



PRESENTATION OF THE GOVERNMENT'S PEACEBUILDING PRIORITIES AND
CHALLENGES

2nd Formal Country Specific Meeting on Guinea-Bissau.

Peacebuilding Commission
New York, 20 February 2008

1. INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

Since independence in 1974, Guinea-Bissau has continued to be faced with enormous problems, in particular how to carry out a transformation of its armed forces into a republican security and defence force. This continuing challenge of how to attain a republican transformation of the security and defence sector lies at the heart of the country's chronic instability, marked by various destabilizing events, including military uprisings and armed conflict. For Guinea-Bissau, this situation represents one of the main constraints to peace consolidation. Since Guinea-Bissau's civil conflict in 1998/99, and in spite of efforts made by the international community to help the country return to constitutional order after the 2005 presidential elections, the country has remained in a state of chronic political and economic instability. Though the frequent post-conflict political and social tensions in Guinea-Bissau have not degenerated into violent conflict, on balance, the overall picture is one of generalized pessimism.

The successful conclusion of various electoral processes, since the end of the civil conflict over seven years ago, have nevertheless failed to produce the expected reforms towards sustainable political stability that could have resulted in viable socio-economic development of the country. Consequently, there is a continuous atmosphere of political polarization which has been marked by frequent turnovers of government. This atmosphere has stifled confidence in the State both internally and externally, with nationals increasingly disillusioned and partners unwilling to commit to continued financial support, so vital for urgently-needed economic recovery. As a result, since the end of the civil conflict, peacebuilding in Guinea-Bissau has involved a long, drawn-out and fragile process of political stabilization, aimed at achieving sustainable peace and stability, which are still a long way from materializing. At the same time, the process of peacebuilding has highlighted the stark reality that the end of a conflict does not automatically lead to a completely peaceful political atmosphere, nor to a stable social and economic development.

The political-institutional instability and internal shocks the country faced are factors that in recent years have had a significant influence on the progression of poverty in Guinea-Bissau. This is a phenomenon related to the fragility of governance, with the aftermaths leading to the deficient functioning of institutions and generating chains of negative trends in other areas, particularly economic and social sectors. As in the period of instability prior to the 1998/99 armed conflict, which had also been the consequence of bad governance, political-institutional stability rose to alarming levels after the political-military conflict. The conflict cost thousands of lives and destroyed much of the already weak economic, social and administrative infrastructures, calling the very viability of the State into question.

The difficult situation of the country, in particular its weak economic growth, is also linked to the low level of tapping of the country's potential in the various productive sectors of the economy, namely agriculture, fisheries, tourism, among others. Although the country has comparative advantages at the sub-regional level related to the production and export of several products other than cashew nuts, the weak private investment in these sectors and products, due to weak savings and the absence of an environment favourable to business and investment, limits the possibilities for development of these sectors and the impact that they can have on economic growth, the creation of employment opportunities, particularly for youth, and sustainable conditions for peace consolidation. Without substantial investment in the economy and in the key areas of the social services sector, Guinea-Bissau is at risk of not attaining the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015 and within the timeframes set.

The Government of Guinea-Bissau is determined to take all measures necessary to confront the pressing challenges posed by post-conflict, in order improve the management of public finances, build State capacity for policy implementation, restore confidence in the economy and from the population, as well as normalize relations with the international community.

2. ONGOING NATIONAL STRATEGIES

The State's responsibility has undergone an evolution, deriving from the far-reaching reforms carried out since the 1980s. These reforms led to a significant rolling back of the role and range of action by the State on economic issues. However, the restructuring of the sphere of action by the State did not affect its principal and exclusive mission, which is to design and implement development policies and strategies. This role of the State as arbiter, regulator and promoter of a favourable investment climate needs to be reinforced and consolidated. Attempts initiated at public administration reform have not achieved any significant results, because they have not led to an improvement in the State's capacity to provide effective answers to social needs, a guarantee of transparent and efficient management of human and financial resources, a control over the enormous wage bill and excessive personnel in public administration, and a comprehensive strengthening of the capacity of public administration.

The rolling back of State intervention in the economic domain should allow for an enhanced efficiency in the sectors of the economy which call for direct State responsibility, and which have a direct impact in the poverty alleviation, particularly the sectors of education, health and infrastructure, including also the care and treatment of patients suffering from AIDS.

