



Joint Meeting of the Economic and Social Council and the Peacebuilding Commission

“The importance of the SDGs in linking peace and development on the ground”

Thursday, 29 June 2023

Informal Summary

On 29 June 2023, the President of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), H.E. Ms. Lachezara Stoeva, and the Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), H.E. Mr. Ivan Šimonović, co-chaired the annual joint meeting of the ECOSOC and the PBC on the importance of the SDGs in linking peace and development on the ground. The meeting focused on promoting coherence and impact for peacebuilding, sustaining peace and sustainable development efforts. The meeting also explored the role of the UN system, as well as the ECOSOC and the PBC, in this endeavor.

Representatives of Member States, observers, United Nations (UN) system, and civil society organizations attended the meeting. The opening remarks by the ECOSOC President were followed by a roundtable discussion, which was moderated by the Permanent Representative of Kenya to the United Nations, and President of the UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS Executive Board, H.E. Mr. Martin Kimani. The Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Mr. Achim Steiner, set the scene for the discussion and provided an overview of issues to consider in operationalizing the interlinkages between peace and development on the ground. This was followed by a moderated discussion with the Assistant Secretary-General for Peacebuilding Support, Ms. Elizabeth Spehar, the Regional Director for Africa of DCO, Mr. Yacoub El Hillo, the Acting Special Representative of the World Bank Group (WBG) to the UN, Mr. Farhad Peikar, and the Acting-President and Chief Operating Officer of Interpeace, Mr. Simon Gimson. The meeting was concluded by the PBC Chair.

In her opening remarks, **the President of the ECOSOC, H.E. Ms. Lachezara Stoeva**, underscored the importance of the SDGs in linking peace and development on the ground. She highlighted the opportune timing considering the upcoming High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) under the auspices of ECOSOC and the SDG Summit. She emphasized the need for transformative actions that address the root causes of conflict and respond to developmental and humanitarian needs on the ground to ensure no one is left behind. She called for coordinated, comprehensive, and integrated solutions and actions across the peace, security, humanitarian, and development pillars. She shared proposals to enhance the collaboration among intergovernmental bodies, particularly the ECOSOC and the PBC, including through convening regular meetings and sharing lessons learned. Lastly, she underscored the opportunity to leverage the work of the ECOSOC and the PBC to accelerate the implementation of the SDGs.

Permanent Representative of Kenya to the UN and President of the UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS Executive Board, H.E. Mr. Martin Kimani, noted that current crises are caused by the repeated series of calamities caused by war, state fragility, and lack of fiscal means. He stressed the instrumental role of the SDGs to moving societies from fragility to resilience, development, and prosperity. He further underlined the importance of maintaining the SDGs at the core of peacebuilding. In this regard, he appealed to Member States to re-engage to put peacebuilding at

the core of the United Nations activities, while recalling the respective peacebuilding resolution adopted by consensus in 2022.

Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Mr. Achim Steiner, noted that the absence of peace is an inevitable consequence of development failures, rooted in economic setbacks and weak governance institutions and underscored the instrumental role of the SDGs in preventing such failures. He added that 2022 had the highest number of victims of conflicts and combat since 1945. He noted that the UN development system, in particular UNDP, is focusing on recognizing earlier the drivers of conflict, such as sharing of water resources, migration, or illicit trade, while working with Governments and civil society. In this regard, the implementation of the SDGs and synchronicity of actions were critical for prevention. He also referred to the UNDP's work on electoral assistance in collaboration with the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA). He stressed that in the absence of development, tensions, pressures, and inequalities amplify, and stressed climate change being the ultimate accelerator of resource tensions in the future. He called for investments in communities to rebuild their ability to function in the absence of functioning institutions and highlighted the importance of working with local communities to create markets and ensure security. He noted the steep decline in funding when peacekeeping ceases and the developmental approach is expected to take center stage.

