

Peacebuilding Commission
Informal meeting of the Liberian Country Specific Configuration
13 July 2011

Chairperson's Summary of the Discussion

Background

On 13 July 2011, the Chairperson of the Country Configuration for Liberia, H.R.H. Prince Zeid Ra'ad Zeid Al Hussein, presided over the sixth informal meeting of the Configuration. The purpose of the meeting was to brief the Configuration on a PBC Delegation's mission to Liberia. The Delegation comprised of six (6) members: Jordan, Liberia, Nigeria, Ukraine, United Kingdom and United States.

Briefing on the PBC Delegation's Mission to Liberia

On behalf of the Delegation, the Chairperson provided an overview of the mission undertaken from the 12 to 17 June 2011. He encouraged members to read the report for details. He summarized some of the key activities highlighting the field visit to Gbarnga and a series of meetings with Government officials, Liberian civil society, donor community and United Nations officials. He further expressed his appreciation to the Government, UNMIL, DPKO and PBSO for all of their support in realizing the mission. The Chairperson also acknowledged the important contributions of Ms. Marietta Robinson, an independent legal expert who joined the mission.

The Chairperson first described the status of the construction of the first Regional Justice and Security Hub in Gbarnga. He commended the Minister of Justice, who joined the Delegation in Gbarnga for meetings with County Authorities, a visit to the site of the Hub as well as court and police facilities. During the mission, the issue of the inclusion of the Circuit and Magistrate courts within the Hub complex was resolutely affirmed, noting that its building would be easily accessible to the public and distinctly separate from other components of the Hub, particular the Police. Additionally during the stay in Gbarnga, the Delegation met with Dr. Guanue, a Liberian Historian and Director of the Peacebuilding Programme at Cuttington University, a local chapter of the women's movement Whipnet and non-government organizations working in the county on rights awareness campaigns.

The Chairperson drew attention to some of the key meetings held with international and national stakeholders in Monrovia. He noted the meeting with the donor community. He also focused on a Security Sector Round Table, which was widely attended including the Chairs of the Legislative Defense Committees. This meeting provided a forum for the Delegation, along with the SRSG, to advocate on the need for finalizing the legal framework for Security Sector Reform through the enactment of the Omnibus Security Act currently pending before the Legislature. Reference was also made to the National Reconciliation TAG meeting with deference given to the Liberian Ambassador for her intervention in the meeting that facilitated reaching a conclusion on the need for a reconciliation strategy. In a later meeting with the President, the Chairperson proposed the idea of preparing a national strategy with H.E. Johnson-Sirleaf, who endorsed it. The Chairperson further mentioned meetings with the Judicial Institute and the Law Reform Commission, noting for the latter that the Act creating this body has now been passed. A meeting was also held with the Chief Justice during which the Delegation stressed the importance of oversight and case management. He further commented on visits to the National Police Academy and the Central Prison.

In terms of follow-up, the Chairperson focused on two key activities: fundraising and communication with the Security Council. He appealed to all the Members to work together to mobilize resources, in particular for the Hub. As part of the advisory role of the PBC to the Security Council, the Chairperson sought the Configuration's agreement to forward the Delegation's report to the Security Council with a cover letter.

Before opening the floor, the Chairperson expressed his appreciation for the Members of the Delegation noting that they substantively added to the findings of the Delegation. He strongly encouraged all members to participate in the next mission emphasizing that one can truly only understand the United Nations after seeing the work of the organization in the field.

Subsequently, two (2) Members of the PBC Delegation who visited Liberia took the floor. The United States Ambassador reinforced the Chairperson's summary praising the Chairperson's leadership and also commending the work of the Steering Group. The Nigerian Minister equally supported the Chairperson's summary and leadership commenting on the urgent need to continue strengthening the capacity of the Police.

20 July 2011