

Guinea Bissau Country-Specific Configuration
Report from the Chair's Visit
September 10-12, 2008

I. Introduction

1. The Chair of the Guinea Bissau country-specific configuration undertook a fact finding visit to the country from September 10-12. The primary purpose of the visit was to gain a first-hand perspective on the recent political developments, including the preparations for the upcoming elections; to discuss the next steps in the Peacebuilding Commission's engagement with Guinea-Bissau and the process for the finalization of the Peacebuilding Strategic Framework and its Monitoring and Tracking Mechanism.
2. During the visit the Chair met with the President, the Prime Minister, the Foreign Minister, the Minister of Finance, the Minister of Justice, the Minister of Defense, the Army Chief of Staff, the Head of the National Electoral Commission, leaders of the major political parties, representatives of civil society organizations, members of the diplomatic community resident in or accredited to Guinea-Bissau, UNOGBIS and the UN Country Team. (See annex I for the visit programme)
3. The visit helped to forge a partnership with the new government of Guinea Bissau and identified options for PBC's continued engagement with the country.

II. Main Findings

Political Developments and the Elections

4. The political situation in Guinea Bissau remains stable following the creation of a new government on 5 August. Civil society organizations and international partners expressed confidence in the new government while stressing that its primary mandate is to conduct legislative elections on November 16. They further noted that the change of government took place peacefully and within the constitutional framework. Stakeholders also welcomed the fact that the new government includes several ministers from the previous administration, thus ensuring the much needed continuity in leadership.
5. The new government has also stressed its intention to move forward on all the necessary reforms in the areas of SSR, drug trafficking, and discussions with the IMF on macro-economic issues, while primarily focusing on the preparations for the elections. In this context, the government and all other stakeholders highlighted their interest in the PBC and also stressed the strategic importance of the PBC's continued engagement.
6. Many stakeholders also noted the fact that the recent attempted coup d'etat was aborted, representing a significant break from the

political parties noted with concern risks associat

energy supply to enable the provision of portable water. Efforts to address the current emergency must also take into account the need to overcome these structural issues through robust political leadership and better coordinated and resourced support from the UN agencies and other international partners.

Peacebuilding Fund Projects

16. Many stakeholders expressed disappointment with the slow pace of the implementation of the PBF quick impact projects. Of the four approved projects, only the project on elections is currently under implementation. The other three projects dealing with youth employment, prisons and military barracks rehabilitation are still in the set-up phase. National counterparts expressed concern about the procedural delays and the limited capacities of UN implementing agencies. They also emphasized the importance for implementing agencies to have a strong presence in the country in particular in the case of UNODC and UNOPS. Some stakeholders noted that further delays in the PBF implementation could have a serious negative impact on UN's effectiveness and image in the country.

III. Options for Moving Forward

17. In all meetings, the CSM Chair discussed options for continued PBC engagement, in particular the timing for the finalization of the Peacebuilding Strategic Framework. There was overwhelming support for the proposal to move forward with the adoption of the Strategic Framework as planned from the government, civil society and political parties (with the exception of a leader of one of the political parties). Stakeholders also stressed the need to maintain PBC engagement throughout the electoral process and expedite the implementation of the quick impact PBF projects.
18. In making the arguments for moving forward with the adoption of the Framework, government representatives, civil society and party leaders, noted that governments may change but the peacebuilding priorities of the country will remain the same.

population and any delay in the adoption of the Framework would have a negative impact on the political stability of the country.

20. The President and the Prime Minister confirmed their intention to reconstitute the National Steering Committee and appoint a new Co-Chair. The Steering Committee is expected to review the Strategic Framework before its formal adoption in New York.¹ Stakeholders also expressed willingness to continue the technical work on the matrix for the monitoring and review mechanism.

IV. Recommendations

21. Based on these findings and observations, the Guinea Bissau country-specific configuration may wish to consider the following recommendations:

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Annex I. Programme

