

**Summary of the PBC Liberia Configuration Steering Group Meeting
Wednesday, 30 October 2013 (9:00-10.30 a.m., New York)**

I. Update from UNMIL on reconciliation and other developments in Liberia

1. The implementation of the Strategic Roadmap for National Healing, Peacebuilding and Reconciliation was launched by the President of Liberia in June 2013 following the 2012 conference on the Roadmap in Gbarnga. The Roadmap aims to promote coherence among different actors and to articulate clear goals for reconciliation.
2. The following projects under reconciliation were underway:
 - 1) The Liberia National History Project is underway. The project attempts to rewrite the history of Liberia in a way that is inclusive and captures all Liberia people's contribution to their history. The project is led by the Governance Commission and involves UNESCO. Two workshops were established, and an advisory committee and a panel of experts consisting of Liberian historians, and other academics were also set up. The University of Liberia is providing a secretariat for the project. UNESCO will continue to provide technical and financial support.
 - 2) The National Symbol Project is looking at the national flag, national anthem, and awards to try to create new ones that would reflect the totality of Liberian society. An advisory board and expert team will also be set up. They plan to visit South Africa to see how the country had created new symbols uniting the country after the fall of apartheid.
 - 3) Transforming the Education System is a project UNICEF and UNESCO are working on with the Ministry of Education to develop a new curriculum which would promote coherence in the country and a culture of peace. UNMIL is working with UNESCO to see how they could launch a 'Culture of Peace' event (similar to the one previously launched in Angola) focusing on culture of peace, tolerance and coherence.

Launch of the Palava Hut

3. The President of Liberia launched the Palava Hut programme in Zwedru on 19 October. The ceremony was attended by the President of Côte d'Ivoire who presented \$10,000 to Liberia for the Palava Hut programme. In mid-November, a workshop (brainstorming forum) will take place to bring together a wide range of participants to examine how to operationalize the Palava Hut system and how to provide guidelines. Liberia was happy that the Palava Hut had taken off, and all parties concerned are being encouraged to expedite the implementation.

Projects under the PBF

4. Seven projects were approved under the PBF. Those under ‘reconciliation’ include Conflict Prevention and Mediation, Womens’ Economic Empowerment, Youth Recovery and Empowerment and Social Cohesion. Progress has been made in the past few months.

Coordination for reconciliation

5. The Ministry of Internal Affairs provides overall coordination supported by the Peacebuilding Office and also holds consultations with key institutions such as the Independent National Commission for Human Rights (INHRC), the Governance Commission and the Ministry of Gender and Development. Capacities among these institutions vary. The Governance Commission has made some progress, while the INHRC is struggling at the leadership level. The INHRC, however, will organize a forum in mid-November. There is also a call for a national peacebuilding and reconciliation steering committee which will include various stakeholders.
6. With regard to the UN, UNMIL is providing technical support through the pillars used to consolidate democratic governance, and within this [framework], UNMIL has a reconciliation and peace consolidation section. The UNCT provides technical and managerial support. UNDP will recruit a senior-level reconciliation and development specialist.
7. The UN would create a working group similar to the one on constitution-making to ensure coherence in the UN’s engagement and to increase the pace of implementation of the Roadmap. The UN also encourages south-south cooperation, taking the example of Rwanda: This was an idea by ASG Judy Cheng-Hopkins. UNMIL also pointed out that there is a plan to visit to Mozambique. [*Mr. Bautista Logioco (PBSO) later clarified that the idea was presented by the President of Liberia in a meeting with the ASG, and that there were no plans for a visit to Mozambique at this initial stage. He added that there was a discussion about a possible event on reconciliation experiences in Rwanda and Mozambique to be held in New York and/or Monrovia.*]
8. UNMIL has an outreach strategy extended to civil society and religious leaders. The Liberian Council of Churches will host a workshop on reconciliation and work with committees engaged in reconciliation. They should be advised to work on existing structures rather than building new ones.
9. There is a delay in the Palava Hut process, but overall, there has been good progress in reconciliation efforts. The Government needs to be encouraged to step up their pace and move forward. UNMIL later pointed out that it was important to find a balance between quantity and quality. It was the “actual talks” by the people that are being considered, but before they take place, many things need to be put in place. The delay is not a problem (It is not a “time factor”). It is important to do it the right way and avoid mistakes along the way. Since the launch, however, positive developments have taken place, i.e. the planning meeting and the forthcoming brainstorming forum. Coordination at the government level and within the UN existed.

