



Security Council

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Report of the Security Council mission to Côte d'Ivoire and Guinea-Bissau

I. Introduction

1. In his letter to the Secretary-General dated 15 January 2019, the President of the Security Council indicated that the Council had decided to send a mission to West Africa (Côte d'Ivoire and Guinea-Bissau). The terms of reference for the visit were subsequently approved by the Council (see annex I). The mission, co-led by the representatives of Côte d'Ivoire and Equatorial Guinea (the latter of whom served as President of the Security Council in the month of February 2019), comprised representatives of all current members of the Council (see annex II).

II. Côte d'Ivoire

2. On 14 and 15 February 2019, the Security Council undertook its first visit to Côte d'Ivoire since the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) completed its mandate in 2017. The main objective of the visit was to take stock of the transition processes in Côte d'Ivoire and in Liberia and to express support for the conflict prevention and peacebuilding efforts of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS) and of the United Nations country teams in the Mano River subregion.

3. The Security Council met the Vice-President of Côte d'Ivoire, Daniel Kablan Duncan, and the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Marcel Amon-Tanoh, and took part in a round table on the transition from peacekeeping to peace consolidation in Côte d'Ivoire and in Liberia, which was also attended by the resident coordinators for the two countries.

Meeting with the Vice-President and the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Côte d'Ivoire

4. The Vice-President Duncan expressed appreciation for the work of the United Nations, in particular UNOCI, for peace and stability in Côte d'Ivoire. He suggested that the case of Côte d'Ivoire be used as a model for countries making the transition from peacekeeping to peacebuilding. He stated that the leadership of the President, Alassane Ouattara, national ownership of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and security sector reform processes, efforts to foster national reconciliation, an effective partnership with UNOCI and close collaboration with neighbouring countries were key factors that contributed to the successful transition process in Côte d'Ivoire.



5. He noted the impressive economic performance of the country, with an 8 per cent rate of growth and efforts to improve the socioeconomic conditions of the population with the adoption of an education and health-focused programme for the period 2019–2020 (valued at approximately \$2.8 million). He underlined the good performance of Côte d'Ivoire in the area of governance. He stated that the political situation in West Africa was stable and encouraged the United Nations to increase support to security efforts, notably the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel. Lastly, he reiterated the country's commitment to supporting the work of the United Nations in the areas of peacekeeping and conflict prevention.

6. The Minister for Foreign Affairs thanked the Security Council for the visit. He referred to President Ouattara's recent briefing to the Council in December 2018, highlighting the progress achieved since the closure of UNOCI, noted the good cooperation between the Government of Côte d'Ivoire and UNOCI and thanked the United Nations and the international community at large for the support provided during the electoral process and post-electoral crisis in 2010–2011. He noted an improvement in the socioeconomic conditions of the population, underlined the 8 per cent rate of economic growth and stressed that the crisis was over in the country. Lastly, he referred to Côte d'Ivoire's successful presidency of the Council in 2018.

7. The Permanent Representative of Equatorial Guinea to the United Nations, Anatolio Ndong Mba, as co-lead of the mission, stated that the visit was aimed at taking stock of the achievements of Côte d'Ivoire since the closure of UNOCI. He said that the country was an economic driving force in the region and expressed the hope that it would remain a model of peace consolidation. He welcomed progress towards achieving lasting peace and economic prosperity in the country and renewed the Security Council's strong commitment to the sovereignty and integrity of Côte d'Ivoire. He underlined the need to strengthen national reconciliation and dialogue and to continue efforts in the areas of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and security sector reform to prevent the reoccurrence of conflict in Côte d'Ivoire and the Mano River Basin. He commended the improved security and humanitarian situation in the country. He stressed the primary responsibility of the Government of Côte d'Ivoire to promote stability and commended efforts to combat terrorism and all forms of illicit trafficking. He also stressed the need for Côte d'Ivoire to ensure a credible electoral process in 2020 for the consolidation of peace and stability in the country. Lastly, he praised the important role played by UNOWAS in working with Member States and regional organizations to tackle threats to peace and security in the subregion and reiterated the Council's support for Côte d'Ivoire.

8. The Minister for Foreign Affairs referred to recent political developments in the country, such as the establishment of a new unified ruling party called the Rassemblement des houpouëtistes pour la démocratie et la paix, the beginning of a political dialogue on the review of the Independent Electoral Commission and the resignation of the Speaker of the National Assembly, Guillaume Soro. Regarding the latter, the Minister clarified that, by deciding not to join the Rassemblement, Mr. Soro was no longer a member of the parliamentary majority and therefore had to resign. He also gave assurances that the upcoming presidential election would provide the opportunity to consolidate democracy in Côte d'Ivoire.

9. The Vice-President informed the mission that 93 per cent of former combatants had been reintegrated. For his part, the Minister for Foreign Affairs noted three elements that contributed to the success of the Ivorian disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process: (a) the commitment of President Ouattara; (b) a clear programme designed by the Government, which provided training and work opportunities for those who chose to leave the army; and (c) national funding. In that regard, he highlighted that the Government had financed 72 per cent of the programme over a three-year period. With regard to security sector reform, he noted

that emphasis had been placed on the need to strengthen the armed and police forces, including through training and the provision of equipment. He explained that the security sector reform process was ongoing.

10. In response to the queries of the members of the Security Council mission, the Vice-President stated that national reconciliation was one of the priorities of President Ouattara, along with peace, security and economic recovery. He informed the mission of the establishment of two commissions, in 2011 and 2015, as well as the creation of a dedicated ministry in 2016 to foster national reconciliation. He also referred to the amnesty granted in August 2018 to 800 individuals, including the former First Lady, Simone Gbagbo, convicted of crimes related to the post-election crisis of 2010–2011. He underlined efforts to identify and compensate the victims of the crisis, with a 10 billion CFA franc fund allocated to the process. He mentioned that the Government had identified key partners to accompany the process of national reconciliation, including traditional leaders, youth groups and civil society organizations, and noted the successful holding of local and regional elections in 2018, notwithstanding incidents, and underlined efforts to foster national dialogue, supported by the inclusive review of the Independent Electoral Commission, for peaceful and credible elections in 2020.

11. The Minister for Foreign Affairs noted the efforts of President Ouattara to create the conditions for continuous dialogue and facilitate the return of the 2010–2011 post-electoral crisis refugees. He stressed that national reconciliation was a long process and called upon partners to give Côte d'Ivoire time to achieve more results.

12. The Vice-President highlighted that the improvement in women's living conditions was one of the priorities of President Ouattara. He underlined the emphasis placed on gender equality in the Constitution, which was adopted in 2016, and mentioned initiatives for women's empowerment, including the creation of a women and development fund to support women entrepreneurs in Côte d'Ivoire. The Minister for Foreign Affairs added that Côte d'Ivoire had created a roster of qualified women who are eligible to work in the public administration.

13. The Vice-President informed the mission of collaboration with subregional organizations, namely, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the West African Economic and Monetary Union, as well as bilateral partners, notably France, in the efforts to combat terrorism. He recalled the serious security challenges in the Sahel and the Lake Chad Basin, as well as support given by Côte d'Ivoire to security efforts, including through the deployment of 650 Ivoirian troops with the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali. He called for effective support for the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel.

14. The Minister for Foreign Affairs referred to the impact of the Libyan crisis on Mali and other West African countries and called upon the international community to redouble its efforts to achieve stability and lasting peace in Libya. He emphasized that prevention was essential in the efforts to combat terrorism and noted the establishment of regional and international intelligence-sharing mechanisms.

15. The Vice-President noted efforts to combat impunity, the establishment of a national commission on human rights and the reform of the justice system. For his part, the Minister for Foreign Affairs reiterated the commitment of Côte d'Ivoire to respecting and promoting human rights.

16. In response to a question on how Côte d'Ivoire was dealing with the flows of migrants from West Africa, the Minister for Foreign Affairs stated that 40 per cent of the 22 million people living in Côte d'Ivoire were foreigners, emphasizing that such diversity was an asset for the country. He recognized that Côte d'Ivoire was also a

country of transit for illegal migration flows and stressed that it had adopted policies to facilitate the return of Ivorian migrants who had crossed borders illegally.

17. With regard to Africa cooperation, the Vice-President reiterated the support given by Côte d'Ivoire to the establishment of free trade areas and a single African market. The Minister for Foreign Affairs said that Côte d'Ivoire supported the adoption of a single West African currency.