The framework of national strategies in existence defines policies aimed principally at the creation of guarantees of political stability and the reactivation of the economy, as well as at the combat against exclusion and the perpetuation of a climate of vulnerability of the population. This framework essentially envisages two national strategy documents, namely (i) the National Poverty Reduction Strategy Document (DENARP) and (ii) the Strategy Document for the Restructuring and Modernization of the Security and Defence Sector (SSR Strategy Document).

2.1 The National Poverty Reduction Strategy Document (DENARP)

The National Poverty Reduction Strategy Document (DENARP) focuses on the objective of a gradual alleviation of poverty and was based on a profound analysis of the human development situation in Guinea-Bissau. It was the product of broad consultations involving all sections of the Bissau-Guinean society, with invaluable collaboration from development partners.

The DENARP draws on factors considered indispensable for peacebuilding, national reconstruction, reconciliation and the creation of conditions necessary for the prevention of armed conflict, taking into account subsequent trends, the schism caused by the 1998/99 armed conflict and the resulting worsening of political instability. On this account, the strategic vision includes specific elements of peacebuilding and peace consolidation needed for an irreversible entrenchment or implantation of the rule of law in a peaceful country which is an integral part of the sub-region and seeking to meet the challenges of globalization, as well as adequately making use of the integration opportunities available within sub-regional frameworks and within the New Economic Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). The DENARP is built on the following four main pillars of action:

The **first pillar** aims to strengthen governance, modernize public administration and ensure macro-economic stability. The measures provided for under this pillar are: (i) pursuance of improvements in budgetary management; (ii) strengthening macro-economic management; (iii) public administration reform; (iv) capacity building; (v) promotion of efficient, transparent, accessible and independent justice and strengthening of the National People's Assembly (ANP); (vi) promotion of rural development and social cohesion; (vii) demobilization, redeployment and improvement of the living conditions in barracks; and (viii) the transformation of the security and defence forces into agents for pacification and consolidation of the rule of law.

The **second pillar** aims to promote economic growth and employment creation. The measures envisaged under this strategic domain are: (i) improvement of the business and investment climate; (ii) activation of the productive sectors of the economy and promotion of diversification and competitiveness of the economy; (iii) rehabilitation of the energy sector; (iv) development of road infrastructure; (v) development of overland and waterways infrastructure; and (vi) supporting the sectors of air transport, weather forecasting and communications.

The **third pillar** focuses on an increase of access to social services and basic infrastructure. The measures under this strategic domain are: (i) increased access to primary, secondary and third cycle education; (ii) guarantee of quality basic education; (iii) improvement in the offer and quality of health services; (iv) fight against HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and other diseases; (v) improvement in the situation of mothers and children; (vi) improved access to drinkable water and sanitation; and (vii) improvement in housing conditions.

The **fourth pillar** aims at improving the living conditions of vulnerable groups. The measures envisaged in this strategic domain are: (i) improvement in the social protection conditions for vulnerable groups; (ii) promoting income-generating activities; (iii) promoting centres for addressing problems of illiteracy among women; and (iv) promoting sports and regenerating residential living spaces.

2.2 The Strategy Document for the Restructuring and Modernization of the Security and Defence Sector (SSR Strategy Document)

The SSR Strategy Document was based on different national and international documents, in line with the OECD guidelines and was the product of wide consultations with key national and international actors.

The key pillars of Guinea-Bissau's SSR Strategy Document are: (i) modernizing the Armed Forces; (ii) strengthening the security forces; and, (iii) reforming the justice sector. The medium to long term objectives of the reform of the security and defence sector are:

- Modernizing the defence and security sector through the provision of a legal framework and human and material resources;
- Transforming the defence and security forces into agents for internal stability and external security;
- Aligning the defence and security forces to the real economic-carrying capacity of the country; and
- Creating conditions for economic development and thus changing the perception of the Armed Forces as being a 'national burden'.

Taking into account the structural weaknesses of the country, the success of such an undertaking with regards to SSR will depend undoubtedly on the will and capacity of the Government to

transform the current constraints and identified obstacles into opportunities and internal forces for development, as well as on the assistance that the Government can obtain from the international community.

