



Security Council

Sixty-ninth year

Provisional

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Wednesday, 5 November 2014, 10 a.m.

New York

<i>President:</i>	Mr. Quinlan	(Australia)
<i>Members:</i>	Argentina	Mr. Oyarzábal
	Chad	Mr. Gombo
	Chile	Mr. Olguín Cigarroa
	China	Mr. Zhao Yong
	France	Mr. Bertoux
	Jordan	Mrs. Kawar
	Lithuania	Mrs. Jakubonė
	Luxembourg	Ms. Lucas
	Nigeria	Mr. Laro
	Republic of Korea	Mr. Oh Joon
	Russian Federation	Mr. Ilichev
	Rwanda	Mr. Manzi
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland ...	Mr. Shearman
	United States of America	Ms. Power

Agenda

The situation in Burundi

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The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

Expression of thanks to the outgoing President

The President: Before we get down to business, because this is the first meeting in the open Chamber since Australia assumed the presidency of the Security Council for this month, I would like to take the opportunity to pay tribute, on behalf of the Council, to Her Excellency Ms. María Cristina Perceval, Permanent Representative of Argentina, for her service as President of the Council for the month of October. I know that I speak for all the members of the Council in expressing our deep appreciation to Ambassador Perceval and all her team for the great diplomatic skill, empathy and good humour with which they conducted the Council's business last month.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Burundi

The President: In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Burundi to participate in this meeting.

On behalf of the Council, I welcome Ambassador Gahutu Zacharie, Director General of International Organizations and Non-governmental Organizations at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Burundi, who is joining today's meeting via video teleconference from Bujumbura.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Parfait Onanga-Anyanga, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Office in Burundi, to participate in this meeting.

On behalf of the Council, I welcome Mr. Onanga-Anyanga, who is also joining today's meeting via video teleconference from Bujumbura.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite His Excellency Mr. Paul Seger, Permanent Representative of Switzerland and Chair of the Burundi configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission, to participate in the meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I give the floor to Mr. Onanga-Anyanga.

Mr. Onanga-Anyanga (spoke in French): At the outset, I would like to congratulate you, Mr. President, on assuming the presidency of the Security Council for the month of November and for the contribution of your country to efforts towards a more stable, peaceful world.

The dominant development, beyond anything else, is Burundi's entry into the campaign period for the elections of 2015. Despite the negative impact of the boycott of the 2010 elections, the entire Burundian national political class expressed its will to turn the upcoming vote into an opportunity not only to perfect the electoral mechanisms but also to guarantee inclusive participation in a more tolerant, peaceful environment, which will contribute to building peace and national reconciliation.

The President of the Republic himself best indicated the link between the upcoming elections and peacebuilding in Burundi when, on 1 July, he said,

"As we already announced to Burundians and to the international community, our wish is for the 2015 elections to take place in a better way than all those we have organized until now. The elections will give the country, institutions and leaders who have the people's trust. The elections will create peace and consolidate and strengthen democracy and independence in the country".

We share that aspiration and that very appropriate comment by the Head of State.

However, we must redouble our efforts, since we are approximately six months away from those important elections and progress to that end continues to be limited. The outstanding progress we have made on the level of political dialogue is being subjected to a difficult test. Although the entire legislative framework is now in place, the setting up by CENI of divisions on the provincial and communal levels has generated controversy and rekindled accusations of partiality on the part of CENI by the opposition.

The President of CENI is committed to correcting the imbalances identified, even though he warned that it would be impossible to satisfy all claims. Whether true or not, the charges reflect the distrust of a significant part of the political class with respect to the institution responsible for organizing the elections in 2015, even before they have begun. We deeply regret that situation,

which shows a lack of trust between the majority and the opposition.

The tensions in the political climate are also present in the various trials in which major opposition figures are appearing. Through these lawsuits, a few months before the elections, the opposition is saying that the justice system is being exploited and not very free, a charge the Government denies, saying it does not interfere with the course of justice. It is not too late to turn these misunderstandings into an opportunity to build confidence in the whole electoral process.

The third evaluation of the road map, which was held 23 October in Gitega at the invitation of the Government and the United Nations Office in Burundi (BNUB), within the framework of the inclusive political dialogue initiated in March 2013, helped the entire Burundian political class to exchange views on the political situation of the country. Although no agreement has been reached on the effective implementation of the code of good conduct adopted, as the Council knows, in June, the meeting in Gitega favoured a clarification of the current political circumstances, while reaffirming the principle of inclusion, without which the credibility of the electoral process would be undermined.

The Government has clearly chosen to reaffirm the rule of law on the basis of more overtly political, previously approved recommendations, refusing to operationalize the concept of the political operator and inviting the opposition to frame its action in strict compliance with the laws in force. We must nevertheless welcome the commitment made by the Government to continue the political dialogue. We also welcome the reaffirmation by the opposition of its determination to participate in future elections to completion, regardless of the constraints. It is now important to focus on the key issues set out in the code of good conduct, in particular to create a more open political space and a reliable safe environment to ensure the protection of all stakeholders in the electoral process, guarantee the freedom and fairness of the elections and condemn and ban political violence in all its forms, especially those that involve youth leagues affiliated with political parties.

The existence of a legal framework and operational mechanisms of CENI will not by themselves be enough to restore confidence in the electoral process. CENI should provide further assurances by strengthening its image as an independent and impartial authority, especially by including all stakeholders in the key

pre- and post-election phases of the process, such as in voter registration, whose launch is scheduled for 24 November, and in the management of electoral disputes.

(spoke in English)

While the upcoming elections are by far the most pressing and multifaceted political challenge facing the country, other significant developments are worth mentioning. Overall, Burundi has continued to enjoy a rather stable security situation throughout its territory. On a related note, during most of the reporting period, a significant drop in acts of political violence and intolerance perpetrated by youth affiliated with political parties was evident, marked by a decrease in the number of violations of the rights to life and physical integrity. From a monthly average of 10 incidents observed between January and July, the number of incidents associated with the youth of the ruling party documented by BNUB dropped to 7 in August and 3 in September. Regular calls by the President of the ruling party warning perpetrators of individual consequences seem to have been heeded. Those incidents include the banning or disruption of public meetings and threats against or physical assaults committed on members of opposition parties. Civil society organizations and journalists were also affected.

In a positive development, on 29 September, human rights defender, Mr. Pierre Claver Mbonimpa, was released on health grounds. However, his case is still pending in court.

It should also be noted that no significant progress has been seen in the fight against impunity, including in the cases of extrajudicial killings that BNUB has documented since 2011, considering that only a small number of cases have been tried in a court of law. In a related development, justice reform has been slow, especially with respect to the key issues of the independence of the judiciary. It is, however, worth mentioning that further to the adoption and promulgation of the law on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, the process to select commissioners has been initiated. Various national and international stakeholders have made calls for a credible and inclusive Commission.

On 26 August, during an address to the nation, President Nkurunziza acknowledged that corruption remained one of the Government's major challenges. He reaffirmed his commitment to a policy of zero tolerance for corruption. In that regard, the work of the

Office Burundais des Recettes — the Burundian tax collection authority — must be hailed and encouraged. Exemplary action will indeed be needed to advance that important objective.

I am pleased to report that, with respect to transition, progress towards BNUB's end of activities proceeded in accordance with the joint transition plan. Symbolically, BNUB's activities will end on 12 December with the lowering of the United Nations flag from its headquarters. A progressive reduction in BNUB staff has continued as part of the staff drawdown plan, balancing staff departures with the conduct of BNUB's substantive activities until the end of its mandate. The United Nations country team has continued to beef up its capacity in the areas in which BNUB will cease its activities, notably in governance and rule of law, bearing in mind the need to avoid gaps.

The approval by the Government on 11 August of the continued presence of a stand-alone office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights based on the 1995 agreement paved the way for ensuring continued United Nations engagement in human rights in Burundi. That is a very positive development, as it will include capacity-building programmes with the relevant Government institutions, the Independent National Human Rights Commission and civil society organizations. We call on the Council and Member States to ensure that sufficient resources are allocated for the new office.

