

The Special Meeting of the Economic and Social Council on “Social and economic measures to prevent genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity”

24 January 2023, 10:00 a.m. to 1 p.m.

PBC Chair’s remarks

I thank the President of the ECOSOC for convening this special meeting on *Social and economic measures to prevent genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity* and inviting me in my capacity as the Chair of the United Nations Peacebuilding Commission to deliver these remarks.

The adverse effects of insecurity, economic and social instability, growing poverty, deepening inequalities, climate change and frequent disasters, and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic have contributed to the exacerbation of conflict. This has posed serious risks and threats to social cohesion, and undermined the peacebuilding gains achieved and pushing countries considered by the PBC off track from meeting the Sustainable Development Goals.

In view of these challenges, the role of Peacebuilding Commission in supporting national efforts towards sustaining peace cannot be overemphasized, especially in light of the General Assembly and Security Council resolutions on peacebuilding and sustaining peace, which stressed the importance of the Commission in promoting an integrated, strategic, and coherent approach to peacebuilding, noting that security, development, and human rights are closely interlinked and mutually reinforcing.

Based on the Commission’s engagements, I wish to share the following observations:

First, I would like to underline the imperative to address the root causes of conflicts and crises, as well as the importance of promoting sustainable and inclusive development, to build and sustain peace. The best means for peaceful, just and inclusive societies is sustainable development, which is why the interdependence of peace and sustainable development is at the core of the 2030 Agenda. We look forward to further intergovernmental discussions on this in the context of relevant initiatives of the Secretary-General’s Our Common Agenda.

The vision of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development requires a comprehensive approach to support countries to address the root causes of conflicts and to ensure an inclusive approach to development with a view to leaving no one behind. Such an approach may aid in preventing atrocity crimes. In this regard, economic and social measures are critical elements in contributing to peacebuilding and sustaining peace as they help to prevent the outbreak, escalation, continuation and recurrence of conflict, support national reconciliation and social cohesion, and move States towards recovery, reconstruction and sustainable development.

Second, we need to ensure that all efforts are inclusive, coherent, conflict-sensitive and promote peacebuilding and sustaining peace, including by focusing more on creating equal economic and livelihood opportunities for all and addressing systemic discrimination and grievances which can lead to the outbreak of violence.

To this end, the Commission's country and region-specific engagements have addressed a wide range of nationally-owned and -led priorities, including support for economic empowerment, good governance, rule of law, and the promotion of inclusive participation in peace processes, which in return are intended to support efforts aimed to improve social cohesion, trust in societies.

Third, I want to emphasize inclusivity as key to advancing national peacebuilding priorities to ensure that the needs of all segments of society are taken into account. In this regard, the full, equal, and meaningful participation of women and inclusion of youth in peacebuilding efforts is crucial to achieve sustainable and inclusive peace.

The Commission has continued to prioritize national ownership and inclusivity in all its interactions and has engaged with an array of relevant local, national, and regional stakeholders to ensure that the Commission responds to the needs on the ground.

The Commission has adopted a Gender Strategy and Action Plan and is committed to continuing to deliver tangible support to women peacebuilders.

Following the adoption of the Commission's Strategic Action plan on Youth and Peacebuilding, the Commission is committed to support and advocate for greater youth engagement in peacebuilding.

Fourth, I want to reiterate the importance of collective international efforts, solidarity and collaboration as key to successfully advancing the SDGs, and peacebuilding and sustaining peace. Partnerships with relevant stakeholders, including regional and subregional organizations, international and regional financial institutions, the private sector, civil society organizations, and local peacebuilding stakeholders, are crucial to advance efforts to bring greater coherence and impact to peacebuilding efforts in support of national peacebuilding priorities.

In line with its mandate, the Commission has engaged and provided a platform for a variety of stakeholders and encouraged further collaboration and partnerships to advance peacebuilding and sustaining peace. Building on the joint ECOSOC-PBC cooperation to promote global solidarity, peer-learning, and partnerships, I wish to underscore the need for coherent international action and effective financing mechanisms to addressing the root causes of conflicts and crises to achieving the SDGs and peaceful societies. Only with these partnerships will we be able to ensure that social and economic measures are used effectively to move towards violence free progressive societies.

Finally, I wish to emphasize the primary role of national governments, ably supported by UN country teams, especially the agencies, funds and programmes in providing tailor-made support to countries faced growing socio-economic inequalities, many of which often can lead to tensions between communities. In this regard I wish to recall the annual PBC ECOSOC joint meeting held on 02 December 2022, in which the critical work of the AFPs in prevention,

peacebuilding and development was reiterated. The AFPs, within their respective mandates, need to adapt and respond to local contexts while strengthening national ownership and leadership through active engagement of all actors across the society.

I thank you.