

Peacebuilding Commission
Informal Meeting on the Situation in The Gambia
(23 April 2018)

Chairperson's Summary of the Discussion

1. On 23 April, the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) convened a High-level meeting on the situation in The Gambia. The meeting was chaired by **H.E. Mr. Dan Neculăescu, State Secretary for Regional Affairs and Multilateral Global Affairs of Romania, Chair of the PBC**. The meeting was convened, upon the requests of the Government of The Gambia, to discuss and sustain international attention and support to The Gambia's peacebuilding and sustainable development priorities, ahead of the International Conference for The Gambia scheduled 22 May 2018, in Brussels, Belgium. The Chair opened the meeting recalling the work done by the Commission in 2017 in support of The Gambia. He recalled that, in March 2017, the PBC Chair visited the Gambia and met with the President and other senior representatives of the Gambian government, as well as with other key national and international stakeholders. Throughout the year, the PBC convened meetings to improve strategic and coherent support to The Gambia's peacebuilding priorities. He noted that this continued engagement demonstrated the importance and relevance of the PBC in sustaining international attention and support to The Gambia. He also stressed that this meeting was an added testimony of the PBC's commitment to accompanying The Gambia in its peacebuilding efforts.
2. **H.E. Mr. Adama Barrow, President of the Republic of The Gambia**, expressed gratitude to the PBC, recognizing the meeting as an important milestone in gathering continued support to The Gambia's peacebuilding efforts. He acknowledged that peace is a strong foundation for justice and a motivational tool for citizens to focus on development. He recognized that to restore democracy and political stability, as well as address the country's sustainable development challenges, the Government had launched the National Development Plan 2018-2021. He assured of the government strong commitment towards democracy, rule of law and economic growth through inclusive and people-centred approaches. He emphasized the important role of civil society, women and youth organizations in the country's peacebuilding efforts. He added that in five years, he envisages a collective success story of sustaining peace and sustainable development; one which displays a creation of jobs for all, especially for the youth, and provides equal access to food, nutrition, education and health. The President assured of The Gambia's efforts to remain a model for peaceful transition to democracy, and to successfully achieve its sustaining peace and sustainable development priorities.
3. **H.E. Mr. Neven Mimica, EU Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development**, commended The Gambia on the successful and peaceful transition of power in 2017. He observed that The Gambia is a young and positive country, yearning for freedom and democracy with a new and ambitious government, full of fresh ideas and determination. He noted that the progress on reforms had been impressive and strongly believes that The Gambia is firmly on the path of democracy, which would allow for more inclusive growth and prosperity. The National Development Plan 2018-2021 clearly identifies The Gambia's priorities which would allow the partners to discuss concrete targets and best ways to compliment and support, especially in the areas of (i) governance and democracy

reforms; (ii) inclusive economic growth; and (iii) renewable energy and climate change. He confirmed the EU's continued support to inclusive economic growth and affordable access to energy. He also called for the international community to ensure that The Gambia's human potential was fulfilled, including education and employment opportunities, as it is their youth who need to build the nation. He confirmed EU full support to The Gambia's National Development Plan. He concluded that EU was co-organizing, with the Government of The Gambia, an International Conference for The Gambia on 22 May in Brussels. He noted that the conference will be followed by a Business Forum, and expressed hope that both events will attract strong participation and contributions in support to The Gambia.

4. **H.E. Mr Amadou Sanneh, Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs of The Gambia**, expressed his gratitude to the PBC for the opportunity to present The Gambia's National Development Plan 2018-2021. He noted that The Gambia had inherited a difficult situation from the past administration, including (i) serious economic mismanagement; (ii) high level of poverty and socio-economic vulnerability; and (iii) human rights violations. He recognized that the successful conclusion of recent local government elections and the preparations for the upcoming municipal elections scheduled 15 May were positive indicators. In addition, he noted that respect for the rule of law and good governance have improved, while the democratic institutions have been strengthened in the country. He referred to the ongoing constitutional reform and review of electoral laws, as well as economic management review and social security reforms as an illustration of these positive changes. However, he noted that challenges remained, especially in the energy sector with cross-cutting effects on all other sectors. He recalled that the National Development Plan was the result of a comprehensive participatory process of all key national stakeholders, with the support of the UN, EU, World Bank, IMF and all development partners on the ground. The proposed National Development Plan has 41 projects mainly categorized into 5 out of 8 strategic priorities: (i) restoring good governance, respect for human rights, the role of law and empowering citizens through decentralization and local governance; (ii) stabilizing economy, stimulating growth and transforming the economy; (iii) modernizing agriculture and fisheries for sustained economic growth, food and nutritional security and poverty reduction; and (iv) investing in the people through improved education and health services and building a caring society; and (v) building infrastructure and restoring energy services to power the economy. He emphasized the government's initiatives to prioritize youth unemployment. He announced that the government would present the National Development Plan 2018-2021 to partners on 22 May, at the International Conference in Brussels, and expressed hope to further gather international attention and support to reach the goals of creating a democratic and prosperous nation.
5. **H.E. Mr. Jean-Claude Brou, President of the ECOWAS Commission**, elaborated on the history of The Gambia's partnership with ECOWAS. He recalled that ECOWAS had supported the electoral process of December 2016 and the post-electoral political process, which led to the peaceful transition. He added that ECOWAS had also supported the government move towards a democratic process to strengthen peace and stability, including the security sector and justice reforms. He assured of ECOWAS commitment to assist the authorities in their reforms with the goal of strengthening peace and stability. He commended the Government for developing a National Development Plan covering key priority areas of ECOWAS support, including democratic governance, peace and security, employment, infrastructure, agriculture, energy and the social sector. He confirmed ECOWAS' participation to the International Conference on The Gambia in Brussels and encouraged all partners

and the private sector to support The Gambia's resources mobilization to effectively implement the National Development Plan.

