

Peacebuilding Commission
Burundi Informal Thematic Discussion on Community Recovery – 9 May 2007

Summary Note of the Chair

1. As part of its workplan for Burundi, the PBC in its country-specific configuration convened an **informal thematic discussion on community recovery and peacebuilding** in Burundi. The primary purpose of this informal discussion was to **obtain relevant information on ongoing community recovery interventions that have an impact on peacebuilding, identify gaps and formulate recommendations** for the component on community recovery of the Integrated Peacebuilding Strategy (IPBS) for Burundi.
2. The meeting was **chaired by H.E. Johan L. Løvald, Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Norway**. It was run as an **interactive session** between the members of the CSM and the participants in Bujumbura who took part via video link (see annex). In his introductory remarks, the Chair remarked that the importance of community recovery could not be underestimated. He recalled that during the visit of the PBC to Burundi, an unequivocal appeal was made by all stakeholders for the need to support interventions that would bring dividends of peace to the people of Burundi in the short term in order to sustain the fragile peace. These interventions are particularly important for youths, women, refugees and IDPs returning to their communities. Ambassador Løvald also made reference to the Round Table which will be held on 24-25 May in Bujumbura and to the need for the PBC to sensitize the international community on Burundi's resource needs as well as to keep a eye on the outcome and follow up to the event.
3. The Bujumbura-based participants **included Youssef Mahmoud, ERSG for Burundi, Sue Hogwood, DfID's Country Representative in Burundi and Peter Uvin, Henry J. Leir Professor of International Humanitarian Studies and Director of the Institute for Human Security at the Fletcher School (Tuft University)**. Mr. Hermenegilde Nkurabagaya, the chargé d'affaires at the Permanent mission of Burundi in New York added his voice to the introductory presentations that underlined the importance of bringing peace dividends to communities as a priority for ensuring sustainable peace.
4. Members of the CSM appreciated the quality of the background paper on community recovery and peacebuilding in Burundi prepared by BINUB. One member of the CSM noted that the dimension of decentralisation could have been integrated in the document.
5. The importance of restoring social services was underlined by several speakers in order to better involve people at community level in their future and in the development of the country. Measures such as the declaration by the President of Burundi of free primary education and free health care for children under five years of age and women in child birth contribute not only to restoring wellbeing

and social cohesion but also to consolidating peace. The community recovery principles of reducing inequality, providing tangible “quick-wins” and increasing participation are all central to the government plans to develop human capital through the improvement of basic service delivery. The government needs further financial support to deliver these services. DFID, in partnership with the World Bank, UNICEF, France and Belgium is supporting the government to deliver health and education services. The European Commission supports conflict resolution and reconciliation activities within the support to the decentralisation component of its Good Governance Programme.

Key points and Challenges

6. There is still **no shared understanding among partners in Burundi of what constitutes peacebuilding**. While some consider that community recovery is an essential component of peacebuilding. Others see it as part of development.
7. While socio-economic recovery should be considered a priority for sustainable peacebuilding, it is **important to prioritize the interventions that are the most relevant to reinforcing the current fragile peace and prevent a relapse into conflict**. Some members noted that mapping interventions that are already in place could help highlight where the PBC could focus its attention. It was also underlined that in addition to identifying what is not already covered, the PBC needed to add value to existing processes. Members of the CSM reiterated that the definition of priorities needs to be driven by the government.
8. It is important to reflect on **how socio-economic recovery interventions will be linked and integrated into other peacebuilding priorities** (Political, Security, Rule of Law).
9. Much emphasis was placed on the need to **reflect on how a visible and immediate impact can be made at community level**. The allocation of the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) was useful in that respect, although it was noted that it is imposing high transaction costs on the government and its partners. The **issue of weak capacity for implementation** - in terms state capacity, implementing partners’ capacity to disburse funds quickly and ability to work effectively together - was also raised as an obstacle to urgent delivery of services to communities.
10. The **capacity of partners in Burundi to learn lessons from the experience of other post-conflict countries** needs to be strengthened as well. This was to ensure maximum impact on peacebuilding of interventions that are put in place (identify the interventions have an intrinsic peacebuilding value)..
11. **Young people in Burundi are an important segment of the population to focus on in the peacebuilding process**. Research in Burundi suggests that over of the 12-13 years period of conflict in Burundi, **only 3% of young men engaged**

