

Ambassadorial-level PBC meeting on Youth Peace and Security (YPS)
10 May 2022
Chair Summary

1. On 10 May, the Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission, H.E. Ms. Rabab Fatima, convened an ambassadorial-level virtual meeting to discuss with young peacebuilders, Member States, and other participants, ways of strengthening the Commission's contributions to the youth, peace, and security agenda. The meeting also discussed the Commission's input to the Security Council ahead of the latter's open debate on youth, peace, and security in 2022.
2. In her opening remarks, the Chair highlighted the efforts that the Commission has made towards mainstreaming the youth, peace, and security agenda into its country and regional engagements. The Chair noted that, while there have been significant gains in all five pillars of the agenda, namely participation, protection, prevention, partnerships, and disengagement and reintegration, the COVID-19 pandemic has negatively impacted youth's meaningful participation in peacebuilding. She expressed support for the recommendations contained in the Secretary General's second biennial report (S/2022/220) and urged for increased youth initiatives. She stated that the recommendations will be taken into account while sending advice to the Security Council as and when the open debate on youth, peace, and security takes place. The Chair also thanked PBSO for the update on the implementation of the Commission's strategic action plan on youth and peacebuilding and reiterated the Commission's commitment to its effective implementation.
3. The UN Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth, Ms. Jayathma Wickramanayake commended the Commission's determination to help advance the youth, peace and security agenda. She expressed concern over the stark reality for youth across the world, characterized by uncertainty and unprecedented challenges, including the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change, and complex geopolitical conflicts that continue to threaten their safety and security and marginalize their voice. Ms. Wickramanayake stressed the need to create more space for inter-generational dialogues, including within the PBC. She highlighted the importance of developing national plans for youth, peace and security and encouraged the PBC to continue to share good practices in that respect. She emphasized the important role that youth play in facilitating innovative approaches to peacebuilding and identified the need to refine data on youth funding in a more systematic way to allow for flexible and adequate financing for youth engagement.
4. The Deputy Executive Director, Management of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), Mr. Ib Petersen commended the PBC for adopting a Strategic Action Plan on

youth and peacebuilding and, more importantly for systematically tracking its implementation. He noted that the actualization of the five pillars of the YPS agenda remains a challenge as low access to funding by youth organizations, limited tracking mechanisms of youth-funded projects, and insufficient level of meaningful engagement with the youth hinder progress. Mr. Petersen urged the PBC to consider ways through which it can promote the meaningful engagement and participation by youth in its activities, and to promote multistakeholder approaches and partnerships in the implementation of the YPS agenda, including through continuing dialogue with international financial institutions. The Deputy Executive Director also encouraged the PBC to utilize its advisory role in advocating for more YPS discussions at the Security Council on the importance of working with and for the youth.

5. Liberian youth peacebuilder and Founder & Executive Director of Messengers of Peace-Liberia Inc., Ms. Gwendolyn Myers, expressed concern over the low level of youth engagement in peacebuilding activities, noting challenges such as limited financial resources for youth organizations and complex donor processes. She noted that due to the informal nature of most youth organizations, there is an urgent need for the PBC and the UN to move away from traditional forms of funding channels. Ms. Myers stated that the current system of funding favours more structured and institutionalized youth organizations, noting that no organization should have a monopoly on youth peacebuilding funds. She urged the PBC and funding partners to build trust with youth organizations, which would facilitate transparency. She called on governments to translate YPS recommendations and policies into programs that impact the youth.
6. El Salvadorian youth peacebuilder and Coordinator of Young Peacebuilders grassroots group *Grupo Impulsor de la Resolución 2250*, Mr. Carlos Garcia, remarked that peace and security should go beyond ending conflicts and encompass issues related to gender, climate change, and equality. In implementing the YPS agenda, he noted that the youth in El Salvador have developed strategies at the local level that address the challenges they face, including developing a mechanism for YPS agenda implementation at the local level, creation of a monitoring group for its implementation, the establishment of a citizen forum for YPS, and the formation of alliances and collaborations. Mr. Garcia called for more government and multilateral support by availing more resources that support youth organizations, including youth in the disbursement of funds, mainstreaming youth funds into official development assistance, and increasing budgetary commitments for the implementation of programs that benefit youth. He further stressed that participation of youth in peacebuilding should be across the board, including in monitoring and evaluation of such initiatives, as well in discussions about legally binding structures for youth.
7. Kenyan youth peacebuilder and Pan-Commonwealth Coordinator of the Commonwealth Youth Peace Ambassadors Network (CYPAN), Ms. Christine Odera, explained that youth

often find it difficult to understand the language used in policies that pertain to the youth agenda, and that convoluted policy jargon devoid of local context can sometimes limit their meaningful involvement. Ms. Odera also explained that lack of technical skills and knowledge remains a barrier for the inclusion of youth who would otherwise have a lot to offer in development and peacebuilding planning and programming. She noted that youth should be viewed as allies in peacebuilding and more investments should be made towards equipping them with the skills, tools, and knowledge that would allow them to design, implement, and monitor programs that affect their lives. She added that until this happens, the YPS agenda will not be sustainable in the long-term Ms. Odera further challenged the PBC to do more to integrate a youth angle across its activities and to support and finance youth efforts at the local level.

