

Peacebuilding Commission
Burundi Informal Thematic Discussion on Governance Reform - February 27, 2007

Summary Note of the Chair

1. As part of its workplan for Burundi, the PBC in its country-specific meeting convened an **informal thematic discussion on governance reform** in Burundi. The primary purpose of this informal discussion was to **obtain relevant information on ongoing governance reform and identify gaps and recommendations** for the formulation of the section on Good Governance of the Integrated Peacebuilding Strategy (IPBS) for Burundi. BINUB, in consultation with national authorities prepared a short background paper on challenges and opportunities for good governance in Burundi (see attached).
2. The meeting was **chaired by H.E. Johan L. Løvald, Ambassador, PR of Norway**. In his introductory remarks, he recalled that informal thematic discussions are building blocks towards the development of the IPBS, which once endorsed will provide a framework for the PBC's continued relationship with the country. An **expert panel composed of the ERSG for Burundi, the World Bank's Special Representative to the United Nations and the Vice-President for multilateral affairs at International Crisis Group** (see attached programme) highlighted the recent progress made in governance reform in Burundi as well as remaining gaps and areas of concern. The presentations underlined the central place of good governance in peacebuilding efforts.

Key developments

3. The Government of **Burundi's recent efforts to manage the changes** required in the various aspects of governance were recognised. Adjustments were made in a deliberate and peaceful manner. The government of Burundi continues to be **constructively engaged with the PBC**, and the international community provides principled yet constructive support to Burundi's peacebuilding efforts. Burundi's capacity to **regain regional stature** was also noted as a positive development for its governance agenda.
4. **Burundi's PRSP** will be considered by the World Bank's Executive Board at its session of 12-13 March 2007. The World Bank currently supports Burundi efforts to achieve MDGs through a total loan of US\$127 million (budget support, primary education and community development). Progress in the development of an **anti-corruption law and improvement in fiduciary management**, covering both procurement and budget management, were welcomed.
5. The **European Community** currently supports Burundi through a US\$22 million good governance programme in Burundi, which covers the rule of law, transparent and accountable management of affairs and support to public participation in the decentralisation process. The EC also supports a small programme (US\$3.5 million) that aims at building the capacity of non-state

actors. As good governance will be one pillar of the **EC's 2008-2013 programme of cooperation with Burundi**, the European Union looks forward to the outcome of the PBC's deliberations on the IPBS in order to feed it into the development of its own programme.

6. The visit of the President of the **World Bank** (7 March 2007) was welcomed as an important sign of the international community's attention to Burundi's post conflict recovery efforts.

Remaining challenges

7. While acknowledging that a separate informal CSM session on the rule of law is envisaged, the importance of addressing **transitional justice** in connection with good governance was underlined.
8. **Gender issues**, including the impact of the conflict on Burundian women (rape, projected decline in life expectancy from 60 to 39 by 2010, discrimination in property and land ownership and participation) will need to be addressed as part of governance reform.
9. The relationship between the government and the people of Burundi (women, private sector, academics, teachers, union, etc.), leadership, and capacity to make progress in the **development of fora for peaceful resolution of grievances** need to be strengthened further.

Recommendations

10. The following specific issues will need particular consideration in the development of the governance component of the IPBS for Burundi: support for the emergence of **transformational leadership both within and outside government**, building the **capacity of various stakeholders** for good governance, and adequate consideration of **gender, youth and regional dimensions** of good governance. It was suggested that the PBC consider the **report of the Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict** who is scheduled to visit Burundi from 10 to 13 March 2007.
11. The following overall principles should continue to guide the development of the IPBS in Burundi: (i) the importance of striking the right **balance between sovereignty, ownership of the process and partnership**, (ii) the need to consider the **specific socio-economic and cultural context of Burundi** when providing support or advice in the development of the integrated peacebuilding strategy, (iii) the need to ensure **involvement of all local stakeholders in the process, including bilateral donors and civil society**, (iv) the need to build on the PRSP and **focus the IPBS on a limited number of critical issues**, and (v) the necessity to **set benchmarks to track success and avoid setbacks** given that progress in the area of good governance remains fragile in Burundi.

12. In closing the meeting, the Chair thanked all participants for their contribution to a session that **provided solid understanding of governance issues as they pertain to** Burundi and contributed to the PBC's ongoing support to the development of Burundi's IPBS. He took note of the **World Bank's offer to provide a briefing on the relationship between Post Conflict Needs Assessments (PCNAs) and PRSPs** during an informal session of the CSM. He also invited participants in the session to share their written interventions with PBSO so that they can serve for future reference (see attached intervention from IPU).