

Chairman's Summary
Informal Meeting – Briefing by the CSM Chair on her field mission
New York, 5 February 2008

1. The meeting was chaired by H.E. Ms. Maria Luiza R. Viotti, Permanent Representative of Brazil to the United Nations, in her capacity as the Chair of the Guinea-Bissau configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission. The purpose of the meeting was to brief the members of the Guinea-Bissau CSM on the Chair's mission to the country from 23 to 25 January 2008. A report on the field visit had been circulated ahead of the briefing.
2. Ambassador Viotti highlighted the timeliness of her visit to Guinea-Bissau, which coincided with the launching in Parliament of the national Security Sector Reform plan. The visit also came at a time where the international community was reengaging with Guinea-Bissau, illustrated by the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) decision to grant Emergency Post-Conflict Assistance (EPCA) to Guinea-Bissau, as well as the Paris Club's decision to cancel part of the country's debt. These developments, together with the current political stability in the country, had created a window of opportunity for renewed efforts by the international community to help the country overcome the legacy of the 1998-1999 conflict. Ambassador Viotti summarized the key findings emanating from her meetings with Government officials, the diplomatic community, civil society representatives and the UN Country Team.
3. The following delegations took the floor: Jamaica, Norway, Portugal, Japan, the European Community, Angola, Egypt, Mexico, Senegal, the African Union, Belgium, Guinea, France, the Gambia, the Russian Federation, Luxembourg, the World Bank and Guinea-Bissau. They welcomed Ambassador Viotti's visit to Guinea-Bissau. They widely concurred with the Chair's assessment of the situation in the country. A number of delegations stated that the time had come to move from expression of support to concrete action. They also supported the Chair's suggested two-track approach, consisting of (1) initiating the work on a medium and long-term strategic framework for Guinea-Bissau and (2) at the same time, devising short-term peace dividend projects that can have an immediate impact on the ground.
4. Concerning the challenges the Chair had gleaned from her discussions in the country, notably with Government officials, members of the CSM noted the difficulty in prioritizing the various needs of the country as they were manifold, ranging from the reform in the security sector, the restructuring of the public sector, the activation of the economy and the need to address huge deficits in the social sector. At the same time, delegations stressed the importance of considering regional approaches in tackling some of the challenges, such as the problems of narco-trafficking, overexploitation of natural resources, and energy supply. Regional and sub-regional organizations should be closely involved in the PBC's work.
5. Members of the CSM also stressed the importance of "early peace dividend" projects, while taking into account the medium- to long-term sustainability of such projects. The importance of ensuring the strategic and catalytic use of the Peacebuilding Fund notably in support of such projects was highlighted.
6. Taking into account lessons learned from the Burundi and Sierra Leone experiences, the role of civil society was stressed as well as the need to provide the necessary support to the

UN Country Team in Guinea-Bissau. Several delegations suggested that the PBC should examine whether there is a need for the strengthening of UN capacity in the country.

7. The importance for the PBC to establish good relations with the ECOSOC Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Guinea-Bissau and with the General Assembly was stressed by several delegations. Over the years, the ECOSOC Ad Hoc Advisory Group had made a number of useful recommendations regarding international support for Guinea-Bissau. In this context, it was suggested to invite the Chair of the Advisory Group on Guinea-Bissau, the Permanent Representative of South Africa, to brief the CSM on the work accomplished by his group. The importance of using existing coordination structures and mechanisms to improve the coordination among donors was stressed.
8. Ambassador Viotti outlined the next steps in the process and the nature the forthcoming meetings of the Guinea-Bissau configuration in the month of February. The next meeting of the Guinea-Bissau configuration will focus on the mapping of existing resources. The PBSO was preparing relevant documentation to that effect and would make a presentation at the forthcoming CSM meeting, with additional contributions from the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.

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6 February 2008