To undertake the reforms envisaged, the SSR Strategy Document has identified 7 strategies with their respective strategic approaches:

- Redesign the defence and security sector in line with the needs and real economic-carrying capacities of the country;
- Modernize the defence and security sector in line with the republican ideals of the Government;
- Address the situation of the veterans of the liberation struggle and ensure a dignity of status for them;
- Strengthen the participation of the defence and security sector in the consolidation of sub-regional security;
- Strengthen the capacity of the justice sector and transform it into an efficient entity;
- Mobilize national and international resources for investment in the reform of the defence and security sector; and
- Involve the civil society and general population in the implementation of reforms in the defence and security sector.

The strategic approaches relevant to the reform of the defence and security sector establish, first and foremost, a new vision for the armed forces. These approaches focus on:

- The preservation of sovereignty and territorial integrity;
- The protection of natural and environmental resources;
- A guarantee of freedom for citizens and security of assets against real or potential external threats; and
- Peacekeeping.

The strategies relevant to the consolidation of SSR place emphasis on justice and on veterans of the liberation struggle. In this connection, it is envisaged that the ultimate outcome of SSR would be a consolidation of the process of restructuring of the justice sector, transforming it into an efficient entity, in order to ensure a lasting post-reform transformation of the defence and security sector. The combat against organized crime, particularly as a tool to deter and prevent the use of the national territory by groups acting against the law, will require the strengthening of capacities and the qualitative transformation of the justice sector in order to make it more prepared to confront the manifold challenges posed by transnational organized crime in particular.

Within this strategy, it is proposed to ensure an efficient functioning of the judicial organs, making them more accessible to the populations in terms of services and costs, and guaranteeing an independent justice system in accordance with the principle of separation of powers.

Addressing the situation of the veterans of the liberation struggle needs also to take account of the identification of their real numbers, which implies the conduct of a census involving the participation of these meritorious actors of the national liberation struggle.

The establishment of a legal framework in line with the envisaged SSR and the setting up of a new pensions scheme which could resolve the dire material conditions affecting the veterans of the national liberation struggle are other strategic approaches proposed for the sector. The current legal framework needs a revision along the following lines:

- Resolution of the problem of definitions or identities regarding who qualifies as a veteran of the national liberation struggle;
- Provision of remunerations and privileges in line with the socio-economic context;
- Clarification regarding the rights of family members of the veterans of the national liberation struggle; and
- Resolving the issue of the difference in identity between the veterans of the national liberation struggle and retired armed forces personnel.

2.3 The recent Geneva Round Table Conference

The donor conference, which took place at the round table in Geneva in November 2006 under the subject “Security and Development”, was a crucial point in the strategy of the Government in the pursuance of its objectives. In essence, the two strategy documents presented to partners by the Government, namely the **National Poverty Reduction Strategy Document (DENARP)** and the **Strategy Document for the Restructuring and Modernization of the Defence and Security Sector**, as well as their respective **plans of action**, became key documents of dialogue in the relationship between Guinea-Bissau and cooperation partners.

3. PRIORITIES FOR PEACE CONSOLIDATION

In the past three years, the country has been making relative progress regarding efforts to achieve stability, and has made important advances in the search for a return to normalcy in political and economic activity, as well as in the progressive strengthening of the institutional capacity of the State. The Government is aware of the fact that peace consolidation cannot take place in a context of a fragile state; fragility such as is related to a lack of quality and sufficient human resources capacity and a lack of financial resources, all of which are limiting the capacity of the State to guarantee a regular functioning of its institutions and the well-being of the population and social peace. The Government is equally aware of its intrinsic responsibilities in terms of the need to create guarantees for political and social stability, security for citizens in all its aspects and economic growth through the reactivation of the productive sectors of the national economy; all of these aspects are inter-related.

Consequently, the Government of Guinea-Bissau proposes to pursue the following important peacebuilding priorities in its engagement with the Peacebuilding Commission: reform of public administration, consolidation of the rule of law and security sector reforms; promotion of professional technical training and youth employment; and, support for vulnerable groups.