10. Mr. Bautista Logioco of PBSO briefed about the recent internal UN meeting on reconciliation that took place at UNHQ. The meeting was attended by the Chair of the Liberia Configuration, DPKO, UNDP, UNMIL and PBSO to discuss how to strengthen support. The meeting agreed that a better coordination mechanism was key to reconciliation and the implementation of the Roadmap. The channelling of funds provided by different partners, including the \$15 million under the PBF, was also discussed. The meeting also discussed the Palava Hut launch and the concerns of the capacity of INHRC, as well as the balance between moving forward with the process and ways to do it properly. Sharing experiences and lessons learned from other countries through south–south cooperation was also an issue that was raised. Mr. Logioco informed that the concept note on reconciliation would be shared with those who participated in the above mentioned meeting shortly.
11. On south-south cooperation, UNMIL indicated that the Peacebuilding Office informed it was now a bilateral matter between the Government of Liberia and the Government of Rwanda. A single institutional exchange would have taken place, but as it was now a bilateral matter, the ministers and Presidents are involved. Mr. George Patten of the Permanent Mission of Liberia to the UN sought clarification on the “bilateral” aspect of south–south cooperation as initially it was intended to draw on lessons learned. Mr. Logioco clarified that initially, the two Governments will proceed bilaterally on setting the overall framework in which this cooperation will take place – through and MOU - and the UN would support implementation of the MOU.
12. UNMIL added that the Governance Commission was working with South Africa on south-south cooperation and also encouraged cooperation with Sierra Leone in this regard. Both UNMIL and MONUSCO were also looking at the hub concept. UNMIL would liaise with UNCT in Rwanda to ask if they could follow up with the government official responsible for reconciliation to finalize the MOU and come up with a programme of work. Ambassador Tillander stressed that finding a pragmatic way of moving forward was key. Support for country-level work was important, and there was also need to maintain a link with New York to exchange views and experiences.
13. Ambassador Tillander suggested holding a video presentation in New York on the reconciliation process for the Liberia configuration at the end of November or early December this year, which could include information about financial needs and request for support from partners. UNMIL would discuss the idea with the Minister of Internal Affairs and see how to make a package for the presentation.
14. At the previous CSC meeting, UNMIL (DSRSG Tamrat Samuel) had mentioned the need for support to the Constitutional Review Commission and the possibility to make a presentation to the Liberia CSC. It may be possible to have the two presentations at a meeting of the PBC CSC in November/December.
15. Ambassador Tillander pointed to three questions on reconciliations: 1) the Government’s financing; 2) the capacity of the INCHR and its leadership of the Palava Hut; and 3) the role of civil society in reconciliation. On financing, UNMIL responded that \$2 million had been earmarked by government for reconciliation which was less than had been expected. UNMIL also stressed that more support was needed from external partners, and suggested that Ambassador Tillander could use his good offices to bring in

the configuration's support. On the role of civil society, UNMIL referred to their ongoing engagement with civil society organizations and NGOs to see how they could support the process. On leadership, UNMIL agreed that support to build capacity of the INHRC was important. The SRSG was also concerned about the selection of the Chair of the INHRC. UNMIL indicated that the Chair was expected to be appointed in mid-January 2014. They added that several technical meetings had taken place to structure an operational framework. Thematic areas, processes and gaps were the main issues being discussed. Ambassador Tillander underlined that reconciliation was a comprehensive process based on the Roadmap. It should be assessed in its entirety, while recognizing the special importance of the Palava Hut process and emphasizing the need for an inclusive approach involving grassroots, civil society, youth and women.

16. Mr. Patten expressed his appreciation for the progress made and stressed that partners' support was important. He indicated that the Government of Liberia would contribute in a modest way and would make allocations annually at the domestic level. Investors in the country could also contribute as the environment was tranquil enough for investments. He also pointed to the issues of concessions that already have agreements for corporate social responsibility. He also noted that the Minister of Finance had agreed that resource mobilization had to be led by the Government. He also referred to the New Deal Compact being prepared, and indicated that it was important to see how far it could go. Ambassador Tillander clarified that at a breakfast meeting held in September 2013, it was indicated that the Compact process would be initiated and would end in a launch in early 2014. Clarity on the process and consultation would be useful in order to link this with possible resource mobilization by the Government, to which PBC would be ready to lend its support. UNMIL said that UNDP had been working on the Compact with the Government of Liberia, but it was unclear what the next steps were.

II. Resource mobilization

17. Mr. Patten expressed his appreciation for the progress made and stressed that partners' support was important. He indicated that the Government of Liberia would contribute in a modest way and would make allocations annually at the domestic level. Investors in the country could also contribute as the environment was tranquil enough for investments. He also pointed to the issues of concessions that already have agreements for corporate social responsibility. He also noted that the Minister of Finance had agreed that resource mobilization had to be led by the Government. He also referred to the New Deal Compact being prepared, and indicated that it was important to see how far it could go. Ambassador Tillander clarified that at a breakfast meeting held in September 2013, it was indicated that there was no clarity on how to initiate the Compact process yet. UNMIL said that UNDP had been working on the Compact with the Government of Liberia and that the Government hoped to complete the programmes according to the Compact once the process is launched.
18. UNDP asked how would the justice and security programme support the national reconciliation process and the Roadmap. UNMIL pointed to four reform processes taking place: constitutional review, security sector reform (including access to justice) and the decentralization process and underlined that reconciliation was critical to justice and security and the Palava Hut concept. On decentralization, UNMIL added that noted

that it was comprehensive programme; there is much political will but there was a need for resource mobilization.

19. Japan noted that on 11 December 2013, they would host a conference on reconciliation and gender related issues focusing on Yemen, Sierra Leone and Kyrgyzstan. Japan hoped to draw out examples that would be useful for Liberia. UNMIL noted that UN agencies were working on fine tuning their strategies on gender. They have also discussed how to mainstream human rights, particularly on gender, into the Palava Hut process.
