



**Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) Ambassadorial-Level OC: Quarterly briefing by the Country-Specific Configuration (CSC) Chairs  
Conference Room 7, 29 March 2017**

*Abstract: The Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) Ambassadorial-level Organizational Committee held on 29 March provided timely and punctual updates on the last four months' peacebuilding (PB) missions' developments in the Central African Republic, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia and Sierra Leone. The Chair of each country-specific configuration delivered a detailed statement about the progresses of the PBC's involvement in those countries, highlighting both the objectives they already met on the ground and the challenges ahead. Chaired by the H.E. Cho Tae-yul, the Permanent Representative (PR) of the Republic of Korea to the United Nations (UN), the meeting was warmly welcomed by all participants, who underscored the importance to periodically follow-up on the whole range of political and humanitarian developments put in place in those countries.*

**Speakers:**

- H.E. Cho Tae-yul, the Permanent Representative (PR) of the Republic of Korea to the United Nations (UN), Chair of the PBC Ambassadorial-level OC;
- Mr. Omar Hilale, Permanent Representative (PR) of the Kingdom of Morocco to the UN and Chair of the Central African Republic (CAR) Country-Specific Configuration;
- Representative of the Permanent Mission of Brazil to the UN and Chair of the Guinea-Bissau Country-Specific Configuration;
- Mr. Carl Skau, Security Council (SC) Coordinator of the Mission of Sweden to the UN and Chair of the Liberia Country-Specific Configuration;
- Representative of the Permanent Mission of Canada to the UN and Chair of the Sierra Leone Country-Specific Configuration;
- Director of Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO)

**Agenda:**

1. Introduction statement by Chair, Amb. Tae-yul
2. Statement by the PR of Morocco, Mr. Hilale
3. Statement by the Representative of Brazil
4. Statement by the Representative of Sweden, Mr. Skau
5. Statement by the Representative of Canada
6. Statement by the Director of PBSO
7. Closing statement by Chair, Amb. Tae-yul

- 1. Introduction statement by Chair, Amb. Tae-yul:** I have convened this meeting with the intention to invite the chairing member states (MS) to discuss the progress within their configurations on a quarterly basis. It is our desire to strengthen the advisory role of the PBC to these MSs in their peacebuilding efforts. We ask for the countries to discuss the activities undertaken in their

configuration during the first part of 2017. The talks with Guinea are under consideration. The Burundi Configuration could not participate today.

- 2. Statement by the PR of Morocco, Mr. Hilale – Chair of the CAR Configuration:** I thank the chair for convening this meeting. On 15 February, I briefed the Security Council (SC) about the challenges in the CAR. On 16 March, we held an informal meeting attended by the CAR President, Faustin-Archange Touadéra, whom came on our invitation.

The visit gave him the chance to address the Security Council and assure them of his commitment to make substantial reforms within his state, and to ensure a sustainable peace process.

The timing was also very opportune to reassure the international community on the country's commitment to maintaining peace in the region. Following on the success of this meeting, we recommend inviting the leaders of problematic countries to speak at the UNSC, because it would give them the opportunity to present their efforts to reform and show their commitment in this regard.

Going forward, we need a high level of political presence within the configurations. If we are able to achieve so much with CAR, I believe it is a good idea to extend this opportunity to speak before the SC to any affected country.

Additionally, on the same day as President Touadéra's visit, I also had the chance to address the SC regarding synergy between the SC and the PBC. Regarding the configurations, I have two points:

1. In accordance with the work done on 23 January 2017, we will seek to uphold the 1<sup>st</sup> Pillar of the National Peace and Reconciliation Commission Bill. It is important to do so because the security in the region is very fragile. MINUSCA is struggling a bit in the region because of intense fighting.

It is important to ensure the mobilization of financial resources and that leadership on the ground takes responsibility. The 1<sup>st</sup> Pillar, like others, covers a number of areas such as justice reforms and national reconciliation.

Here, it seems helpful to organize a meeting between the departments of the UN before moving forward to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Pillar because at this stage, it is too early to know how much time will be required to finish the 1st Pillar and move on to the 2<sup>nd</sup> one.

2. I am planning on making a visit to CAR soon and I am pleased that the PBC chair will accompany me on this visit. I want the visit to be a strong signal of support to CAR authorities. We are talking with the Secretary General to figure out the best time for this visit to occur.

I reiterate my invitation to our other PBC colleagues to join us, as the political timing for this visit is very important. The CAR is going through a very difficult time currently, so it is important to strengthen our relationship with the CAR President and move forward with peace processes in the country, such as setting up the ICC there.

