

**Working Group on Lessons Learned
Special Session, 12 June 2008**

**SYNTHESIS REPORT AND SUMMARY OF DISCUSSIONS
Key Insights, Principles, Good Practices and Emerging Lessons in
Peacebuilding**

Executive Summary

This report compiles key lessons and good practices in peacebuilding based on the work of the Working Group on Lessons Learned (WGLL) since its inception in January 2007 as well as the outcome of the special session of the WGLL on 12 June 2008 when the synthesis report was discussed. The Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) established the WGLL as an informal platform to enhance dialogue on issues of particular relevance to countries on its agenda. During the ten sessions of the WGLL to date, member states, with input from UN staff, external experts and representatives of institutional donors and civil society organizations, examined a range of topics dealing with key dimensions of peacebuilding. Six sessions of the WGLL focused on specific topics including elections, local governance, transitional justice, the internally displaced persons, budget support, and environment and natural resources. While each topic is important on its own, the six thematic sessions served to display the complex interplay between different dimensions of peacebuilding. The remaining four sessions addressed cross-cutting issues, including gender, regional approaches, peacebuilding strategic frameworks, and post-conflict compacts. Collectively, these sessions pointed to a rich and growing body of knowledge, principles, good practices and practical lessons in peacebuilding drawn from comparative experiences from different countries and regions.

One consistent conclusion that emerged from comparative experiences is that each post-conflict country is unique: there are no “one-size-fits-all” models in peacebuilding. There are, however, useful lessons and common principles for effective peacebuilding that have relevance across different contexts which include the following:

- Adopting a holistic and strategic approach
- Promoting national ownership
- Strengthening national capacities
- Providing sustained engagement
- Achieving effective coordination
- Fostering mutual accountability
- Ensuring prioritization and sequencing
- Integrating a gender perspective
- Encouraging a regional approach

The main challenge lies in calibrating these general principles with country-specific realities and leveraging the linkages among diverse elements of peacebuilding.

Over the past two years the WGLL’s work has contributed to the PBC’s mandate to develop best practices. The Working Group is now well-positioned to build upon this foundation to support the PBC’s other configurations as well as contributing to peacebuilding policy and practice. Recommendations to enhance the WGLL’s effectiveness include improving its working methods, strengthening its links with the UN system and the larger peacebuilding community, and promoting synergies for knowledge utilization.

Key Insights, Principles, Good Practices and Emerging Lessons in Peacebuilding

I. Introduction

Since its entry into UN vocabulary with *An Agenda for Peace* in 1992, peacebuilding has evolved significantly, both as a concept and as a growing body of policy and practice. The decision to create a new peacebuilding architecture at the UN World Summit in December 2005 provided the missing institutional framework and the additional impetus to improve international assistance for peacebuilding in countries emerging from conflict. Formally launched in June 2006, the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) supports post-conflict countries on its agenda through integrated approaches to peacebuilding. In accordance with its founding resolutions, the PBC aims “to provide recommendations and information, to improve the coordination of all relevant actors within and outside the United Nations, to develop best practices, to help to ensure predictable financing for early recovery activities and to extend the period of attention given by the international community to post-conflict recovery.”¹

As part of its mandate “to develop best practices,” in January 2007 the PBC established the Working Group on Lessons Learned (WGLL) as an *ad hoc* body open to all member states, institutional donors and representatives of civil society. Serving as an informal platform for sharing experiences, principles, and good practices about peacebuilding, the WGLL has held ten thematic meetings to date. Each session was designed as a focused dialogue and chosen in light of its relevance to the PBC’s Country-Specific Meetings (CSMs).² Taken together, the thematic discussions at the WGLL constitute an important contribution to the PBC’s overall work and provide a useful body of knowledge for enhancing peacebuilding policy and practice.

This report compiles key insights, principles, good practices and emerging lessons from the proceedings of the WGLL and situates them within the broader work of the Peacebuilding Commission. The report’s final section includes conclusions and recommendations from the special session of the WGLL on 12 June 2008 when the report was discussed.

