



Security Council

Sixty-ninth year

Provisional

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Tuesday, 18 November 2014, 3 p.m.

New York

<i>President:</i>	Mr. Quinlan	(Australia)
<i>Members:</i>	Argentina	Mr. De Antueno
	Chad	Mr. Gombo
	Chile	Mr. Barros Melet
	China	Mr. Zhao Yong
	France	Mr. Bertoux
	Jordan	Mrs. Kawar
	Lithuania	Mr. Baublys
	Luxembourg	Ms. Lucas
	Nigeria	Mr. Laro
	Republic of Korea	Mr. Park Yong Min
	Russian Federation	Mr. Iliichev
	Rwanda	Mr. Manzi
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland ...	Mr. Tatham
	United States of America	Mr. Pressman

Agenda

The situation in Guinea-Bissau

Letter dated 11 November 2014 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2014/805)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Guinea-Bissau

Letter dated 11 November 2014 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2014/805)

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

On behalf of the Council, I welcome His Excellency Mr. Domingos Simões Pereira, Prime Minister of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau, and I request the Protocol Officer to escort him to his seat at the Council table.

Domingos Simões Pereira, Prime Minister of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau, was escorted to a seat at the Council table.

The President: In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representatives of Ghana and Timor-Leste to participate in this meeting.

On behalf of the Council, I welcome Her Excellency Ms. Hanna Serwaah Tetteh, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration of Ghana, and His Excellency Mr. José Luis Guterres, Minister of State and Foreign Affairs of Timor-Leste.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Mr. Miguel Trovoada, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau, and His Excellency Mr. Antonio de Aguiar Patriota, Chair of the Guinea-Bissau configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission and Permanent Representative of Brazil.

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

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2014/805, which contains a letter dated 11 November 2014 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council.

I now give the floor to Mr. Trovoada.

Mr. Trovoada (spoke in French): I have the honour and privilege to address the Security Council as Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS). My statement follows the letter of the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council on 11 November 2014 (S/2014/805) on the latest political and security developments in the country since his last report (S/2014/603), in August.

Constitutional order has been fully restored in Guinea-Bissau. Its principal institutions are once again legitimate and representative. Moreover, an inclusive Government incorporating all of the political persuasions represented in Parliament has been formed. With the support of the international community, regional and subregional organizations and partners, the country is striving to continue its transition from a state of fragility to one of peace and stability. In that context, I must emphasize the important role played by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), especially the ECOWAS Mission in Guinea-Bissau, as well as that of the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries.

Today, Guinea-Bissau has reached a critical stage in its evolution. The country cannot afford the luxury of the status quo, at the risk of losing its significant democratic gains and slipping backwards.

There is a point on which all stakeholders—including the authorities, the political class and the population of Guinea-Bissau as a whole—seem to agree. It is the need for reform, in particular in the areas of defence and security, justice and public administration. Given the sensitivity and importance of the issues at stake, such reforms will require commitment at the national level and concerted action to achieve consensus. With regard to the specific case of defence and security, the change at the head of the General Staff of the Armed Forces was just the first step. Reform must be a comprehensive, inclusive, pragmatic and integrated in order to achieve a solution that is technically feasible, economically viable and politically acceptable to all stakeholders.

Guinea-Bissau is a country where inequalities persist between the various layers of society, in which a handful of people have a lot and the vast majority of the population does not have enough. The infrastructure required for the development of agriculture and the exploitation of natural resources are almost non-existent. The same goes for the areas of health care, education,

water, electricity, transportation and communications, to name just a few.

Faced with these many challenges, the authorities spare no effort in seeking to meet the needs of the population. They are working hard to find ways to ensure the regular payment of salaries and arrears, to implement preventative measures against Ebola and to improve the delivery of basic services.

As Council members will be aware, the Government developed, and presented in September, a programme setting out its priorities for the short, medium and long terms. In that context, the authorities identified stability, the strengthening of the rule of law and of public institutions, good governance, justice and development as overarching priorities.

The process of transformation and democratization under way in Guinea-Bissau is on the right track, but there is still a long way to go and the resources at the country's disposal are extremely limited and, at times, unpredictable. It is therefore not the time to withdraw; on the contrary, the international community must remain mobilized in solidarity alongside the people of Guinea-Bissau in support of their efforts to build peace, stability, justice and a better future for their children.

