

Peacebuilding Commission – Liberia Configuration
Report of the Chair’s visits to Belgium and Liberia
16 – 22 February 2011

I. Introduction

On 16 February, 2011 I departed for my second trip to Liberia with a one-day stop-over in Brussels to meet with European Union (EU) Officials. This report is structured per country around the main themes of the terms of reference for each country as set out in Annex 1.

I would like to recognize the important contributions of Robert Pulver, DPKO who participated in the Liberia part of the mission and Tammi Sharpe, PBSO who was with me throughout the mission.

II. Belgium

On 17 February 2011, I met with a group of EU officials representing the European External Action Service (EEAS), the European Council Working Party on Africa (COAFR) and the Directorate General for Development and Cooperation (DEVCO). A joint meeting with officials from the political and programmatic sides of the EU provided for a rich exchange on the consolidation of peace in Liberia.

Based on their continuous engagement with Liberia since before the war, EU officials shared a thorough assessment of the progress, challenges and potential for peace in Liberia. While EU directs a significant portion of its assistance in areas not covered in the Statement of Mutual Commitment (SMC), namely realizing the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), they are trying to ensure that their assistance is coherent with the peacebuilding strategy. In addition to the MDGs, the EU focuses on consolidation of democracy in Liberia. For the upcoming elections, they are considering sending an election monitoring team which could prove invaluable in promoting free and fair elections.

Within the priorities of the SMC, we agreed that transnational crime and national reconciliation pose some immediate risks. We examined the menace that drug cartels pose in the sub-region and agreed that building specialized prosecutorial capacity could be invaluable in hedging such risks. If the Government is supportive, the EU could examine how to support this under its good governance activities. Security sector reform was also put forward as a critical element to consider in countering transnational crime; in many settings outside of Liberia it is the military that is collaborating with the cartels. We further concurred that a national historical commission provided for in the Truth and Reconciliation (TRC) Report could be an effective mechanism to assist the Government to manage the inherent sensitivities surrounding national reconciliation.

With regards to fundraising, the EU suggested that it might be an opportune moment to organize a roundtable in which the Liberian President could participate. Sufficient time

has passed since the last such meeting and it would present an opportunity to examine the status of peace consolidation in Liberia. We concluded with an agreement to look at funding possibilities once the Priority Plan is finalized.

III. LIBERIA

The following report contains analysis that derives from my first and second trips to Liberia as well as continuous consultations I have had since assuming the position as the Chair. During my second trip, I focused on meeting national stakeholders with whom I was not able to meet during my first visit. I also traveled to Nimba County. The main purpose of this field trip was to assess the implications of the Ivorian crisis on peace consolidation in Liberia. The trip, however, also provided the opportunity to meet with local officials and in one meeting delve into the complexity of land disputes in this county. I also took advantage of the trip to visit justice, corrections and security facilities in Sanniquellie. The full programme is attached as Annex 2.

I would like to thank the Government of Liberia for having guided and facilitated this visit, as well as the national and international stakeholders for their availability, openness and engagement. I also wish to thank the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) for their advice, logistical assistance and substantive engagement as well as the Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO) for their continued support.

Implications of the Ivorian crisis on peace consolidation in Liberia

I would like to bring to the forefront the potential devastating impact the Ivorian crisis could have on Liberia. I traveled to Sanniquellie, Nimba County for a day to meet with Liberian Officials and humanitarian actors engaged in the response efforts. At the time of my trip close to 40,000 Ivorian refugees had sought asylum in Liberia with an average of approximately 100 crossing a day. An estimated 35,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) were reportedly just across the border. Since my return, the situation has seriously deteriorated with the number of Ivorian refugees more than doubling. At the time of my trip the humanitarian community was planning for a potential of 100,000 refugees in Liberia. This number has been reassessed to 250,000 in view of the escalating situation.

In a frank exchange with the Liberian National Police (LNP), Liberian Refugee, Repatriation and Resettlement Commission (LRRRC), Bureau Immigration and Naturalization (BIN) and humanitarian actors, the Government was steadfast in its determination to uphold its international obligations towards Ivorian refugees despite the overwhelming challenges this entails. Equally impressive is the incredible hospitality with which host communities are receiving refugees despite their own difficulties in

for the safety of the refugees and, specific to the PBC's remit, such support is equally important for alleviating pressures on Liberians that could act as triggers for conflict inside Liberia. The Liberian war started in Nimba County. Massacres with ethnic dimensions have been in Nimba. Additionally, there have been along with changing ethnic

exploited for political purposes.

enable a gradual expansion of the Magistrates Sitting Programme¹ alongside the establishment of the Justice and Security Hubs.

priorities – security sector reform (SSR), rule of law (RoL) and national reconciliation - however; some of the hardest work remains in terms of prioritization.

