

Peacebuilding Commission Formal meeting

31 January 2018

Statement of the Chair

Excellencies, dear colleagues,

At the outset, allow me to warmly congratulate Ambassador Cho, outgoing Chair of the PBC, for the excellent work done last year. The Republic of Korea led the Commission at a crucial time, implementing important recommendations of the review of the peacebuilding architecture, in particular diversifying the working methods of the Commission, strengthening its convening power and enhancing its advisory role to the Security Council. It is a privilege for me to be able to count on the Republic of Korea, as well as on Germany, as Vice-Chairs in 2018.

At the same time, I want to recall the significant achievements brought to the work of this Commission by outstanding ambassadors who chaired the PBC in previous years: Antonio Patriota of Brazil, Olof Skoog of Sweden, and Macharia Kamau of Kenya.

I also wish to express my deep gratitude to all Members of the PBC for the trust they have given to Romania. I take this as a recognition of my country's 100 years of tradition in multilateral diplomacy, as Romania was a founding member of the League of Nations in 1919 and, since it joined the UN in 1955, it invested a lot in preventive diplomacy, conflict prevention, peacebuilding and mediation. In the last 26 years Romania participated with more than 12,500 troops in 20 UN peacekeeping missions, it ranks today first among EU countries contributing with police officers under the UN flag and is the only UN member state providing close protection units to UN high level officials in high risk areas.

By taking over the Chairmanship of the PBC on behalf of my country, I reconfirm Romania's full commitment and determination to peacebuilding and sustaining peace. As the effectiveness and efficiency of this Commission is directly linked to the engagement of its Members, I count on your most valuable support to continue the important work done by my predecessors. I look forward to working with all of you, as a team, to further strengthen the PBC and consolidate its relevance in relations with all partners, in particular with the Security Council.

Excellencies,

The provisional work plan for 2018, which is considered for adoption today, was drafted with two objectives in mind: to implement the recommendations contained in the PBC annual report which we just adopted, and to follow-up to several initiatives the

Commission has undertaken over the last couple of years. **The work plan reflects 5 priorities that I have identified for the current session:**

First, the PBC regional approach. Since its first meeting on the Ebola crisis in 2014, the Commission has consistently proved its value in catalysing responses to regional and sub-regional situations. I intend to stay on this important track, with particular focus on the Commission's engagement on the situations in the Sahel and the Great Lakes regions.

Through its Presidential Statement PRST/2017/2 and resolution 2389 (2017), the Security Council recognized the role the Commission can play in support of peacebuilding and sustaining peace efforts in these two regions. These are important opportunities to demonstrate the ways in which the PBC can use its convening power to mobilize greater commitment and partnership between the countries in the region, the UN system and other relevant international and regional partners, in support of the countries in these regions.

The PBC is well positioned to carry on a coordinated and coherent approach to peacebuilding, and to help address the root causes of conflict. Ultimately, these are opportunities to demonstrate the unique role of the PBC to advise and support the Security Council.

As demonstrated during recent discussions on Asian and Latin American experiences, peacebuilding is a universal imperative. I wish to encourage countries from various regions to consider using the PBC platform to share peacebuilding experiences and build partnerships with key stakeholders.

Second, partnerships. The PBC has demonstrated a high degree of flexibility when it comes to engaging with key peacebuilding stakeholders. I intend to further strengthen collaboration with regional and sub-regional organizations (and the African Union in particular), international financial institutions such as the World Bank and the African Development Bank, and civil society organizations. We should take advantage of the critical and complementary roles of the UN and the World Bank in an integrated political, security and development framework.

One partnership that I believe should be further explored is with the private sector. International and domestic private sector actors and entities have important roles to play in implementation of peacebuilding and sustaining peace efforts, particularly in addressing the root causes of conflict. Political, social and economic activities associated with peacebuilding are closely related, and the main challenge of peacebuilding from an economic perspective is to create an environment favourable to sustainable development, for which private investment may be indispensable, especially in post-conflict situations.