- in violence.** The fact that 97% did not engage in violence merits attention as it is a favourable factor for sustenance of peace.
12. During the course of a seven-month research in urban and rural areas Burundi, Professor Uvin spoke with 400 young men (15 to 30 years old). Key messages that came out of the conversations he had with them include: the **high value young people place in the completion of an education, the importance of securing a job and the importance of migration as a strategy for advancement.** Young people in Burundi are an extremely dynamic segment of the population that needs conducive environment to advance, they demand citizenship (equality, equity in access to resources, etc.) and their outlook on issues reflects a capacity to go beyond standard dichotomies, such as ethnic divides.
 13. These **research findings from the work conducted at community level should inform the definition of priorities and the development of programmes,** including those of the PRSP. One member wondered how cost effective the analyses conducted by academic institutions were compared with those of Bretton Woods Institutions.
 14. The scarcity of land (average density of 285 inhabitants/km²) is exacerbated by return of refugees and IDPs to their communities and is considered one of the big challenges to peacebuilding in Burundi. The newly created National Commission on Land and Other Properties has started to address the issues, with the support of partners (UNDP, UNHCR, USAID, allocation from the PBF). The Government of Burundi **estimates that US\$70 million would be required to resolve the land disputes that the national commission is currently seized with.**

Recommendations

15. The following were suggested as **possible starting-points for prioritization of community recovery interventions** that would have impact on peacebuilding:
 - a. Within the overall agreement to target youth, **specific attention should be paid to young people in poor neighbourhoods of Bujumbura,** particularly “self-demobilised” youth, and those around them.
 - b. Targeting **young returnees/repatriates who do not have land in rural areas and youths in IDP camps in the North.** The latter are mostly alienated from agriculture, yet there is nothing else to do in the area.
16. The PBC should be guided by a **knowledge of what the Round Table will or can deliver, and avoid overlap.** BINUB will send the latest information on the status of preparations for the Round Table. The information can also be found on a dedicated website: www.cslpminiplan.bi. It was also noted that the donor community in Burundi has a chance to review all proposals considered for the

PBF, so that overlap with existing projects can be avoided. In response to a specific question on the allocation of funds from the PBF, it was noted that three criteria guide the selection of interventions to be funded by the Fund: (i) direct and visible peacebuilding impact, (ii) addressing needs of the most vulnerable and (iii) providing basic services in an equitable manner. The PRSP builds on these for the medium and long term. Information on the projects that have been approved by the joint steering committee on peacebuilding to date can be found on www.un.pbf.org.

17. The Government called on the **PBC to continue to play its fundraising role**.
18. The need to **clarify the role that the PBC can play in implementation** was raised. With reference to the background paper prepared for the meeting, **caution** should also be taken **not to put the existing different strategic frameworks on the same level, and, in any case, the PBC should maintained its focus on the IPBS (Strategic Framework) which guides the engagement between the Government of Burundi and the PBC**.
19. In closing the meeting, the Chair thanked all participants, and particularly those in Bujumbura for whom it was late in the day, for their contribution to a session that allowed the PBC to have a better **understanding of the importance of community recovery to peacebuilding in Burundi** and how the PBC can define its support to ongoing interventions in that area.
20. The **next and last informal CSM will focus on the rule of law and security sector reform**. It will be held on **Tuesday, 29 May 2007**, based on a background paper which will be prepared by BINUB.

PBSO, 14 May 2007

Annex 1 – Participants in Bujumbura (via video link)

1. Government

Pierre-Claver Rurakamvye, Executive Secretary of Comité National de Coordination de l'Aide (CNCA)

Adolphe Nahayo, Director of Department for International Organisations (Ministry of External Relations and Cooperation)

2. International Partners

Sue Hogwood, Country Representative, DfID

Makonga Monga Mulenda, DRC

Mohamed El Khashab, Ambassador to Burundi, Egypt

Peter Uvin, Professor, Fletcher School (Tuft University)

3. United Nations

Mahmoud Youssef, ERSG (chair)

Antonius Broek, Country Director UNDP

Adama Coulibaly, DRR Programme

Barbara Piazza-Georgi, Representative, UNFPA

Kaba-Guichard Neyaga, UNHCR