Moving forward, Burundi will continue to need strong support from all its partners to overcome outstanding challenges and implement its national poverty alleviation and development strategy. I commend Ambassador Paul Seger for his leadership and unflagging commitment to peace consolidation and development efforts in Burundi. BNUB and the entire United Nations family are mobilized to actively participate in the round table scheduled to take place in Bujumbura on 11 and 12 December.

In conclusion — and this point cannot be overemphasized — the Government should continue to do everything in its power to preserve peace and stability and consolidate democracy. It should avoid any posture that could lead to a reversal of the gains achieved so far. I have every confidence that it will do so. As the country prepares itself for the upcoming 2015 elections, there is no better way to achieve that goal than to proactively implement inclusive and transparent

policies to ensure the credibility of the electoral process, which will represent a critical test that Burundi cannot afford to fail in its march towards greater peace and prosperity for all of its people.

The President: I thank Mr. Onanga-Anyanga for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Seger.

Mr. Seger (*spoke in French*): Since this is the last meeting of the Council before the closing of the United Nations Office in Burundi (BNUB) at the end of 2014, not including the meeting scheduled for January, let me begin by conveying my heartfelt thanks to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Parfait Onanga-Anyanga, and his entire team in Bujumbura. I would like to welcome in particular the exemplary professionalism and unshakable dedication that they have always shown in implementing the complex tasks assigned them by the Council and the implementation of a smooth transition by the end of the year. Thanks to their support, I was able to play my part in the peacebuilding process.

I also welcome the presence of my dear friend Ambassador Zacharie Gahutu, Director General for International Organizations and Non-Governmental Organizations at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Burundi.

I would like to cover three main points today. After some remarks on the current situation in the country, I would like to expand on the subject of the end of the United Nations mission and its implications. Finally, I would like to talk about the round-table meeting that will be held on 11 and 12 December in Bujumbura between the Government and its main bilateral and multilateral partners.

During my most recent briefing to the Council in May (see S/PV.7174), I observed a growing lack of trust that was hindering the country's progress on two levels: both internally between the ruling party and the opposition and externally between the Government and its main international partners. Today, with the electoral process fully under way, those tensions persist. To not repeat what has already been said by Special Representative of the Secretary-General, I will refrain from dwelling on the details of recent developments, but will limit myself to some key messages with regard to next year's elections, which are of paramount importance.

Inclusive participation is key. Indeed, I believe we cannot overestimate that element. All political stakeholders must be allowed to participate in the electoral process in a free, fair and secure manner. Political space must be opened up not only in theory but in practice and throughout the entire country. The Government is primarily responsible in that regard. I therefore call on it to prepare for the elections with the confidence of a country that is undertaking this exercise in democracy for the third time since emerging from its bloody past, and with the vigilance of a country that is aware of the fragility of its peacebuilding process and the responsibility inherent in it.

I also urge the opposition parties not to repeat the mistakes of 2010 and to participate in the elections. They must declare their willingness to contribute to the country's political dynamic in order to strengthen the democratic process and work hand in hand towards a prosperous future for Burundi. There must be a medium- and long-term vision rather than a focus on short-term political considerations.

Finally, while the primary responsibility lies with the Government, I appeal to all political stakeholders to refrain from any behaviour that could further increase tensions or lead to acts of political violence. I remain confident that that will not occur, since no-one would stand to gain from it, but we should all continue to work hand in hand to prevent that from happening.

BNUB's imminent departure at the end of the year is a crucial and delicate moment for Burundi — crucial because it gives the country an opportunity to prove that it is ready to start a new chapter in its peacebuilding process, but also delicate because it comes only five months prior to the general elections. BNUB will leave behind serious gaps, not least in the areas of political dialogue and high-level facilitation, which were identified as priority areas in the joint transition plan adopted by the Council earlier this year. However, efforts are well under way to ensure a smooth transition into the post-BNUB phase, and I am happy to note that. I welcome the United Nations electoral mission, which will be deployed with the approval of the Government on 1 January 2015 and will remain until after the elections.

The strengthening of the United Nations country team is also on the right path. It is important that the transition from BNUB to the country team be carried out in a seamless manner. I therefore call upon the

United Nations Development Programme for a timely nomination of a Resident Coordinator for Burundi with the necessary profile to support the country at the socioeconomic level and on related institutional and political issues.

