

Initial Mission by the Chairperson of the Guinea Configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission to the Republic of Guinea

3 - 10 April 2011

Mission report

Following the request of the Guinean authorities to be accompanied by the United Nations Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), Guinea was officially placed on the agenda of the PBC at a formal meeting of the Organisational Committee of the PBC on 23 February 2011. The same day, I was elected Chair of the Guinea configuration and asked to initiate dialogue with the Guinean authorities as soon as possible. In this context, I paid an initial visit to Guinea from 3 to 10 April 2011, accompanied by Ms. Judy Cheng-Hopkins, Assistant Secretary-General for Peacebuilding Support. This report contains the conclusions of the mission that are most pertinent for the peacebuilding agenda in Guinea, possible entry points for an engagement of the PBC with Guinea and for the support of the Peacebuilding Fund, as well as a proposal for next steps in the Guinea-PBC engagement.

I. Objectives of the visit

1. The overall objectives of my visit were the following:

- a) To familiarize with the political, social and economic situation in Guinea and get acquainted with recent developments.
- b) To initiate dialogue with the Government of Guinea and exchange views on the nature of the engagement between the PBC and Guinea.
- c) To initiate dialogue with the UN in Guinea (UNCT) and in the sub-region (UNOWA) and other key peacebuilding stakeholders, including member states, regional and sub-regional organizations on the ground, and exchange views on the PBC engagement around the peacebuilding priorities identified by the Government.
- d) To initiate dialogue with other national stakeholders including political parties, civil society, women organizations, local NGOs, trade unions, human rights organizations and media organizations.

II. Key points and main results of the visit

2. In the course of my visit to Guinea, I met with the President of the Republic, the Prime Minister, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the other members of the Government whose portfolios touch upon the three priority areas identified by the Government in its request for support by the PBC, members of the National Transition Council and of the

Economic and Social Council, representatives of political parties, a wide range of non-state actors, as well as representatives of the international community and the UN system on the ground, including the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for West Africa. The annexed program of the mission provides details on the interlocutors I met during the course of the week.

3. I also went to Kindia, where I met local authorities and communities and the institutions that benefitted from the support of the Peacebuilding Fund, notably the “Special force for a safe electoral process” (FOSSEPEL), the Group which follows-up on the Code of conduct of the political parties, and rural radio stations, as well as the entities that implemented these projects.
4. I noted a clear will of the Government, of the other Guinean actors and of the international community to engage with the PBC. The different actors are ready to support the Government and to work in consultation with the Government. The Government is open to the PBC’s advice.
5. There was large consensus among my interlocutors that the three priority areas that the Government has identified - national reconciliation, the reform of the security sector and the employment of youth and women - are most relevant and urgent. My interlocutors unanimously indicated that although there had not been an open conflict in Guinea, the country was in a very fragile situation following the consecutive authoritarian regimes, the massive human rights violations, the interethnic tensions and the bad governance which had plagued Guinea over the past 58 years and which needed to be urgently addressed.
6. Interlocutors on the ground suggested that priority actions within the three areas be defined taking into account also other factors that can impact on peace and stability, such as the conduct of the electoral process, the expectations of the population or, on the contrary, the perception of being excluded. There should be an integrated approach, given the links between the three priority areas as well as their potential for mutual reinforcement.

National reconciliation

7. National reconciliation was identified as the “priority of priorities” by the majority of the Guinean stakeholders. Reconciliation needs to be multidimensional and aim at re-establishing, on the one hand, the relation between the people and the State/the armed forces and, on the other hand, among Guineans. Dialogue is a fundamental element of this process (« the Guineans need to talk to each other »), which in turn is a pre-condition for sustainable development in Guinea.
8. National reconciliation efforts need to go hand in hand with the fight against impunity if a durable peace is to be established in Guinea.