18. In response to questions by Security Council members about the role of Côte d'Ivoire in the subregion, the Minister for Foreign Affairs highlighted the important role played by President Ouattara, as ECOWAS Chair, from 2012 to 2014, to defuse tensions in Mali. He also mentioned that the country was an important economic power in the region.

19. The Vice-President stressed that the return of internally displaced persons and refugees was a major priority for the Government, mentioning that 280,000 of 300,000 refugees had returned to date, with 250,000 coming from Liberia. He hoped that all refugees would return to Côte d'Ivoire by 2020. He added that Côte d'Ivoire had focused on education, with the establishment of new universities in Abidjan and the main regions. He also called upon the Security Council to raise the awareness of partners on the important economic role of Côte d'Ivoire in the subregion. The Minister for Foreign Affairs mentioned efforts to modernize the country through the establishment of processing industries in the coming years and called upon investors to support the country's development efforts. He underlined the objective of Côte d'Ivoire to become an emerging country by 2030.

Round-table discussion on the transition from peacekeeping to peace consolidation in Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia

20. During the round-table discussion on the transition from peacekeeping to peace consolidation, the resident coordinators of Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia shared their experiences in those countries' transitions.

21. The resident coordinator for Côte d'Ivoire stated that transition planning from peacekeeping to peace consolidation had begun in 2015, two years before the closure of UNOCI. He noted that the process had been the result of a coordinated approach between UNOCI, the Government of Côte d'Ivoire, international partners and the United Nations country team. Emphasis had been placed on the identification of residual challenges, which were incorporated into the 2016–2020 national development plan and the United Nations programmatic framework for Côte d'Ivoire for the period 2017–2020. The Government subsequently developed a national programme and strategy for reconciliation and social cohesion for 2016–2020. He underlined that the country team had identified social cohesion and national reconciliation, rule of law, gender-based violence and community safety as priorities, and explained that \$500 million had been needed for the transition process, adding that the country team had finalized a transition programme at a cost of \$50 million. He recognized the important financial contribution of the Peacebuilding Fund (\$1.8 million), which had significantly contributed to a smooth transition in Côte d'Ivoire. He also noted that additional funding for the transition programme had been provided through the United Nations regular budget (\$2.8 million), the Government of Côte d'Ivoire (\$10 million) and bilateral partners (\$25 million). The resident coordinator stated that the United Nations programme for the country had been developed in cooperation with the Government. While noting the efforts of the Government towards enhancing the condition of women, the resident coordinator highlighted major challenges to gender equality, recalling that only 16 per cent of members of Government and 9 per cent of members of Parliament were women. He identified land conflicts and issues related to the management of natural resources as

remaining root causes of conflict in Côte d'Ivoire. Referring to the local and provincial elections held in December 2018, the resident coordinator stressed that difficulties had emerged because of a shift in political alliances and highlighted United Nations efforts to defuse tensions.

22. The resident coordinator for Liberia noted the attention given by the international community to Liberia and added that the new administration was trying to build on the successful exit of the peacekeeping mission. He noted that Liberia had not yet fully addressed the root causes of conflict, including issues of accountability and reconciliation. He listed the political, security, social and economic fragilities of the country. In that regard, he noted the low level of decentralization and the weak economy, with a 1.4 per cent rate of economic growth. He added that Liberia was vulnerable to security threats since the departure of the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), with increased criminal activities in the Gulf of Guinea, and stated that the Government lacked the capacity to monitor the country's long coastal line. He highlighted the different steps followed by the United Nations country team in Liberia to manage the transition process. The capacity mapping exercise of the country team and the comprehensive review of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) office had resulted in the recalibration of the United Nations presence in Liberia. He recalled the establishment, following the closure of UNMIL, of a multi-partner trust fund focusing on peace consolidation and peacebuilding and informed the mission that \$19.3 million had been mobilized for the fund. He also reported on the establishment of a political, peace and development unit in the office of the resident coordinator and the establishment of a standalone office of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), and stressed the need for a continued United Nations presence in countries making the transition from peacekeeping to peace consolidation in order to deal with residual issues following the closure of peacekeeping operations. He confirmed that the work of the President of Liberia was very much guided by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. He underlined the importance of the country team mapping exercise in Liberia and agreed that it could be a good tool to lay the groundwork for the transition from peacekeeping to peace consolidation. He highlighted the effective role of the Peacebuilding Commission in support of Liberia and mentioned discussions with UNOWAS to find ways to revive relations with the Mano River Union. Referring to United Nations reforms, he said that the delinking of the resident coordinator and the UNDP resident representative was not very visible in Liberia, given that the two had close working relations. He identified three main drivers of conflict in the country, namely, land issues, respect for human rights and the issue of accountability for crimes committed during the civil war. With regard to regional cooperation, he mentioned the good collaboration with the African Union and ECOWAS on prevention and mediation. He called upon the Security Council to ensure that decisions to close or draw down peacekeeping operations were carefully adopted, effectively support United Nations operations before, during and after the closure of peacekeeping missions, and be aware that the shift from assessed contributions to voluntary support affected operations/programmes on the ground. Lastly, he called upon members of the Council to continue to look at Liberia through "a lens of prevention and not of celebration".

Observations/key messages

23. The Security Council delegation welcomed the progress achieved by Côte d'Ivoire in terms of stability and economic growth. They renewed their support to the country and emphasized the need for national authorities to continue to consolidate democracy through free, fair, credible and peaceful elections in 2020. They also called upon the authorities to enhance national reconciliation and take the steps necessary to engage all stakeholders.

24. The round table provided an opportunity to draw lessons from the transition processes in Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia. It helped to identify potential areas in which strengthened support was required from the Security Council, including in terms of human and financial resources to address residual challenges following the departure of peacekeeping missions. It also helped to identify some useful steps to successfully manage the transition from peacekeeping to peace consolidation, including the carrying out of capacity mapping exercises of the United Nations country teams and the identification of residual tasks that would have to be addressed following the closure of a peacekeeping mission.

III. Guinea-Bissau

25. The Security Council visited Guinea-Bissau on 15 and 16 February 2019. Council members held a number of meetings in Bissau with government officials, the leadership of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS), the Group of Five international organizations represented in Guinea-Bissau (the African Union, the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries, ECOWAS, the European Union and the United Nations), the United Nations country team and the diplomatic community, among others. The focus of discussions was the current political and security situation in the country ahead of the legislative elections planned for 10 March 2019 and the progress made in the implementation of the Conakry Agreement on the Implementation of the Economic Community of West African States Road Map for the Resolution of the Political Crisis in Guinea-Bissau. The visit provided an opportunity for the Council to stress the need for the legislative elections to be held on 10 March 2019 as scheduled and for the presidential election to be held in 2019, in line with the legal framework.

Meeting with the Prime Minister and key Cabinet members

26. In the evening of 15 February, members of the Security Council met the Prime Minister, Aristedes Gomes, and key Cabinet members, namely, the Minister of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers and Parliamentary Affairs, Agnelo Regalla, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, João Ribeiro Butiam C6, the Permanent Representative of Guinea-Bissau to the United Nations, Fernando Delfim Da Silva, and the Director-General of External Policy at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, João Soares Da Gama. At the outset of the meeting, Mr. Regalla expressed his appreciation to the United Nations, in particular the Council, for its continued attention, while hoping for its continued support to help to break the cycle of constitutional crises affecting the country. He then introduced the government delegation.

27. Mr. Ndong Mba explained that the visit came at a crucial time, as the country prepared for the legislative elections, and on the eve of the start of the election campaign period. He welcomed the signing of the Stability Pact on 14 February, describing it as an important provision of the Conakry Agreement. He expressed the hope that the Government would continue its efforts to promote unity and engage in constructive dialogue for the full implementation of the Agreement. He concluded by stressing that the visit was intended to demonstrate the full support of the Security Council for the country, advocate political dialogue for the implementation of the Agreement and encourage Guinea-Bissau to hold free and fair legislative elections on 10 March as a lead-up to the presidential election before the end of 2019. He noted that the mission would hold several meetings in Bissau with various interlocutors to obtain a better understanding of the situation in the country.

