

Informal Meeting of the PBC Burundi Configuration: Chair's Summary

6 June 2013

Introduction

On Thursday, 6 June 2013, from 11:30 am to 01:25 pm, an informal meeting of the Country - Specific Configuration on Burundi of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC Burundi Configuration) took place at UN Headquarters under the chairmanship of H.E. Ambassador Paul Seger, Chair of the Burundi Configuration. The government of

coordination with the main donors who made pledges in these areas, with the PBF playing a catalytic role, including kick starting activities critical to peacebuilding, paving the way for other donors to come in later. She asked if the current land issue could be one of the areas where the PBF could provide support, given the potential for

certain dispositions within the law that could seriously hamper the freedoms of press and opinion in Burundi. The Chair underscored his hope that the government would interpret the new law in a liberal and equitable fashion upholding the fundamental freedoms of press and opinion at all times. The Chair also mentioned he would like to explore the possibility of a growing engagement of the PBC Burundi Configuration in the current land issue.

In his statement, *Second Vice-President Rufyikiri* thanked the Chair and the PBC Burundi Configuration for delivering on one of the main objectives of the PBC, resource mobilization, through the Geneva Conference. He welcomed progress in the realization of pledges made in Geneva, with 43% of overall pledges already translated into funding agreements. He indicated that the Government had been following through with commitments it made in Geneva. He mentioned the most recent meetings organized in preparation of the 2015 elections and expressed satisfaction that these meetings have reassured Burundians and the international community. On the newly promulgated media law, he reiterated his Government's commitment to the respect of freedom of press; he reassured members that the law had taken into account comments received in the process of its elaboration and had drawn from other countries' experiences. He

objective of these sector specific conferences, which is the presentation of programs and projects and the response by partners in terms of alignment behind priorities and coordination of their interventions. He reiterated the Government's invitation to partners to participate in the sector specific conferences and mentioned that invitations would be sent out soon and a website containing the necessary documentation was r

Responding to members' concerns about the new media law the Second Vice-President reassured them that Burundi is proud of its active and dynamic media and has every intention to maintain it by continuing to defend the freedoms of press and opinion in the future.

The Chair wrapped-up the discussion by thanking the Second Vice-President and members of the PBC for a frank and open exchange of opinions on current developments in Burundi. He stressed the importance of such a constructive partnership and noted the great but at the same time also critical support and encouragement coming from all partners for Burundi. As a case in point he mentioned the discussion on the new press law. He concluded by reminding that the freedom of press is a "natural resource" for Burundi, which it should cherish and nurture at all times.

Next Steps

The Chair informed the Burundi Configuration of his upcoming visit to Bujumbura on 24-28 June 2013 to pursue the PBC engagement with Burundi, building on the key messages of this meeting.

AOB

Regarding the working methods of the PBC Burundi Configuration one delegation reminded that all public statements and letters coming from the Configuration must be consulted with and cleared by the whole membership.