II. The Working Group and the Evolving Field of Peacebuilding Policy and Practice

The literature on peacebuilding has grown exponentially in the last decade.³ Although it continues to generate heated debates and contested perspectives, it is generally agreed that peacebuilding is multi-faceted in nature. It encompasses security, political, humanitarian, human rights, socio-economic and environmental dimensions which are inter-dependent. Reflecting this reality, the ten sessions of the Working Group on Lessons Learned covered key dimensions of peacebuilding, including good governance, socio-economic and environmental issues, and justice. Six sessions dealt with specific

¹ General Assembly Resolution 60/180 and Security Council Resolution 1645 (2005).

² Please see the Annex 1 for a list of the ten sessions of the Working Group on Lessons Learned.

³ For a useful review of the literature, please see the section “*About Peacebuilding*” at the HPCR Peacebuilding Initiative portal at www.peacebuildinginitiative.org

issue areas: elections; local governance; budget support; internally displaced persons; transitional justice; environment and natural resources. The remaining four sessions dealt with cross-cutting issues: gender; regional approaches to peacebuilding; peacebuilding strategic frameworks; and post-conflict compacts.

For each session, background papers were prepared that summarized the current state of knowledge on the issue, presented main lessons and raised outstanding questions of relevance to the Peacebuilding Commission. At the meeting of the Working Group, panelists (drawn from the UN system or external experts) offered additional insights and documentation based on comparative experiences from selected countries. These were supplemented by oral or written contributions by member states.⁴ These diverse inputs were incorporated into the Chair's summary of each session and are available on the PBC website.⁵

Although informal in nature, the Working Group's proceedings were guided by the founding resolutions of the PBC as well as by the work of the PBC's other configurations. The founding resolutions affirmed

- the inter-linkages between development, peace, and security and human rights,
- the need for a coordinated, coherent and integrated approach to achieve sustainable peace,
- the primary responsibility of national and transitional Governments and authorities in identifying their peacebuilding priorities and strategies,
- the importance of supporting national efforts to establish, redevelop or reform their institutions,
- the role of regional and subregional organizations in post-conflict peacebuilding in their regions,
- the contributions of countries that have experienced recent post-conflict recovery to the work of the PBC,
- the contribution of civil society and non-governmental organizations, including women's organizations, to peacebuilding efforts,
- the important role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in peacebuilding.⁶

In developing the integrated peacebuilding strategies in Burundi and Sierra Leone, the PBC further refined its strategic approach to peacebuilding by endorsing several key principles, including:

- **National ownership:** the primary responsibility and ownership for peace consolidation and development lie with the government and people of a country.

⁴ The European Union and the European Commission frequently provided useful data and analysis based on their programming in various post-conflict settings.

⁵ Please see www.un.org/peace/peacebuilding

⁶ The resolutions are available on the PBC website.

- **Mutual accountability:** sustainable peacebuilding requires a strong partnership based on mutual respect and accountability between the government and the people of a country and their international partners.
- **Sustained engagement:** peacebuilding is a long-term process requiring sustained and predictable engagement from all stakeholders.⁷

These general principles provide the foundation for the PBC’s work in its various configurations, including the Working Group on Lessons Learned.

III. Grounding Peacebuilding in Country Experiences

One of the main conclusions to emerge from the Working Group’s review of comparative experiences in peacebuilding is that each case is unique. There are no universal lessons and no ready-made, “one-size-fits-all” models. Nonetheless, as highlighted in the different sessions of the Working Group, there are certain normative frameworks, such as the *Guiding Principles for Internal Displacement*, or the Security Council Resolution 1325 on *Women, Peace and Security* which enjoy widespread acceptance. In addition, there are general principles and operational guidelines⁸ across countries and sectoral areas that have broader relevance and applicability. **The challenge, therefore, lies in calibrating general principles with country-specific realities based on an accurate analysis of commonalities and differences among countries.**

The thematic as well as the cross-cutting sessions of the Working Group on Lessons Learned identified certain common features of peacebuilding which have influenced policy and practice across a range of countries. These include the following:

- Situated at the nexus of security, politics and development, peacebuilding requires a **holistic** and **multi-disciplinary** approach.
- Peacebuilding is a **long-term investment** and needs a **long-term strategy** to address sources of conflict.
- Holistic and strategic thinking needs to be accompanied by focused and prioritized attention to particular **conflict risks** (e.g. youth unemployment) and **issue areas** (e.g. return of IDPs) that are **context-specific**.
- The same factors (such as natural resources, displaced populations or elections) can serve as **drivers of conflict** as well as **instruments of peacebuilding**. Thus, peacebuilding depends on sound analysis as the basis for appropriate action.
- Peacebuilding requires **national will, ownership and capacity** to resolve problems without recourse to violence. It needs to take place at the national, sub-national and local levels and involves the government, civil society and the private sector.

