

Peacebuilding Commission
Informal Meeting on the Situation in The Gambia
(19 April 2017)

Chairperson's Summary of the Discussion

1. On 19 April, the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) convened an informal meeting on the situation in The Gambia. The meeting was chaired by H.E. Mr. Cho Tae-yul, Chair of the PBC. The meeting was convened, upon the request of the Government of The Gambia, to discuss ways to provide strategic and coherent support to the country's peacebuilding priorities. The meeting also provided the opportunity to brief the Commission on the joint visit of the Permanent Representative (PR) of The Gambia to the United Nations, Ambassador Mamadou Tangara, with the Chair of the PBC and the Assistant Secretary-General for Peacebuilding Support, Mr. Oscar Fernandez-Taranco to Banjul from 20 to 21 March 2017 (hereinafter referred to as joint visit). UNDP Assistant Administrator and Director of the Regional Bureau for Africa, Mr. Abdoulaye Mar Dieye and DPA Africa 2 Division Director, Mr. Abdel-Fatau Musah also attended the meeting and briefed the Commission.

2. PR of The Gambia expressed gratitude to the international community, in particular the UN, AU and ECOWAS, as well as the African leaders whose engagements and coordination resulted in a peaceful transfer of power to President Adama Barrow following the December 2017 election. He noted that the Gambian people had reaffirmed their commitment to peace and democracy with the successful legislative elections held on 6 April 2017. He stressed the importance of coordinated international support to The Gambia's serious peacebuilding challenges, including: i) setting up a transitional justice mechanism; ii) ensuring respect for fundamental human rights through access to justice; iii) depoliticizing state institutions and civil service; iv) restoring confidence in the judicial system; v) reforming the security sector; vi) reducing poverty with a particular focus on youth unemployment and women empowerment; vii) improving access to basic services; viii) improving infrastructure and connectivity; and ix) reforming the civil service and building capacity. He added that another priority of the country was cooperation for regional peace and stability, in particular with the sister nations of Senegal and Guinea-Bissau. He assured the PBC of his Government's commitment to place emphasis on national unity and inclusive governance, as well as a national development plan, taking into account the peacebuilding priorities to be presented at the donor roundtable in the coming months. He requested the PBC's support in sustaining international attention and coordinating UN, regional and international actors in support of The Gambia.

3. ASG of PBSO briefed on the joint visit, a coordinated UN effort in support of the transition in The Gambia, which started with a UN Inter-Agency Mission led by DPA

and UNDP in February 2017, followed by the joint visit of USG Jeffrey Feltman and SRSG for West Africa Mohamed Ibn Chambas in early March. He briefed on the meetings with the President Adama Barrow, Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Finance, the leadership of the armed forces and police, Chief Justice, Independent Electoral Commission, civil society organizations, ECOMIG Commanders, President of the ECOWAS Commission (who was visiting at the same time), diplomatic community, and the UN Country Team. He noted that discussions focused on on-going efforts to ensure a rapid and coordinated UN response in support of The Gambia, including the initial allocation of USD 3 million of PBF to support the immediate peacebuilding priorities identified by the Government of The Gambia, including i) security sector reform; ii) transitional justice; and iii) support to the government's coordination of the national peacebuilding and development plans. He underscored the importance of timing and sequencing in the implementation of key reforms, and the linkages between transitional justice, security sector reforms and national reconciliation efforts, as well as working with bilateral and multilateral support programmes and regional efforts. He highlighted the need to harmonise the various national development plans into a comprehensive framework ahead of the donor conference. ASG Fernandez-Taranco also informed that following the visit, PBSO had worked with DPA, UNDP, UNOWAS and Office of the Resident Coordinator to launch the two projects on transitional justice and security sector reform.

4. On the joint visit to The Gambia, the PBC Chair added that during the meeting with President Barrow he explained that the PBC can serve as a platform to help sustain international attention and mobilize deeper commitment within the UN and with other regional and international partners in support of the Government's peacebuilding priorities. PBC Chair reported that President Barrow expressed his hopes that The Gambia's political, security, development, and human rights priorities would benefit from continued attention and support from the international community, including through the PBC.
5. DPA Director presented the international community's engagement in the electoral process and post-electoral crisis in The Gambia as a classic example of 'prevention' at its best. He recalled the instrumental role played by the UNCT in support of the democratic process, and the proactive and concerted engagement by ECOWAS, AU, UN, EU, the Commonwealth and other international partners in the post-electoral crisis, which resulted in the peaceful resolution of the crisis. He noted that in addition to the critical reforms of the judiciary and security sectors, the new Government is also confronted with the challenges of de-politicization and professionalization of the civil service and state institutions, youth unemployment and women empowerment, as well as transitional justice and national reconciliation. He stressed the importance of prioritizing and sequencing the response to these critical peacebuilding challenges.
6. In his remarks, UNDP Assistant Administrator Director of the Regional Bureau for Africa identified support to the newly elected Parliament, reform of the judiciary and

the security sectors, as well as the revival of the public administration system, notably the economic management institutions (Central Bank, central planning and sectoral ministries as well as local government institutions) as critical peacebuilding priorities. He noted that in the immediate term, and with a sense of urgency, UNDP and all UN agencies are working on the re-casting of UNDAF and various UN agencies' country programmes to respond to the priorities defined by the latest UN interagency mission. He noted that UNDP, in collaboration with UNOWAS and relevant UN entities, will focus on supporting the parliament and government collaborative leadership, SSR and transitional justice. He added that UNDP will also explore the possibility of setting up a TOKTEN programme (Transfer of Knowledge through Expatriate Nationals).

7. Member States welcomed the flexible working methods of the PBC, which have allowed the Commission to discuss a broad range of country-specific, cross-border and regional situations, including the Mano River Union, the Sahel, and The Gambia. They commended the coordination and coherence between the UN, AU, ECOWAS and other international partners during the post-electoral crisis in The Gambia. Several Member States noted that while The Gambia can be dubbed as a successful case of preventive diplomacy, it would also represent a test case for UN's sustaining peace efforts.
8. Member States stressed that the meeting demonstrates the importance and relevance of the PBC's role in sustaining international engagement in support of its peacebuilding priorities. They emphasized the convening role of the PBC, which can serve as an ideal platform to mobilize deeper commitment and partnership from the national stakeholders, the UN system, and regional and international partners in support of The Gambia. They encouraged continued collaboration and coherence within the UN, as well as with the key regional partners and international financial institutions, such as the World Bank and the African Development Bank to help address the peacebuilding, recovery and development priorities, crucial for peace and stability in The Gambia.
9. PBC Chair concluded the meeting by thanking Ambassador Tangara for seeking the PBC's support and Member States for supporting the Commission's important role in raising the international community's awareness of The Gambia's peacebuilding challenges and opportunities. He assured the PR of the Gambia of the PBC's readiness to provide support, at the Government's request, to the country's continued sustaining peace efforts.
