

08 May 2017

To: Members of the Peacebuilding Commission, Burundi Configuration

Informal meeting of the Burundi Configuration of the PBC

New York, 26 April 2017

Chair 's Summary

1. The Chair of the PBC Burundi Configuration, H.E. Mr. Jürg Lauber, briefed the Configuration on 26 April 2017 on his recent visit to Tanzania and Burundi (March 27 - 31). In his report, Ambassador Lauber emphasized that the trip was designed as a continuation of the socioeconomic discussion which had started in November 2016 with the consultations of the multilateral partners in Geneva. In addition, the Chair wanted to pursue his engagement with H.E. Mr. Benjamin Mkapa, former President of Tanzania, who facilitates the inter-Burundian dialogue on behalf of the East African Community.
2. The Chair noted that he had started his visit in Dar es Salaam where he met EAC-Facilitator Mkapa as well as Bella Bird, Country Director of the World Bank, Representatives of the Tanzanian Foreign Ministry, UN agencies and the diplomatic community on 27-28 March.
3. The Chair noted that in Burundi he had had the opportunity to meet the President, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, the Minister of Finance, the President of the National Assembly, the Ombudsman, the Archbishop of the Catholic Church, the Chairman of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, the Special Envoy of the African Union, representatives of the private sector, of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR), political parties, civil society, the diplomatic community, the ICRC and a group of young people who engage in PBF-funded projects with a focus on social cohesion and reconciliation.
4. The Chair summarized his meetings along the main subjects (a) socioeconomic situation, (b) political process, (c) national reconciliation and (d) security, human rights, refugee situation [*for more details, see the report of his visit which was circulated on 26 April*].



5. In his report, the Chair highlighted the working lunch of 30 March in Bujumbura which he had co-chaired with Burundi's Foreign Minister H.E. Mr. Alain-Aimé Nyamitwe and the UN Resident Coordinator a.i. Bo Viktor Nylund. The lunch brought a number of high-ranking government officials and representatives of various UN agencies together for an exchange on the socioeconomic situation. In this framework, the Government emphasized the need to address both humanitarian and development needs as well as macroeconomic stability. The Government had used this opportunity to express its gratitude for the continuous international support. During that working lunch, the Government and its UN partners mentioned encouraging examples of cooperation, but also noted certain challenges and gaps and the need to intensify discussions on the modalities of cooperation.
6. That meeting and other contacts in Bujumbura motivated the Chair to pursue the dialogue on socioeconomic questions. He informed the Configuration about his plans to hold a socioeconomic discussion with the Government and Burundi's main international partners, possibly in July in Bujumbura. This conversation will focus on the macroeconomic situation and the socioeconomic challenges, on the one hand, and on the modalities of cooperation, on the other hand.
7. The Chair also briefed the Configuration about the trip he had undertaken to Washington DC on 21 April to pursue engagement in the margins of the Spring Meetings of the IFIs. During this trip, he met with H.E. Mr. Domitien Ndiwokubwayo, Burundi's Minister of Finance, as well as with Representatives of the World Bank and the IMF. From these meetings in DC, he noted that contacts between the World Bank and the IMF with the Government of Burundi were still on and that key programs were under way to address the on-going challenges of fragility. He also pointed to the continuing challenges and the need for strengthening trust between Burundi and its partners. They welcomed the idea of a socioeconomic meeting this summer in Bujumbura.
8. In his conclusions, the Chair suggested that the Configuration could support peacebuilding in Burundi in the following ways:
 - (a) By encouraging all stakeholders to engage fully and participate without pre-conditions in the EAC-led Burundi Dialogue and by mobilizing international and regional support for these efforts, including through the upcoming EAC Summit;
 - (b) By inviting Burundi's international partners to carefully consider the economic and fiscal situation of Burundi and to discuss ways to make the cooperation more fruitful and to address existing political and technical obstacles;



