

2 March 2016

To : Members of the PBC Sierra Leone
Configuration

**Ambassadorial-level Meeting of the Peacebuilding Commission
Sierra Leone Configuration
24 February 2016**

Chair's Summary

Background

On 24 February 2016, the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) Sierra Leone Configuration held an Ambassadorial-level meeting under the chairmanship of H.E. Mr. Michael Grant of Canada to inform members of the preparations for the second Peacebuilding Assessment Mission (PAM II) to Sierra Leone taking place from 29 February until 8 March 2016.

H.E. Mr. Vandi Chidi Minah, Permanent Representative of Sierra Leone briefed the members on the country's views regarding the engagement with the PBC. From Sierra Leone, Mr. Saidu Nallo, Director for International Organizations in the Foreign Ministry of Sierra Leone spoke via VTC about peacebuilding priorities and challenges in the post-Ebola phase. The UN Country Team in Sierra Leone represented by Mr. Gabriel Rugalema, UN Resident Coordinator ad interim, and Mr. Philip Dive, Strategic Planner of the Office of the ERSG/RC, also briefed via VTC on the preparations of the PAM II programme. Mr. Patrick Buse, Political Affairs Officer of the UN Office for West Africa (UNOWA) spoke via VTC about pressing challenges and efforts from a regional perspective. The Minister of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs of Sierra Leone, H.E. Mr. Alhaji Moijueh Emmanuel Kaikai, shared his view on the peacebuilding priorities in Sierra Leone. Ms. Mari Yamashita, Director and Deputy Head of the PBSO briefed the members on the future engagement of the PBC with Sierra Leone.

Introductory Remarks by the Chair

1. In his introductory remarks, the Chair highlighted the progress made in Sierra Leone over the past ten years with two peaceful elections, the graduation from the Security Council Agenda, a successful transition from the UN political mission to the UN Country Team, and the recent recovery from the Ebola Virus Disease. He congratulated Sierra Leone for its tireless efforts in tackling the Ebola crisis and noted the national, regional and international efforts in developing, adopting and implementing strategies for recovery during the post-

Ebola phase. He highlighted that the PBC had been operating in a lighter and more responsive manner since the country's exit from the Security Council's agenda in March 2014, and had based its engagement on the first PAM, which refined the parameters of the PBC's role and scope with the agreement of the national authorities. The Chair stressed the positive role that the PBC had played during the Ebola crisis by convening joint meetings together with the Liberia and Guinea Configurations and the Mano River Union, as well as through the participation of the PBSO in the UNDP-led Ebola Recovery Assessment process. He noted that given the recent positive developments in the country, PAM II was timely in order to make recommendations for the PBC's future engagement and look into the peacebuilding efforts in the country. He informed the members about the specific objectives of PAM II as well as a planned Ambassadorial-level visit by the Chair in 2016.

2. H.E. Mr. Vandi Chidi Minah thanked the PBC for its continued efforts and support for Sierra Leone, especially in times of crises. He noted that despite Sierra Leone graduating from the Security Council's agenda, the country still needed further support and funding especially in the post-Ebola recovery phase in order to strengthen its resilience. He stressed that the impact of the crisis on the health sector and the economic capacity had pushed back the progress of Sierra Leone becoming a middle income country. With regard to the engagement of the PBC, he noted that a lighter engagement could serve as an example for other countries engaged with the PBC, and that the recommendations of the recent reviews of the Peacebuilding Architecture, the United Nations Peace Operations and the Global Study on the Implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 should be drawn from, especially in regard to the evolutionary thinking of the shift from peacebuilding to making peace sustainable. He underlined that Sierra Leone was one of the positive examples where the PBC made a unique difference in engaging various actors in a fully integrated and inclusive manner, including for funding support. H.E. Mr. Vandi Chidi Minah also noted some processes such as the New Deal and decentralization which needed to continue. We needed to ensure that evolution in thinking become evolutions in practice.

On PAM II

3. Mr. Nallo also thanked the PBC for its valuable support and continued partnership with Sierra Leone. He stressed the added value of the PBC's convening and advocating role and the coordination of donors according to the priorities set by the country, which became especially visible during the Ebola crisis. Noting the process of gradually transitioning the engagement with the PBC into a lighter form, he stated the importance of making the most use of the PBC's added value in order to build resilience and sustainability through building human capacity in Sierra Leone as one of the key priorities. He welcomed the programme of the upcoming PAM II and the planned engagement with a broad range of actors, and added that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation together with the relevant line Ministries were in full preparation for the visit to deliver a coherent approach on the peacebuilding priorities.

4. Mr. Rugalema noted the significant impact that the Ebola crisis has had on the economic situation which had shown some positive signs of improvement owing to Government-led efforts. He stressed the importance of peace and stability in the country for which there was a need to address challenges such as youth unemployment, disaster resilience and the reduction of overall fragility.

