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PEACEBUILDING COMMISSION

14 May 2021

Dear Mr. President,

I am writing to you in response to the invitation extended to the Peacebuilding Commission through the General Assembly Resolution A/RES/74/302 of September 2020, to provide written advice for the consideration by the General Assembly at upcoming sessions on the agenda item on “causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa”.

The General Assembly, in the aforementioned resolution, also encouraged the Commission to assist countries in the African continent that are affected by conflict in laying the foundation for peace and sustainable development. I am pleased to report that the Commission has continued to place particular emphasis in helping to build and sustain peace, address the root causes of conflict and to promote sustainable development in a number of conflict-affected countries under its consideration, respecting national priorities and the principle of national ownership, while emphasizing that inclusivity is key to advancing national peacebuilding processes.

In recognition of the need to continue to consolidate the conditions required for sustainable development, including by developing human and institutional capacities throughout the continent and strengthening the respect for human rights, justice and rule of law, in accordance with respective mandates, particularly in countries emerging from conflict, and in recognition of the importance of inclusive approaches as well as aligning international support with the peacebuilding priorities of African countries, the PBC has been promoting and supporting the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as well as the African Union’s Agenda 2063 and its first 10-year implementation plan (2014–2023).

In 2020, out of the 15 national and regional contexts that the Commission covered, 12 were in Africa. In all the related PBC engagements, the Commission delivered on its promise of inclusiveness by creating space for an array of stakeholders in support of national and regional peacebuilding priorities. Recent highlights include:

- Strong multi-partner support for peacebuilding in Burkina Faso.
- Close follow-up to and robust support for the democratic reform processes in The Gambia, especially in the area of transitional justice.
- Creating space for an innovative PBC engagement in the Great Lakes designed by women in the region.

His Excellency
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President of the General Assembly
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- Continued engagement with Burundi on the new government's priorities for peacebuilding and socio-economic development, including the implementation of Burundi's National Development Plan.
- Promotion of effective and meaningful participation of women and youth in peacebuilding initiatives in Guinea Bissau.
- Strong commitment to help address the underrepresentation of women in Liberian politics, including through support to the second Liberia National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security for 2019-2023 and the National Roadmap on Rape and sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV).
- Creation of space for Sierra Leone to confirm its exit from the configuration and present its own roadmap and priorities for future engagement with the PBC.
- Promotion of action by the international community in support of the priority investment programme of the Group of Five for the Sahel, within the framework of UNISS and in collaboration with the Security Council, as well as in support of the implementation of the regional strategy (Lake Chad Basin) for the stabilization, recovery and resilience of areas affected by the presence of Boko Haram.
- Mobilizing further support for Somalia's National Development Plan and its National Reconciliation Framework.
- Submission of input to the Security Council on broad peacebuilding perspectives of peace operations, as was recently the case during the mandate renewals of MINUSCA, UNIOGBIS and UNOWAS.

The Commission also supported innovative solutions in support of peacebuilding in Africa by strengthening its partnerships in the continent as well as through its engagements in support of policy issues that are important for individual African countries.

For example, I recently represented the Peacebuilding Commission at the second edition of the "Aswan Forum for Sustainable Peace and Development", where the need to prioritize institution building in conflict-affected countries was emphasized, particularly in view of the socio-economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. An inclusive approach of Governments, people and communities was deemed to be imperative in all peacebuilding efforts. The Forum recognized that the pandemic has exacerbated governance gaps across the African continent affecting the health, economic and social sectors and causing additional strains on social cohesion with implications for the peace and security landscape, most notably through exploitation by armed groups and terrorist organizations. During the deliberations, there was wide recognition that, in order for peacebuilding and sustaining peace efforts to be successful, governments must invest in building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at the national and local levels while promoting inclusive governance through a whole-of-government approach.

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My participation in the Aswan Forum followed consistent efforts of the Commission to enhance its partnerships with regional and subregional organizations in Africa. This has been evident in the last year through the increased participation of African Union (AU) representatives in PBC discussions. During an informal consultative meeting held between the African Union Peace and Security Council (AUPSC) and the PBC in October last year, the two bodies recognized the unprecedented challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic in the countries and regions under the consideration of the PBC, and the crucial role of women and youth to help address them. They called for stronger support for AU-owned and -led Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development (PCRD) efforts, and in that regard welcomed the establishment of the AU Centre for PCRD as a positive step to further advance the implementation of peacebuilding strategies in Africa.

