



# Security Council

Seventy-fifth year

**8724**<sup>th</sup> meeting

Friday, 14 February 2020, 10 a.m.

New York

*Provisional*

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*President:* Mr. Pecsteen de Buytswerve . . . . . (Belgium)

*Members:*

China . . . . .	Mr. Zhang Dianbin
Dominican Republic . . . . .	Mr. Singer Weisinger
Estonia . . . . .	Mr. Jürgenson
France . . . . .	Mr. Michon
Germany . . . . .	Mr. Schulz
Indonesia . . . . .	Mr. Syihab
Niger . . . . .	Mr. Ankourao
Russian Federation . . . . .	Mr. Repkin
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines . . . . .	Ms. DeShong
South Africa . . . . .	Mr. Matjila
Tunisia . . . . .	Mr. Ladeb
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . . . . .	Mr. Clay
United States of America . . . . .	Mr. Hunter
Viet Nam . . . . .	Mr. Dinh

## Agenda

The situation in Guinea-Bissau

Report of the Secretary-General on developments in Guinea-Bissau and the activities of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (S/2020/105)

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20-03982 (E)



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*The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.*

### **Adoption of the agenda**

*The agenda was adopted.*

### **The situation in Guinea-Bissau**

#### **Report of the Secretary-General on developments in Guinea-Bissau and the activities of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (S/2020/105)**

**The President** (*spoke in French*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Guinea-Bissau to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Ms. Rosine Sori-Coulibaly, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Guinea-Bissau and Head of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau, and His Excellency Mr. Ronaldo Costa Filho, Permanent Representative of Brazil to the United Nations, in his capacity as Chair of the Guinea-Bissau configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2020/105, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on developments in Guinea-Bissau and the activities of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau.

I now give the floor to Ms. Sori-Coulibaly.

**Ms. Sori-Coulibaly:** Since my previous briefing to the Security Council, in a closed meeting on 31 October 2019, Guinea-Bissau has witnessed renewed tensions among political stakeholders, hampering stabilization and the Government's ability to focus on the country's economic performance and improve the living conditions of the population. Following the peaceful holding of the presidential election and the announcement by the National Electoral Commission (CNE) that Umaro Sissoco Embaló, the candidate from the Movement for Democratic Change, had won the election, the candidate of the African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde (PAIGC),

Domingos Simões Pereira, filed a legal challenge with the Supreme Court of Justice claiming electoral irregularities and fraud.

Subsequently, on 24 January the Court requested the CNE to repeat the national tabulation of the data from the regional electoral commissions, in accordance with the electoral law. A period of uncertainty ensued following the Court's orders and the CNE's compliance. However, following high-level mediation led by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) on 4 February, the CNE completed the verification exercise under the aegis of ECOWAS and in the presence of the representatives of the two presidential candidates, the outcome of which reconfirmed the provisional results.

However, the PAIGC filed another complaint concerning the verification process, seeking the annulment of the second-round election results. On 9 February, ECOWAS held an extraordinary session of its Authority of Heads of State and Government, in Addis Ababa, on the margins of the African Union Summit. They welcomed the conclusion of the verification process by the CNE, invited the Supreme Court to play its role fully in accordance with the constitutional provisions and electoral law and finalize its work by 15 February. The Supreme Court has since initiated the examination of the complaint in order to issue a decision.

As a result, the legal process involving the electoral outcome has yet to be resolved in order to allow for the first-ever peaceful transfer of power to a democratically elected Head of State in the country. However, given the deep mistrust between the two political camps, divisions in the executive branch and shifting political alliances in the Parliament, the swearing in of the future President will unlikely bring about stability. Therefore, the continued engagement of the Security Council and the broader international community will be essential. Likewise, the continued engagement and active participation of civil society to advocate and monitor the implementation of the Stability Pact and the Conakry Agreement will be paramount for the sake of stability.

Despite the challenges facing the outcome of the presidential election, Guinea-Bissau should be commended for completing its electoral cycle. Other areas that registered progress include the fight against drug trafficking and organized crime, with regard to

which the Bissau Regional Court is currently hearing a landmark case involving the seizure of 1.8 tons of cocaine in September 2019.

The judiciary police has also concluded key investigations, leading to the 10-to-15-year prison sentence of three suspects. In addition, a national action plan on drug trafficking and transnational organized crime is now in place and will serve as a road map for justice, security and judicial institutions in their efforts to combat drug trafficking. State institutions in Guinea-Bissau have also shown resilience and should be commended for resorting to legal means to resolve political disputes in connection with the presidential election results. Moreover, the country has witnessed no interference by the military in the political arena; the media have been enjoying freedom of speech; and there have been no major human rights violations.

The upcoming post-electoral period could present a window of opportunity for sustainable peace, stability, national cohesion and reconciliation, should there be political will and commitment by national stakeholders. Within the framework of Guinea-Bissau's Stability Pact, there is an urgent need for a far-reaching reform agenda that includes the constitutional review, the electoral law and the political parties' law reforms, as well as the reform of the defence and security sector and the judiciary.

National authorities should renew efforts to build a culture of accountability at all levels of the State. Progress in human rights and gender mainstreaming represents key peacebuilding components. Accordingly, political stakeholders and a free and respected media should set the tone to curb all forms of discrimination and hate speech. Most important, as history has taught us, ethnic and religious discourse must not find its way into the political arena. The establishment of an independent national human rights institution compliant with the Paris Principles remains a fundamental pillar for the promotion and protection of human rights following the withdrawal of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS). Furthermore, the implementation of the national action plan on drug trafficking and transnational organized crime will be key for the country's long-term stability. Consolidating recent gains made in drug seizures and the prosecution of cases requires political will at the highest level, but also reinforced collaboration among national, regional and international players.

In line with resolution 2458 (2019), which endorsed a three-phase transition and drawdown of UNIOGBIS, I would like to assure the Council that the mission is working towards its exit by 31 December. In that regard, the closure of the four regional offices was completed in 2019. Meanwhile, I have been working to ensure solid transition planning with the United Nations country team, as well as through close engagement with the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS), which will assume the role of good offices in Guinea-Bissau following the mission's departure.

I have also been engaging with national authorities and regional partners to ensure that the transition is fully supported by all stakeholders. A set of benchmarks has been developed and reflected in an integrated United Nations transition calendar that will enable the gradual drawdown and transfer of residual tasks to the United Nations country team, ECOWAS, UNOWAS and other partners in preparation of the mission's closure. However, diligent engagement with national counterparts is critical at this stage, and I call upon Bissau-Guinean national stakeholders to enhance their involvement with the transition process.

As part of the transition efforts, a comprehensive assessment of the United Nations country team's capacities against the national peacebuilding priorities will also be undertaken to identify gaps in its capacity. Those peacebuilding priorities will be anchored in the United Nations country team's long-term programmatic interventions, encapsulated in the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework for the period 2021 to 2025. In that regard, I intend to hold a joint UNIOGBIS-United Nations country team retreat in March to help streamline ongoing transition efforts and the development of the Cooperation Framework.