It is important to ensure that the progress achieved so far be consolidated, and not eroded by corruption, the use of the country as a transit point for drug trafficking or a base for organized crime, or by lack of respect for the rule of law and human rights. The judicial system must be strong enough to avoid any major breakdown in law and order. In other words, impunity cannot be eradicated until those who interpret and apply the law have the freedom to act without constraints and the necessary tools to enforce judicial decisions.

On 17 and 18 October, the Government held a retreat in preparation for the donor round table to be held in early 2015. Its findings were very encouraging. The retreat defined a vision for economic recovery based on the agro-food industry and investment in the areas of energy, infrastructure and capitalizing of the wealth of biodiversity.

The latest *Human Development Report* ranks Guinea-Bissau's at 177 out of 187 countries. We hope and believe that the country will be able to attain better results on the Human Development Index next year. The will to do so is clear and the resources are being mobilized.

Following the request of the Security Council in resolution 2157 (2014), the Secretary-General deployed a strategic assessment mission in Guinea-Bissau from 3 to 14 November. The objective of the mission was to review the mandate of UNIOGBIS and make recommendations to align its activities with national priorities identified by the Government. The mission has completed its work and is finalizing its report. Its findings will be included in the next report of the Secretary-General on UNIOGBIS, which will be published in January 2015.

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

I now give the floor to Mr. Patriota.

Mr. Patriota (Brazil): I would like to start by thanking you, Mr. President, for inviting me to address the Security Council in my capacity as Chair of the Guinea-Bissau configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC). I would also like to thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Miguel Trovoada for his briefing and his wise leadership, as well as to acknowledge the presence among us of Prime Minister Domingos Simões Pereira.

I would like to say how encouraged I was by the attendance at the International Contact Group meeting this morning, which was co-chaired by the Foreign Ministers of Ghana and Timor-Leste in their respective capacities as rotating Chairs of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries.

There seems to be broad agreement that the new authorities in Guinea-Bissau are moving in the right direction and that international partners are ready to fully re-engage with the country. As I mentioned this morning and also to Security Council experts last week, I recently took a short visit to the country, where I found a political situation markedly different from the one I saw in my last visit in January, as well as to witness at first-hand the genuine commitment from the national authorities to achieve the stability, prosperity, development and institutional progress that Bissau-Guineans need so much.

The defence and security sector modernization process, which is an essential element to ensure long-term stability in the country, is already under way. As I mentioned in my report on the recent visit, which was circulated to the members of the Security Council, decisive steps have been taken in the past months, especially in the update of the members of the armed

forces retirement roster, the identification of military personnel to be retired by January 2015, paying military personnel through the banking system and, most notably, in the peaceful and very well-conducted replacement of the Chief of the General Staff of the Armed Forces.

One should recognize, however, that this progress is viable mainly due to the efforts that have been put forward by the ECOWAS Mission in Guinea-Bissau (ECOMIB) on the ground. At the International Contact Group meeting this morning, participants unanimously agreed that ECOMIB had been playing an essential role in the implementation of the security sector reform, and therefore that the sustainability of the process depended to a large extent on the continued presence of the force in Guinea-Bissau. In that context, I would like to bring to the Council's attention paragraphs 17 through 19 of the final communiqué adopted today, which read as follows:

“The Group strongly supported the position of the new authorities of Guinea-Bissau regarding the need to maintain an ECOMIB presence on the ground. Such a presence will decisively contribute to supporting the implementation of the identified reforms and to build up confidence among international partners. The Group underlined the need for that force to enjoy a formal invitation by Guinea-Bissau setting out a clear mandate and time frame for its activities. It also invited the United Nations Security Council to consider this force's mission and coordinate it with UNIOGBIS' mandate. The Group recognized and welcomed the decisive contribution made by ECOWAS through ECOMIB, which has been guaranteeing security in Guinea-Bissau.”

With regard to the socioeconomic situation, I was equally impressed during my recent visit to witness a newfound optimism prevailing among Bissau-Guineans. Improved access to water and electricity and the payment of salaries are notable dividends of the re-establishment of constitutional order.