3.1 Reform of public administration

a) Reform of public administration

Within the framework of its National Poverty Reduction Strategy Document (DENARP), the Government of Guinea-Bissau selected, as main pillars of its programme, the modernization of public administration and strengthening the capacity of public servants. In this connection, the Government envisages a process of reforms in public administration which will lead to a reduction of the role of the State in productive and commercial activities, redesigning the structure and size of personnel in accordance with the real needs and financial capacities of State and improving efficiency in public services.

The measures envisaged in the Multiyear Action Plan of the DENARP, with a focus on public administration reform, include (i) the adoption and application of a fundamental law on Government, ministries and secretariats of State; (ii) the control of the wage bill and number of

personnel in public administration through a census of all public servants, as well as the setting up and operationalization of a computerized system for management of public servants and payment of salaries and emoluments; (iii) a setting up of a system of reforms and pensions for public servants; (iv) an adoption and application of a development plan for human resources capacity, taking into account the refurbishment of the offices of the Centre for Administrative Training (CENFA) and the establishment of a national school of administration.

The Government plans to accelerate the process of public administration reform through the development of national capacities in public management and the employment of transparent and secure salary and personnel management systems in order to monitor and stabilize public expenditure without delay and build transparency in the management of the national wealth.

Through these reforms, the Government aims to present a public administration which is modernized, restructured, responsible in the carrying out of its activities and compliant with rules regulating public finance management, public bidding processes, as well as the coordination of aid and decentralization.

In general terms, the results expected from public administration reforms will depend on the implementation of an operational mechanism for the coordination of public administration reform; on the effective simplifying of the basic frameworks for the functioning of State structures; and on the adoption and implementation of a programme of public administration reform and development.

The development of capacities in public administration will depend to this effect on the designing and effective implementation of a national capacity development plan; the training of trainers within the Centre for Administrative Training (CENFA); and the establishment of a national school of administration.

To achieve an effective improvement in the management of human resources within the public administration, it will be necessary to adopt a human resources development and career management plan; a review of the salary scale to focus on remuneration according to merit, training undertaken, qualifications obtained and professional commitment, and not only on job functions carried out or on seniority as is currently the case; the establishment of a practicable system of public administration reform and pensions; a streamlining in the management of civil servants through the setting up of a computerized management system of personnel and salary payments; and the implementation of a voluntary retirement plan for civil servants who wish to leave the public administration.

In general outline, the ultimate objectives regarding public administration reform, as proposed above by the Government, will lead to: **(i) an enhancement of the professional competence of the public administration sector through capacity-building; (ii) an improvement in public finance management; and (iii) a modernization of public sector systems and infrastructures.**

3.2 Consolidation of the rule of law and Security sector reforms

(a) support for the electoral system

The political governance process in Guinea-Bissau has undergone an evolutionary process over the years, ranging from an authoritarian regime to a democracy characterized by recurring cycles of instability, political conflict and a civil conflict. However, though Guinea-Bissau is in its third electoral cycle, recurrent exceptional constitutional arrangements for political governance constitute a threat to the consolidation of a democracy based on the rule of law and have converted elections into repeat and re-start processes, that is, recurrent post-conflict elections.

In September 2007, following the request for electoral assistance made to the United Nations by the Government of Guinea-Bissau, the Electoral Affairs Division of the Department of Political Affairs (DPA) sent a mission to Guinea-Bissau. This mission was coordinated by the office of the Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General in Guinea-Bissau (UNOGBIS) and involved the participation of UNDP in Guinea-Bissau, and had as its main objective an assessment of the political context and the technical conditions necessary for the provision of international community assistance for the legislative elections scheduled for 2008.

Following the official confirmation of assistance from the United Nations to the country's electoral process, a second technical mission from UNDP visited Guinea-Bissau in November 2007 with the objective of formulating a project for technical assistance. This mission held joint working sessions with national institutions involved with elections (National Commission for Elections – CNE, Technical Office for Support to the Electoral Process – GTAPE, as well as with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Finance regarding the electoral budget, in addition to the timeframe for the electoral operations and activities. Following these sessions and in close collaboration with the national partners, the mission identified the priority areas and prepared a timetable for the electoral assistance programme.