9. While the events of 28 September 2009 are perceived as particularly traumatizing for all Guineans, many of my interlocutors also insisted on the necessity to ensure that justice is done in respect to the wrongs done by the successive regimes since 1958.
10. The creation of a mechanism of « Truth, Justice and Reconciliation », with the objective of providing a framework for the reconciliation effort and of ultimately attaining forgiveness, is under discussion. While taking inspiration from past experiences, all my interlocutors underlined their wish to develop a Guinean model that would take into account the specificities of Guinea. An important question in this context will be the form of justice that the Guineans wish for. For civil society, it is important to reconstruct the facts, to possibly judge the people responsible and to dialogue in good faith in order to reach forgiveness. The ultimate objective of the process, for civil society, is indeed forgiveness, but « before turning the page, we must read the page ».
11. The implication of women as full-fledged actors of the process is very important given also the significant role they play within the family.
12. Many of my interlocutors considered that religion and faith could also be important ingredients for national reconciliation. 99% of the Guinean people are believers, and the elder as well as religious authorities could play a role in vulgarizing national reconciliation.
13. Religion could also act as a link between communities. I have indeed noticed that the Guineans are worried by the deepening rifts between communities and by the risks associated with the exacerbation of ethnic questions within the Guinean society in particular in the run-up to the national and local elections. They want to see the creation of an environment conducive to dialogue between communities as well as between political leaders. The violent clashes on 3 April 2011 on the occasion of the return to Guinea of the opposition leader, Cellou Dalein Diallo, gave rise to certain worries among Guineans and within the international community on the ground, and illustrate the fragility of the situation in Guinea.
14. The interaction with the newly created National Commission for Human Rights will also have to be addressed.
15. We will have to explore whether the Diaspora could play a role in the national reconciliation process. The Government seems committed to incorporate the Diaspora into its development and peacebuilding programs.
16. The media are an important vector for messages of reconciliation. On the other hand, journalists need better qualifications to avoid that they exacerbate tensions in the name of a badly understood freedom of information.
17. The organization of a national conference on reconciliation which the Government is planning could be the opportunity to develop a consensus on the main questions and the mechanisms to be put in place with the involvement of all relevant state and non-state actors.

The Security Sector Reform

18. Among the three priority areas of engagement, it is in the process of reforming the security sector that the preparatory work seems most advanced on the basis of the evaluation of the security sector conducted last year by ECOWAS with the help of the African Union and the United Nations, the national seminar held from 28 to 31 March 2011, and the National Steering Committee on SSR that will be established shortly.
19. A meeting of donors is foreseen to examine funding needs and discuss opportunities and mechanisms to ensure and improve the consistency among various initiatives. I understand that the bilateral partners are willing to support the government and are considering providing the components mainly related to infrastructure (“hardware”). The United Nations system on its side would provide support to the more strategic and political aspects (“software”).
20. I would like to propose the holding, in the coming weeks, of a special meeting of the Guinea Configuration on the security sector reform to allow the stakeholders and experts involved in these reform efforts to share the outline and the next steps of the process with us, given that the details of the security sector reform spelled out in the May 2010 evaluation report and in the working papers of the seminar held in March 2011 go beyond the scope of this mission report.
21. Meanwhile, discussions with stakeholders in Guinea have highlighted specific aspects of peacebuilding that must be taken into account in the process of the SSR. These include, inter alia, the strengthening of the role of civilian institutions, such as the parliament and civil society, in the control and supervision of the defense and security forces (“civilian oversight”).
22. The demilitarization of the Guinean administration and the review of the pyramid of ranks in the armed forces, where the officers / troops ratio is abnormally high are other issues which need to be addressed. The country has long remained under a military system and interlocutors from the Government expect it will take time to change mentalities, practices and working methods.
23. The national and international interlocutors also stressed the need to instill the culture of democracy in the army, police and gendarmerie, and restore the police in its role of maintaining order, which had been assumed by the army in recent years.
24. Those responsible for the “Special force for a safe electoral process” (FOSSEPEL) also expressed the hope that this special force would be further strengthened in view of the parliamentary elections. This may be an area for PBC engagement.
25. Several speakers emphasized the links between the SSR and the process of reconciliation. Indeed, the SSR has the potential to reconcile a part of the population - the members of the security sector - with their compatriots, many of whom have been victims of abuse and malfunctioning of the security sector.