However, as the Prime Minister pointed out at this morning's meeting, the food security issues worsened by this year's sparse and irregular distribution of rains are a stark reminder that multiple challenges need to be faced. Moreover, it should be noted that any progress on the socioeconomic front could also be threatened, if not annulled, by the potentially devastating consequences of an Ebola outbreak. While some international support

has been forthcoming, Guinea-Bissau's health system remains extremely fragile. I would like to take this opportunity once again to encourage the Government and the United Nations counterparts to engage with the United Nations Mission for Ebola Emergency Response and continue their efforts to bolster rapid response capacity and preparedness in Guinea-Bissau.

I was encouraged to see that the final communiqué adopted this morning by the Contact Group also made reference to that crucial point by emphasizing, in paragraph 14,

“that the Group identified as a potential threat to the socioeconomic structure in Guinea-Bissau the Ebola virus disease, which had seriously hit some countries in the West African subregion, and expressed their firm commitment to put in place an operational preparedness plan to forestall the outbreak of the epidemic in the country.”

I would agree with Special Representative of the Secretary-General Trovada that the best way to describe the situation on the ground after the new Government's first 100 days in office is to speak of a fragile stability with room for cautious optimism. While recognizing the positive developments so far, it is important to note that the progress will be sustainable only if due attention is paid to the political context.

Following a request made by the Prime Minister at the Contact Group meeting, the PBC stands ready to support the Government in its efforts to foster an inter-institutional dialogue, with a view to ensuring that Guinea-Bissau's most relevant political actors all share the same commitment to the long-term prosperity of the country. The international community, while not interfering or prejudging a national dialogue that needs to be conducted and decided upon by Bissau-Guineans themselves, must remain vigilant to any source of potential instability.

Furthermore, continuing progress will also greatly depend on the Government's ability to maintain the momentum for reform and mobilize sufficient internal and external support for the implementation of the established priorities, while effectively preventing spoilers from threatening to unravel what has been achieved so far. The political and financial support of all stakeholders will be crucial for the new authorities to survive this critical juncture.

In that regard, we are pleased to note that the preparations for the upcoming round table scheduled to

take place in Brussels in February 2015 are under way. In support of the round table, the PBC's Guinea-Bissau configuration will work to facilitate international coordination with a view to mobilizing sufficient resources for the Government to implement as priorities and maintain the positive momentum.

Finally, I would like to underscore that it is of the utmost importance that the international community speak with one voice and work in a coherent manner — a call that was eloquently made by the Prime Minister himself. As a platform that includes neighbouring Governments, Security Council members and many donor countries, the PBC's Guinea-Bissau configuration is well placed to ensure that international partners provide deep, sustained and coordinated accompaniment for the country's progress. In fact, Guinea-Bissau provides us with an example of how constructive and complementary the relationship between the Security Council and the PBC can be. I am confident that by working together we will be able to transform Guinea-Bissau into a success story for the region and for the United Nations.

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

I now have the honour to give the floor to the Prime Minister of Republic of Guinea-Bissau.

Mr. Pereira (Guinea-Bissau) (*spoke in French*): I thank you, Mr. President, for the honour of inviting me to attend and speak at today's meeting of this important body of the United Nations.

Guinea-Bissau is a country that, on the international stage, is emerging from a climate of relations with the international community characterized by multiple conditions and sanctions. Our presence and participation in the work of this important body for the maintenance of international peace and security and the symbolism it projects is of critical importance for my country, and indeed for all the people of Guinea-Bissau.

Guinea-Bissau has returned to this forum of dialogue and political consultation at a time of complete renewal — with new political authorities, fresh commitment and a hope that we can build a State and a society that are better positioned to pursue our major national aspirations. That return also signals that we have completed yet another phase in restoring the framework for dialogue and cooperation with the outside world, as well as a growing affirmation of Guinea-Bissau as a stable and credible partner in the regional and global security system.

Ultimately my presence in this forum also represents a unique opportunity for me, on behalf of His Excellency Mr. José Mário Vaz, President of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau, all of our national political stakeholders and our wider society, to thank the members of the Security Council and, indeed, the entire United Nations system, for the efforts and support provided over more than a decade to assist the stabilization process in our country.

Despite ongoing political instability, the United Nations has continued to maintain Guinea-Bissau on its agenda while pursuing ways and means to promote political dialogue and reinforce the institutional framework for the rule of law. I would like to suggest some features that, in the view of our Government, should characterize the new framework for dialogue and cooperation with our international partners, especially with the United Nations.

