Peacebuilding Commission

Ambassadorial-level meeting of the peacebuilding Commission Configuration on Guinea-Bissau

22 January 2025, 10:00 AM – 01:00 PM, Conference Room 2

Concept Note

Context and background

Guinea-Bissau was one of the first countries to engage with the Peacebuilding Commission, which established the Guinea-Bissau Configuration in 2007. The primary focus of the Configuration has been to provide a platform for the Government of Guinea-Bissau and its partners to exchange on the peacebuilding challenges impeding long-term development, as well as to help mobilize international support for the country's peacebuilding and development priorities.

Guinea-Bissau faces a number of development challenges as one of the least developed countries. Structural limitations, such as a lack of economic diversification, heavy reliance on cashew nut exports, and insufficient investment in key sectors like education, health, and infrastructure, have contributed to poverty. Additionally, unemployment, particularly among young people, political tensions and high vulnerability to climate shocks continue to be critical issues.

The Government has been working with various partners to improve macroeconomic policies. The Government has made progress in implementing the IMF Extended Credit Facility reforms, by meeting eight of nine performance criteria and all indicative targets for June 2024. This has strengthened fiscal governance and credibility with donors, enabling access to concessional funding, and supporting fiscal sustainability. While the Government's structural reforms are progressing, the IMF has urged further efforts in governance, transparency, and economic diversification to ensure sustainable and inclusive growth. The World Bank has finalized a new Country Partnership Framework in consultation with the UN to frame its dialogue and operations with the Government. The African Development Bank has shaped its country engagement under the strategic priority of supporting structural transformation anchored on infrastructure and governance reforms for inclusive growth. Guinea-Bissau is also in consultation with other development partners, including the Islamic Development Bank.

The United Nations Country Team in Guinea-Bissau has been implementing the current United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (2022-2026) with the Government and other national stakeholders. Anchored in the three strategic pillars of transformative governance,

structural economic transformation, and human capital development, initiatives aim to foster inclusive growth and resilience while aligning with national priorities and the SDGs. The UNCT has tentatively identified rule of law and security, food systems transformation, as well as education and technical vocational education and training (TVET), as its collective priorities in 2025, with a particular focus on youth and gender equality. Moreover, the Peacebuilding Fund currently has an active portfolio of seven operational projects in Guinea-Bissau, with a total budget of $23 million.

Since 2007, the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) has invested about $67 million in Guinea-Bissau, supporting projects ranging from youth and women's empowerment to institutional reforms agreed upon in the ECOWAS Roadmap and 2016 Conakry Agreement, echoing the country's 2019 Stability Pact. Since 2020, PBF support has been guided by the UN Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS) transition and the peacebuilding priorities identified by the UN Country Team and the Government in 2022. The major focus of post-2020 PBF support has been on helping to ensure that key areas of political dialogue, the fight against drugs and transnational crime, and support for human rights are not unduly affected by the closure of UNIOGBIS, which had supported these vital areas. Partnerships with Civil Society Organizations have been cross-cutting across all programming priorities, with an additional focus on supporting the institutional empowerment of these critical peacebuilding actors.

Since 2023, the PBF has supported new initiatives focusing on addressing community land conflicts and transhumance, including from the climate security angle, with stronger emphasis on the involvement of women and young people. The Fund has enabled more inclusive social dialogue and governance in the health sector. It has also supported the Citizens' Convention, an initiative that brings together over 100 CSOs to engage in dialogue with government authorities, through recommendations in ten critical areas including health, youth, employment, inclusion, and human rights.

The Government has also initiated a review of the 2022-2023 National Development Plan under the leadership of the Ministry of Economy, Planning and Regional Integration. It plans to update its 2009 population data by undertaking the country´s Fourth National Census in 2025, with support from the UN and World Bank. In addition, the Government is committed to improving development cooperation with the UN and other multilateral and bilateral partners and strengthening its integrated national financing frameworks (INFF) for SDG financing.

Objectives and expected outcomes

This Ambassadorial-level meeting of the Configuration on Guinea-Bissau presents an important opportunity to revitalize the Peacebuilding Commission's engagement with the country. It provides a platform for Guinea-Bissau to outline its current peacebuilding priorities and seek

support from the PBC, while also enabling the PBC to explore effective ways to provide meaningful assistance.

Guiding questions

1. What are the peacebuilding priorities in Guinea-Bissau that require immediate attention? And what international support is required to assist the country with those peacebuilding priorities?

2. What can the PBC and its Configuration do to support Guinea-Bissau and the UN Country Team in accelerating towards the SDG, particularly rule of law and security, food systems transformation as well as education and TVET, with a focus on youth and gender equality?

3. How can the UN support Guinea-Bissau to better foster national ownership and strengthen capacity-building?

Provisional agenda

Opening remarks by H.E. Mr. Sérgio França Danese, Permanent Representative of Brazil, Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission's Configuration on Guinea-Bissau.

- Briefings by:
  - H.E. Mr. Carlos Pinto Pereira, Minister of Foreign Affairs, International Cooperation and Communities of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau.
  - Ms. Barrie Freeman, Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Deputy Head of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel.
  - Ms. Geneviève Boutin, United Nations Resident Coordinator in the Republic of Guinea-Bissau.
  - Ms. Denise Indeque, Coordinator of the Guinea-Bissau office of the West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP).
- Interventions from floor.
- Remarks by Ms. Elizabeth Spehar, United Nations Assistant Secretary-General for Peacebuilding Support.

Closing remarks by H.E. Mr. Sérgio França Danese, Permanent Representative of Brazil, Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission's Configuration on Guinea-Bissau.