

Ambassadorial-Level Meeting of the Peacebuilding Commission on Somalia

2 December 2020

Chair's Summary

1. On 2 December, the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) convened an Ambassadorial-level meeting on Somalia. The meeting was held on a virtual platform and chaired by H.E. Mr. Bob Rae, Chair of the PBC. The objective of the meeting was to discuss the country's peacebuilding priorities, explore opportunities to support the National Reconciliation Framework and the vital role of women in peacebuilding in Somalia, and to share Somalia's experience in achieving debt relief under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative (HIPC) and explore ideas for collaboration with International Financial Institutions on peacebuilding.
2. In his opening remarks, the Chair recognized that Somalia had made significant progress on its path to peace and recovery despite challenges the country faced as a consequence of decades of conflict. He particularly highlighted progress made on debt relief under HIPC, the development of the National Reconciliation Framework and the aspirations as expressed in the Somali Women's Charter. He noted that the meeting took place at a critical juncture in Somalia's peacebuilding process, including the country's preparation for elections and the anticipated drawdown of the African Union Mission in Somalia, AMISOM. The Chair emphasized that the meeting provided an opportunity to discuss how the Commission could support Somalia in delivering on the country's peacebuilding priorities, which had been articulated in Somalia's ninth National Development Plan for 2020-2024.
3. H.E. Mr. Mohamed Hussein Roble, Prime Minister of the Federal Republic of Somalia, updated the Commission on significant gains made towards peace, security and recovery in the past ten years with the support of international partners. These included the restoring of functioning federal and regional state institutions and increased service-delivery to the population. He underscored that Somalia was ready to adopt a strategic approach to peacebuilding and strengthen coordination of national peacebuilding processes with regional and international efforts, while safeguarding nationally owned and inclusive solutions grounded in the local context. The Prime Minister updated on the country's three overarching peacebuilding priorities: i) state-building; ii) reconciliation; and iii) economic reconstruction and recovery, with human rights, gender equality, youth engagement and conflict-sensitivity as cross-cutting priorities in all peacebuilding efforts. He informed the Commission that final preparations were underway for the launch of the National Reconciliation Process, based on the National Reconciliation Framework that had been developed through extensive consultations with all parts of Somali society. He highlighted the support provided by the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) that was expected to continue serving as a catalyst for peacebuilding interventions in Somalia under the renewed eligibility for five years. The Prime Minister underscored his commitment

to continued cooperation with the Commission to promote peacebuilding in Somalia and the region at large. He informed the Commission that a National Peacebuilding Coordination Unit had been established in the Office of the Prime Minister to help coordinate peacebuilding activities.

4. H.E. Ms. Hanifa Mohamed Ibrahim, Minister of Women and Human Rights Development of the Federal Republic of Somalia, stressed the centrality of implementing the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda as Somalia continued to make progress towards peacebuilding and reconciliation. She emphasized that Somali women were active peacemakers, mediators and negotiators who would be essential in successfully rebuilding peace and security in the country. The Somali Women's Charter, adopted in 2019, outlined a vision for women's equal participation in all political, economic and social aspects of life. This vision had been reinforced by the results of a survey of over 10,000 Somali women conducted by the Ministry of Women and Human Rights Development to enable the most vulnerable women to participate in the articulation of WPS priorities. The Minister informed the Commission that a national action plan for the implementation of Security Council Resolution 1325 on WPS was under development and noted that this process coincided with the constitutional review process and the upcoming elections, which were critical windows of opportunity to advance gender equality in Somalia. In relation to the elections, the Minister updated on her visits underway to Federal Member States to advocate for the implementation of the agreed 30% quota for women. She further underlined that the National Reconciliation Framework provided an opportunity to address drivers of inequality and strengthen the role of women in peacebuilding. In conclusion, she underscored the need for a solid knowledge base in order to make informed policy decisions and highlighted in this regard the collaboration between the Ministry of Women and Human Rights Development and the Office of National Statistics to produce reliable data.
5. Mr. James Christopher Swan, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Somalia, welcomed the PBC engagement in Somalia and recognized that important strides had been made in the country's peacebuilding process since the last PBC meeting in 2015. He emphasized the importance of maintaining a spirit of dialogue and compromise to ensure that the country remained on a positive trajectory, particularly in the context of the upcoming elections and the security sector transition period set to commence in 2021. He confirmed that the UN remained committed to assist Somalia in overcoming significant challenges, including extreme poverty, armed conflict, sexual and gender-based violence, displacement, droughts and floods, locusts and the COVID-19 pandemic. He recalled that since 2015, the PBF had provided \$52.3 million in flexible and risk tolerant funding in Somalia, which had allowed for piloting new approaches and deepening the partnership with government and civil society actors on matters related to peacebuilding. He informed the Commission that during the coming five years, the PBF would commit at least 50% of its funding in Somalia to promote gender equality and women empowerment and urged other international partners to follow this example. This

was especially urgent as evidence continued to show that the full and meaningful participation of women was imperative to achieve sustainable peace. He further acknowledged that the youth would be the drivers of peace in Somalia, with an estimated 73% of the population under the age of 30 years, and stressed in this regard the need to engage youth in their communities, in confidence-building and reconciliation processes and in building and consolidating peace.

