

Peacebuilding Commission
Informal meeting of the Organizational Committee
23 March 2010

Chairperson's Summary of the Discussion

Background and Context

On 23 March 2010, the Organizational Committee of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) convened an informal meeting. The PBC Chairperson presided over the meeting. The agenda for the meeting included the following items: (1) Partnership for peacebuilding: Interaction with key PBC partners; (2) Follow-up to the PBC retreat (5 and 6 March 2010); (3) Participation of the PBC Chairperson in the Global Meeting on the International Dialogue for State-building and Peacebuilding (Dili, Timor Leste, 8 and 9 April 2010); and (4) Other matters.

1. Partnership for peacebuilding: Interaction with key PBC partners

In preparation for the discussion on this agenda item, the Chairperson extended invitation to representatives of the World Bank, IMF, European Union, African Union and the Organization of Islamic Conference to make brief introductory remarks and engage in interactive discussion with members and guests. The PBSO prepared an issues paper on "Partnership for peacebuilding" to frame and focus the discussions on four types of partnerships, namely: (1) Partnership for a common vision for engagement in a country; (2) Partnership for improved coordination; (3) Partnership for advocacy and political support; and (4) Partnership for financial resources mobilization.

In his introductory remarks, the Chairperson underlined that the objective for forging and strengthening partnerships with IFIs and regional entities is to support and reinforce peacebuilding efforts undertaken by national stakeholders. In this regard, he underlined the following points in relation to the envisaged types for partnership:

- There is a need to develop a shared vision of peacebuilding among all the key actors and the national stakeholders with respect to: identifying the gaps to be addressed; the priorities which deserve focused and sustained attention; and the means to address the gaps and sustain attention and commitment for the long-term.
- The PBC's engagement should continue to offer conducive environment and an appropriate platform for in-country coordination. To this end, there is a need to ensure that shared vision of gaps and priorities will have operational relevance for all partners in support of national efforts.
- Joint advocacy by international partners is critical to sustain peacebuilding processes, including in support for an inclusive national dialogue, implementation of difficult peace

The presentations by the panelists and the subsequent discussions produced the following observations:

which was circulated to members and panelists held its third informal retreat at the Ambassadorial level on 5 and 6 March 2010 in Greentree Estate, Manhasset, New York. The event was organized by the PBC Chairperson, with the sponsorship of Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Germany and Switzerland. The members of and participants in the Organizational Committee of the PBC as well as other relevant guests from within and outside the United Nations, including the Co-facilitators of the 2010 PBC review process, participated in the retreat (Annex I: list of participants).

The United Nations Deputy Secretary-General, Ms. Asha-Rose Migiro, inaugurated the retreat with a keynote address at the opening dinner on 5 March 2010 (Annex II). The

The retreat took place shortly after the launching of the 2010 review process co-facilitated by the Permanent Representatives of Ireland, Mexico and South Africa. It offered an informal platform to address the areas of improvement in the work of the Commission which could be pursued in parallel with possible improvements to be addressed through the review process. The general expectation is that the PBC needs to improve its engagement with countries that are currently on its agenda and new countries which will come on its agenda. The retreat also offered member states an opportunity to reflect on critical short term deliverables for 2010.

The high turn-out of Permanent Representatives, Ambassadors, senior UN officials and representatives from the World Bank contributed to making the discussions frank, thought-provoking and substantive.

Summary of the Discussion

The retreat was structured around the theme of: “Fulfilling the potential of the PBC in 2010”. The discussions were organized in two main sessions: 1) Forms of engagement: the PBC’s impact at the country level; and 2) The sustainability of peace: could the PBC do better?

The retreat opened with a general exchange of views in the context of a warm-up session on the evening of 5 March and concluded with wrap-up session at which the Chairperson shared a preliminary summary of the discussions which took place in the previous sessions (Annex III: Retreat Agenda).

The discussions began with a **general reflection on conceptual issues** which the 2010 review process would possibly address. Reflecting on some questions and issues presented by the Chairperson; the Vice-Chairperson and the Head of PBSO, members recalled their respective ideas of the vision behind the creation of the Peacebuilding Architecture in 2005. A key question which came up was whether the 2005 vision was too ambitious or ideal and to what extent has the PBC succeeded in implementing such vision. In doing so, members pondered the question of whether the PBC is an institutional necessity, or whether its creation was a response to the failure of the Security Council and UN system to meet the challenges of post-conflict situations. Closely related, members

addressed the role of the PBC in incorporating socio-economic development perspectives in security strategies as a means to sustain peace and ensure longer term engagement in and commitment to countries emerging from conflict.

Several participants saw the PBC's comparative advantage as consisting of addressing gaps in the transition period, advocating on behalf of the countries concerned for the long-term challenges to sustaining peace and serving as political platform for addressing obstacles in global policy across the security, political and socio-economic spectrum. Other issues of concern also included the notion of building national ownership in a controversial triangle which also involves "partnerships" and "conditionality".

Participants engaged in a discussion on how to **improve the relevance of the work of the Peacebuilding Commission in its country-specific configuration**. The discussion was initiated with brief presentations from UNDP BCPR and DPA. The two panelists, both of whom referred to their respective experiences in post-conflict situations, focused their interventions on the role of their respective entities in peacebuilding processes at country level. The presentations provided differentiated emphasis on youth employment, gender mainstreaming and the importance of capitalizing on existing national and international development frameworks, and support to elections and national dialogues. There was, however, clear convergence on the importance of PBC partnering with senior UN representatives at field level, and of working with existing national and international frameworks.

