



# General Assembly Security Council

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## Peacebuilding Commission

Fifth session

Guinea configuration

### Summary record of the 1st meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Friday, 23 September 2011, at noon

*Chairperson:* Ms. Lucas . . . . . (Luxembourg)

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*The meeting was called to order at 12.05 p.m.*

#### **Adoption of the agenda (PBC/5/GUI/1)**

1. *The agenda was adopted.*

#### **Statement of mutual commitments (PBC/5/GUI/L.1)**

2. **The Chairperson** said that the Republic of Guinea was the first State ever to be placed on the agenda of the Peacebuilding Commission at its own request without having been referred by the Security Council and without having hosted a United Nations peacekeeping mission. The Government of Guinea had thus demonstrated its determination to rebuild the country through dialogue and cooperation with the international community and had identified three highly relevant priorities for that process: the promotion of reconciliation and national unity; security and defence sector reform; and youth and women's employment. The draft statement of mutual commitments on peacebuilding in Guinea was based on the principles of national ownership, partnership in support of national efforts and mutual responsibility for outcomes. It set out the actions and commitments of the Government and the Commission in the three priority areas identified.

3. Two of the commitments were particularly important: firstly, the prompt organization of legislative elections, with open dialogue among all political stakeholders to address technical and political issues, would help build confidence and make the transition to democracy. Secondly, international support — including through the Peacebuilding Fund — for quick-impact projects such as military retirement programmes and a census of security forces in Guinea would help develop a partnership for security sector reform.

4. **Mr. Condé** (President of Guinea) said that the scope and complexity of the challenges facing Guineans were far greater than had been foreseen even in the most pessimistic forecasts. Social and economic conditions had been worsening for decades as a result of poor governance, political and institutional instability, and impunity for wrongdoing. Those ills had been exacerbated by a fractured economy and widespread corruption, against the wider backdrop of a region ravaged by civil war and transnational organized crime, most notably drug trafficking. Given that sombre picture, everything was now a priority in Guinea. Nevertheless, the first order of business must

be the country's development and meeting the pressing needs of the people. He had therefore instructed the Government to tackle the deep-rooted causes of poverty immediately and establish a political, institutional and governance framework for the country's revitalization. A priority action programme adopted in January 2011 was being rigorously implemented.

5. To face the challenges of a fragile peace and national reconstruction, the Government had requested the Peacebuilding Commission to provide support and advice on the promotion of national reconciliation and unity; reform of the security and defence sector; and employment for youth and women. Steps had already been taken in each of those areas: a commission had been established under the chairmanship of two religious leaders who would work with regional advisers, with input from local communities, to develop a framework for dialogue among Guineans. Stringent measures had been taken to make the defence and security forces State institutions in the service of peace, security and development. Comprehensive policies were also being implemented to help young people and women meet the difficult challenges they faced. In addition, the Government was intent on completing the democratic transition by holding legislative elections in a transparent and harmonious process that would include all stakeholders.

6. The statement of mutual commitments between Guinea and the Commission reflected his Government's desire to establish a foundation for peace and stability in the country and the subregion. The prospects for peace, security, development and respect for human rights would depend not only on the Government's determination to meet the legitimate aspirations of the people, but also on the support of the international community based on the commitments set out in the statement. In particular, financial assistance would be required for the 4,200 soldiers to be demobilized as a result of security sector reform. The Commission's advocacy would also, he hoped, foster partnerships with international financial institutions, regional and subregional organizations and other international stakeholders. Guinea, for its part, would shoulder its responsibilities in working with the Commission and all national, regional and international stakeholders.

7. **The Chairperson** said she took it that the members of the Guinea configuration wished to adopt

the draft statement of mutual commitments on peacebuilding in Guinea.

8. *It was so decided.*

9. **Mr. Vrailas** (European Union) said that the commitments set out in the statement just adopted must now be implemented as quickly as possible. Crucially, now that elections had been announced for December 2011, dialogue with all political actors must begin. Recent meetings between members of the Government and the opposition were laudable; such efforts should continue despite the obstacles. It was incumbent upon those in authority to take the necessary steps to promote peace and social cohesion; further efforts were needed to bring about inclusiveness and transparency and thus to encourage the opposition to participate constructively in the electoral process. Ensuring that the first legislative elections in a democratic Guinea were exemplary would help turn the page towards a stable and prosperous future. He also called for restraint and respect for the right of peaceful demonstration on the anniversary of the tragic events of 28 September 2009 in Guinea.

10. The European Union would continue to stand by Guinea during its political transition. In 2010, it had mobilized €40 million in post-crisis funding, which included support for elections, security sector reform and job creation. Once free and transparent elections were held, additional funding would be made available from the European Development Fund.

11. **Mr. Cassidy** (Indonesia) said that the current meeting provided an important opportunity for the members of the Guinea configuration to seek the views of the Guinean delegation on how best the Commission could provide targeted and tangible assistance. He welcomed the Government's involvement in developing the statement of mutual commitments, as national ownership was crucial.

12. Efforts to promote national dialogue and mediation were necessary to achieve lasting peace and sustainable development. As a country that was itself undergoing judicial reform, Indonesia saw the justice system as a key element for creating an environment that fostered the rule of law, human rights and fundamental freedoms. For such reform to take place, capacity-building was needed in the Government departments responsible for the judiciary, law and order, and security.

13. He welcomed the high priority accorded to youth and women's employment. Viable means of generating income were crucial to establishing peace and security; he hoped that the United Nations and other international partners would assist Guinea in implementing employment programmes, particularly for young people and women.

14. **Mr. Angell** (Canada), noting that Guineans now had a democratically elected President for the first time in 50 years, applauded their perseverance in overcoming the challenges of the transition process. The Guinea configuration had made impressive strides in its first year; the statement of mutual commitments would help focus its actions and the use of resources from the Peacebuilding Fund.

15. In an important innovation, the statement laid out thematic areas in which the Commission might pursue closer cooperation and complementarity among its four West African configurations, notably the areas of transnational organized crime, the development of the mining and agricultural sectors and employment for women and youth. It was crucial for the Commission's country-specific configurations to pool their efforts and learn from shared experiences. That process had already begun to some extent, when representatives of Guinea had attended a seminar on youth employment organized by Austria and the Peacebuilding Support Office in 2010. The lessons shared at the seminar were reflected in the statement of mutual commitments by the priority given to closer alignment between vocational training and the labour demands of emerging economic sectors such as mining and agriculture.

16. The Commission's collaborative regional efforts in youth employment could provide a useful template for joint work on other issues such as transnational trade in illicit drugs. On that issue, the Sierra Leone configuration, which was chaired by Canada, would be open to organizing an initiative to share experiences among the four West African configurations and regional and subregional partners in order to develop a more coherent approach.

17. **Mr. Barton** (United States of America), applauding the three priority areas set out in the statement of mutual commitments, welcomed the President's focus on action. He suggested that a dedicated Government representative should be appointed to work with the Peacebuilding Commission,

which would help the alliance to flourish, lead to better collaboration with the resident missions and strengthen the United Nations presence in Guinea.

18. The upcoming legislative elections were a key task that, once completed, would signify that Guinea had moved through the transition phase, while the establishment of a legislature would be a step towards fulfilment of the national goals set by the Government. Lastly, he welcomed the emphasis placed on economic development: ensuring predictable financing for early recovery activities and sustained investments over the medium and long terms would help guide the Commission's activities in Guinea.

19. **Mr. Gompertz** (France) said that his delegation supported the administration of President Condé and was confident that it stood ready to meet the challenges ahead. While the establishment of a date to hold elections was a welcome development, it was worth noting that the opposition was dissatisfied with how the process had been conducted. He joined other delegations in encouraging the administration to engage in a dialogue with the opposition that would be inclusive and sensitive to political and personal rivalries, so as to ensure peaceful elections and calm the existing conflicts between ethnic groups.

20. He commended the Government for courageously undertaking the reform of the security sector, in particular the demobilization of 4,200 troops, which had proved to be a controversial measure in the country. The experiences of Madagascar and Côte d'Ivoire provided a useful example of how former troops could be transformed into a civic corps that carried out productive activities, such as the building of schools and hospitals. His Government encouraged and would offer its full support to such endeavours.

21. With regard to economic development, while his delegation recognized that the discussions with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) were part of a complex process, it hoped that an agreement with IMF could be reached by 2012, as that would make significant budgetary assistance available to Guinea. French companies and the nation's largest employer's union had shown an interest in the reconstruction and development of Guinea.