Guinea-Bissau is experiencing a new cycle full of hope and expectation that is responding to the dreams of its people to build a State capable of achieving the necessary internal and external conditions for good governance and development.

The understanding reached among the major national political parties, especially the African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde and the Party for Social Renewal — the two main parties in the Parliament — is both a pillar of inclusive governance and a factor in pursuing the necessary reforms in the basic State institutions and essential legal and constitutional elements in building stability and strengthening a foundation for development.

Ensuring legitimate governance and social stability and rebuilding our economy are essential in establishing political and governmental stability in the country. To achieve those results, Guinea-Bissau urgently requires robust external aid to enable us to shore up the foundation of an already fragile State with limited resources and persistent social instability, where scars are still visible in essential social sectors, including, among others, education and health.

Despite significant progress in the reform process — for some people it called for great courage — the Government admits, given the reality, that major threats and vulnerabilities remain, warranting further attention and an appropriate response. We welcome the outstanding work of the Economic Community of West African States Mission

in Guinea-Bissau in maintaining security on behalf of our institutions and political representatives. To that end, Guinea-Bissau expresses its unequivocal determination to ensure that its mandate is continued. We therefore call on the Security Council and all international partners to provide the requisite financial support.

The current phase of stabilizing and rebuilding our State, the rule of law and our economy requires the continuing presence of Guinea-Bissau on the agenda of United Nations, as well as its continued support and political assistance. To that end, we would advocate in favour of immediately continuing the presence of the United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office in Guinea-Bissau and United Nations support, based on strategic collaboration between the Security Council and the Peacebuilding Commission. That concern was also expressed during the recent visit of the strategic assessment mission deployed by the United Nations in our country.

Similarly, Guinea-Bissau needs United Nations support to organize the donor round table scheduled to take place in Brussels in February 2015. The successful convening of the round table for development partners would be a fundamental achievement in maintaining the Government's momentum in the medium term.

The new Guinea-Bissau — which is currently under construction — intends to establish a strategic, fresh partnership with the United Nations that is geared towards success as a platform for sustainability. That new framework will include the commitment of the political leadership — having confirmed their political compromises — and of all sectors of civil society.

I also welcome the re-establishment of the International Contact Group on Guinea-Bissau, established under the auspices of the United Nations in 2006, which has now held its first meeting after two years of interruption. My country views that forum as a framework for interaction of critical importance in breathing fresh life into the dialogue between Guinea-Bissau and its international partners and in supporting our Government's efforts to mobilize international assistance. I would therefore like to express my deep appreciation for the presence of the representatives of the States members of the Security Council in that forum.

In conclusion, I reiterate my thanks to the United Nations, its bodies and its agencies for the attention and

assistance that they have tirelessly provided to Guinea-Bissau.

The President: I now give the floor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Timor-Leste.

Mr. Guterres (Timor-Leste): It is a great honour for us to take part in this afternoon's meeting of the Security Council. It is also a great honour to see you, Mr. President, presiding over the meeting. Australia is a neighbour and a friendly country that has supported Timor-Leste for many years in achieving peace and stability. Australia has also been a great contributor to the development process in Timor-Leste. I thank the Australian delegation, the permanent members of the Security Council and the non-permanent members that are present today for this opportunity.

It is a great honour for us to address the Council on behalf of the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries (CPLP), whose members are Angola, Brazil, Cape Verde, Equatorial Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, Portugal, Sao Tome and Principe and Timor-Leste.

I would like to start by also congratulating the people of Guinea-Bissau on the holding of peaceful, free and fair elections earlier in the year and on the inauguration of the newly elected authorities, thus formally returning the country to constitutional order. In that regard, I would also like to recognize the very decisive supporting role played by the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau, the Economic Community of West African States Mission in Guinea-Bissau and other partners.

In its first 100 days, the Government, led by Prime Minister Domingos Simões Pereira, has made very significant progress in improving the provision of basic services to the people of Guinea-Bissau, paying salary arrears, launching the new school year and seeing its programme and budget unanimously approved by the National Assembly.

