

## **Statement of the PBC Chair at the Security Council briefing on Liberia on 10 September 2015**

Mr President,

Thank you for the invitation to address the Security Council this morning on behalf of the Liberia Configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission.

I also wish to thank USG Ladsous for his briefing.

Let me begin by congratulating Liberia for having been declared Ebola-free last week by the World Health Organization. The Peacebuilding Commission has been impressed by the steadfast determination by the Liberian people to fight the disease, and I am heartened by the fact that full attention can now be geared towards recovery. As we have continuously stressed, peacebuilding must form part and parcel of rebuilding after the Ebola crisis. The crisis exposed gaps in peace and state-building efforts to date, including in the area of building trust between citizens and the state, and with regards to strengthening the social fabric. The economic downturn that followed after the Ebola crisis must be met with increased support for revitalizing socioeconomic development.

Mr. President,

Let me turn to the main focus of today's briefing; the continued drawdown of UNMIL, and the handing over of security and stability tasks to national authorities at the conclusion of the security transition by 30 June 2016. As the Secretary-General has pointed out in his report, assuming the responsibility for security in the country by the Government of Liberia will be an important milestone in post-conflict Liberia and a demonstration of confidence that the country has turned the corner from conflict. In this regard, the leadership and ownership by the Liberian government will be absolutely essential, as national authorities prepare to take over. The international community will of course have an important role in supporting and accompanying Liberia in this transition.

At the same time, it will be important to not only focus attention on what needs to happen until June 2016, but equally so on what needs to follow the conclusion of the security transition. Early and proper planning is needed. Only by identifying the longer-term peacebuilding needs now can we jointly ensure that the required capacity and support structures are in place to reinforce national efforts. The PBC will continue to stress the imperative for greater focus on institutional reforms and capacity building, socio economic development and strengthening of the justice sector in the context of consolidating Liberia's peace efforts.

The international community has generated experience and a body of knowledge on UN missions transitions, upon which we should now seek to draw. In our view, there are no excuses for not learning from past successes as well as failures. We know that the drawdown of UN missions constitute a defining moment on the path to sustainable peace and development. However, we still experience significant gaps in political attention, as well as financing of critical processes, programs and institutions. We could certainly do better when it comes to transitioning between different modes of UN engagement. In this regard, we are fortunate to have two recent reviews on how to strengthen peace operations which offers poignant analysis. The PBC stands ready to learn from these analyses and do our outmost to provide effective and relevant support to Liberia in its crucial next phase of peace consolidation.

Mr. President,

The PBC will continue to act as a convener and to advise and help mobilize resources for Liberia's key longer-term peacebuilding priorities. The Liberia configuration intends to soon host a meeting with all relevant stakeholders involved in peacebuilding efforts with the aim of identifying these peacebuilding needs, to discuss capacity and potential gaps, and look at where funding is falling short and where donors could do more. Such a meeting would constitute an opportunity for the Liberian government to brief on progress made under its transition plan, and for UNMIL to update on the security transition. The meeting will also help shed light on local perspectives of civil society organizations and grassroots actors. We hope that these discussions will complement and add to the work undertaken in the Joint Implementation Group in Monrovia, which is tasked with monitoring the implementation of the government's plan for UNMIL transition. The Commission could share the conclusions of those deliberations with this Council.

In addition, in order to ensure that the Peacebuilding Commission plays a relevant role in support of the Government beyond the transition, the configuration has taken steps towards revision of its current instrument of engagement with Liberia. The Commission has invited the Secretary-General to make recommendations for an updated framework of engagement for the PBC in view of the security transition. This strategic input by the UN system will be critical to enable the Commission to play an effective role, and will help align our support to efforts made by operational actors in the field. Those actors include the World Bank, the IMF and the African Development Bank. Key priorities of our current engagement remains valid – namely reform of Security Sector, National Reconciliation and the Rule of Law – and the updated instrument is intended to align and bring together existing national plans, including the Agenda for Transformation, Government's plan for UNMIL Transition, and the Ebola Recovery Plan. The configuration looks forward to engaging with the Liberian Government on updating our framework of engagement, and we will keep the Council informed on this exercise.

Mr. President,

As Liberia is preparing for the security transition, it is simultaneously grappling with a number of other reforms with a bearing on peace consolidation. The preparations for the

elections in 2017, the current constitutional review, as well as the process of decentralization will remain on the agenda of the Peacebuilding Commission, as these processes will affect fundamental aspects of state and nation building. Similarly, implementing the strategic road map for national healing, peacebuilding and reconciliation also remains imperative. We will also highlight land issues and its relevance to the crucial area of natural resource management, not only to ensure reduced tensions between affected communities and concessionaires, but also to help Liberia develop a sustainable source of domestic revenue. Lastly, tackling corruption with continued vigor will be key in order to increase public trust in government institutions.

In closing, Mr. President, one might say that the value-added of the accompanying role of the Peacebuilding Commission is clearly tested as a post-conflict country is approaching a milestone in its journey towards sustaining peace. Liberia has a challenging year ahead. The Council and bilateral and multilateral partners have accumulated experience and knowledge that we must continue to deploy in support of Liberia's own efforts to consolidate peace. The Commission stands ready to contribute to all these efforts focused on national priorities and sustained peace.

Thank you, Mr. President.