

Summary of the PBC Burundi Configuration meeting, 16 April 2018

1. On 16 April 2018, H. E. Mr. Jürg Lauber, Chair of the Burundi Configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission, informed the Configuration about his visit to Burundi from 27 to 30 March. The Configuration was also briefed by H. E. Mr. Albert Shingiro, Permanent Representative of Burundi to the United Nations and Mr. Oscar Fernandez-Taranco, Assistant-Secretary-General for Peacebuilding Support.
2. In his report (attached), the Chair provided an update and reflections on his latest visit, with a focus on the subjects he had presented to the Configuration before departure, on 29 January, i.e.: the EAC-led dialogue process, the path towards the elections in 2020, the socioeconomic situation, humanitarian challenges and reconciliation. He summarized the conversations he had had with numerous high-ranking government representatives, including H.E. President Pierre Nkurunziza, H.E. Mr. Alain Aimé Nyamitwe, Minister of External Relations, H.E. Mr. Domitien Ndiwokubwayo, Minister of Finance, with leaders of political parties, representatives of the diplomatic community, regional and international organizations, the private sector and academia.
3. Mr. Oscar Fernandez-Taranco, ASG for Peacebuilding Support, highlighted the importance of a coordinated approach and coherence in international engagement with Burundi. He stressed the continuous important role of the PBC to find common ground and foster dialogue with the government of Burundi. He also underlined the importance to respect voters' choices in the upcoming referendum and to create the necessary conditions for free and fair elections in 2020 in full respect of the Arusha Agreement. He also provided an update on Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) investments in Burundi, reaching 8.5 million in 2017 for four Immediate Response Facility (IRF) projects. He highlighted the support of women mediators and projects focusing on youth engagement. Furthermore, he announced the allocation of \$8 million of additional PBF support to Burundi for 2018.
4. H. E. Mr. Albert Shingiro, Permanent Representative of Burundi to the United Nations, who had travelled with Ambassador Lauber, briefed the members, articulating the important role of the PBC as a bridge between Burundi and its partners. He expressed his appreciation for the Chair's balanced report, and highlighted the need to mobilize resources with a focus on socio-economic challenges, refugee returns, and combating poverty. He added that the security situation had considerably improved and that therefore up to 72'000 refugees are expected to return from Tanzania to Burundi in 2018. He also explained the ongoing preparation for the referendum scheduled on 17 May. Ambassador Shingiro welcomed further support to national reconciliation and women mediators.
5. Following the briefings, the following PBC members took the floor : Kenya, Belgium, Morocco, France, Indonesia, European Union, China, Germany, Tanzania, USA, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, the Netherlands, Mexico, Uganda, Romania, Norway,

Colombia, United Kingdom, Ecuador and Bolivia. The interventions reflected a range of shared and diverging perspectives on the situation in Burundi and on the question of how the international community should lend its support. Members expressed appreciation for the engagement of the Chair, and his visits to Burundi were highlighted as a very useful tool of PBC engagement in Burundi. Several members emphasized the important role PBC is playing in maintaining the dialogue between Burundi and its partners. Some members welcomed the Security Council Presidential Statement on Burundi of 5 April.

6. Members expressed support for the priorities outlined by the Chair. While many delegates reiterated their support to the EAC-led political dialogue, they also underscored their concern regarding the lack of progress.. Several delegations asked for clarification regarding an African Union statement, released the same morning, reporting on the government of Burundi's suspension of its participation in the next EAC-led dialogue scheduled for the end of April. The Permanent Representative of Burundi responded that the Burundian authorities remain committed to the dialogue and were merely trying to identify an appropriate date for the next session.

7. Several delegates welcomed the Chair's focus on socio-economic priorities and highlighted Burundi's National Development Plan as a basis for a renewed conversation between Burundi and its development partners. To this end, several delegates expressed the need to further mobilize resources. The Permanent Representative of Burundi stressed the need for sanctions to be lifted.

8. Many members expressed concern over the upcoming constitutional referendum. Other members emphasized that changing the constitution lies within Burundi's national sovereignty – a point which was also highlighted by the Permanent Representative of Burundi. Some stressed the necessity that any amendment of the constitution should be in line with the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement, calling on the guarantors to safeguard its provisions. Some members expressed the hope that the 2020 elections would represent a turning point for the country, and encouraged Burundi to invite international electoral assistance.

9. A number of delegations expressed concern over the human rights situation and encouraged Burundi to sign the MoU with OCHCR and review its suspended cooperation with the Human Rights Council. There was a call for the Burundian government to allow for improved reporting from the ground. Some Members raised concerns over the perceived lack of space for civil society and indicated that ahead of the 2020 elections, an enabling environment that protects and respects civil society actors should be in place so that they can participate in the process freely. PBSO highlighted towards the end of the meeting that the office remains committed to an inclusive approach with a diversity of actors.

11. In conclusion, the Chair expressed his appreciation for the support of his priorities, and informed that after a silence procedure his report will be shared with the Security Council, as per established practice.