



Joint Meeting of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC)

2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Sustaining Peace

Friday, 24 June 2016

Informal Summary

The Economic and Social Council and the Peacebuilding Commission held a joint meeting on “2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Sustaining Peace” on 24 June 2016. The meeting aimed to advance the discussion on the peace and development nexus in view of the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals, which includes a focus on peaceful and inclusive societies (e.g. in SDG 16), and the General Assembly and Security Council resolutions on the review of the peacebuilding architecture.

The meeting was chaired by the President of the Council, H.E. Mr. Oh Joon (Republic of Korea) and the Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission, H.E. Mr. Macharia Kamau (Kenya). The Deputy Secretary-General delivered remarks at the opening, stressing the common elements between the 2030 Agenda and sustaining peace, such as their universality, which was echoed by several Member States. Dr. Carlos Lopes of ECA joined via videolink to bring a regional perspective. This was followed by a panel discussion with the Deputy Foreign Minister of Sweden, the Permanent Representatives of Australia and Ireland, and the Deputy Permanent Representative of Mexico. The co-facilitators for the negotiations on the peacebuilding architecture and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development shared the expectations and thinking behind the commitments. This was followed by an interactive dialogue with Member States.

2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Sustaining Peace

Member States acknowledged that there could be no sustainable development without peace and no peace without sustainable development. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, among others, recognizes the need to promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels. The inclusion of these issues in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was an important step in enhancing the peace and development nexus. Sustaining peace and strong institutions were critical for achieving all the goals and in turn, the entire 2030 Agenda can contribute to sustaining peace – before, during and after conflict. The remaining challenge was the effective implementation of commitments to sustainable development and sustaining peace.

Sustaining peace, sustainable development and human rights were considered mutually reinforcing. This required addressing the drivers and root causes of conflict, such as social and economic inequalities and unemployment, where the UN development system has an important role to play in sustaining peace. Some countries' efforts towards good governance have resulted in economic growth. Strengthening institutions and the rule of law, therefore, should be a priority. Development should be holistic, inclusive and beneficial to all for it to be sustainable and conducive to peace.

Countries affected by conflict face complex challenges that require multidimensional approaches. Inequality among groups, rather than individuals, within a country was considered a major contributor to conflict in Africa, and elsewhere. The exclusion of youth and other groups was also a factor igniting conflict. While people often accept state authority as long as services are provided, the decline of economic and social services could cause the system to break down and deprived groups to seek redress.

A new approach

Countries affected by conflict needed the support of the international community and the United Nations in the technical, financial and political arenas in order to achieve the SDGs. A tailored approach is needed, where each country and goal should be given specific priorities. The principle of national ownership must be respected in all efforts of peacebuilding and sustainable development. Strengthening local institutional capacity should be a priority for sustainable development and sustaining peace. Economic and political stability in countries affected by conflict were needed to attract foreign investment. Violence often had cross-border or regional aspects and conflict in one country often resulted in negative economic consequences for neighbouring countries. Hence, collaboration with regional as well as sub-regional organizations was imperative.

More resources are being spent on responding to violent conflicts instead of sustaining peace. A preventive approach must be prioritized with the full involvement of society, especially women and youth. Interventions needed to be tailored to integrate peace and development. A stronger nexus is essential for achieving the SDGs.

Role of the United Nations system

The review of the peacebuilding architecture assigned clear responsibilities to sustain peace to the entire UN system. Revitalizing the UN peacebuilding efforts needed to cross silos by using a horizontal, instead of a vertical approach. The fragmentation of the UN system needed to be addressed. The role of the Group of Friends of Sustaining Peace in driving the implementation of the peacebuilding architecture review reforms was also acknowledged.

Humanitarian intervention, peacebuilding and development must be implemented in a coherent and coordinated manner. Competition among UN agencies for funding had a negative effect on peacebuilding and sustainable development. Achieving the 2030 Agenda and sustaining peace, therefore, required a much more holistic and coherent approach. The UN

system had to deliver as one, and the UN was expected to adapt to the new agenda, rather than the other way around. Bold reforms were needed in this regard. Collective action and collaboration within the UN system must be a priority. There was a need to strengthen the coherence and coordination of UN-wide efforts at country level.

The current method of funding was leading to fragmentation and competition for resources. Incentives for joint work needed to be provided for breaking down the silo approaches and remove the competition for resources. The ongoing discussions on the long-term positioning of the UN development system and the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review (QCPR) were considered by several delegations as key opportunities to address these issues, including the role of the UN development system in sustaining peace. There is a need for a mechanism that involves all stakeholders which would define their roles in terms of collaboration, funding and interaction. The new Secretary-General would be expected to put sustaining peace and development at the top of her/his agenda to break down the silos, and make proposals to get the necessary funding for peacebuilding activities of the UN system. Core funding and assessed contributions could be utilized to overcome competition for funding. Sweden and Sri Lanka, and others, were hosting a pledging conference for the Peacebuilding Fund in September.

Member States also recognized the need to address their own fragmentation at national level to break down their silos and the sometimes divergent views expressed in different intergovernmental bodies—that divide security, peacebuilding, humanitarian and development issues—and modify their funding to act coherently across systems.

The United Nations' engagement with conflict-affected countries should go beyond relief to relief and sustainable development. An increase in economic activities would possibly reduce the risk of violent conflict.

In this context, it was underscored that an SDG-framework was essential for building and sustaining peace. As such, all the SDGs are relevant for all countries and all goals are important, not just goal 16.

Cooperation between ECOSOC and the PBC

Cooperation between ECOSOC and PBC was considered very timely to enhance the peace and development nexus at the intergovernmental level. This, however, should take into account and respect the unique mandates of each body to prevent duplication of work and enhance coherence. Such collaboration between PBC and ECOSOC was important for preventing lapse or relapse into conflict. With its unique intergovernmental advisory role, the PBC could provide a bridge between the principal charter bodies of the United Nations. The PBC should also take on the broader challenges specific to countries emerging from conflict.

Delegations strongly supported regular dialogues between ECOSOC and the PBC to promote coherence and complementarity between the UN's peace and security efforts and its development, human rights and humanitarian work. In addition, ECOSOC would benefit from

advice from the Peacebuilding Commission on issues relevant to the countries affected by conflict.

Recommendations

- ECOSOC and the PBC should forge closer collaboration to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and to sustain peace, including through regular joint meetings.
- The PBC should focus on the prevention of violent conflict in all its dimensions across the UN system – ranging from economic, social, humanitarian and development to peace, security, rule of law and human rights.
- The PBC should support the General Assembly, ECOSOC and the HLPF in the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda, focusing on progress in conflict-affected countries.
- ECOSOC should seek advice from the Peacebuilding Commission on issues relevant to countries affected by conflict.