We need to see the commitments and promises from CAR brought to life. We must not let the bolder moves of violent groups in CAR hurt these peacebuilding processes. The consequences of the deterioration of the peace process there could be dire, so that must not be allowed to occur.

- 3. Statement by the Representative of Brazil – Chair of the Guinea Bissau Configuration:** I firstly want to apology for the absence of the Brazilian Ambassador. I thank you for convening this meeting and for the ability to address PBC on the work of the Guinea Bissau configuration. Hearing the views and advice of the members of the commission certainly helps our efforts.

Guinea Bissau continues to struggle with political crisis and instability. Key political actors have paralyzed the implementation of important reforms.

Our priority is to support ECOWAS and to find solutions for the political deadlock. Both in our statement to the SC and our 16 February statements, we urge the international community to fully support these efforts. We would like to outline these priorities that epitomize our efforts:

1. On 15 February, the configuration discussed the Guinea Bissau situation. Mr. Modibo Touré (Special Representative for Guinea Bissau and Head of the UN Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea Bissau) and Mr. Marcel Alain de Souza (President of ECOWAS) were both in attendance and we committed to assisting ECOWAS with its efforts for peace in the country.
2. We are seeking ways to make progress in social reform. The people of Guinea Bissau are the ones who will face the worst consequences if the effort at building peace should fail. It is important that the UN and other international partners remain engaged in Guinea Bissau's peace building efforts.

**4. Statement by the Representative of Sweden, Mr. Skau – Chair of the Liberia Configuration:** Thank you Chair for organizing this timely meeting. It's a time marked by chance and hope for Liberia. We are now moving forward into the elections of a new government and the exit of the UN peacekeeping mission.

We must remain committed to supporting Liberia in any way we can during these huge transitions. Thus, the focus of our work in 2017 is supporting the drafting of a peace building plan. This was requested by the SC in Resolution 2333 this past December.

This is the first time we were asked to adopt a Resolution within 90 days of its conception, so the effort has been very concentrated. We are trying to get multilateral and bilateral actors to assist with Liberia's transition to peace. It was undoubtedly an ambitious call of the Commission to ask us to achieve these results so quickly, but we have all been impressed with what the country has achieved in so short a time.

The peacebuilding plan must be owned by national actors in order for it to succeed. Ideally, it must build upon existing policies to avoid duplication. The adoption of these reforms should be bottom-up to be most effective.

These reforms have been led by the Liberian government but also supported by the other various political parties within the country. The PBC has consulted with and provided input on Liberia's plans. The UN, ECOWAS, and the World Bank have been helping as well, and need to continue to help Liberia in its efforts.

In the coming month, the configuration will engage in talks about how the PBC can help implement the plan in Liberia and how we can monitor progress there. At the next ambassadorial meeting, hopefully next month, we hope to hear from the national election commission on how election plans are coming along in the country. The chair plans to visit Liberia hopefully very soon, with a focus on the peacebuilding plan and the elections.

We are aware that many look to Liberia as a test case of how effective the transition to peace can be. We hope the PBC does its part in supporting this transition and we welcome feedback from any members on the way forward for Liberia.

**5. Statement by the Representative of Canada – Chair of the Sierra Leone Configuration:** *I extend regrets from Ambassador Blanchard, who was unable to attend.*

*Before discussing our work envisaged for the second quarter of this year, I will provide a brief overview of the context. Presidential and parliamentary elections originally set for 2017 are now pushed to 2018.*

*The Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) has been trying to build on good practices from UNIPSIL support from 2012 elections. Several highly technical steps need to be completed before the 2018 elections. The government of Sierra Leone has announced a constitutional referendum before the elections, to be held in September 2017.*

*Progress is being made. However, there is still a funding shortfall to contend with. During the second quarter, there was an expert level PBC meeting held on 3 March which gave us an update on the political opportunities in Sierra Leone.*

*We wanted to better clarify the funding shortfalls occurring there. Next quarter, we plan to continue seeking funding, which includes moving beyond the typical donor base. We appreciate the funding from the EU, UK and other stakeholders. We do anticipate a formal ambassadorial level meeting to bring together ECOWAS, AU, EU, Nigeria, Ghana, South Africa and others. This will take place in May 2017. This will discuss how to diversify Sierra Leone's economy.*

*We remain very grateful for the coordination from the mission of Sierra Leone in New York, without whose cooperation none of this progress would be possible.*

**6. Statement by the Director of PBSO:** Thank you to members of PBC for maintaining momentum in peace building. From the PBSO perspective, these discussions are very effective and important. Today's meeting is important for two reasons:

1. To collectively hear from the leaders of these configurations. We also would like to hear from other members of the PBC to hear their advice.
2. These discussions are important for us to hear from you what more we need to do to implement peace building efforts. To ensure our internal reforms match the expectations of member states, we must remain in tune with what your expectations really are.

