

Peacebuilding Commission
Informal meeting of the Guinea-Bissau Country Specific Configuration
12 May 2014

Chair's Summary

Background

- On 12 May 2014, the Chair of the Guinea-Bissau Country Specific Configuration, H.E. Mr. Antonio de Aguiar Patriota, held an informal meeting of the Configuration to discuss the electoral process in Guinea-Bissau, preparations for the post-election period including a possible donors' conference, and the upcoming renewal of UNIOGBIS' mandate by the Security Council. Mr. José Ramos-Horta, UNSG Special Representative and Head of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS), briefed the Configuration via VTC. Assistant Secretary-General Judy Cheng-Hopkins of the Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO), also took part.

Elections in Guinea-Bissau

- The Chair congratulated the people of Guinea-Bissau on the successful completion of the first round of elections held on 13 April. He noted that the voter turnout had hit a record high at 89.29% in the Presidential election, and 88.57% in the Legislative election, according to CNE figures.
- The Chair highlighted the importance of the PBC's continued engagement to ensure that the second round on 18 May would be conducted in a peaceful and orderly manner and that the results would be respected by all. It was a crucial moment for the country's restoration of constitutional order.
- Bearing this in mind, the Chair proposed that the Configuration issue a second press statement before the second round. The draft statement had been circulated to the Configuration prior to the meeting for their comments. He added that it would be useful if the Configuration expressed itself again on the importance of respecting the results of the elections.
- SRSR Ramos-Horta shared that the first round of the legislative and presidential elections had been conducted successfully on 13 April and had resulted in the legislative victory of the PAIGC (57 seats out of 102), a viable opposition PRS with 41 seats, and a second-round run-off between the independent candidate Nuno Nabiam (supported by the PRS) and Jose Mario Vaz (the PAIGC candidate). Guinea-Bissau now had a Prime Minister designate, Domingos Simoes Pereira, the President of the PAIGC, who would likely be tasked with forming the new government.
- The SRSR underlined that forming a government was not an easy task under any circumstances; against the current political landscape of Guinea Bissau, it was likely to be particularly challenging, as the future of the country hinged on whether or not the

current elections – both Legislative and Presidential - could be a first step towards the establishment of a new political equilibrium in Guinea-Bissau. He alerted that "no short-term miracles" should be expected and that the process of rebuilding national institutions would take time.

- He pointed out that the results of the elections would only matter if they were seen against the larger canvass of historical and political experience. Only then could we hope that the current elections could come to mean more than yet another item on a long list of frustrated political processes and serve as an opportunity to set new patterns. Should such new patterns emerge successfully, it would be possible to turn things around in Guinea-Bissau. Should the old patterns remain in place, however, failure this time around would probably be more costly than ever, as it seemed doubtful that Guinea-Bissau's 'second chances' would continue indefinitely.

Preparations for the post-election period

- The SRSG stated that any discussion of a 'new politics' in Guinea-Bissau would serve little purpose if the new politics were not backed with new resources and institutional structures necessary for it to succeed. The success or failure of the new government would depend on its ability to deliver relatively quickly, which in turn, hinged in large part on the willingness of the international community to make good on its pledges. In this regard, the SRSG urged all members of the Configuration to honor their pledges and to provide as much support as possible.

- He added that while Guinea-Bissau needed more resources, as critical as the amount the elected government will have at its disposal to underwrite much needed reforms would be a new approach to how these resources were managed and accounted for. UNIOGBIS had tabled the Governance Efficacy Amelioration Programme (GEAP) for discussion, and, in the course of planning for a donors' conference in September or October 2014, the SRSG urged all relevant parties to examine not only the ways in which funds could be mobilized, but would be spent responsibly and accountably to foster genuine peacebuilding in Guinea-Bissau.

- The SRSG also emphasized the need to make sure that the yardstick against which progress is measured would be realistic. The process of state re-building in Guinea-Bissau would take time. While more resources and responsible financial management were likely to make a big difference, no miracles should be expected from the new government.

- On the possible donors conference, the ASG of PBSO stressed that in order to attract donors, the conference should not portray the situation as "business as usual"; something

new had to be tabled. She added that GEAP was a good model for promoting transparency and efficiency in the budget. She expressed interest in seeing the details on GEAP, suggesting south-south cooperation might be useful for the programme.

