

**The Joint Meeting of the PBC and ECOSOC on the Linkages between
Climate Change and the Challenges of Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace in
the Sahel**

Tuesday, 13 November (10:00am-13:00am)

Statement by the Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission

Your Excellency Inga Rhonda King, President of the Economic and Social Council,
Your Excellency, Ms. Amina J. Mohammed, Deputy Secretary-General,
Members of the Economic and Social Council,
Members of the Peacebuilding Commission,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to start by expressing my gratitude to the President of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) for the partnership and cooperation on development and peacebuilding and sustaining peace, and the joint decision to convene today's meeting to further explore ways and means to discuss the situation in the Sahel - a region which continues to face multidimensional endogenous and exogenous risks, yet receiving inadequate international attention or investment. More than ever, the Sahel calls for urgent needs of integrated coordination, analysis and support from the international community.

To both ECOSOC and the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), which have important mutually reinforcing roles, the Sahel is as much a land of opportunities as it is of challenges.

Today's Joint Meeting builds on past good practices of bringing together the efforts of ECOSOC and PBC. The Joint Meeting of June 2016 on the "2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Sustaining Peace", and the one on the "Situation in the Sahel region" of June 2017 all highlighted the importance of multi-dimensional approaches to address the challenges while taking into account the gender, age, geography, ethnicity, cultural, etc dimensions of the situation. The two UN bodies agreed that the focus of this year's joint meeting should be on *"the Linkage between climate change and the challenges to peacebuilding and sustaining peace in the Sahel region"*.

This well-timed ECOSOC-PBC meeting follows the High-level PBC Annual Session on the Sahel that was held just yesterday, on the 12th of November. The Joint Meeting hence provides an opportunity to further elaborate on the important roles that the PBC and ECOSOC can play in helping to address the root causes of crises and threats in the Sahel region. Although our Joint Meeting today is focused on challenges in the Sahel, we should mention that. Climate change impacts around the globe – including, desertification, droughts, floods and food insecurity — all pose grave threats to generations of human and development gains.

Focus and attention is growing but much more is needs to be done. Following the Joint Meeting, this afternoon, ECOSOC is convening a meeting on *"Pathways to resilience in climate-affected Small Island Developing States (SIDS) - A Forward-Looking Resilience Building Agenda: Promises, results and next steps"* to further

debate this matter with a view to achieving a risk informed and resilient 2030 Agenda.

Your Excellencies,

The Joint Meeting builds on previous efforts to foster collaboration between key partners and institutions working on the Sahel situation. The ECOSOC resolution 2009/32, as well as the twin resolutions A/RES/70/262 and S/RES/2282 (2016) on the peacebuilding architecture review called for closer cooperation and enhanced coherence between ECOSOC and PBC. The joint PBC and the African Union-Peace and Security Council (PSC) meeting held in July 2018 asked the PBC, including through its Annual Session, to focus on specific priorities identified in the United Nations Integrated Support Strategy (UNISS) Support Plan for the Sahel. The Sahel as a critical focus region is under PBC consideration, following a Security Council tasking for the Commission, to provide support to the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS) in the implementation of UNISS plan, through the PBC convening power.

During the planning phase for the Joint Meeting, we took note of a number of important considerations. First, climate change as one of the United Nation's top priorities as underscored by the *2015 Paris Agreement* and the *2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development* which all call for urgent action. Second, the Secretary-General has called for a global sense of urgency in responding to climate change impacts. Third, we acknowledged the sensitivity of the topic. The invited speakers

to the Joint Meeting will help us understand the Sahel situation which is considered to have some of the most conspicuous evidence of climate change risks and threats.

Your Excellencies,

I would like to conclude by affirming that ECOSOC and PBC have the capacity to help the region to identify effective mitigation and adaptation measures for the Sahel Region to meet the challenges created by climate change in ways that build and sustain peace. Allow me to list a few potential areas for joint ECOSOC-PBC support to partners in the Sahel region:

Coordination and policy coherence: The PBC **bridging role** on UN systems coherence coupled with stronger synergies between the PBC and ECOSOC can contribute to improved support for coordination of partners and policy coherence at various levels.

Partnership Building: Future Joint Meetings can serve as an important platform to **sustain international partners' attention** on ongoing and new initiatives in the Sahel that aim to tackle development and peace challenges triggered by climate change effects. We should consider follow-up Joint Meetings, to continue the discussions and support.

Resource Mobilization: The Joint Meeting has potential to support ongoing efforts by Member States of the Sahel to continuously **raise awareness and to mobilize**

resources needed for the implementation of various support strategies. Such support can include advocacy at upcoming high-level Global Summits, including the UN 2019 Climate Summit.

Leadership and National Ownership: ECOSOC and PBC can provide expert guidance and support to **promote national ownership and leadership** to initiatives on the ground, including UNMISS.

I thank you.