However, to allow the United Nations country team to take on critical peacebuilding activities — including political dialogue, national reconciliation and the implementation of urgent reforms, as well as combating drug trafficking and transnational organized crime — after the departure of UNIOGBIS, funding will be essential. I appeal to the international community to lend generous support to the Cooperation Framework in Guinea-Bissau.

With the conclusion of the electoral cycle, the mission has shifted its efforts towards supporting the reform agenda, as envisioned in the Conakry Agreement and the Stability Pact. However, the lack

of constructive dialogue among national political stakeholders, including in Parliament, poses a serious threat to the implementation of reforms, particularly the constitutional review, which is recognized as being at the heart of the country's recurrent instability. During the critical post-electoral period, all political forces and civil society organizations should be encouraged to commit to political dialogue and consensus-building on important national priorities to consolidate peace and stability. Regional and international stakeholders must also remain engaged.

In that regard, UNIOGBIS continues to support preparations for the holding of a national conference on peace, reconciliation and development, with financial assistance from the Peacebuilding Fund. That commendable initiative should be supported by the international community. I encourage the Security Council to call upon the relevant actors to firmly move forward with that agenda, which would also contribute to ensuring political and institutional stability.

It is also important for the international community — and ECOWAS in particular — to remain committed to Guinea-Bissau in support of political dialogue and confidence-building, while encouraging a culture of democracy, inclusivity and national unity. In that connection, I intend to establish a high-level platform that brings together international partners and national authorities to regularly discuss, promote and accompany the country in its reform agenda, as well as inform on the United Nations transition. That platform would continue under the chairmanship of the Resident Coordinator following the closure of UNIOGBIS.

I take this opportunity to commend the other members of the group of five — the African Union, ECOWAS, the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries and the European Union — whose joint and tireless efforts ensured that Guinea-Bissau complied with the electoral calendar.

Before I conclude, allow me to recall that, during the past 20 years, the United Nations has invested considerably in Guinea-Bissau. Now, ahead of the reconfiguration of the United Nations presence in the country, we have a collective responsibility to safeguard the democratic and peacebuilding dividends. It is imperative that Guinea-Bissau be kept high on the agenda of the regional and international community, including the Peacebuilding Commission.

We must collectively step up our efforts aimed at inclusive and sustainable development for all, within the context of the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework and beyond. Focusing on the most vulnerable, particularly women and youth, is paramount, considering that about 60 per cent of Guinea-Bissau's population is under 25-years old and most young people are unemployed. Without opportunities, they could become spoilers, rather than peace agents.

Finally, following the legacy of Amílcar Cabral, I encourage Bissau-Guinean political leaders to engage in constructive dialogue to overcome their differences and respect their national institutions — the very basis of the State — in order to rebuild their country for the next generation.

**The President** (*spoke in French*): I thank Ms. Sori-Coulibaly for her briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Costa Filho.

**Mr. Costa Filho:** I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for the invitation to address the Security Council in my new capacity as Chair of the Guinea-Bissau configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC). I take this opportunity to recognize my predecessor and former Chair of the configuration, Ambassador Mauro Vieira, for his dedication and commitment to Guinea-Bissau. I also wish to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Ms. Rosine Sori-Coulibaly, for her comprehensive briefing today and her work at the helm of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS).

The PBC congratulates Guinea-Bissau on the successful conduct of legislative and presidential elections in 2019 and thanks regional and international partners for providing the necessary financial and logistical support for the polls. However, the holding of elections was only the first step towards political stability. The country's institutions are now dealing with the legal challenge of the electoral results pending before the Supreme Court of the Justice. We expect that any issues will be addressed in accordance with the Constitution, in a peaceful and transparent manner. A peaceful transition of power will allow all of us to build on the positive momentum of the elections to consolidate democracy and focus on the implementation of the country's peacebuilding priorities.



For Guinea-Bissau, 2020 will be a landmark year. Once the legal proceedings on the electoral results are settled, the country will witness, for the first time in its history, an elected President handing over office to another democratically elected President.

UNIOGBIS will continue its drawdown and transfer of tasks to an empowered Resident Coordinator's Office and to the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel, as mandated by the Security Council. Let us recall, however, that this transition should not be a United Nations-centred process. Instead, the role of the United Nations will be to ensure a coherent and coordinated approach in support of nationally led efforts to take forward policies and programmes that address the root causes of instability and promote peace and development. The Commission remains committed to supporting UNIOGBIS central role in contributing to those efforts. It will be important for the international community to continue to help the Government to strengthen democratic and inclusive institutions to assist in internal reforms, support the engagement of women and youth in peacebuilding and promote and protect human rights. In addition, in the light of the current political situation, it will be essential that UNIOGBIS continue to exercise good offices and facilitate inclusive political dialogue. As the situation in Guinea-Bissau is still volatile, it is of the utmost importance that we ensure an appropriate political monitoring of developments in the country.

I recently met with Special Representative Sori-Coulibaly to discuss how the PBC's convening, bridging and advisory role could serve to enhance coherence among stakeholders during this critical year and ensure sustained international attention to Guinea-Bissau's long-term needs. The Peacebuilding Commission is prepared to assist UNIOGBIS and the Government of Guinea-Bissau by providing a platform for coherence and coordination among stakeholders, as well as for the promotion of shared analysis and understanding of the multidimensional peacebuilding challenges in the country. Our efforts, of course, will be anchored in the dialogue with the Government. We will try our best to work with them to identify peacebuilding priorities and promote the internal reforms that the country needs to accomplish long-term stability. The Commission is also committed to addressing the challenge of the financial cliff often experienced by transitioning countries. In that case, we must work to mobilize international and regional support for the country's peacebuilding

priorities, particularly for national development plans and for the future United Nations Sustainable Development Framework, which will guide United Nations development activities at country level.

Lastly, the PBC will continue to champion the effective participation and representation of women and youth in political processes and peacebuilding. For those and other activities to happen, the role of the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) will continue to be pivotal. The PBF projects have been instrumental in furthering political inclusion in Guinea-Bissau, and we hope that they will continue to play that role during and after the transition.

The Peacebuilding Commission has been engaged in Guinea-Bissau since it entered the formal agenda in 2007. Since then, the Commission has witnessed both progress in, and challenges to, the PBC's support to the country's peacebuilding priorities. I believe that the 2020 United Nations peacebuilding architecture review will offer us a valuable opportunity to take stock and reflect on the remaining challenges. I reiterate the readiness of the PBC to support the reconfiguration exercise and to provide timely and specific advice to the Security Council in that regard. We must work together to ensure that Guinea-Bissau will continue to receive adequate cooperation from its international partners, ensuring that the peacebuilding priorities supported by UNIOGBIS will not be left unattended.

Once again, I thank you, Sir, for giving me this opportunity to brief the Security Council. I look forward to our cooperation in support of peacebuilding in Guinea-Bissau.

**The President** (*spoke in French*): I thank Mr. Costa Filho for his briefing.

I shall now give the floor to those Council members who wish to make statements.

I call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Cooperation, African Integration and Nigeriens Abroad of the Niger.

