

Peacebuilding Commission
Ambassadorial-Level Meeting on Guinea-Bissau
29 November 2022

1. (PBC) Guinea-Bissau Configuration, H.E. Mr. Ronaldo Costa Filho, convened an Ambassadorial-level meeting to update Member States on the political and socio-economic situation in Guinea-Bissau, and to discuss priority areas and related actions in the areas of peacebuilding and socio-economic development.
2. In his introductory remarks, the Chair informed about the political and electoral developments since his last report to the PBC in June 2022. He noted the political consultations led by the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Decentralization, resulting in a proposal to postpone the legislative elections scheduled for December 2022, to May 2023, which is yet pending on the approval of the President Embaló. He addressed the key gaps on the legislative electoral process, including a timely voter registration process and the lack of financial resources, while highlighting the need to enhance meaningful political participation of women. He noted with concern the deteriorating socio-economic situation in the country, due to the Covid-19 pandemic and disruption of global supply chains, informing of the negative impact on imports and exports and the cost of living. He further noted that strikes in the social sectors affected the delivery of basic services. Given the modest level of development-oriented projects, he encouraged the PBC to mobilize support to foster economic opportunities and employment in Guinea-Bissau, as well as to consider opportunities for South-South and triangular cooperation (SSTC).
3. The Minister of Foreign Affairs, International Cooperation and Communities of Guinea-Bissau, H.E. Ms. Suzi Carla Barbosa, welcomed the continued PBC engagement with Guinea-Bissau and stability and development in the country. a conducive environment for inclusive, free and fair legislative elections. She informed about the emerging consensus on holding the elections in May 2023, as well as on the on-going dialogue on the legitimacy of the National Electoral Commission (NEC). The Minister informed that the budget for the electoral process was over \$12 million, of which the Government has been able to mobilize \$7 million. She underscored the need for enhancing the participation of women and youth in the process and recognized the need to secure the minimum 36% quota of women parliamentarians in the National Popular Assembly Af(Asse)uD 14BD4(d)-0 1 724 0 6a12 rir7 0 o 139.(iss)-3(a)4(u)-8BTr Assembl goin

which will enhance economic recovery efforts and create budgetary space for sustainable inclusive growth. Lastly, she highlighted the critical role of the PBC to help mobilizing regional and international support to further strengthen the work on the Government priority areas, such as institutional reform, confidence building, inclusive dialogue, women and youth empowerment, and drug trafficking and transnational organized crime.

4. Officer-in-Charge and DSRSG of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS), Ms. Giovanie Biha, commended the continued engagement of the PBC on Guinea-Bissau. She informed that the Government would start the new 3-month long voter registration on 10 December. However, the stakeholders remain divided on the legality of the NEC, since the mandate expired in April 2022. Therefore, a consensual political solution would be required to capacitate the NEC in the absence of a parliament to appoint a new executive. Thus, she underscored the need to focus on dialogue to address the challenges ahead of the legislative poll. The DSRSG underscored the importance of a peaceful legislative election in terms of advancing

justice, security, and defense reforms. Going forward, she encouraged strengthening assistance to addressing security challenges, such as drug trafficking and to continue liaising with ECOWAS to work with national defense and security institutions. She recommended focusing also on regional and cross-border opportunities to strengthen peace, stability, and development in Guinea-Bissau, and highlighted the important work of the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) in this regard.

5. The UN Resident Coordinator in Guinea-Bissau, Mr. Anthony Ohemeng-Boamah, informed that despite the

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arrangement with Guinea-Bissau and underlined the importance of further IFI engagement and support.

- They highlighted the importance of meaningful inclusion of women and youth in political processes and structures. In this regard, they welcomed the 36% quota for women in the National Assembly but noted the underrepresentation despite the quota. They encouraged the implementation of institutional and policy reforms to remove structural barriers of equal participation and representation.
- They stressed the need for sustainable, adequate, and predictable financing for peacebuilding and commended the PBF support to Guinea-Bissau as valuable and catalytic.

8. In her closing remarks, Minister Barbosa thanked Member States for the support, and informed of current partnerships in support of peace and development in the country. She reiterated the commitment for inclusive and democratic elections, and noted the need to further develop infrastructure, transportation, and communications in view of regional integration. DSRSG Biha emphasized the importance of enhanced support to peaceful, transparent, and inclusive legislative elections, and acknowledged the commitment of UNOWAS to engage with all stakeholders to ensure peace and stability for sustainable development in Guinea-Bissau. The Resident Coordinator thanked Member States for the support and noted the importance of strengthening innovative and transformative programs in sustaining peace particularly in relation to socio-economic development.

9. In concluding remarks, Director and Deputy Head of the UN Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO), Ms. Awa Dabo, Guinea-Bissau and commended the enhanced attention and support as the country advances towards national legislative elections amidst a challenging socio-economic commitment to promoting SSTC in addressing common challenges and creating space for a variety of stakeholders to seek opportunities that contribute to building peace and development. In this regard, she encouraged the PBC to enhance cooperation and coordination, sharing lessons learned, good practices and expertise, and to promote successful innovative solutions for peace and development. Further, she underscored the crucial need to scale up support for Bissau-Guinean women and youth and their meaningful participation in political processes and dialogue and called upon Member States and partners to support interventions that strengthen their participation and leadership in peacebuilding and governance. She highlighted that Guinea-Bissau is a priority country for the PBF, and informed that the PBF has supported initiatives in Guinea-Bissau since 2007 in the area of economic development, political stabilization, institutional reforms, and strengthening the national response to combatting drug trafficking and potential support to other peacebuilding needs.

10. In his closing remarks, the Chair of the Guinea-Bissau Configuration underlined the need to enhance inclusive political dialogue to support sustaining peace. He also noted Guinea-economic vulnerabilities, and emphasized the imperative to promote economic diversification, as well as inclusive economic empowerment and employment of women and youth. Further, he underlined the urgent need for justice, institutional, and security sector reforms. The Chair closed the meeting by emphasizing the value of regional partnerships in building durable peace, and in this regard welcomed the ongoing cooperation with ECOWAS.