The project envisages implementing urgent activities aimed at ensuring a proper, efficient and peaceful organization of the electoral process of 2008, while at the same time laying solid foundations for a long-term development of capacities with respect to the 2008-2010 electoral cycle. In this connection, for 2008 the project will support institutions involved in electoral management activities to carry out a new and consensual electoral census (which has not taken place since the last presidential elections in 2005); the administration and organization of the electoral process for 2008; the planning and carrying out of civic education campaigns. At the same time and depending on the resources mobilized, the project will aim to provide short-term technical assistance to the CNE, in close collaboration with other institutional actors, taking into account the objective of a sustainable development of an electoral capacity building.

The activities planned for implementation in 2009 and 2010 answer the medium to long term needs, aimed mainly at a reform of the electoral system, the development of capacities of permanent structures for the management of electoral processes, as well as some operational activities which could contribute to the organization of presidential elections in 2010.

(b) Support to the judicial system

The reform of the defence and security sector covers not only aspects related to security. Undoubtedly, the success of these reforms will also depend on the strengthening of the State judicial machinery and its decentralization. To this effect, it will be necessary to train magistrates, build regional tribunals and develop an effective prison system through the construction and rehabilitation of penitentiary establishments.

(c) Demobilization, reintegration and reinsertion of military and police

The demobilization of the military and police (including veterans and former military) must be accompanied with social measures aimed at providing a dignified life for them. Actions to be carried out to this effect must be developed within the framework of a system of pensions and State public administration reform, as well as measures to provide access to housing accommodation at the places of origin of demobilized person. To achieve this, it will be necessary to adopt a DDR framework, including a workable programme of reintegration and reinsertion, targeted training and compensation for demobilized persons.

(d) SALW collection

In recent times, there has been an upsurge in criminality, including armed robbery and homicides. The general population has become skeptic and lost confidence in the State security institutions, which can no longer control the situation as a result of scarce operational means.

The complex nature of the proliferation of SALW among different social groups in Guinea-Bissau requires a multi-pronged strategy in order to build consensus and mobilize the efforts of all actors to promote alternatives to violence, as well as effectively combat the threat posed by SALW.

The Government's objective in this connection focuses on the collection of all SALW in the possession of elements of the population as a way of restoring security and stability within the general population. However, SALW which could be categorized as constituting relics and memento of the national liberation struggle would be registered and displayed in a museum of national liberation.

(e) Mine action

Within the framework of efforts by the Government at peacebuilding, mine action takes on a crucial and strategic character in the pursuit of poverty alleviation objectives, to the extent that mine-infested spots in the country make it impossible to carry out economic and social activities.

The presence of mines in different localities in Guinea-Bissau constitutes an obstacle to the production of food which is indispensable for the survival of populations.

Mine action is important for the restoration of security in mobility and the reclaiming of arable land for the population.

Through mine action initiatives, the Government aims to: (i) identify the areas inside Guinea-Bissau and at the border with Senegal and Guinea-Conakry where there is a presence of mines and other unexploded ordnance; (ii) assess the mined areas whose impact on the stability and socio-economic development of the population is more acute; (iii) strengthen the national capacity of mine action teams in terms of destruction of mines and other unexploded ordnance.

3.3 Promotion of professional technical training and youth employment

Youth who are adversely affected by poverty (80% of Guinea-Bissau's poor are aged between 15 and 35 years) are also the main target of involvement in the political and military conflicts in Guinea-Bissau and the sub-region. The lack of paid employment opportunities and the weakness of activity in the agricultural sector in rural areas cause youth to abandon rural areas for towns and to engage in illegal emigration activity, most often with grave human consequences. Youth living in urban areas are equally faced with a lack of employment opportunities or decent jobs, even when in possession of skills or training.

The causes of the youth employment situation include the absence of a coherent national employment policy, lack of professional training for youth, as well as the inexistence of job opportunities resulting from the lack of investment in social and economic infrastructure in the production sector, in particular the energy sector which is critical to growth and job creation. The private sector is not developed and the State, owing to budgetary constraints accumulated since the end of the armed conflict of 1998-99, is incapable of financing public employment opportunities. Without a reliable and efficient supply of electricity, the private sector firms – be they engaged in

agricultural, commercial or industrial activities - will not grow, thus limiting employment opportunities, especially for the youth.

