

**Address by His Excellency José Ramos-Horta
Nobel Peace Prize Laureate; former President of Timor Leste; and, Special
Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General in Guinea-Bissau**

I am honoured by the invitation to participate at the opening segment of the First Annual Session of the Peacebuilding Commission.

The initiative of conducting annual substantive sessions starting this June is a positive step forward by the Peacebuilding Commission. Such an engagement will indeed enhance the PBC's role of advocacy, resource-mobilisation and engaging partnerships not only for building peace but also for sustaining it. Further, this session should provide a valuable forum of stock-taking and exchanges aimed at enhancing the invaluable contribution of the Peacebuilding Commission to the agenda of peace and security of the United Nations.

The context of sustainable peacebuilding is relevant also in the case of Timor Leste, particularly from independence through to state building. Further, as I prepare this week to end my mission as Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Guinea-Bissau, a country on the PBC agenda since 2007, the experience of the past 18 months, a reasonably short period of time, in that country have served to reinforce my conviction that the PBC should be called upon to enhance its role in ensuring timely and sustainable support for peacebuilding particularly where there are challenges of instability and weak delivery capacities of State institutions. The legitimate expectations of the people impacted by conflict-related hardship, especially vulnerable groups including women, youth and children, must be satisfied.

Since its establishment in December 2005, the PBC, also through the mechanism of the PBF and supported by the PBSO, has worked assiduously to perform its role not only as an intergovernmental body mobilizing financial and technical resources but also providing advice and strategies for post-conflict recovery and focusing international attention on reconstruction, institution-building and sustainable development.

Further, the PBC has added value to the UN in advancing its peace and development agenda. This the PBC has done, among others, through pooling together, through short to medium to long term, the broad capacities and

experiences of the United Nations in conflict prevention, mediation, peacekeeping, respect for human rights, the rule of law, humanitarian assistance, reconstruction and long-term development. Consequently, the multidimensional engagement by the PBC has seen the body involved actively in diverse ways to address peacebuilding challenges posed in many corners of the globe, including Burundi, Sierra Leone, Guinea-Bissau, Central African Republic, Cote d'Ivoire, among others.

In essence, the challenges to sustainable peacebuilding are both of a domestic as well as international nature. For example, a challenge could be seen in the PBC, as an international partner, playing only an advisory role in a country context where it intervenes to support. This is because the PBC's success in such a context could be contingent on whether there is adequate national political authority ownership, aside of a PBC national steering committee mechanism, to ensure PBC support is applied domestically efficiently, effectively and with accountability in order for sustainable peacebuilding to stay on course.

In most country contexts where the PBC has an intervention, the multiplicity of international partners, with diverse implementation modalities, timeframes and bureaucratic procedures for assistance requires coordination, without which it would be difficult for partners to obtain maximum returns on investments of time, effort, material resources and other support. Also, apart from ensuring the availability of financial and technical resources, there is also the need for properly-assessed capacities of beneficiary State institutions to absorb the funding allocations, as well as capacity-building for the implementing national partner institutions and perhaps recipient organisations.

The PBC national steering committee in any country context is a key mechanism, as it will enhance the conduct of regular consultative processes and liaison between domestic and international aspects of the PBC engagement. However, at the level of international partners, it is our renewed hope that the PBC, which was conceived as a mechanism for coordinating international partner efforts and a holistic approach in resource-mobilization, will work to enhance overall coordination. A good combination of national and international coordination is where we can "tackle the bull by the horns" and significantly improve the capacity of the international community to stay the course in a beneficiary country until the work of sustainable peacebuilding is achieved.

Further, a sustained and visible engagement of the PBC is important particularly where there are abrupt national challenges and processes, including unconstitutional changes of power, which should actually be interpreted as the context where peacebuilding efforts are most urgent and required, including through PBC engagement, rather than where sanctionary measures ought to be administered. A PBC beneficiary country's priorities are not bound by time or circumstance. They remain the same and represent both a radical crisis of development and a daunting challenge to national and international partners, regardless of the Government in place, and noting that the country requires the same level of attention and urgency while its population is vulnerable and needs help at all material times.

When a country is on the agenda of the PBC, it means that its authorities would be required at the very least to commit energy and commitment to political stability and peacebuilding in order to make progress forward with socio-economic development. Conversely, it is implicit and acknowledged that the PBC engagement would add an extra spotlight of international attention on as well as galvanize support for the country. There is therefore a link of domestic and international aspects of PBC engagement.