Politics in Guinea-Bissau is not as it was before. It is a new day and a new and great journey lies ahead for the people of Guinea-Bissau. Policies implemented by Prime Minister Simões Pereira and his team evidence the change that has occurred in the country. I congratulate the Prime Minister and all of his colleagues for those policies. I profoundly believe that following that path will lead to success, not only in peace and stability but also in development for the people of Guinea-Bissau and, ultimately, for the entire

region of West Africa — including even small countries such as ours that are very far away and situated in Asia.

The recent actions taken by the authorities concerning security sector reform — especially the substitution of General António Indjai as Chief of General Staff of the Armed Forces, the routing of all salary payments through the banks, the revision of the Armed Forces retirement roster and the identification of 100 personnel to retire by January 2015 — are to be commended. Those achievements show the strong commitment and steady leadership of the newly elected authorities. We welcome the Government's continuing reforms aimed at greater political and socioeconomic stability, as well as at consolidating the rule of law and protecting and promoting the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of all Bissau-Guineans. In that regard, we stress the vital importance of the international community's support in its technical and financial aspects, but also in ensuring stability to allow the national authorities to implement those reforms.

For all its achievements, Guinea-Bissau is still a post-conflict country with fragile institutions and scarce financial resources. In his address to the General Assembly at its sixty-ninth session, the Prime Minister called on the international community for assistance, and specifically requested the reactivation of the International Contact Group on Guinea-Bissau as a privileged forum to discuss and seek support for the mobilization of international aid (see A/69/PV.17). This morning, we held the tenth working session of the International Contact Group on Guinea-Bissau. A joint communiqué has been published. I urge Council members to read it because it contains some recommendations that will certainly be helpful to them and their own countries.

This morning, the Prime Minister described for us the current situation in Guinea-Bissau and the vision that his government has for the people of that country. The CPLP and its member States remain deeply involved in coordinating efforts with the United Nations, the African Union, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the European Union, the Peacebuilding Commission and the Guinea-Bissau configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission, as well as the International Contact Group on Guinea-Bissau to support the priorities identified by the Government of Guinea-Bissau. On 29 October, the CPLP held an extraordinary meeting of its Council of Ministers in Guinea-Bissau, at which we expressed our

deep appreciation for the positive role played by the ECOWAS Mission in Guinea-Bissau (ECOMIB), while encouraging the national authorities to coordinate with ECOWAS and all African States to reconfigure ECOMIB to support the implementation of much-needed reforms. We also call on the Security Council to give all its support to ECOMIB, which has played an extraordinary and very positive role in bringing peace and stability in Guinea-Bissau.

We also recognize the very positive role played by the President of Rwanda and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, His Excellency President Trovoada. In that regard, we also welcome the Secretary-General's recent report on Guinea-Bissau (S/2014/805) and its recommendations, and we endorse in particular the technical rollover of the mandate of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau. We look forward to the next report of the Secretary-General, which will include the findings and recommendations of the strategic assessment mission sent to the country earlier this month, and the comprehensive review of the mandate announced for early 2015.

We profoundly believe that it is our obligation — whether we are a small or big country, a poor or rich nation — to give our support to a people that today is in great need of it. For many years, Timor-Leste was blessed by Council members' support here in this Chamber, as well as by all the Members of the United Nations. We are deeply grateful for that and acknowledge everyone. Today, Guinea-Bissau, a small and still a poor country, needs the same support. We feel the need and the duty to share what we have with our brothers and sisters of Guinea-Bissau.

Today, each member of the CPLP is deeply committed to contributing to Guinea-Bissau in the coming years, as we have done in the past. As President of the CPLP, I would like to pledge our full support to the Prime Minister and people of Guinea-Bissau during the donors conference to take place in early 2015. We will continue to seek the full engagement of all international partners, and in particular the International Contact Group.

I would also like to draw Council members' attention to the risk of the Ebola epidemic in West Africa, which also poses a great threat to Guinea-Bissau. Even if no cases have yet been identified, if the virus spreads to the country and no preventive measures are taken we can be sure that one day all the achievements in peace

or development that we have achieved in that country will be lost. In that respect, we also commend the efforts made by the Government of Guinea-Bissau to prevent the spread of the deadly disease, and we ask Council members and international partners to support, financial or otherwise, the people and the Government of Guinea-Bissau in order to help prevent the spread of Ebola that we all know is affecting West Africa.

Let me thank Council members for their attention. All the countries from the Portuguese-speaking Community are committed to supporting Guinea-Bissau.

