United Nations General Assembly 59th Plenary Meeting

Causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa [Item 62 (a) and (b)]

Statement by the Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission

20 February 2023

Building on the Peacebuilding Commission's longstanding engagement with countries and regions in Africa in support of their peacebuilding priorities, the Commission takes note of the report of the Secretary-General on the promotion of sustainable development and durable peace in Africa and its approach to governance as a tool for building peace and achieving sustainable development, and wishes to make the following remarks:

1. The PBC welcomes the recommendation of the report to strengthen concerted efforts by the Security Council, the Peacebuilding Commission and the Economic and Social Council to promote an approach that understands nation-building as a critical element for peacemaking, peacebuilding and sustaining peace.

2. Strengthening of national capacities is an important component of peacebuilding. Effective and efficient national institutions can address internal factors of instability and mitigate the impact of external shocks; and a collaborative and concerted action of the international community can support national institutions and address external factors of instability.

3. The Commission takes note of the interrelation between conflict and the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and, in this regard, notes with concern the impact that the multifaceted crisis triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic has had on the socio-economic conditions of African countries. The deterioration of the socio-economic situation, climate conditions, in many countries in Africa and the increased budgetary constraints resulting from the pandemic and ongoing global crises, has exacerbated existing inequalities and increased the related risks.

4. The Commission stresses the need to build peace by addressing the root causes of conflicts and instabilities. In this context, there is a need to support the efforts of states in building their national institutions and capabilities in a way that prevents them from slipping into conflicts, and guarantees stability to enable sustainable development.

5. The Commission underlines the importance of sustainable and inclusive socioeconomic development for sustaining peace in Africa through economic development, including but not limited to transnational and transregional infrastructure development, industrialization, poverty eradication, job creation, agricultural modernization and promotion of entrepreneurship, and expresses the need for continued   support to African countries, based on their national priorities and needs, aimed at the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the African Union Agenda 2063.

6. The Commission takes note of the data presented in the report that suggest that good governance contributes to the implementation of all Sustainable Development Goals,

while governance shortcomings may in some circumstances lead to increased risk of instability and conflict. More detailed data is required to analyze the different dimensions of governance and identify the type of policy and programmatic action that might be more effective in unlocking the potential of governance for sustainable development and durable peace in a particular country. Enhanced collaboration between the United Nations, the African Union, African countries and other stakeholders should prioritize the collection and processing of data in this area.

7. The Commission notes that Africa's socio-cultural diversity is one of its greatest assets. It promotes the development of multiple solutions to respond to emerging challenges and boosting innovation. In order to tap into this potential, it is crucial to ensure that governance structures are adapted to manage and leverage socio-cultural diversity.

8. The Commission notes that public service delivery can promote inclusion and social cohesion, when delivered in an efficient, effective and transparent way, or conversely trigger discontent and tensions as a result of actual or perceived inequalities in the access to public services. Thus, ensuring equal access to service delivery is indispensable to promoting peace and stability. It is also an effective tool to increase the presence of state institutions across the territory, mitigating the risk caused by the rise of armed non-state actors in the continent.

9. The Commission notes that traditional African leadership structures and mechanisms can be pivotal in facilitating participation and service delivery. In this regard, the Commission encourages United Nations to study utilization of traditional leadership structures as complementary mechanisms for strengthening governance in African countries.

10. The Commission stresses the importance to ensure the full, equal and meaningful participation of women at all levels, and calls for the engagement of youth to overcome governance challenges. The empowerment of women and the inclusion of youth in various fields should be translated into executive policies to overcome the economic, social and security challenges.

11. The Commission welcomes efforts by the African Union to enhance governance in the continent through a robust normative and institutional framework, including the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance and commends the work of the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) in proposing practical measures to strengthen governance structures in its member States. The Commission encourages the United Nations to increase their cooperation with the APRM with a view to enhancing its monitoring capacity.