

Consultative Meeting between the UN Peacebuilding Commission and the African Union Peace and Security Council

8 July 2010

Joint Chairs' Summary of the Discussion

Background

Member states of the United Nations Peacebuilding Commissions (PBC) held consultations with the African Union Peace and Security Council (AU-PSC) on 8th July, 2010 in New York.

The meeting was co-chaired by Ambassador Peter Wittig, Permanent Representative of Germany, and Chairperson of the PBC and Ambassador Dalo Gbouagbre of Côte d'Ivoire, Chairperson of the AU-PSC.

The agenda consisted of the following items: (1) Peacebuilding processes in African countries on the PBC agenda; (2) AU PSC perspectives in addressing peacebuilding challenges; and (3) Conclusions and the way forward.

Opening remarks by the Chairperson of the Peacebuilding Commission and the Chairperson of the AU Peace and Security Council

In his opening remarks, the PBC Chairperson underlined the significance of the meeting, noting that it was a testimony to the high priority the Peacebuilding Commission attaches to forging a solid partnership with the African Union. He also noted that the meeting was aimed at further deepening the cooperation which brings together the United Nations and the African Union behind a comprehensive vision for peace and prosperity in Africa.

The PBC Chair noted that the objectives of the meeting were: to lay a foundation to further develop the channels of communication between the two bodies; to exchange views on how members of the two organisations could optimise their respective comparative advantage in support of peacebuilding efforts in Africa; and to explore mechanisms to jointly advocate and promote political and sustain financial support for post conflict countries in Africa.

In his statement, the Chairperson of the AUPSC highlighted the important role that regional organizations can play in peacebuilding processes. The AU is a particularly active partner due to its recently adopted Policy Framework on Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development. Strengthening the partnership with the AU would constitute a value added for the work of the PBC, as it would promote and strengthen the role of African leaderships, guarantee inclusive approach and encourage national ownership.

Peacebuilding processes in African countries on the PBC agenda

The Chairs of the PBC Country-specific Configurations provided brief overviews on the peacebuilding processes in the four countries on the PBC agenda.

- The Chair of the Central African Republic Configuration identified DDR process and the forthcoming presidential and parliamentary elections as the current priorities for peacebuilding in that country. In these and other peacebuilding priorities, the PBC was supporting the national authorities and fostering increased coordination among national and international partners, as well as with regional and sub-regional organizations.
- The Chair of the Guinea-Bissau Configuration noted that the PBC was working closely with national partners to address the key priorities for that country: the fight against drug trafficking, the reform of the security sector, economic revitalization and in supporting the social dimensions of peacebuilding. The Chair noted that, particularly in these difficult moments, the political and financial support of the international community, as well as the role of regional organizations, are of crucial importance to the country.
- The Chair of the Sierra Leone Configuration noted that Sierra Leone represents a success story for peacebuilding but that the country. Yet, the country still needs international support to improve its governance and rule of law sector, address the issue of youth unemployment and combat drug trafficking.
- The Chair of the Burundi Configuration reported on his recent visit to that country and on how the PBC is supporting national authorities to ensure the forthcoming elections are peaceful, inclusive and fair. He also noted that the AU has played an important role in helping Burundi in this crucial phase and in advancing the peace process, in general.

The Assistant Secretary-General for Peacebuilding Support briefed on how the UN system was supporting the engagement of the PBC in countries on its agenda. In particular, she stressed the importance of the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) as strategic gap filler and a catalyzer of funds to address the tension between security and development. She also briefed on the ongoing review of the international civilian capacity for peacebuilding and on the need to take full advantage of the existing expertise in the global south in the process. She added that the contribution of the AU to the review will be crucial.

AU-PSC perspectives in addressing peacebuilding challenges

The AU Commissioner for Peace and Security briefed on the progress and challenges in the implementation of the AU Policy Framework for Post-conflict Reconstruction and Development (AUPCRD), and outlined potential areas for collaboration with the PBC. The Commissioner presented the activities of the AU in the peace and security domain as a continuum englobing elements ranging from structural prevention of conflict to post-conflict reconstruction and development. In this respect, the AU is putting in place a doctrine composed of a strategic framework and policies, as well as a complete architecture with organs and instruments. The AU approach on post-conflict reconstruction is based on an integrated approach designed to promote

consolidation of peace, implementation of reforms and the undertaking of socio-economic development in the context of political inclusiveness and good governance.

The Commissioner's perspective on the four country configurations on the UN PBC agenda tallied with those provided by the four Chairpersons of the configurations. He called for the extension of the mandate and activities of the UNPBC to other African countries, including to Sudan, Somalia and DRC, and also to Liberia, of which the request for inclusion should have been expeditiously fulfilled.

Conclusions and way forward

Several PBC and AU-PSC member States took the floor to emphasize the importance of a strengthened partnership between UN and AU. A number of concrete suggestions were offered in course of those interventions, on the possible ways of enhancing collaboration between PBC and AUPSC.

Member States emphasized the need for joint action on a range of issues. These included the need for both the PBC and AU PSC to develop joint mechanisms for mobilising resources for peacebuilding activities in Africa and to field joint teams of both the PBC and AU to undertake capacity needs assessment of countries emerging from conflict. Promoting coherence of action between national actors and international partners in support of peacebuilding was also stressed. In particular, coordination between the PBC and SRSGs should be enhanced.

They also affirmed the principle of national ownership of the peacebuilding process in post conflict countries and of international partnership in support of such efforts

In taking forward this important and regular dialogue between members of the PBC and AU-PSC, the need for it to remain flexible was underlined.

12 July 2010