

**Informal Meeting
of the Guinea-Bissau configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission
Chair's Summary
21 October 2015**

On 21 October, the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) Configuration for Guinea Bissau held an informal meeting to review the political and economic situation in the aftermath of a recent governance crisis in Guinea-Bissau. The newly appointed Minister of Foreign Affairs, H.E. Mr. Artur Silva and the UNIOGBIS Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Marco Carmignani briefed the Configuration from Bissau.

The Chair of the PBC Guinea-Bissau Configuration, H.E. Ambassador Patriota welcomed the decisions which put an end to the two-month long stalemate, namely the conformation of a new Government led by Prime Minister Carlos Correia and the swearing –in of a new Cabinet. Ambassador Patriota underscored in this regard the importance of national, as well as regional and UN efforts to find a constitutional way out of the impasse. He noted the high social and economic impact the recent situation had on the population and warned of remaining tensions that could threaten the fragile stability. Nevertheless, the Chair expressed cautious optimism about the opportunity the country has to find lasting solutions to address the root causes of instability and avoid future relapses. The Chair praised the constructive role of civil society and the armed forces in particular for preventing the exacerbation of tensions, as well as the independence of the judiciary branch while reaffirming the PBC's commitment to provide assistance to the new Bissau Guinean authorities.

Foreign Minister Silva briefed the Configuration on the priorities for the newly appointed government of Guinea-Bissau. He noted the political will and commitment of the authorities to restore stability in the country through the implementation of a government plan and reforms. Mr. Silva stated that the Government had prioritised a meeting in the coming days with international partners such as the EU, AU, CPLP and ECOWAS, to take stock and adopt a forward looking governance approach. The Foreign Minister indicated that the Government will develop a policy agenda for Guinea-Bissau, together with partners, which would include the convening an International Contact Group and the strengthening of relations at the international, regional, and bilateral level. In this regard, the Government is envisaging the resumption and enhancement of international cooperation in order to follow-up on the pledges of the Brussels donor round table, as well as meetings with ECOWAS, BCEAO, the Gambia and Senegal. Among the most pressing priorities, the Minister of Foreign Affairs highlighted the continuation of the reform of the security sector.

DSRSG Carmignani briefed the Configuration on the country's challenges and opportunities ahead. He stated that the Presidential decree gave the Prime Minister the *ad interim* functions of Minister of interior and natural resources because the nominations for these posts had not yet been agreed upon. He informed that the newly sworn-in Cabinet consisting of 16 ministers and 14 Secretaries of State (of whom five and three respectively are women) did not include members of the main opposition party, the PRS, which chose not to be included

in the Cabinet. Mr. Carmignani spoke of the Government's assurances to honour commitments regarding the national dialogue process between State institutions, and to introduce a proposal for a national budget at the National Assembly. He highlighted the importance of reforming the public administration and other key sectors, as well as the need to address internal divisions within the PAIGC. The DSRSG welcomed the mutually reinforcing actions and statements of the international community and the mediation efforts of ECOWAS through its Special Envoy, former President Obasanjo. He reiterated UNIOGBIS' support, especially with regard to the national commission for dialogue and reconciliation and the stability pact, and welcomed the cooperation with the PBC and PBSO.

Portugal, Nigeria, Timor-Leste, the EU, Spain, Ethiopia, and Luxembourg took the floor to express satisfaction with the peaceful resolution of the impasse and the democratically mature actions of the armed forces throughout the period of crisis. Yet, all the speakers conveyed concern about the prevailing tensions and remaining fragility. In praising the efforts of the UN, the international community and regional actors, the participants supported the initiative of convening a meeting of the International Contact Group for Guinea-Bissau to relaunch the momentum needed for the "Terra Ranka" programme. Portugal stressed the critical importance of sustainable and reliable funding for the stability of the country and suggested the participation of International Financial Institutions in the International Contact Group.

The need for rebuilding trust between national and international partners was mentioned as a vital step towards restoring mutual confidence. Reacting to some of the statements, Foreign Minister Silva reaffirmed the commitment of the authorities to move forward in an inclusive manner in close partnership with international stakeholders. Mr. Carmignani referred to the economic situation and noted the moderate economic growth after the temporary slow-down caused by two months of government inaction, but expressed concern over the slow resumption of public services such as provision of water and electricity.

The Assistant Secretary-General (ASG) for Peacebuilding Support, Mr. Fernandez-Taranco emphasized the role of the PBC in supporting efforts of preventive diplomacy in conjunction with other partners during the recent crisis. Mr. Fernandez-Taranco stressed the need for Guinea-Bissau to translate the political will of this Government into sustained efforts and actions while reaffirming PBF's support of USD \$ 10 million to fund the Priority Plan for projects on national dialogue and reconciliation and SSR.

In conclusion, the Chair reiterated the PBC's support for the Government and its efforts to consolidate stability in Guinea-Bissau. He welcomed the appointment of women in senior positions in the new Cabinet and pledged support for the organization of a meeting of the International Contact Group. Furthermore, the Chair announced plans to travel to Guinea-Bissau in early 2016. In closing the Configuration agreed to issue a statement.
