

PBC Ambassadorial-level meeting

Briefing by the Secretary-General on Our Common Agenda

22 October 2021

Chair's summary

1. On 22 October 2021, the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) held an Ambassadorial-level virtual meeting convened by the Chair, H.E. Mr. Osama Abdelkhalek (Egypt), to hear a briefing by the Secretary-General on Our Common Agenda. In his opening remarks, the Chair commended the Secretary-General for his vision and recommendations on pursuing Our Common Agenda and highlighting that the PBC is well-positioned to contribute to different components of the Agenda, particularly the New Agenda for Peace. In this respect, he stressed the need to ensure adequate, predictable and sustained financing for peacebuilding.

2. The Secretary-General, Mr. Antonio Guterres, conveyed a sense of urgency in seeking a breakthrough to a better future for people and planet. He stressed the need to accelerate the implementation of Agenda 2030 and the Paris Agreement, which are essential in preventing war and strengthening global peace and security. He explained that his report proposes a New Agenda for Peace that could include measures to reduce strategic risks such as nuclear arms and cyberwarfare; strengthen capacities for foresight across the UN family; scale up action to reduce all forms of violence; increase investments in prevention and peacebuilding, including by addressing the root causes of conflict and increasing support for regional initiatives; put women and girls at the center of UN peace efforts; and promote the meaningful participation of young people in all decision-making processes. He recognized ongoing PBC and Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) support in several of these areas and emphasized the need to dedicate more resources to those two instruments, including through assessed contributions to the Fund, to meet increasing demand. He suggested a dialogue on how to update the collective view of the peace and security landscape, including in preparation of a Summit of the Future, proposed for 2023.

3. Member States welcomed the presentation by the Secretary-General and raised the following points:

- Many speakers commended the Secretary-General on his report on Our Common Agenda and shared his broad vision for the 21st century challenges that are confronting our world and the sense of urgency it expresses. They welcomed the renewed focus on prevention, trust, social cohesion and international solidarity, with some stressing the need to increase vaccine solidarity.
- Several members expressed their commitment to continue to offer the PBC platform for the promotion of global solidarity in response to global risks and complex crises and asked how the PBC can contribute to the work of the proposed Emergency Platform.
- Members committed to continuing to work in synergy with the PBF in support of inclusive and multistakeholder approaches for peacebuilding and development, while reiterating the intergovernmental nature of the PBC.
- Several Member States welcomed the commitment of the Secretary-General to place women and girls at the center of peace efforts and renewed their commitment to mainstreaming gender dimensions across all aspects of the Commission's work, including through the full implementation of the PBC gender strategy and action plan.

- Member States stressed the need to further strengthen the advisory role of the PBC to the General Assembly and the Security Council, and its bridging role with ECOSOC. Some delegations mentioned that strengthening the Commission's advisory and bridging roles can help operationalize key aspects of Our Common Agenda, while at the same time recognising the current resource limitations that prohibit the Commission from meeting increasing demand and strengthening its work. In this respect, some delegations regretted the recent rejection by the PBC of an invitation from the Human Rights Council for a briefing by the Commission's Chair.
 - Some delegations wanted to know more about specific plans to operationalize the New Agenda for Peace and how this related to the implementation of SDGs. They encouraged the Secretary-General to empower the UN development system to take forward Our Common Agenda.
 - Several Member States expressed support for adequate and sustained financing for peacebuilding and for additional contributions to the PBF, and some added that these should include assessed contributions, emphasising the Fund's catalytic and multiplier effect.
4. In response to the interventions from the floor, the Secretary-General welcomed the overall support expressed for Our Common Agenda and recognised that strengthening the role of the PBC so that it can meet increasing demand and carry forward relevant aspects of Our Common Agenda would not be possible without dedicating additional resources in support of the Commission's work. He encouraged PBC members to continue implementing the PBC gender strategy and action plan, which places gender equality as a key priority across all its activities. He also encouraged a strengthened relationship between the Commission and the Security Council and suggested an automatic mechanism for more regular PBC contributions in support of the Council's preventive work. He reiterated that the SDGs are an integral part of the Common Agenda and that the UN country teams were being equipped to adopt a holistic view about the political, economic, and social dimensions of society, taking into account that their work is essential for both prevention and peacebuilding. In relation to financing, the Secretary-General regretted the scarce resources dedicated to prevention and peacebuilding compared to peacekeeping and agreed on the need for additional contributions to the PBF, including assessed contributions, which he characterised as a symbolic gesture in recognition of the fact that prevention and peacebuilding are structural objectives of the UN.
 5. Upon departure of the Secretary-General, the Assistant-Secretary-General for Peacebuilding Support, Mr. Oscar Fernandez-Taranco, recalled that Our Common Agenda reminds us how today's challenges require a coherent UN prevention and response system of which the PBC and the PBF have proven to be important foundations, supporting in synergy multidisciplinary and multistakeholder solutions. He reiterated the importance of building on the analysis provided for by the UN-World Bank Pathways for Peace report, further strengthening the impact of the PBF's Gender and Youth Promotion Initiative and promoting gender-responsive peacebuilding through the systematic engagement with women peacebuilders and better mainstreaming of gender dimensions of peacebuilding. He recalled the need to continue to advocate for adequate, predictable and sustained financing for peacebuilding and that by dedicating more resources to the PBC and increased contributions to the PBF, including assessed contributions, these instruments will be able to meet the increasing demand, also in the context of Our Common Agenda.

6. The Chair closed the meeting thanking the Secretary-General and the ASG for Peacebuilding Support for their briefings. He underlined that the PBC can contribute positively to the ongoing deliberations among Member States on how to advance “our common agenda”, with a view to build a broad-based understanding for key peacebuilding objectives in the common agenda.