

19 October 2009

To : Members of the PBC - Burundi Configuration

**Informal meeting of the Country Specific Configuration
of the PBC on Burundi
New York, 14 October 2009, 10 h00 am - ECOSOC
Chambers**

Chair's summary

On Wednesday, 14 October 2009, from 10:00 am to 1:00 pm, in the ECOSOC Chambers an informal meeting of the Country Specific Configuration of the PBC on Burundi took place under the chairmanship of H.E. Mr. Peter Maurer, Chairperson of the PBC Country-Specific Configuration of Burundi.

The Government of Burundi, the National Independent Electoral Commission, CENI, as well as members of the PBC - Burundi Configuration based in Bujumbura attended from Bujumbura via videolink.

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the preparations of the 2010 elections in Burundi. The discussion focused on the state of preparations for creating an environment conducive for free and fair elections as well as on the PBC's support to elections, including financial contributions to the electoral basket fund.

In his opening remarks, the Chair recalled the recommendations of the 29 July 2009 review of the Strategic Framework. Those recommendations relevant to elections were used as reference for the meeting.

Discussions were organized into two parts: (1) issues related to the creation of an environment conducive for free, peaceful and transparent elections; (2) issues related to the mobilisation of support to the electoral process, including financial contributions to the budget of elections.

An update was provided from Bujumbura by the Minister of Interior, the representative of the Minister of External relations and International Cooperation, the representative of the Minister of Public Security, and the President of CENI. They highlighted the significant progress achieved in the preparation of the electoral process: the adoption of the electoral code, achieved through a dialogue and consensual process among the political partners, the permanent forum of political parties, the Office of Ombudsman currently being set up, the campaign of civic education launched by the President of the Republic in September, measures being taken to ensure the security of elections, including the professionalisation of the police and the disarmament of the civilian

population. CENI, supported by UNDP, provided information on the immediate priorities, including the establishing of provincial and communal structures of the CENI, the resources needed, and called upon the PBC to mobilize immediate support. They referred to the project document on "Support to the electoral cycle in Burundi" signed by the Government of Burundi and the UN on 18 September 2009, with a budget of 43,7 millions USD (document communicated to members of the PBC - Burundi Configuration).

During the discussions, the following delegations took the floor to make statements and/or to ask specific questions on the preparatory work: Burkina Faso, Mexico, South Africa, China, Uganda, United Kingdom, Sweden, Belgium, European Union, Egypt, USA, Benin, Japan, European Community, Burundi and Peacebuilding Support Office. Most expressed satisfaction for progress achieved and efforts being mobilized by the Government of Burundi. Most confirmed their initial commitment, pledges, some promised to explore further possibilities to increase their assistance and to speed up the disbursement of funds.

In concluding the meeting, the Chair highlighted the following points:

- There is encouraging progress towards the creation of an environment conducive for free, peaceful and transparent elections.
- The complementary roles of the Government, CENI and Civil Society are key to ensuring successful elections.
- It is important to recognize and support the commitment of the Government to provide CENI with the working conditions and resources required. Members of the PBC - Burundi Configuration welcome the respective roles played by the Ministry of External Relations and International Cooperation, the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Security as well as the dialogue and collaboration with CENI.
- The pursuit of a transparent cooperation between the Ministry of Interior and CENI will reinforce the credibility of the electoral process.
- There is consensus on safety and security as a necessary condition for free and fair elections. For the elections to be a success, the government is committed to ensuring the safety and security of the process and the international community will continue to provide its support in this area.
- The meeting has reaffirmed the commitment to freedom of speech and freedom of assembly for the citizens, and the role of political parties, of the organizations of civil society and of free media in the election process.

- Burundi is committed to a culture of dialogue to overcome constraints and tensions as they arise in the process, and the government is taking concrete steps to maintain dialogue between all stakeholders.
- The International Community will continue to accompany Burundi and the Burundians in the process of consolidating peace and democracy. Each member of the PBC - Burundi Configuration will provide their strongest support, tapping into comparative advantages and capacities. Support will come in many forms, including political, financial, technical, logistical and others.
- Regarding financial support, the Chair will discuss with PBSO possibilities of using PBF resources if important gaps to respond to immediate needs are not fully addressed.

The Chair thanked the Government of Burundi, CENI, members of the PBC - Burundi Configuration and BINUB for their contribution to the success of the meeting. He concluded that all stakeholders are committed to making the 2010 elections a success for each and every Burundian. The Chair will follow up with the members of the PBC - Burundi Configuration to secure the support required.

After concluding the discussions on elections, the Chair recalled the attention of members of the PBC - Burundi Configuration on the other priority agreed: the strategy for socio-economic reintegration of former combatants, demobilized soldiers, returnees, internally displaced people, and other vulnerable groups affected by the conflict. As agreed with the Government, a meeting dedicated on this priority will be organized mid-November. It has been agreed that before the meeting, the Government will finalise the reintegration strategy and share it with members of the PBC - Burundi Configuration.

Finally, the Chair encouraged PBC members to participate to the upcoming meeting of the Consultative Group on Burundi in Paris on 26-27 October.