PBSO is doing its best efforts to bring coherence to our system-wide work. We take very careful note of all interventions and progress you all have made. I look forward to the ongoing discussions.

## **7. Comments and questions from the floor**

### Chair:

Since last year, the Security Council has shown greater interest in the PBC role in Sahara, Sierra Leone, and other countries in the region. This is an important opportunity for us to show our efforts are working. We may have more opportunities coming to meet with the Security Council and we urge you to think of ways to improve our commission's efforts.

### Egypt:

Listening to the chairs presenting their country's context, it helps us understand our collective role as a committee. I would like to make three comments:

1. The question of timing of the activities of the PBC. It was clear by the comments made by Sweden that the timing of the presentations by the chair is very important to influencing the Security Council in June. Timing is very important. A statement given in the chamber of the SC is not the best way to present the PBC's value added. It is more important to make moves on the ground in the country, not in NYC.
2. On substance. I would like to hear suggestions for the next time we meet here to take stock on how various configurations are proceeding. We would like to have certain guiding elements in all

presentations, such as specific views of national partners on issues at hand (like a political process or elections being prepared).

We would like presentations to also include specific mentions of how the convening role was played. We would like to know the actual response of the stakeholders (national stakeholders like the government, but also regional partners as well as the UN). How are they reacting to the convening role and the efforts of the countries themselves? It would enrich our knowledge and ability to react. How can each of us contribute? What advice would we give to the SC in response to these issues?

3. Currently the SC is debating a Resolution on the Chad Basin and it is very important that the chair and the PBC is engaged in figuring out with the SC the link between the Sahel region and the Chad basin. These are seen as separate regions but this is not the case. The PBC has a tremendous role to play in showing the commonalities and challenges between the two regions. Perhaps a proactive approach with the SC should be called for.

#### United Kingdom:

We are grateful for all configurations' work and we should be wary of putting too much of a procedural burden on them. All efforts of the PBC are most helpful when applied to specific countries.

We definitely need to be flexible and responsive to particular needs on the ground in each specific country. We welcome the move to more flexible engagement within each country.

I just wanted to comment on the Sierra Leone's brief, because he stressed the importance to support the upcoming elections. For the UK's part, we want to see that support from the PBC in two areas:

1. The political engagement with the government of Sierra Leone. We think it is important for a clear prioritization of the election, such as the election budget.
2. We think it is important to put money where our collective mouth is. Sierra Leone is a success story and needs to continue to be so, and for that they need hard cash. We urge all PBC members to consider donating, any contribution large or small will help the positive progress Sierra Leone has shown-

#### Sierra Leone:

I apologize for the absence of our ambassador, who is in our capital for political considerations. We all know that elections will be held in March 2018.

The main issue at hand now is the funding of the process, namely the elections. At this time, it is better to get things done rather than continue pushing them off. Putting things off will embolden the opposition. Funding is especially important for getting things moving so we hope we have the support of the PBC in that regard.

#### Belgium:

We need to keep in mind that there is no one fits all solution that can fit every country in every transitional period.

There are always unique factors that need to be taken into consideration. We remain deeply committed to a country-specific configuration. This allows us to tackle the problems on a specific and deeper basis.

In regard to Egypt, by holding a country configuration meeting right before a SC meeting on that country, it ensures the two institutions can complement each other in their work. This can be shown in the recent work in Burundi and CAR.

If I can raise a specific point about our Swedish colleague's comments, our peacebuilding plan for Liberia seems to be a particularly interesting plan.

Norway:

I do believe we are heading in the right direction. The way to work on building together with the national authorities is the key to success in those countries. Without national ownership, there is not much we can achieve.

One critical element of this is the national resource configuration. The question of what resources these countries have is critical to what they can achieve. I urge the configurations to consider this point when moving forward in their efforts in these countries.

How is the rest of the UN included in peace building efforts in these countries? To what degree is the World Bank included? We need to bring these disparate parts of the UN into greater roles with these problem countries. We need to make sure for not only ourselves but the countries we are working with that we make progress in this regard.

Bangladesh:

I apologize on behalf of our Ambassador for not being here. We have always been a strong advocate of the PCB agenda and appreciate making it a priority in the various countries.

1. The PBC is a unique opportunity to bring together voices on the ground. We support the idea of creating more opportunities for highest level political authorities in these countries to come here to NY and speak with the PBC. It is critical to remain engaged with the regional and sub-regional configurations.