Assistant Secretary-General for Peacebuilding Support, Ms. Elizabeth Spehar, stressed the urgent need to advancing the linkages of peace and development. She underscored the SDGs offering a clear path for structural prevention and sustainable peace and development, since many of the issues they aim to address represent the root causes of conflict in many societies. She outlined elements that can offer innovative approaches, good practices, and effective tools to operationalize the peace and development nexus on the ground for sustainable impact, including strengthening 1) structural and policy reforms within the UN system; 2) the incentive of pooled funding for collective action, in which donors have a key role to play; 3) the role of the PBC in bringing coherence to humanitarian, peace and development actors through its convening capacity; 4) capacity-development of institutions and civil society; and 5) the alignment between the UN and international financial institutions (IFIs). Noting that building and sustaining peace and development are Member State responsibilities, she said that the international community must support nationally-led and owned processes and promote domestic resource mobilization

Regional Director for Africa of the UN Development Coordination Office (DCO), Mr. Yacoub El-Hillo, noted the important role of Africa in the global future, from a demographic and resource standpoint, acknowledging that the continent contributes a significant amount to the world economy, but is threatened by climate change, while being the region that contributes the least to the problem but is the fastest-warming region. He stressed that developmental efforts in Africa must consider the challenges brought forward by climate, COVID-19, conflicts, coup d'états, rising costs, and corruption. In that regard, he noted that the SDGs help prevent and address these challenges and provide solutions for development. He particularly underlined the delivery of public services for all and fostering livelihoods and socioeconomic opportunities, particularly for youth, women, internally displaced people (IDPs) and refugees as important objectives. He informed of the pivotal role of the Africa Regional Collaborative Platform in leveraging regional assets and identifying

opportunities and solutions to improve the effectiveness of the reinvigorated Resident Coordinator system and strengthen cross-border programmes and subregional initiatives. Finally, he also emphasized the importance of regional strategies, such as the UN Integrated Strategy for the Sahel.

Acting Special Representative of the World Bank Group to the UN, Mr. Farhad Peikar, highlighted the Pathway for Peace report as crucial catalyst for spurring collective action towards conflict prevention and changing perceptions on fragility, conflict, and violence (FCV) as a critical development challenge threatening efforts to end extreme poverty. He noted the various funds and financial support the WBG has been providing to achieve peace and development, such as through the new prevention and resilience allocation within the International Development Association (IDA), providing additional financing to eligible governments to proactively address the risks and grievances that can lead to FCV. He stressed the importance of investing in prevention to address risks before they turn into full blown crisis and addressing cross-border spillover of conflicts. Noting the series of setbacks to stability since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, he emphasized the need to deliver the SDGs to reverse the declining progress on human development. Going forward, he underscored the importance of strengthening partnerships and fostering dialogue, while noting that since 2016 more than \$6 billion of the WBG's financing has been implemented in partnership with the UN and other partners in over 40 crisis-affected situations.

Acting-President and Chief Operating Officer of Interpeace, Mr. Simon Gimson, noted that that voices from the field are frequently not being heard, which impacts the effectiveness of the international community's interventions. Therefore, he underscored the importance of listening to the voices and perspectives of local partners on the ground, recognizing their resilience and dignity. He called for better defining of accountability, as well as reassessment to ensure interventions are reaching the right people and places. Further, he recognized the role the PBC can play in leveraging collaboration between the peacebuilding and the development spheres. He emphasized the inclusive nature of the SDGs, particularly stressing youth and women as two horizontal entry points to look at peace and development in an effective way. He highlighted peace responsiveness as a solution that goes beyond conflict sensitivity and the Do No Harm principle, and stressed the importance of improving the funding, collaboration, and delivery of the UN agencies.