28. The Prime Minister thanked the Security Council for the visit, which was an illustration of its close monitoring of developments in the country. He hoped that the

visit would help the Council to better assess and improve its understanding of the situation in Guinea-Bissau. The Prime Minister stated that the Government had done its best to create the conditions necessary and conducive for the holding of the elections, adding that dialogue continued with the political parties and civil society organizations concerned. He noted that, on 14 February, the competing political parties had signed the Stability Pact, a framework that obliged its signatories to accept the results and to implement institutional reforms following the elections, regardless of its outcome.

29. The Prime Minister also explained that Guinea-Bissau had a good legal framework on elections, which gave all the powers to the National Electoral Commission, and that a biometric system had been used for voter registration. The political parties had also signed the Code of Conduct on elections. He believed that the Stability Pact and the Code of Conduct were two important instruments that could ensure post-election stability, if respected by the signatory parties. He acknowledged that some political parties did not agree with how the biometric voter registration had been conducted.

30. The Prime Minister noted that there had been technical problems with the voter registration, as some names of registered voters did not appear on the voter lists. To address those issues, ECOWAS experts were helping the Technical Support Office for the Electoral Process with the cleaning/audit of the electoral lists to address the discrepancies and ensure the credibility of the electoral process and to avoid a situation in which election results were contested. The audit was ongoing, and a final list of registered voters would be made public to allow all those with a voter card to vote. Once the process had been completed, the final voter lists were expected to be submitted by the Technical Support Office to the National Electoral Commission on 19 February. He noted that the political parties had been part of the process and would also partake in the deliberations within the framework of the Commission. He explained that, during the vote, all political parties would have the right to have representatives in the polling stations and would participate in the manual counting of the votes. The vote counting would be done in public, with the results recorded at the same time by representatives of political parties and national and international observers. He noted that, according to the law, any citizen could challenge the outcome of the elections.

31. Responding to comments and questions by Security Council members, the Prime Minister noted that the elections would be held pursuant to the good cooperation framework with the United Nations. With regard to the organization of the elections, he stated that his Government had reached out to all partners concerned, including ECOWAS, the African Union, the United Nations and the International Organization of la Francophonie, highlighting the need for the deployment of electoral observers, to give credibility to the process, given that it had become a common concern. In that connection, he informed the Council members that the European Union would probably send election experts, although he opined that observers would be needed more. He stated that Guinea-Bissau also counted on regional partners, including the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries, to assist in the electoral process. He reassured the mission that the Government had carried out the preparations necessary for the elections to effectively be held on 10 March. He acknowledged, however, that there were some risks and challenges to the electoral process, such as the possibility of the resumption of protests by students, which could have a negative impact on election security. He also said that there were political actors that did not want the elections to be held and that were manipulating social unrest by agitating public opinion and triggering violence by infiltrating student protests the previous week. Given the weakness of State institutions to counter such risks, he noted that such unrest would reflect poorly on the election. He added

that his Government was facing pressure to simultaneously manage social grievances and maintain a consensual electoral process. He explained that there would be a new Minister of Interior imminently, filling a post that had been vacant for some time. The appointment would come in time to ensure election security. Concerning the possible impact of the teachers' strike on the elections, the Prime Minister noted that they were politically motivated. He further explained that, during their efforts to organize elections, the Government was under pressure from civil society and civil servants linked to the strikes and was faced with heightened tensions among political parties during the drawing up of political districts. He explained that he had to juggle all these issues, while walking a fine line with political parties during the voter registration process to ensure their buy-in regarding the electoral process.

32. With regard to funding for the elections, the Prime Minister stated that the Government had received strong international support, but that some donors had failed to fulfil their commitments. That had an impact on the transport of election materials, which had required the Government to deploy additional funding to ensure a smooth process. He added that the Government was under pressure because it had the responsibility for organizing the elections, while lacking the necessary funding in the State budget. He noted that the deficit had been covered by the UNDP election basket fund, adding that the funding provided to the fund for the legislative elections did not equal contributions to previous elections.

33. The Prime Minister noted that questions were being raised about the reconfiguration of UNIOGBIS at a time when the country was preparing for the legislative elections. He mentioned that, during his briefing to the Security Council in August 2018, he had emphasized the importance of the cooperation between the Government and UNIOGBIS. He added that the reframing of that cooperation would require dialogue and consultation and information-sharing between the Government and UNIOGBIS. He believed that UNIOGBIS should be a tool to reinforce the efforts of Guinea-Bissau to reform the State. He argued that a similar approach should be applied to the cooperation between Guinea-Bissau, the African Union and ECOWAS, and underscored that any plan to reconfigure UNIOGBIS should be discussed with the Government and be done in a manner that would support national efforts to undertake key reforms.

34. With regard to organized crime, the Prime Minister highlighted the need to help with the surveillance abilities and capacity of the relevant State institutions that were still weak. He also noted problems of infiltration within the State institutions, thus making the efforts of the Government to combat drug trafficking and organized crime a challenging task. He stated that, through the elections, the country would have new authorities to help to combat organized crime. Some individuals, however, had their own agenda and thus had no will to address the scourge. In calling for support to resolve that issue, he noted that Guinea-Bissau needed a plan and to create the political will to combat crime, in particular on the islands.

35. With regard to the gender parity law, the Prime Minister explained that the Government could not impose it on the political parties, but that the Supreme Court of Justice had notified all parties concerned, encouraging them to respect and apply it to their candidate lists. He noted that the parties faced some difficulty, given that many areas, in particular on the islands, did not have enough women willing and/or able to run for the legislative elections.

36. The Security Council mission encouraged the Prime Minister and his Government to continue efforts to organize the elections and address the technical problems related to them, as well as to engage in dialogue with all stakeholders concerned to ensure that the elections were conducted in an inclusive, free and transparent manner.

Meeting with the diplomatic community

37. On the evening of 15 February, the Security Council mission exchanged views on the upcoming elections and the overall situation in the country with representatives of the Group of Five (with the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries represented by Cabo Verde), Angola, Brazil, Portugal and Senegal over a working dinner in Bissau. The UNIOGBIS Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Guinea-Bissau represented the United Nations at the meeting. Responding to queries from the Security Council mission in reference to the political/institutional crises, a representative of the diplomatic community commented that the semi-presidential system was applied in other countries and that it functioned well. It was therefore noted that the problem in Guinea-Bissau was related to the Government's interpretation or rather non-interpretation of the Constitution. The member of the diplomatic community highlighted the need for the people of Guinea-Bissau to decide on the matter through a constitutional referendum. With regard to the legislative elections, representatives of the diplomatic community stated that the elections would likely be held as scheduled, on 10 March, and would bring about a new legislature and Government, with the expectation that the presidential election would be completed afterwards. However, the representative of the diplomatic community expressed concern that the same cycle of political crises could persist should the country not establish industries to transform the country's fisheries and agricultural products in order to improve the economy. The member further noted that the international community could play a crucial role in that regard and stressed the need for reforms of the security sector and the economy to be undertaken by the new legislative body and Government, and concluded by saying that the continued presence of the United Nations would be crucial.

38. Another member of the diplomatic community underscored the importance of the visit of the Security Council, adding that, while the legislative elections would likely be held on 10 March, there had been some problems during the voter registration process due to the lack of adequate registration kits. The member remarked that those were problems also faced in other countries and that they should be expected in Guinea-Bissau owing to its limited financial resources. The member also noted that, had it not been for the international community's financial and in-kind support, the elections would not have been possible.

39. The Deputy Special Representative described the remarkable support for the elections provided by the Group of Five. He thanked the relevant donors for their funding contributions, reporting that the UNDP election basket fund had received \$9.9 million of the \$7.7 million requested. He therefore stated that funding could not be considered a hindrance to the holding of the elections.

Briefing by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Guinea-Bissau to the Security Council

40. On the evening of 15 February, the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Guinea-Bissau, on behalf of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, briefed the Security Council on UNIOGBIS activities and recent developments since the issuance of the report of the Secretary-General report (S/2019/115) on 7 February 2019. The briefing, which was held on UNIOGBIS premises, replaced the closed consultation session usually held in New York. The briefing focused on the political and security environment amid preparations for the legislative elections, as well as progress in the implementation of key institutional reforms outlined under the Conakry Agreement.

41. The Deputy Special Representative noted that the arrival of the Security Council mission coincided with the launch of the campaign period for the legislative elections

and that all preparations necessary for the elections had been put in place by the Government with the support of international partners, including the Group of Five. The key milestones achieved to date included the release of the provisional voter list of 733,000 individuals for verification, with the final publication expected by 19 February, and the publication on 8 February of the list of candidates of 21 political parties, validated by the Supreme Court of Justice, to compete in the elections.