I therefore submit to your kind attention the suggestion that the PBC should explore, where relevant, opportunities to engage more strategically with private sector actors to raise awareness on the peacebuilding priorities of our partner countries and their regions, including by enhancing the participation of the private sector in terms of definition of peacebuilding objectives.

The Commission's annual session is a perfect place to bring all these actors together. To link my first two priorities, I propose to you that we use the platform of the annual session of 2018 to convene key stakeholders to review the wide-ranging security, political and socio-economic challenges facing the Sahel region, and ongoing efforts of the United Nations to advance the implementation of its Integrated Strategy for the Sahel.

Third, implementing peacebuilding and sustaining peace. A key outcome of the 2015 review was the recognition of the importance of supporting conflict affected countries through the whole process, from preventing the outbreak, escalation and recurrence of conflict, to reconstruction and development. Prevention not only saves lives but it is also cost-effective. The Commission, in accordance with its mandate, should stand ready to support conflict affected countries that seek to engage with the international community at all stages of conflict. As a unique consensus building body, the PBC role is only to help.

Peacebuilding must respect the sovereignty of the states concerned and be based on the concept of ownership. Equally important, further rising of the PBC profile depends largely on its relationship with the Security Council and the PBC capacity to bring valuable inputs to the Council's work, without interfering with the Council's competences.

Fourth, the relationship between the PBC and the PBF. I intend to further strengthen the synergies between the Commission and the Peacebuilding Fund. Over the last couple of years, Mr Oscar Fernandez-Taranco and PBSO have performed a tremendous work to raise awareness among Member States on the activities of the Fund. I hope the PBF will play an increasing role in implementing the Council and General Assembly resolutions on the peacebuilding architecture review.

Therefore, I intend to continue convening on a regular basis discussion with the PBSO, with the objective of keeping the PBC updated on the countries it supports and of finding innovative ways to develop the PBC relevance. At the same time, while preserving the independence of the Fund, I think there should be more coherence between programming tools and political objectives. The Commission should also be utilized as a platform to raise awareness with donors and international financial institutions of the work of the PBF, with a view to reinforcing the Fund's catalytic nature.

Fifth and last, but not the least, visibility and communication. In the follow-up to the 2015 review of the peacebuilding architecture, the PBC has made important progress in strengthening its advisory role to General Assembly and Security Council, in discussing

a more diverse range of peacebuilding challenges, and in improving its working methods. I believe that this progress needs to be better known and recognized by a broader audience. I welcome the suggestion of my predecessor to have open meetings of the Commission transmitted on webcast. I believe we should explore ways to engage more consistently with the media and the broader public.

I encourage Member States to discuss, in the framework of the Commission's working methods, ways to raise awareness on the work of the PBC. The PBC needs to continue to focus into a better perceived value to the Council and to the countries that it seeks to support. At the same time, a solid and lasting peacebuilding process needs high levels of transparency, public scrutiny, participation and consultation.

Therefore, while keeping the balance between transparency and confidentiality in the Commission's deliberations, and upon consultation with the countries concerned, I will announce when the meetings are to be open or closed. Whenever possible, we may also think to invite the media to become one of our partners in building peace.

Excellencies,

The PBC now has to translate the improvements achieved in its activity in the last couple of years into a more visible role as a bridge between the Security Council, the General Assembly and the EOSOC, to make these three UN institutions work together better, for a more coherent peacebuilding. If successful, this would be a relevant added value to our Commission's role.

As we move ahead in the implementation of the 2015 review of the peacebuilding architecture, it will also be important to further enhance the Commission's country-specific engagement. In this respect, we may consider to further expand the range of our discussions in the framework of the Organizational Committee, while reaffirming our commitment towards lasting partnerships with the countries that have approached the Commission in the past.

With these humble ideas in mind, I count on your most valuable support and I look forward to working with all of you to ensure a successful and effective year for the PBC.

Thank you.