

Ambassadorial-level meeting of the UN Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) on Guinea-Bissau

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Thank you, Mr. Chair, for convening this meeting and to the briefers for the update on your recent mission.

Let me take the opportunity to acknowledge the important role of Guinea-Bissau as the current ECOWAS Chair. ECOWAS remains a critical partner in peace and stabilisation efforts.

I will raise two questions today. One on the support to foundations for peace in Guinea-Bissau. Another on sustaining peace during elections.

Firstly, Guinea-Bissau has negotiated foundations for peace through the ECOWAS Roadmap and the 2016 Conakry Agreement, yet, implementation remains a challenge. Inclusive institutions, the rule of law, equitable governance of resources, and the provision of basic services are all critical to strengthen the social contract. Furthermore, climate change is reality, not a distant threat, in West Africa. The Peacebuilding Fund – among other mechanisms – provides support to those areas. I would be interested in learning more about how the briefers assess the impact of peacebuilding initiatives to address the effects of climate change and other risks, and what can be done to further strengthen this support?

Secondly, elections are just around the corner in Guinea-Bissau. All eyes are on the preparations for free, fair, transparent and inclusive elections, and I would like to commend efforts towards political dialogue among stakeholders.

Inclusivity can bolster public trust in the electoral process and sustain peace in the long run. Excellencies, how can the safe and meaningful participation of women, minorities, youth and, civil society in the electoral process be further supported in Guinea-Bissau?

Finally, sustaining peace during elections is not a one-off event. It is a continuous and long-term process. Many elections are underway in countries considered by the Peacebuilding Commission, from Liberia to South Sudan. Let me end by suggesting that we, the Peacebuilding Commission, consider utilizing our convening role to foster cross-country exchanges to share experiences on the prevention of violence during electoral processes.

I thank you.