

TO: Members of the Peacebuilding Commission

Peacebuilding Commission
Informal meeting of the Organizational Committee
6 April 2016

Chair's Summary

1. On 6 April 2016, the Peacebuilding Commission convened an informal meeting on the “Sub-regional dimensions of peacebuilding in West Africa”. The meeting, chaired by H.E. Mr. Macharia Kamau, Chair of the PBC, represented an opportunity to discuss a number of regional challenges to peacebuilding and the role the PBC can play in supporting West African countries achieve sustainable peace. Mr. Oscar Fernandez-Taranco, Assistant Secretary-General for Peacebuilding Support, Mr. El Ghassim Wane, Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, and Ms. Ruby Sandhu-Rojon, Deputy Assistant Administrator and Deputy Regional Director of the Regional Bureau for Africa (UNDP), briefed the Commission.
2. In his introductory remarks, the Chair noted that the meeting was a follow-up to the discussions that took place on 18 January on the peacebuilding trends and challenges in West Africa, which highlighted a number of domestic and cross-border peacebuilding challenges that require the support of the international community. In this regard, he recalled that, both at the January meeting and through the negotiations on the Review of the Peacebuilding Architecture, the cross-cutting and regional approach of the PBC was strongly recommended-encouraged.
3. Mr. Fernandez-Taranco opened his presentation by commending USG Feltman and SRSG Chambas who briefed the PBC on 18 January, laying the foundations for coherent UN assessment of, and response to regional peacebuilding challenges. He briefed on his recent trip to West Africa (9-18 March), which started in Bamako-Mali, followed by Dakar-Senegal and Abidjan-Cote d'Ivoire, and ended in Ouagadougou-Burkina Faso. He noted that the purpose of the visit was to: i) Follow-up on ongoing PBF support; and ii) explore the regional approach and opportunities to support these countries efforts to tackle their growing transnational and cross-border peacebuilding challenges.
4. Mr. Fernandez-Taranco said that, in Mali, he attended the G5 Sahel Conference on “Border Management and Border Communities” sponsored by UNDP and the Government of Japan. He noted that the conference provided a unique opportunity to discuss political, security,

humanitarian and development challenges facing the Sahel with Government Officials from the region, including the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Defence of Mali, the Ministers of Security of Burkina Faso and Chad, representatives of the UN, AU, EU, ECOWAS, and women and civil society organizations. He reported that participants underscored the importance of a multi-dimensional approach going beyond the military and security responses, focusing on affected communities particularly in border areas. The Conference also called for enhanced cooperation between the various actors national, regional and international actors and provided an opportunity to present a coherent UN approach to sustaining peace in the region. Mr. Fernandez-Taranco also reported on the positive reactions, from senior government officials and from representatives of the population, to the work the PBF is conducting in Mali.

5. Mr. Fernandez-Taranco reported that, in Senegal, he met with UNOWA, UN Regional Directors based in Dakar, as well as with representative of civil society organizations, to discuss the growing cross-border and transnational threats to peace and stability in West Africa and the Sahel and on the best ways for the international community to provide a coordinated response to those challenges.
6. Referring to Côte d'Ivoire, he said that he participated with SRSB Chambas to a workshop hosted by the African Development Bank (AfDB) on SDG-16 in fragile situations where they discussed concrete actions to strengthening the partnership between UN, AU and AfDB to implement SDG 16, with a special emphasis on West Africa. He also reported that he met with the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Minister of Planning and Development to discuss PBF activities in the country, including opportunities to extend PBF support to the challenges of sustaining peace in the Côte d'Ivoire-Liberia border areas, with particular attention to women and youth.
7. Finally, Mr. Fernandez-Taranco reported that he and SRSB Chambas met the President of Burkina Faso in Ouagadougou and informed that the President expressed appreciation for the Secretary-General and United Nations support to the transition and commitment to support his government's efforts to sustain peace and stability in Burkina Faso. Mr. Fernandez-Taranco underscored that PBSO is working with UNOWAS and the UNCT to identify concrete projects for the PBF to address a number of challenges, including at the cross-border level.
8. Mr. Wane recognized that the excellent collaboration between DPKO and PBSO represents a key element for coherent UN response to the multi-dimensional peacebuilding challenges in West Africa. On the situation in Côte d'Ivoire, he welcomed the progress made by the country, including the recent peaceful elections in 2015. He noted that there are still important milestones ahead for this year, including the constitutional referendum and legislative elections. He added that in spite of the peacebuilding progress achieved SSR, national reconciliation and social cohesion were among the country's long-term challenges. He informed that, in view of these achievements, it was decided that UNOCI would drawdown by June 2017. Noting the importance Côte d'Ivoire's in the stability of the sub-

region, he called for continued UN and the international community support to help address the remaining peacebuilding priorities.

