

**Peacebuilding Commission**  
**Informal meeting of the Liberian Country Specific Configuration**  
**2 October 2013**

**Chairperson's Summary of the Discussion**

**Background**

On 2 October 2013, the Liberia Configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission convened an informal meeting. The meeting, which was chaired by the H.E. Mr. Staffan Tillander, Chair of the Configuration, 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 UNMIL on Security Sector Reform and the Liberian Constitutional Reform process.

**Briefing on the PBC Chair's visit to Liberia (15-20 September)**

1. **Reconciliation:** the Chair noted that, during his visit, H.E. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, President of Liberia, made clear the need for the reconciliation process to move forward. In this context, the Chair noted that the process is ready to move forward, including discussions on transitional justice and the use of the Palava Huts process for that purpose. Coordination of efforts in support of reconciliation and an efficient and effective funding mechanism will be needed to encourage partners to contribute to these efforts. In addition, partners, including the PBC should also explore ways in which experiences of countries that have undergone reconciliation processes can be shared and lessons learned. In that context, the Chair requested PBSO to convene a follow up meeting with UN partners and interested Member states to explore ways in which members of the PBC can contribute to reconciliation efforts in Liberia, including through experience sharing and resource mobilization.

2. **Justice and security:** the Chair noted that the SSR retreat showed that there was an agreement concerning the strong need to accelerate progress on justice and security. This should encompass reform of the police, judiciary and prosecution, among other. This reform should focus not only in the quantity (number of police and judges) but also in quality (confidence and respect towards institutions and the addressing of corruption). In this context, there is a need to strengthen management capacity to ensure long term sustainability and strengthen accountability oversight mechanisms. In order to achieve that, comprehensive programmes are needed, with priorities, sequencing and a holistic view to build management and institutional strength in different areas, and to ensure presence and access to justice and services in different parts of the country. It is also clear that there is a need for an immediate review of the Justice and Security Joint Programme and the Trust Fund.

The Chair noted that there is general agreement that the Hub concept provides a useful approach to extending access to justice outside of the capital. In this context, visibility of the hub is important, but the actual access to justice and security services should be the basis for measuring success. In the Gbarnga hub, it is now possible to measure and assess the impact in a number of areas mentioned in the Chair's visit report.

The Chair also noted that Government allocation of 1 million USD for hubs 2 and 3, in Harper and Zwedru was a welcome announcement. Indicators of progress in these two hubs should focus on

the actual access to services in key areas. The Chair reiterated the idea of a PBC visit to Harper and Zwedru in the Spring of 2014 to identify achievements and remaining challenges.

3. **Resource mobilization:** The Chair noted that, in the Statement of Mutual Commitments, the Country Specific Configuration committed to support and mobilize resources, in coordination with and in support to Liberian initiatives. The prerequisites for successful resource mobilization include Government's allocation and timely release of resources in support of peacebuilding areas as well as commitment on reform and implementation of measures. Comprehensive and coordinated programs as well as effective funding mechanisms are also essential.

The Chair noted that an important basis for resource mobilization must be long term substantial commitment from partners on financing. The PBC should support a Government of Liberia-led resource mobilization strategy. The Chair indicated his preparedness to continue supporting the marshalling of resources in close coordination with the Government of Liberia, through activities in Monrovia, New York and the capitals of bilateral partners.

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

UNMIL's Deputy Special Representative (Rule of Law), Mr. Tamrat Samuel briefed the Configuration via VTC from Monrovia. The DSRSG noted that the SSR retreat was extremely useful in identifying priorities in the sector as well as highlighting the need for the appropriate allocation and timely release of funding to move forward the security sector reform. There was also an agreement on the need for increased support from the international community to the sector as Liberian resources are limited. In this context, the DSRSG noted that the retreat also showed that security sector reform is not only about increased resources but it also requires stronger institutions, particularly with regards to management and accountability, which is currently lagging behind.

The DSRSG also noted that the Government of Liberia, UNMIL and key partners are already having discussions on how to simplify and increase the effectiveness existing management and funding structures in the justice and security sector. The DSRSG also informed that UNDP is giving the highest priority to the review of these mechanisms and working with other partners in that direction.

The DSRSG also briefed the Configuration on the status of the Constitutional Review Process, which faces several financial, institutional and time challenges. In addition, there are still divergent views on the scope of and methodology for the review. He noted that there is a UNDP project that is the main channel for support to this process.

With regard to the Regional Justice and Security Hubs, the DSRSG noted that the Gbarnga hub is effectively functioning. Despite some remaining challenges, a perception survey on the satisfaction of the population with the services being provided by the Hub, conducted by the Government, showed a very positive feedback by the people. A lessons learned workshop focusing on the provision of services in the Gbarnga hub will be conducted in the next few weeks.

Concerning hubs 2 and 3, in Harper and Zwedru respectively, the DSRSG noted that the efforts to establish them are already undergoing. He also noted that the relatively slow progress in their establishment was due to the need to effectively apply lessons learned from hub 1.

## **Briefing by the Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO)**

Assistant Secretary-General (ASG) for Peacebuilding Support, Ms, Judy Cheng-Hopkins, informed the Configuration that PBSO was about to approve its next allocation to Liberia (the second one after Liberia joined the PBC) for a total of 15 million USD. This allocation was subsequently approved by PBSO on Thursday 3 October. The Peacebuilding Priority Plan to be financed by this allocation supports the kick-starting of the National Reconciliation Roadmap and related initiatives, particularly concerning: community level conflict management, including the Palava Hut process; conflict sensitive management of land and natural resources; sustainable livelihoods, including youth and women economic empowerment; and constitutional and legal reform.

With regard to the Regional Justice and Security Hubs, ASG Cheng-Hopkins noted that, in line with the agreement between PBSO and the Government of Liberia, proceeding with implementation of the second and third hub was linked to trigger events concerning the level of operation and deployment of staff in the Gbarnga hub and the commitment of the Government to cover recurrent costs. Now that the Gbarnga hub is more than 80% operational, PBSO authorized the release of \$2,500,000 for each of hubs 2 and 3, for a total of \$5,000,000, on the understanding that the Government of Liberia will contribute \$500,000 for each of hubs 2 and 3, for a total of \$1,000,000 as capital contribution, in addition to covering their recurrent costs. In this context, ASG Cheng-Hopkins noted that it is critical to continue assessing the effective provision of services through surveys and lessons learned exercises.

## **Interaction with Member States**

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

- The national security institutions need to be ready, both in terms of quantity and quality, to take over UNMIL's security responsibilities throughout the Mission's transition.
- There is a need to focus on management, including financial, budgetary, fleet and human resources management, and accountability of security institutions.
- There is a strong commitment on the part of the Government of Liberia to move forward with the necessary reforms in the security sector.
- Reconciliation efforts should aim at getting the different groups to develop a shared perspective and address both political and non-political issues such as livelihoods and development.
- There are experiences and expertise that can be drawn from other countries and shared with Liberia.

**Issues to follow up:**

- Schedule a VTC with UNMIL on the status of the Constitutional Review Process (November 2013).
- Organize an event for stakeholders in New York on lessons learned on the implementation of the Hubs concept. This event should take place after the lessons learned workshop takes place in Monrovia.
- Schedule a follow up meeting of UN agencies and Member States on reconciliation to look at how the Configuration and the UN could increase their support in this area.
- Increase discussions on resource mobilization for peacebuilding in Liberia.
- Share information about PBF allocation to Liberia (already updated in this summary).

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