26. The holding of the “Etats généraux de la Justice” at the same time than the National Seminar on SSR has emphasized the ties between the security sector and the justice sector even further. Both sectors were the topic of the assessment undertaken last year by ECOWAS and their intrinsic links were also pointed out many times during the seminar. It is hence widely accepted that the security sector reform goes hand in hand with that of the justice sector and that this joint process of reform will require the continued assistance of the international community.
27. The link between the SSR and youth employment, which is undeniable, still needs to be explored further. The ongoing efforts aiming at the reintegration of youth that had been associated with the army over the past years, which are financed by the peacebuilding fund, could inspire rehabilitation programs for the workforce originating from a reduction of the size of the army.
28. Some interlocutors have mentioned that the fight against drugs should be a component of SSR. There is certainly an opportunity to address the issue within a regional approach, building on the commitment of the PBC with now four countries in the sub-region, as well as on the West African Coast Initiative.
29. In conclusion, it seems to me that three main aspects of the security sector reform in Guinea could benefit from the support of the PBC and the UN system more broadly, in addition to current and future efforts of other multilateral and bilateral actors:
 - a. support and strategic advice on issues of design, approach and plans for long-term and sustainable development of the security sector, particularly through the development of a national security policy that defines the Guinean vision of the roles and responsibilities of actors involved in the security sector;
 - b. support and strategic advice on the establishment and strengthening of mechanisms and processes of control and civilian oversight of the security sector, including through sensitization and capacity building of ministries, the parliament and civil society, and through the creation of a parliamentary committee on defense and security, and
 - c. support in view to achieve coherence and synchronization of initiatives undertaken by the international community, notably the United Nations system in support of the security sector reform, including through the organization of coordination meetings, and the management and regular update of a database pertaining to these initiatives.

Youth and women employment

30. There is broad consensus that this third peacebuilding priority area defined by the Guinean Government goes beyond the mere peacebuilding agenda and the support that the PBC can provide. Hence our discussions focused on how to help prevent social crises that may originate from these categories of the population, especially the youth that might

feel abandoned, and on how to support the political, economic and social empowerment of women.

31. There are a number of initiatives and projects targeting the youth, but they seem to be conducted on an ad hoc basis and without a clear strategic approach. The youth employment sector is currently covered by a number of different ministerial departments.
32. The Government recognizes the need to create an environment of trust conducive to attracting investment, the private sector playing a key role in creating jobs for youth and women.
33. Many interlocutors underlined that the abundant natural resources in the agriculture and mining sectors make them potential key sectors for Guinea's economic growth, and thus also for youth employment. Policies in the area of youth employment and training should therefore take into account the labor market these two sectors can generate. Others suggested energy, transportation and housing as additional sectors within which can trigger large development projects and generate numerous jobs.
34. This will however require an education and vocational training system which is able to produce a skilled workforce. I understand that past education policies had focused rather on academic education. As a result the country counts many graduates who are unemployed while at the same time it lacks skilled workers, technicians and professionals who are needed in main economic growth sectors such as mining and agriculture. The ministers dealing with the issue of youth education underscored the urgent need to review the education and training system in order to adapt it to the needs of the labor market. More emphasis should be put on vocational training, by developing training curricula, rehabilitating technical schools and technical vocational training centers, and by developing non-formal education programs in order to provide opportunities for youth unable to pursue formal education.
35. It is also important to develop training and employment opportunities in rural areas as a way to limit the rural exodus and the concentration of unemployed and disillusioned youth in urban centers. Similarly, some interlocutors suggested the development of training and employment programs in areas that have experienced particular social tensions in the past or are at risk of witnessing such tensions in the future. The communities surrounding mining areas were mentioned several times in this context. Some government officials suggested the creation of an umbrella organization of youth that could help to better coordinate support to youth and their existing associations. Such an umbrella organization could also be a key interlocutor for the government in its efforts to ensure greater institutional coherence in the area of youth employment.
36. The Government has already set up a fund of 10 billion GNF to promote youth employment.
37. The main actions suggested by our interlocutors include the following:
 - (a) a dialogue with the mining sector / private sector to identify their labor needs

