

**Peacebuilding Commission
Working Group on Lessons Learned**

Enhancing Gender Responsive Reconciliation Processes

Initial Findings

Introduction

On 11 December 2013, the Chair of the Working Group on Lessons Learned (WGLL) of the PBC, Permanent Representative of Japan, Ambassador Motohide Yoshikawa, convened a meeting to address the gender-responsiveness of national reconciliation processes in order to identify lessons and good practices for promoting implementation and action. The founding resolutions (A/RES/60/180 and S/RES/1645(2005)) establishing the Peacebuilding Commission call upon the Commission to integrate a gender perspective into all of its work. Therefore, one of the main objectives of the discussion was to propose recommendations grounded in national experiences to inform the development of a gender support strategy for the Commission, which will also contribute to strengthening implementation of the Secretary-General's Seven Point Action Plan on Gender-Responsive Peacebuilding.

The following are the findings and recommendations from the Chair, which he expects would contribute in taking gender issues forward in the work of the PBC.

Lessons learned and good practices

Active interaction took place in the meeting, as summarized in the Chair's Summary, on challenges and opportunities for enhancing gender-responsive national reconciliation processes, and many valuable lessons and good practices from national experiences were shared. The following are the key findings that the Chair considers particularly important:

- All reconciliation processes are context-specific, therefore it is important to employ differentiated and targeted approaches tailored to needs in specific contexts, taking cultural and social factors into account.
- Despite the fact that reconciliation can take different paths, experiences show that women are still not adequately included in processes as victims or decision-makers, which indicate that their perspectives are not usually accommodated in building future economic, political and social institutions.
- It is necessary to take holistic and coordinated views of various mechanisms and processes, as reconciliation involves wide-ranging dimensions including governance, economic recovery, justice, security, information and education.
- More understanding is needed for including women and gender mainstreaming, from the earliest stages of the planning, priority setting, design and delivery.
- Deliberate efforts are needed to identify and eliminate barriers, as women often face

considerable barriers to participating in reconciliation processes. Technical support, advice, capacity building and special measures should be employed as appropriate to rectify the situation of discrimination and abuse. (e.g. outreach programmes, quota systems, procedures for protecting the security and dignity of victims and witnesses, measures to compensate for time constraints and lack of experience, knowledge and mobility, and the provision of identity documents, etc.)

- Promoting women's engagement in peacebuilding requires resources, but currently only a fraction of the total funding goes to them.
- The transformative potential of reparations goes beyond transitional justice. Resources provided through reparations programmes can also contribute to economic security and increase contribution of women to recovery efforts.
- Activism by women on a quest for an inclusive and equal society should not be underestimated. Women often cross party, ethnic, and religious lines and advance the interests and concerns of other marginalized groups to improve the outcome for all.
- An inclusive process is more likely to address the root causes of conflict as it increases the legitimacy and the collective local ownership of the reconciliation process.
- Women's civil society organizations should be given ample opportunity to receive timely information and support for participating in reconciliation processes.
- It is critically important to have the strong commitment and leadership of the national government, especially in the context of transformation of social relations.
- There are areas needing further lessons-learning exercises, such as applicability of certain special measures to different contexts, and the use of different forms of media as tools for national reconciliation so as to support change in attitudes, help modify perceptions of "others" and facilitate reconciliation between divided groups.

Promoting implementation in the work of the PBC

In the meeting, the Chair believes there was a general consensus by participants that the PBC has an important role to play in support of national efforts for gender-responsive reconciliation processes in the following areas:

- i) disseminating lessons learned
- ii) sustaining long-term engagement by the international community
- iii) mobilizing adequate funding from different sources
- iv) forging coherence and consensus among various actors.

As country-specific configurations are the major platform for a coordinated approach to gender-related issues in peacebuilding, the Chair considers that there is a need for systematically addressing gender and reconciliation issues and developing common standards/practices to be applied across country configurations. The following are some operational suggestions from the Chair which could inform the gender support strategy of the Commission to be developed. The Chair proposes that the Commission take further action for elaborating a gender support strategy as well as for promoting implementation, taking into

account the findings of this Working Group meeting, existing commitments on peacebuilding and women, peace and security, and the reports from PBC field trips and country configuration discussions.

- Make the meeting and interaction with women's groups during all PBC field missions a standard practice, and report on the main findings upon return.
- Take steps in collaboration with relevant entities to assess gaps and limitations in reconciliation processes of agenda countries from the perspective of gender responsiveness.
- Play an advocacy role to the government as necessary to promote gender-responsive reconciliation processes.
- Encourage Member States to support various entities in a coherent manner, based on the above-mentioned assessment, to ensure that adequate resources are allocated for women's participation in reconciliation and to mid- and long-term capacity-building of women's organizations.
- Reach out to new partners if funding gaps remain.
- Regularly report on the assessment of gender responsiveness in PBC agenda countries for consideration and action by PBC members.
- Create opportunities, as appropriate, for women's groups and/or gender experts to present their views at PBC meetings.
