

25 Jun 2008

## **JUNE 25, 2008 - SECURITY COUNCIL PRESS STATEMENT ON GUINEA-BISSAU**

The following Security Council press statement on Guinea-Bissau was read out today by Council President Alejandro D. Wolff (United States):

The Security Council was briefed on the situation in Guinea-Bissau on 25 June by the Representative of the Secretary-General, Shola Omoregie, by the Executive Director of United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), Antonio Maria Costa and by the Chair of the country-specific configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission for Guinea-Bissau, Ambassador Maria Luiza Ribeiro Viotti.

The members of the Council welcomed the progress on the preparations for the legislative elections scheduled for 16 November 2008 and call upon the Government of Guinea-Bissau and all parties to ensure an environment conducive to free and fair elections. They commended the international partners for their pledges in support of the elections and they urged the international community to continue to provide technical, material and financial resources, in order to fill the current gaps and ensure effective and timely elections.

The members of the Council reiterated their concern over the acute threat posed by drug trafficking and organized crime to the peace-consolidation process in Guinea-Bissau. They noted the efforts by the Government of Guinea-Bissau with the continued support by the international community in the implementation of the anti-narcotics operational plan and called on the international community to further enhance support for national and regional efforts to combat this scourge. They applauded the recent steps taken by the Government to bring drug traffickers to justice and recommended prompt follow-up to these actions.

They called on the Government to cooperate fully at regional and international levels in order to tackle drug trafficking and organized crime. They welcomed the decision of Cape Verde to host the ECOWAS (Economic Community of West African States) regional Conference on drug trafficking and organized crime in West Africa.

The members of the Council reiterated the importance of security sector reform in Guinea-Bissau and urged the Government to intensify its efforts on all aspects of reform of the security sector. They welcomed the start of the European Security and Defence Policy mission in Guinea-Bissau and called on the donor community to continue to contribute financially in order to complement the European Union's support provided to security sector reform and law enforcement and the criminal justice system.

The members of the Council expressed support and encouragement for the Government's collaboration with the Peacebuilding Commission and looked forward to the country's strategic framework for peacebuilding. They stand ready to consider, as appropriate, the recommendations of the Secretary-General, in particular to strengthen the capacity of United Nations Peace-building Support Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNOGBIS) and the United Nations country team to provide the required support to the peacebuilding process in an integrated and efficient manner.

The members of the Council reiterated their support for the action undertaken by the African Union, ECOWAS, and the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries (CPLP), in the peacebuilding process in Guinea-Bissau.