In addition, guided by a gender strategy adopted in 2016 and reviewed in 2020, as well as a Strategic Action Plan on youth and peacebuilding adopted in February 2021, the Commission delivers tangible support to numerous women and youth across Africa, and helps to amplify their voices, including by conveying their messages and recommendations to other intergovernmental bodies such as the General Assembly and the Security Council.

To set the stage for the operationalization of the PBC's advisory role to the General Assembly and fulfill its mandate, the Peacebuilding Commission convened an expert-level meeting with representatives from the office of the United Nations Special Advisor on Africa on 11 February 2021, to exchange on the latter's efforts in restructuring the Secretary General report on "causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa" and making it forward looking and action oriented.

Moving forward, the Commission will continue to prioritize impact in its engagements in accordance with the twin resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council on the review of the UN Peacebuilding Architecture A/RES/75/201 and S/RES/2558 (2020), which placed an emphasis on the continued implementation of the resolutions on peacebuilding and sustaining peace, with due attention to the impact made at the field level.

Mandated by the twin resolutions which recognized the issue of financing as a critical challenge, the Commission will play a key role in convening relevant stakeholders and generating inputs as well as action-oriented recommendations for the high-level meeting at the 76th session of the General Assembly to advance, explore and consider options for ensuring adequate, predictable and sustained financing for peacebuilding.

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In this regard, I would like to share the following points for the consideration of the General Assembly:

- The General Assembly is invited to continue to draw upon the convening role of the Peacebuilding Commission in mobilizing attention and commitment from all relevant stakeholders and partners for peacebuilding needs of conflict affected countries. Sustaining peace requires coherence, sustained engagement, and coordination between the General Assembly, the Security Council, and the Economic and Social Council, consistent with their mandates as set out in the Charter of the United Nations.
- There is a need for a comprehensive approach to peacebuilding and sustaining peace that promotes integrated, strategic and coherent responses to peacebuilding needs in Africa, an approach which draws on all three pillars of the United Nations and also appreciates linkages between Agenda 2063 and the SDGs. This requires promoting joint analyses and effective strategic planning of UN peacekeeping operations, UN Country Teams and other relevant actors, including the World Bank, entities of the UN Peacebuilding Architecture and UN agencies, funds and programmes, for the delivery of prioritized support to the target country aimed at addressing the root causes of conflict, consistent with the country's specific peacebuilding needs and priorities.
- It is important to take stock of the impact of relevant reforms on the performance of the United Nations system in advancing the implementation of the resolutions on peacebuilding and sustaining peace, and with emphasis on the systematic impact made at the field level.
- The scale and nature of the challenge of sustaining peace in Africa calls for close strategic and operational partnerships between the United Nations, African governments, the African Union as well as with sub-regional organizations, international financial institutions and civil society organizations, taking into account national priorities and policies.
- It is critical to enhance the contribution of peacekeeping operations to peacebuilding and sustaining peace, including during transitions and drawdowns, in order to lay the foundations for consolidation of peace beyond the lifetime of a peacekeeping operation.
- There is also a need to mobilize support to the UN Country Teams in order to increase and diversify their presence and engagement in addressing the root causes of conflict and build national and local capacities to build and sustain peace, deliver basic services and create economic opportunities including throughout the life cycle of a peacekeeping operation.
- More attention is needed for advancing a regional approach to peacebuilding in Africa in light of the cross-border nature of the challenges facing the continent including, where and as relevant, the adverse effects of climate change.

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- We need to promote institution building in conflict-affected countries in line with their priorities, particularly in view of negative impact by the COVID-19 pandemic. Supporting recovery from the pandemic is needed to preserve the peace gains and prevent relapse into conflicts.
- Enhancing the full, equal and meaningful participation of women should continue to be at the heart of our peacebuilding responses. We also need to continue to strengthen the role and inclusion of youth in peacebuilding responses.
- Supporting national, regional and international measures towards sustainable and resilient recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, including by ensuring universal vaccination in the African region, and enhancing national capacities and resilience to tackle future pandemic.

At a time when there is broader recognition of the need for scaled-up and comprehensive peacebuilding responses to increasingly complex crises and conflict-affected situations, I would like to reiterate the commitment of the Commission to step up to the plate by continuing to bring Member States and partners to ensure robust responses to pressing and multidimensional challenges, particularly in conflict-affected contexts. Scaled-up responses require not only additional funding for peacebuilding globally, including additional contributions to the Peacebuilding Fund, but also efforts to expand the scope of the PBC's geographical and substantive focus. I remain committed to promoting and seeking support for this cause.

I would be grateful if you could kindly bring this letter to the attention of the Members of the General Assembly in view of the upcoming consideration of the draft resolution on "causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa".

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Yours sincerely,



Mohamed Edrees

Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission