

The Peacebuilding Commission Annual Session

“Regional approaches to peacebuilding: The Sahel, Lake Chad Basin, and the Mano River Union”

4 December 2019

10 AM, Trusteeship Council Chamber

Concept Note

Context

Last year, the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) dedicated its annual session to engage relevant regional and international partners in an interactive discussion on fostering stability and ensuring sustainable peace in West Africa and the Sahel. A year later, some progress was achieved, but difficulties persist. Countries from the region continue to take collective action to address multifaceted challenges to stability and development. The UN recalibrated its strategy for the Sahel and is currently implementing the accompanying support plan¹. Other international actors increased investments and continue to seek ways to improve coordination. However, progress is marred by a deteriorating security environment, particularly in the border areas between Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger, and in the Lake Chad Basin, further impacting on the security situation of coastal countries and overshadowing attempts to focus on long-term peacebuilding priorities. The massive displacement in the region was discussed in July at the annual ‘Lake Chad Basin Governors’ Forum for Regional Cooperation on Stabilization, Peacebuilding and Sustainable Development’, held in Niamey. This coincided with the launching by UNDP of a regional stabilization facility for Lake Chad to help local authorities extend effective civilian security and improve the delivery of basic services and livelihoods. The UN supports the Regional Stabilization Strategy for the Lake Chad Basin region² and helps sustain international attention to the region, including through visits of the Special Representatives of the UN Secretary-General for West Africa and for Central Africa to the affected areas, the last of which took place from 20 to 24 November.

At the same time, the Mano River Union (MRU) countries strive to consolidate peace dividends, and in doing so they increasingly prioritize enhanced cross-border cooperation for security, trust building, and development. At the request of the countries of the region, the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for West Africa and the Sahel together with the Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission and the Assistant Secretary-General for Peacebuilding Support travelled to Sierra Leone, Liberia and Côte d’Ivoire from 4 to 8 November to explore opportunities for enhanced cooperation in support of the cross-border and regional issues relevant to peacebuilding and sustaining peace efforts in the MRU. This was followed by a workshop

¹ https://unowas.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/english_summary_report_2.pdf

² <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/rss-ab-vers-en..pdf>

organized from 25 to 28 November by the MRU Secretariat, with UNOWAS support, to review the Union's cross-border security strategy and make specific recommendations for its recalibration.

The Peacebuilding Commission continues to offer a unique platform to complement existing discussions and help maintain international attention to regional peacebuilding initiatives that take into account the linkages between political, peace and security, development, human rights and humanitarian normative frameworks and efforts.

Goal and objectives of the meeting

The overall objective of the meeting is to review challenges and opportunities for enhancing regional and sub-regional approaches to peacebuilding in the Sahel, the Lake Chad Basin, and the Mano River Union (MRU)³. Building on relevant PBC meetings in the last two years, including the 2019 ECOSOC-PBC meeting on 'transhumance in West Africa and the Sahel', the annual session will focus on:

- Ensuring consistent PBC accompaniment to the Sahel region, to sustain international attention and to advance a more coherent, coordinated and action-oriented approach to peacebuilding and sustaining peace. The meeting will provide an opportunity to brief on the recalibrated focus of the UNISS and on challenges and opportunities to implementing UN support plan.
- Maintain attention to the specific multi-faceted challenges in the Lake Chad Basin, with particular emphasis on international response to massive displacement, and explore best ways to support ongoing regional efforts.
- Taking stock of the PBC/UNOWAS visit to MRU countries from 4 to 8 November, explore ways to consolidate ongoing efforts to address cross-border/regional challenges and support the region's movement towards strong economic growth and steady progress in governance and institution building.

Format of the meeting

The President of the Peacebuilding Commission will convene the meeting. An opening segment with welcoming remarks will be followed by keynote addresses and an interactive discussion.

Opening Segment (10:00 – 11:00)

- H.E. Mr. Guillermo Fernández de Soto, Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission
- H.E. Ms. Mona Juul, President of ECOSOC
- SRSG Mohamed Ibn Chambas, Head of UNOWAS
- SRSG François Louncény Fall, Head of UNOCA
- H. E. Mr. Mamman Nuhu, Executive Secretary of the Lake Chad Basin Commission

³ The Mano River Union was established in 1973 as an instrument of regional cooperation on trade, development, peace and security in Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone.

- UNDP's Assistant Administrator and Regional Director for Africa, Ms. Ahunna Eziakonwa

Interactive Dialogue with Member States on the following themes

Moderated by H.E. Guillermo Fernández de Soto, Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission

The Sahel and the Lake Chad Basin (11:00 – 12:30)

- Representative of the G5 Sahel
- Dr. Alhaji Sarjoh Bah, Chief Advisor on Peace, Security and Governance, Permanent Observer Mission of the African Union to the UN
- Pr. Ali MAHAMANE, Recteur de l'Université de Diffa

Discussion on recent efforts to enhance international coherence and partnerships in the Sahel and the Lake Chad Basin, with a particular focus on moving towards durable solutions and increased regional ownership, amidst severe security, socio-economic and humanitarian challenges.

The Mano River Union (15:00 – 16:30)

- Representative of ECOWAS
- Representative of civil society organization ‘Purposeful, Sierra Leone’
- Dr. Alhaji Sarjoh Bah, Chief Advisor on Peace, Security and Governance, Permanent Observer Mission of the African Union to the UN

Countries of the Mano River Union will share peacebuilding and sustaining peace experiences and lessons learnt. They will also present their views for cross-border and regional cooperation to foster long term stability in the MRU.

Closing remarks

- H.E. Mr. Guillermo Fernández de Soto, Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission

