

Informal meeting
of the Guinea Bissau configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission
in preparation for the Chair's trip to Bissau

Chair's Summary

16 April 2015

On 16 April, the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) configuration for Guinea Bissau held an informal meeting to announce the upcoming trip of its Chair, Ambassador Antonio de Aguiar Patriota, to Guinea Bissau from 19 to 21 April. Further to the successful donor round table of 25 March 2015 in Brussels, the Chair intends to meet with the national authorities and international partners in Bissau and explore opportunities for the PBC to advocate for sustainable peacebuilding efforts.

The Chair briefed the meeting on the national development plan, which was presented in Brussels, and for which donors mobilised an unprecedented 1.2 billion Euros. He underscored the need for political will and consensus among national stakeholders to implement this swiftly. In view of the current situation, the Chair suggested conveying messages of optimism, despite Guinea Bissau's continued fragility, about the historic opportunity for all Bissau Guineans to put aside differences from the past and work hand in hand to build a prosperous and peaceful country.

Moreover, the Chair emphasised the PBC's important role in aligning international partners, especially from the region, behind identified priorities for Guinea Bissau. These must be based on the Government road map focused on governance; poverty eradication; better access to services; and economic opportunities for all. The Chair urged international partners to deliver the pledges they made in Brussels and to coordinate their support for the consolidation of constitutional order and stability in Guinea Bissau.

The Chair underscored that the reform of the security sector (SSR) remains a critical area requiring the attention and cooperation of the international community. A representative of DPKO's SSR Unit at Headquarters briefed on the findings of a recent UN SSR-led support mission to Guinea Bissau, with the participation of the AU and EU. The PBC endorsed recommendations including urging the government and the international community to consider SSR as a long-term process, requiring coherent political, technical and financial support. The meeting also recommended that the Bissau Guinean authorities should develop a vision for comprehensive SSR based on the actual needs of the country, following the principle of democratic civilian oversight of the armed forces. PBC members all recognised the valuable contribution of ECOMIB, while calling for support to its extension beyond its current mandate expiration in June 2015.

The Permanent Representative of Guinea Bissau thanked the PBC and the active leadership of its Chair for the solidarity and continuous support in the run-up to the round-table meeting.

Ambassador Soares da Gama stated that the PBC was a credible and trustworthy partner of Guinea Bissau and the Chair's upcoming visit was timely and welcome. There was unanimous consent among PBC members on the need to consolidate the gains of the round table, especially while there is a positive political momentum. Portugal and Spain noted that the international community has a moral duty to follow through on pledges made at the round table and ensure there is an adequate follow-up mechanism to prevent overlap and inefficiency in delivery.

There was also overwhelming agreement on the need to keep all actors fully engaged in building national capacities. The Permanent Representative of Morocco exhorted the authorities to stay on the path of democratic consolidation while the Ambassador of Luxembourg emphasised the PBC's ability to prevent further unravelling of political tensions when there is effective political accompaniment. Luxembourg also called upon all stakeholders to live up to their responsibility and establish mutual accountability, based on expected reciprocity.

Before concluding the meeting, the Chair urged international community partners, especially members of the Security Council, to review a still widely-held view of Guinea Bissau as a country plagued by a serious problem of drug traffic. The Chair noted with concern that the Security Council emphasised this issue in its most recent UNIOGBIS mandate renewal document (Resolution 2203 of 2015), even though the most recent Secretary General report (S/2015/37) finds little evidence that narcotics trafficking still poses a major problem. The Chair defended the argument that a misrepresentation of the drug traffic issue is detrimental to the efforts of helping Guinea Bissau change its image, and may moreover unfairly perpetuate stigmatisation of the country as a narco-State.
