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Preparation Paper

Peacebuilding Commission (PBC)

"Action Plan for a Sustainable Development of the Republic of Liberia"

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encompassing the role and evolution of: imposed smart sanctions, the DDR process and the security sector reform, civil society organizations and transnational corporations.

Introduction: the PBC

In March 2005, following the proposal of the "High Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change", the Secretary General Kofi Annan recommended the creation of a Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) in his own report "In Larger Freedom". The aim of the Commission, conceived as a body with a broad membership encompassing not only states but a variety of actors involved in the reconstruction of war-torn countries, is to design peacebuilding strategies for countries and societies emerging from conflict in order to foster long-term development and to prevent countries (or even regions) from relapsing into war.

The Security Council Resolution 1645 of 20th December 2005 and the General Assembly Resolution 60/180 of 30th December 2005 emphasized the need for a coordinated, coherent and integrated approach to post-conflict Peacebuilding and reconciliation with a view to achieving sustainable peace. It's on the basis of these two resolutions that the PBC was established as a consensus based advisory body.

The PBC meets in two different composition: the Organizational Committee composition, made up of 31 member countries, and the country-specific composition where participation is tailored in order to involve country representatives and other relevant actors such as regional organizations, regional banks and international financial institutions. It's in the country-specific meetings that the PBC is supposed to elaborate the strategies for post-conflict recovery and long-term sustainable development.

The Commission held its first conference on June 23, 2006 and it dealt with the first two country cases, Sierra Leona and Burundi, at the end of 2006.

The Topic: Creation of an integrated long-term strategy for the Republic of Liberia

Liberia has suffered from violent conflict for the past 25 years. The causes of conflict are deeply rooted in the country's history, characterized by gross inequalities in the distribution of power and resources and a reliance on violence to realize economic and political objectives.

In December 1989, warlord Charles Taylor's National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) launched an armed uprising from Côte d'Ivoire and soon controlled most of the country. Then-president, Samuel Doe, was overthrown and tortured to death. Doe's fall led to the political fragmentation of the country into violent factionalism. In mid-1990, Taylor's force split up and the civil war turned into an ethnic conflict, with seven factions fighting for control over Liberia's resources (especially iron ore, diamonds, timber, and rubber). With several peace agreements, a ceasefire was established and the United Nations successfully observed the conduct of the election of Charles Taylor in July 1997. The same year, the United Nations Peace-building Support Office in Liberia (UNOL) was established, with the main task of assisting the government in consolidating peace following the July 1997 multiparty elections.

However, the activities were undermined by systematic abuses of human rights, exclusion, and harassment of political opponents and the absence of security sector reform (SSR). Taylor's brutal regime targeted several leading opposition and political activists, which served to increase criticism of his person. The increasing instability rallied the international community to seek a negotiated settlement of the conflict.

In August 2003, a comprehensive peace agreement ended 14 years of intermittent fighting and prompted the resignation of former president Charles Taylor, who was exiled to Nigeria. He was arrested and was recently transferred to the UN war crimes tribunal's detention centre in The Hague where he is awaiting his trial, charging him with war crimes. After two years of rule by The National Transitional Government of Liberia, democratic elections were held. With UN and ECOMOG (Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group) troops safeguarding the peace, Liberia successfully conducted presidential elections in the fall of 2005. The November 8, 2005 presidential runoff election was won decisively by Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, a Harvard-trained economist.

The election of Ellen Johnson Sirleaf as president of the Republic of Liberia has created a unique chance for reconstruction and was saluted by the strong support of the international community. The international

climate is therefore particularly positive and stimulating for the PBC in order to design a multidimensional approach for sustainable peace and development in the country.

The overarching goal of peacebuilding is to enhance the indigenous capacity of a society to manage conflict without violence. Ultimately, peacebuilding aims at building human security, a concept that includes democratic governance, human rights, the rule of law, sustainable development, equitable access to resources, and environmental security. As such, peacebuilding involves conflict prevention, and resolution and various kinds of post conflict activities. It focuses on the political and socio-economic context of conflict, rather than on military or humanitarian aspects.