42. The Deputy Special Representative noted that the elections would be held in a tense environment marked by the student demonstration of 8 February and the threat of the resumption of strikes by the teachers' association and other labour unions, which was resolved when the Government agreed to honour the demands of students, including the payment of teachers' salary arrears within 10 days. He mentioned that some political parties (the Party for Social Renewal, the Movimento Alternância Democrática and the African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde) had reacted publicly to the tense political environment by expressing concern about the negative impact that the student demonstration could have on the electoral process.

43. The Deputy Special Representative reported that political parties, beginning on 16 February, would be in pre-election campaign mode, with some committing to forming alliances. In that context, he noted that an agreement had been signed on 1 February among four political parties (the African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde, the Democratic Convergence Party, the National Unity Party and the Union for Change). In addition, newly formed political parties (the Movement for Democratic Change, the United People's Assembly – Democratic Party of Guinea-Bissau and the Patriotic Front for National Salvation (FREPASNA)) were also participating in the election. He also reported that, on 14 February, the political parties had signed the Stability Pact and Code of Conduct for the elections, in compliance with the Conakry Agreement.

44. In anticipation of the new UNIOGBIS mandate, to be adopted by the Security Council on 28 February, which would consider the recommendation of the Secretary-General for the drawdown and exit of UNIOGBIS by the end of 2020, the Deputy Special Representative informed Council members that, subject to the new mandate, full-scale transition planning, implementation and monitoring would be launched by the Office in close collaboration with relevant partners, including the national authorities. He appealed for the future mandate to enable the Office to support the implementation of necessary institutional reforms and foster dialogue and reconciliation among political actors and civil society.

45. The Deputy Special Representative stated that the forthcoming legislative elections would be an important political milestone, adding that they had never been a challenge in the country, but that problems had arisen in the past during the post-election period. He also stated that, while the signing of the Stability Pact was important, the timely implementation of its provisions into legislation and policies by the future parliament and Government would be critical to realizing the urgent reforms needed in the country.

46. The Deputy Special Representative concluded by expressing his gratitude to the Group of Five for their invaluable support for and contributions to the stabilization and peacebuilding process. He added that the achievements made would not have been possible without the support of the Security Council for sustainable peace in Guinea-Bissau.

Meeting with the Group of Five

47. Over breakfast on 16 February, the Security Council mission exchanged views with the representatives of the Group of Five on the current political environment,

their forecasts for the legislative and presidential elections, the renewal of the UNIOGBIS mandate and the role of the ECOWAS Mission in Guinea-Bissau, as well as the reforms expected to follow the elections. Mr. Ndong Mba commended the group for their sustained efforts in support of the political process in the country.

48. The Group of Five highlighted the key issues of importance to them. They mentioned that the recurring political crises facing Guinea Bissau were a result of a number of issues, including the deep mistrust among national actors and the fragility of State institutions. They noted that the electoral process had begun well but had encountered technical and financial challenges. The elections would nevertheless be held as scheduled. They added that the elections would not resolve the political crisis that affected the country without the necessary reforms being undertaken.

49. A member of the Group of Five noted that the main problem facing Guinea Bissau was rampant corruption, the divergence of political opinions and constitutional interpretations/reform. The member noted the divergent views/interpretation of the Constitution among the political stakeholders. Another member of the group described the current situation in the country as calm owing to the presence of ECOWAS Mission in Guinea-Bissau forces, noting that the troop-contributing countries were facing funding challenges. The group welcomed the clear message of the Security Council to Guinea Bissau actors, underscoring the need for the continued support of the international community.

50. In response to queries, a member of the Group of Five reported on the challenges related to the quality of the information published by official and private media and social networks ahead of the legislative elections, with some questioning the credibility of the electoral process. To address that, the member mentioned that the Code of Conduct required the media networks and radio channels to support the elections and not spread negative rhetoric. On that issue, the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General informed the Security Council mission that, through the Peacebuilding Fund, UNIOGBIS was implementing several projects related to building the capacity of media personnel. A member noted that, of the 50 political parties in the country, only 21 were running in the legislative elections, of which some were not competing nationally. With regard to international observation, the group reported that the African Union, the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries and ECOWAS intended to deploy missions, while the European Union would send two experts.

Meeting with the Speaker of the National Assembly and the heads of political parties in parliament

51. On 16 February, the mission met the President of the National Assembly, Cipriano Cassamá, accompanied by the Director of Cabinet, Assoumane Sanha, and heads of the political parties with representation in Parliament, namely, the African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde, the Party for Social Renewal, the Democratic Convergence Party, the New Democracy Party and the Union for Change.

52. In his opening remarks, Mr. Ndong Mba stated that 2019 was a critical year for Guinea-Bissau. He stated that the Security Council was in the country to make sure that the legislative elections would be held on 10 March and the presidential election later in 2019, and hoped that the recently signed Code of Conduct and Stability Pact would be respected. He also said that the Council was closely monitoring the situation and would exchange views with national stakeholders.

53. The Speaker of Parliament welcomed the delegation, noting that it was the second visit of the Security Council to the country during the current legislature. He described the political developments that had ended the political crisis, with the

resumption of the National Assembly, and the appointment of the consensual Prime Minister whose main task was to organize fair and transparent legislative elections. He noted that the electoral process faced several problems, in particular with regard to the voter registration process. He informed the mission that the electoral database experienced those problems following the decision of the Prosecutor General to suspend the activities of the Technical Support Office for the Electoral Process and expel the Nigerian experts associated with the registration. Following a decision by the Supreme Court of Justice that allowed for the resumption of the activities of the Technical Support Office, the experts could no longer retrieve the work already done, including the data of some registered voters. Notwithstanding that setback, the voter registration had been completed and the anomalies identified were being rectified. He appealed to the Council to assist the country in mobilizing financial resources for the elections. He stated that the list of 21 political parties competing in the legislative elections had been approved by the Court.

54. With regard to the recent student protests, the Speaker of Parliament stated that some political parties had taken advantage of the situation, infiltrating the protests with individuals who barricaded roads, vandalized vehicles and committed other violent acts against civilians. He added that, as a result, the city had been paralyzed until the police took action. He described those acts as attempts to obstruct the holding of the legislative elections. In that regard, he lamented the absence of a Minister of Interior, a position of utmost importance to ensure election security. He also noted the importance for the international community to remain vigilant, given that some actors did not want the elections on 10 March to be held.

55. Concerning the drawdown of UNIOGBIS, the Speaker hoped that its reconfiguration would be done after the conclusion of the elections, adding that Office should be strengthened to enable it to continue to work to combat drug trafficking and to help to address the root causes of instability in Guinea-Bissau.

56. In response to questions by members of the Security Council mission, the Speaker noted that the gender parity law had been debated for a month before being passed. He said that, in the National Assembly at present, only 14 per cent of representatives were women, expressing the hope that, with the next makeup of the legislature, the rate would be 40 per cent. He also informed the mission that, in Guinea-Bissau, women played an important role in achieving peace. He described a delegation of women parliamentarians that had travelled throughout the country to help to attract and include women in the political/legislative process. Concerning the political and economic nexus, he noted that, while Parliament was the institution in which laws were drafted and passed, it was the mandate of the Government to govern the country and create the conditions necessary to provide basic services to the population and to address development needs. He stated, however, that, in four years, the country had seen seven Governments and, accordingly, political instability could not allow the Government to make progress. With regard to the Stability Pact and the Code of Conduct, he expressed the hope that those would be fulfilled and respected by the political parties. He expressed his concern, however, that some political parties might not fulfil their obligations, adding that that would not be the first time.

57. After the leaders of the political parties had joined the discussions, Mr. Ndong Mba reiterated that 2019 was a critical year for Guinea-Bissau, stressing that the 10 March polling date should be respected and followed by the presidential elections in the same year, in accordance with the legal framework. He called upon the political parties to uphold their commitments and avoid further institutional instability. He concluded by saying that the Security Council would continue to follow developments in the country closely.

58. The leader of the African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde, Domingos Pereira, welcomed the delegation and expressed his appreciation for its regular visits. He expressed the hope that the Security Council would return soon to witness the positive advancements made in Guinea-Bissau and not to remind them to implement and fulfil their constitutional obligations. He noted that recent events had shown that some actors aimed to compromise the holding of the legislative elections. He reassured the Council of the readiness of his party to do its part to ensure that democracy prevailed, noting that his party had been falsely accused of being the organizer of the problems encountered during the electoral process and of controlling the Government.