and discuss the most appropriate content of training programs. In case large mining companies are unable to find skilled labor in Guinea, they will most likely recruit from other countries in the sub-region, which could carry risks of social tensions. Dialogue with the mining companies could be launched in the context of the ongoing revision of the mining code, to raise awareness of their potential contribution to peacebuilding, including through social responsibility practices.

(b) labor intensive public works programs that could occupy the youth in the short term already, in the context of urgent reconstruction, rehabilitation and sanitation activities.

(c) conducting a labor market survey in key economic sectors in order to better adapt the vocational training programs to the labor market needs.

(d) developing a coherent long term policy on youth employment.

38. It was also recommended that civic education should be extended beyond primary education as a means to develop and strengthen the sense of citizenship and social cohesion and foster a better understanding of the concept of democracy and rule of law.
39. Women appear to be politically and economically better organized than the youth, and I got the impression that they maintain a more structured relationship with government institutions.
40. A strategic plan for implementing Security Council resolutions 1325 and 1820 has been developed, together with a national strategy to fight gender-based violence. Interlocutors requested that for the next two years the PBC would support the Government and women's organizations in the implementation of the strategy to fight gender-based violence, the mainstreaming of resolutions 1325 and 1820 into national policies and programs, women's participation in the 2011 parliamentary elections, as well as providing institutional support to women. Support already provided by the Peacebuilding Fund has helped to train and sensitize women around various themes of peacebuilding and to integrate these themes into the training curricula of the security forces.
41. The Government has set up a fund of 20 billion FGN to support women's entrepreneurship.
42. Overall, the Guinean authorities should pay particular attention to the issue of political, economic and social empowerment of women, including in view of the important moderating role they play in a context of social tensions.

Other issues relevant to the peacebuilding agenda

43. During our discussions, interlocutors mentioned additional points that are relevant to peace consolidation and should be taken into account as cross-cutting issues within the three peacebuilding areas of engagement between the Government of Guinea and the PBC. These issues include the consolidation of democracy, within which the upcoming

parliamentary elections are critical, together with the need to sustain dialogue between the Government and the political parties; inter-ethnic relations; governance; and the boosting of the economy.

44. The parliamentary elections are no doubt a key step in restoring trust. I felt that Guineans are anxious to proceed with these elections as a way to complete the transition to democracy. However the parliamentary elections are currently scheduled for the last quarter of 2011. Many of my interlocutors have shared their concerns about the preparation of these elections, and their desire to see the Government have an open dialogue with all political actors on issues related to the preparation for these elections. In particular, the discussion on the validity of the current electoral list should be taken forward in a spirit of broad consultation.
45. All stakeholders agree that economic development is vital for moving the country out of poverty, all the more since Guinea has real potential. However a number of conditions in terms of stability and security must be fulfilled before economic development can take root.
46. The inflation rate exceeds 20%. Combined with monetary creation, which has brought money supply to a level of about 37% of GDP, this inflation has adverse social consequences (increased cost of foreign exchange, increased cost of basic commodities). This has compelled the Government to take measures aimed at mitigating the risks of social unrest, including by subsidizing oil prices among others. The very high public debt weighs heavily on the economic growth opportunities of the country. Debt cancellation and the attainment of the Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative completion point are a priority.
47. It is important to support the national authorities in these efforts, including in the PRSP process. Among members of the Government, I sensed a strong desire to ensure greater ownership of the PRSP process and to achieve a better articulation between the short-term planning (priority action plan), the medium-term planning (PRSP II and 5-year plan) and the longer-term vision.
48. The convening of a donors conference should be seen in this context. While the Guinean authorities initially wanted to organize a donors conference in early summer 2011, it seems that there is a growing convergence of views that it would be better to organize it later in the year, in the last quarter of 2011 (a meeting of a more technical nature could be held earlier in Conakry). Organizing such a donors conference at a later date, with the inclusion of a "peacebuilding" component, would give more time to establish a track record of implementing the reforms advocated for by the IMF and the international community as they engage with Guinea.