⁷ The integrated peacebuilding strategies, respectively called the *Strategic Framework for Peacebuilding in Burundi* and *Sierra Leone Peacebuilding Cooperation Framework*, are available on the PBC website.

⁸ A ‘principle’ is a normative standard that has proven to be helpful in decision-making; a ‘guideline’ is advice, suggestion or instruction that recommends certain action in a particular circumstance.

- **External actors** (including the United Nations, the international financial institutions, bilateral and multilateral donors, regional organizations, international NGOs and the private sector) play a critical role in peacebuilding.
- Predictable and sustained provision of **financial and non-financial resources** is essential for peacebuilding.
- Beyond specific risks and sectoral priorities (such as national reconciliation, rule of law, economic recovery) there are **cross-cutting issues** (specifically gender and human rights) that need special attention.
- Peacebuilding often involves difficult **trade-offs, tensions and dilemmas** across issue areas which need to be reconciled (e.g. the imperatives for peace and justice as well as security and development).
- **Coherent strategies and integrated policies** are necessary but not sufficient. Peacebuilding often falters due to faulty implementation resulting from lack of coordination, capacity and resources.
- **Regional and transnational factors** influence conflict dynamics as well as peacebuilding.

IV. Learning from Good Practices

While important, general observations and principles are too broad as the basis for effective policy and action. They need to be supplemented with concrete good practices and lessons drawn from country experiences. The six thematic sessions of the WGLL covered below examined peacebuilding challenges relating to good governance, justice and rule of law, socio-economic issues, the environment and natural resources. Due to space limitations, the lessons and good practices⁹ drawn from these sessions are highly condensed and do not capture the nuances, specificities and complexities involved in each issue area. Nor do they adequately reflect the varied interactions between these issue areas. Nonetheless, they attest to the emergence of a cumulative body of good practices and useful lessons that can help enhance international peacebuilding efforts.¹⁰

Elections and Risk Reduction in Post-Conflict Contexts

Elections are increasingly accepted as an essential instrument in the transition from conflict to peace. While serving as an important benchmark for post-conflict political consolidation, elections can also be conflict-inducing. Thus, they require close attention throughout the electoral process (before, during and after voting) to avert any negative fallout. The record of post-conflict elections from around the world is mixed. Some countries have successfully held several rounds of elections while others have witnessed

⁹ The term “good practices” is more appropriate than “best practices” since it allows for greater diversity of experiences. Similarly, the term “lessons” rather than “lessons learned” better reflects the ongoing, cumulative nature of learning in a new field such as peacebuilding. It is important to recognize that much valuable learning comes from “bad practices” which are plentiful and easier to identify. Due to space limitations, this paper does not include bad practices, however, this is an essential area of analysis that should receive the investment of time and resources by the PBC.

¹⁰ For the background papers, concept notes and Chair’s Summaries from each session (which provide the analysis and justification for the each theme’s contributions to peacebuilding), please see: <http://www.un.org/peace/peacebuilding/pbc-lessons.shtml>

renewed war following elections. Countries have used a range of strategies and mechanisms to alleviate the risks associated with elections. Comparative case studies confirm that successful electoral processes depend upon the following elements:

- **a stable security environment**
- **institutions and mechanisms** (such as an independent electoral management body) that are designed to ensure fair and free elections
- **constructive role of the media** in offering an opportunity for national dialogue
- the commitment of the government to provide **a level playing field**
- **technical, financial and political support** of the international community for the integrity of the elections
- **self-restraint** on the part of all political parties and a commitment to **respect the final outcome**.