22. The problem of drug trafficking extended beyond Guinea and was a matter of concern to the African region, the European Union and beyond. It was in the interest of all States to work jointly to combat the

issue. He pledged the goodwill of his Government in that regard.

23. **Mr. Parham** (United Kingdom) said that his Government fully agreed with the priority actions identified in the statement of mutual commitments. The United Kingdom had supported the democratic transition through its participation in the Group of Friends of Guinea. His delegation particularly wished to encourage the Government to continue its efforts to ensure free, fair and transparent elections, by, inter alia, engaging in an inclusive national dialogue, and to strengthen demilitarization mechanisms, given that a clear defence and security plan was critical to achieving economic stability.

24. **Mr. Fedotov** (Director-General of the United Nations Office at Vienna and Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)) said that UNODC was fully engaged with the peacebuilding process in Guinea. Among other initiatives, the Office had supported efforts to invite Guinea to join the West Africa Coast Initiative. In addition, in 2010, UNODC had launched a programme to support implementation of the Political Declaration on the Prevention of Drug Abuse, Illicit Drug Trafficking and Organized Crimes in West Africa of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). The Executive Director would soon be making a visit to the country with a view to improving the effectiveness of UNODC programmes and expanding its range of actions. The Office's specific objective for Guinea was to provide assistance in the development of a national strategy to combat illicit drug trafficking and organized crime, which had larger implications for the entire transatlantic cocaine route. He thanked the Government for its assistance in destroying chemical precursors that had been seized in 2009.

25. **Mr. Lamamra** (African Union) said that the activities of the Guinea configuration were a welcome complement to the work of the Group of Friends of Guinea. The statement of mutual commitments effectively summarized the priorities of the new Government. Its adoption was cause for celebration given the many obstacles that had been overcome in Guinea. President Condé was clearly aware of the value of dialogue with the opposition and in a position to persuade those who were reticent to negotiate. He welcomed the President's interest in contributing a Guinean unit to the international effort to restore peace

in Somalia. As the coordinator of the Guinean unit, the African Union called on its international partners to contribute the necessary equipment. The presence of a Guinean unit in Somalia would be an important act of pan-African solidarity for the young democracy.

26. **Ms. Cheng-Hopkins** (Assistant Secretary-General for Peacebuilding Support) said that preventing conflict was critical to the larger goal of peacebuilding in Guinea. Recent reports had revealed concerns requiring immediate attention, including difficulties in initiating a real dialogue between the Government and the opposition; the organization of credible legislative elections; and the assassination attempt against the President and its implications for security sector reform. Political rhetoric on both sides was hardening and the opposition had called for demonstrations a day before the anniversary of the events of 28 September 2009, increasing the risk of violent clashes.

27. The Peacebuilding Fund sought to play a catalytic role in reducing some of those threats. It had already invested \$12.5 million dollars to support security sector reform, the holding of elections and political mediation, and was in the process of approving a second peacebuilding plan, pending instructions from the President of Guinea to convene the national Joint Steering Committee. The Fund also offered a fast-track mechanism that could mobilize funds within two or three days to support timely initiatives to defuse tensions and violence.

28. **Mr. Condé** (President of Guinea), in response to the comments made, said that the date of the elections had been set by the country's electoral commission, not his administration. He emphasized that his was a legitimate Government; while demonstrations were a lawful form of expression, they must not lead to vandalism or acts of violence. He urged the international community to broaden its focus beyond the events of 28 September 2009, as they were part of a larger historical context that must be understood. Attempts at seeking justice must include all citizens.

29. The demobilization of 4,200 troops and their reintegration into civilian life required urgent support for the payment of pensions, benefits and job training. A census of current military personnel was to be carried out in order to properly manage such efforts. For example, many active troops were well beyond retirement age. He thanked the European Union and

France for the support pledged and noted that aid for job training would not only benefit former troops but also young people entering the job market. He looked forward to receiving support from the Commission for the upcoming elections, which would be a critical step in Guinea's transformation into a democratic nation.

30. **The Chairperson** noted the genuine will to assist Guinea in becoming a stable, inclusive and prosperous society. The statement of mutual commitments sent an important message to the subregion as well. He stressed the need for all partners to act in a concerted manner and translate their commitments into action.

*The meeting rose at 1 p.m.*