**Mr. Ankourao** (Niger) (*spoke in French*): Allow me, at the outset, to thank Ms. Rosine Sori-Coulibaly, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Guinea-Bissau and Head of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS), for her excellent briefing on the situation on the ground. I wish to reiterate that the Niger, as current Chair of the Economic Community of West

African States (ECOWAS), stands more ready than ever before to contribute to international and regional efforts for the peaceful resolution of the Bissau-Guinean crisis.

The joint actions of international partners, in particular the group of five international organizations comprised of the African Union, ECOWAS, the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries (CPLP), the European Union and the United Nations, have contributed to the significant advances recorded in recent years in Guinea-Bissau. That progress made it possible to hold legislative elections on 10 March 2019, followed by the first round of presidential elections on 24 November and the second on 29 December, under conditions deemed just and fair by the entire international community. The Niger commends the holding of those elections, congratulates the people of Guinea-Bissau and thanks the international community for providing the necessary funding.

However, while we celebrate the end of the electoral cycle — proof that the protracted political crisis in Guinea-Bissau has been resolved — the political stalemate that emerged after the recent presidential elections is increasingly a cause for concern. Currently, a potentially catastrophic scenario cannot be ruled out completely. Having led ECOWAS support missions to Guinea-Bissau several times, I recall that, in order to better appreciate the current crisis, it is necessary to pay greater attention to the following elements.

First, the Bissau-Guinean crisis today has taken on an institutional form, rather than a violent one. The Constitution and electoral laws in force are sown with the seeds of chronic misunderstandings and are therefore fertile ground for all kinds of partisan interpretations.

Secondly, the current President of the Republic concluded his legal mandate on 25 July. He has been kept in office by the will of ECOWAS through a resolution adopted at the July summit in order to prevent an institutional vacuum.

Thirdly, the current Government emerged from the 2019 legislative elections. Established on 3 June, it is led by the largest party, the African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde, which does not, however, hold an absolute majority, rendering it unstable.

Fourthly, and finally, drug trafficking activities in the country is regularly indicated as one of the major destabilizing factors for institutions.

In order to avoid a new political crisis in the country, the Niger reiterates ECOWAS call to the various bodies and institutions involved in the electoral process in Guinea-Bissau to contribute to its political and institutional normalization by finalizing their work no later than 15 February — that is, tomorrow. In that regard, Guinea-Bissau's bilateral and multilateral partners must remain determined and vigilant in order to implement the Conakry Agreement and the ECOWAS road map. They must also work to maintain the sanctions regime in order to ensure that offenders comply with it.

With the upcoming closure of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau, on 31 December, as Ms. Sori-Coulibaly just mentioned, the extension of the mandate of the ECOWAS Mission in Guinea-Bissau will be necessary to help the country reform its security sector and those fundamental texts. To that end, the Niger reiterates the African Union's call for a collective mobilization of the international community, particularly the United Nations and the European Union, to provide greater financial support for the Mission in order to enable it to continue its operations until the national defence and security forces are able to ensure the country's security. The West African region, hard-hit by the increasingly intense and expanding terrorist attacks, cannot afford further instability in Guinea-Bissau, which is already seeing an increase in crimes related to drug trafficking.

In conclusion, I make an urgent appeal to the Council to work together to ensure that Guinea-Bissau does not relapse into instability and become a home base for terrorists in the Sahel.

**Mr. Singer Weisinger** (Dominican Republic) (*spoke in Spanish*): I once again would like to welcome the Foreign Minister of the Niger. In addition, we would like to thank Ms. Sori-Coulibaly and Ambassador Ronaldo Costa Filho for their briefings.

We would like to begin by congratulating the Government of Guinea-Bissau on having successfully carried out its legislative and presidential elections in 2019. The results have been described by international and civil society observers as transparent, fair and credible. The recent political developments have a direct positive impact on the long-term stability of the country. We therefore welcome the relatively secure and stable environment maintained during this period. We are awaiting a ruling of the Supreme Court of Justice

on the request for a nationwide vote recount. For the credibility of the electoral process, the investigation must conclude and its results must be implemented without delay.

We urge the Government to maintain the impartiality it has shown so far, and congratulate the military forces on their commendable work in maintaining peace by instructing the security forces to refrain from any act that violates the constitutional order.

However, we are concerned about the reported increase in provocative rhetoric, which contributes to elevated tensions and fragmentation throughout the territory, including ethnic and religious divisions. In that regard, we urge the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS) to continue initiatives such as supporting the National Council for Social Communication in its development of the code of conduct for media coverage during elections.

We also urge the Government to redouble efforts to address past human rights violations and establish a national human rights institution that is aligned with the Paris Principles. The use of force by security agencies against demonstrators is unacceptable. Their rights to free expression and association must be protected.

We recognize the training work carried out by UNIOGBIS to promote the integration of women and young people, who are crucial to building a fairer, more inclusive society. We highlight in particular the inclusion of the new gender policy, which will be integrated into all the work of the National Electoral Commission.

We note that, after the conclusion of the electoral processes, it is vital to refocus the country's priorities on the economic situation. The deterioration of public finances and the increase in public spending have heightened State fragility, directly affecting the most vulnerable populations. In that regard, food security and chronic malnutrition remain one of the greatest challenges for the people of Guinea-Bissau.

As a member of the Peacebuilding Commission, the Dominican Republic welcomes the Commission's commendable work on the ground, especially with regard to mobilizing funds, prioritizing peacebuilding objectives, bolstering the participation and inclusion of women and young people in the political process and promoting the internal reforms that the country needs to achieve lasting stability.

We applaud the Government's progress in countering drug trafficking and organized crime — both criminal activities that threaten efforts to stabilize and develop robust political and social institutions. Collaboration among the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, UNIOGBIS and INTERPOL has resulted in increased technical training, improved detection equipment and the seizure of the largest amount of cocaine in history.

In conclusion, we commend the efforts and good offices of Guinea-Bissau's regional and international partners, especially the Economic Community of West African States for its crucial support and mediation during the electoral processes held in 2019.

**Mr. Ladeb** (Tunisia) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to begin by thanking Ms. Rosine Sori-Coulibaly, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Guinea-Bissau and Head of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau. I also wish to thank Mr. Ronaldo Costa Filho, Permanent Representative of Brazil to the United Nations. I once again welcome the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Niger.

Since the Security Council meeting (see S/PV.8656) on the situation in Guinea-Bissau last November and the adoption of presidential statement S/PRST/2019/13, which emphasized the importance of making headway on the political track and conducting the presidential elections according to their scheduled dates, the situation on the whole has been stable. Tunisia therefore hopes to see the situation in Guinea-Bissau moving towards détente and an easing of current tensions, in particular following the presidential elections, which were conducted according to their scheduled dates, amid good circumstances and in a peaceful and transparent manner, as asserted by all observers.

Tunisia takes this opportunity to express its appreciation for the efforts of the various parties concerned, in particular the authorities in Guinea-Bissau. We commend the commitment of the military forces to neutrality and to provide adequate conditions conducive to holding the elections. We appreciate the efforts of the National Electoral Commission and the group of five international partners in Guinea-Bissau — the Economic Community of West African States, the United Nations, the African Union, the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries and the European Union — to ensure the holding of those

important elections in Guinea-Bissau on 24 November and 29 December 2019.