9. On Mali, Mr. Wane welcomed the significant progress made in implementing the Peace Agreement, noting the need to accelerate the implementation to respect the timeline of 18 to 24 months agreed by the parties. He expressed concerns about the deterioration of the security situation, in spite of the cease fire. He noted the need for minimum security to ensure peace dividend. He also mentioned the need to ensure inclusivity in the implementation of the peace agreement, particularly with women and youth. He added that armed groups are not always representatives of affected communities.
10. Ms. Sandhu-Rojon welcomed the participation of Mr. Fernandez-Taranco to the “Border Management and Border Communities” in Bamako, which testified to the strong collaboration between UNDP and PBSO. Speaking of cross-border challenges, she underscored the importance of strengthening the collaboration between all stakeholders to improve the institutional framework of border management, involving communities and reinforcing local capacities. She added that cross-border challenges in Africa are symptomatic of a need for strong governance and rule of law institutions and also require a regional response. In this connection, and recalling the work UNDP has done to support peacebuilding activities, she underlined UNDP’s readiness to collaborate with PBC and PBSO in supporting border management to ensure sustainable development and preserve the livelihoods of border communities.
11. Member States welcomed the initiative to convene cross-cutting and regional discussions which, following-up to the meeting of 18 January and building upon some of the key recommendations of the Review of the Peacebuilding Architecture, reconfirms that the PBC has an important role to play in bringing together a broad range of stakeholders to address thematic and country-specific priorities. Member States focused their interventions on the following issues:
 - The PBC represents a unique platform to bring together security, development and human rights. In this regard, several delegations welcomed the role the PBC played in increasing the coherence between DPA, DPKO and UNDP in addressing multi-dimensional challenges.
 - The PBC has an important role to play in advising the Security Council on cross-cutting and regional/sub-regional issues, in particular when the Council is discussing the drawdown of a peacekeeping mission. One delegation suggested that the PBC should encourage the establishment of a sub-regional operational framework to reinforce the synergies among the socio-economic, political and security dimensions of the UN work during the drawdown of UNOCI and UNMIL.
 - Capacity building, the extension of state authority, and the strengthening of border communities are prerequisites to tackle cross-border peacebuilding challenges. Several delegations recognized the important work done by the PBF in this area.

- Sub-regional organizations are important stakeholders in peacebuilding processes in West Africa and the PBC is a useful forum to bring them together with the UN.
- Radicalization and violent extremism represent critical challenges to the region. The international community needs to act in a coherent way, tackling the root causes and addressing underdevelopment and youth unemployment.
- The Peacebuilding Fund is uniquely placed to address sub-regional peacebuilding challenges.

12. The Chair welcomed the strong support by Member States for the Commission's focus on the sub-regional dimensions of peacebuilding and informed that he will continue working in that direction in the forthcoming meetings.

PBC Activities

13. The Chair briefed Member States on the activities he undertook in the first quarter of the year, including a meeting with the co-facilitators of the Peacebuilding Review to discuss the status of the Review (25 February), briefings to the Security Council open debates on "Post-conflict peacebuilding" (23 February) and "The Role of Women in Prevention and Resolution of Conflict in Africa" (28 March), to the Security Council informal Arrria-Formula Meeting on "Food Security, Nutrition and Peace in the context of sustainable development" (29 March).

14. In this connection, the Vice-Chair (Republic of Korea) reported that he represented the PBC during the World Bank Fragility and Conflict Forum in Washington D.C (1-3 March). The Vice-Chair noted that the forum represented an important opportunity to showcase the work of the Commission, particularly in fragile situations. He recommended continued PBC engagement with the World Bank and other IFIs.