III. Conclusion and next steps

49. In Conakry, I sensed a true commitment to build a new Guinea and to engage with the PBC. I also sensed a willingness of the international community and of the countries and organizations of the region to accompany Guinea and the Guineans on their path towards peace, democracy and economic development. Some partner countries have restarted their cooperation programs. This is a strong signal of commitment. I also perceived however clear expectations by the Guineans and the international communities towards the Guinean Government. The answers that the Government will formulate to address these expectations will largely determine the engagement of the Government with its people and with its international partners.
50. A technical follow-up mission is foreseen from 2 to 6 May 2011 to continue discussions with all stakeholders and start preparations for the drafting of the main documents : the document of political engagement (Statement of mutual commitment) and the program document for the support of the Peacebuilding Fund (Peacebuilding Fund Priority Plan) which will have to be aligned on the former.
51. Given the importance of security sector reform and its potential impact in terms of peacebuilding, I would like to propose holding, in the coming weeks, a specific meeting of the Configuration on the security sector reform in order to have an in-depth discussion with members of the CSM about the ongoing process in Guinea and the integrated approach to be followed, including with regard to ressource mobilization.
52. The CSM will need to reflect on the appropriate structures or mechanisms to accompany peacebuilding efforts on the ground, in particular from a more political angle. Given the pilot nature of the PBC's engagement with Guinea, it will be important to discuss whether, and to what extent, the existing structures - the UN Country Team and UNOWA - are in a position to play that role, and also what their interaction could be with the Group of Friends of Guinea established at the initiative of the President.
53. In the same vein, the question of the articulation between the coordination mechanisms on the ground of the PBC and the PBF will have to be addressed, as well as the question of the existing Joint Steering Committee. Even if the PBC and the PBF are not simply two sides of the same coin, it is of the utmost importance that they collaborate very closely to allow the Fund to play its catalyzing role for peacebuilding activities. Given the objective of a coherent and integrated approach, the implication of bilateral partners will also have to be addressed.
54. Finally, I will pursue the issue of a Government-level focal point with the Guinean authorities. The focal point should be able to steer the peacebuilding efforts at a political level and to closely interact with the Guinea CSM.



**PBC Chair's visit to Guinea
03 – 10 April 2011**

FINAL PROGRAM

Objectives of the visit:

- (a) To familiarize with the political, social and economic situation in Guinea and get acquainted with recent developments.
- (b) To initiate dialogue with the Government of Guinea and exchange views on the nature of the engagement between the PBC and Guinea.
- (c) To initiate dialogue with the UN and other key peacebuilding stakeholders, including member states, regional and sub-regional organizations on the ground, and exchange views on the PBC engagement around the peacebuilding priorities identified by the Government.
- (d) To initiate dialogue with other national stakeholders including political parties, civil society, women organizations, local NGOs, human rights organizations.