Local Governance and Decentralization

Governance problems can be the source of conflict; they are also exacerbated by violent conflict. Effective and inclusive governance is considered essential for sustainable peacebuilding at all levels of government. Local governance is not identical with decentralization. It involves effective networks, relationships and partnerships with local leaders and people while decentralization refers to restructuring of authority to ensure a system of co-responsibility between central, regional and local levels of government. Decentralization faces special challenges in post-conflict contexts, as noted below:

- Decentralization is **not a politically neutral exercise**.
- Successful decentralization requires a **strong central government** which is rarely the case in post-conflict contexts.
- Rapid decentralization **might not be a good strategy** for post-conflict contexts.
- **Political, bureaucratic and social will** are critical for decentralization. Governments must decide that they want to decentralize.
- **Donors cannot force a government to decentralize** but they can create the will to decentralize.
- Budget support, with a strong technical assistance component from donors, can enable a country to **absorb resources and build capacity** at different levels of government.

Justice in Times of Transition

Justice is a key dimension of peacebuilding although the quest for justice and peace might, at times, conflict. Representing a society's need to come to terms with a legacy of large-scale past abuses, transitional justice aims to ensure accountability, serve justice and achieve reconciliation. There are different approaches to justice in post-conflict contexts, including restorative or traditional justice. In post-conflict contexts, a comprehensive and holistic approach to justice would include: criminal prosecutions,

truth commissions, reparation programs, security sector reform; and memorialization efforts. Key lessons from comparative experiences in diverse contexts such as Sierra Leone, South Africa and Cambodia include the following:

- There is **no single formula** for dealing with a past marked by massive and systematic abuse. Each society should, indeed must, choose its own path. However, it is necessary to examine prior national and international experiences to avoid repeating avoidable errors.
- **National ownership** as well as active consultation with and participation of the public (including victim groups) are essential.
- **Timing and sequencing** are important. Design of justice mechanisms and processes must balance the demands of justice with the realities of what can be achieved in the short term. Adopting a comprehensive approach to transitional justice, encompassing judicial, non-judicial and restorative justice, would help in this regard.
- In this context, the need for “**transition to justice**” should be taken into account while designing justice mechanisms in times of transition so to accompany transitional justice with appropriate measures to lay the foundations of a self-sustainable national justice system.
- Transitional justice measures which neglect the distinct injuries suffered by women, as well as gendered patterns of abuse faced by men and women in accessing justice, will miss opportunities to address the **gendered legacies of authoritarianism and conflict**.
- There is a need for ongoing **intellectual and practical exchange** between transitional justice specialists and those working in related fields such as conflict resolution, democratization, development, peacebuilding, and anti-corruption.

Addressing Internal Displacement in Peacebuilding

Displacement can be a cause or consequence of violent conflict, involving refugees as well as internally displaced persons (IDPs).¹¹ The internally-displaced persons represent a group whose numbers have risen significantly due to intra-state conflicts. Situated at the nexus of humanitarian, human rights, security and development concerns, addressing the needs of IDPs poses special challenges in peacebuilding. Main lessons drawn from internal displacement situations in Sudan, Cote d’Ivoire, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Burundi and Sierra Leone are as follows:

- **Peace agreements alone are insufficient** to achieve durable solutions for IDPs since their specific needs, such as security and access to property, livelihoods, basic services and infrastructure remain unsolved.

¹¹ In addition to the March 2008 WGLL meeting, in May 2007 the Peacebuilding Commission convened a joint presentation by UN High Commissioner for Refugees Mr. Antonio Guterres and the Representative of the Secretary General on the Human Rights of the Internally Displaced Persons Mr. Walter Kaelin on the relationship between peacebuilding and the resolution of the conditions of refugees and IDPs.

- The successful return of IDPs requires that their **safety** during and after returning is guaranteed, their **property** and housing are restored and the **environment that sustains return** is created by the government with the cooperation of the international community.
- The **quality of the process** leading to durable solutions is critical. While IDPs usually want to return, they must be granted the free and informed choice between return to the place of origin, integration in the area of displacement or relocation in other parts of the country.
- Only if the **specific needs of returnees as well as the communities receiving them** are addressed can a sustained reintegration be assured.
- To overcome the traditional dichotomies between humanitarian and development processes, a **development perspective** needs to be integrated into finding durable solutions for IDPs.
- **Quick and flexible funding** is necessary to address early recovery needs.

