

**Statement by the Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission's country specific configuration for Liberia to the Security Council delivered by Mr. Joakim Vaverka, Officer-in-Charge, Permanent Mission of Sweden to the United Nations [as delivered]**

**25 August 2016**

Madame President,

Thank you for the invitation to brief the Security Council on behalf the Peacebuilding Commission. Today, I will present the main focus of the commission's work in the past couple of months, as well as our upcoming priorities for the fall of 2016.

Let me first take this opportunity to congratulate the Liberian government on its successful resumption of security responsibilities on 30 June. An important milestone was reached this summer, and I would also like to commend the Peacekeeping Mission in Liberia for the continued support provided during this transition.

Madame President,

In May, the Government of Liberia and the Peacebuilding Commission launched the revised Statement of Mutual Commitments on Peacebuilding in Liberia (SMC). It captures the priority actions to be undertaken by the Government and the PBC respectively for the next two years. I feel confident that it provides a robust basis for our work in support of peacebuilding efforts during a crucial period of transition for Liberia.

In the Statement of Mutual Commitments, the Commission commits to continue to provide support in the areas of promoting national reconciliation, security sector development, and strengthening the rule of law. I was happy to note that the SMC was consistently referred to by Liberian officials during the recent visit to Liberia by the Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission, Ambassador Kamau. It signaled to us a true sense of shared ownership and genuine interest to roll out commitments without delay. In addition to the three areas just mentioned, the PBC will have reason to follow up on conversations with national interlocutors regarding good governance, employment generation, equal treatment of ethnic and religious groups, as well as the need to build trust and confidence between the security sector and citizens. The PBC also came away from the visit with renewed commitment to forge stronger collaborations with the International Financial Institutions.

Madame President,

Allow me to describe two areas that the Commission will devote special attention to over the coming months. First of all, we will pay particular attention to preparations for the upcoming presidential and legislative **elections in 2017**. This will include engaging with national stakeholders such as the National Election Commission and the Governance Commission to support efforts by the government to ensure that elections are successfully conducted and contribute to further democratic consolidation. By addressing critical factors early, we hope that the PBC can support preventive measures, ranging from ensuring that efficient and quick mechanisms for dispute resolution are in place, to support regular channels for dialogue between the security forces and the population. In addition, the PBC will emphasize the importance of women's, youth and civil society participation throughout the electoral process.

Second, the commission will pay close attention to **reconciliation**. As has been noted in the report by the Secretary General, there have been delays in advancing national reconciliation. We know that for a prosperous and stable Liberia in the years to come, it will be important to keep strengthening the social fabric and social cohesion. The Liberian government has described reconciliation as a multidimensional process of overcoming social, political, and religious cleavages; healing the physical and psychological wounds from the civil war; and confronting and addressing historical and structural wrongs. This cuts to the core of addressing root causes of conflict, and we remain committed to helping the Liberian authorities in this pursuit.

Madame President,

Later this fall, important decisions will be made in the Security Council regarding the future United Nations presence in Liberia. In preparation for those deliberations, and in fulfilling our advisory mandate, the Peacebuilding Commission looks forward to providing succinct and targeted advice on the longer-term peacebuilding needs and priorities. The PBC Chair of the Liberia Configuration will be travelling to Liberia early this fall, to consult with the government, national stakeholders and international actors. In the SMC, the PBC has furthermore committed to convening a dedicated *multi-stakeholder forum* on Liberia to discuss peacebuilding priorities for this purpose. It is our hope that such advice will complement the input the Council receives from other parts of the UN system, and in the end contribute to helping the UN and international community to plan strategically and comprehensively for a smooth and successful transition.

In conclusion, Madame President, let me reiterate what we have stated before; there are no excuses for a fragmented approach from the UN System, or from the international community, in our support for sustaining peace. As the Peacekeeping Mission continues to draw down, we have a responsibility to sustain international attention on Liberia

during and beyond the transition, both in terms of mobilizing financial support and political accompaniment. The resolutions on Sustaining Peace adopted this spring provide clear guidance and strong impetus in this regard. The PBC looks forward to continued close collaboration with the Security Council on supporting Liberia on its path towards further consolidation of peace over the coming years.

I thank you.