

Peacebuilding Commission Organizational Committee Meeting

18 December 2017

Chairperson's Summary of the Discussion

Background

On 18 December 2017, the Peacebuilding Commission convened an informal meeting. The meeting was chaired by the H.E. Mr. Juan Jose Ignacio Gómez Camacho, Vice-Chair of the PBC, and addressed the following agenda items: (1) Informal adoption of the PBC report on its eleventh session; 2) Report by the Chairs of the PBC Country configurations, PBC focal points, and coordinator of the periodic stock-taking exercises on the PBC's advisory function to the Security Council; 3) Briefing on activities of the Peacebuilding Fund.

Informal adoption of the PBC report on its eleventh session

1. The Chair presented to the Member States the draft report of the PBC on its eleventh session. He informed that, once informally adopted by the Committee, the report would be transmitted to the secretariat for editing and translation into the UN official language, with a view to formally adopt it at a meeting of the Commission scheduled for 31 January 2018.

The Committee informally adopted the Report.

Report by the Chairs of the PBC Country configurations, PBC focal points, and coordinator of the periodic stock-taking exercises on the PBC's advisory function to the Security Council

2. The Chair invited the Chairs of the Configurations to report to the OC on the activities they have undertaken in the last quarter and to present their work plans for the first quarter of 2018. He also invited the countries informally acting as focal points for thematic issues and the coordinator of the periodic stock-taking exercises on the PBC's advisory function to the Security Council to brief on their activities in 2017.
3. The Chair of the Central African Republic Configuration (Morocco) reported that, during the last quarter, the Chair had met in New York the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Central African Republic who updated him on the security, political and development situation in the country. The Chair informed that the security situation in CAR remained fragile and had a negative impact on the humanitarian situation. The Chair noted that the implementation of the National

Recovery and Peacebuilding Plan (RCPCA) was delayed because of a number of reasons, including the limited amount of funding disbursed after the Brussels conference, the security situation, and the limited capacities in some areas of the government. The Chair informed that the work of the Commission would continue to focus on the implementation of Pillar I of the RCPCA, which focused on peace, security, and reconciliation, and will convene dedicated discussions on each these areas.

4. The Chair of the Guinea-Bissau Configuration (Brazil) informed that, following an ECOWAS Ministerial Mission to Bissau, ECOWAS issued a final communiqué on 3 December noting that the additional period of three months for progress in the implementation of the Conakry Agreement, established at the 51st ECOWAS Summit, had ended on 3 September with no results. The Chair recalled that the PBC convened a meeting on Guinea-Bissau on 6 December. On that occasion, the SRSB for Guinea-Bissau reported that there had been no tangible progress in the implementation of the Conakry Agreement and that tensions continued to rise. The Commission also discussed the upcoming legislative elections and was informed that the National Electoral Commission (CNE) presented to the President of the Republic a calendar according to which legislative elections were to be held in May 2018. In line with this proposal, preparations were underway, including those related to the electoral cartography and the electoral budget. However, the Chair noted that there were still important technical challenges to be addressed, particularly the update of the voters' registration list. He reported that the DSRSB and UN Resident Coordinator stressed that the organization of the elections was contingent upon the willingness of the key political actors and that there were still no certainties on this matter. The Chair recalled that the PBC issues a statement on 11 December to reiterate its support to the Bissau and Conakry Agreements. The statement also stressed the importance of holding free and fair elections and called on political actors to show restraint and invited them to express their views and disagreements peacefully.
5. The Chair of the Sierra Leone Configuration (Canada) reported that he travelled to Sierra Leone on 10-13 December where he discussed with a broad range of stakeholders the ongoing preparations for the March 2018 elections. The Chair noted that he was pleased with the progress in the technical preparation for the elections with the overall support of all parties for the National Electoral Commission. He stressed that funding for the elections remained a concern and informed that the government had committed to pay about 2/3 of the total cost out of its own budget, but with austerity measures in place and a difficult financial situation, this remained a challenge. He noted that, while a good portion of the funds owed to the NEC was transferred, a decision in recent weeks to pause disbursement of remaining payments caused concerns among many stakeholders. In this connection, he reported that he reiterated to the government of Sierra Leone the importance of transferring all funds. In connection with potential violence during the electoral period, he informed that the need for police and security forces to demonstrate impartiality and restraint was emphasized. He informed that he had also discussed the importance of ensuring women's participation in the political process and the importance of dialogue among all political parties.

