

21 October 2016

To : Members of the PBC – Burundi Configuration

**Informal meeting of the Burundi Configuration of the PBC, New York,
19 October 2016**

Chair's Summary

1. On 19 October 2016, the Burundi Configuration of the UN Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), held an informal meeting under the chairmanship of H. E. Ambassador Jürg Lauber to discuss the situation in Burundi. PBC members were briefed by H. E. Ambassador Albert Shingiro, Permanent Representative of Burundi to the United Nations, by Ms. Mari Yamashita, Director and PBSO Deputy Head, and by Mr. Andrew Gilmour, Assistant Secretary-General of OHCHR.
2. In his introductory remarks, the Chair updated Members on the policy retreat on the socio-economic situation and peacebuilding in Burundi which he planned to co-organize with the UN Resident Coordinator, in cooperation with the World Bank and in consultation with the Government of Burundi, from 7 to 9 November 2016 near Geneva. He recalled some significant developments that took place since the last PBC meeting on Burundi on 13 July. These include the Security Council resolution 2303 adopted on 29 July, the second round of the EAC-led talks that took place from 12 to 14 July in Arusha, the 27th AU summit that took place on 17 – 18 July in Kigali, and the extraordinary EAC Summit of 8 September, where former President Benjamin Mkapa, briefed the leaders of EAC Member States on the course of the Inter-Burundian Dialogue.
3. He also referred to developments that had taken place in the area of human rights and international criminal justice, including the report of the UN Independent Investigation in Burundi, presented to the Human Rights Council on 27 September, the subsequent resolution on 30 September, and the reactions of the Government of Burundi, that included declaring the three experts persona non grata, suspension of cooperation with the OHCHR, and, withdrawal from the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.
4. The Chair noted that these developments posed additional challenges for the dialogue between the Government and international partners.
5. He further recalled the discussions he had in July with economic actors in Burundi, which suggested that the deterioration of the socio-economic situation has the potential to become an additional driver of the crisis. He noted that the continuous weakening of the economy includes a decline in foreign currency reserves, a slowdown of private sector

activities and investments, increased domestic public debt, cuts in social spending, rising unemployment as well as decreasing donor engagement.

6. Against this background, the Chair had agreed with the Government and key multilateral partners that he would, together with Mr Paolo Lembo, the UN Resident Coordinator in Burundi, organize a policy retreat on the socioeconomic situation and peacebuilding in Burundi from 7 to 9 November near Geneva. The Chair clarified that this retreat was not a pledging conference, and that it had been designed as a frank policy dialogue behind closed doors between the Government and its main multilateral partners, to share analysis of the socio-economic challenges and exchange views on policy responses, including coherence among policies.
7. The Chair informed members that in order to enable an informal and focused conversation, the co-organizers had agreed to limit the participation: the Government of Burundi, the UN system, the European Union, the World Bank, the IMF and the African Development Bank have been invited to participate. Former President Mkapa has been also invited, in his capacity as EAC Facilitator for the dialogue process; the UN Special Advisort Benomar has been also invited.
8. The Chair's introductory remarks were followed by briefings by H. E. Ambassador Albert Shingiro, Permanent Representative of Burundi to the United Nations, by Ms. Mari Yamashita, Director and PBSO Deputy Head, and by Mr. Andrew Gilmour, Assistant Secretary-General of OHCHR. [*The three briefings are attached to the present summary for easy reference*].
9. The following Members of the Configuration took the floor: Belgium, Canada, China, Egypt, the EU, France, Italy, Japan, Kenya, Morocco, the Netherlands, Russian Federation, Tanzania and the US. They welcomed the policy retreat on the socio-economic situation, and underlined the need to have a holistic approach to the Burundi crisis, focusing on both political and economic aspects. In this regards, the invitation to former President Mkapa to the retreat was welcomed. They expressed interest in the outcome of the retreat both in terms of the substance and in terms of channel of communication between Burundi and its partners. Delegates expressed various views on the decisions taken by Burundi to suspend cooperation with OHCHR; many expressed their hope that the cooperation between Burundi and OHCHR would normalise. Some delegates also made observations on the decision taken by the Government of Burundi to withdraw from the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. On this last point, the Permanent Representative of Burundi clarified that adhering and withdrawing from this kind of international mechanisms is a sovereign decision of each member state.
10. In concluding the meeting, the Chair thanked members of the PBC for their support for the policy retreat; he committed to organise a debriefing meeting after the retreat.
