

3 May 2017

To : Members of the PBC Liberia Configuration

Ambassadorial-level meeting of the Peacebuilding Commission

Liberia Configuration, 24 April 2017

Chair's Summary

Background

On 24 April 2017, the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) Liberia Configuration held an Ambassadorial-level meeting under the chairmanship of H.E. Ms. Irina Schoulgin Nyoni of Sweden to discuss the Liberia Peacebuilding Plan and the role of the Peacebuilding Commission; preparations for the elections in Liberia; and to share other updates including with respect to: the finalisation of the Review of progress in the implementation of the statement of mutual commitments (SMC) on peacebuilding in Liberia; the United Nations Country Team mapping; and the justice and security sector public expenditure review.

Senior officials, including the Minister of Internal Affairs, H.E. Henrique F. Tokpa, Chairman, National Elections Commission, Cllr. Jerome Kokoyah, Deputy Minister for Budget, H.E. Tanneh Brunson, Deputy Minister for Budget, Deputy Minister of Justice for Administration and Public Safety, Cllr. Wheatonia Y. Dixon Barnes, SRSG for Liberia and Head of UNMIL Mr. Farid Zarif, DSRSG (Political and Rule of Law) UNMIL Mr. Waldemar Vrey, DSRSG (Peace Consolidation) and RC, Mr. Yacoub El Hillo, Permanent Representative of Liberia to the UN, H.E. Lewis Brown, and resident PBC members, the Assistant Secretary-General for Peacebuilding Support, Mr. Oscar Fernandez-Taranco, and Director, PBSO, Ms. Mari Yamashita.

Introductory Remarks/briefing by the Chair

1. In her introductory remarks, the Chair highlighted the busy time ahead for Liberia with two historic transitions; the election of a new government and the departure of the UN Peacekeeping Mission. Turning to the first agenda item the Chair welcomed the visionary Peacebuilding Plan requested by the Security Council in its resolution

2333 of 23 December 2016 and the engagement of the PBC in its drafting. She welcomed the approach to preparing the plan which was owned by national actors, built on existing policies and strategies, and took place at country level. The ambitious plan included commitments from a wide range of actors, including political parties, civil society, UN, World Bank, ECOWAS and other international partners. The plan reflected the concept of sustaining peace: a strongly integrated approach to peace and security, human rights and development, grounded in inclusive national ownership; and supported by a broad set of partner.

2. The Chair noted that the plan also set out a clear role for the PBC in supporting implementation and monitoring. It did not replace the revised SMC which would guide the work of the configuration until spring 2018, concluding when the second phase of the peacebuilding plan would start. This would be the opportunity to define what should form the basis of PBC engagement in Liberia going forward.

On the Liberia Peacebuilding Plan

3. The Minister of Internal Affairs, H.E. Henrique F. Tokpa thanked the leadership of UNMIL, the UNCT and other international partners for their support to the development of the peacebuilding plan. He noted that the plan is both a framework and a tool for sustaining peace in Liberia. It is also aligned with the SMC. The Minister noted the fiscal challenges faced but underlined the commitment of the Government of Liberia to the peacebuilding plan.
4. Deputy Minister of Justice for Administration and Public Safety, Cllr. Wheatonia Y. Dixon Barnes also noted that the peacebuilding plan complements the SMC and called on the international community for support to the new plan.
5. The SRSG for Liberia and Head of UNMIL Mr. Farid Zarif welcomed the visionary peacebuilding plan and its sharp focus on the drivers of conflict. He welcomed the inclusion of non-state actors, including the media and political parties in the development of the plan. The SRSG emphasised the Deputy Minister's call for continued international commitment and support.
6. The Assistant Secretary-General for Peacebuilding Support, Mr. Oscar Fernandez-Taranco stressed that the peacebuilding plan evidenced the new way of working of the PBC and its commitment to sustaining peace and its bridging and advisory role across the UN system. The ASG noted the significant challenges ahead for Liberia in its transition and the importance of inclusive national ownership, strong leadership and joined up support of the international community (including the World Bank, EU and ECOWAS) to ensure we deliver on the promise of sustaining peace. The ASG noted that both the ambitious plan and the SMC call on the PBC configuration for its support and already last week, a mission in support of the justice and security sector public expenditure review was undertaken. The Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) would

also support projects on preventing electoral violence, justice and reconciliation, women and youth, in addition to the cross-border project ongoing. The PBC could play an important role in mobilising political and financial support, and serve as a forum to bring coherence and coordination to the many ongoing processes in Liberia, ensuring they are mutually reinforcing.

7. Member States welcomed the peacebuilding plan as a model example and a significant milestone in support of sustaining peace. The meeting welcomed its emphasis on national ownership, and a whole-UN, multi-stakeholder approach, including with respect to (sub)regional organizations. The plan's inclusion of gender equality was welcomed. The importance of reconciliation and the strong link to sustainable development and the 2030 Agenda was also emphasised. The meeting noted the important role of the PBC in supporting the peacebuilding plan, as a forum for regular briefings on progress on the plan, ensuring alignment and cohesion of disparate strategies/actors and provide sharp and focused advice. It was suggested that lessons learned on the contribution to sustaining peace of the UN system in Liberia inform Security Council mandates in the future.
8. The Permanent Representative of Liberia to the UN, H.E. Lewis Brown emphasised Liberia as a successful model for the PBC. He also stressed the serious economic stress faced by the country and the role of the PBC in sustaining international support, including in partnership with IFIs.

On the preparations for the elections

9. The Chairman of the National Elections Commission, Cllr. Jerome Kokoyah briefed on preparations to date for the elections scheduled for October 2017, including engagement with all political parties. The total elections budget was US\$43 million, with \$20 million committed by the Government, and discussions with donors ongoing. He informed that the process for drafting of electoral regulations and voter registration have already been completed and that the Interparty Consultative Committee meet regularly.. Registration of presidential candidates will take place between June 19 and July 11.

On other updates

10. DSRSG (Political and Rule of Law) UNMIL Mr. Waldemar Vrey briefed on the recent UN (DPKO and PBSO) and World Bank mission in support of the planned justice and security sector public expenditure review. The outcome of the review is intended to be ready for the incoming government in April 2018, and in support of phase 2 of the peacebuilding plan. A key contribution of this project will be to help in the prioritisation of expenditures.

11. DSRSG (Peace Consolidation) and RC, Mr. Yacoub El Hillo briefed on the UN Country Team mapping exercise and warned of the massive drop in support that will be experienced with the end of the mission. He highlighted areas in need of significant support including human rights. The DSRSG noted some of the challenges in the UN system in transition and the need for support, including in the area of asset transfer from the mission to the UNCT. The PBC, PBSO and PBF could play an important role in continuing to follow Liberia post-transition.

Conclusion

12. Ms. Mari Yamashita of PBSO reflected in conclusion on the clear expectations for the PBC in support of Liberia; including through sharp and focused advice to the Security Council on lessons learned, as an invaluable forum to support the implementation of the Peacebuilding Plan as well as the elections and the transition to the new government.
13. The Chair noted that while the Peacebuilding Plan is a new model, there were also lessons to learn from the past. She noted the importance of gender mainstreaming and the role of the UNCT mapping in coherent implementation and financing, including with respect to human rights capacities. The Chair highlighted that Sweden would travel to Liberia in the coming months. She concluded by thanking all speakers and members of the configuration and looked forward to its ongoing engagement.