The President: I now give the floor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration of the Republic of Ghana.

Ms. Tetteh (Ghana): I thank you, Mr. President, for the honour and opportunity to address the Security Council on behalf of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). Let me also thank you for the leadership that you have provided to the Security Council since Australia assumed its presidency, and assure you of the appreciation of ECOWAS for the work of this organ.

I would also like to thank the Security Council for its efforts to promote peace, security, progress and development in West Africa, particularly, in Guinea-Bissau, as well as its commitment to fighting and eliminating the Ebola virus disease, an epidemic considered to be a threat to international peace and security, from our region. I also note with keen interest that during Australia's presidency of the Council, the situations in Liberia, Mali and Guinea-Bissau, as well as the renewal of the mandate of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau, among others, which are of interest to the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), will, we hope, be favourably considered by the Council.

This morning, at the tenth meeting of the International Contact Group on Guinea-Bissau, held across the hall from this Chamber, we explored effective ways of coordinating and harmonizing international interventions for optimal gains in our collective efforts to help to consolidate the political stability and economic recovery of Guinea-Bissau. Our deliberations were not oblivious to the scarcity of resources and the urgent and competing global needs, yet the need for us to strive hard to sustain the support and assistance provided so far and to improve our support and contributions to help

Guinea-Bissau make further progress, kept us resilient, believing that, with international support and goodwill and by working together, we will be able to give hope for the future to the people of Guinea-Bissau.

I therefore would like to closely associate myself with the sentiments ably expressed by the Prime Minister of Guinea-Bissau, my colleague the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Timor-Leste, and Ambassador Patriota on the Security Council's support to Guinea-Bissau. Allow me to highlight the need for the Council to recognize and support the work of the ECOWAS Mission in Guinea-Bissau (ECOMIB) and to maintain the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau so as to shore up the progress that has been made so far been in the country, and to further emphasize the need for support for the defence and security sector reforms currently being undertaken by the Government of Guinea-Bissau.

The next meeting of the Authority of Heads of State and Government of ECOWAS will take place in December. It will be an opportunity to extend the mandate of ECOMIB to support the work of the new Government of Guinea-Bissau — of course, at its request — in its plans and initiatives. But I would like to put on record that this year has been a difficult one for the West African region, especially with the Ebola epidemic and its economic impact on the region. In these circumstances, support for the operations of ECOMIB by the Council and development partners would be greatly appreciated.

ECOWAS welcomes the reactivation of the International Contact Group on Guinea-Bissau and will continue to do its best to help sustain peace, security and development in our member State. With the fragile socioeconomic situation in Guinea-Bissau, we consider the Ebola virus disease to be a serious potential threat that may rapidly reverse the modest progress made in the country. We know that preparation to prevent Ebola is extremely expensive. We know that it also involves the deployment of a significant amount of logistics and people — the right people — to help to prevent something like this from happening. For a country like Ghana, it has been an expensive exercise, even though we have not recorded an incidence. For a country like Guinea-Bissau, we think that it definitely needs all the support it can get to prevent the epidemic from being able to take root, even if it were to occur, within the member States.

We urge the United Nations to assist Guinea-Bissau to prepare against the outbreak of the disease in the short and long terms, and to support the strengthening of its public health systems to be able to deal with other outbreaks and epidemics. We believe that, with the needed support, Guinea-Bissau can be part of the new narrative of Africa rising and become a model of democracy and good governance. But if that is to happen, it is imperative that the Council and United Nations Member States continue to support its rebuilding efforts, and we would like to encourage the Council's support to deal with the possible threats that may derail the process of nation-building that has begun with so much promise. We would also like to emphasize that work done by non-governmental and civil society organizations funded by international development partners should support the priorities of the Government of Guinea-Bissau.

In conclusion, I would like to urge the Council and our international partners in development to continue to support Guinea-Bissau in its efforts to build on the gains that have been made, sustain them, consolidate peace, establish a credible democracy and ensure economic development by effectively participating in the donors pledging conference scheduled to take place in 2015. And by "effectively", I mean I hope that attendees will come with deep pockets and with deep wallets. On that note, I would once again like to thank you, Mr. President, for the opportunity to address the Council and wish the Council all the best in its deliberations.

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 situation in Guinea-Bissau.

The meeting rose at 3.55 p.m.