Sunday 03 APRIL 2011

- Arrival and check-in - *Novotel*

Monday 04 APRIL 2011

- 09.00-10.00 Meeting with the UN country team - *UN House*
- 10.15-11.00 Meeting with the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Guineans Abroad - *Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Guineans Abroad*
- 11.15-12.00 Meeting with the Prime Minister - *Prime Minister's Office*
- 12.15-13.00 Meeting with the Minister of International Cooperation, *Ministry of International Cooperation*
- 13.00-14.30 Lunch with the Coordinator of the expert team on the Security Sector Reform in Guinea, United Nations – General Lamine Cisse - *Novotel*
- 15.00-15.45 Meeting with the Minister of Territorial Administration and Decentralization - *Ministry of Territorial Administration and Political Affairs*
- 16.00-16.45 Meeting with the Minister of State in charge of Social Affairs, the Promotion of Women and Youth and her Deputy Minister - *Ministry for Social Affairs, Promotion of Women and Youth*

- 17.00-17.45 Meeting with the Minister of Pre-University Education and Civic Education - *Ministry of Pre-University Education and Civic Education*

Tuesday 05 APRIL 2011

- 08.30-10.00 Meeting with the Diplomatic Community and International Organizations – *UN House*
- 10:15-11:00 Meeting with the Business Confederation of Guinea – *UN House*
- 11.15-12.15 Meeting with the SRSG (UNOWA) – *UN House*
- 13.15-14.15 Working Lunch with the United Nations Country Team – *UN House*
- 14.30-15.30 Meeting with the Member States of ECOWAS – *Office of the Special Representative of ECOWAS (Cherif Building)*
- 15.45-16.30 Meeting with the Representatives of Political Parties – *Common House*

Wednesday 06 APRIL 2011

- 11.00-12.00 Audience with H.E. the President of the Republic – *Presidential Palace*
- 12.30-13.30 Meeting with the Minister in charge of Security and Protection of Civilians - *Ministry of Security and Protection of Civilians*
- 13.45-14.30 Working Lunch with the Representatives of European Union Member States and Donors - *Novotel*
- 15.30-17.00 Meeting with Civil Society Organizations (CNSOCG) – *UN House*
- 17.00-17.45 Meeting with Women NGOs – *UN House*
- 18.00-18.45 Meeting with the Secretary-general for Religious Affairs – *Secretariat for Religious Affairs*
- 20.00-21.00 Meeting with the Representative of the World Bank - *Novotel*

Thursday 07 APRIL 2011

- From 8.30 Visit of projects funded by the Peacebuilding Fund in Kindia

- Civil and Military Committee and presentation of the activities of the Special Force for a safe electoral process (FOSSEPEL)
- Executive Board monitoring the code of conduct of political parties
- Rural radios (Search for Common Ground)

Friday 08 APRIL 2011

- 09.00-10.00 Meeting with the National Transitional Council (CNT) and the Economic and Social Council (CES) - *National Transitional Council*
- 10.15-11.00 Meeting with the Minister of State, Secretary General of the Presidency of the Republic of Guinea - *Petit Palais*
- 11.15-12.00 Meeting with the four main trade union organizations of Guinea (Centrale Nationale des Travailleurs de Guinée-CNTG ; Union Syndicale des Travailleurs de Guinée-USTG ; Organisation Nationale des Syndicats Libres de Guinée - ONSLG ; Union Démocratique des Travailleurs de Guinée – UDTG) - *UN House*
- 12.15-13.00 Meeting with the Deputy Minister of National Defense - *Camp Samory Toure*
- 13.15-14.00 Meeting with the Minister of Youth and the Promotion of Youth Employment - *Ministry of Youth and the Promotion of Youth Employment*
- 14.15-15.00 Meeting with the Minister of Planning - *Ministry of Planning*
- 15.15-16.00 Meeting with the Minister of Justice - *Ministry of Justice*
- 16.15-17.00 Debriefing with the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Guineans Abroad - *Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Guineans Abroad*
- 17.15-18.00 Meeting with the Networks of Guinean Journalists - *Common House*
- 18.00-18.45 Press Conference - *Common House*

Saturday 09 APRIL 2011

- 12.00-13.00 Debriefing with the Resident Coordinator – *Novotel*

Sunday 10 APRIL 2011

- Departure of the mission