



Peacebuilding Fund Updates

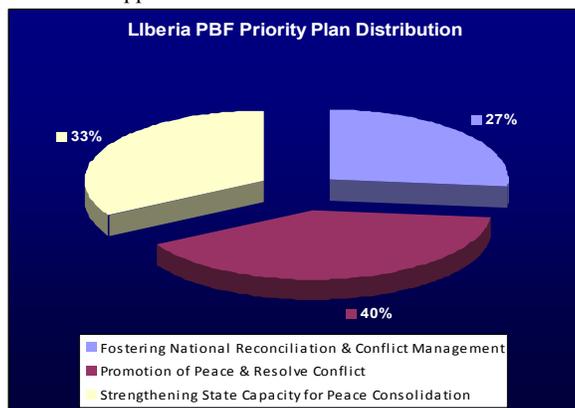
Guinea-Bissau eligible for UN Peacebuilding fund

13 March 2008 – The Secretary-General declared Guinea-Bissau eligible for support from the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF). This announcement comes in response to a decision of the Peacebuilding Commission on 20 February, in its country-specific configuration on Guinea-Bissau, to advise the Secretary-General to declare the country eligible. The amount of the country allocation will be determined at a later stage, based on the outcome of ongoing consultations between the Government of Guinea-Bissau and the United Nations.

Other PBF Activities and Support Missions

17 December 2007 - The PBF allocated US\$15 million to support the ongoing peacebuilding process in Liberia, funding projects to reduce poverty, promote national reconciliation and provide employment and other opportunities for war-affected and young people (see graph below). The establishment of the PBF infrastructure for Liberia was then initiated with a joint PBSO/MDTF mission to Liberia in January.

A technical review mission also visited Sierra Leone and discussed with UN Team and Government on the re-launching of the PBF following the Sierra Leone elections. PBSO has also been monitoring progress under the Emergency window in all the four approved countries.



The Second PBF Advisory Group Meeting held

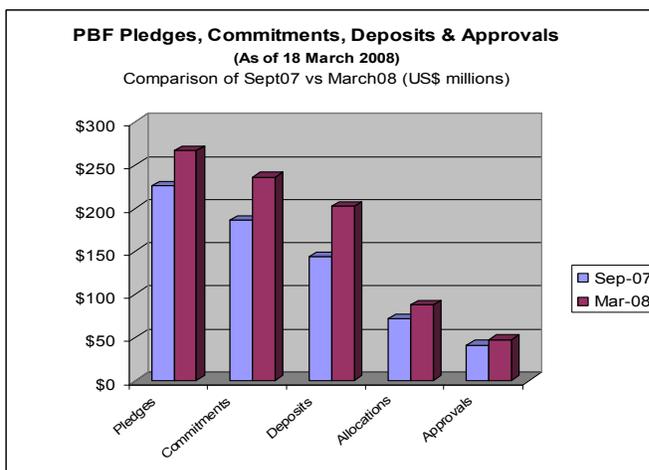
On 5 and 6 March 2008, the PBSO organized the second meeting of the PBF Advisory Group. Appointed by the Secretary General, the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) Advisory Group is an independent group, drawn from all the regions and with experience on peacebuilding that provides advice and oversight to the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF). The second meeting provided useful guidance on the use of the various PBF windows, funding allocations, the upcoming independent evaluation of the PBF and ways to improve project performance and delivery. A public seminar on “Catalytic Action for Peacebuilding: Examples of the PBF” hosted by the Government of Finland preceded the Advisory Group meeting

on 5 March and had invited guest speakers from two PBC countries - Liberia and Burundi - who both shared their respective country lessons and experience on peacebuilding using PBF support.

| BASIC FACTS (As of 18 March 2008) | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| Total Portfolio: | \$267,291,861 |
| • Pledges: | \$31,245,066 |
| • Commitments: | \$236,046,795 |
| • Deposits: | \$202,662,483 |
| Funds Allocated: | \$88,253,903 |
| Number of Donors: | 43 |
| Countries: | Burundi, Sierra Leone, Cote d'Ivoire, CAR, Guinea Conakry, Liberia |

PBF Resource Position

Going into its second year of operation, the PBF, as 18 March 2008 had a total portfolio (un-disbursed pledges and commitments) of **US\$267.3 million**. Those confirmed as firm **commitments** amount to **US\$236 million**, 94% of its initial funding target set at US\$ 250 million. A total of 43 donors participating in the Fund had deposited a total of **US\$202.7 million**, or 85% of commitments. **In all**, a total of **27 projects** have been approved for PBF support since its inception, with six countries, i.e. Burundi, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Cote d'Ivoire, Central African Republic, and Guinea benefiting. Guinea Bissau is expected to join the list once its funding envelope is released. Of the US\$202.7 million available for programming in the PBF account, a total of US\$88, or 44% of total deposits has been allocated for Windows I, II and III to the approved country-projects. Germany announced a US\$10 million contribution to the PBF for the year 2008, showing continued donor confidence and interest in the work of the PBF.



