

Peacebuilding Commission Organizational Committee Meeting

4 April 2018

Chairperson's Summary of the Discussion

Background

On 4 April 2018, the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) convened a meeting of the Organizational Committee (OC). The meeting was chaired by H.E. Mr. Ion Jinga, Chair of the PBC, and addressed the following agenda items: 1) Briefing by the Chair of the PBF Advisory Group; and 2) Report by the Chairs of the PBC Country configurations.

Briefing by the Chair of the PBF Advisory Group

1. The Chair opened the meeting by welcoming Mr. Nigel Roberts, outgoing Chair of the Secretary-General's Advisory Group of the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF). Mr. Roberts briefed the PBC on the meeting of the Advisory Group that was held on 30-31 January 2018. That meeting marks the end of the current Advisory Group's tenure, and so Mr. Roberts took the occasion of the PBC briefing to reflect on progress the Fund has made in the past two years and to note challenges and opportunities moving forward as the Fund sets course against its new Strategic Plan. Mr. Roberts' reflections drew from a letter to the Secretary-General by the Advisory Group at the end of their mandate.
2. The Chair of the Advisory Group began his remarks by noting what a rare and great pleasure it has been to have served as an advisor to the Fund. The Chair noted that the Fund has managed to effectuate critical internal reforms in the past two years that has enabled it to fulfil its potential and earn an enviable reputation for inducing cohesion within the UN and effectively convening the UN and its partners around critical peacebuilding needs in a flexible and timely manner. Comparing to other similar funding instruments, Mr. Roberts observed that "no other global Fund has managed to achieve [the PBF's] range or impact."
3. Turning to the new Strategic Plan 2017-2019, Mr. Roberts noted that the ambition to receive and programme \$500 million a year is well within the capacity of the PBF if certain adjustments are made, including: a) recognition that a five-fold increase will yield a very different public profile for the Fund that will come with a higher degree of inspection and oversight by its donors. This heightened scrutiny will require capacity within the Fund to service donor's demands, including ramped up and effective strategic communications, as well as possible considering of different oversight functions of donors; b) exploring more vigorously the Fund's mandate to directly support governments and civil society actors; and c) securing financial stability at the higher funding level, which implies exploring all options for innovative sources of funding, including possibly assessed contributions. While all options should be

explored, however, Mr. Roberts cautioned that these should not impinge upon PBF's ability to act with speed and independence, lest the additional funding undermines what have been the cornerstones of its success to date.

4. Member States welcomed the briefing and the opportunity to discuss PBF activities in the Commission. In their interventions, delegations highlighted the following points:
 - Appreciation for the role the PBF plays in breaking silos within the system and an urging to Fund management to emphasize even more the role it can play in helping to smooth transitions and exit strategies from one UN configuration to another, i.e. from Mission to non-Mission settings.
 - Highlighting the need for expanded and improved communications so the story of the Fund's success can be better understood and more widely acknowledged. Better communications capacity would assist with fund raising.
 - Encouraging the Fund to explore innovative financing options, while also expressing confidence that sufficient resources can be found to meet the Fund's ambitious targets through voluntary contributions. In recognition that the PBF is stronger on programming fundamentals such as guidance on conflict analysis and comparatively nimble, rapid programming, queries were also made whether the Fund could potentially leverage World Bank funding.
 - Stressing that even as it expands in scope, the Fund should remain true to issues on which it has a comparative advantage.
5. The Deputy Head of the Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO) thanked Mr. Roberts for his briefing and his service to the PBF over the course of the past two Advisory Groups. She noted that, in response to prior messages from Member States and the Advisory Group, the Fund had already begun to respond to some of the future challenges Mr. Roberts highlighted in his remarks. Most notably, the Deputy Head was pleased to announce the future deployment of a specialist on innovative financing and recruitment of a dedicated strategic communications specialist to help PBF tell its story. The role PBF plays in helping to smooth transitions of UN configurations is one of the central priorities of the Fund's new Strategic Plan. Finally, the Fund has launched joint planning with the World Bank in places like Zimbabwe recently, which position the Fund to partner more easily with the Bank and influence cohesion among other donors.

Report by the Chairs of the PBC Country Configurations

6. Before inviting the Chairs of the Configurations to report on their activities, the Chair informed the Commission that, at the invitation of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Chad, he had attended, together with the Permanent Representative of Chad and the ASG for Peacebuilding Support, the 6th meeting of the Ministerial Coordination Platform for the Sahel Strategies, held in N'djamena, Chad on 15 March 2018. He noted that the meeting, which brought together the countries of the Sahel region, UN, AU, EU and G5 Permanent Secretary, as well as other bilateral and multilateral partners, provided an opportunity to review the recent developments in the Sahel. Participants

expressed concerns over the persistent threat of terrorism and other transnational crimes in the Sahel, including the most recent terrorist attacks in Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger. The meeting also recognized that, despite the considerable efforts to ensure peace and stability, the countries in the Sahel region were facing persistent and growing security challenges, in addition to the already serious economic, environmental and food security risks. It stressed the need for a holistic approach to deal with the multidimensional threats facing the Sahel region. The Chair reported that, in this connection, he had informed about the PBC engagement since the Security Council Presidential Statement S/PRST/2017/2 of January 2017, and assured of the Commission's commitment to sustain international attention and support to the countries in the Sahel, and to help enhance coherence and coordination between the national, regional and international partners.