59. The Party for Social Renewal representative, Jorge Malu stated that the country was at the last stage of the process leading up to the legislative elections. The current Government was the product of an agreement between the African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde and his party. He clarified that his party did not accuse the African Party of controlling the Government but noted that the Prime Minister and the Minister of Territorial Administration in charge of the contested voter registration were both from it. He added that his party was only requesting an explanation on the discrepancies (200,000) in the number of voters registered in 2018, which was much less than that of 2014. With regard to the date of the elections, the representative informed the mission that no political party was responsible for setting the date, adding that that was done by presidential decree in consultation with the parties. The representative added that his party was ready to compete in the upcoming elections, notwithstanding the irregularities, noting that it had signed the Stability Pact after it was amended to include a condition on the need to publish the audit report and correct the missing voters in the list of registered voters. Lastly, he said that it was not in the interest of his party to have the President sack the current Government because of those irregularities.

60. The leader of the New Democracy Party, Mamadú Iaiá Djaló, said that there was no perfect election, highlighting that the date of 10 March for the legislative elections was not consistent with the electoral law, adding that the date had been reached by consensus among the political parties. He stated that his party would be ready to compete in the election should the problems with the list of registered voters be rectified. He underscored the importance of holding free, fair and transparent elections that would, he hoped, result in a more representative legislature that did not bend to external influence. He noted that, following elections, the new legislators would be able to review all laws of governance, in particular the electoral law and the Constitution, which give the President, who is not elected by the people, the right to dismiss the Prime Minister. He concluded by saying that the problems that faced Guinea-Bissau had begun soon after the Terra Ranka round table that had mobilized funding for the Government. He concluded by appealing to the international community to respect the outcome of the round table and disburse the funds pledged.

61. The leader of the Union for Change, Mr. Regalla, informed the Security Council mission that his party had signed the Stability Pact and the Code of Conduct and was committed to fully respecting them. He highlighted the need for the country to hold the legislative elections on time, notwithstanding the challenges faced during the voter registration process, and expressed concern that there were some hidden hands attempting to obstruct the holding of the elections. With regard to the semi-presidential system in place, he stated that, while the President had the right to dismiss the Government, he should have reverted to the political party that held a majority in Parliament for a proposed candidate for the position of Prime Minister, adding that, should the individual chosen to be Prime Minister not be from the majority party, it would be considered a non-constitutional Government. With regard to UNIOGBIS, he expressed the view that it should remain to avoid losing the gains achieved to date,

advising that the reconfiguration should be done in a manner that helped the Government to address the necessary reforms. He proposed that the reconfiguration take place after the installation of a new Government. He added that the United Nations should pay much attention to addressing the scourge of drug trafficking and organized crime in a fragile State such as Guinea-Bissau. He mentioned that any Government that aimed to combat corruption would face resistance.

Meeting with the President of the National Electoral Commission

62. The President of the National Electoral Commission, José Pedro Sambú, noted that 16 February was the date for the start of the election campaign. He informed the Security Council mission that sensitive electoral materials, such as ballot papers and results forms, would arrive in Bissau on 23 February. The Commission plenary, which included representatives of the political parties, the National Media Council, the Presidency and the Government, had met and completed the draw for the order of parties on the ballot papers, decided on the allocation of radio airtime for the parties and approved the design of the ballot paper.

63. Mr. Sambú also pointed out that a civic education campaign had been launched on 9 February, with 1,000 civic animators in the field, and that National Electoral Commission radio spots were being aired on community radio stations. The two-day training for the presidents and secretaries of the polling stations had begun on 16 February and would continue until 2 March, at which point the clerks and protection agents would be trained. He expressed concern with regard to the status of the security arrangements but acknowledged that a new Minister of Interior had been appointed the previous day, who would be the direct interlocutor of the Commission.

64. In response to various questions posed by Security Council members, Mr. Sambú stated that the Technical Support Office for the Electoral Process, which was responsible for voter registration, was working on the issues related to the voter list. Given that there was a legal period for corrections and claims regarding the voter list, the list was therefore subject to change during that period. Those changes would likely lead to an increase in the number of registered voters on the list. After the corrections were made, the final list would then be handed over to the National Electoral Commission. He stated that the Commission did not have any logistical problems. The remaining sensitive materials were being produced by Portugal and would arrive on schedule. With regard to finances, he stated that there was a financial gap for several electoral activities that the Government should fund, but that it was currently experiencing financial difficulties in order to do so.

65. Mr. Sambú noted that the electoral reforms should have taken place following the signing of the Conakry Agreement and prior to the elections. Given that that was not the case, however, the reforms would have to take place in the future. There was a need to update the number of seats in each constituency, in accordance with the population, citing the example of two constituencies, 1 and 29, with voter populations of 60,000 and 17,000, respectively, which both had three seats in the National Assembly. He added that that would not affect the credibility of the current election. Regarding the gender parity law, he also noted that it would not have direct consequence for the parties' participation, but that there would be fiscal penalties. He stated that the Supreme Court of Justice had sent to the Commission the names of the parties that did comply with the law and that, on 18 February, the Commission would publish those names in the media. He added that the Commission met regularly with the political parties that had been allowed by the Court to contest the election. He also added that, of the legally registered parties, 24 submitted their lists to the Court, of which 21 were validated. He did not expect any challenges in that regard. Lastly, he said that the (provisional) election results would be published 48 hours after the close of the polls.

Meeting with the Vice-President of the Supreme Court

66. Following the meeting with the President of the National Electoral Commission, the Security Council mission met the Vice-President of the Supreme Court of Justice, Rui Nene, in the absence of the President of the Court, who was away on official business.

67. Mr. Nene welcomed the delegation and reaffirmed his readiness to accept any advice that could advance the peace process in Guinea-Bissau. He called upon the members of the delegation to continue to support the country during the electoral period and beyond, noting that elections had never resolved the institutional crises in the country. He informed the mission that the judiciary was an independent institution, adding that, given that Guinea-Bissau did not have a Constitutional Court, the Supreme Court of Justice was undertaking that role. He explained that the Supreme Court had administrative jurisdiction over the electoral process, adding that all political parties that intended to compete in the elections were required to present their candidacy to the Supreme Court for verification. Should there be any irregularities, the Supreme Court would inform the head of the political party concerned and request the party to provide the missing information. Once the plenary of the Supreme Court completed the verification process, a provisional list of candidates would be established. The purpose of the provisional list was to allow the candidates to know whether they were in conformity with the law. The plenary of the Supreme Court would then publish the definitive list and send it to the National Electoral Commission for its inclusion in the election. No claim could be received once the final list was published.

68. Mr. Nene recalled that the Supreme Court of Guinea-Bissau was the ultimate appellate court in the Bissau-Guinean judicial system. He added that the Chief Justice (of the Supreme Court) and the Deputy Chief Justice were elected by the Higher Council of the Judiciary, which is one of the executive-administrative organs of the Supreme Court, composed of advisory judges and presided over by the Chief Justice. He also indicated that there were three chambers: criminal, civil and social and administrative. With regard to the role of the Court in verifying political party candidates for any elections or its intervention following a dispute over election results, he informed the mission that candidates could contest results first, through the regional commissions. Should an agreement not be reached, affected candidates could proceed to the National Electoral Commission, which was expected to verify whether the claims were in line with the law. If the candidates were unsatisfied with the resolution at that level, they could then appeal to the Court, making sure that they met the set deadline for appeals. He explained that the decision of the Court was final. Regarding the intervention of the Court on the interruption of the voter registration process, the case was referred to the Court by the Commission, given the disagreement among the political parties. The Court, which as an independent institution, took a decision in an impartial manner.

69. With regard to the issue of respecting the gender parity law by the political parties, Mr. Nene noted that the Supreme Court of Justice had called upon the political parties to include women in their lists of candidates on the basis of the 36 per cent quota. He acknowledged that few women were engaged in politics in Guinea-Bissau, thus making it difficult for political parties to meet the requirement. Some parties had, however, deliberately disregarded it. He stated that the Court would be firm with the political parties on the parity issue for the next elections, given that they would have enough time by then to encourage women to participate in political parties.