Extension of UNIOGBIS' Mandate by the Security Council

- On the renewal of the mandate of UNIOGBIS, the SRSG suggested that the Security Council should be realistic not only about what the new government could do, but also what the UN itself could accomplish in Guinea-Bissau. To assume that a small political mission like UNIOGBIS could be an effective partner in all areas where Guinea-Bissau needed support would be overestimating its own capacity; to assume that UNIOGBIS could make a difference in all areas within the one-year timespan of a mandate, would mean setting ourselves up for failure.

- The SRSG underlined that the focus of UNIOGBIS should be primarily political, facilitating a process of comprehensive and genuine national political dialogue when and where possible, grounded in and feeding into the work the agencies, funds and programmes are carrying out in accordance with their mandates.

- The SRSG added that the partnership with the PBC as a political body, which has always been a part of UNIOGBIS' mandate, was essential. As discussions on defining role of the CSC on the ground take place within the next few months as the Peacebuilding Strategic Framework is revised and a Priority Plan for comprehensive PBF re-engagement articulated, the link with the PBC should remain a key building block of UNIOGBIS mandate.

- The Chair reminded the Configuration that Resolution 2103 (2013) of the Security Council not only recognized that the 2012 coup undermined the activities of the PBC in the country, but it also referred to PBC's readiness to re-engage, once conditions allow; it also stressed the "need to further realign the United Nations system's state-building and peacebuilding activities and the contribution of the Peacebuilding Fund to peace consolidation in Guinea-Bissau".

- The Chair noted that UNIOGBIS was also mandated to work with the PBC to support peacebuilding priorities in the country, as well as to help coordinate and mobilize international assistance. He pointed out that much had been achieved in this regard. PBF had supported projects designed to have a quick impact in the transitional phase, and his visit to Guinea-Bissau in January with ASG Judy Cheng-Hopkins, allowed the

Configuration to consider some key peacebuilding objectives, which still needed further consultation with legitimate authorities. The Chair also emphasized that the meetings in this Configuration had contributed to the improved coordination among key partners. He also reminded that the PBF has approved \$4.2 million for support to Guinea-Bissau's elections, youth and women, media training for the elections and the high-level strategic commission.

- Based on the briefing by the SRSG, the Chair proposed raising with the Security Council to strengthen the elements of UNIOGBIS mandate that refer to its partnership with the PBC, recognizing the potential for this partnership to help bring about enhanced coordination, additional strategic advice on a key set of core, achievable peacebuilding priorities, and greater synergy with the PBF.
- At the upcoming Security Council briefing on 19 May, the Chair also noted that he intended to touch on other important aspects in his briefing. He stressed that once legitimate authorities took office and a government was formed, it was crucial that the international community stepped in with much needed assistance. The High-Level Planning and Coordination Commission set up during the transitional period would have identified priority areas in this regard and would provide a useful roadmap on the way forward.
- The Chair underlined that it would be key to mobilize the necessary resources to address such priorities, ranging from the payment of salaries, support to agriculture (diversification of agricultural production) and food security, education, health, and also projects that would help create jobs and economic opportunity. It was also central to devise strategies that support women who played a key economic role in Guinea-Bissau.
- On the modernization of the security sector, the Chair underlined that it would remain essential to support the efforts led by ECOWAS, including with resources and expertise. The PBC remained available to play a coordinating role, and offer strategic advice, by providing a platform that can bring together the main partners around common objectives. This engagement could be important to help bring about the necessary political space for such complex processes to advance. He pointed out that security sector reform in Guinea-Bissau could not be viewed in isolation. It was linked to other key reforms, to economic revitalization, to reconciliation and political dialogue, to a process which entailed the creation of opportunities and political alternatives with a view to consolidating democratic stability.
- The Chair emphasized that expectations should also be attuned to such realities, so as to help us devise the most effective strategies to advance on realistic objectives.

Comments from Member States

- Member States congratulated the people of Guinea-Bissau and UNIOGBIS on the successful outcome of the first round of voting on 13 April. The high voters' rate was a sign of commitment by the political actors towards the peace and stability of the country. Support from the electoral observers also played an important role.