Despite the lack of clarity that prevailed following the announcement of the electoral results and the political crisis in its wake, which, if it continues, would jeopardize security and stability in the Republic of Guinea-Bissau, Tunisia commends the efforts of all the parties concerned in seeking to surmount the crisis. We also value the approach being taken by the two parties in the presidential elections in opting for legal and judicial means to determine the electoral results.

Given that the continued lack of trust among political actors in Guinea-Bissau poses a challenge, Tunisia calls upon all the parties concerned to prioritize the greater national interest and maintain calm and security, while refraining from taking any actions that could lead to escalation or jeopardizing peace and security. In that context, we commend the effective and constructive mediation role played by the Economic Community of West African States — a role it continues to play with the various actors in the Republic of Guinea-Bissau — to resolve the political crisis and ensure the best possible conditions for establishing an environment of peace and stability in this brotherly African country.

Tunisia also appreciates the efforts made both to implement the road map and to fulfil the various commitments undertaken in the Conakry Agreement, including on the holding of elections, the constitutional review and security sector reform. Those efforts will enable the authorities in Guinea-Bissau to strengthen national reconciliation, promote democratic governance and prompt further reforms in various areas, including fostering gender equality, enhancing the participation of young people, upholding human rights, spreading a culture of accountability and fostering economic and social development.

Despite the great progress achieved on the political, economic and social levels — with support from the international partners represented in Guinea-Bissau and from regional and international organizations — the country will remain under threat if we fail to effectively address the issue of drug trafficking and transnational organized crime, which continues to pose a serious threat to stability, security and development in Guinea-Bissau. In that regard, Tunisia welcomes the efforts of the authorities, with support from the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS), to strengthen monitoring along land, sea

and air borders so as to ward off those threats. We call for increased support and follow-up in the implementation of the national action plan on drug trafficking, and we promote bilateral cooperation with the United Nations and other partners to fight against this scourge.

My delegation stresses that a lack of political stability in Guinea-Bissau endangers the country and is likely to lead to further deterioration in the security situation and increased backsliding on the political track despite the progress seen in the holding of presidential and legislative elections. Lapses in this progress are likely to have serious repercussions throughout the entire region, especially with terrorists and criminal groups poised to take advantage of the situation, bolster their presence and extend their activities; lapses will also enable transnational organized crime in all its forms. As for the reconfiguration of the United Nations presence in Guinea-Bissau, in line with resolution 2458 (2019), Tunisia reiterates that it is following this issue in parallel with the improvements in the country's situation.

In conclusion, I would like to note that under Tunisia's chairmanship of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 2048 (2012), concerning Guinea-Bissau, we commend the role played by the Committee's former Chair, His Excellency Ambassador Anatolio Ndong Mba, Permanent Representative of Equatorial Guinea. We intend to build upon the progress achieved by the Committee thus far and stand ready to further the work of the Committee. We will also continue to consult and coordinate with UNIOGBIS, the members of the Committee and other actors concerned as we monitor developments in the situation and follow the progress achieved on the path towards political stability and reform.

**Mr. Schulz** (Germany): First of all, I would like to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Ms. Rosine Sori-Coulibaly, for sharing her valuable insights with us in her briefing this morning. We also thank the Permanent Representative of Brazil, His Excellency Mr. Ronaldo Costa Filho, for his briefing and his efforts in his capacity as Chair of the Guinea-Bissau configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC). We find it important to further strengthen the link between the Security Council and the Peacebuilding Commission, all the more so given the necessity of an even more prominent role for the PBC. We extend a special welcome to the Minister



for Foreign Affairs of the Niger, His Excellency Mr. Kalla Ankourao.

We commend the peaceful holding of both rounds of the presidential elections, despite the political tensions that preceded the polling. The voter turnout of more than 70 per cent is very encouraging. It is now of paramount importance that all stakeholders act responsibly and ensure a peaceful transition of power to a new president. As a first step, that requires the determination of the final results of the elections according to constitutional and democratic principles and respect for the results by all parties. We very much welcome efforts by the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) aimed at fostering dialogue, mediating between political adversaries and supporting efforts to find a way to overcome the political tensions, both in the run-up to the elections and now.

After the conclusion of the electoral cycle, it is key for all political actors to put their country and their people's interests first and to work in a collaborative manner to enact critical reforms envisioned in the Conakry Agreement and laid out in the Stability Pact. We particularly commend the inclusion of gender perspectives and the support for women's engagement in the democratic process. In that context, we also welcome the support for efforts to end impunity for gender-based crimes and human rights violations.

We remain concerned about the threats to stability posed by transnational organized crime and drug trafficking. We therefore express our support for the important work of United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and UNIOGBIS in that regard. It remains important to empower national law enforcement authorities to effectively prosecute organized crime.

We are glad to hear that the transition process is well-structured and planned. Any vacuum following the end of UNIOGBIS must be avoided. Therefore, Guinea-Bissau's close cooperation with other United Nations entities on the ground, and of regional organizations, especially ECOWAS, as well as their active involvement in the country, is crucial to avoid destabilization. In that regard, we highlight the continued importance of the cooperation of the group of five international partners. We also commend the role of the PBC country-specific configuration as well as the support provided by the Peacebuilding Fund. The

mandate renewal of UNIOGBIS this month needs to take into account the realities on the ground and should once more send a signal of our continued support for Guinea-Bissau and our commitment to efforts aimed at development and peacebuilding.

Before concluding, let me say that we also agree with the Secretary-General's recommendation to work very closely with the Government of Guinea-Bissau in order to ensure national ownership.

**Mr. Michon** (*spoke in French*) (France): I thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Ms. Rosine Sori-Coulibaly, and Ambassador Costa Filho, who chairs the Guinea-Bissau configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission, for their briefings. I would also like to welcome the presence of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Niger, which is currently chairing the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

First of all, I would like to welcome the holding of the presidential elections last November and December. After a period of great uncertainty, the conduct of the polls in peaceful conditions was a major step forward. I would like to commend the responsible attitude of all of Guinea-Bissau's civilian and military actors who made it possible to reach that stage.

These positive developments also owe much to the support of the international community in its various components, and I would like to pay tribute in particular to the States of ECOWAS, whose unfailing political, economic and military commitment has borne fruit and which, as we have heard, continues to remain very committed to supporting their regional partner. I also wish to commend the positive role of the Peacebuilding Commission, under the leadership of Ambassador Vieira, and now Ambassador Costa Filho, and the role of the Peacebuilding Fund projects in contributing to the current results.

