

Peacebuilding Commission

Statement by the Chair of the Configuration of Guinea-Bissau Security Council briefing, 10 September 2019

Mr. President,

I would like to thank you for the invitation to address the Security Council in my capacity as Chair of the Guinea-Bissau Configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission. I also wish to thank the Assistant Secretary-General, Ms. Bintou Keita, for her comprehensive briefing today.

Guinea-Bissau is facing a critical moment in its way to consolidate democracy and strengthen its institutions. In spite of all difficulties, legislative elections were successfully held last March. The country now prepares for the presidential elections scheduled for 24 November 2019, with a second round, if needed, foreseen for 29 December 2019.

A peaceful transition of power would be an historic achievement for the people of Guinea-Bissau. The steadfast support of the international community is, therefore, crucial at this important juncture.

I welcome the recent appointment of Ms. Rosine Sori-Coulibaly as the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau, UNIOGBIS. I already had the opportunity to hold a fruitful and cordial exchange with her, in which I reiterated the readiness of the PBC to support her mission.

The PBC Configuration has been closely following the political situation in Guinea-Bissau and the planning process for the transition and drawdown of UNIOGBIS, as mandated by the Security Council resolution 2458 (2019). During its most recent meeting, in May, the Configuration received updates from Mr. José Viegas Filho, the then Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the UNIOGBIS, and from Mr. Tanou Koné, Permanent Observer of the Economic Community of West African States, ECOWAS.

Following this meeting, the Peacebuilding Commission issued a statement calling on the political stakeholders of Guinea-Bissau to sustain their

commitment to the Conakry Agreement, underscoring the urgent need for the appointment of a Prime Minister and stressing the importance of holding transparent, credible and peaceful presidential elections in 2019, in accordance with the Constitution of Guinea-Bissau.

The new Government was formed three and a half months after the election, after the agreement reached during the Summit of Heads of State and Government of ECOWAS, held on 29 June. The efforts undertaken by ECOWAS demonstrate its pivotal role in supporting political stability and the consolidation of democracy in Guinea-Bissau.

The members of the Configuration also welcomed Peacebuilding Fund investments in Guinea-Bissau, particularly in the context of the legislative elections and the UNIOGBIS drawdown. They stressed the importance of ongoing PBF projects aimed at empowering women and youth, especially in fostering their participation in political advocacy and decision-making, conflict resolution and sustaining peace efforts. Finally, they commended the important work done by the then Special Representative of the Secretary-General, José Viegas Filho, and by the UNIOGBIS staff.

Mr. President,

Today we have just heard the Assistant Secretary-General, Ms. Bintou Keita, present the report of the Secretary-General. The PBC welcomes the report and congratulates UNIOGBIS team and its leadership, as well as the Department of Peacebuilding and Political Affairs for their support to the country's peacebuilding efforts, and for the progress made in the planning of the drawdown of the Mission.

The PBC welcomes the appointment of the new Prime Minister and the subsequent formation of the new Government. While taking note that 11 women have been appointed to the Government, we encourage further progress towards gender parity, and encourage similar progress in other institutions.

We also encourage the national authorities and people of Guinea-Bissau to ensure transparent, credible and peaceful presidential elections. We thank international partners who are providing the necessary financial support for this poll and we encourage partners to consider further contributions. As I said, this will represent a milestone towards the stabilization of Guinea-Bissau.

Please allow me to highlight some key elements of the report that are particularly relevant for the peacebuilding agenda. In this regard, I welcome the

work done by UNIOGBIS in supporting the effective participation of women in national affairs within the framework of the women and peace and security agenda. UNIOGBIS collaborated with the United Nations country team and the Peacebuilding Fund in contributing to strengthening the active involvement of women in civil society consultations and facilitation efforts, helping to encourage dialogue among the political agents of Guinea-Bissau.

Projects funded by the Peacebuilding Fund continued to play a critical role in supporting political and institutional stabilization processes in Guinea-Bissau.

Under the Peacebuilding Fund portfolio consisting of 10 projects worth USD 10,9 million, UNIOGBIS and the UN Country Team have supported the implementation of mutually reinforcing initiatives, including on dialogue, national reconciliation and the strengthening of the justice and media sectors. The projects contributed to more inclusive and participatory legislative elections this past March by providing training for women and youth candidates on the elections, supporting the monitoring of the elections by domestic observers in collaboration with the European Union, empowering the media to provide more objective and non-partisan reporting on the elections and financing multiple live radio broadcasts of meetings between the general public and political candidates.

Mr. President,

With regard to the reconfiguration and drawdown of UNIOGBIS, the PBC has taken note of the guidance provided by the Security Council in Resolution 2458 of 28 February 2019.

In our discussion at the meeting of 6 May, some PBC members encouraged flexibility concerning reconfiguration, referring to the need to maintain the current configuration of UNIOGBIS until the conclusion of the presidential election. A suggestion was made to consider past good practices, including the possibility of supporting the development of a peacebuilding plan, as was done during the drawdown of UNMIL in Liberia, as a tool to accompany the country after the UNIOGBIS drawdown.

I reiterate the readiness of the PBC to support the reconfiguration exercise and to provide timely and specific advice to the Security Council in this regard. I also thank the Peacebuilding Fund for its commitment to continue to support key

initiatives to ensure that ongoing peacebuilding priorities supported by the Mission are not left unattended.

Mr. President,

The presidential election in November will complete the electoral cycle in Guinea-Bissau. This, we expect, should enable the national authorities and the people of Guinea-Bissau to focus their attention on the national development agenda and to implement the reforms outlined in the Conakry Agreement.

In this regard, the PBC will continue to serve as a platform for the country to mobilise international support, including for the implementation of the development programs identified in the Government's Strategic Development Plan for the period 2015-2025, "Terra Ranka". The PBC will also continue to support the international community, in consultation with the Government, to consider ways to strengthen national institutional capacity to deliver peacebuilding and development objectives.

I also plan to visit Guinea-Bissau in the coming month of October to engage with the Government of Guinea-Bissau and local stakeholders. The objective and the agenda of the visit will be discussed with the SRSG and PBC members as per usual practice. I will share the report of my visit with the Security Council in accordance with the PBC advisory role to the Security Council.

Once again, I thank you Mr. President for giving me the opportunity to brief the Security Council. I look forward to our continued cooperation in support of peacebuilding in Guinea-Bissau.