Buttressing the State's Fiscal Capacities through Budget Support

Mobilizing essential financial resources for peacebuilding is linked to effective national fiscal capacities. Budget support can contribute to (re)establishing a national public financial management system (PFM). Several steps are needed to rebuild fiscal institutions and to enable budget support such as establishing a legal framework, building capacity in the Ministry of Finance, and designing simple policies and administrative procedures to get fiscal institutions working again. There are useful lessons from recent experiences with budget support:

- Budget support can be a useful aid instrument in post-conflict countries depending on the presence of specific **requirements** in the macroeconomic and monetary environment, the political sphere and the management of fiduciary risks.
- Budget support should aim at reinforcing recipient country **ownership**, but should go hand-in-hand with a strong commitment on the part of the recipient country.
- Budget support may be preferable to project aid when donor and recipient preferences are aligned and when assistance is small relative to the recipient's resources. This does not imply that the two instruments should not be used together. **Aid should be tailored to recipient's characteristics.**
- Budget support can be **instrumental** in addressing urgent financial needs, consolidating key state functions and maintaining social stability.
- Donors need to design aid modalities that enhance **predictability** and reduce **volatility**. In addition, current aid modalities need to be improved with regards to providing increased technical and managerial support to Government structures.
- Donors need to build capacity in the Ministry of Finance and the Central Bank to enhance the management of **liquidity** due to budget aid inflows and to reduce transaction costs and longer term costs of managing liquidity.

Environment, Conflict and Peacebuilding

There is growing recognition of the complex interplay between conflict, environment and natural resources. There are various pathways by which natural resources and environmental factors can contribute to conflict or serve as important tools for economic recovery, cooperation and confidence building in war-torn societies. The experiences of Sudan, Angola, Afghanistan, Sierra Leone and Liberia demonstrate the dynamic interaction between environmental and various socio-economic factors (such as ideology, ethnicity and poverty) in generating conflict when they are not properly addressed. Environmental factors can serve to destabilize countries by undermining government legitimacy, hastening migration and weakening the economy. There are useful lessons to draw from innovative policies and programs that seek to address conflict risks and contribute to peacebuilding through equitable access to and use of land, natural resources and the environment:

- Environmental interventions in post-conflict situations should seek to address **concrete needs and opportunities** to enhance governance capacity, environmental rehabilitation, environmental technology, and confidence building at the national and local levels.
- **Rehabilitating the environment and securing livelihoods** provide local communities with capacities to manage their environment while contributing to peacebuilding through employment generation.
- **Access to land**, including land distribution, is a concern at various points of the conflict cycle but it is best addressed early on, based on an understanding of the indigenous land tenure systems.
- The **complexities of land tenure** are both political and technical. The way forward is to continue with advocacy, capacity building, training and development of tools to integrate land issues into peacebuilding.
- There are valuable lessons to be learned from **previous international policy responses** to natural resource issues. **The Kimberley Process** is a certification regime that successfully regulates the diamond trade by bringing, governments, the industry and civil society together on a voluntary basis. The **Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative** is an expanding voluntary scheme which has contributed to increased transparency of finances as government income from natural resource extraction has been compared with reports by the extraction companies.
- **Environmental issues can be mainstreamed** into development and peacebuilding efforts using gender mainstreaming as a model.

V. Searching for Coherence: Strategic and Cross-Cutting Issues

While each of the above issues is important, ultimately peacebuilding is more than the sum of individual issue areas. Not only are the various dimensions of peacebuilding intertwined, there are also certain issues that cut across various dimensions. The Working Group examined four such issues: gender, regional approaches to peacebuilding, and peacebuilding strategic frameworks and compacts.

Gender and Peacebuilding: Enhancing Women's Participation

The PBC's founding resolutions mandate gender mainstreaming in all of its work. The Commission also identified gender equality and human rights as cross-cutting priorities for peace consolidation in both Sierra Leone and Burundi. The Working Group session on gender further highlighted the fact that peacebuilding involves women's participation in decision-making as well as addressing gender-specific concerns such as gender-based violence. Given the cross-cutting nature of gender, key lessons apply to several issue areas.

