

**Press Release by the Peacebuilding Commission  
on impact of COVID-19 in The Gambia**

16 June 2020

Following the virtual meeting of the Peacebuilding Commission chaired by H.E. Mr. François-Philippe Champagne, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Canada and Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission on 15 June 2020 on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in The Gambia, with briefings by H.E. Mr. Abubacarr M. Tambaou, Attorney-General and Minister of Justice; H.E. Mr. Mambury Nije, Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs, Mr. Mohamed Ibn Chambas, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for West Africa and the Sahel, Ms. Seraphine Wakana, UN Resident Coordinator, Ms. Oumie Sise, Manager of Discovery Tours and member of the Board of the Gambia Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and H.E. Mr. Lang Yabou, Permanent Representative of The Gambia, the Commission issued the following statement:

The Members of the Peacebuilding Commission note with concern the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic for The Gambia's peacebuilding efforts, including the postponement of important work on transitional justice and possible delays in other key reforms, and its impact on important sectors of the economy such as tourism and commerce, with particularly severe consequences for women, youth, small business owners, and the informal sector.

They welcome efforts by the Government of The Gambia to reinforce the health response and assist the population with food and essential items, to stimulate the economy and to continue important reforms and peacebuilding processes. They note the resource gap in the Government's budget created by these additional expenditures.

They further welcome efforts by the Government of The Gambia, with support from the international community, to continue addressing the country's peacebuilding priorities, including crucial political and economic processes and reforms, and preparations for 2020-2021 general elections. They welcome in particular advances in transitional justice and the resumption of work by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission as well as efforts to help empower women and youth to play an active role in peacebuilding and development initiatives. They urge all concerned stakeholders not to lose sight of The Gambia's peacebuilding agenda.

They welcome the adjustments by the UN and other partners to integrate the challenges of COVID-19 in their assistance to The Gambia. They highlight the pivotal role played by women

in promoting economic development and in helping the society address challenges emerging from the pandemic; in this regard, they commit to work with The Gambia in further promoting the critical role played by women and the youth in peacebuilding and in addressing the socio-economic impact of COVID-19.

The Members of the Peacebuilding Commission acknowledge the support provided by the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) in key peacebuilding areas in The Gambia, including transitional justice, security sector reform, youth empowerment and social cohesion initiatives, and resolution of land conflict and climate change induced tensions, and welcome the PBF's in reprogramming of some projects to address COVID-19-related issues.

They express their readiness to help mobilize international solidarity in support of The Gambia's immediate response and efforts towards ensuring post-COVID-19 socio-economic recovery and sustained attention on the country's peacebuilding priorities.