

Informal meeting of the Country Specific Configuration of the PBC
on Guinea

New York, 6 July 2011

Chair's Summary

On Wednesday, 6 July 2011, from 10.00 am to 11.00 am, a meeting of the Guinea Configuration was held on the developments of the political situation in Guinea. The purpose of the meeting was to hear a briefing by Mr. Said Djinnit, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for West Africa, in particular on the preparations for legislative elections. The meeting was also an opportunity to discuss the challenges ahead and the role of the PBC.

In her opening remarks, the Chair, H.E. Ambassador Sylvie Lucas highlighted the key role of the elections both to complete the democratic process following the presidential elections and as a necessary ingredient to national reconciliation. She also expressed the PBC's concern with regards to the political tensions caused by disagreement on the electoral calendar and a perceived absence of dialogue amongst political actors leading to a stalemate that could threaten peace consolidation efforts.

The SRSG welcomed the sustained interest for Guinea and recalled the recent history of Guinea and the backdrop on which the presidential elections took place in 2010, and highlighted the joint mediation efforts by the UN, the AU and ECOWAS in the transition process. He underlined the importance of the forthcoming legislative elections as a continuation of the democratic and national reconciliation processes. He recalled that the plan initially coined by the International Contact Group for Guinea and accepted by all political actors, had foreseen to hold the legislative elections before the presidential elections. He regretted that, for political considerations, it had finally been decided to hold the presidential elections first.

Mr Djinnit identified the insufficient dialogue between the Government and opposition parties as the main challenge for the organization of the legislative elections. The legislative elections were to follow presidential elections by 3 to 6 months, a calendar which obviously had not been respected. While the President insists on the conduct of a census as a basis for renewing the electoral lists, the opposition rejects such an approach as unnecessary, arguing that the same electoral lists were used for the presidential elections, and that at best some adjustments had to be made. The SRSG indicated that he is encouraging the President to engage in a real dialogue with the opposition parties to reach a consensus on the issues around the legislative elections. As

an indication of the President's willingness to dialogue and recognition of the role of the opposition, Mr. Djinnit informed that President Condé had announced his intention to anchor the position of the head of the opposition in the Constitution.

The SRSB also provided an update on national reconciliation, the Security Sector Reform (SSR) and governance reforms. He reported on a recent presidential decree establishing a committee to reflect upon a suitable mechanism for peace, justice and reconciliation in Guinea. In his view, the PBC could usefully accompany this process, which the President intends to handle in a prudent manner so as not to awaken too many demons of Guinea's painful history. On SSR, he praised the work done by General Lamine Cissé and his role in the progress achieved, in cooperation with the Guinean authorities and regional organizations, and urged the international community to improve the coordination of its interventions, as well as to step up financial contributions. He suggested that the PBC could play a coordinating role in this regard. He announced a further visit to Guinea in order to assess progress made and to determine ways to better coordinate international efforts. He praised the strong support of the President in favor of SSR and commended the measures undertaken to lower the presence of heavy weaponry and military presence in Conakry.

He concluded by ascribing the insufficient political dialogue in Guinea to the country's history of military and dictatorial regimes and called for indulgence, but also vigilance, as well as a strong and sustained commitment of the international community to help ingrain a culture of political dialogue in the country. The SRSB finally highlighted positive actions undertaken by the President in the field of economic governance, such as installing the uniqueness of state coffers ("unicité des caisses"), the auditing of state contracts and the review of the mining code.

Member States then took the floor to inform about national initiatives or ask for clarifications on the role of the PBC in the political process in Guinea. The Permanent Representative of Guinea highlighted a number of other challenges that his country faces namely youth unemployment, drug trafficking and transnational organized crime. He also suggested four ways for the PBC to bring added value to the country: 1) reinforce the cooperation between the SRSB and the PBC, 2) have a direct working relationship with the Group of Friends that succeeded the ICG, 3) support the civil society initiatives in favor of political dialogue, 4) mobilize resources.

Member States solicited clarifications on the division of labor between the PBC and the Group of Friends of Guinea, as well as on the consequences of the new electoral census in terms of costs and electoral calendar. Additional interventions included questions on the nature of the support of UNOWA to the

PBC in the absence of a Political Mission in Guinea. Member States also noted the fragmentation of the Guinean political spectrum and the extremely large number of political parties and queried about the views of the SRSG on: 1) a possible political reform leading to a less fragmented political space, 2) recommendations for a durable peace in Guinea, and 3) the political reforms in West Africa that would facilitate consensus by political actors on the electoral list.

In response, the SRSG highlighted the need for a stronger and sustained support of the international community for durable peace, democracy and development as suggested by the Permanent Representative of Guinea. He also pointed to the President's determination in the fight against drug trafficking and transnational organized crime and his positive response to the invitation to Guinea to join the WACI. Mr Djinnit confirmed that UNOWA stood ready to provide support to the PBC in Guinea. From the SRSG's perspective, the legislative elections will assist in reducing the political fragmentation by yielding an effective party representation in the Parliament. Finally, he drew attention to lessons learned from the experiences in terms of consensus on electoral lists in Côte d'Ivoire and Niger.

Before concluding the meeting, the Chair recalled the transmittal to the Guinean authorities and the members of the Configuration of a first draft of the Statement of Mutual Commitment and invited members to review the draft and to provide their comments by 18 July 2011