I am optimistic that this document can become a roadmap that can maximize the efforts of the Government, civil society and the international community on the critical issues that need to be tackled for Liberia to continue to consolidate peace. From the relatively unique perspective of the PBC, I would like to recommend that this programme document report all support being provided to the Government in the priority areas and clearly indicate gaps. For example, officers seconded to UNMIL providing day-to-day guidance and mentoring to LNP, BIN and other institutions should be reflected in the plan. The programme document would, thus, reflect the full efforts of the UNCT, UNMIL and bi-lateral actors in the three priority areas and the areas needing additional support. This could later be integrated into the Poverty Reduction Strategy for Liberia, which is to be updated in mid-2012. While possibly departing from past practices, this approach could enhance partnership among all stakeholders. Being cognizant of the comparative advantages of Member States in the area of SSR and RoL, it may be advantageous to detail the types of skills to be developed in order to identify the best placed actors for mentoring and/or training. Specifying such in-kind activities could reveal opportunities for non-traditional donors to contribute, thereby broadening the donor base.

In its advisory capacity, the PBC may also be able to contribute to prioritization. Drawing on a wealth of consultations with Government, civil society actors and the international community, transnational crime emerges as the foremost threat as responsibility for security management transitions from UNMIL to the Government of Liberia. To meet this challenge, it might be advisable to prioritize the Transnational Crime Unit and establishment of a special financial court alongside some of the core support that is planned in terms of provision of basic equipment and rehabilitating court, police station, and prison facilities. It should also be kept in mind that these efforts may require legislative reform along with strengthening linkages between the police, prosecutors and the judiciary for which the case tracking system will be invaluable.

Report on the establishment of a national historical commission stands out as a central pillar through which Liberians could agree upon a common history and reckon with the role that they or their respective community has played in the conflict that has plagued Liberia. This would underpin the other recommendations related to accountability and reparations such as the Palava Hut and memorials that are currently being designed.

Partnership with ECOWAS

In consultation with the steering group, I postponed my trip to Abjua as both the President and the Vice President of ECOWAS were called to meetings outside of Abuja. In preparation for a future visit, Robert Pulver, DPKO, and Tammi Sharpe, PBSO, traveled to Abuja and met with ECOWAS Officials. Their report is attached as Annex 3. Following a briefing by them, I am optimistic that we will be able to find a means for ECOWAS to contribute to the work of the Configuration. ECOWAS Officials were

ANNEX 2

Programme

DAY 1: Friday 18 February 2011

Time	Respondent/Organisation	Comments	Venue/Contact Person	Status (confirmed/not confirmed)
17:30	Arrival at RIA	Travel to Cape Hotel	Contact: Roque Tel: 05319381/4269; Manasa, Tel: 05319387	Hotel booked (1 VIP, plus 3)
20:00	Discussions with Moustapha Soumare DSRSG	To discuss the agenda, PBC developments and next steps	Cape Hotel Contact Claudine Sanye: ext.4210	

DAY 2: Saturday 19 February 2011

9:00-10:30 **Trip to Sanniquellie (by air)**

10:30-11:00 **Meeting with County Officials**

11:00-13:00 **Meeting with UNHCR,
humanitarian sector heads, BIN,
ERU and local security agencies**

13:00-14:00

14:00-15:00

15:00-16:00

16:30

10:00-11:00	Meeting with UNMIL FC, UNPOL Commissioner and UNMIL JMAC to discuss UNMIL Transition Planning and Cote D'Ivoire situation	JMAC is closely monitoring the situation in Cote D'Ivoire and is leading work on UNMIL transition planning	UNMIL 3 rd Floor Conference Room Contact, Rory, Tel: 05319908	
11:00-12:00	Debriefing by the drafting group on PBC programming exercise	Following programming workshop and drafting exercise (15-19 February).	UNMIL 3 rd Floor Conference Room Contact, Rory, Tel: 05319023	
14:00-16:00	Meeting with former Chair of the TRC, Jerome Verdier	Venue to be determined	Alison/Eugene to try and set something up. Tel: 05319898	
17:00-19:00	Visit to new Jordanian FPU		Contact: UNPOL Abubakarr, Tel: 5-31-9292	