Sierra Leone – PBF Support for the Creation of the Human Rights Commission and its Achievements

By PBF Secretariat, Sierra Leone.

The Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) has provided a seed grant of US\$1.5 million to support for the creation of a National Human Rights Commission (HRC) that was Lome Peace Treaty of 1999. Mandated by Parliament to “receive and act on complains of human rights violations, monitor, investigate, document and report on human rights situations, raise public awareness on human rights, to oversee Government’s compliance with treaty obligations and to serve as a follow-on committee in overseeing the recommendations of the TRC and inform the moral guarantors accordingly”, the establishment of the Commission has helped Sierra Leone in its peacebuilding efforts.

The lack of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms was identified as one of the root causes of the conflict in Sierra Leone, while post-war human right challenges like the lack of respect for rights of women and children, the failure to fully address the plight of war victims, etc continue to plague the nation. Moreover, the lack of confidence and trust in the justice system has compelled many victims and their families to channel their complaints of human rights violation to the HRC. Since its establishment with PBF support, the Commission has address some of the challenges, and even assumed new tasks that include compiling for Parliament, the annual “*State of Affairs of Human Rights Report*”.

Achievements and progress

Since its creation, the HRC has successfully considered and resolved cases that would have either deteriorated into violence situations and/or threaten the prevailing peace if they had not been given due attention. Under the leadership of its Executive Director, the Commission has received 70 complaints, with the commonly reported violations boarder on alleged cases of deprivation of life, discrimination and political intolerance, prolonged delay in trials, denial of right to education, over detention, etc. In a bid to monitor the TRC recommendations, the HRC that has now taken custody of the TRC archives, is also pushing for war victims compensation.

Documented success cases

Of particular mention to the HRC’s successes as a peacebuilding agent are two cases sighted below: the widely publicized case of “*investigations into a mysterious death of a school girl called Alima Kamara*”; and the “*discrimination and disenfranchisement of the now-Honourable Veronica Sesay*”.

Trustworthy investigations into mysterious deaths – the case of Alima Kamara: On 25th October 2007, violent public reactions erupted in the eastern city Kenema and the capital Freetown following reports of the mysterious death of a secondary school girl purportedly at the hands of a local business man. The public as it seemed were less convinced about the outcome of initial police investigations and post mortem that exonerated the alleged

perpetrator. Resultant violence by angry youth wanted further investigations led to the destruction of property worth millions of Dollars.

Consequent to the public’s reaction, and the complaints by the deceased’s family, the newly created and PBF-funded HRC, ordered a coroner’s inquest and reopened the investigations. Calm returned to the affected areas and mutually respected investigations were being carried-out under the guidance of the Commission. Had it not been for the existence of the Commission, this case would have sparked wider violence that would threaten the peace.

Discrimination and Disenfranchisement (The case of Now-Honourable Veronica Sesay): Hon. Madam Veronica Sesay who comes from the Moyamba District of southern Sierra Leone, and one district that happens to have communities who continue to hold a tradition precluding women from running for public office. Madam Sesay who represented the SLPP party chose to run for office in her area during the last constituency elections. Some 100 chiefs and secret society elders came together and signed a petition against her candidacy, categorically pointing their dissatisfaction to a female candidate. Hon. Veronica filled her case with the HRC quoting the petition and requesting the HRCSL to step in and guarantee her rights to her franchise - to vote and to be voted for.

Upon receipt of the complaint, the Commission first organized a radio discussion program in the District in the bid to raise awareness on rights and democracy, political pluralism and non discrimination whilst it lobbied community elders and local politicians in the area. Veronica subsequently received the endorsement of the community elders to run for office. She won the constituency elections gaining 7,898 votes (78% of total vote) and defeating male candidates that represented other political parties. She is now a member of parliament, with assigned duties in key Parliamentary Committees including Marine Resources, and Information and Communication Committee. In all, failure to act on this case would have led to those community leaders to disenfranchise not only Veronica but the population that voted for her.



Veronica Sesay Campaigning before the polls in 2007. Pic. by PBF- SC, Freetown, 2007

For more information on the work of the Peacebuilding Fund visit: www.unpbf.org or contact

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