

23 June 2010

To : Members of the PBC – Burundi Configuration

**Informal meeting of the Country Specific Configuration of the  
PBC on Burundi**

**New York, 21 June 2010, 10.15-12.15 – Conference Room 6 at the  
United Nations**

**Chair's summary**

On Monday, 21 June 2010, an informal meeting of the Country Specific Configuration of the PBC on Burundi took place chaired by H.E. Mr. Paul Seger, Ambassador of Switzerland to the United Nations and the new Chairperson of the PBC Country-Specific Configuration of Burundi. The meeting was linked by videoconference to Bujumbura where the National Electoral Independent Commission (CENI), the Executive Representative of the Secretary-General and representatives of the international community in Burundi participated. The purpose of the meeting was for members of the Burundi Configuration to be updated on the electoral process and to discuss opportunities to further support the democratic process and encourage an inclusive approach regarding the upcoming legislative elections.

After his introduction, the Chair gave the floor to the President of CENI in Burundi who gave an update on the elections. He highlighted the following facts and issues:

On 24 May 2010, Burundians went to the polls to elect communal councils. There was massive participation. Logistical problems were addressed as they were identified and as the electoral process unfolded. During the day of the vote, political parties were represented at each polling station and nobody from the political parties raised any problems questioning the electoral operation.

The population, diplomats and the observers who followed the voting confirmed that the communal elections were correct and had taken place in peace and tranquility.

As the provisional results were released, the communal elections started to be disputed and contested. In the end a group of thirteen political parties challenged the communal election results and announced that they would boycott the remaining elections. These dynamics have resulted in an atmosphere of tensions and passion in Bujumbura that is not reflected in the provinces and hills. The cases of violence and attempted violence resulting from these tensions need to be addressed.

The presidential elections are scheduled on 28 June and CENI is ready for these elections.

On 23 and 28 July, the national legislative elections (National Assembly and Senate) are scheduled. Currently, candidates' lists for these elections can be submitted. Political parties who decided to withdraw thus have an opportunity to reconsider and to give to their constituencies a chance to be represented in the Parliament. CENI has started a dialogue with those political parties to discuss corrective measures that need to be taken for these upcoming elections and possible ways to encourage their participation in the legislative elections.

The President of CENI indicated that CENI has already received candidatures from the CNDD-FDD and FRODEBU-Nyakuri and that those from UPRONA are expected soon.

He announced that CENI would be flexible with the application of deadlines set and is willing to give an extension to allow parties to submit their candidatures for the National Assembly elections. For logistical constraints, this extension cannot go beyond Sunday 27 June.

After the presentation by CENI, the African Union, Australia, Belgium, Benin, Canada, the European Union, France, Germany, Norway, the United States of America and the Executive Representative of the Secretary General in Burundi took the floor. They expressed satisfaction with the conduct of the communal elections. They reiterated their confidence in and support of CENI. They welcomed efforts by CENI to pursue dialogue with the political parties and to consider an extension of the deadline for the registration of candidates for the legislative elections. They encouraged CENI to further intensify their efforts of communication, transparency and openness. They invited political parties to reassess their decision to withdraw or participate in the legislative elections. They encouraged them to use existing mechanisms to file complaints with regards the communal

elections and to pursue dialogue with CENI. They called all parties to refrain from any use of violence which will not be tolerated by the International Community. They reiterated their commitment to support the electoral process through the financial resources already made available, the observation of the remaining elections and through other forms of support needed. They insisted on the respect of the Burundians' right to vote. They reiterated their commitment to support Burundi's efforts beyond the elections. Some suggested that these elections will have an impact on the future engagement of the International Community with Burundi. ERSG Petrie acknowledged the on-going mobilization of the other components of the Burundian Society such as the Religious Denominations, the Civil Society, and Women Associations as a key factor to the success of this process.

In his closing remarks, the Chair stressed the magnitude of progress already achieved in the peace process in Burundi. He suggested that Burundi was a few yards before the finishing line and that like in sport these last yards are often the most difficult. He held out the prospect of Burundi becoming a model of peacebuilding in the region and continuing on the path of stabilization and economic development. The PBC will continue to advise and accompany the country in these efforts.

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