

THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

REMARKS TO THE PEACEBUILDING COMMISSION

**AMBASSADORIAL-LEVEL MEETING ON “LEADERSHIP, ACCOUNTABILITY
AND CAPACITIES”**

New York, 7 September 2018

Mr. Chair [H.E. Ion Jinga, Permanent Representative of Romania],
Members of the Peacebuilding Commission,
Excellencies,

Thank you for your focus today on enhancing leadership, capacities and accountability to sustain peace.

Effective, responsive and accountable leadership -- supported by the right capacities and resources -- lies at the heart of my vision for sustaining peace.

It is also crucial for fostering coherent and effective action in support of national governments and their people.

UN leaders and their teams, particularly in conflict-affected settings, must navigate a complex, politically sensitive environment while often operating with limited staff and financial resources.

We need to work together to enhance their authority and capacities.

We also need to invest more – and much earlier -- in prevention and peacebuilding.

I have outlined a number of options in my report on peacebuilding and sustaining peace. I urge you to consider them seriously.

I also repeat my conviction in the Peacebuilding Fund as a key instrument to drive coherence across our peacebuilding activities.

I renew my appeal to significantly scale up your contributions to this vital Fund which often plays a catalytic role in assisting countries seeking to build and sustain peace.

In Guinea-Bissau, for example, the Peacebuilding Fund provided critical support for the inclusion of women and youth in the political process.

In Colombia, the Peacebuilding Fund became the first contributor to the United Nations Post-Conflict Multi-Partner Trust Fund, helping mobilize more than \$90 million from bilateral donors for implementation of the peace agreement.

In the Central African Republic, Peacebuilding Fund support helped strengthen a UN system-wide approach to responding to peacebuilding priorities.

Beyond financing, senior United Nations leaders in the field must receive dedicated and sufficient assistance from Headquarters, including surge capacities, guidance and training.

They must have delegated authority to take calculated risks in support of national priorities – and benefit from adequate, predictable and sustained financing for peacebuilding.

In return, senior leaders across the UN system must be held accountable for bringing the UN system and its partners together around a common strategy for sustaining peace.

We have progress to build upon.

In Sierra Leone, my Special Representative for West Africa and the Sahel, together with the Resident Coordinator's office, worked closely with national and regional partners to defuse tensions and encourage political dialogue during and after the presidential elections in March 2018.

In Liberia, former President Obasanjo of Nigeria was deployed as member of my High-Level Advisory Board on Mediation, complementing the sustained efforts of my Special Representatives to diffuse tensions surrounding the second round of the presidential elections in November 2017.

In these and other cases, effective leaders tapped into available capacities, such as regional political offices, Peace and Development Advisers, Human Rights Advisers, electoral experts and others. The Peacebuilding Fund has also provided valuable support.

Of course, good leadership relies on solid strategic vision.

With its bridging and convening role, the Peacebuilding Commission can support the development of such vision in national and regional contexts and marshal resources for peacebuilding priorities.

Such was the case with the development of a peacebuilding plan in Liberia, and enhancing the strategic coherence of international efforts in the Sahel.

We must do more to ensure effective strategic leadership during transitions from one form of UN engagement to another.

Recent experiences in Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia were important test cases in ensuring the continuity of senior leadership and personnel through different phases of UN engagement, coupled with strengthened capacity of the respective UN Country Teams.

The PBC has an important role to play. During the transition of UNMIL, for instance, a mapping of capacity of the Country Team against peacebuilding priorities was discussed with Member States through the Commission.

Allow me to also highly commend the PBC for promoting the crucial role of women in peacebuilding and adopting a gender strategy, the first of its kind for a UN intergovernmental body.

Excellencies,

My reform agenda features several proposals that are relevant to enhancing our leadership, accountability and capacities in support of countries' efforts to build and sustain peace.

I am grateful to Member States for your support.

Management reform will improve accountability and effectiveness of programme delivery.

It will empower field leadership, simplify administrative policies, decentralize decision-making closer to the point of delivery and better align the responsibility for mandate implementation with the authority to manage resources.

The repositioning of the development system will ensure that a new generation of Resident Coordinators and UN Country Teams benefit from better cross-pillar support, risk-informed joint analysis and planning, policy advice, monitoring and reporting.

Empowered and impartial Resident Coordinators will have experience across the UN system and multiple skills including in integrated planning, risk management, gender issues and human rights. This will ensure more coherence across the humanitarian-development-peacebuilding continuum.

The restructuring of the peace and security pillar will bring greater effectiveness and alignment.

The Peacebuilding Support Office will have the capacity to act as a “hinge”, facilitating greater coherence across the UN.

Of course, success of these efforts will also depend on ensuring that the leadership culture is principled, inclusive, pragmatic, and action-oriented.

As part of this effort, gender parity within the UN system is an absolute priority.

Empowering women and attaining long-overdue gender parity throughout the ranks of the Organization – as we have achieved in my Senior Management Group – is of course the right thing to do.

It will also position the UN system to better support Member States in achieving inclusive and sustainable peace.

None of this happens on its own. We need to back our resolve with resources.

I committed to allocate at least 15 per cent of United Nations peacebuilding funds to gender equality and women’s empowerment.

I am proud to report that the Peacebuilding Fund more than doubled this target, devoting 36 per cent of funds for projects supporting women’s peacebuilding work last year.

We must also re-focus United Nations leadership to fully engage with young women and men in building and sustaining peace – as underscored in the independent Progress Study on Youth, Peace and Security.

Excellencies,

Once again, thank you for your focus on effective and accountable leadership.

Let us continue to build on our progress to build and sustain peace.

Thank you.