by an integrated as well as a regional approach in taking forward the peacebuilding agenda. A number of African countries expressed strong solidarity with the Government and the people of Guinea as it builds a new future and their willingness to support the Chair of the Guinean Configuration and work with her throughout the PBC's engagement with Guinea.

Speakers agreed that national reconciliation was the ‘priority of priorities’, and a number of them expressed their countries’ and organisations’ support to mechanisms such as a Truth and Reconciliation Commission as a way to advance national reconciliation and promote national dialogue.

Within the SSR area, members of the Configuration supported the idea of a specific meeting of the Configuration on SSR as a way to be informed on the planning steps already taken on the ground and to discuss possibilities for the PBC’s further engagement in this area.

On the priority of youth and women employment, members of the configuration underscored the need to further prioritise, taking into account linkages with the two other priority areas, the opportunity to innovate and help bringing together the UN expertise in the area of employment. Youth and women employment policies should also take into account the urgency of the current economic and financial situation and tap into the immense potential of the country, including mining resources.

Members also recommended the rapid and transparent conduct of the legislative elections to complete the transition and expressed their readiness to support the electoral process.

Many members insisted on the importance of a regional approach, considering that the three priorities are issues of concern to most countries in the region, and stressed the potential contribution of regional and sub-regional organisations.

On the issue of the capacity and configuration of the UN on the ground in light of this new phase of engagement of the PBC in Guinea, the need for further discussions was expressed. While some members argued for a more political presence given the priority areas of the PBC, and raised the role of regional structures, especially UNOWA, others recommended to build on existing structures and to strengthen the RC and the UNCT capacity. The Permanent Representative of Guinea advised to reinforce the UN Country Team with some PBC expertise and evaluate in six months’ time whether such a set-up was sufficient.

The Permanent Representative of Guinea welcomed the attention to his country that has been long sidelined and the new impetus given to cooperation generated by the country’s engagement with the PBC. He thanked members for their support and their interest in the Chair’s report. He expressed his confidence that the proposals made by the report would

attract the attention of the international community.

In her concluding remarks, the Chair highlighted her determination to adopt a regional approach. The PBC is now engaged with four countries in the West African sub-region, and the four configurations can benefit from each other's lessons; there are common challenges such as security sector reform, youth unemployment, drug trafficking and trans-national crime. The PBC engagement can also help forge respectively strengthen cooperation with the regional and sub-regional organisations. Regarding the status of the PRSP, the Chair informed members of the Configuration that the current document is a continuation of the PRSP II that will cover the period 2011-2012 and serve as the basis for the donors' conference planned by the Guinean authorities in cooperation with the international community. She suggested that scheduling such a donors' conference towards the end of 2011 would give time for the Government to deliver on key political and financial fronts such as the completion of the legislative elections and macro-economic reforms, thus creating a conducive environment for a dialogue with international partners during the donors' conference.

In terms of next steps, the Chair announced that a technical mission would go to Guinea from 2 to 6 May to pursue discussions with national stakeholders on the process of drafting a statement of mutual commitment and a peacebuilding priority plan. The objective was to agree on a short document providing an overarching strategy such as the document prepared for Liberia, and describing what the PBC can realistically commit to in response to the Government's expectations. The statement of mutual commitment will then guide the development of a peacebuilding priority plan that can either be extended or focused on PBF funding, the key being that consistency between the documents is ensured.

As many members had welcomed the idea of a thematic meeting on the security sector reform, the Chair reaffirmed her willingness to hold such a meeting, in the course of May, with the participation of relevant stakeholders, to allow Member States to appraise progress already made in that field and determine how the PBC can support the process.