The developments I mentioned serve to show that all the tools we have collectively deployed to respond to this crisis, including the sanctions that have been decided by the Council, have been effective. But despite the progress, the situation in Guinea-Bissau remains fragile. We are still awaiting confirmation of the results of the presidential elections by Guinea-Bissau's Supreme Court, and we hope that the electoral process will be completed as soon as possible and in accordance with the rule of law. The current situation illustrates the extent to which the process in Guinea-Bissau remains

to be consolidated. Beyond the elections, as others have said, the restoration of lasting peace and stability also requires significant progress in other areas, including the set of political reforms provided for in the Conakry Agreement of 2016, in particular the revision of the Constitution, which must now be implemented as soon as possible by the new authorities.

In that context, France supports the implementation of the transition plan for the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau that we decided in the Security Council, with a view to the Office's closure at the end of the year. However, as the transfer of the Office's various activities begins to take place, we call for the mission in support of security sector reform — which is particularly crucial for the long-term stability of the country — to be effectively taken over.

Finally, continued progress, as noted by several speakers, in the fight against organized crime, in particular drug trafficking, will require a strong and sustained commitment from the authorities of Guinea-Bissau, as well as continued support from the international community. We are therefore at a critical juncture, and the coming weeks should allow us to confirm that Guinea-Bissau is truly committed to the path of sustainable stabilization. The supporting role of the region and, more broadly, of the international community and the Council, will continue to be important in the period ahead, and the authorities of Guinea-Bissau can count on France's support for all those efforts.

**Mr. Syihab** (Indonesia): At the outset, on behalf of my delegation, let me once again warmly welcome the presence of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Niger to the Security Council. I would also like to thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Rosine Sori-Coulibaly and Ambassador Ronaldo Costa Filho for their comprehensive briefings.

As stated in the Secretary-General's latest report (S/2020/105), the completion of the electoral cycle in Guinea-Bissau is indeed a critical benchmark. Indonesia welcomes the conduct of the presidential elections, as they took place in a generally peaceful way. We would like to congratulate the people of Guinea-Bissau and express our sincere hope that the process will pave the way towards lasting stability and prosperity in the country. In that regard, I would like to highlight three points.

First, it is necessary to resolve the post-election stalemate. We urge all parties to put aside their differences and enable the peaceful transfer of power. We hope that the electoral dispute can swiftly be resolved through peaceful means so as to prevent the country from lapsing into a major political crisis. In a country that has experienced political turmoil since independence, instability has for too long hurt the economy of Guinea-Bissau and has created an environment conducive for organized crime, including drug trafficking. It is high time for all Bissau-Guineans to move away from political uncertainty, so that they can focus their energies on addressing more pressing issues, including constitutional reform and economic development.

That leads me to my second point, which is the implementation of multisectoral reform. Once the transfer of power is completed in a peaceful way, Bissau-Guinean stakeholders will have to overcome immediate challenges, ensuring political stability, the functioning of State institutions and improving the lives of the population. Poverty reduction is one of the areas that needs to be focused on, considering that more than half of the population lives below the poverty line. Another area is combating drug trafficking and organized crime, which continue to threaten the stability of Guinea-Bissau.

We are heartened by the progress achieved thus far, including the development of a national action plan on drug trafficking and organized crime, the strengthening of law enforcement capacity and the increased participation by women in the political process. The progress must be sustained and will lay a solid foundation for the future of Guinea-Bissau. We commend the work of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS), the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) and other international partners in that regard.

Thirdly, on the drawdown of UNIOGBIS, which we are gradually embarking upon, with the closure of the mission planned for the end of this year, it is important to keep in mind that the country is at a critical juncture on its path forward. Continuous engagement and support from the international community is of crucial importance for the subsequent peacebuilding and reform efforts. We welcome the development of a road map to ensure the seamless transition of the United Nations presence in Guinea-Bissau and commend the PBC for the mobilization of funds to support the United Nations

country team. I concur with the Secretary General and the Chair of the PBC country-specific configuration that the transition should not be a United Nations-centred process and that national ownership is key.

Lastly, we would like to commend the ongoing efforts of, and sustained support by, regional and international actors, including the Economic Community of West African States, the group of five international partners and the PBC, with a view to restoring peace and stability and ensuring sustainable development in the country. Moving ahead, we must ensure that the many hard-won gains will not be lost and that the international community will continue to support peacebuilding and development in Guinea-Bissau, even after the closure of UNIOGBIS.

**Ms. DeShong** (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines): We also wish to recognize and welcome the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Niger and to express our gratitude to Special Representative of the Secretary General, Ms. Rosine Sori-Coulibaly, and His Excellency Ambassador Costa Filho for their briefings.

While gradually improving, the situation in Guinea-Bissau still presents some challenges, which, if not properly addressed, may very well lead to a regression in the gains we have seen in the country over the past few years. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines congratulates former President José Mário Vaz for completing a full term in office and Guinea-Bissau for the conclusion of relatively peaceful presidential elections. Commendations are also due to members of the international community, including the group of five international partners, in particular the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), and civil society organizations, which provided valuable support during the electoral process.

As noted by Special Representative Sori-Coulibaly, the result was contested. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines conveys its support for the internal legal process currently ongoing in Guinea-Bissau in relation to the election dispute and calls on the relevant parties to respect the process and act accordingly.

We further encourage Guinea-Bissau to work, as a matter of urgency, towards the critical reforms and strategic foci outlined in the ECOWAS road map, the Conakry Agreement and the Stability Pact. We urge the political actors in Guinea-Bissau to keep their focus on the noble tasks involved in leading the country towards progress and stability, which have been entrusted to

them by their constituents. Parliament members will be required to put aside differences and work more closely with each other through a non-partisan approach in order to realize reforms in the country.

In addition to those reforms, it would be remiss of me not to mention the socioeconomic improvements required in the country. The current situation in West Africa has shown that underdeveloped communities plagued by lack of economic opportunities and poor availability of social services are those most likely to be targeted by criminal and radical elements. We have observed in the report of the Secretary-General (S/2020/105) that transnational organized crime, mainly drug trafficking, exists in Guinea-Bissau. We welcome the strategic national action plan on drug trafficking and transnational organized crime, developed by the country with the assistance of United Nations agencies, particularly the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. We also call on the international community to continue its support for Guinea-Bissau as the country continues to work on peacebuilding and sustainable development. We further call on the Peacebuilding Commission to continue to serve as a platform to mobilize such support.

Finally, we wish to thank the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS) for its commendable service in Guinea-Bissau during the period under review. As the Office approaches the mandated timeline for its closure, as stipulated in resolution 2458 (2019), it has made tremendous strides towards the three-phase drawdown. We welcome the \$4 million mobilized by the Peacebuilding Fund to facilitate the United Nations transition and the seamless transfer of UNIOGBIS's residual mandated tasks to other United Nations agencies and partners. We were also particularly encouraged by the outreach efforts undertaken by UNIOGBIS to bring greater attention of the drawdown to States and entities in the region, which we also see as having an important role in filling the void that will be left by UNIOGBIS.

**Mr. Zhang Dianbin** (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China welcomes the Foreign Minister of the Niger to today's meeting.

We listened carefully to the briefings by Special Representative Sori-Coulibaly and Ambassador Costa Filho.