As we move forward with today's event and reach further beyond, I would like to close by underscoring the need for: (i) ensuring a PBC beneficiary country's national ownership and continuing commitment; (ii) continuing close consultation and cooperation between international partners and national governments; and, (iii) smooth coordination of the efforts of international partners. The PBC, as we hold this forum today, is of the essence and at the very epicenter of partner coordination efforts in resource-mobilisation. While I have no doubt that we will conduct a successful session today, it remains yet my greatest conviction that we will come away also with a measure of reinforced commitment, in addition to a greater determination, to assist countries ensure sustainable peacebuilding through an effective blend of the twin aspects of domestic national commitment and international engagement at all material times.

Dear Amb Patriota, Ambassadors, ASG Judy Chen-Hopkins,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

As I am here in dual capacity, as the still SRSG for GB and still former PR of TL allow me to refer specifically to Guinea-Bissau and Timor-Leste.

The newly-elected President of Guinea-Bissau H. E. Mr. Jose Mario Vaz, (or Jomav as he is widely known), has just been sworn-in this morning in Bissau.

Soon after, within a few days, a newly elected Government, led by Prime Minister Domingos Simoes Pereira, will be sworn in.

In the last few weeks before and after the announcement of the election results, I had several meetings with both leaders, together, and separately. I also had a number of meetings with the Defense Forces leadership, including Gen. Antonio Injay.

I left reassured that this is a turning point in Guinea-Bissau tortuous path since independence 40 years ago.

There is much to celebrate but there is much to be done in coming days, weeks, months and years.

There are salaries to be paid to the civil service, roughly US\$7 million a month. There are many months in arrears.

UNIOGBIS has drafted and discussed with Prime Minister Domingos Simoes Pereira a strategic document aiming at rebuilding the institutions of the State; Prime Minister DSP fully endorses this strategy.

UNIOGBIS has proposed the creation of a Strategic Planning Agency modeled after the very prestigious Malaysian one. This think-tank group, working under the leadership of the Prime Minister, was made operational last September thanks to contributions from PBF and DPA. PM DSP wants to continue to build on with this think-tank with adjustments.

UNDP, World Bank, ADB, working with national counterparts, as well as with ECOWAS, has been active in preparing a pledging conference.

I hope that the international community will do its part and will not fail the people of Guinea-Bissau.

In our current turbulent world where there is hardly any good news to report on, Guinea-Bissau is a "success story" in terms of how, with little cost to the international community, we have been able to steer the country back to Constitutional Democratic Order. There was no need for a Peace-Keeping Force and we did what the UNSC told us to do - do more with existing resources.

However, this "success story" can be a short-lived one if we, as international community, fail to respond to the needs and modest expectations of the people.

Timor-Leste is a better known "success story" even if modestly the leaders of the country continue to call it "fragile State" which it is indeed.

There are no shortcuts to peace, nation building and State building. First requirement, is national ownership and strong, credible national leadership. The international community cannot stand in for national actors and leaders.

In the case of Timor-Leste, which experienced severe setbacks in 2006, national credible national actors and democratically-elected leader were able to pull together, living up to the challenges and brought the country back from the abyss of failure.

In the case of Guinea-Bissau, after decades of failed experiments and failed leadership, there is renewed hope and optimism with the election to the highest positions of a new generation of leaders.

In both cases, the international community played a critical supporting role, enabling the leaders, civilian and military, to reengage with each other in a frank and transparent manner, bridging the divide of the recent past.

Both countries are relatively rich in strategic resources; while Timor-Leste is already benefiting from these well-managed resources, having established a very successful Petroleum Fund in 2005, Guinea-Bissau is only now beginning to tap into some of its resources like phosphates, bauxite and heavy sand.

However, I have advised the leaders of the country to review all existing, old and new, agreements, including fisheries and forestry agreements.

PBC/PBF should take the lead in mobilising resources to support Guinea-Bissau in a timely and strategic manner; the next few months and the next five years are crucial to consolidate this political "success story" and to prevent a relapse of past crisis.

There is a real chance for the international community to do it right this time with immediate, timely and focussed support in State Building, reforms of Public Administration, Justice and Security Sectors.