

Peacebuilding Commission Annual Session

Regional approaches to peacebuilding: The Sahel, Lake Chad Basin and the Mano River Union

INDIA STATEMENT

By

**Ms. Lakshmi Swaminathan
Second Secretary**

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Mr. Chairman,

1. We welcome this opportunity to continue our discussions on peacebuilding and sustaining peace in the Sahel region.
2. Peacebuilding Commission has an important role to play in continuing to use its platform to sustain international attention, strengthen strategic partnerships and encourage regional approaches to peacebuilding and sustaining peace in this region.

Mr. Chairman,

3. In Africa's pursuance of "Africa-owned" and "Africa-led" development, it is India's endeavour to base our partnership on the principles of equality, mutual respect, solidarity and mutual benefit. Our model of cooperation with Africa is demand driven, consultative, and participative, involves local resources, builds capacity and is based on Africa's own prioritization of its needs. Our ongoing projects in West Africa and the Sahel amount to more than half a billion US dollars in areas such as agriculture and food processing, rural electrification and power transmission, low cost housing and resilient constructions and potable water.
4. The countries in West Africa and the Sahel region continue to face serious challenges transcending respective national boundaries. The security situation, with increasing terrorist activities, transnational organized crime networks, and violent extremism, particularly in the Sahel and Lake Chad basin, is a matter of concern. The region is also facing

serious environmental challenges such as desertification. The problems call for increased regional and international cooperation in developing sustainable solutions. It is important that the international community, while deliberating these issues, should avoid politicization.

5. The countries in the region have made notable progress in recent years in addressing post-conflict challenges with the support of regional organisations. They have taken collectively several important initiatives such as G-5 Sahel and Multinational Joint Force to address security challenges. These initiatives complement the UN efforts in the region.

Mr. Chairman,

6. The critical role played by regional organisations like Economic Community for West African States (ECOWAS) in taking a lead to address issues affecting the region is commendable. Cote d'Ivoire, with political reforms and impressive economic growth in the recent years, is an example for countries emerging from conflicts. Similar is the case of Sierra Leone and Liberia. The other examples where regional approaches have proved effective include International Conference on the Great Lakes Region and Lake Chad Basin Commission.

7. India supports the commitment expressed by ECOWAS Heads of State and Government at the Summit in June 2019 to peace, security and stability in the region as a pre-requisite for regional economic integration and development.

8. While approaches to peacebuilding need to be comprehensive, we would like to highlight generating employment opportunities and strengthening institutions that would contribute in achieving long-term stability.

- To generate more employment opportunities, the focus should be on skill development including vocational training. Here again, the host country, with the involvement of its youth and women, should provide direction, indicating their specific needs and requirements. This would help the international community to consider feasible areas of support, according to the expertise and resources available at their disposal.

- On institution building, the host country should identify specific requirements based on their understanding and analysis of the prevailing situation. PBC can play a pivotal role to frame the needs assessment for the country based on its expertise. This would go a long way in helping the country to identify and concretize its own requirements, which in turn would help in receiving focused and coherent international support.

We thank you, Mr. Chairman.