DAY 4: Monday 21 February 2011

8:00-9:00

10:30-11:30	Meeting with Associate Justices of the Supreme Court		Palace of Justice Contact: Katie, Tel: 06407768	
12:00-13:00	Meeting with the Chairperson of the Independent National Commission on Human Rights, Cllr. Leroy Urey	To get a better understanding on remit and role of the Commission and how it plans to undertake its work. As per the President's recent report related to the TRC, this body has reportedly taken on a number of TRC recommendations in its work plan. This meeting will thus focus significantly on the PBC's reconciliation priority.	INCHR, Congo Town, Contact : Alison/Eugene: (Tel: 06 510 409 for Counsellor's Office)	
13:00-14:00	Lunch (with UNOPS)	To receive update on progress in preparing the Gbarnga hub	UNOPS Contact: Rory, Tel: 05319908	
14:00-15:00	Meeting with the Minister of Justice, Hon. Christina Tah	To focus on key justice reform priorities over the coming year and role that PBC can play	Ministry of Justice Contact: Wilfred: Tel: 06647010	

15:00-16:00

8:30-09:30	Meeting with drafting group on PBC programming exercise		Cape Hotel, Mamba Point	
9:30-10:30	Meeting with the Chairperson of the Law Reform Commission, Cllr Philip Banks		Cape Hotel, Mamba Point Contact: Katie, Tel: 06407768	
10:30-11:30	Debriefing with Minister of Planning and DSRSG Recovery and Governance, Moustapha Soumare	To forge agreement on next steps	Ministry of Planning Contact: Wilfred: Tel: 06647010	
11:30	Depart for Airport	Flight to Abuja with Virgin Nigeria. Flight departs at 13:35 (TBC)		

ANNEX 3

On 23 February, Tammi Sharpe of the Peacebuilding Support Office, and Robert Pulver of the DPKO Office for Rule of Law and Security Institutions met with ECOWAS Commission officials in Abuja. They were received by Mr. Alhaji Mohammed Daramy Commissioner for Trade, Customs & Free Movement; General Charles Okae Director of the Peace and Security; Mr. Dieudonne Nikiema, Acting Peace Fund Manager; Ms. Florence IHEME Acting Director of the Early Warning Department; and other ECOWAS colleagues. The undersigned briefed ECOWAS officials on the PBC programme in Liberia and began to explore opportunities for enhanced ECOWAS engagement with the initiative.

The Peacekeeping Operations and Regional Security Directorate with five divisions is working on an array of issues of direct relevance to the Configuration. Overall, the Director stressed that ECOWAS will need to take on more responsibility as UNMIL draws down and expressed interest in meeting with DPKO and other United Nations colleagues to consider a potentially enhanced ECOWAS role to coincide with the draw-down. In the area of trans-border crimes, ECOWAS is presently working on a “blue print” on security sector reform. Another division is focused on strengthening ECOWAS capacity in the fight against proliferation of arms in relations to the ECOWAS Convention on Small Arms and light weapons.

The ECOWAS Peace Fund stood out as a mechanism that could provide a means for joint fundraising and/or project implementation under the ambit of ECOWAS. The types of projects to be implemented under the Fund fit squarely within the work of the PBC as the projects should be of relevance to peace and development. ECOWAS, in partnership with a few different actors (e.g. UNESCO, UNHCR, EU), is already implementing several projects. Plans in Liberia are underway to deploy up to 45 Peace Volunteers to Liberia to work in health (20), education (20) and agriculture (5) sectors. ECOWAS intends to place a total of 160 volunteers within the region, but faces challenges in terms of resources, staffing and programme management. The Fund has also been used to support ECOWAS directorates and Special Representatives. Mr. Nikiema, Acting Peace Fund Manager indicated that he would raise the issue of forming linkages between ECOWAS and the PBC CSC with the ECOWAS President.

The ECOWAS Early Warning System (ECOWARN) is impressive and could provide valuable insights for the PBC. It involves a team of experts who analyze data and prepare reports, policy briefs, situation reports (daily, weekly, quarterly and yearly) and incident reports regarding actual and potential threats to peace and security. Data is gathered on the basis of 66 indicators, and each country is given an overall risk rating. ECOWARN has close ties with civil society actors in countries and formal links with experts on the issues. ECOWARN is linked with the AU Continental Early Warning System, and it maintains an office in Liberia.

Commissioner for Trade Daramy stressed youth employment as a key to lasting stability in the region. His team also provided a briefing on ECOWAS cross-border cooperation

programmes and described initiatives to develop common migration and trade approaches throughout the region as well as strengthen relations among border communities. In some of these projects there may be opportunities for collaboration between ECOWAS and the PBC.

4 March 2011
RP (DPKO) and TS (PBSO)