Youth who are lucky to benefit from professional training are not adequately supported to engage in self-employment activity, nor do they have access to information on employment-related opportunities in the job market either in the country or when they migrate. In essence, public administration does not have human, financial or material resources to establish and ensure the functioning of a system of information-gathering and support to youth on employment opportunities, professional training and support in business start-up. The multifunctional centers for youth which the National Institute for Youth has set up, with the help of the United Nations system in Guinea-Bissau, could serve as a launching pad for the operationalization of structures and mechanisms for information diffusion, orientation and support for business and entrepreneurial development. The efforts made by various associations to promote professional training and facilitate micro-credit financing do not lead, unfortunately, in time to the creation of productive and secure employment.

The promotion of productive employment and decent jobs for youth in rural and urban areas constitutes a real challenge militating against poverty alleviation and achievement of the Millennium Development Goals for Guinea-Bissau. Guinea-Bissau, in its National Poverty Reduction Strategy Document (DENARP) specifically places emphasis on the promotion of economic growth and the creation of jobs through the development of infrastructures and the activation of the private sector as one of the conditions for poverty alleviation, with particular reference to youth. However, owing to the lack of financing constraints, the level of implementation of DENARP is rather low.

The Government also plans to promote youth employment through the development of the latter's professional capacities, with a focus on their improved participation and involvement in the job market and professional integration. This focus would also include the strengthening of capacity and diversification programmes for small and medium enterprises in order to create jobs and generate income through the tapping of the potential in local resources.

The programme for the promotion of sustainable productive employment and decent jobs for youth in Guinea-Bissau will contribute to the implementation of one of the essential aspects of the DENARP, which focuses on poverty alleviation through the stimulation of economic growth and the promotion of employment. In this connection, the programme will obtain support for its implementation through public institutes and training centers, as well as existing associations and thereby ensure a simultaneous development of capacities. The main results expected within the ambit of this programme are:

- The development of national capacities and of the National Institute for Youth to ensure an improvement in the management and follow-up of employment opportunities and professional training for youth;
- Guaranteed implementation of a youth professional training programme;
- Strengthening of capacities of professional training institutes;
- Information and awareness-raising among youth on the various professions and professional training available;
- Professional training for youth in priority and emerging areas with job opportunities; and
- Support to youth in the formulation and implementation of business and income-generating projects.

3.4 Vulnerable groups and peace consolidation

Vulnerable groups in this case refers to specific social categories which include children, women, disabled persons, youth, veterans of the national liberation struggle and idle persons. Their vulnerability is symptomatic of factors deriving from structural problems conditioned by the local and national milieus.

(a) Access by vulnerable groups to social services

Improved access by the most vulnerable populations to social services presupposes the need for more infrastructures, for example in the education and health sector, and the improvement in the functioning of the systems of sanitation and education. With regards to the promotion of socio-economic integration of vulnerable groups, there is the need for the creation of a Fund for Social Action, the implementation of mechanisms of follow-up and assessment of the impact of micro-projects involving targeted groups, and the strengthening of capacities for local communities, groups and associations.

Action in favour of children focuses on the following priorities: (i) provision of rural and peri-urban areas with schools and school canteens; (ii) carrying out of campaigns to fight malnutrition; (iii) strengthening programmes of action in favour of street children and against child labour; (iv) improving the application of conventions on the protection of children's rights; and (v) strengthening the capacity of institutions involved in the protection of children.

Action in favour of disabled persons focuses on the following: (i) improvement in legislation and protection of disabled persons against discrimination and abuse; (ii) guaranteeing assistance in sanitation for disabled persons; (iii) promoting education and training for disabled persons; and (iv) promoting the social and economic integration of disabled persons.

With regards to victims of unexploded ordnance, targeted actions need to be carried out, such as an improved provision of resources for providing first aid needed, physical and psychological rehabilitation of victims of mines and other unexploded ordnance, as well as the social and economic integration of these persons in their respective communities. In this connection, focus will be on (i) supporting the healthcare system to increase capacity of offer of first-aid services to victims of mines and other unexploded ordnance; (ii) training of specialists in psychological, physical and social rehabilitation of victims of mines and unexploded ordnance; (iii) strengthening the rights of victims of mines and unexploded ordnance, particularly a guarantee of free access to treatment and eventual compensation; and (iv) warning and educating the rural populations, especially children, on accidents risks posed by mines or unexploded ordnance.

b) Development of human capital in the education sector

Education has a significant role to play in peacebuilding. At present, the education sector in Guinea-Bissau is characterized by weak levels of performance and available human, material and financial resources.