- **Equal participation of women and men** in peacebuilding processes, including peace negotiations and DDR programmes can strengthen local ownership and contribute to greater equality between men and women in post-conflict societies.
- Women are frequently prevented from assuming decision-making positions and participating in the full range of post-conflict processes by the effects, or continued threat, of the violence committed against them. Gender-based violence will never be properly addressed until there are sufficiently high numbers of women in **decision-making positions at the peace table**, or in post-conflict national and local governments.
- The existence of legal frameworks and policies would not end violence by themselves—**implementation, enforcement, and resources** are also critical to ensure the end of impunity for gender-based crimes. The following steps can be pursued to greater ensure implementation: a) results-based reporting; b) clearly outlined responsibilities of all national entities; c) engagement of civil society; d) greater gender focus in peacebuilding in collaboration with regional organizations.
- **Economic empowerment**, in particular ensuring land and property rights, is critical to ensuring women's meaningful participation. Women's agency as generators of socio-economic development and as political leaders in local and national reconciliation must be acknowledged alongside their needs as victims.
- **Gender mainstreaming** is effective in the preparatory phase of programming and planning but less so in the implementation and monitoring phase.
- **Serious gaps** in terms of research capacity, data availability, institutional mechanisms, targeted programming and financial resources are serious obstacles to overcoming women's full participation in peacebuilding.

Regional Approaches to Peacebuilding

The growing role of trans-national drivers of conflict (such as cross-border flow of arms, refugees and "conflict trade") has intensified the search for regional approaches to peacebuilding. Traditionally, there has been greater reliance on regional mechanisms in conflict resolution and peacemaking rather than peacebuilding. Peacebuilding efforts at the country level should be complimented with regional approaches. Regional peacebuilding can capitalize on a range of institutional mechanisms to address problems that cannot be resolved at the country level, such as through the long-standing partnership

between ECOWAS, the United Nations and the European Commission. Other practical lessons include the following:

- Refugee flows, small arms, youth gangs and natural resource management are promising areas for regional cooperation. However, it is particularly important to **identify concrete problems in each sub-region** and to program around them through cross-country or border zone projects.
- In West Africa a **regional approach to youth unemployment and the extractive industries** (along the lines of the Kimberley Process for diamonds) would be particularly appropriate.
- The **Pact on Security, Stability and Development in the Great Lakes Region** provides a powerful instrument for regional peacebuilding by convening all relevant stakeholders to reach a shared analysis and common actions.
- Given that socio-economic development is essential for sustainable peace, **regional economic integration and trade** can promote regional approaches to peacebuilding. The spill-over effects of regional economic growth would have far-reaching positive impacts on sustainable peace and development.
- The international community lacks **peacebuilding tools and instruments** that can be deployed at the regional level since many governments and inter-governmental organizations (including the United Nations) program primarily at the country level.
- The European Commission is developing regional funding envelopes through the European Development Fund (EDF) to support the peace and security architecture of the **African sub-regional organizations**, as well as financing fragile and post conflict states.

Strategic Frameworks, Indicators and Monitoring Mechanism

Peacebuilding strategic frameworks seek to contribute to building inclusive national capacities to tackle the root causes of conflict by aligning international political, technical and financial resources behind strategic objectives agreed with national actors. This session presented findings from a comparative analysis of peacebuilding strategic frameworks and international cooperation agreements in major post-conflict contexts, including Kosovo, Sudan, the DRC, Afghanistan and Iraq.¹² Its key conclusions are:

- **Integrated approaches to peacebuilding are difficult to achieve**, especially when there is a gap between peacekeeping and peacebuilding. Nonetheless, peacebuilding concerns should be prioritized from the outset of an intervention alongside peacekeeping concerns.
- Achieving sustainable peace requires **participation, dialogue, ownership, and leadership**. A major role for the international community during a transitional period is to **build tangible national capacities**.

¹² This session also drew upon the paper titled “*Monitoring Strategic Frameworks for Peacebuilding*” which was prepared by the PBSO in August 2007 in connection with the development of the Monitoring and Tracking Mechanism for the Burundi Strategic Framework for Peacebuilding. The paper is available on the PBC website.

- **Concrete, measurable, and time-bound indicators**, overseen by a nationally-led monitoring mechanism, are essential for sequencing priorities and assessing progress and setbacks toward agreed commitments between the national government and its international partners.
- Greater **aid effectiveness** spurs national capacity and international confidence. On the other hand, **donor conditionality** can undermine a peace process.
- Neighboring countries can play a significant role in providing **political and other forms of support**.
- Peacebuilding strategic frameworks need to help **sustain a political process** rather than serve as another document. It is essential to bring different frameworks and approaches to peacebuilding under one umbrella.