Furthermore, the Government's commitment to cooperate with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to continue to promote that agenda in Burundi is an encouraging sign, as the Special Representative of the Secretary-General noted. However, while the political will to open a stand-alone office exists, the necessary financial means to maintain its field presence are still lacking. Therefore, as Chair of the Burundi configuration, I organized a working lunch with Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights Ivan Šimonović to raise awareness among interested Member States of the needs of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. I was encouraged by the broad support expressed at that meeting, and I appeal to participants today to make a contribution. That echoes what the Special Representative of the Secretary-General just stated a few minutes ago. Beyond the Office's role as a protective presence, considerable work remains to be done in the field of human rights in terms of civil and political rights, the transitional justice process and the establishment of social and economic rights for all Burundians, which is a goal we all pursue.

Last week, I also had a very fruitful meeting with the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General to the Great Lakes Region, Mr. Said Djinnit. We both believe that the current challenges have to be tackled through a regional approach and are committed to working together to enhance the role of regional and subregional organizations. Those organizations, including the African Union, the East African Community, the Economic Community of the Great Lakes Countries and others, will become even more important once BNUB has left Burundi. Regional cooperation is also crucial to fulfilling the economic potential of the countries of the Great Lakes region and promoting the socioeconomic development necessary for its people.

I believe Burundi will continue to make progress in peacebuilding, leaving its conflicted past behind once and for all. Until then, vigilance is required, including by the Council, and I will seek to provide continued support to the country on its path.

This brings me to my third and final point, the round-table meeting. On 9 October, I wrote a letter to the Council announcing that a round-table meeting between the Government and its main bilateral and institutional partners would take place on 11 and 12 December in Bujumbura. That decision was reached at a high-level luncheon I organized on 29 September, attended by the First Vice-President and the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Burundi, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs Jeffrey Feltman, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and other eminent persons from Member States and multilateral institutions.

On the basis of the concept paper, which I also transmitted to the Council, it was agreed that the round table would have three objectives: first, to take stock of progress achieved in and challenges to the implementation of the second poverty reduction strategy paper, which was presented at the 2012 Geneva Partners Conference, in particular in view of the 2015 elections; secondly, to discuss the implications of BNUB's departure and its consequences for the future cooperation between Burundi and its bilateral and institutional partners at the regional and international level; and, thirdly, to evaluate future perspectives for a mutually beneficial partnership for Burundi's development and long-term prosperity on the assumption that, in 2015, fair, safe, democratic and universal elections will have laid the foundation for peaceful and sustainable development in the country.

Ideally, the number of high-level representatives of the Government and the main partners participating in the round table would be limited in order to encourage an open and frank conversation in an informal setting. I am encouraged by the many assurances of commitment I have already received from high-level representatives in that regard. Together with the Government, we are currently working on a joint declaration to be adopted at the end of the December meeting, and we will submit it to all the main partners in due time. The declaration aims at identifying the progress achieved, as well as the areas requiring further attention and intervention. Its objective is to define a new set of mutual commitments that would guide the common way forward during the election year and beyond.

I welcome the Government's decision to organize the round table. Invitations should be sent out soon. I intend to travel to Burundi in the days leading up to the round table to meet the parties involved, as is the usual

practice. Prior to that, I will be part of a delegation of Chairs of the Peacebuilding Commission visiting the African Union in Addis Ababa. On that occasion, I will further discuss the issue of regional engagement.

There is no doubt that Burundi is going through a challenging and decisive phase. The tasks at hand are critical to the consolidation of the gains the country has achieved and to laying the foundation for a long-term vision, following the elections in 2015. BNUB's drawdown and, even more importantly, the 2015 elections are milestones and must be managed with utmost care, but they also offer new opportunities. Burundi has a historical chance to show the international community that it has overcome its painful past and that it is embarking on a new era based on strong democratic institutions and defined by the improvement of the living standards of its population, in particular of its youth. The international community must help Burundi achieve those goals.

The President: I thank Mr. Seger for his briefing.

I now give the floor to the representative of Burundi.

