

Peacebuilding Commission
Ambassadorial-Level Meeting on Burundi
27 January 2020
Chair's Summary

1. On 27 January 2020, the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) held an ambassadorial-level meeting on Burundi chaired by H.E. Ambassador Jürg Lauber, Chair of the PBC Burundi Configuration. The purpose of the meeting was to provide the Commission with an update on the situation in Burundi and to discuss the Chair's upcoming trip to Burundi, from 2 to 6 February 2020.
2. In his opening remarks, the Chair began by thanking H.E. Ambassador Albert Shingiro, the Permanent Representative of Burundi, for his excellent cooperation and informed that Ambassador Shingiro was in Burundi preparing for the visit. He welcomed Assistant-Secretary-General (ASG) for Africa, Ms. Bintou Keita and her ongoing engagement with Burundi, and informed that the ASG would be joining the visit to the country.
3. Mr. Evariste Ngendankengera, Second Counsellor of the Permanent Mission of Burundi, provided an update on the situation in Burundi. He informed that the authorities were preparing to ensure a productive visit of the Chair and ASG Keita to Burundi. He further informed about electoral preparations, including the activities of the National Independent Electoral Commission (CENI), the adoption of the revised electoral code, the decision by the Government to finance the operational budget for the elections entirely with its own resources, the promulgation of a political party code of conduct, and a successful voters' registration process. He noted that Mr. Evariste Ndayishimiye, Secretary-General of the ruling CNDD-FDD party, had been designated on 26 January as the party's candidate for the May 2020 presidential elections. He stressed a favorable climate for free and fair elections, recalling that political space had expanded through the establishment of new political parties in country and the return of opposition political leaders to Burundi in October and December 2019. He further described measures aimed at preventing violence around the elections, including the creation of mixed committees composed of youth from different political parties and regular exchanges among political parties within the "*Forum des Partis Politiques*". He noted that due to a calm and stable security situation, Burundians could participate in the elections without fear and welcomed the return of refugees who had fled in 2015. He highlighted Burundi's development priorities, notably the eradication of poverty and the achievement of the sustainable development goals. In this regard, he welcomed the Configuration and the UN Country Team to serve as a bridge in mobilizing resources in support of Burundi's National Development Plan. He concluded by reiterating cooperation with the Configuration and the Peacebuilding Support Office, in respect of national ownership and commended the excellent work carried out by the UN Country Team in Burundi.
4. Ms. Bintou Keita, Assistant-Secretary-General for Africa, Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and Peace Operations (DPPA-DPO), briefed members of the Commission on her two visits to Burundi and on recent developments in the country. She shared insights from her meetings with a wide range of interlocutors, including government

officials, political party leaders, civil society representatives, and members of the diplomatic community, regional organizations and the UN system. She mentioned that, at the invitation of the First Lady of Burundi, she participated in the International Women Leaders' Conference last October, where she was inspired by the avenues for a peaceful and prosperous future that were identified and presented by the members of a Burundian women mediators' network. She underlined the importance of drawing from women's experiences and encouraging them to participate in politics. She further highlighted that the Burundian population, and women in particular, were engaging in intensive community outreach to promote stability during the elections cycle. She encouraged support for mechanisms aimed at navigating tensions and preventing violence beyond the electoral period and reiterated the importance for all stakeholders to take a clear stance against any form of violence. She concluded by calling on the international community to be supportive of positive developments in the country.

5. The Chair outlined the objectives of his upcoming visit. These include the political situation and possibilities for supporting Burundi in creating conditions for peaceful, transparent and democratic elections; the socioeconomic dimension and engagement between Burundi and international partners around priorities in Burundi's National Development Plan; national reconciliation and initiatives to prevent and resolve conflict at the community level; and the voluntary return and sustainable reintegration of refugees. He indicated that he would engage with interlocutors on requirements for peaceful, transparent and credible elections. He emphasized that while preparations for the elections are important, socio-economic development in Burundi must not slow down. He added that he would seek to meet with government ministers, bilateral and multilateral partners, and the UN Country team to discuss priorities for long-term engagement on socio-economic issues.
6. Member States welcomed the briefings and made the following observations:
 - They welcomed the joint visit, noted its timeliness after the recent nomination of the CNDD-FDD Secretary-General to be the party's presidential candidate and expressed their support for the objectives outlined by the Chair.
 - They reiterated their support for a comprehensive approach to peacebuilding and welcomed engagement with a wide range of interlocutors during the upcoming visit of the Chair.
 - They welcomed developments in Burundi's elections preparations, including the designation of the party's candidate for the presidential elections by the CNDD-FDD and the confirmation of the decision by H.E. President Pierre Nkurunziza not to stand for elections.
 - They urged Burundian authorities to ensure peaceful, transparent and inclusive elections and expressed hope that the joint visit would help to reinforce this message.

- Some members highlighted the importance of political tolerance, inclusivity and the protection of human rights, including freedom of expression and assembly. They welcomed steps taken to build trust among political parties and prevent violence.
 - Some members underlined the important role of regional and subregional organizations and called for synergy and complementarity with the UN's engagement.
 - They emphasized the need for continuous international attention to the country's development agenda in order to reduce vulnerabilities and strengthen resilience. They expressed continued support for Burundi's National Development Plan and encouraged the Configuration Chair to deepen cooperation with IFIs in support of its implementation.
 - Some expressed serious concern about the humanitarian needs of returnees and noted that it is one of the least funded humanitarian emergencies in the world.
 - They stressed the importance of the meaningful participation of women and youth in political processes and peacebuilding. They acknowledged the critical contributions of the PBF in support of women and youth and encouraged the PBF to continue supporting women peacebuilders across the country.
 - They acknowledged that steady work on reconciliation and dialogue was fundamental to peace and expressed appreciation for PBF-funded projects in support of social cohesion and the prevention and resolution of community conflict.
 - Noting the opportunity offered by the 2020 review, they encouraged the Configuration Chair to take stock of progress achieved to date and challenges remaining in the PBC accompaniment to Burundi's peacebuilding priorities.
7. In his concluding remarks, the Chair thanked the briefers and PBC members for their feedback and recommendations. He acknowledged the clear readiness of member states to remain engaged constructively on Burundi's peacebuilding priorities. He highlighted the shared expectation that the PBC continue serving as a platform for dialogue between Burundi and its development partners and took note of the encouragement to pursue partnerships in support of the implementation of Burundi's National Development Plan. He further noted that member states supported engagement to ensure peaceful, transparent and inclusive elections. He reiterated Member States' expectations for supporting women in political processes and peacebuilding activities and for the meaningful engagement of youth. He closed by informing that he would debrief the Commission upon his return.