

Chairman's Summary
Sierra Leone Country-Specific Meeting
Peacebuilding Commission
13 December 2006

1. The Peacebuilding Commission held its second country-specific meeting on the situation in Sierra Leone on December 13, 2006. The meeting was held as a follow-up to the meeting on October 12, 2006 and in the context of the Peacebuilding Commission's ongoing work in support of **peace consolidation** and **risk reduction** efforts led by the government of Sierra Leone.

Progress to Date

2. Members of the Commission noted with appreciation the efforts of the government of Sierra Leone in further revising the Peace Consolidation Strategy based on national consultations involving all stakeholders and highlighting the immediate peacebuilding challenges facing Sierra Leone. The Commission also welcomed the efforts of the international community in supporting the government in the development and implementation of the **Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS)**, the **Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF)**, and the **Peace Consolidation Strategy (PCS)**, and in building national capacities for conflict prevention and long-term development. All peacebuilding efforts should be linked to the existing strategies under the **leadership and ownership** of the government of Sierra Leone. Members of the Commission noted with satisfaction the support provided by various donors to several critical areas of interventions, in particular in infrastructure rehabilitation and service provision.

3. Members of the Commission recognized that the process of engagement between the government and the international community including the UN system through these various frameworks should lead to greater **confidence-building** and **concrete results** which can be described as peace dividends. Indeed an important contribution that the PBC can make is to help countries emerging from conflict to support the creation of an enabling environment for economic recovery, and medium to long-term growth and development, including by stimulating domestic investments, promoting trade and increasing foreign investment. The Commission also recognized the need to encourage **sub-regional cooperation** as an important element of consolidation of peace and stability and in that regard encouraged continued support to the Mano River Union and ECOWAS.

4. Members of the Commission welcomed the political will and commitment of the government of Sierra Leone in addressing youth empowerment and employment issues through the creation of a **Youth Employment Scheme** which focuses on the most immediate challenges facing young people. Some donors and the UN system have already expressed commitment to support the government's efforts in this regard, noting that such support will have a quick impact and an overall positive effect on the stability of the country. In this regard the contribution of the private sector to economic growth including creating sustainable opportunities for youth employment should be encouraged.

5. Members of the Commission noted with satisfaction that arrangements to facilitate the disbursement of the Peacebuilding Fund in Sierra Leone have been put into place and that progress was made in identifying priority activities. With the conclusion of the review stipulated in the Terms of Reference of the Fund, it is expected that a country envelope of approximately US\$ 25 million can be made available as an initial contribution. In this context, it was noted that arrangements are now in place to enable donors to convert pledges announced into contributions.

Challenges and Gaps

6. The Commission welcomed the efforts of the government in implementing the comprehensive **Security Sector Reform Programme** and improving the professionalism and capacity of the security

agencies. Members of the Commission noted that support to reform efforts in the justice and security sectors are critical to addressing the immediate challenges to peace consolidation.

7. The Commission agreed with the government that establishing and strengthening democratic institutions of governance are indispensable prerequisites for peacebuilding, and that support to such institutions is critical as Sierra Leone prepares for its second post-conflict parliamentary and presidential elections. Enhancing the role and participation of civil society including women's groups in Sierra Leone's political transformation is critical and requires urgent attention and support through capacity-building activities and the **strengthening of coordination and communication** strategies with the government and other actors.

8. Members of the Commission agreed with the government that addressing the challenges facing the **justice system** in Sierra Leone requires a comprehensive approach, including the implementation of the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, support for the continued work of the Special Court, support to the newly established National Human Rights Commission, support to efforts enhancing traditional dispute settlement mechanisms, addressing the backlog of court cases, and increasing access to justice for the majority of the population.

9. The Commission welcomed the desire of the government to undertake a comprehensive and sustainable **civil service reform** providing opportunities for merit-based recruitment and stronger performance accountability systems. The creation of the Senior Executive Service within the Civil Service was seen as a first step in this direction. Further support is needed to urgently address the capacity gap and low levels of women in the civil service, and ensure effective delivery of public services. The Commission noted with satisfaction the collaboration between the government and international partners in launching a review of a **National Anti-Corruption Strategy** and stressed the need to enhance efforts at combating corruption and promoting greater accountability, through implementation of its recommendations.

Next Steps and Recommendations

10. The Commission recognizes that peacebuilding, whether in Sierra Leone or elsewhere, requires sustained efforts across a broad spectrum of political commitments, security reforms, development investments, and responses to the immediate needs of the population. While emphasizing the importance of detailed mapping and further identification of gaps, members of the Commission noted that the completion of a **mapping process should be carried out in parallel to support for immediate, short-term, quick-impact priorities.**

11. Members of the Commission urged the international community to ensure an adequate level of external assistance and to lend support to the Government of Sierra Leone to **broaden its donor base** and secure assistance, including further **debt relief**, to meet its peace consolidation objectives. Members of the Commission further noted the need to focus donor resources to **enhance national capacity, coordination and aid effectiveness** in full agreement with the government of Sierra Leone.

12. Members of the Commission called on the international community to provide, in a timely manner, **adequate resources and support** for the **upcoming presidential and parliamentary elections**, including capacity-building to ensure **women's equal participation** in the political process.

13. Members of the Commission requested the PBSO to present a **calendar of ongoing and planned peacebuilding-related activities** for Sierra Leone.

14. Members of the Commission recognized that the PBC process should enable further **sharpening of the Peace Consolidation Strategy**, as well as monitoring progress on its implementation. Members of the Commission requested the Chair of the Country-Specific Meeting for Sierra Leone to develop, in consultation with the members of the country-specific meeting of the PBC and with the active support of the PBSO, a **work plan for the country-specific meeting on Sierra Leone with a clear timeline and division of responsibilities for actions** to be undertaken by the Government, the UN system and other stakeholders in preparation for the next country-specific meeting of the PBC. The members of the Commission also requested the Chair, with the support of the PBSO, to keep them **informed** and **regularly briefed** of the progress in implementing the work plan, and to draw upon their expertise and contributions in this process.

15. Members of the Commission stressed that every effort should be made to deliver the **PBF country envelope for Sierra Leone in January 2007** so that implementation of the agreed short-term priorities can commence immediately, taking into account the need for wider consultations among all stakeholders on specific projects. **A follow-up meeting of the Commission on Sierra Leone which will be held in March 2007** will review actions and progress undertaken in the realization of peacebuilding goals and priorities, the effectiveness of international assistance and ways in which this assistance can be enhanced. In response to the invitation of the Government of Sierra Leone, the Commission Members agreed to consider the possibility of a visit to that country before the review.