5. Mr. Dive informed the meeting about the comprehensive programme of the PAM II highlighting the planned interaction with various actors from the educational, justice and private sectors, as well as Parliament speakers and key Ministries. Furthermore, he informed on the planned Round Tables with actors from the Government, the UN system and national and international civil society on issues such as youth, gender, security, democracy, human rights and anti-corruption. [Copies of the programme were shared with the members at the meeting.] He stated that a technical report on the results of PAM II would be prepared by the visiting experts prior to the Chair's visit that was expected in April, which would serve as a basis for higher level 'diplomatic' discussions.

6. Mr. Buse stated that while Sierra Leone had made tremendous progress in its peace consolidation, it faced a number of challenges ahead, namely the constituency delimitation exercise drawing on the national census, as well as the national registration exercise and the new voters' register. Being mutually interlocked, these were highly sensitive processes. Against the background of economic challenges, especially with the decline in the extractive sector. Taking into account the regional dimension, he noted the need for attention to challenges arising from the eventual drawdown of the UN peacekeeping operations in Liberia and Cote d'Ivoire. He stressed the need for a holistic regional approach which takes into account the security, economic and other dimensions with the aim of creating synergies. He noted that in order to improve border fragility, UNOWA and ECOWAS had embarked on an assessment in October 2015 which promoted a cross-border approach. Furthermore, the Secretary-General of the Mano River Union was expected to sign a cooperation framework with UNOWA in March 2016.

7. H.E. Mr. Kaikai welcomed the comprehensive programme of PAM II and underlined the importance of the Round Tables on youth and gender and the engagement with civil society. He stated that women's participation was key to sustainable peace and also highlighted the constructive role that women in Sierra Leone had played within the past ten years through various initiatives including recent actions of reintegrating Ebola survivors. He stressed the importance of economic empowerment of women and youth in order to reduce threats to peace and build lasting peace and sustainable development. Prior to the PAM II, some quick-fix projects could be considered, such as for women and youth empowerment, in time to deliver during the visit. He also highlighted that there had been no forensic labs to pin down perpetrators of sexual violence in Sierra Leone, and therefore, most victims went to courts. This was also an issue that should be discussed with the Ministry of Justice and Attorney General during the visit. Furthermore, he highlighted the importance of strengthening existing institutions rather than creating separate structures.

8. Member States congratulated the Government of Sierra Leone for the progress it had made in recent years and expressed appreciation for Canada's continued leadership within the PBC. Member States encouraged Sierra Leone to continue with the National Development Plan, but stressed the importance of continued vigilance and the reflection on lessons learned. Some Member States welcomed the good regional and subregional integration of approaches, especially the cross-border initiatives, but stressed the need to standardize the lessons learned and good practices in regard to disaster preparedness to improve an early warning system, as well as to strengthen the efforts of capacity building, DDR, decentralization, good governance, improvement of basic social services and the empowerment of women and youth. Members States expressed their support and stressed the importance of progress in the justice sector, particularly for citizens' access to justice, as well as further active engagement with civil society, especially women's and youth groups. They also welcomed the lighter, flexible engagement this group had adopted since PAM I in light of the implementation of the Report of the Advisory Group of Experts on the Review of the Peacebuilding Architecture, as well as the process of assessing the peacebuilding priorities through the PAM. Sierra Leone could also set an example for other PBC Configurations and the work of the PBC in general. Some Member States also suggested that the criteria for engagement of the PBC should be redefined and that this process would go along with support for the engagement of the PBC voiced during the Open Debate on Peacebuilding in the Security Council this month.

9. Member States welcomed the comprehensive programme of PAM II and the endeavour to assess the future path of engagement built on key priorities of the Government. Some delegations welcomed the focus on gender and youth as key actors for peacebuilding and highlighted the importance of strengthening existing institutions. A Member State also noted the need to identify funding gaps and create an overview of the funding priorities and gaps in order to improve coordination.

10. Ms. Yamashita thanked the participants for the rich discussion at the meeting and stated that Sierra Leone was a success story of peacebuilding in action. She highlighted the importance of the development of strategies for key peacebuilding priorities and welcomed the comprehensive programme of the PAM II. She stressed the importance of extracting lessons learned in order to apply them to other cases and to draw from the insights and recommendations of the assessment mission. She noted that the timely definition of exit strategies would be welcome and also underlined the added value of the PBC in its convening role. Ms. Yamashita stressed the important function of the PBF and its catalytic support and expressed the readiness of the PBSO in further supporting the PBC's lighter engagement in support of the "evolution of Sierra Leone from peacebuilding to peace sustainability" as coined by H.E. Mr. Minah.

Conclusion

11. In his concluding remarks, the Chair highlighted the importance of partnerships as well as national ownership, and announced that the report on PAM II would be shared upon the return of the mission.