We have noted the Secretary-General's report on the developments in Guinea-Bissau and the activities

of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS) (S/2020/105). The National Assembly of Guinea-Bissau adopted the Government's policy programme last October, and two rounds of presidential elections were held smoothly at the end of last year and early this year. Political stability in the country was maintained during that period, which China was pleased to see. We highly commend the positive role by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and countries of the region. We have also noted that there remains controversy at the domestic level regarding the election results. We hope that all parties in the country will act in the interest of the country's peace and stability, strengthen dialogue and coordination and resolve the differences appropriately in order to ensure the smooth completion of the election process and maintain security and stability in the country.

China stands for African solutions to African problems. We hope that all parties in the country will consolidate the hard-won positive momentum, continue to implement the Conakry Agreement and the ECOWAS six-point road map and vigorously advance reforms with a view to improving people's livelihoods and promoting the country's development and stability. We call upon the international community to lend tangible support to Guinea-Bissau in combating drug trafficking and transnational organized crime. China supports the people of Guinea-Bissau in exploring a development path that fits their national conditions. A development perspective must be incorporated into conflict prevention efforts. The international community must assist the country in its capacity-building, while giving priority to such issues as poverty eradication, education, health care and infrastructure with a view to achieving sustainable development and lasting peace and stability. UNIOGBIS and the Peacebuilding Commission can play a greater role in that regard.

China supports the African Union, ECOWAS and other regional and subregional organizations and countries in the region in continuing their constructive role. We call on UNIOGBIS to strengthen coordination with ECOWAS, the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel and other United Nations agencies, to respect the national sovereignty and aspirations of the country and, on that basis, to lend tailored support and assistance to the country in its efforts towards peace and development. China will continue to support the work

of UNIOGBIS, including its phased restructuring and transfer of responsibilities as mandated by resolution 2458 (2019). We hope that UNIOGBIS will enhance its cooperation with the national Government and fully heed the Government's opinions to ensure a seamless transfer of responsibilities and maximize the benefits of its work for the people of Guinea-Bissau.

**Mr. Matjila** (South Africa): I thank you, Mr. President, for convening this meeting, one year after the Security Council visited Guinea-Bissau, where it had an opportunity to interact with Ms. Sori-Coulibaly. We join others in welcoming the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Cooperation, African Integration and Nigeriens Abroad and are mindful that the Niger is the current Chair of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). We thank Ms. Sori-Coulibaly for her presence and her update on the developments of the past 12 months. We further welcome His Excellency Ambassador Ronaldo Costa Filho and appreciate the work of the Guinea-Bissau configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission.

I would like to focus my observations on three issues, namely, political developments, transnational organized crime and the implementation of the mandate of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS).

First, with regard to political developments, my delegation would like to join other Council members in congratulating the people of Guinea-Bissau on the presidential elections, which were carried out in a free, fair and credible manner. That is a positive milestone, especially the fulfilment of the electoral cycle. South Africa is confident that this will put the country on a trajectory towards stability and prosperity. We also call on all the parties in Guinea-Bissau to exercise calm and restraint in response to the recent tensions around the election results and to allow the legal process to take its course as the current impasse is overcome.

Inclusivity is paramount as the country moves forward. The participation of women and gender equality remain critical issues that should be addressed. Similarly, the engagement of youth in the political sphere should be prioritized. The demographic dividend should be harnessed to its full potential in order for the country to attain sustainable peace and development. Similarly, South Africa commends the strong leadership of ECOWAS, under the Foreign Minister of the Niger, and its support of the mediation



efforts to further the aspirations of the citizens of Guinea-Bissau. We urge the leaders of Guinea-Bissau to pursue the spirit of cooperation with ECOWAS by fully implementing the reform agenda as stipulated in the Conakry Agreement. That road map highlights the need for constitutional reforms, inclusive political dialogue and national reconciliation processes to be implemented. Furthermore, the role of the international community has been critical in supporting Guinea-Bissau in the electoral and peace processes. We urge the international community to continue its strong support so that Guinea-Bissau may achieve socioeconomic development and build an inclusive society.

Secondly, our delegation remains concerned about the threat that transnational organized crime poses for Guinea-Bissau and the region. We support the recommendations contained in the Secretary-General's report, which states that

“[t]he strengthening of land, maritime and air border control is critical in confronting this threat.”  
(S/2020/105, para. 89)

In that regard, we commend the efforts being undertaken, in partnership with UNIOGBIS, to provide strategic and technical advice and to support the Government of Guinea-Bissau in combating drug trafficking and transnational organized crime, in close cooperation with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. It is important that the requisite support be provided in order to avoid fuelling terroristic activity in the region.

Thirdly, and lastly, South Africa supports a responsible drawdown, with due consideration for the situation on the ground, so as to avoid the reversal of the significant progress that has been registered so far. We furthermore support the implementation of the transition plan for the gradual drawdown and transfer of tasks to the United Nations country team, the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel and international partners with a view to a prospective completion by 31 December.

**Mr. Hunter** (United States of America): I thank the Special Representative for her briefing and her tireless efforts to further peace and security in Guinea-Bissau. We also extend our thanks and a warm welcome to Ambassador Costa Filho as he takes up his new role here in New York.

The United States commends Guinea-Bissau for having held peaceful first-round and run-off elections in December, with the help of the international community. Free, fair and transparent elections are the cornerstone of democracy, and we are encouraged by how far Guinea-Bissau has come in empowering its citizens to choose their own leaders. No matter the outcome of the Supreme Court ruling, the United States will continue to support democratic institutions and the rule of law in Guinea-Bissau. As a friend and as a partner, the United States looks forward to working with the President-elect to help the country carry out its reform agenda, advance peace and security, address corruption and narcotics trafficking, strengthen democratic governance, and spur economic growth and development. We also look forward to continuing to work with the Special Representative, the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS), the African Union, the European Union, the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries and the Economic Community of West African States on these shared priorities. Each has played a critical role in moderating Guinea-Bissau's electoral process.

The United States is also concerned by the drug trafficking and transnational organized crime that threaten stability in Guinea-Bissau and in the broader region. We welcome the opportunity to work with UNIOGBIS and with the people of Guinea-Bissau to prevent the spread of these destructive operations. We recognize that UNIOGBIS is facilitating valuable programming in support of counter-trafficking efforts in Guinea-Bissau, and we underscore the need for the United Nations to continue this important work, even as UNIOGBIS draws down and the United Nations country team assumes additional responsibilities. We continue to support the proposal of the Secretary-General to conclude UNIOGBIS by the end of 2020 and are pleased to hear that the schedule for withdrawal remains in place.

**Mr. Jürgenson** (Estonia): I thank the briefers for their insightful overviews of the latest developments in Guinea-Bissau.

We were encouraged to see that the presidential elections in Guinea-Bissau were held in a generally peaceful atmosphere. However, we urge the parties to refrain from using inflammatory rhetoric and also using potential tensions in society for their own political gains.

It is important that the final confirmation of the results of the 2019 presidential elections be announced soon. There is a clear need to create conditions for trust between the political actors and to move forward with the necessary economic and social reforms.

We welcome the timely and decisive engagement of the Economic Community of West African States and the African Union at the end of last year to prevent the deterioration of the political situation in Guinea-Bissau and support their continued engagement in the matter.