70. With regard to drug trafficking and transnational organized crime, he reassured the delegation that the courts in Guinea-Bissau had the necessary competencies, adding that measures were in place to combat the issue. He stressed that each time a

case was opened, the public ministry would investigate, following which the case would be referred to a judge for prosecution. The case could also be brought before the Criminal Chamber of the Supreme Court of Justice.

Meeting with heads of political parties not represented in Parliament

71. Following the meeting with the Vice-President of the Supreme Court of Justice, the Security Council mission met representatives of political parties not represented in the National Assembly, including the Movimento Alternância Democrática, the Guinean Democratic Movement, the Democratic Guinean Movement, the African National Congress of Guinea-Bissau, the Guinea-Bissau Resistance-Bafatá Movement, the Social Democratic Party, the Patriotic Movement, the Democratic Centre Party and the Democratic Party for Development.

72. At the outset of the meeting, Mr. Ndong Mba noted that the visit of the Security Council members was aimed at delivering a message of support and encouragement to political parties and the authorities for the timely holding of the parliamentary elections on 10 March and the presidential election in 2019, as well as to urge them to respect the recently signed Stability Pact and Code of Conduct. Several party representatives denounced the irregularities encountered during the voter registration process, noting the large discrepancy of registered voters for 2019, compared with 2014. Some appealed to the Council to support their request for the publication of the ECOWAS audit report on the voter registration process and some called upon the Council to help to ensure that the elections were inclusive and met international standards, adding that, if those standards were not followed, smaller political parties would be negatively affected. The issues of candidate security, campaign resources and media coverage of campaigns were also discussed. Several representatives pointed to possible challenges during the post-electoral period.

73. Mr. Ndong Mba noted the issues raised and stated that the one concerning the discrepancy in the number of voters had been raised in several of the mission's meetings in Bissau, and he made the views of the Security Council clear in that the list of registered voters should reflect reality and that measures be taken to rectify any anomalies. He urged the political parties to wait until the ECOWAS audit had been completed. Lastly, he urged all political parties to fully participate in the upcoming elections on 10 March and in the presidential election later in 2019, expressing the hope that those elections would help to usher in a new chapter of stability for the country.

Meeting with civil society organizations and the organizing commission of the national conference

74. The Security Council mission met civil society representatives. Several representatives noted that Bissau-Guineans were yearning for change. Recognizing that it was for Bissau-Guineans to change their country, several representatives urged the United Nations "not to abandon" Guinea-Bissau. With regard to the elections, several representatives expressed the desire for peaceful elections, with some noting the signing of the Stability Pact and the Code of Conduct as positive steps. Some representatives voiced concern over irregularities regarding the voter registration process and called for continued United Nations support for a successful election. Several civil society representatives called for the support of the international community to ensure that a stable Government would be installed after the election. Some appealed to the international community to support Guinea-Bissau in strengthening its maritime border control. Several speakers noted the need for reform of public services, political party laws and the security and defence and the justice sectors, with some calling upon the United Nations to consider facilitating the reform processes. The public demonstration of 15 February 2019, which had turned violent,

the current political climate, national reconciliation efforts and the role for women and young people going forward were also discussed. Some civil society representatives appealed to the Council to consider reviewing and lifting the sanctions against 10 military officers after the conclusion of the elections.

75. The Permanent Representative of Côte d'Ivoire to the United Nations and mission co-lead, Kacou Léon Adom, thanked the civil society organizations for their various roles in the social and political discourse and their contributions to the democratic process, and encouraged them to continue their engagement, saying that Bissau-Guineans had the primary role in helping to bring about change and overcome the political crisis. He encouraged the participation of women and young people in the political discourse.

Meeting with the United Nations country team and international partners

76. Over a working lunch, the mission exchanged views with the United Nations country team, in a meeting chaired by the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Equatorial Guinea, in his capacity as the resident coordinator. Representatives of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), UNDP, the United Nations Office for Project Services, the World Food Programme (WFP), the World Health Organization (WHO), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), OHCHR and the World Bank were present. The offices of OHCHR and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime are integrated into UNIOGBIS.

77. The resident coordinator mentioned that the purpose of the meeting was to have a conversation on the developments in Guinea-Bissau. He reported that there were 10 United Nations agencies, funds and programmes working in Guinea-Bissau and that their programmes were reflected in the United Nations Development Assistance Framework for the period 2016–2020, adding that the planning of the next phase of the United Nations Partnership Assistance Framework was expected to commence in 2020. He added that now was the time to redefine the priorities of Guinea-Bissau and to adapt the future interventions of the United Nations. He said that the post-election period was expected to usher in stability, thereby enabling the United Nations to establish a partnership with the new Government when it reviewed the country's priorities areas, especially the critical reforms needed in public services.

78. The resident coordinator explained that the United Nations Development Assistance Framework was anchored to four pillars: (a) support for State institutions to consolidate stability, the rule of law and democratic participation; (b) economic growth and sustainably promoting poverty reduction, decent jobs, food security and the structural transformation of the economy; (c) ensuring that marginalized and vulnerable groups had equitable, sustainable access to and use of basic services (health, nutrition, HIV/AIDS, water, sanitation and hygiene, education and quality protection services); and (d) support for public institutions, civil society organizations and the private sector in the promotion of the sustainable development of the environment and natural resources, risk management and disaster prevention.

79. UNICEF reported that it had provided interventions in basic services, including health, nutrition, water and sanitation, HIV and education, and were collaborating with six other United Nations agencies for the implementation of their programmes. The representative noted that the recurrence of the teachers' strike had reportedly posed considerable challenges in UNICEF support for and interventions in the education sector. The agency had nevertheless provided and facilitated the distribution of textbooks and the building of new schools. With regard to health, UNICEF supported the immunization of children, recording an 80 per cent coverage of the targeted population. It also provided support to reduce the number neonatal

deaths, given that child mortality was notably high in Guinea-Bissau. The agency also supported 4,000 community health workers in the provision of health-care services in remote areas. It had also rehabilitated 64 health-care centres over the past two years and continued to provide community services for HIV-affected persons and attend to child protection issues, including female genital mutilation. UNICEF also facilitated the collection of household data in relation to human development in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals.

80. The World Bank informed the Security Council mission that its office had opened in Bissau approximately two and half years ago, noting that operations focused on public sector interventions, namely, budget support, energy services, health care and information and communications technology. The representative stated that some \$215 million had been invested to date. He mentioned that the economy of Guinea-Bissau had declined in 2018 to 3.8 per cent, down from 5.9 per cent in 2017. The decline was a result of the considerable low cashew production and a drop in the global price of cashews. Tax revenue had also declined by 1.7 per cent of gross domestic product, while inflation averaged 1.2 per cent annually. He added that the fiscal position of the Government was generally weak and that the World Bank was supporting reforms in public finance management, customs registration, tax collection and budget preparations. He also mentioned that support was being provided for reforms in the energy sector to improve its generation capacity and ensure the efficient management and sustainability of the sector.

81. WFP highlighted the need for stability in the country. State institutions remained very weak and required support to be operationally effective and efficient. WFP was providing interventions in nutrition, given that nutrition was said to be low in the country. In this regard, WFP was supporting efforts to improve nutrition and food security through enhancing the capacity of national institutions and through its school feeding programme with public schools, which has increased enrolment by 55 to 60 per cent. In total, 800 schools were covered and some 180,000 children benefited under the programme. Cumulatively, approximately 18 per cent of the population of Guinea-Bissau benefited from the nutrition support. WFP noted the nutrition-related diseases (e.g., diabetes and malnutrition) that were reported to be prevalent in the country. It had therefore embarked on developing mechanisms to promote sustainability in some intervention areas through training and changes in policies and in eating behaviour.

82. UNHCR noted its work on the protection and acceptance of refugees in Guinea-Bissau. The agency had worked on a durable solution to the approximately 10,000 Senegalese refugees in the country. In December 2018, 7,000 of those refugees had been granted citizenship in Guinea-Bissau following the signing of a presidential decree. Work was under way to process the other refugees. For its part, WFP was working to provide livelihoods to the refugees, a primary focus of UNHCR, which was also working to eradicate statelessness by 2020. A policy document on statelessness was completed, and its implementation was pending. Some 3,700 identity cards had been given to the naturalized refugees, while efforts were under way to facilitate their reintegration into society.

83. UNFPA informed the Security Council mission that it had commenced operations in 1987, focusing on preventable maternal deaths, family planning and zero gender-based violence. UNFPA collaborated with other agencies in those areas and worked towards decreasing the impact and prevalence of HIV.