- Member States expressed their strong hope that the second round on 18 May would also conclude in a peaceful and transparent manner. It was a crucial moment for Guinea-Bissau now and the electoral campaign must be conducted in a civil manner, and the results must be respected by all political parties. Successful elections would open new windows of opportunities for Guinea-Bissau.

- Member States underlined the need to continue paying close attention to the political situation in Guinea-Bissau. Restoration of constitutional order is key to the peace and stability of Guinea-Bissau which would lead to the country's economic growth. The PBC played an important role in this regard and would be a useful platform for resource mobilization. There was also support expressed for GEAP, in particular, for public administration. Close coordination among countries and organizations such as the AU, CPLP, ECOWAS, EU and UN should be maintained, and support to Guinea-Bissau should be overlapped.

- Member States said that the donor's conference would be a useful way to discuss ways to promote dialogue and should be held soon after the new government was in place.

- Member States underlined that it was crucial that the mandate of UNIOGBIS was renewed at this important period of time for Guinea-Bissau. The Chair's suggestion to PBC role in the mandate is important.

- Member States overall supported the Chair's proposal to release a press statement and indicated they would send their comments on the text to PBSO by the given due date.

- A Member State expressed support for the EU debate on lifting sanctions against Guinea-Bissau.

- A Member State noted that the teacher strikes had been disrupting the school year in Guinea-Bissau; social peace was important for Guinea-Bissau.

- Other areas of support for the new government which Member States recommended included: 1) the safety of the democratic authorities as domestic capacity was limited, 2) technical and financial support, 3) rule of law and the fight against impunity, 4) rebuilding capacity and institutions, 5) security and justice reform, 6) economic planning, 7) poverty eradication, 8) development work, 9) food security. Member States also indicated the need for renewed commitment by the new government for wide-ranging reforms and that the local realities must be taken into account.

- Other points raised by Member States included 1) the need for full national ownership of the post-electoral transition process, 2) the need for the international community to call on all political parties to engage in dialogue, 3) ensure proper UN mandate where appropriate, 4) build and share best practices and lessons-learned.

- The SRSG responded that UNIOGBIS was continuing its efforts for the success of the second round of votes. UNIOGBIS had been listening to all political parties including the military and anticipated that there would be no negative consequences after the second round of votes.

- The SRSG pointed out that the installation of a new government was usually a difficult process. A wide range of consultations was ongoing with various stakeholders, and no major obstacles were expected in discussions to form the new government. The PRS was also engaged in dialogue to seek ways in which the party could also contribute to the new government. There was engagement by the military in the security sector reform process so that it would be carried out in an inclusive manner.

- The SRSG emphasized that it was crucial that the international community deliver its support to Guinea-Bissau after the new government was installed as the new authorities would not find the financial resources they need. Salaries needed to be paid for public servants and food needed to be provided. The SRSG commended WFP for its efforts and expressed his hope that donor countries continue to assist WFP, in particular, for nutritional supplements for children. He also praised UNDP for providing equipment for the elections.

- The SRSG also expressed his hope that by June or July the immediate necessities for the next six months are provided for Guinea-Bissau. At the same time, a strategy for the possible donor's conference in the fall would be prepared. He also underlined the important role of regional organizations in resource mobilization.

Conclusion

- The Chair thanked all participants for attending the Configuration meeting and also to SRSG Ramos-Horta for his very informative briefing

- The Chair concluded that the Configuration looked forward to the early formation of the new government of Guinea-Bissau in a new political culture. The Configuration is ready to engage rapidly once the new authorities are established.

- A donors' conference that will provide sustained support should be prepared once the new authorities are in place. The Chair notes that Guinea-Bissau did not necessarily need extraordinary amounts of support; even small amounts could produce significant results. The international community should demonstrate their support in a responsible manner. The Chair also pointed to the important role played by the UN and regional organizations as well as Nigeria and urged that they remain actively engaged.

- The Chair also referred to his meeting with World Bank Vice President for Africa, Mr. Makhtar Diop, and noted that the World Bank had expressed interest in coming back into Guinea-Bissau as quickly as possible. The Chair added that he had met with other authorities who were also motivated in a similar spirit.