6. **H.E. Ms. Fatima Kyari Mohammed, AU Permanent Observer to the United Nations** recalled that since March 2017, the AU had supported The Gambia in the following key areas: (i) transitional justice; (ii) the rule of law; (iii) inclusive economic transformation and (iv) security sector and legal reforms. She noted that there was a critical need for a balanced approach to The Gambia's Truth, Reconciliation and Reparation Commission and overall justice sector reform. She added that coherent and coordinated multilaterals support, in line with national priorities, was necessary for a successful security sector reform. She also recognized the importance of supporting agriculture and fishery, as well as revitalizing the energy and tourism sectors as part of efforts to stimulate economic growth and transform the economy.
7. **Mr. Taye-Brook Zerihoun, Acting Under Secretary-General for Political Affairs**, acknowledged that the PBC was an indispensable part of the support and assistance provided by the international community to The Gambia. He noted that The Gambia had continued making progress in the areas of transitional justice, judicial and civil service reforms and economic development. He recalled that, last December, the Parliament had approved two bills to establish the Truth, Reconciliation and Reparation Commission and the National Human Rights Commission. Local elections were successfully held on 12 April and preparations for municipal council elections in May are underway. He stressed that the tangible results so far attested to the potential of The Gambia, transitioning from two decades of dictatorship to democracy. He also expressed hope to see more progress in national reconciliation efforts and security sector reform. He noted that following the UN inter-agency mission in 2017, DPA and the UNDP, in close collaboration with PSBO, had focused on the implementation of integrated UN strategy to support inclusive reforms, national dialogue, and sub-regional cooperation. He assured of UN commitment to continue supporting The Gambia's efforts to build the foundations for a democratic republic that respects the rule of law and meets the security and development needs of its citizens. He expressed gratitude to the members of the PBC for their commitment and efforts in peacebuilding and sustaining peace.
8. **Mr. Abdoulaye Mar Dieye, Assistant Secretary-General, Head of Global Policy Bureau, UNDP** commended the Government for integrating the principles of peace, social justice, human rights, dignity and freedom the National Development Plan 2018-2021. He recognized that while addressing the biggest challenges in the country, the National Plan also provided a foundation for a democratic state. He expressed hope that the plan would be the moment of transformation by building social cohesion and reconciliation towards sustaining peace. He recalled to the example of Singapore to imply that clear vision and disciplined implementation were at the heart of a nation's transformation. He called for the international community to fully support The Gambia's National Development Plan 2018-2021.
9. **Mr. Oscar Fernandez-Taranco, ASG for Peacebuilding Support**, noted that PBC engagement with The Gambia was an illustration of progress towards the innovative and flexible working methods of the Commission. He recalled the 2016 twin resolutions and the importance of enhancing coherence and pursuing integrated approach across the UN system in peacebuilding and sustaining peace. He further noted the significance of partnerships in support of Member State-led efforts towards sustaining peace.

He highlighted PBSO's signature of a Memorandum of Understanding with ECOWAS to strengthen coordination and contribute to a more predictable and strategic partnership in the areas of conflict prevention, political dialogue, national reconciliation, demographic governance and human rights. He recognized that The Gambia National Development Plan bridges the country's sustaining peace and sustainable development priorities. He also applauded the clear outlining of the peacebuilding vision in the National Development Plan 2018-2021, and encouraged continued people-centred approach and inclusive national ownership in sustaining peace efforts. He highlighted the role of the PBF, as a fast and flexible funding mechanism, to support peacebuilding initiatives, especially in areas of security sector reform, transitional justice, national reconciliation and women/youth empowerment and participation. He called for Member States' continued support to the International Conference on The Gambia scheduled on 22 May in Brussels.

10. Member States welcomed the opportunity to discuss the peacebuilding priorities of The Gambia and, in their interventions, raised the following issues:

- The Gambia is a textbook case for peacebuilding and sustaining peace through partnerships with the international community. Those partnerships are important to support The Gambia in implementing its National Development Plan.
- The sustained support of the international community—in particular, accountable, predictable and sustained financial support—is key to ensure conflict-affected countries can build and sustain peace. The role of regional and sub-regional organizations, international financial institutions, and the private sector, should also be highlighted.
- It is important to provide a space where countries can learn lessons from other peacebuilding processes. The PBC has been doing an important job in this regard.
- South-south, regional, multilateral, international and bilateral cooperation should be further strengthened.
- Expressed appreciation for The Gambia's prioritization of youth issues (including youth empowerment and employment) in the National Development Plan, acknowledging their important role in peacebuilding and sustaining peace.
- The International Conference and Business Forum in Brussels, Belgium in May is important as The Gambia will give a comprehensive presentation of the National Development Plan 2018-2021, hence all Member States and partners should attend and show/provide support.