8. Indonesian youth peacebuilder and Executive Director of ASEAN Youth Organization, Ms. Agatha Lydia, commended the PBC for prioritizing the YPS agenda. She brought to the Commission's attention challenges that restrict youth involvement in peacebuilding such as language barriers, limited or no access to finance, and misconceptions about youth inexperience. She noted that the heavy bureaucracy associated with financial support by donors limits access to funding, further stating that youth organizations are struggling to ensure sustainability as they often use their limited personal savings and resources to fund their activities. Ms. Lydia commended the YPS agenda as a critical tool that has paved the way for youth to step up and be involved in peacebuilding across different countries and regions. She noted that youth have brilliant ideas, urging the PBC and its partners to involve them from the early stages of their programs and activities as opposed to one-time consultations, and to provide sustainable and long-term funding to youth projects, as well as trust the youth as a strategic partner in policy and decision making.
9. ASG for Peacebuilding Support, Ms. Elizabeth Spehar, stated that the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs is committed to help overcome the structural barriers that youth continue to face, particularly regarding political participation, their exclusion from decision-making and peace processes, and their difficulties in accessing flexible financing tailored to their priorities and needs. She explained that, together with UNFPA, DPPA had developed key policy documents, including most recently a guide for public officials to implement the youth, peace, and security agenda at the country-level. She added that, through the Peacebuilding Fund, which was at the time of the meeting the largest funding window in support of the youth, peace, and security agenda, DPPA was helping to address the scarcity of funding in this key area. She stressed the need to find better ways to reach small, local, youth-led organizations, as also highlighted during a recent high-level event of the General Assembly on peacebuilding financing. She underscored that Our Common Agenda underlines the importance of direct and meaningful engagement and partnerships with young people and encouraged the Commission to continue to hear from and amplify youth voices and to partner with them to attain our shared goals.

10. Member States welcomed the briefings and made the following observations:

- Member States welcomed the analysis and recommendations contained in DPPA/PBSO's written update on the implementation of the Commission's Strategic Action Plan on youth and peacebuilding since its approval in February 2021, and the second report of the Secretary-General on youth, peace and security (S/2022/220) - which had been shared with the Commission ahead of the meeting.
- While recognising progress since the adoption of resolution 2250 (2015) and subsequent resolutions 2419 (2018) and 2535 (2020), Member States acknowledged that young people continue to face multidimensional challenges and barriers which are exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change, and exclusion from decision-making and peace processes. They called for more action in support of national-level action plans for YPS, accessible funding for youth-led peacebuilding, and institutionalization of the YPS agenda.
- Member States commended the remarkable work done by the youth briefers in their respective countries and noted that youth peacebuilders should be recognized not just as beneficiaries of peacebuilding but also as key stakeholders and strategic partners. They stressed the need to improve ownership and effectiveness of youth-related initiatives globally and called for more action to place young people at the centre of strategies for peacebuilding and conflict prevention.
- Member States underscored the significance of education and training in building the capacity of youth peacebuilders. They noted that entrepreneurship; IT knowledge; financial sources and know-how; monitoring and evaluation skills; as well as awareness of YPS policies could help address some of the key challenges youth organizations face, including sustainability and financial limitations. Some Member States also underscored the importance of addressing the mental and psycho-social needs of youth in conflict affected settings, urging for concrete commitments.
- They recognized the important contributions of PBF, while also underscoring the need to increase funding for youth-led peacebuilding initiatives. They called for increased flexibility and fluidity in funding allocation for youth organizations, and for stronger partnerships with the private sector and international financial

institutions. Some Member States stressed the need to ensure synergies with the women, peace and security agenda.

- They expressed commitment to doing more to mainstream youth-related considerations in the Commission's activities, in line with resolution 2250 (2015) and subsequent resolutions 2419 (2018) and 2535 (2020), including by fully utilising its bridging and advisory role for the advancement of the youth, peace and security agenda. In that regard, they agreed to reflect key elements of the meeting into the Commission's subsequent written advice to the Security Council ahead of the latter's open debate on youth, peace, and security in 2022. They also agreed to increase communication channels and engagement with youth peacebuilders, a necessary condition for the effective implementation of the Commission Strategic Action Plan on youth and peacebuilding.