International Compacts: Successes, Challenges and Lessons

International compacts provide a framework for the international community's engagement with a post-conflict country on the basis of mutual accountability and joint commitment. The drafting and implementation of the Afghanistan Compact provided important preliminary lessons in view of growing international interest in developing similar international frameworks such as the Liberia Governance and Economic Management Assistance Programme, the Iraq Compact and the Timor-Leste Compact as well as the PBC's integrated peacebuilding strategies in Sierra Leone and Burundi. The key lesson from these experiences is the need to avoid "one-size-fits-all" templates and to focus on developing context-specific cooperation instruments. Other lessons include the following:

- **Security cannot be provided by military means alone.** It requires good governance, justice and the rule of law, reinforced by reconstruction and development.
- International compacts between internal and external partners should be based on the **coordination and leadership role of a national government**.
- **Joint monitoring mechanisms**, with a manageable number of partners, are useful for tracking progress.
- It is necessary to **harmonize and limit the number of benchmarks** in assessing progress.
- **Accountability mechanisms** for the implementation of identified commitments need to be established and strengthened.

V. Commonality amidst Diversity

As the above review of comparative lessons and good practices reveals, despite important differences among post-conflict countries, there are areas of common concern that merit sustained attention by the PBC as well as national and international actors engaged in peacebuilding. Based on the findings of the Working Group on Lessons Learned—and reinforced by the work of the Peacebuilding Commission in its various configurations--the following stand out as essential to successful peacebuilding:

Summing Up: Key Principles and Elements of Peacebuilding

- ***Specificity of peacebuilding***: in order to address drivers of conflict that are context-specific, peacebuilding strategies have to be informed by accurate analysis of country realities.
- ***National ownership***: the primary responsibility and ownership for peace consolidation rests with the Government and the people of the host country.
- ***Strengthening national capacities***: the international partners' focus to get things done quickly and effectively should not undermine efforts over the medium- and long-term to strengthen national capacities for conflict management.
- ***Holistic approach***: Since peacebuilding encompasses security, development and human rights, the linkages between them need to be adequately recognized and prioritized.
- ***Ongoing support for political consolidation***: constructive political processes are essential to peace consolidation.
- ***Mutual accountability***: sustainable peacebuilding requires a strong partnership based on mutual respect and accountability between the Government and the people of the host country and their international partners.
- ***Sustained engagement***: peacebuilding is a long-term process requiring sustained and predictable engagement from all stakeholders. Despite the necessity to implement projects that provide tangible peace dividends, sufficient attention should be given to the sustainability of efforts.
- ***Effective coordination***: to avoid duplication as well as gaps in peacebuilding, international, national and local stakeholders need to act in a coherent and mutually reinforcing manner. Existing mechanisms, such as post-conflict needs assessments, integrated peacebuilding strategies, poverty reduction strategies and monitoring and tracking mechanisms, are important instruments for effective coordination.
- ***Tangible peace dividends and quick wins***: while peacebuilding requires time, early provision of tangible peace dividends for the population and quick win projects are necessary to build confidence and generate support.
- ***Integrating a gender perspective***: men and women are affected differently by conflict. Any peacebuilding strategy should address these differences, especially to ensure the end of impunity for gender-based violence, while contributing to gender equality and supporting women's full participation in and ownership of peacebuilding and recovery.
- ***Encouraging a regional approach***: an effective peacebuilding strategy takes into account the regional dimensions of a conflict and provides a regional and/or international solution, in consultation with relevant governments and non-state actors.
- ***Prioritization, sequencing and timing***: when building peace in societies ravaged by violent conflict, everything is considered a priority. However, to use the limited resources most effectively, host governments and international actors need to agree on key priorities and to sequence their implementation.

VI. Building on Emerging Lessons and Good Practices: Strengthening the Working Group's Contributions to Peacebuilding

Given the PBC's primary commitment to support peacebuilding in countries on its agenda, the intended beneficiaries of the comparative lessons and good practices presented at the WGLL are the PBC's Country-Specific Configurations and, through them, the range of national and international actors involved in peacebuilding in these countries. Accordingly, the topics covered at the Working Group have corresponded to the peacebuilding priorities of the first two countries on the PBC's agenda. However, as Member States have already noted, transmitting lessons learned and translating those into country-specific guidance are not easy. To date, the Working Group has relied on the Chair's Summaries, the PBC website and informal channels as its primary communication vehicles. Increasingly Member States acknowledge the need for more effective cross-fertilization between the PBC's various configurations.