84. UNDP mentioned that, since it had begun operations in 1974, it was focusing primarily on matters of governance, the environment and poverty reduction. With regard to the former, UNDP worked to improve access to justice and the provision of infrastructure towards the enhancement of justice systems. UNDP also had overseen

interventions regarding specialized institutions such as Parliament and worked with civil society organizations to enhance their capacities on matters of decentralization and local government functions. With regard to the environment, Guinea-Bissau was said to be vulnerable to climate change. UNDP was supporting the Government in its work regarding the Sustainable Development Goals, which offer an opportunity to promote a peaceful environment, especially in the context of Goal 16.

85. The UNIOGBIS human rights unit representative, speaking on behalf of OHCHR, mentioned three areas of its mandate: coordination and assistance to promote human rights, monitoring and reporting on human rights issues and the development of a human rights approach in its programmes. The unit collaborated with various groups, including civil society organizations and State organs, to promote human rights values in civil discourse and the provision of social services. It reported that challenges/issues of human rights in Guinea-Bissau related to acts of impunity, limited access to justice and basic services, sexual violence, human trafficking and poor-quality detention centres. The capacities of civil society organizations to monitor and report on human rights issues were also noted as a serious challenge.

86. WHO informed the Security Council mission that it had been in Guinea-Bissau since 1974 and was the lead actor in the health sector. The representative noted some operational challenges, including the capacity for coordination by national actors, especially in remote locations, the prevalence of and increase in non-communicable disease and weak health infrastructure. The representative noted that the contribution of the Government to the health sector was only 8 per cent by way of salaries, while 47 per cent of funding came from external sources and 46 per cent came through paid services accessed by the local population. The third national development plan had just been completed, and the need for a resilient health system had been its primary focus.

87. Responding to comments and questions by Security Council members, the resident coordinator underscored the limited number of donors to the United Nations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Guinea-Bissau, which posed a considerable challenge to resource mobilization. Political instability had caused frustrations for donors, which appeared to result in limited funding for programmes. The possibility of a donor conference could be envisaged if a successful election were held and the environment remained promising. For its part, UNDP also noted that the capacity existed to fill the gap after the departure of UNIOGBIS, stressing that there was a need for resources and a transition plan for implementation. He explained that the United Nations Development Assistance Framework was also fully aligned with the Terra Ranka round table outcome in its four outreach areas, which corresponded to the four outcomes of the Framework. WFP stressed that a transition plan was critical for a smooth takeover of residual tasks.

88. In response to the query whether WHO was preparing the country for possible health events such as Ebola, WHO informed the Security Council mission of its efforts to support the country's preparedness, surveillance and response to public health emergencies. The representative noted that, in support of the emergency operations centres that had been created by the Ministry of Health, WHO had set up four regional offices located in the four regional centres identified by the Government. Those offices were staffed by WHO medical personnel and one driver to provide continuous support to the Ministry and they strengthened surveillance capacities and rapid response teams for any health event. WHO had also strengthened laboratory capacities through the provision of training to all laboratory personnel in the country, the provision of entomological training, the development of standard operating procedures, protocols, manuals and plans related to emergency preparedness and response, and the provision of personal protective equipment to all

health centres in the country. Under the “One Health” approach, WHO also continued to provide expertise and experience in the country through its work with the Ministry and other United Nations partners, including NGOs in the country. It continued to provide capacity development opportunities for Ministry staff. Lastly, it informed the mission that, with its support, Guinea-Bissau was in the final process of achieving a polio-free certification and that the Certification Committee would arrive in the country by the end of February for a field assessment.

Meeting with the President of Guinea-Bissau

89. On 16 February, members of the Security Council held a meeting with the President of Guinea-Bissau, José Mário Vaz, at the Presidential Palace. In his opening remarks, the mission co-lead, Mr. Adom, thanked the President for meeting with the Council and reiterated the purpose of the visit, stressing the importance of the legislative elections being held on time, on 10 March, and the presidential elections thereafter, in 2019. He sought the President’s views on the current situation in Guinea-Bissau, including preparations for the legislative elections, as well as his preliminary advice on the date of the presidential election in 2019.

90. President Vaz welcomed the Security Council to Bissau, adding that it was important for the Council to obtain its information on the situation directly on the ground through their meetings with the Bissau-Guineans. He encouraged the mission to pose questions. He explained that Guinea-Bissau was currently in a difficult situation and welcomed the Council’s efforts to help the country to find a way out of the crisis. He noted that the country had not faced any issues with its voter registration during past elections. Notwithstanding the challenges encountered, he reassured the Council that all the conditions were in place for the holding of the legislative elections on 10 March. He observed that, from outside the country, the Council might have heard some misguided reports about Guinea-Bissau, adding that the short visit would not give the mission the opportunity to become fully acquainted with the country. He said that the situation in Guinea-Bissau was calm ahead of the elections, noting that the military continued to remain in the barracks. He also explained that he had been able to keep them in the barracks by respecting the armed forces and their chain of command, and that was the reason why the country remained calm. He added that he communicated only with the General Chief of Staff of the Army. He pointed out that, since 1994, this would be the first time that the leaders in Guinea-Bissau would remain in power until the end of their term. He observed that the Council visited Guinea-Bissau only when there were crises.

91. In response to questions posed by the mission, President Vaz stated that he would prefer not to discuss the date for the presidential election at the present time, given that the focus was on the legislative elections. He added that there would be a programme for reforms following the conclusion of those elections. He added that Guinea-Bissau was mobilized for the 10 March legislative elections that would lead to peace and stability. He mentioned that the entire defence and security forces would ensure that the elections were peaceful. He explained that he used his influence to defend young people. According to the Constitution, however, he did not have executive powers. He explained that he was the Head of State and not of the Government and was therefore not responsible for the public treasury. He informed the mission of his programme called “Mona Lama” and mentioned that more than 80 per cent of the population lived in rural areas. He believed that development in Guinea-Bissau had to begin in rural areas and that the country needed to support young people in those areas. He added that he also had an anti-corruption programme and that Guinea-Bissau could not move forward if State resources were not managed well. He said that State money must go to the public treasury. He said that his battle

was to combat corruption and that Guinea-Bissau was facing problems in the health, infrastructure and transportation sectors.

92. President Vaz recalled his speech to the General Assembly in September 2018 and his meeting with the Secretary-General, when he had talked about the reforms in Guinea-Bissau. He said that he was supportive of any reforms of UNIOGBIS as envisaged by the Secretary-General. Concerning the funding of the elections, he said that, during the most recent summit of the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries, he had raised this issue with the Heads of State and Government of the lusophone community. He also raised the issue during the ECOWAS Summit, noting that the President of Côte d'Ivoire had played a crucial role in helping to mobilize funds for the elections in Guinea-Bissau. He concluded by saying that the Prime Minister was best placed to respond to issues pertaining to election funding.

93. President Vaz raised concerns regarding the military. He explained that, during his tenure, the military had displayed good behaviour and that the "former freedom fighters" needed to be compensated in order to leave the barracks. He appealed for the lifting of the sanctions against the military and regretted that the Security Council was not able to visit the army headquarters in Bissau. He stressed that the military needed the support of the international community. He said that he would send instructions to the Permanent Representative of Guinea-Bissau to the United Nations, requesting him to find out why the United Nations sanctions had not been lifted.

94. With regard to the issues with the voter lists and funding gaps, President Vaz said that he would convey those concerns to the Government. He indicated that UNDP was managing the electoral basket fund and that the Bissau-Guinean authorities were working to resolve the cases of those citizens who had voter cards, but whose names were omitted from the voter lists. He said that he was working with the Prime Minister on the matter. He said that Guinea-Bissau needed to move forward and that the country was counting on the support of the Security Council. He reiterated his call for the Council to lift the sanctions against the relevant members of the Guinea-Bissauan military.

95. Towards the end of the meeting, Mr. Ndong Mba made a final appeal, referring to the opportunity for President Vaz to set the country on the path of peace and stability by holding the elections on time. He added that, should the country invest in its agriculture, Guinea-Bissau could feed all of West Africa, but that it would require political stability to attract foreign investment. President Vaz responded that the country no longer suffered from war, beatings and arbitrary detentions, and that that was his legacy.

96. Following the meeting with President Vaz, the co-leads of the Security Council mission briefed the media on the main purpose of the Council's visit, the meetings held with various interlocutors and the key messages conveyed to all political stakeholders, including the Government, civil society and women's and youth groups.