6. Ms. Rowda A. Olad, mental health and peacebuilding practitioner, stressed the need to address the psychosocial effects of conflict on the population and to reflect on these in peacebuilding efforts. She encouraged making mental health an integral component of peacebuilding as a method for prevention, disengagement and reintegration, particularly for young women and men who were among the most affected by the invisible wounds of conflict. In this regard, she highlighted the support provided by the PBF for a pilot project on the link between mental health and peacebuilding. Recognizing that Somali women were natural mediators with the potential of transcending the divisions in Somali society, she underscored the need to combat the structural violence against women that was hampering women's meaningful participation in peacebuilding and political processes. She further emphasized that civil society could play a critical role in rebuilding trust in public institutions as well as in helping to ensure peaceful elections. In this context, she noted that the National Reconciliation Framework had the potential to ensure civil society engagement in otherwise elite-dominated processes.
7. Mr. Oscar Fernandez-Taranco, Assistant Secretary-General for Peacebuilding Support, highlighted that the meeting demonstrated the renewed and strong commitment of the PBC to support prevention and peacebuilding in Somalia, following the approval of Somalia's PBF re-eligibility. As part of the re-eligibility process, close to 400 Somalis engaged along with 70 key stakeholders from government, civil society and the international community to collectively identify the key priority areas for the forthcoming PBF support: i) reconciliation; ii) justice and rule of law; iii) security; and iv) governance, with WPS as a cross-cutting priority in line with UNSCR 1325 and the Somali Women's Charter. He commended Somalia for pointing with clarity to the nationally owned peacebuilding priorities to which the PBC could help mobilize international support. He further welcomed the strong partnership between the UN and the World Bank in Somalia, which had enabled both organizations to deliver more effectively on national priorities across the humanitarian-development-peacebuilding nexus. He reiterated that progress in Somalia would remain contingent on the meaningful participation of women and youth, and recalled in this regard that the UN and the World Bank had committed to put an emphasis on empowerment of women and girls in every aspect of their joint engagement. In conclusion, he reaffirmed the commitment of the UN to the country partnership platforms – the Somalia Development and Reconstruction Facility and the Mutual Accountability Framework – and encouraged all partners to reinforce their engagement.

8. Member States and partners welcomed the briefings and made the following observations:

- They welcomed Somalia's commitment to sustainable peace and reconciliation as highlighted in the country's ninth National Development Plan, its National Reconciliation Framework and the Somali Women's Charter. They commended Somalia for the use of dialogue and consensus-building to navigate obstacles on its peace- and state-building trajectories, as well as Somalia's progress in anchoring the National Reconciliation Framework and the Somali Women's Charter among Somali stakeholders, providing an opportunity to shift to a long-term perspective on the country's peacebuilding priorities.
- They encouraged continued openness towards broad and inclusive dialogue as a means for consensus building on issues of national interest, including the preparations for the upcoming elections and the ongoing efforts to develop a detailed and human rights-based transition plan for the Somali security sector. They encouraged the country to pursue reforms in preparation for the elections of 2025.
- They congratulated Somalia on the progress made on debt relief under HIPC. They welcomed the innovative UN-World Bank partnership in Somalia, including in the area of public financial management with increased transparency and sustainability of public finances, which would be particularly crucial to allow for a smooth transition in the security sector and rebuilding trust in public institutions. They underscored the importance of further strengthening cooperation with the International Financial Institutions.
- They welcomed the strategic support provided by the PBF to Somalia and the identified priority areas for the renewed eligibility period, including reconciliation, justice and rule of law, security and governance, with WPS as a cross-cutting priority. They encouraged partners to consider providing additional resources to ensure sustainability of collective and inclusive peacebuilding efforts, while also increasing support to civil society actors.
- They underlined the need for a holistic approach encompassing humanitarian, development and security responses and reiterated that the mental toll on the population, particularly youth, after decades of conflict and humanitarian strife required special attention.
- They stressed the importance of ensuring meaningful participation of women and youth in government institutions as well as conflict prevention and peace processes, including

through direct support to women-led and youth-led initiatives that aim to promote social cohesion, prevent and counter violent extremism and radicalization, and realize livelihood opportunities. They underscored the importance of honoring the 30% quota for women in the upcoming elections.

- They welcomed the Federal Government’s commitment as expressed by Prime Minister Roble to foster coordination with regional and international peacebuilding mechanisms, and in this regard took note of the creation of a National Peacebuilding Coordination Unit in the Office of the Prime Minister.
 - They expressed their readiness to engage with Somalia to explore opportunities to support the implementation of the National Reconciliation Framework and reiterated the central role of women in that regard. The Commission committed to sustain its attention on efforts aimed at addressing on-going peacebuilding challenges in Somalia and mobilizing international support for the country’s peacebuilding priorities.
9. In his closing remarks, the Chair reiterated the Commission’s commitment to accompanying Somalia on its path towards peacebuilding and sustaining peace. He emphasized that the level of participation in the meeting and the quality of discussions had demonstrated the level of engagement of the PBC to support nationally owned peacebuilding processes.