The participation of women and youth in reform processes and peacebuilding activities is of crucial importance. We are glad that a high level of participation of women in the electoral process was achieved and urge the Government of Guinea-Bissau to further integrate and implement gender aspects in its policies.

Estonia supports the work of Special Representative of the Secretary-General Sori-Coulibaly and the planned activities of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS), including the phased drawdown as set out in the current mission's mandate. It is very important that while the mission is planning for the transfer of its tasks to the United Nations country team, the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel and other partners, a holistic approach to peacebuilding activities be taken. The Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Fund can play an important supportive role in this regard.

**Mr. Dihn** (Viet Nam): At the outset, on behalf of my delegation, I would like to warmly welcome His Excellency the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Niger to this meeting. I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his report on the situation in Guinea-Bissau (S/2020/105) and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Ms. Rosine Sori-Coulibaly, and His Excellency Ronaldo Costa Filho, Permanent Representative of Brazil, for their comprehensive statements.

My delegation wishes to make the following observations.

First, we commend the efforts made by national stakeholders and welcome the generally peaceful conduct of the presidential elections held in 2019 in Guinea-Bissau. We also commend the work of international partners, the United Nations, the African Union, the Economic Community of West

African States (ECOWAS), the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries and the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS) for their support and mediation efforts in ensuring that the elections took place as scheduled.

Secondly, we took note of the recent political developments in Guinea-Bissau. We look forward to the completion of the electoral cycle and the confirmation of the election results by the relevant organs in Guinea-Bissau. It is important that the relevant parties resolve their differences within the constitutional and electoral-law framework and work together to implement and ensure a peaceful implementation of the election results once announced.

Thirdly, we call on the future President of Guinea-Bissau, members of Parliament and all concerned parties to work in a collaborative manner to seize this opportunity to move forward towards national unity and to enact the critical reforms envisioned in the Conakry Agreement, the Stability Pact and the ECOWAS road map. We stress the importance of intensifying the fight against drug trafficking and transnational crime and of strengthening bilateral cooperation with the United Nations and other partners in addressing those challenges. We emphasize the need for the protection of civilians and increased participation of women and youth in the decision-making process and development course of Guinea-Bissau.

Fourthly, we reiterate our position in support of the implementation of resolution 2458 (2019), the presidential statement issued on 11 February on the situation in West Africa and the Sahel (S/PRST/2020/2), and the final communiqué of the ECOWAS Extraordinary Summit held on 8 November 2019.

Fifthly, we call on the United Nations, UNIOGBIS, the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS), ECOWAS and the future Government of Guinea-Bissau to work closely together in implementing and completing the subsequent phases, leading to the transfer of UNIOGBIS's residual peacebuilding activities and its gradual drawdown and planned closure by 31 December 2020.

In conclusion, Viet Nam reaffirms its commitment to work closely with the United Nations, the African Union, ECOWAS, the future Government of Guinea-Bissau and the relevant parties in sustaining peace, security and sustainable development in Guinea-Bissau.

**Mr. Clay** (United Kingdom): Let me start by thanking Special Representative of the Secretary-General Sori-Coulibaly and Ambassador Filho for their briefings, which set out clearly the achievements that Guinea-Bissau has made, but also some of the challenges that remain.

I would also like to welcome the Foreign Minister of the Niger to the Council. As current Chairman of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Niger has a vital role to play in supporting the democratic process in Guinea-Bissau.

The peaceful holding of legislative and presidential elections in 2019 were significant steps forward in Guinea-Bissau's political transition. We commend the Guinea-Bissau authorities and people on this progress, and we welcome the ongoing neutrality of Guinea-Bissau's military and security forces in the political process.

We are concerned, however, by the political instability that we have seen following the election. The uncertainty that this creates risks undermining the democratic process and damaging public confidence in the electoral system. We call on all political actors to work together to resolve the situation as quickly as possible so that a new Government can be inaugurated and focus on the important work of consolidating democracy and providing development and stability for its people, as per the 2016 Conakry Agreement and the ECOWAS road map.

The United Kingdom appreciates the supporting role played in Guinea-Bissau by the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS), the Peacebuilding Commission, the United Nations country team and other United Nations bodies and offices, which have helped build a more robust and inclusive political environment. We thank Ms. Sori-Coulibaly for her work and will continue to provide our full support to her in the discharge of her mandate.

The United Kingdom also welcomes the key role played by ECOWAS and the group of five international partners in holding political stakeholders in Guinea-Bissau to account. We trust that they will remain as engaged and vigilant throughout the full implementation of the Conakry Agreement.

Given the recent progress, the United Kingdom supports the drawdown of UNIOGBIS by December

2020, and we are confident the steps are under way to ensure a smooth transition. It is important that key tasks be handed over to United Nations agencies or other actors, such as the United Nations country team, with respect to development, and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, with respect to drugs trafficking and transnational crime, and that those agencies have sufficient resources to take on the tasks.

As UNIOGBIS draws down, the good offices of Mr. Chambas, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel, will be increasingly important in accompanying Guinea-Bissau on the path to greater political stability. The Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Fund will also play a helpful role in ensuring the continuity of support for peacebuilding tasks. It is vital that political stakeholders in Guinea-Bissau continue to engage positively with the United Nations good offices and sustain their commitment to the reform agenda until the Conakry Agreement has been fully implemented.

In conclusion, we hope that the political progress achieved in recent years can be maintained to carry Guinea-Bissau out of its past into a stronger, more stable and more democratic future. The primary responsibility for delivering that lies with the Bissau-Guinean Government. The United Kingdom, along with the international community, will continue to monitor the situation and work with the Government in support of that objective.

**Mr. Repkin** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian Federation welcomes the presence of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Niger at today's briefing. We thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Guinea-Bissau, Ms. Rosine Sori-Coulibaly, and the Chair of the Guinea-Bissau configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission, the Permanent Representative of Brazil, Mr. Ronaldo Costa Filho, for the information they have provided.

We are pleased at the fact that the elections in Guinea-Bissau took place within the legally mandated timeline in accordance with relevant standards of democracy and transparency, for which it was highly commended by regional and international observers. We note the special role played by the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS) and the Economic Community of West African States in the preparation of the elections.

As is rightly noted in the report of the Secretary General (S/2020/105), the conclusion of the electoral cycle could be a milestone in the modern history of Guinea-Bissau. We trust that with those elections the country will be able to turn the page on an era of protracted political tumult, thereby creating conditions that would enable the country to make a peaceful shift towards socioeconomic development. Such path can be followed only if national consensus is made a priority. At this critical juncture, we call upon all social and political forces to act responsibly, in line with national interests, facilitating prompt resolution of disputes.

We believe that the time has come for addressing the issue of lifting the Security Council sanctions against Guinea-Bissau. The sanctions have long been obsolete in nature. The current situation is a far cry from the events of 2012. As the recent elections have again shown, the armed forces are staying out of politics. We can therefore observe that the sanctions achieved their objective long ago. Maintaining the sanctions, in the light of the drawdown of the United Nations presence in the country, is all the more bewildering.