We would perhaps like to hear about the challenges these configurations are facing and how the UN could lend some traction to their work. On the 61<sup>st</sup> meeting on the status of women, there were some interesting comments from Sierra Leone that show the importance of national ownership. Sierra Leone emphasized women's role in peacekeeping efforts in the region and for the smooth transition to the upcoming elections. Those kinds of voices we hear from the ground are especially influential.

2. We also need financing for peacebuilding. Funding for Sierra Leone elections deserves our attention. We would very much like to hear about the financial challenges affecting these countries so we can bring these challenges into our work.

These discussions emphasize that no country's situation is the same and no solution fits all.

Indonesia:

National ownership remains fundamental. Therefore, the PBC's support must be in partnership with the national authorities.

We support the idea that partnership with regional and sub-regional organizations on the ground is of utmost importance and so we urge these organizations to become more involved in the peace building process. This enables us to get a more complete picture of what is happening on the ground.

On budget, a better financing mechanism should be implemented for peacebuilding efforts. Moreover, we are of the view that the PCB should be integrated as an international forum.

Colombia:

Thank you chair for convening this meeting. As far as the CAR is concerned, we think that the three Pillar of the National Development Plan should be included in report you are going to present about the country.

Also, it would be meaningful to introduce the Agenda 2030 in the National Development Plan. Moreover, do we have any opportunity to engage national ownership in these countries? Doing so will gain trust and lend significance to the work of the SC.

Chair of Liberia CSC, Sweden:

I think it's important to have a more interactive discussion so I would like to answer to the statements delivered by my colleagues. On the SC, as others have said, timing is very critical. We need to look at their calendar and plan around their schedule so as to most effectively make progress. We can look at both formal and informal engagement methods with the SC. To actually affect change, we need to be ready before the day of their meetings. Also, as the quality of our input improves, it will really give us added influence over the SC's proceedings.

I would also recall the issue of coherence put forward by Norway. This peacebuilding plan is an excellent example of how the EU and other organizations have been involved. It's really upon us to be coherent in our approach.

In regard to resources, the configurations can only make progress if our contributions are guided by the PBC.

In regard to political economy, we are increasingly seeing that this is central to peacebuilding. We need to better understand the formal and informal fiscal economy and incentives that drive the elites in some of these issue countries. We are working closely with our Liberian colleagues on this point.

Egypt:

I would like to take the floor on the engagement with the SC. There were talks about CAR yesterday in the SC and the PBC's work was not included. It's not an issue of neglecting our work; it's simply that our work does not come naturally to the pen holder yet.

The mutual commitment framework and the three Pillars of the national development plan is very important in CAR right now and it is very important that the international community supports these efforts. The PBC should be influential in this regard, in getting these efforts out to the international community.

Germany:

Thank you Chair and briefers. I learned that Norway and Indonesia are the focal points on financing. I would like to learn who the other focal points are so that we can understand everyone's work better. We ask to let articulate a list of all focal points.

Chair:

To Germany: the list is work in progress but it has not been completed yet. This is why we have not already distributed this information.

Japan:

Thank you chair. I would like to echo the points made by Egypt and Sweden. In national ownership, we fully agree with the importance of making national efforts on the ground.

We want to strengthen the role of the PBC in this regard. We also want better coordination between the security council and the PBC. We would like to fully support the comment on paying particular attention to the calendar of the security council.

Chair of Central African Republic CSC, Morocco:

Two years ago, the relationship between SC and PBC was very cold and there was no effort from the former to form a relationship with the latter.

Never did any P5 ambassador accept the invitation to come to a meeting here. Where do we stand now? There has been a qualitative change between us; there are closer synergies between the work of both PCB and SC.

We would like to see consultations every time there is a problem country of note to both, but we still have a long way to go in our relationship with the SC. The chairs of the PBC do need to speak to the SC about the importance of our work and that we are there to add a forum for people to give their opinions outside of the SC.

There have been productive meetings between the Country-Specific Configurations and the SC regarding financing, transitional justice, and other topics. Thus, things have changed in a good way. This transition has been able to come about due to efforts by the PBC. However certain members of the SC have rejected the work of the PBC. I won't say which one it was, but one of the members rejected our efforts to be involved because we had nothing to do with the SC, according to him. The process of building trust between the two institutions is something that will occur little by little. We must make specific efforts towards the P5.

8. **Closing statement by Chair, Amb. Tae-yul:** In order for our relationship to change, I believe we need to change ourselves first. If we make our value known, that is the only way for them to seek our advice and cooperation.

Let's do our work with or without SC support, and then the time will come where they will appreciate our work here. We all agree on the need to include the national governments in our efforts. We will continue strengthening our cooperation and we look forward to making progress as a peacebuilding organization.

The meeting is adjourned.