

1. On 25 February, the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) held an ambassadorial-level meeting in Bujumbura under the chairmanship of HE Mr. Jürg Lehner, Chair of the PBC and Co-Chair of the Burundi Configuration. The purpose of the meeting was for the Chair to debrief on his trip to Burundi from 2 to 6 February 2020 and for the PBC to receive an update from the Secretary-General of the East African Community (EAC), HE Mr. Libéral Mumeni, on the EAC mission to Burundi from 4 to 8 February 2020.

2. The Chair informed about his recent visit to Burundi and expressed his appreciation for Assistant Secretary-General for Africa, Ms. Bintou Keita, who had joined the delegation for the meetings in Burundi. He noted that, on his way to Burundi, he had meetings in Addis Ababa where he met with the African Union (AU) Commissioner for Peace and Security as well as the AU Commissioner for Political Affairs. The exchanges confirmed the readiness of the AU to support Burundi's peacebuilding priorities before, during and after elections. In Burundi, the Chair and his delegation were well-received by the

attention to Burundi's socioeconomic development, noting that Burundian authorities stressed the centrality of the National Development Plan (NDP) and invited the UN, through the PBC and UNCT, to serve as a bridge between Burundi and its partners to mobilize resources for its implementation. He informed that interlocutors emphasized addressing the imperatives of poverty reduction, education, and employment initiatives, particularly for youth. The Chair noted the government's encouraging cooperation with bilateral donors, the World Bank, and the African Development Bank as well as with the UNCT in finalizing the 2020 Humanitarian Response Plan.

4. The Chair recommended that the PBC remain committed to supporting Burundi in creating a conducive environment for peaceful, inclusive, and transparent elections, noting the possibility for further engagement with the government regarding support for party poll-watches. He recommended that the PBC continue to serve as a platform to mobilize resources and build partnerships around key priorities, and invited donors to rapidly

They stressed the importance of holding credible, transparent, inclusive and peaceful elections and appreciated Burundi's efforts to create an enabling environment.

They acknowledged the importance of the voluntary return of refugees and the need for continued support to returnees and host communities to strengthen resilience and social cohesion.

While emphasizing the importance of a nationally owned election process, they acknowledged the importance of regional and sub-regional engagement, including that of the AU, the EAC and the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR).

They highlighted the need for the international community to remain positively seized and underscored that a peaceful electoral process and transfer of power would be critical to increasing investor confidence and prospects for sustainable development.

They stressed the importance of the effective and meaningful participation of women and youth in peacebuilding and highlighted the work of the PBF-supported women mediators' network.

They expressed continued support for inclusive dialogue with political parties, civil society organizations and youth, and underlined the importance of funding for the PBF for its dialogue projects in Burundi.

They underscored that socioeconomic development efforts should continue throughout the electoral process and beyond. They welcomed the call for the PBC and the UNCT to serve as a bridge between Burundi and its partners in resource mobilization.

Some expressed concern about the arbitrary arrests of journalists and opposition party members and noted the importance of freedoms of expression, press, and assembly. They called for prompt investigation of human rights violations and prosecution of those responsible.

- 9 In his concluding remarks, the Chair underlined that the PBC would remain engaged in Burundi in support of the country's peacebuilding priorities, during the elections and beyond, and would continue serving as a platform for dialogue between Burundi and its partners to strengthen the resilience of the population. He reiterated as its motto: "Justice is the only way to a sustainable future."**