Mr. Gahutu (Burundi) (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the Government of the Republic of Burundi and on behalf of the Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, I would like to extend my sincere congratulations to you, Mr. President, on your assumption of presidency of the Security Council for the month of November.

The Government of Burundi would like to bring the following facts to the attention of the international and national community. In response to the recent information circulated in some local media, the Government of Burundi reiterates its political will to protect the entire population of Burundi and all foreigners living in the country against threats or attacks from saboteurs and criminals of all stripes. In order to accomplish that task, which is its primary mission, the Government calls for the cooperation of all its citizens and all foreigners and urges them to report all troublemakers, including by providing any information they may have about any acts aimed at destabilizing Burundi or crimes committed on its territory.

The Government of Burundi takes this opportunity to express its thanks to the bilateral and multilateral partners working in Burundi and for the clear cooperation they have demonstrated throughout its

long march to consolidate the peace process that began more than a decade ago.

During this crucial period, Burundi has been preparing itself for general and presidential elections for the third time. It calls on the same partners to redouble their efforts to ensure that the elections take place in good conditions, ensuring the security, freedom and transparency of the elections for all. The Government is aware of the scale of the task before it, but is confident that it will successfully carry out its responsibilities with the help of the entire population and its regional and international community in general. In that regard, the Government would like to note that the road map adopted by all political and Burundian stakeholders and the consultations undertaken between the Government and all stakeholders will herald a peaceful environment for the elections of 2015.

The Government's discussion with political actors on facilitating the role of the United Nations Office in Burundi (BNUB) in our country reflects its resolve to conduct an inclusive, fair and free electoral process. Similarly, the current work of the media and civil society in general, as well as the consultations begun by the Government with religious groups, demonstrate the Government's desire to open a political space to all throughout the country. While the Government has the primary responsibility for ensuring the security of all those living in the territory of its country, it avails itself of the opportunity to call on all political actors to refrain from any action that could lead to heightened tensions and to avoid political violence. In doing so, it will be possible for us to bury once and for all the hatchet that has bloodied our country's history and its sanguinary past.

The Government of Burundi would like to recall that BNUB's mandate expires at the end of 2014. It is also aware that the drawdown will leave a vacuum to be filled, which will be difficult on many levels. However, it is time for the Government to assume its responsibilities and prove that it is up to the challenge in an effective and efficient fashion. The Government is also aware that many challenges lie ahead. That is why it calls on the United Nations Office in Burundi and other partners involved to implement the joint transition plan and the peacebuilding priority plan as swiftly as possible.

It should be noted that an agreement between the Government of Burundi and the United Nations with

regard to the deployment of the electoral observer mission has also almost been reached. The same will hold true with respect to other partners who may wish to participate in the monitoring of the elections next year in Burundi. In that regard, we should stress that this is the same language that the Government has used for the past month. The Government is also willing to work with all partners in the area of human rights and to do everything in its power to conclude the ongoing process of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

The Government continues to work with other Governments in the subregion and in Africa as a whole to promote regional cooperation through the organizations of which it is a member and with the African Union. In the framework of the implementation of the Vision Burundi 2025 and our second Strategic Framework for Growth and the Fight against Poverty, Burundi would like to see all the commitments made at the Geneva Partners Conference, held in October, 2012, honoured by all partners. Indeed, the subsequent sectoral conferences that were held led to specific viable projects.

As a result, the Government of Burundi hopes that the round table to be held on 11 and 12 of December will produce specific and firm commitments, which will immediately unblock the remaining financial resources. In so doing, the international community can demonstrate its willingness to help Burundi fill the vacuum left by the drawdown of BNUB and to complete any ongoing programmes for the various strategic development instruments, such as Vision Burundi 2025 and our second Strategic Framework for Growth and the Fight against Poverty, thus putting Burundi on the road to progress, so as to build on what has already been accomplished and position the country for achieving a brighter future for its people. It is such action that will create a foundation for sustainable development in the medium and long term.

Lastly, the Government would like to conclude by reiterating its willingness to work for peace and development for all the people of Burundi, with the support of all its partners.

The President: There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers. I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 10.40 a.m.