Interventions from the floor

Members states welcomed the contributions of the panelists and added the following observations and recommendations:

- They recognized the value of the collaboration between the ECOSOC and the PBC and encouraged to continue convening joint meetings if possible at least twice a year. They emphasized the need to identify and build on the linkages between the ECOSOC and the PBC. It was proposed that a joint meeting of ECOSOC and the PBC could focus on sharing good practices on sustaining peacebuilding elements by development actors after conclusion of peacebuilding projects. It was also proposed that both bodies could cooperate more often, in particular at the intersection of peace and development.
- Emphasizing the centrality of the SDGs, they highlighted the SDG 16 as key to realizing the linkages between peace and development. The SDGs were considered as universal guides for coordinating development action.

- They emphasized the interlinkages between peace and development both in the abstract discussion of peace and development issues and in coordinating the work of the UN entities and their development partners on the ground. In this regard, they called for the further concrete operationalization of the linkages between humanitarian, peace, and development through the PBC, including in its country- and region-specific meetings.
- Noting the issue of duplication, they expressed concern about the structurally siloed nature of the UN system and the resulting inefficiencies. They called for the UN system to explore ways to overcome this siloed structure to promote integrated approaches to peace and development. The review of strategic plans of UN funds and programmes in 2024 offers opportunities in this regard. They emphasized the role that Resident Coordinators can play in transcending the barriers between Agencies, Funds, and Programmes (AFPs) and facilitating collaboration. It was also noted that the Operational Activities Segment for Development, the Humanitarian Affairs Segment and the Transition Meeting could be the platforms for breaking down the silos.
- They recognized the centrality of nationally-owned and -led development and peacebuilding efforts. Further, they emphasized the need to ensure that nationally-identified peacebuilding and development priorities are supported through UN Common Country Analysis and the Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks. Peacebuilding and development processes must be locally owned, and promote an active role of civil society, aimed at strengthening capacity of people and local structures.
- They called for flexible, adequate, and predictable financing for peacebuilding and development efforts, and particularly highlighted the importance of overcoming financial challenges in peacebuilding by increasing contributions to the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF). In that regard, members of the General Assembly's Administrative and Budgetary Committee were encouraged to approve the assessed contributions. Further, they called on the IFIs to enhance its coordination with the UN system entities and fully commit to operationalizing the peacebuilding-development nexus in their work.
- They called for the increased inclusion of women and girls on peacebuilding, sustaining peace, sustainable development, and humanitarian efforts, including in decision-making processes, recognizing both the disproportionately gendered impact of conflicts, as well as the positive impact of women in building peace and resilient societies.
- Calls were made for ensuring that development strategies were backed by comprehensive analysis at all levels, including on political economy. Member states stressed that the PBC is well-positioned to support the analysis.
- They called for increased knowledge-sharing on development and peacebuilding, highlighting various examples of successful UN projects and initiatives.
- They noted the need for synergies with regional organizations in advancing localized approaches for conflict detection and prevention.
- They called for the increased involvement of private actors in development, recognizing their capacity for more flexible and dynamic approaches. Calls were made to create attractive incentive structures to facilitate the engagement of private actors.
- They pointed out that the upcoming HLPPF, SDG Summit and the Summit of the Future should be viewed as key opportunities for the international community to recommit to achieving the 2030 Agenda and to find new solutions for operationalizing the linkages between peace and development.

In his closing remarks, **the Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission, H.E. Mr. Ivan Šimonović**, emphasized the need to identifying and addressing the root causes of conflict, including economic, social, and environmental ones to achieve peace and development. He called for stronger and more systematic and structured cooperation between the PBC and the ECOSOC. He noted the SDGs being a powerful tool for peacebuilding and sustaining peace and for preventing lapse or relapse into conflict. He acknowledged the detrimental effects that the interlinked crises have had on the SDGs. He underscored the importance of coordination between donors, the UN system, IFIs and regional and sub-regional organizations. He highlighted the benefits of tailoring solutions specific to each situation as well as supporting institutional structures, and civil society and community organizations. He stressed the need to take advantage of upcoming opportunities, such as the New Agenda for Peace (NAP), the SDG Summit, and the Summit for the Future, to accelerate the implementation of the SDGs and utilize them as a prevention tool for peacebuilding and sustaining peace in national and global contexts.