



**PALABRAS DEL EMBAJADOR
GUILLERMO FERNÁNDEZ DE SOTO
REPRESENTANTE PERMANENTE DE COLOMBIA
PEACEBUILDING COMMISSION
FORMAL MEETING**

New York, 28 January 2018

Excellencies and distinguished colleagues,

I wish to congratulate Romania and Ambassador Jinga for the important accomplishments of the past year. Under Romania's leadership, the Peacebuilding Commission further enhanced its role as a key intergovernmental platform in support of conflict-affected countries. It is clear, from reading the annual report we just adopted, that, throughout the last session, the Commission successfully implemented the priorities the Chair had identified at the beginning of last year.

I also wish to express my gratitude to all of you for electing Colombia as Chair of the PBC in 2019. Colombia's recent history, our experience in building peace and our attachment to the principle of national ownership will guide our work during the next twelve months.

Our trust in the peacebuilding architecture –as a recipient of support from the Peacebuilding Fund; as a member of this commission and as one of the main supporters of the reforms to the United Nations– will guide our efforts to ensure that 2019 is a successful year for peacebuilding and sustaining peace.

Looking forward, I see a number of priorities that I would like to share with you for your consideration.

First, the bridging role of the PBC. The 2016 resolutions on the review of the peacebuilding architecture called for the PBC to play a bridging role among the principal organs and relevant entities of the United Nations. By nature and its own composition, the Commission already brings together the General Assembly, Security Council and ECOSOC. Since 2005, Member States created the PBC with this structure, because the Commission was always meant to strengthen the synergies between different parts of the UN system, while respecting each body's mandate. I encourage the Member States elected from these three bodies to continue exploring ways to further strengthen those synergies and create more coherence at the intergovernmental level.

Second, the PBC advisory role to the Security Council. The Commission's advisory role to the Security Council has expanded during the past few years. The PBC has improved the timing and quality of its advice, particularly on country-specific issues, and the Council has requested the advice of the PBC more often. I strongly

COLOMBIA



welcome this positive trend and urge all of us to further strengthen the relations between the Council and the Commission.

A stronger advisory role will be particularly important when the Council is considering the formation, review and drawdown of Peacekeeping Operations and Special Political Missions. Last June, Colombia participated in a fruitful discussion between members of the Security Council and the PBC on this topic. During the discussion, Member States noted that the PBC is uniquely positioned to provide broad and diverse peacebuilding perspectives to the Council. I will repeat what my predecessor in the Colombian Mission stressed at that meeting: countries like Colombia can only benefit from a special relationship between the PBC and the Security Council.

Third, the regional approach. The value of the PBC as a convening platform is particularly evident during its consideration of regional situations. We are encouraged by the possibility of continuing to contribute to the progress, such as that recently noted by the Secretary-General, who stressed that after years of efforts, the United Nations Peacekeeping Mission in Liberia has completed its work, consolidating the successes of other operations of the United Nations in West Africa. In the report that we have just approved, it is emphasized that the priority of the Commission is to help the government of Liberia to implement its national peacebuilding plan and in this perspective we will discuss its National Development Plan. It is in these situations, where a diverse range of stakeholders are engaged, that the PBC can foster coherent and coordinated approaches to peacebuilding and sustaining peace. This is why, in January 2017, the Security Council requested the PBC to support the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel in mobilizing commitment and partnership across the UN system, the countries of the Sahel and other international and regional partners with the view to advancing the implementation of the UN Integrated Strategy for the Sahel.

I intend to continue the work done by the Republic of Korea and Romania and make sure that the Commission can play a constructive role in support of peacebuilding and sustaining peace in the Sahel. I also intend to reinforce the idea that peacebuilding is universal and that other regions of the world can also benefit from the support of the PBC.

I also intend to reinforce the idea that peacebuilding is universal and that other regions of the world can also benefit from the support of the PBC. In this connection, and in response to an invitation the PBC has received from the Organization of American States, I intend to visit the OAS to discuss areas of possible cooperation.

Fourth, partnerships. In addition to the point I just made about regional organizations, I believe we should seek stronger collaboration with some of our key partners. First of all with the World Bank, in implementation of the agreement reached in June 2017 which stressed the importance of convening an annual dialogue between the PBC and the Bank. With the African Development Bank, a key organization which supports several of the countries we work with. I will also seek partnerships with the

COLOMBIA



Interamerican Development Bank, as well as with sub-regional organizations, such as ECOWAS and the Mano River Union. The relationship between the Peacebuilding Commission and the Peace and Security Council of the African Union through its annual meeting should continue to serve the purpose of focusing efforts on conflict prevention, good governance, human rights and national reconciliation.

Fifth, the synergies between PBC and PBF. Colombia is a recipient of the PBF. In 2017, my government came forward and expressed its interest to come before the PBC to share its peacebuilding experience and express its appreciation for the support received from the United Nations. At that meeting, the important message was focused on the coordinated support between the recipient country and the UN System – including within the organization itself – in order to improve the efficiency in peacebuilding.

We believe that the work of the Commission and the Fund go hand in hand. While fully respecting the independence of the decision-making process of the Fund, I welcome the recent trend that favours greater discussions on the activities of the PBF in the PBC.

I intend to explore ways to further improve these synergies with a view to ensure that we can provide coherent and effective peacebuilding support

Sixth, good practices in peacebuilding. The 2016 resolutions asked the PBC to convene discussions to develop and share good practices in peacebuilding. Since then, the Commission convened several meetings where countries shared their experiences. From Kyrgyzstan to Somalia, from Burkina Faso to Sri Lanka, from Papua New Guinea to Colombia, this process testified to the fact that, despite coming from different parts of the world, despite finding themselves at different moments of their history, these countries faced similar challenges and could benefit from what others were learning.

I intend to further expand that approach, talking to possible new countries but also following up with some of the countries that approached the PBC several years ago and inviting them to update us on their peacebuilding progresses.

I will stress in my discussions with them that national ownership is the cornerstone of the credibility and effectiveness of the PBC.

Seventh and last, the 2020 review of the peacebuilding architecture. Next year, the General Assembly and Security Council will review, for the third time, the peacebuilding architecture. At a moment when we are making progress in the implementation of the recommendations emanating from the 2015 review, I intend to convene informal consultations with Member States to seek their views on what they expect from the next review. I will also maintain a regular dialogue with the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Security Council.

COLOMBIA



Excellencies,

The work in front of us is ambitious and challenging. I am grateful for the Commission's decision to elect countries of the calibre of Egypt and Romania to work with Colombia in leading the PBC in 2019. But despite our efforts, we will not be successful without the full support of all of you. For us to succeed, each Member of the PBC will have to actively contribute to our shared goals.

I encourage all of you to consider the priorities I just listed and share your views and suggestions. I intend to capture our ideas in a draft programme of work for 2019 that will be shared for further consideration in the coming days.

I thank you once again for your confidence and support and I wish to all of you a successful work year in the PBC framework.