As was the case in the past, we believe that the restructuring of UNIOGBIS is necessary and should be carried out in a phased manner in line with the timeline set out in resolution 2458 (2019). By the end of 2020, when UNIOGBIS is to conclude its operations in Guinea-Bissau, the United Nations country team should have secured the relevant mechanisms and tools not merely to facilitate development in Guinea-Bissau but also to provide meaningful assistance to the country in countering such challenges as drug trafficking and corruption and in fine-tuning the institutions of State governance.

**The President** (*spoke in French*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of Belgium.

Belgium welcomes the holding of the presidential elections, which took place without major incident and with a high level of participation. However, the political arena continues to be characterized by tensions and a climate of mistrust, which is worrisome. Let us not forget that political stability is essential for socioeconomic recovery and the fight against trafficking. The time has come for national political actors to play a positive and constructive role. As we await clarity on the final result of the presidential elections, Belgium calls for dialogue and restraint so as to avoid further tension

in the situation. For that reason, the sanctions regime remains relevant, although certain adjustments could be envisaged in the near future.

With regard to the future of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS), we support the phased transition plan provided for in the resolutions adopted by the Security Council. However, it is important that the transition take place as calmly and as painlessly as possible for the country: the departure of UNIOGBIS should not imply any abandonment of Guinea-Bissau by the international community. That is why Belgium welcomes the increased engagement already undertaken by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel.

Strengthening the country team and, in particular, the capacity of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime is essential. I welcome the progress already made in that direction and hope that it will continue. In the immediate future, Belgium supports the coordinated action of UNIOGBIS and the group of five international partners on the ground.

The monitoring of the situation by the Guinea-Bissau configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission and the support of the Peacebuilding Fund are positive. It will be important that that support be continued in the new phase opening up in Guinea-Bissau.

I will conclude by expressing the full support of Belgium for the work of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Ms. Sori-Coulibaly, and of UNIOGBIS as a whole.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I give the floor to the representative of Guinea-Bissau.

**Mrs. Pinto Lopes D'Alva** (Guinea-Bissau): I thank you, Mr. President, for inviting my delegation to the Security Council and for giving me the floor.

First of all, I would like to congratulate Belgium on its assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of February 2020. We wish the Council success in its deliberations.

My delegation would like to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary General for Guinea-Bissau, Ms. Rosine Sori-Coulibaly, for her briefing on



the developments in the country, for the activities of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS) and for all her dedication since her arrival in Guinea-Bissau last September.

I would like also to thank His Excellency Ambassador Ronaldo Costa Filho, Permanent Representative of Brazil and Chair of the Guinea-Bissau configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission, for his briefing on the developments in the situation in Guinea-Bissau. I would also like to express my country's sincere appreciation for the personal engagement of his predecessor, former Permanent Representative of Brazil, Ambassador Mauro Vieira, whose strong advocacy in favour of consolidating peace in Guinea-Bissau over the past few years was crucial.

As we just heard in the very comprehensive briefing just delivered by the Special Representative, since the previous meeting of the Security Council on Guinea-Bissau (see S/PV.8656), a lot has happened in the country, and many challenges remain for the consolidation of peace. However, with the continued work of the United Nations on the ground and the fundamental role of the Peacebuilding Commission in bringing together the efforts of the international community in support and assistance to Guinea-Bissau, we cherish the hope that sustainable peace in the country is achievable. We appreciate the important role of the Peacebuilding Fund and its funded projects, which allowed for the participation of women and youth in major political processes, including in the elections and all other relevant peacebuilding efforts in the country.

After the general elections of 2014, when hopes were high for Guinea-Bissau, the country entered into another period of political and institutional instability in 2015, with a consequent blockade of institutions that has caused the normal functioning of the State apparatus to deteriorate.

With the important and unique role played by Guinea-Bissau's civil society, including women and youth, with the support of the international community in the process, an understanding among national political actors was finally reached and the Government was formed, which allowed the legislative elections to be held on 10 March 2019 and presidential elections on 24 November, with the second round held on 29 December 2019.

Despite all the political tensions and difficulties in 2019, following the March legislative elections a Government led by Prime Minister Aristides Gomes of the African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cabo Verde, the party with the largest number of seats in Parliament, was formed, and despite the Government programme already adopted by the National People's Assembly, the country is still experiencing a series of challenges that require special attention and a dedicated presence by the United Nations.

As all present are aware, elections in Guinea-Bissau always take place in a peaceful environment, and this time was no different. As usual, the people went to the polls in an orderly and peaceful manner. Although the results of the second round have been challenged and the process is still pending before the Supreme Court of Justice, the population nevertheless has remained calm and is patiently awaiting the final ruling of the Court, an organ of national sovereignty. The people of Guinea-Bissau deserve a clear and positive closure to the process so that they can see the light of hope for the future of their children.

In that regard, the Government of Guinea-Bissau welcomes the positions of the United Nations, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the African Union on the need for a pronouncement from the country's competent judicial office on the post-election crisis, because we believe that only with free, fair and transparent elections will we be able to strengthen the democratic rule of law in our country so that the sovereign will of the people can prevail.

We are sure that by 15 February — the date recommended by the ECOWAS extraordinary conference on the political situation in Guinea-Bissau — the Supreme Court of Justice will issue its final decision on the election in accordance with the Constitution of the Republic, so that the country can return to constitutional normality.

We are convinced that the international community and our development partners will continue patiently to monitor the political situation in our country. In that connection, allow me to reiterate our thanks to the members of the group of five international partners in Guinea-Bissau, in particular the United Nations and our subregional organization, ECOWAS, which has provided unceasing support in the process of consolidating peace and social and economic

development in Guinea-Bissau, including through the presence of the ECOWAS Mission in Guinea-Bissau.

We thank the United Nations, the African Union, ECOWAS, the European Union, the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries, the International Organization of la Francophonie and our bilateral and multilateral partners and friends for their financial and technical support for the realization of the elections. Their engagement in the preparations for and the holding of the elections is very much appreciated by our Government. We ask that they remain attentive to ensuring a peaceful conclusion of the process by the relevant national organs of sovereignty.

We are aware of the structural changes, the drawdown and the new configuration of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS), as well as the planned withdrawal. However, we believe that the continued involvement of the United Nations, through the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel and the Organization's agencies, funds and programmes, remains necessary for the strengthening the institutions of the Republic,

implementing the necessary reforms and promoting sustainable development so as to assure the people of Guinea-Bissau that the United Nations is there to help us consolidate our democracy and strengthen our State institutions.

Let us remain positive that after the electoral process has finally been settled, there will be a new beginning for Guinea-Bissau and that the United Nations, with a new, reconfigured mandate, will have a chance to focus more closely on helping us with the development agenda. Only with sustainable peace and strong institutions can we achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. Guinea-Bissau and its people deserve a new beginning and a new chapter. We are counting on the Council's continued support and that of the international community as a whole.

**The President** (*spoke in French*): There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers. I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

*The meeting rose at 11.35 a.m.*