

Ambassadorial-Level Meeting of the Peacebuilding Commission on Sierra Leone

9 December 2021

1. On 9 December, the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) convened an Ambassadorial-level meeting on Sierra Leone. The meeting was held on a virtual platform and chaired by H.E. Mr. Osama Abdelkhalek, the Chair of the PBC. The main purpose for the meeting was for the Government of Sierra Leone to update the PBC on progress in the roadmap for engagement with the PBC. The meeting also provided a platform for an exchange on the lessons learnt in peacebuilding efforts, and the mobilization of additional support for youth and women empowerment in Sierra Leone. In his opening remarks, the Chair noted that the meeting provided an opportunity for the international community to continue to accompany Sierra Leone in the implementation of the roadmap to ensure lasting peace and sustainable development.
2. The Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, H.E. Ms. Mamadi Gobeh Kamara, informed that the country has continued to consolidate peace gains within the identified roadmap priorities, focusing mainly on national cohesion, human capital development, economic diversification, institutional resilience and governance as well as COVID-19 response and recovery efforts. She mentioned some of the successes so far, such as the inclusion and engagement of youth into the political and socio-economic sectors, free quality education and the adoption of the Empowerment Policy.
3. The Minister of Planning and Economic Development, H.E. Dr Francis Mustapha Kai-Kai, roadmap, explaining that COVID-19 had further increased inequalities and caused additional funding and resource constraints. address governance and development challenges, with a focus on the role of women and youth. He was accompanied by the Director of Planning, Research and Policy at the Ministry of Planning and Economic Development, Dr. Sheka Bangura, who presented in more detail activities that aim to economically empower youth, including through the promotion of entrepreneurship and investments in cocoa and coffee plantations, rice cultivation, waste management and car washing. He noted that more support is needed to provide market-based livelihood opportunities for vulnerable youth, school retention and reintegration, reduction of adolescent pregnancy and child marriage, and to increase the public awareness of drug abuse. He described efforts to increase national school enrolment of girls and boys in primary and junior secondary schools, and to reduce maternal mortality, infant mortality and under-five mortality rates. He also highlighted the importance of the recently adopted Gender Empowerment Bill and associated efforts to

4. The Minister of Youth, H.E. Mr. Mohamed Oman Bangura, acknowledged the support provided by the Secretary- Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) to the Government and other key stakeholders in the development of a joint report on youth outreach in Sierra Leone, which led to PBF funded pilot projects in Tonkolili and Kenema districts focusing on empowering youth at risk (women and men) as resources for sustaining peace and community resilience, with over 800 beneficiaries (46% women). The projects aim to empower and include youth (targeted at 15-35 years) in all spheres of the decision-making processes, including at the cabinet, national, district and village levels. He emphasized the need to empower youth in communities, for example through the establishment of youth councils and youth and development groups, and to enable youth at risk to meaningfully reintegrate into their families and seek livelihood opportunities. He explained that these efforts are

increase in drug and substance abuse and increased recruitment of young boys and girls into gangs, which has facilitated the reintegration of about 500 young people engaged with gangs and provided them with psychosocial support, life skills and knowledge of their civic rights.

7. Member States welcomed the briefings and made the following observations:

They commended Sierra Leone for progress in consolidating peacebuilding dividends, national ownership, reconciliation, and social cohesion. They recognized the PBC accompaniment of Sierra Leone over the past 14 years as a platform for the mobilization of international support efforts. They appreciated the valuable role played by the PBF in providing targeted and catalytic funding.

They expressed support for national reconciliation efforts and underscored the role of the