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29 July 2011

Excellency,

On behalf of the Peacebuilding Commission Configuration for Liberia, I have the honour to transmit to you the report of a mission undertaken to Liberia by Members of the Configuration from 12 to 17 June 2011. The Delegation comprised of six Member States: Jordan, Liberia, Nigeria, Ukraine, United Kingdom and United States.

In response to the Security Council's request in its letter dated 19 July 2010 for PBC's advice and recommendations on "strengthening security sector reform, supporting rule of law and supporting national reconciliation", the attached report examines on-going interventions in the three sectors evaluating their status with recommendations on how to advance efforts.

These findings derive not only from the most recent mission but also from two visits undertaken by myself and the initial assessment mission last year. Complementary to the field visits, there have been a series of meetings between members of the Peacebuilding Commission and stakeholders based in Liberia through video-tel-conferencing and in New York allowing for regular communication and considerable deliberation on the challenges to building durable peace in Liberia.

As the Council is fully aware, Liberia, through the leadership of the Government and the determination of its people, has made significant progress in recovering from 14 years of war. Yet, experience in Liberia and other countries on the agenda of the Peacebuilding Commission show recovery from war is a long and arduous process.

Liberia's recovery efforts are threatened by fragile peace in neighboring countries and organized crime and drug trafficking. These risks together with the internal security threats, while relatively innocuous, nonetheless require professional forces that command respect and also have the capacity (technical expertise, equipment and professional

His Excellency
Mr. Peter Wittig
President of the Security Council
New York

training) to control situations of mob violence and investigate criminal cases. The crisis in neighboring Côte d'Ivoire has not only underlined the fragility in that part of the sub-region but is putting additional burden on security providers through an increase in the circulation of arms and combatants. The Delegation confirmed previous assessments that even though the main security providers, namely the army and the police, have been restructured and substantive training is on-going, they do not yet have the necessary capacity to respond to the tasks at hand without the support of UNMIL.

The incipient linkages between the police and the justice system have not yet been sufficiently established to enable an effective transmission of cases for prosecution. The establishment of the Justice and Security Regional Hubs have been designed to address this weak linkage as well as the above outlined capacity matters of law enforcement actors. The first Hub, which the Delegation visited, is steadily progressing and will be a notable example of strengthening government presence outside of the capital.

Further compounding the situation and resulting in high rates of pre-trial detentions, lengthy hearings and low numbers of cases being processed, is an outdated justice system that requires a significant overhaul of rules and procedures. Though belatedly, reform of the justice system has begun both at the policy and the legislative levels and the Delegation strongly advocated that a number of key outstanding issues be handled expeditiously.

Additionally, accountability and oversight structures have not yet been fully established in the security and justice sectors. Given the importance that PBC and the Government places on these sectors, the Delegation focused its advocacy on underscoring the urgency of improving these oversight structures as key means to prevent relapse into violent conflict and/ or creation of a predatory State as has historically occurred in the country.

The absence of reform of the security sector and demands for equitable delivery of justice were among the root causes of the Liberian conflict and continue to be potential conflict drivers. Recent consultations and studies have revealed that Liberians continue to perceive these sectors as corrupt and not protective of the rights of all Liberians. This underlines the population's desire for an array of interventions related to national reconciliation. One of the key issues is reaching consensus on a historical narrative that allows all Liberians to embrace a common identity that is based on a balanced account of the contributions of all the various segments of society. This will entail the difficult process of confronting the gross human rights violations of the past. An important outcome of the mission was the President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf's endorsement for the preparation of a national reconciliation strategy that the Delegation and many stakeholders assessed as critical in terms of advancing the reconciliation agenda in the country.

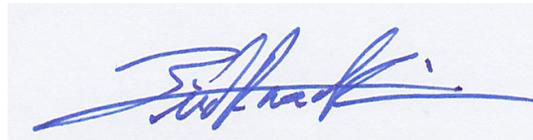
As I have underscored in my past briefings to the Security Council, supporting reconciliation goes well beyond provisions of "cement" and building infrastructure. The same can be said for security sector and rule of law reform. Remedial achievements in all

three sectors, alongside significant economic achievements and minimum restoration of basic services, have placed the country on a path towards recovery. However, the PBC is firmly of the view that Liberia still needs substantial support from the international community.

The attached report explains in greater detail achievements and activities in progress in the three sectors, providing assessments on critical gaps. The PBC will continue to work with the Government, the international community and Liberian civil society on the specific issues enumerated in the report and summarized in the conclusion.

We remain at your disposal for any further information that may be required. The PBC will continue to closely monitor the situation, keeping the Council informed through further analysis of the core issues around the three priority areas.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.



Prince Zeid Ra'ad Zeid Al-Hussein
 Chair
 Liberia Configuration
 Peacebuilding Commission
 and
 Permanent Representative of Jordan to
 the United Nations