Observations/key messages

97. In their engagements with key national and international stakeholders, members of the Security Council strongly advocated continued political dialogue towards the full implementation of the Conakry Agreement and the ECOWAS Road Map within the agreed timelines. They made specific reference to the need to hold free, fair and transparent legislative elections on 10 March and for presidential elections to be held thereafter in 2019, in line with the legal framework. The mission noted the concerns voiced by some political parties and civil society representatives regarding the voter registration process, in particular the discrepancies in the number of registered voters in the voter lists for 2019, compared with those of 2014. The mission urged the bodies concerned to address the irregularities identified in order to enable disenfranchised

citizens to exercise their right to vote. In that context, members of the Council welcomed the signing of the Stability Pact and the Code of Conduct on 14 February 2019, encouraging parties to meet their obligations as outlined in the two documents. The mission also urged the parties to continue efforts towards constitutional reform in order to mitigate a renewed political crisis, with the aim of having a clear division of labour/functions of the executive, legislative and judicial arms.

Annex I

Terms of reference of the Security Council mission to West Africa

Mission to Côte d'Ivoire (14 and 15 February 2019), co-led by Equatorial Guinea and Côte d'Ivoire

1. The Security Council will undertake a mission to Côte d'Ivoire in accordance with the statements by the President of the Security Council of 30 June 2017 (S/PRST/2017/8) and 24 July 2017 (S/PRST/2017/10 and S/PRST/2017/11). The purpose of the visit is to take stock of the ongoing transition in Côte d'Ivoire, as well as in Liberia and Sierra Leone, and to support the work of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS) for conflict prevention and peacebuilding in the Mano River subregion and the respective United Nations country teams in those three countries.

2. The Security Council will meet with the Vice-President and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Côte d'Ivoire and take part in a round-table discussion on transitions from peacekeeping to peace consolidation in Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia and Sierra Leone, with the participation of experts from the relevant United Nations country teams and UNOWAS.

3. In accordance with the framework established in paragraph 1 above and the areas of interest to the Security Council, the Council will:

(a) Review the state of play of the political, economic and security situation in the Mano River Union subregion, in particular in Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia and Sierra Leone. In that regard, the mission will:

- (i) Discuss the overall situation of the political, economic and social environment in the subregion, specifically in the countries concerned;
- (ii) Review the security situation in the Mano River Union subregion, in particular in the countries concerned;
- (iii) Identify current challenges to peace and stability in the subregion;

(b) Welcome and support the strategies put in place by the Mano River Union to promote peace, stability and economic development in the subregion. In that connection, the mission will:

- (i) Learn about regional strategies for strengthening States' resilience to crises and the cooperation between the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and UNOWAS, in the framework of support for States in post-crisis situations;
- (ii) Assess the progress made by the Government in stabilizing the security situation in Abidjan and the rest of the country, in particular in the border region between Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia;
- (iii) Encourage the Government to continue to improve inclusive political and democratic governance and to promote human rights;

(c) Review the transition of United Nations peacekeeping operations in Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia and Sierra Leone. In that regard, the mission will:

- (i) Evaluate national strategies for crisis resolution and peacebuilding;
- (ii) Create an opportunity for exchanges with United Nations country teams and sharing experiences and best practices on the transition from United Nations operations to peacebuilding in Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia and Sierra Leone;

- (iii) Identify persistent structural vulnerabilities, which could be factors in the resurgence of instability and conflict in the States concerned;
 - (iv) Evaluate national and country team capacity to develop and coordinate long-term financing strategies for peace and stability, taking into account the role of international financial institutions and the private sector;
 - (v) Identify lessons from the role of the Peacebuilding Commission in setting the scene for longer-term peacebuilding efforts, and recommendations for the role the Commission can play in transitions more broadly;
 - (vi) Encourage cross-border cooperation between the countries concerned to combat cross-border organized crime and community violence;
- (d) Express support for the role of civil society and women in prevention and post-crisis processes. In that regard, the mission will:
- (i) Emphasize the role of civil society organizations in conflict prevention and resolution;
 - (ii) Share experiences and good practices in social cohesion and national reconciliation and reinforce the gender dimension in prevention and in the process of ending the crisis;
 - (e) Reaffirm the continued support of the Security Council for the subregion. In that regard, the mission will:
- (i) Reaffirm the commitment of the United Nations to continue supporting Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia and Sierra Leone, through their respective United Nations country teams and through UNOWAS;
 - (ii) Emphasize that Côte d'Ivoire is an important country in the subregion, which should remain a model of stability and development, and reiterate the support of the United Nations in pursuit of its peacebuilding policy;
 - (iii) Reaffirm the support of the Security Council for enhancing the capacity of UNOWAS to support the transition from peacekeeping to peacebuilding in United Nations engagements in West Africa.

Mission to Guinea-Bissau (15 and 16 February 2019), co-led by Equatorial Guinea and Côte d'Ivoire

4. The Security Council will carry out a mission to Guinea-Bissau within the framework of Council resolution [2404 \(2018\)](#) and the press statements dated 21 February, 7 September and 27 December 2018.
5. The Security Council will meet with the President of Guinea-Bissau, the Prime Minister and his Government, the President of the Parliament, the President of the Supreme Court of Justice, the President of the National Electoral Commission and the heads of the political parties represented in the Parliament and of those not represented in the Parliament. The Council will also meet the representatives of civil society organizations, including women's and youth groups, the members of the group of five international organizations represented in Guinea-Bissau (African Union, Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries, ECOWAS, European Union and United Nations), the diplomatic community, the United Nations country team and the leadership of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS), among others.
6. The members of the Council will fulfil the following tasks:
- (a) Engage with key stakeholders involved in the political crisis in Guinea-Bissau and advocate strongly for: (i) political dialogue towards the implementation

of the Conakry Agreement and the ECOWAS road map within the agreed timelines; (ii) preparing for and conducting free and fair elections; (iii) holding the legislative elections on 10 March and presidential elections thereafter in 2019, in line with the legal framework; (iv) constitutional reforms to mitigate the risk of renewed political crisis among the political leaders with the aim of having a clear division of labour and functions of the executive, legislative and judicial branches; and (v) the commitment by the Government and/or legislature to administer funding and continue implementation of development programmes for the benefit of the people of Guinea-Bissau throughout the political deliberations and elections planning;

(b) Analyse the consequences of political tensions for the living conditions of the populations in Guinea-Bissau;

(c) Evaluate the progress made in reform processes, such as the reform of the security and justice sectors, as well as progress made in addressing impunity for past violations and crimes;

(d) Evaluate the compliance of UNIOGBIS with its mandate, in support of the Guinea-Bissau authorities, to contribute to lasting peace and stability in the country, including through support for strengthening democratic institutions and assistance to national authorities and stakeholders to promote and protect human rights;

(e) Evaluate the efforts made by the Guinea-Bissau authorities to implement and review national laws and mechanisms to more effectively combat transnational organized crime, in particular drug trafficking and money-laundering, which threaten security and the stability of Guinea-Bissau and the subregion (resolution [2404 \(2018\)](#), para. 20);

(f) Reiterate the Council's support for the fundamental role and active participation of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Guinea-Bissau and Head of UNIOGBIS, José Viegas Filho, including his good offices and close coordination and cooperation with the international community, especially the African Union, the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries, ECOWAS and the European Union;

(g) Reiterate the Council's support for the subregional, regional and international organizations that actively participate in the stabilization of Guinea-Bissau.

Annex II

Composition of the Security Council mission to Côte d'Ivoire and Guinea-Bissau

Ambassador Marc Pecsteen de Buytswerve (Belgium)

Ambassador Wu Haitao (China)

Ambassador Kacou Houadja Léon Adom (Côte d'Ivoire)

Mr. Josué Fiallo (Dominican Republic)

Ambassador Anatolio Ndong Mba (Equatorial Guinea)

Mr. Antoine Michon (France)

Ambassador Juergen Schulz (Germany)

Ambassador Dian Triansyah Djani (Indonesia)

Ambassador Mansour Alotaibi (Kuwait)

Mr. Paul Duclos (Peru)

Ambassador Joanna Wronecka (Poland)

Mr. Dmitry A. Polyanskiy (The Russian Federation)

Ambassador Jerry Matthews Matjila (South Africa)

Ambassador Jonathan Allen (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

Ms. Elaine French (United States of America)
