



Check Against Delivery

STATEMENT

BY

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TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

AT

**THE ECOSOC MEETING ON AD-HOC ADVISORY GROUPS ON
AFRICAN COUNTRIES EMERGING FROM CONFLICT**

**UNITED NATIONS, NEW YORK
18 JULY 2005**

Mr. Chairman,

I speak in my capacity of Chair of the Group of Friends of Guinea-Bissau and a member of the Ad hoc Advisory Group on Guinea-Bissau.

My delegation is pleased that ECOSOC has decided to take up the case of Guinea Bissau at this time. This is indeed a unique peace building experimentation in which the international community – the Security Council, ECOSOC, the UN Secretariat, the Agencies, the Bretton Woods institutions, donors, regional and sub-regional inter-governmental institutions, other IGOs, the NGO community – have all rallied together and worked assiduously and in concert, with the elected Government and the people of Guinea Bissau, to ensure that in spite of all the odds, the country does not slide back into conflict.

The Provisional Government of Guinea-Bissau deserves our commendation. President Enrique Rosa and his dynamic Prime Minister and Cabinet have done an excellent job in stabilizing the running of the public affairs of the country. All reports indicate that the economy is continuously showing signs of increased good health; basic social services are being restored and strengthened; and financial management has been significantly improved. Public servants are receiving their salaries with greater regularity, as indeed it should be and there is more transparency and accountability in Government.

On the political front, the recent developments speak eloquently for themselves. The legislative elections were conducted in a free and fair manner and with virtually no major hitches. The first round of the Presidential elections was also conducted in like manner. All the contestants as well as the electorate demonstrated great political maturity. We congratulate all those involved, as well as all of Guinea-Bissau's partners who contributed to the various processes of this successful democratic transition, for their perseverance and their show of faith in the potentials and the strengths of the international system. For without the support and partnership of the international community which Guinea-Bissau enjoyed throughout these past few trying years, this experimentation with a country emerging from conflict would not have registered these successes.

The work of the Ad-Hoc Advisory Group on Guinea-Bissau must be singled out for special mention. Without the determination of this Group, and indeed of its dynamic Chairman, Ambassador Kumalo of South Africa, it is certain that the international community would have tired of the situation in this fledgling democracy and would have allowed state failure to set in, had the Group not doggedly pursued its mandate, and refused to give up. Through its work, the Group has evolved blueprints on how states like Guinea-Bissau can be positively and constructively engaged by the international community; be encouraged to stay the course and not follow the path of anarchy that could have resulted from coups d'états, dictatorial usurpation of power by the executive,

Statement by H.E. Amb. Crispin Grey-Johnson, Permanent Representative of The Gambia to the United Nations, at the ECOSOC Meeting of Ad Hoc Advisory Groups of African Countries Emerging from Conflict

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or the encouragement of tribalism; and adopt innovative methods of attracting and effectively disbursing donor assistance to the satisfaction of all.

The Group of Friends of Guinea-Bissau which I chair is proud to have been involved in the work of the Group. That involvement served as a bridge between the donors – friends and partners of Guinea-Bissau – and the United Nations. Through it, the relevant back up for support at critical points in the transition were sought and in virtually all cases secured in a satisfactory and timely manner. Let me seize this opportunity to thank those who generously contributed funds to help Guinea-Bissau go through its recent elections, in particular, The European Commission, the Netherlands, France, Sweden, Italy, Portugal and Brazil.

Guinea-Bissau is about to embark on the last and final phase of its transition: the conduct of the second round of voting in the elections for President. My delegation has no doubts whatsoever, that as with the other elections, this will also be conducted smoothly, in a free and fair manner and that the people of Guinea-Bissau would thus have spoken on the type of leadership they desire for themselves. I call on the international community to respond appropriately with the requisite support to now help this fledgling democracy stand on its own two feet. In particular, plans for the holding of a donors' conference should be speeded up and implemented without any delay, and in any case before the end of 2005, so that the much-needed development and humanitarian assistance to the country would be assured and would start flowing in. This is a case where the international community must show more carrots to encourage and reward good deeds.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, It has been our experience, that the business of peace building is time consuming, and cannot be concluded in a hurry. Most of it entails capacity building, which requires time. The Ad-hoc Advisory Group has come thus far with Guinea-Bissau, it should be allowed to continue its good work in order to ensure that the seeds it sowed, take root and grow into a strong healthy tree. I hope ECOSOC will look favourably into this need to extend the mandate of the Group for another six months or so.

Thank you.