

New York

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Secretary-General's Message to High-Level Meeting on a New Approach to Peacebuilding [Delivered by Mr. Oscar Fernandez-Taranco, Assistant Secretary-General for Peacebuilding]

I send my greetings to the International Peace Institute and all gathered for this timely event. I thank Ambassador Skoog of Sweden for his exemplary leadership as Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission.

We are living through a period of multiple crises that are stretching our responses to the limits.

As we respond to immediate crisis, we need to do more to address the root causes of conflict and build the long-term foundations of peace.

Predictable, sustained support to breaking out of the vicious cycle of crisis and response is essential. But too often we fall short, as attention passes to the next emergency.

If we do not act urgently to prevent lapse and relapse into violence, we will condemn the peoples of this world to continued suffering, and ourselves to the spiralling costs of crisis response.

The Advisory Group of Experts I appointed to support the 2015 Peacebuilding Review have reminded us that “sustaining peace” must be understood as a core task of the UN Charter. It must be a thread that must run through all our actions across the life-cycle of conflicts.

Sustaining peace requires coherent and coordinated action among the UN’s principal organs, between headquarters and the field, and among different peacebuilding actors. The Peacebuilding Commission, as an advisory body, can play a crucial role in bringing the attention of key actors to these challenges.

Sustainable, durable peace can only ever be built on genuine, broadly inclusive national ownership. Only last April, at a Security Council open debate, we discussed how involving youth in peacebuilding processes is essential to stemming the growth of radicalization. Women, too, must be empowered to play their central role as agents of peace.

Sustaining peace is impossible without long-term political and financial support, or without partnership among local communities, governments, the private sector and regional and international organizations. I am delighted that the Peacebuilding Fund has amassed a proven record of catalytic support to kick-start critical peacebuilding interventions. To deliver its full potential, though, the Fund needs greater support.

The “Sustaining Peace” Report proposes a paradigm that is both new and old. In many ways, it seeks to revive the vision of my predecessor, Dag Hammarskjöld, who stated in 1954 that “the pursuit of peace and progress, with its trials and its errors, its successes and its setbacks, can never be relaxed and never abandoned.”

At this time of turmoil and test, I call on us all to rally behind this vision.