

**Peacebuilding Commission**  
**Informal meeting of the Liberian Country Specific Configuration**  
**22 May 2013**

**Chairperson's Summary of the Discussion**

**Background**

On 22 May 2013, the Liberia Configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission convened an informal meeting. The meeting was chaired by the H.E. Mr. Staffan Tillander, Chair of the Configuration, and provided an opportunity to hear a briefing by the Chair on his recent visit to Liberia, by PBSO on matters concerning the Peacebuilding Fund in Liberia, and by DPA on the Liberian Constitutional Reform process.

**Briefing on the PBC Chair's visit to Liberia (12-16 May)**

1. The Chair briefed the Configuration on his visit to Liberia from 12 to 16 May. He noted that, while in Liberia, he met with a broad range of stakeholders, including representatives of the Government (H.E. Mr. Amara Konneh, Minister of Finance and Acting Minister of Planning and Economic Affairs; H.E. Mr. Morris Dukuly, incoming Minister for Internal Affairs; and H.E. Mr. Blamoh Nelson, outgoing Minister for Internal Affairs), the civil society organizations, bilateral partners, international financial institutions, and representatives of the United Nations in Liberia. He also noted that the mission specifically addressed the following issues:

2. Justice and security: the Chair recognized the importance for the UN system to work together in a coordinated manner. In particular, he welcomed the recently published UNMIL/World Bank Public Expenditure Review of the Security Sector, which offers an important basis for a comprehensive approach to priority setting. He emphasized the importance of the UN interventions being effective and efficient, mentioning in particular the continuing challenges associated with the Justice and Security Trust Fund. The review and evaluation of the Justice and Security Joint Programme and the Trust Fund was of great importance for designing a well functioning mechanism. The Chair also noted that the ongoing discussions on the second tranche of the PBF allocation represents a useful opportunity to further strengthen the collaboration between the UN, the World Bank and the African Development Bank (AfDB). Speaking of the work of the PBF in Liberia, he welcomed the fact that Liberia provides an example where the 15% target for gender related funding from PBF could be reached and exceeded.

3. Reconciliation: the Chair informed that the recently appointed Minister of Internal Affairs, H.E. Mr. Morris Dukuly, showed interest in moving forward the process of national reconciliation. The Chair also noted that the Minister expressed his interest in briefing the Configuration on this issue, via VTC, in mid-June.

4. Land and natural resources: the Chair noted that the PBC is continuing its work on land issues. He stressed that the PBF has an important role to play in further increasing coordination and cooperation among partners (in particular between UN, World Bank and AfDB). The Chair also indicated that the Configuration should seek another opportunity to discuss the land issue in the near future.

5. PBC member states in Liberia: the Chair informed that an informal breakfast meeting was held with representatives of PBC countries in Liberia. He noted that those meetings were very useful and that an informal dialogue with representatives at country-level should be continued.

#### **Briefing by PBSO on matters concerning the Peacebuilding Fund in Liberia**

6. Mr. Brian Williams of PBSO briefed member states on his visit to Liberia and on the most recent developments of the PBF activities in the country. He recalled that the PBF 2011 allocation of \$21.5 millions mainly focused on justice and security sector activities, including \$8 million earmarked for hubs #2 to #5 that has not yet been accessed. In 2013, PBF aims to make an additional, phase II allocation of funding. The process began in November 2012, at which time the Assistant Secretary-General for Peacebuilding Support wrote to the Co-chairs of the Joint Steering Committee asking them to identify priorities for the second phase. As a result of preliminary discussions, the 2013 allocation will focus more on reconciliation, as significant funding remains from the first allocation for justice and security (for hubs 2-5, see above).

7. Mr. Williams noted that in comparison to 2011, Liberia has a much clearer programme document articulating its peace and security objectives, namely in the Agenda for Transformation (AfT), whose Pillar 1 (peace, justice and security) now includes a peacebuilding component. In view of this development, he indicated that PBF aims to reorient itself around the AfT, that the AfT will replace the PBF (expanded) Priority Plan for Liberia, and that the Joint Steering Committee should consider how it can rationalize its structure with the Pillar 1 Committee of the AfT.

8. Updating on the status of the hubs, he informed that hub #1 is close to completion, and services are beginning to be delivered out of the hub. Once partners in Liberia inform PBSO formally that they have achieved the agreed benchmarks for functionality of the first hub, the PBF will be ready to release the earmarked funding for hubs #2 and #3. He noted that, in order to ensure that next two hubs move faster than hub #1, the UN should work on common messages across UNMIL and the UNCT to negotiate with the government the best way to support hubs #2 and #3.

#### **Briefing by DPA on the Liberian Constitutional Reform process**

9. Mr. Jason Gluck, DPA, briefed the Configuration on the mission he undertook to support the ongoing reform process of the Liberian Constitution. He informed of the activity of the Constitution Review Committee in preparing an inclusive report which will serve as a basis for a new Constitution to be voted by the Liberian Parliament in August 2014 and eventually approved by referendum in August 2015. Mr. Gluck also highlighted that the process could face a number of challenges which include: the limited funding available to support the consultative process; the relations between different actors involved in the review (namely Parliament and Constitution Review Committee); risk of polarization and divisiveness in the society; and the structure of the review which could lead to a large number of questions addressed in the referendum.

## **Interaction with Member States**

10. The delegations of Australia, European Union, Indonesia, Norway, Liberia, and United States took the floor. They welcomed the briefings and expressed appreciation for the work of PBC and PBF in Liberia. In particular, comments focused on the following issues:

- The Commission should continue strengthening its political accompaniment of the Government of Liberia.
- The alignment of the PBF Priority Plan with the AFT represents a crucial step forward.
- On the constitutional reform, and without undermining the importance of national ownership, those involved in the process should look at similar processes undertaken by other countries.
- Engaging with Member States in the field represents an important element in the working methods of the PBC which should be replicated in other PBC countries.

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