7. The Chair informed that, on the margins of the Ministerial Coordination Platform Meeting, together for the ASG for Peacebuilding Support, he met with the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Minister of Economy and Development Planning of Chad. He reported that the meetings with the Government Officials provided an opportunity to discuss the situation in the Sahel and Lake Chad Basin regions, as well as Chad's national peacebuilding priorities. The discussions focused on the support of the United Nations to the peacebuilding efforts to address the regional and national peacebuilding priorities, including through the current and potential engagements of the PBC and PBF.
8. The Chair invited the Chairs of the Configurations to report to the OC on the activities they have undertaken in the first quarter and to present their work plans for the second quarter.
9. The Chair of the Burundi Configuration (Switzerland) updated on his visit to Burundi (27-30 March). He informed that he met with the President of Burundi and a number of Ministers, political parties, and other stakeholders, including the AU, the local diplomatic community, representatives of the private sector and the academia. At these meetings, the Chair reiterated the importance of continued engagement with the regional political dialogue, the expectation that the referendum of 17 May on the constitution would be conducted in a peaceful manner, and the expectation that the international community remains engaged with Burundi. The Chair reported that the President underlined the stable security situation in Burundi, called for more development aid instead of humanitarian aid, and that he supported a new round of social-economic dialogue, to be conducted in an inclusive way. The Chair also informed that a more detailed briefing on the visit would be done at a meeting of the Burundi Configuration of the PBC scheduled for 16 April.
10. The Chair of the Central African Republic Configuration (Morocco) reported that, during the first quarter, he had visited Washington to meet with senior officials from the World Bank and the US State Department, as well as with officials from the US Institute for Peace. He informed that the International Support Group to CAR would meet in Bangui on 11 April to discuss the National Recovery and Peacebuilding Plan (RCPCA) implementation and deal with peacebuilding issues. He noted that he was

planning a meeting of the PBC to have an exchange of views with the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, who was invited to attend the meeting of the International Support Group, and with the Senior Director of the World Bank Fragility, Conflict, and Violence Group. He informed that he would travel to CAR and Brussels in June and concluded condemning the recent attacks in CAR.

11. The Chair of the Guinea-Bissau Configuration (Brazil) recalled that Prime-Minister Umaro Sissoko Embaló resigned on 16 January and, on 31 January, Artur Silva took office as the new Prime-Minister. He reported that, on 1 February, ECOWAS issued a communiqué stating that the nomination of a consensual Prime-Minister, as determined by the Conakry Agreement, had not happened and that the Commission would start applying sanctions against those that create obstacles to a political solution. President Vaz initiated political consultations in order to determine a date for the legislative elections in 2018 and stated his desire to abide by the legal and constitutional electoral framework. The Chair reported that the National Election Commission of Guinea-Bissau suggested organizing the elections on 18 November. The Chair recalled that the PBC convened a meeting in February to hear a briefing by the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs. Looking ahead, the Chair confirmed that the Configuration would continue to support Guinea-Bissau through consultations with key partners, and would convene a meeting in May.
12. The Chair of the Liberia Configuration (Sweden) underscored that Liberia is going through a dual transition: the transition to a new government, which constitutes the first democratic transfer of power since 1944; and the exit of the UN Peacekeeping Mission and transition to the UN country team. The Liberia configuration has accompanied and is committed to continue to accompany and support Liberia through these transitions. Furthermore, the Chair recalled that the work of the Commission focused on three main areas: first, UNMIL drawdown, and the capacity and resources of the country-team; second, the preparation for the elections; and third, the drafting of a Peacebuilding Plan, which was requested by the Security Council in its resolution 2333 of 23 December 2016. In this connection, during his visit to Liberia of March 2018, the Chair was informed by the government that the Peacebuilding Plan was being implemented and that a system to monitor progress and challenges was put in place. Looking forward, the Chair noted that the Configuration would continue to support Liberia throughout the development of the new national development plan, and it would continue undertake advocacy so that Liberia continues to receive international attention and support, including resources to avoid the risk of a financial "cliff" after the departure of UNMIL.
13. The Chair of the Sierra Leone Configuration (Canada) reported that legislative, and presidential elections in Sierra Leone were held on 7 March, and deemed free, fair, and transparent by international observers (including EU, AU, ECOWAS, UN) despite minor discrepancies and concerns about intimidation throughout the campaign. He said that no candidate received the percentage of votes required to win in the first round, runoff elections were initially called for 27 March and eventually held on 31 March. He noted that tensions remained high throughout the country as people awaited the announcement of final results, which were expected on 5 April. The Chair noted that

the PBC Configuration remained constantly engaged during the preparation of the elections, including through a meeting at expert level on 23 March to hear an update from the office of the Resident Coordinator in Freetown. The Configuration also joined other regional and international actors in issuing a press statement on Friday calling for calm and restraint by all parties. Moving forward, the Chair noted that he would work with the new Government to decide the priorities of the PBC.

14. Member States welcomed the briefings and highlighted the following issues:

- The important role the PBC can play in supporting national authorities.
- The importance of discussing cross-cutting and thematic issues, in addition to country-specific and regional discussions.
- In connection with peacebuilding in Liberia, and while recognizing the important progress, the need of addressing root causes of conflict.

Other matters

15. The Chair thanked all PBC members for their contribution towards a more effective Commission. In this regard, he underscored the importance of having all Members as engage as possible. The Chair encouraged all interested PBC members to champion thematic and cross-cutting issues identified in consultation with the Chair and the Vice-Chairs and in line with the PBC workplan.