Liberia is on the way of consolidating the peace process undertaken in the last few years. Gradually lifting sanctions, in close cooperation with the present government, is a way to strengthen a peaceful future. The term smart or targeted sanctions is meant to stress the idea that this type of sanctions focuses their impact on those believed responsible for objectionable behavior, while reducing collateral damage to the general population and third countries. Since 1992, arms embargo, individual sanctions like travel bans and assets freezes and commodity sanctions directed towards the export of diamonds and timber have been imposed on Liberia by the Security Council. As they were all renewed in 2006, the question here is what role the UN sanctions can play in this regard, particularly, given positive developments, what the conditions are for their termination (for example: the full compliance of the Liberian government with the Kimberley process certification scheme and the implementation of a national law concerning the exploitation and protection of national forests and the put into practice of effective control mechanisms on the export of timber).

There is not one state in West Africa that has not suffered from some form of conflict in the past decade and the political landscape of the West African region is still pitted with unrest and turmoil. While most West African conflicts originate in one country, they involve cross-border activities that engulf other communities and states. Crisis in one country directly impacts the situation in neighboring countries, as a result of leaky uncontrolled borders. Therefore, the need to address issues like the disarmament, demobilization, rehabilitation and reintegration process and the security sector reform are of the uttermost importance. Furthermore, the monitoring of the designed strategies is a crucial dimension that must be taken into account and for which an innovative approach focusing also on the regional level is mandatory.

The United Nations and its specialized agencies have worked for decades with NGOs and calls for a more effective partnership between the UN and civil society constitute one of the main topics in the United Nations reform projects. Local and international are often the first-mover in brining appalling situations to the attention of the international community. They also catalyze financial resources in development projects. In the Liberian case, non-governmental organizations have played a very important role in unraveling the mechanisms that linked commodity export to the fuelling of civil war. The delegates will have to establish to what extent CSOs/NGOs should be involved in the creation, implementation and assessment of peace-building strategies. Moreover, a focus on the geographical dimension will be required: should local and regional organizations be favored instead of international? How to weigh and ponder the trade-off between the ability to raise funds and to lobby international institutions of big international CSOs/NGOs and the enhancement of indigenous capacities?

The involvement of private actors is one of the tiles for a successful and long-lasting strategy. For instance, concerning conflict diamonds, the commitment of international diamond traders was the fundamental axiom that allowed the Kimberley Process certification scheme to effectively work in shutting down diamond industries fuelling civil war. In Liberia, the business sector is largely controlled by foreigners. While undoubtedly vectors of international direct investments, the work of TNCs in a fragile country trying to consolidate peace can destabilize this delicate balance. Considering the timber sector, as the largest timber concession is owned by a TNC based in Indonesia, the Oriental Timber Corporation (OTC), questions concerning the relationship between the government with its obligations to implement controls in the export field and the TNCs/MNCs presence and work in the country arise. As the ultimate aim of any peacebuilding strategy is to create such environment able to guarantee human security, the Commission should decide whether to and how address the issues of human and labor rights. For example, in the rubber industry, a very attractive sector for corporations, allegations of violation of labor and human rights characterized the work of these TNCs in the country. Hence, the Commission will have to come to a decision whether it is desirable to involve the private sector in the peacebuilding process and to what extent TNCs' work should be regulate by the Liberian government accordingly with the strategies designed by the Commission. Finally, of primary importance is the foundation of growth synergies that allow the Liberian state to find a solution to the high unemployment rates without renouncing to its sovereignty and without having his citizens suffering from violations of fundamental rights.

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(further information on the bibliography referring to single issues and/or countries/organization will be sent to the delegates)

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http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/site/c.glKWLeMTIsG/b.1810109/k.D54B/Special_Research_ReportBRP eacebuilding_CommissionBR23_June_2006.htm This report gives a good summary of the creation of the PBC, its functioning and what documents to consult for further research.

http://www.un.org/largerfreedom/add2.htm This report written by K. Annan can be seen as the milestone for the creation of the PBC and it gives a good idea of the future meaning behind the PBC

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