Comparing the pedagogical and technical competences or qualifications of teachers, only about 40.5% of those in basic education possess diplomas. The quality of teachers in basic education, most of them recruited at the academic level requisite for primary education, continues to be of great concern.

Therefore, a strengthening of the pedagogical and technical capacity of teachers is crucial for raising the level and quality of basic education. Adult literacy activities should additionally be one of the Government priorities aimed at satisfying the right to education for all.

The Government plans to strengthen human capital in the education sector through an improvement in the quality of the sector's human resources and educational resources, by means of (i) promotion of continuing and in-service training for teachers, education inspectors and coordinators; (ii) re-designing of the training curriculum for initial cycles and continuing phases in favour of teachers and programmes, in accordance with cross-cutting measures, including gender-mainstreaming, education for peace and tolerance, preventive health and environmental-awareness training; (iii) support for improvements in the quality, production and distribution of school materials, including other types of educational materials such as exercise books for student and guides for teachers; (iv) creation of lasting conditions for continuation in the supply of educational materials for students; and (v) promotion of adult literacy.

c) Strengthening of human capital and improvements in the functioning of health centres

The quality of human resources in the health sector is another aspect requiring an in-depth analysis, taking account of the fact that the sector's weaknesses are visible in public.

The competence of a large number of medical doctors, whether in the area of diagnosis (even for simple diseases) or in prescription of treatment, is largely poor and inadequate both in core and auxiliary health services.

Within the framework of the Social Sector Project 1 (PSS) of the World Bank, and with particular regard to the promotion of auxiliary nurses and general nurses, it was acknowledged that the number of auxiliary health personnel with requisite minimum skills was relatively low, or that it was impractical to consider a redeployment of this group of personnel.

Also with regards to quality, there is the lack of ethics and professional standards training at all professional levels. This situation is well known on account of circumstances in the public knowledge.

The problem of low quality in the provision of health services can be explained, in a great part, by the low level of basic education within the education system of the country, as well as by the variances and divergences in training programmes and the disjointed dissemination of values during training for health service professionals in Guinea-Bissau.

The Ministry of Public Health (MINSAP) has two training schools which provide the bulk of medical doctors (more than 40%), as well as almost all other technical and auxiliary personnel within the health service structure of Guinea-Bissau.

Therefore, an improvement in the human resources of the National Health Service system is crucial.

The Government plans to promote training and institutional capacity-building through: strengthening capacity of the National School of Health (ENS); training of sufficient numbers of nurses and midwives to cover current national needs; organization of skills-improvement courses and specialization programmes in the various areas, in accordance with the needs and priorities of the National Programme for the Development of the Health Service (PNDS); long-term capacity-building and development of continuing professional development through mechanisms for supervision put in practice in regional management centers for health services (DRS) related to

management, administration, accounting, as well as the development of a medium to long term plan for training abroad.

Conclusion

The challenges militating against the consolidation of political stability and a democracy based on the rule of law, the creation of conditions for efficient and rigorous economic governance, as well as against the gradual improvement in living conditions for the population, have been the focus of attention of the Government in recent years, with some progress made. However, in spite of the progress made to date, difficulties still persist, particularly with regards to the lack or slow pace of disbursement mechanisms for the resources needed for the implementation of reform programmes considered to be indispensable in public administration or in the defence and security sector. A prolongation of the delays in implementing these strategic reforms carries with it a prolongation of the obstacles to peace and stability and constitutes a real threat to democracy in Guinea-Bissau.

Taking into account the difficult process of normalization in public life, the Government intends to submit a number of quick-impact projects to the Peacebuilding Commission, in the areas of health, energy, elections and youth, the latter with emphasis on job creation in the productive sector. These projects will have an immediate impact in the addressing of challenges to political and social stability in Guinea-Bissau, while steps are being taken to implement the modalities and time framework for the prospective effective provision of assistance from the Peacebuilding Commission to Guinea-Bissau.