**Peacebuilding Commission**

**High-Level Meeting on Burkina Faso**

**26 September 2019**

**Chair’s Summary**

1. On 26 September 2019, the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) convened a high-level meeting under the chairmanship of H.E. Mr. Iván Duque Márquez, President of Colombia, and subsequently by H.E. Mr. Guillermo Fernández de Soto, Chair of the PBC, to discuss the situation in Burkina Faso. The purpose of the meeting was to update on peacebuilding challenges and threats to the stability of the country and to discuss opportunities to provide adequate and coherent support from the international community for the Government’s peacebuilding priorities.
2. In his opening remarks, the Chair thanked the President of Burkina Faso for his interest in coming to the PBC to discuss the situation in his country. He noted that the level of participation at the meeting testified to the commitment of the international community to support peacebuilding and sustaining peace in Burkina Faso. He underlined the need to increase synergies among partners as peacebuilding called for coherent and coordinated support. He highlighted that the PBC has, since its creation, played an important role as an intergovernmental platform in supporting countries affected by conflict and violence, through an exchange of experiences and identifying solutions, including through facilitating South-South cooperation. In this regard, the Chair invited the PBC to hold a session in Cartagena, Colombia, to be held before the end of the chairmanship, to highlight the value of international partners and to further explore modalities for effective South-South cooperation. He underscored that the sectoral focus of the PBC also responds to the needs and coordination with the Security Council. The Chair closed his remarks by offering the support and peacebuilding experiences of Colombia to Burkina Faso.
3. The President of Burkina Faso, H.E. Mr. Roch Marc Christian Kaboré, thanked all partner countries and institutions for supporting the Government’s peacebuilding priorities by attending the meeting. He noted that Burkina Faso faced an unprecedented security situation with a level of violence and instability that had resulted in a humanitarian crisis. The President highlighted that the fight against terrorism was a national priority that must also be part of a sub-regional approach in the Sahel with an economic development dynamic. He recalled that the Government had declared a state of emergency in several regions and engaged in military operations both nationally and through the G5 Sahel Joint Force. The Government had also launched the Emergency Program for the Sahel (PUS-BF) and the program of support for local economies (PADEL). He underlined that international support to fight terrorism in Burkina Faso in particular and in the Sahel countries in general must take into account the humanitarian cost. Strengthening resilience and promoting development required an inclusive territorialized approach covering the security, humanitarian and development dimensions. The President called for enhanced coordination and a synergy of actions by all partners to better support the country. Joint missions such as the Prevention and Peacebuilding Assessment (PPBA) by the UN, the World Bank, the African Development Bank and the European Union under the leadership of the Government was a step in this direction.
4. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for West Africa and the Sahel, Mr. Mohamed Ibn Chambas, recalled that 2019 had seen a re-energized UN response to the needs in Burkina Faso, including through the joint PPBA. The Peacebuilding Fund also continued to support the country’s efforts to enhance social cohesion, the prevention and resolution of local conflicts, and trust-building between security forces and the population, with a specific focus on women and youth engagement. He commended the President for initiating a national dialogue process in June that had already led to consensus around the organization of elections in 2020. The UN stood prepared to support the electoral process and had completed an Election Needs Assessment Mission to the country in July.
5. The Chairperson of the African Union, H.E. Mr. Moussa Faki Mahamat, confirmed the African Union’s full solidarity with Burkina Faso and the Sahel region. He recalled the multidimensional and severe crisis marked by terrorism, violent extremism and inter-communal violence that undermined peace and national cohesion. He commended ECOWAS for recently taking concrete measures to mobilize 1 billion USD to combat terrorism in the Sahel. He underscored that tackling the inter-related challenges in Burkina Faso, as well as in the wider Sahel region, required collective and coherent engagements and mobilization of resources in support of the priorities identified by the Government.
6. The Vice-President for Africa of the World Bank, Mr. Hafez Ghanem, expressed deep concern over the severe humanitarian and economic consequences of the deteriorating security situation, explaining that extremist and violent groups had benefitted from perceived inequalities and the weak State presence in some regions. He noted that they had exploited the lack of inclusion of youth as well as the lack of economic opportunities. The World Bank program in Burkina Faso amounted to 2.5 billion USD largely spent on water and sanitation, local governance, and sustainable economic development with a strong focus on the empowerment of women and girls. He commended the Government’s continued commitment to explore opportunities to promote peace and to ensure coordinated international support in line with national strategies, including the request for technical assistance through the joint PPBA that would be concluded in December.
7. Member States welcomed the briefings and made the following observations:
* They expressed deep concern over the deterioration of the security situation and condemned the numerous attacks by extremist groups targeting civilian populations and security and defense forces, as well as security incidents involving armed groups and inter-communal clashes.
* Many underscored the regional nature of the security threat as the situation in Burkina Faso could pose a serious threat also to the stability of other countries of the Sahel and to neighboring countries in the West Africa subregion.
* They welcomed the Government’s efforts to respond to the current security and humanitarian challenges, and to provide the population with social services. They reiterated the need for stronger State presence throughout the country particularly in those regions affected and at risk of insecurity.
* Many commended the President’s commitment to peacebuilding, acknowledging recent constructive dialogue between the Government and the opposition political parties in preparation for the elections of 2020.
* Many reiterated their commitment to support Burkina Faso, including in the security sector, humanitarian assistance and peacebuilding activities.
* They recognized the need to strengthen coordination and coherence among international partners in Burkina Faso and to integrate security, humanitarian and development responses. Some suggested a soft security approach that tackles the root causes of conflict.
* They highlighted the urgent need for partners to prioritize their support to the Government in addressing the growing threats posed by extremist and other armed groups.
* They recognized the importance of specific focus on women and youth engagement in peacebuilding. Some reiterated the need to prioritise the problems faced by the youth as a way to prevent the risks of radicalisation.
* They welcomed the work of the PBC and the ongoing support of the Peacebuilding Fund to address critical priorities.
1. In his concluding remarks, the President thanked the Chair and the participants for their sense of urgency. He recalled that Burkina Faso shares borders with countries of the Sahel and countries of the coast, noting that the current security threat facing Burkina Faso could quickly affect coastal countries. The situation called for a rapid and collective response, and for a coherent implementation of activities and development policies in close cooperation with partners, including on establishing State authority in all areas of the country and on strengthening women and youth engagement as well as the regional response. The Chair reaffirmed the full support of the Commission to Burkina Faso and recalled that the Commission would issue a press statement on the situation in Burkina Faso.