- (c) By following the security and human rights situation in Burundi carefully and by encouraging the Government and OHCHR to agree on the conditions for the continuation of their cooperation;
 - (d) By considering support for the reconciliation process led by the CVR;
 - (e) By considering additional support to grass-roots efforts for peacebuilding, building on the PBF investment and with a view to strengthen resilience, in particular by engaging with youth and women.
9. Ms. Mari Yamashita, Director and Deputy Head of the Peacebuilding Support Office, welcomed the conclusions which the Chair had drawn from his trips to Burundi/Tanzania and Washington DC. She noted that the socioeconomic discussions, which the Chair had been leading, suggest that macro-economic reforms and socio-economic interventions can be intentionally designed to prevent the crisis from further escalating and to support core peacebuilding objectives. She emphasized that PBSO maintained its commitment to Burundi, including through PBF projects in the area of dialogue, human rights, youth engagement in social cohesion and community security, women's participation in political decision-making and regional dialogue efforts. Ms. Yamashita also suggested that the PBC considers holding a dedicated meeting on youth & peacebuilding in Burundi, possibly with the participation of young Burundians. She outlined some ideas for future PBF engagement with a focus on social cohesion, the preparation of the return of refugees and IDPs and support to the efforts of the SESG for the Great Lakes Region with a cross-border dimension (*cf. Ms. Yamashita's full statement for further details*).
10. H.E. Mr. Albert Shingiro, the Permanent Representative of Burundi to the UN, who had travelled with the Chair, shared the positive assessment of the mission. In particular, he welcomed the Chair's intention to support reconciliation efforts in Burundi and to follow-up on the socioeconomic consultations in Geneva with a meeting in Bujumbura this summer. Ambassador Shingiro said that the socioeconomic challenges continue and mentioned specific needs in the areas of health, food security and education. While referring to international support, including plans for a new program by the World Bank, he also called upon international partners to resume direct budgetary support. Ambassador Shingiro then referred to both the EAC-facilitation and to the process led by the National Commission for the Inter-Burundian Dialogue (CNDI). He expressed confidence in the facilitation efforts of former President Mkapa and called the return of 5 opposition leaders and numerous refugees a sign for a considerable improvement of the security situation. The launch of a new national human rights strategy by the National Commission for Human Rights (CNDH) was also highlighted in his briefing. He concluded by noting that the Government of Burundi had accepted the candidates proposed by the Secretary General for the positions of Special



Envoy and Resident Coordinator in Burundi. According to Ambassador Shingiro, these decisions as well as the continuation of the negotiations with the OHCHR and the Office of the Special Advisor show that Burundi attaches great importance to good relations with the United Nations (*cf. Ambassador Shingiro's full statement for further details*).

11. Following the briefings, Representatives of France, Tanzania, Kenya, Norway, the African Union, the Netherlands, Uganda, the European Union, the United Kingdom, Belgium, Canada, the Republic of Korea and Sweden took the floor to make comments and ask questions. In their statements, they welcomed the visits of the Chair and his intention to continue the socioeconomic dialogue with the government and its international partners. Various donor countries pointed out that only direct budget support had been suspended, while numerous socioeconomic and humanitarian programs continued. Some Members quoted the volumes of their ongoing programs. The need for a constructive engagement of all stakeholders in the EAC-led dialogue process was underlined by many delegates. Regional engagement was generally encouraged. While the Configuration Members expressed a general interest to remain engaged in Burundi and great readiness to address the needs of the population, they also referred to various challenges for international cooperation with Burundi (namely the outstanding MoUs with the AU and OHCHR; the reports on human rights violations including by Imbonerakure; the lack of progress in the Arusha dialogue; the non-implementation of UNSC Resolution 2303). One Member State noted that there were still two diverging narratives on Burundi and expressed the hope that the conversations in the Configuration could help close this gap. The Members encouraged the Chair to pursue his engagement with Burundi.
12. In conclusion, the Chair expressed his gratitude to the Government of Burundi and UN partners for organizing a very rich and insightful visit. He underlined the need to maintain support and attention to Burundi, including by a significant international presence in the country. He thanked Member States for their continuous support and commitment to the work of the Configuration.