The ensuing discussions among members focused on elements of the PBC's mandate, as well as the importance of avoiding fragmentation, strengthening coordination and coherence and improving resource mobilization. Overall, it was felt that there was a need to develop alternative models for PBC engagement and that there was no "one-size-fits-all" model. A tailored and more flexible approach was preferred to respect the specificities of each country. Participants agreed that PBC's engagement should be "lighter" and "context specific". The PBC could also contribute to ensuring coherence of approach and avoiding overlap and duplication of efforts. In addition, a strong UN presence at field level was highlighted as crucial to ensuring coordination and system-wide coherence. Participants also underlined that the Organizational Committee could assume a greater strategic role in addressing key institutional, working methods and political issues and that the Working Group on Lessons Learned should generate more tailored advice to countries on the agenda of the PBC. Members also underlined that PBSO's capacity should be enhanced to support an expanding and deepening PBC's country-level engagement and partnerships and that UN presence in countries on the PBC agenda should have clear mandates and adequate capacities to support peacebuilding processes.

The discussion on **how the PBC's engagement will promote sustainability of efforts** was initiated with brief presentations by France, the World Bank and DPKO. The presenters emphasized various perspectives regarding the short-term and longer term nature of peacebuilding engagement, including on the sequencing of tasks within such engagement. In addition, the question of national ownership in relation to international partnerships was also perceived by one presenter as a key dilemma in approaching sustainability.

During the discussion, some members underlined the need for a closer advisory relationship with the Security Council, so as to ensure due attention to peacebuilding during the formulation of peacekeeping missions' mandate and when planning for drawdown and withdrawal of these missions. However, concern was expressed that a linear concept in which peacekeeping precedes

peacebuilding continues to prevail in the Council, thus affecting sustainability of peacebuilding efforts. One member proposed that the Secretary-General should be requested to include a dedicated section on peacebuilding in his regular reports to the Security Council on peacekeeping and special political missions in PBC and non-PBC countries.

Members also highlighted the importance of national ownership as the guarantor for sustainability such efforts. At the same time, participants underlined that ownership needs to be based on building human and institutional capacities which need special focus and attention in post-conflict settings. Participants also advised that such ownership should be construed broadly to ensure participation of all national actors and some members highlighted the critical supporting role of regional partners. Moreover, it was suggested that the PBC could build a knowledge base – possibly through the Working Group on Lessons Learned – on the relevance of peacebuilding for traditional norms and institutions. The discussions also addressed funding for peacebuilding activities as key factor to ensure success and sustainability. In this regard, members alluded to the role of PBF and advocated for closer synergy with the PBC, albeit with the Secretary General retaining final authority over allocation. It was also noted that subjecting PBF allocation to the approval of an intergovernmental body would make it difficult for certain countries to continue contributing to the Fund. There was broad agreement on the need for a closer relationship between the PBC and the IFIs, whose engagement was acknowledged as being critical for long-term and sustainable development. Support was also expressed for enhanced coordination with regional development banks.

In summarizing the discussions in the previous three sessions, the Chairperson underlined that the discussions reflected a sense of commitment by members to making the PBC more effective and meeting the high expectations associated with its creation. Members reacted to the elements of the Chair's preliminary summary by reiterating their perspectives on strengthening the PBC's effectiveness through redefined relationships with the Security Council (as well as the GA and ECOSOC), the PBF, and the IFIs; improved working methods and institutional mechanisms; reflect on how it could undertake its political and advocacy role; and learn from the experience it has gained so far. Participants also converged that PBC's current mandates are still relevant and should not be reopened. At the same time, members broadly agreed that PBC's engagement and advice must become operationally relevant to the numerous actors in the countries concerned.

Key Recommendations and Observations

The following recommendations and observations on the way forward emerged from the discussions regarding the areas where the PBC should continue to make improvements by:

Coordination and partnerships:

- Helping to overcome fragmentation and avoid overlap of actions;
- Promoting a shared vision on peacebuilding gaps and priorities at the country level;
- Developing its role as facilitator of UN and non-UN engagement at the country-level;
- Promoting partnerships with IFIs and regional organizations/entities (e.g. AU and EU);

Linkage between peacekeeping and peacebuilding:

- Strengthening its advisory role to Security Council in the design and review of peacekeeping mandates;

Agenda and forms of engagement:

- Strengthening linkages with the Security Council, ECOSOC and GA to explore expansion of advice and engagement to more countries emerging from conflict;
- Adopting a more flexible “modus operandi” and context-specific tailored” engagement;
- Focusing engagement on peacebuilding-related gaps and priorities in existing national strategies;
- Exploring sustainability factors at country level (e.g. employment generation activities, institutional capacity ...etc);
- Deepening analysis of peacebuilding challenges and identifying potential threats to peacebuilding processes;
- Giving more attention to regional contexts of the peacebuilding processes;
- Continuing to explore ways to mobilize financial and political support over the long term and ensure quick peace dividends in the socio-economic field.
