**Statement by the Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission**

**Security Council Meeting on “Peace and security in Africa: UNISS, an integrated response to peacebuilding and sustaining peace in the Sahel”**

**20 December 2018**

**President of the Security Council, Ambassador Kacou Houadja Léon Adom**

**Special Adviser of the Secretary-General for the Sahel Mr. Ibrahim Thiaw**

**Distinguished Members of the Security Council**

**Ladies and gentlemen,**

I wish to thank you for this opportunity to brief this Council today, in my capacity as Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission during this very important and timely meeting on “Peace and security in Africa: The United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel, an integrated response to peacebuilding and sustaining peace in the Sahel”.

On 18 December 2018, the Security Council adopted Presidential Statement S/PRST/2018/20 on peacebuilding and sustaining peace. This is another testimony of this Council recognizing and supporting the important role the Peacebuilding Commission is playing in fostering coordination and coherence to international peacebuilding efforts.

The engagement of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) on the situation in the Sahel started with Security Council Presidential Statement (S/PRST/2017/2), issued on 20 January 2017, which emphasized the convening role of the Commission in mobilizing international support, in collaboration with UNOWAS, for implementing the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel (UNISS).

Since then, the Commission has convened a series of meetings on the situation in the Sahel, with the participation of the countries in the region, the G5 Sahel, the African Union (AU), the European Union (EU), different parts of the UN system, and other national and regional actors. Primarily, the Commission has been focused on deepening partnerships and ensuring coordination and coherence of the United Nations and the international community in support of the Sahel.

On 30 January 2018, this Council issued another Presidential Statement (S/PRST/2018/3) reiterating the importance of the convening role of the PBC in peacebuilding and sustaining peace efforts in the Sahel.

**Mr. President,**

In March 2018, in support of the Sahel countries’ efforts to foster coherence and ensure coordination, I attended the sixth meeting of the Ministerial Coordination Platform for the Sahel held in N’Djamena (Chad), together with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for West Africa and the Sahel, Mr. Mohamed Ibn Chambas, the Assistant-Secretary-General for Peacebuilding Support, Mr. Oscar Fernandez-Taranco, and the Permanent Representative of Chad to the UN, Ambassador Ali Alifei Moustapha. On the margins, we met with the Minister of Foreign Affairs, H.E. Mr. Mahamat Zene Cherif, and the Minister of Economy and Development Planning, H.E. Mr. Issa Doubragne. I also got the opportunity to visit a project supported through the Peacebuilding Fund at the border of Chad and Cameroon, where I interacted with the local population, community leaders, civil society and the United Nations Country Team.

From 15 to 19 October, I once again joined SRSG Chambas and ASG Fernandez-Taranco on a regional visit to West Africa and the Sahel. In Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso), we met the President of Burkina Faso, H.E. Mr. Roch Marc Christian Kabore, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, H.E. Mr. Alpha Barry, the Minister of Finance and Development Planning, H.E. Ms. Rosine Coulibaly-Sori, and the Minister of Security, H.E. Mr. Clement Sawadogo. We also met and exchanged views with the diplomatic community, representatives of the civil society and the United Nations Country Team.

In Dakar (Senegal), we attended the launch of the UNOWAS Study on “Pastoralism and Security in West Africa and the Sahel”. We also met with the United Nations Regional Directors’ Team who are playing a key role in UN efforts in the Sahel region. My engagements with government officials, civil society, United Nations Regional Directors’ and Country Teams in Chad, Burkina Faso and Senegal, provided me with a useful insight into the multifaceted challenges facing the Sahel region.

In Abidjan (Cote d’Ivoire), we met with the Vice-President for Regional Development, Integration and Business Delivery of the African Development Bank (AfDB), Mr. Khaled Sherif. This was part of our continued effort to enhance the strategic partnership with the international financial institutions in support of peacebuilding and sustaining peace. Our discussions focused mainly on ways to reinforce coordination and coherence in support of the countries in the Sahel region. The Vice-President of the African Development Bank assured us that the Sahel is also one of the Bank’s major priorities. We emphasized the potential for enhanced coordination with the United Nations in support of the countries in the region, including through the Peacebuilding Fund and the Bank’s “10,000 communities in 1,000 days” initiative. You would also recall that in July 2018, at the PBC meeting with the African Union Peace and Security Council here in New York, we explored ways to deepen the strategic partnership with the African Union in support of the Sahel region.

Overall, my visits to the Sahel region and interactions with the national authorities, civil society, diplomatic community, United Nations regional directors and country teams allowed me to gain a better understanding of the important role the Peacebuilding Commission can continue to play in support of the Sahel.

On 12 November 2018, the Commission held its Annual Session on the situation in the Sahel. The meeting was attended by the Deputy Secretary-General, the Special Adviser of the Secretary-General for the Sahel, the African Union High Representative for Mali and the Sahel, the Permanent Secretary of the G5 Sahel, a local elected official and representatives of women and civil society organizations from the Sahel region. The Annual Session provided a unique opportunity to deliberate on the political, security, social, economic and environmental challenges of the countries in the Sahel. Furthermore, the Annual Session allowed member states to explore opportunities to strengthen partnerships to bring coherence to international support to the Sahel region. On 13 November 2018, the PBC and the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) dedicated their joint annual meeting on the “Linkages between Climate Change and Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace in the Sahel”.

Both meetings underscored the importance for the Commission to continue using its platform to sustain international attention, and advance a more coherent, coordinated, and action oriented approach to peacebuilding and sustaining peace in the Sahel region.

**Mr. President,**

Over the last couple of years, in close collaboration with the countries from region and the United Nations leadership at headquarters and in the field, the Peacebuilding Commission has used every opportunity to sustain international attention and support to address the multifaceted challenges of the Sahel. The Commission will continue to prioritize the Sahel region with the support of this Council.

Thank you.