

**Summary of the PBC Liberia Configuration Steering Group Meeting
Wednesday, 16 April 2014 (9:00 a.m., New York)**

The Peacebuilding and Reconciliation Forum in Monrovia (23-25 April 2014)

1. The Chair of the PBC Liberia Configuration thanked the Peacebuilding Office (PBO) of the Ministry of Internal Affairs for sharing the background material on the Peacebuilding and Reconciliation Forum which had been distributed to the Steering Group prior to the meeting. He underlined that the documents for the Forum needed to be well prepared in advance which would help participants reach an agreement; bottlenecks should be identified; a coordinated approach must be taken; and government resources and comments were key to mobilizing resources.
2. PBO shared the following objectives of the Forum:
 - 1) Establish a Costed Action Plan for implementation of the Strategic Roadmap for National Healing and Reconciliation;
 - 2) Identify the challenges, gaps, and reasons for delays in the implementation of the Roadmap and establish ways to accelerate the process of the Roadmap;
 - 3) Develop a coordination mechanism; one that is much simpler in structure.
 - 4) Establish a resource mobilization strategy to galvanize national support for implementation of the Roadmap including support from grass-root level society.
3. PBO noted that the need for a costed action plan had also been emphasized by the President of Liberia at her meeting with the Chair in February in Monrovia. The President had also ensured that funding by the government would not be an issue for the implementation of the Roadmap. PBO also noted that key stakeholders for the implementation Roadmap would attend the Forum including Ambassador Weah and the senatorial committee on peacebuilding and reconciliation. It was hoped that the outcome of the Forum would be reported to the Cabinet for its endorsement of the institutional arrangements for the implementation of the Roadmap. As the budget planning period was approaching, it would be timely to achieve concrete action plans by the Government and other key actors in Liberia.
4. On the question raised by the Chair concerning how to deal with the bottlenecks and overlapping of coordination mechanisms for the implementation of the Roadmap, PBO explained that these were key issues to be addressed at the Forum. A draft proposal had been prepared in consultation with the UN team in Liberia on harmonizing structures for coordination mechanisms which would be taken up at the Forum. A number of issues had also been taken into account in discussions regarding coordination mechanisms including how and where issues should be discussed; the decision-making level; where government action could be taken; reporting lines, and other matters. The PBO also highlighted that civil society support and participation in the implementation was lacking, and that mechanisms for nation-wide public outreach was important. The proposal for a

communications strategy recommended by the Minister of Internal Affairs was important in this regard. Other issues to be discussed at the Forum were resource and capacity constraints and south-south cooperation.

Other matters regarding national reconciliation

5. PBO shared that stakeholders in Liberia wanted to see the Palava Hut talks initiated. However, some issues needed to be resolved including which actors to involve; possible duplication with the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission; reporting procedures; and others. It was also noted that following the outcome of the Palava Hut forum in November 2013, an ethnographic study would be conducted to enhance the understanding of the Palava Hut talks. The study would take about two weeks to select institutions to conduct the study, and then two months to complete the study.
6. UNMIL pointed to the need to discuss the type of funding mechanism for the Trust Fund. It was also important to ensure that the management structure did not supersede the oversight strategy of the Reconciliation Roadmap. Resource mobilization strategies needed clarification including the international aspect. On south-south cooperation, UNMIL indicated that it needed to be housed under an institution to take the lead, for instance, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. UNMIL was waiting for the Government's decision on this. PBO added that there was an issue as to how to formalize the process of engagement by actors concerned, i.e. the Ministries, PBC, etc. As a conclusion, UNMIL emphasized the importance that decisions made at the Forum are followed up on, to ensure accountability and sustainability, this also require that the Government shows commitment and that policymakers are well coordinated.

Comments by the Steering Group

7. The following comments were raised by the Steering Group members in New York:
 - Sufficient funding provided by the Government of Liberia for the Reconciliation Roadmap is important to show the government's commitment to the implementation of the reconciliation process.
 - The structure of the proposed National Reconciliation Trust Fund is unclear in terms of size of personnel, costs and other administrative arrangements. A light administrative structure may be preferable at this stage as the set up and funding sources are not yet clear.
 - On south-south cooperation, it is not a matter of where it should be housed but a matter of action. It should build on best practices from other countries and also be built into programmes to move ahead. Good examples of south-south cooperation would also encourage donor support.
 - Implementation of the Reconciliation Roadmap has been slow. It is important to identify what has happened for the past two years and how funds were spent.

- The Ministry of Foreign Affairs should be part of Liberia's engagement in peacebuilding activities. PBO later indicated that this would be informed to the Minister of Internal Affairs.
- Focusing on one or two issues under National Reconciliation would be useful for implementation of the Roadmap.

Presentation by UNMAS

8. UNMAS gave a presentation on the current status of the UNMAS programme in Liberia which would end in June 2014 unless funding was secured. Details of their programme had been shared with the Steering Group prior to the meeting. UNMAS underlined that its work including training and mentoring to the Armed Forces of Liberia and the Liberia National Police as well as Explosive Ordnance Disposal response were important for Liberia after the drawdown of UNMIL. A total of \$US1.7 million was needed for 12 months to continue activities. Four donor countries had confirmed interest in partial contributions towards this amount. However, firm pledges are yet to be received. The Permanent Mission of Liberia to the UN expressed its support for UNMAS' work and its willingness to assist UNMAS in reaching out to donors. UNMAS pointed out that it would need to decide by 30 April 2014 on the continuity of its presence in Liberia beyond June 2014.