6. The Chair of the Liberia Configuration (Sweden) noted that Liberia was going through an historical moment of dual transition: the election of a new government and the drawdown of the peacekeeping operation. In connection with the election, he informed that the second round was set for 26 December and he welcomed the peaceful way in which the country addressed some of the issues related to the first round. He recalled that, during the last quarter, the PBC followed the developments in the country and convened discussions with key stakeholders. With regard to the drawdown, the Chair informed that the UNCT undertook a mapping exercise to identify gaps in its ability to support the implementation of residual peacebuilding tasks and identified a clear risk of a “resource cliff”. He noted that the PBC supported the UN to identify ways to manage the transition and to ensure predictable financing for peacebuilding in Liberia during the critical transition phase. He said that the Commission continued to discuss with the Government of Liberia and UNMIL the implementation of the Peacebuilding Plan. In this regard, he informed that the PBC was working with the UN in Liberia to organize a conference in March 2018 to give an opportunity to the government to present to the international community its vision of phase II of the Peacebuilding Plan.
7. The focal points for youth (Belgium) reported on the informal meeting on youth, peace and security was organized in June 2017 to brief the experts of the Commission on the Progress Study on Youth, Peace and Security mandated by Security Council Resolution 2250 (2015). The lead author of the study, who was appointed by the Secretary-General, explained that the study was an opportunity to think tactically about how we can invest in the positive contributions of young people as part of a prevention approach. The focal point noted that the role of youth in peacebuilding was welcomed by several delegations throughout the year.
8. The co-focal point for gender (Canada) reported that, together with Bangladesh, they continued with the implementation of the PBC gender strategy and stressed the importance of the strategy at a number of fora, including at an informal side event at the margins of the Commission on the Status of Women. Rather than convening meetings that can create more work to the PBC, they advocated for increased attention to women in peacebuilding processes throughout the meetings and prepared background information for the PBC annual session. .
9. The co-focal points for financing (Indonesia and Norway) recalled that their objective as focal points was to support the Chair and add to the work of the Commissions work on financing issues, . The reported that they organized a side event on financing for peacebuilding and development event during the ECOSOC Financing for Development Forum (May 2017)..They also recalled the informal meeting of the PBC which was organized in October to discuss innovative financing.
10. The focal point for institution building (Japan) noted that institution building was recognized as an important peacebuilding element in several meetings. He recalled that Japan organized informal workshops, including one on strengthening criminal justice systems in post-conflict countries, with a specific focus on Guinea and Nepal

(April).. In connection with the Sahel, the focal point informed that, going forward, and in order to complement the work of the Chair, the Vice-Chairs, and the Commission, he would plan to hold an informal workshop, with a view to focus on building sound state institutions, especially in border areas.

11. The focal point for national ownership (Russia) noted that the Commission made progress in 2017, introducing new and flexible working methods and exploring options beyond the country-configurations. He stressed that the good examples of this year came from a Commission which fully respects national ownerships and engages with countries upon their request.
12. The coordinator of the periodic stock-taking exercises on the PBC's advisory function to the Security Council (Egypt) underscored that the advisory function to the Security Council assumes particular importance in view of the increasing complexity of the conflicts and crises with which the Council is seized. Therefore, the informal stock-taking exercise provided a periodic opportunity for a dialogue between the Council and the Commission on how context-specific advice and engagement could be further envisaged and targeted. The coordinator noted that the stock-taking showed how the advisory role of the Commission evolved over the past two years, for example in connection with the situations in Burundi and Liberia. Beyond the country-specific situations, the regional approach to peacebuilding and sustaining peace represents a significant evolution in the Council's recognition of contexts where the PBC's engagement and advice could potentially be of particular relevance. The coordinator stressed how the informal interactive dialogue on the Sahel (June) offered the Council and the PBC a unique opportunity to identify areas where the Commission could help foster a more coherent and regional approach to addressing the multitude of challenges in the region. He also underscored that there was a potential for incremental openness and confidence by the Security Council towards an advisory role of the PBC. For that to happen, members of the Council that are members of the PBC should champion the bridging role, and the PBC should ensure a solid response from to the Council's tasking.
13. In connection with the position of coordinator of the periodic stock-taking exercises on the PBC's advisory function to the Security Council, and in view of the decision of Egypt to relinquish his role of coordinator at the end of the year, following the expiration of its two-year membership term on the Security Council, the representative of Sweden expressed the readiness of his Delegation to become coordinator in 2018, if so decided by the Commission.

Briefing on activities of the Peacebuilding Fund

14. PBSO recalled that Peacebuilding Fund played a critical role in i) driving cohesion of UN strategies in conflict situations, through joint analysis, planning and implementation; ii) by enabling strong integrated support from the broad set of tools of the organization at HQ and in the field and iii) strengthening partnership, particularly with the PBC, the WB, the EU, the AU and ECOWAS. PBSO announced that the new Strategic Plan 2017 -2019 aimed at investing at least \$500m until 2019

in at least 40 countries. Investments would remain focused on the PBF's priority areas as mandated in the Fund's Terms of Reference across the continuum, investing in prevention, in the midst of violent conflict to prevent escalation and in post conflict settings. It was noted that the Fund would also emphasize investments streams which proved to be key enablers of peacebuilding and sustaining peace, such as i) cross border and regional investments; ii) facilitating transitions from one UN configuration to another, such as in Cote d'Ivoire, Liberia and Haiti; iii) youth and women empowerment, and; iv) private sector engagement as a new and growing areas of focus for our country teams in conflict situations, such as in Colombia and Liberia. PBSO also informed that about \$280m in commitments or pledges for the 3 years cycle were secured. This year marked the highest level of contributions since 2006 and a 90% increase from 2016. It was noted that the PBF remained the most widely subscribed fund of the UN system.

15. PBSO underscored that this level of commitment from donors allowed the Office to significantly raise its level of support to meet the growing demand around the world. PBSO reported that it expected to approve this year up to \$154m, which represented the highest level ever of approvals since the Fund's inception, a 102% increase from last year. The fund invested in 31 countries approving 81 projects and providing funding to 15 agencies of the development system and 7 CSOs. More than 82% of those projects were joint programs, always integrated with SPM or Peacekeeping Missions where they operate. This year demonstrated PBSO commitment in meeting the growing demand with quality and impactful programming.
