

(As delivered)

Statement by Ambassador Yukio Takasu  
Permanent Representative of Japan  
Formal Meeting of the Country-Specific Configuration  
of the Peacebuilding Commission on Guinea-Bissau  
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Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

I would like to also join in congratulating you on your election as Chair of the country-specific configuration on Guinea-Bissau, in a very expeditious way guiding our work. Just before saying a few comments on Guinea-Bissau, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of the delegations for contributing to a very successful retreat over the weekend, because this is the first opportunity to express my warm feeling. It was a great success, and it was a very good opportunity to talk about policy and other issues, but also to reaffirm common commitment and common goals, and I think that spirit is reflected in the country-specific meeting on Guinea-Bissau, too.

We know that the peacebuilding challenge in Guinea-Bissau is an enormous one. At the same time, there is a very good opportunity now to support the Government and the people through the PBC so that the country can extricate itself from the current stagnation and difficulty. I would like to say that Japan is not a very strong traditional supporter, but since this is an issue on the PBC, Japan will take a new look at it, and we are ready to work very closely with the Government and people of Guinea-Bissau and its partners.

Obviously the expectations of the people there are extremely high, and the Commission has a responsibility to produce tangible results on the ground in an expeditious manner, so your preliminary visit is extremely good to start our very deep engagement with the country. I would like just to say a few points that are probably important in your visit:

First of all, that we have to be very clear as to the nature and mandate of the Commission and the support we can provide, as well as to the Peacebuilding Fund. I think we know that the expectations have to be met. At the same time, they must be realistic expectations about what the PBC and also the Peacebuilding Fund can do.

Second, to hear the specific priorities of the Government and the people, which are the guiding principles for our work: what will be the immediate needs they ask us to help support, and what kind of support is most needed from the PBC.

Third, to encourage their national ownership and primary responsibility.

Fourth, to identify appropriate focal points of the Commission with the Government and also how to organize better the UN presence in Guinea-Bissau – that is slightly different from our experience from the two countries with which we have been engaged – and to start to look for and think about the potential of partners whose support will be useful and essential, on top of the traditional partners. The African Development Bank is very important; the European Commission and many European Union countries and Portuguese-speaking are very important; the UN Office on Drugs and Crime is also very important; but we should start to look for all those countries and organizations that are non-traditional donors and partners with

very large potential to support and contribute.

Lastly, we have a very good experience and lessons learned from the earlier work of the country-specific meetings on Burundi and Sierra Leone. Obviously every country-specific meeting has its own way of doing things, but I think that we can learn from them the basis for the most appropriate approaches and tools to address the specific needs of Guinea-Bissau.

Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

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