

SECURITY COUNCIL
THE SITUATION IN GUINEA-BISSAU
STATEMENT BY THE CHAIR OF THE GUINEA-BISSAU
CONFIGURATION OF THE PEACEBUILDING COMMISSION

H. E. Ambassador Antonio de Aguiar Patriota

Permanent Representative of Brazil to the United Nations

5 February 2015

Mr. President,

I wish to thank you for the invitation to address the Security Council this morning in my capacity as Chair of the Guinea-Bissau Configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC).

I would also like to thank SRSG Miguel Trovoada for his insightful presentation and for sharing a vision of the progress, challenges and opportunities that Guinea-Bissau faces today. I am particularly grateful for his readiness to cooperate with the Peacebuilding Commission toward our shared objective of providing the best support to the authorities and the people of Guinea-Bissau.

Two weeks ago the PBC Guinea-Bissau configuration held its first meeting of the year, to which we invited SRSG Trovoada and the Prime Minister Simões Pereira to brief from Bissau. We also invited the Department of Political Affairs to debrief on the Strategic Assessment Mission that this Council requested to the Secretary-General, through Resolution 2157 (2014) of 29 May 2014.

Mr. President,

I would like to take this opportunity to attest to the commendable achievements since the new authorities came into power in Guinea-Bissau last June. I have been able to witness this first hand last fall, when I travelled to Bissau. The careful analysis heard from the Prime Minister, the Department of Political Affairs and the SRSG during our last PBC meeting, and today again from SRSG Trovoada, are all convergent.

As the PBC engages this year in an important review of the peacebuilding architecture, I believe that Guinea-Bissau provides some valuable lessons about the difference that a legitimate, competent and inclusive government can make, when combined with committed political accompaniment by international partners.

What is different today from any other time in the modern history of Guinea-Bissau is that, despite the existing challenges posed by rampant poverty and the legacy of decades of unsatisfactory governance, a better and more stable future for the country and its population is within reach. With modest, timely and well-thought-out efforts, the new authorities of the country have put Guinea-Bissau on a promising track, showing their willingness to overcome dysfunctionalities of the past, and to do things in a democratic and inclusive result-oriented manner. In the seven months since the new authorities have been in power, politics has been conducted wisely and courageously; including on thorny issues such as the reform of the defense and security apparatus, the need to rebuild the social contract through national dialogue and reconciliation, and improving the justice system. This new era of progress has also been marked by the delivery of basic services to a greater number of people.

Mr. President,

I am pleased that this Council is considering the recommendations of the Secretary-General's recent assessment. It provides a thorough and honest diagnostic of how Guinea-Bissau's ills from the past could be overcome. The report also emphasizes the risks that lie ahead. It places the responsibility on the authorities to own and lead the reforms, paving the way towards democratisation and prosperity. However, we know that although this predisposition is essential, what is also required now more than ever, is that our words of support translate into deeds. Our solidarity should catalyse long-term sustainable engagement; I should like therefore to urge regional neighbours, friends and partners of Guinea-Bissau to actively participate and ensure the success of the round table for Guinea-Bissau on March 25 in Brussels.

Let me remind this Council that we are dealing with a comparatively small scale challenge. If we cannot succeed in Guinea-Bissau how are we to contemplate success with regard to more complex and bigger problems?

We have come a long way in a short time with respect Guinea-Bissau, and opportunities to consolidate peacebuilding gains rarely present themselves in as

promising a way as they do right now in the country. To build the State sustainably, the country will still require strong support from United Nations, especially the Security Council and the Peacebuilding Commission. The situation we are witnessing presents a fertile ground for both bodies to cooperate and focus international support on the Government's priorities. This means that we should continue supporting the work done by UNIOGBIS and thus welcome the renewal and update of its mandate for one year. We also recognize the valuable work done by ECOMIB in securing the institutions and advance security sector reform in the country and believe the Security Council should politically endorse it. Both UNIOGBIS and ECOMIB are trusted partners of the Bissau-Guineans and have shown solidarity, understanding and the ability to make a significant difference during difficult times. Now that the situation is improving their assistance will be more valuable than ever, and both institutions therefore require your continued loyal support.

I would also like to emphasise the need to reinforce the role of civil society, especially of women and youth in decision-making processes designed to change the paradigm of poverty and under-development in Guinea-Bissau. It is time to start changing the long-held view that Guinea-Bissau is a chronic case of corruption, impunity and drug trafficking. We should favour an approach that maximises the potential and promises of a nation full of youth, energy and desire to turn a page of its darkest history. For this, the State must foster dialogue across society, leading by example in ensuring that the political actors continue to put their differences aside with a view to advance the interests of the nation. We must redouble efforts, international partners and Bissau-Guineans alike to ensure that sustainable progress and stability become the new reality henceforth.

Thank you Mr. President.