



## FINAL COMMUNIQUE

### MEETING ON PEACE AND SECURITY WITHIN THE MANO RIVER UNION

The Mano River Union Secretariat (MRU) and the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS) organized a high-level sub-regional meeting from 25 to 26 November 2019, in Freetown, Republic of Sierra Leone. The purpose of the meeting was to review the role of the Joint Border Security and Confidence Building Units (JBSCBUs) in order to draw lessons from the current status of these units and to analyze ways to improve and make them fully operational on a sustained basis, taking into account the socio-economic and political situation of its Member States in the sub-region; as well as to review the various existing MRU peace and security frameworks and make proposals for joint activities.

The meeting was attended by H.E. Amb. Medina A. Wesseh, Secretary General of the MRU; Mrs. Ruby Sandhu-Rojon, Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary General for West Africa and the Sahel; Prof. David J. Francis, Chief Minister; Mr. Francis Kaikai, Minister of Planning and Economic Development; Mr. Edward Soluku, Minister of Internal Affairs and other officials of Government from the Republic of Sierra Leone, members of the Diplomatic and Consular Corps, Officials of Government and technical experts from the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire, Republic of Liberia, Republic of Guinea, UN Resident Coordinators from MRU member states, UNDP Resident Representative and other development partners, Peace and Security Advisors from the UN system of the sub-region, presidents from the MRU JBSCBUs, representatives from the Civil Society including the Mano River Union Women's Peace Network (MARWOPNET), representatives from the National Election Commissions of Guinea and Côte d'Ivoire.

The meeting noted with satisfaction the positive steps taken by the MRU Secretariat in reinforcing engagements with partners to promote regional stability through existing mechanisms within the sub-region. They called for the conduct of peaceful elections in Guinea and Côte d'Ivoire in 2020.

In this regard, and after full consideration of the issues under discussion, the meeting expressed gratitude with the level of partnership between the MRU and UNOWAS for the organization of the high-level meeting on peace and stability with focus on the JBSCBUs, and therefore resolved as follows:

- Affirmation on consolidating democracy, peace and stability by identifying ways to prevent and reduce tensions related to pre and post electoral crises, and other governance issues in the sub-region;

- Development of a strategic framework of cooperation between the UN system and the MRU that will identify joint initiatives within the peace, security and development nexus;
- Consideration of upgrading the capacities of the JBSCBUs to function at an optimal level as an early warning and response mechanism, and create a framework for member States to take ownership of these mechanisms;
- Expanding partnership engagements at multilateral and regional levels that will enable member states to address external threats and other cross-border crimes;
- Creating a platform to increase advocacy on human rights issues, issues related to women and youth empowerment, as well as peace building with a particular focus on strengthening the capacity of MARWOPNET.

The participants expressed satisfaction with the convergence of views on all the issues and concerns raised, and expressed particular delight with the spirit of mutual understanding and cordiality that prevailed throughout their deliberations. They further reiterated the strong need to take all measures that would promote regional peace and stability, prevent and reduce tension in pre and post electoral context in Member States, enhance the capacity of the JBSCBUs to address cross border challenges and ensure socio-economic development and regional integration in the sub-region.

The participants expressed their appreciation to the Government of Sierra Leone, the MRU Secretariat, and UNOWAS for the well-organized meeting and efforts to making it successful.

**Done on 26 November 2019, in Freetown, Republic of Sierra Leone**

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