As the WGLL reviews its future work program, it might consider several innovations, including:

- adopting a strategic approach to identifying its thematic agenda based on special requests from countries on its agenda, from other member states or from the OC;
- inviting member states, IFIs, institutional donors and other relevant actors to provide written input on lessons learned on selected topics based on their experiences as post-conflict countries, donors, peacekeepers, financial contributors to peacekeeping and peacebuilding activities or regional partners;
- disseminating the lessons and good practices collected through various channels including the UN Peacebuilding Commission website, the UN Peacebuilding Community of Practice, and the HPCR Peacebuilding Initiative portal;
- ensuring synergies and active follow-up of the WGLL's work with the PBC's country-specific configurations and the Organizational Committee as well as with other relevant national or international entities to facilitate cross-fertilization of peacebuilding policy and practice across various actors and country contexts.

Alongside country-level work, the PBC is mandated with enhancing international peacebuilding. The Working Group's deliberations have direct relevance for improving international efforts in support of peacebuilding. Encompassing a range of cross-cutting and interlocking issues, the lessons and practices presented at the WGLL point to a cumulative body of empirical evidence, operational guidelines and principles.¹³ The PBC is well-placed to draw upon this body of knowledge to contribute to international peacebuilding policy and practice. As this synthesis report demonstrates, while warning against "one-size-fits all" formulas, the deliberations of the Working Group provide a useful foundation for the Peacebuilding Commission's interest in generating strategic and policy guidance on effective peacebuilding—possibly through the Organizational

¹³ The individual sessions of the Working Group also generated concrete proposals and recommendations for consideration by the PBC. Since these range from broad normative frameworks to concrete policy responses, they have not been included in this synthesis report.

Committee. By collecting and sharing useful lessons through a systematic knowledge management strategy, the Commission can assist the UN system as well as wider international efforts to ensure that the highest peacebuilding principles and tested practices are applied to future peacebuilding activities.

VII. Summary of Conclusions and Recommendations from the Review Session

The Working Group discussed the Synthesis Report at its special session on 12 June 2008. Speakers expressed strong support for the report, noting that it serves as a useful repository of the conclusions of the Working Group's substantive work to date as well as a "living document" that can be updated over time. However, one member state questioned the utility of consolidating general peacebuilding principles, arguing that the Working Group should focus on supporting the PBC's country-specific work by generating actionable guidance based on comparative experiences and best practices.

Working Group members reiterated that the WGLL serves as a valuable informal, open, inclusive and interactive platform to advance and enhance peacebuilding. Accordingly, they made specific recommendations to strengthen the WGLL's work program and agenda in light of the ideas proposed in the Synthesis Report. These can be grouped under several distinct areas: the WGLL's working methods, the choice of topics, links with the UN system including other PBC configurations, links with the larger peacebuilding community, promoting synergies and utilization of lessons learned by the Working Group.

Working Methodology: Given the increasing workload of the PBC's various configurations and the need to generate practical knowledge of direct relevance to the PBC, it was proposed that the WGLL streamline its working methods. Suggestions included: a) setting the WGLL's agenda early and through advance consultations to ensure that the selected topics can feed into the work of the PBC's other configurations; b) requesting member states to consult their experts on topics on the agenda and to report back with concrete lessons learned for further analysis; c) inviting WGLL members and their experts to serve as speakers to provide country-based insights on lessons learned; and d) retaining sufficient flexibility in the Working Group's agenda to address certain topics at the request of CSMs in order to generate concrete lessons learned outputs.

Topics: It was recommended that the Working Group both expand and deepen the topics on its agenda. It was suggested, for example, that further work needs to be done on the issue of natural resource management and transitional justice. One member state highlighted to need to pay special attention to national sovereignty and political sensitivities in discussing these issues. New topics for consideration include: a) benchmarking and monitoring of peacebuilding efforts and b) resource mobilization in post-conflict countries. It was also proposed that the interplay between different themes should be examined more closely.

Links with the UN system: It was proposed that the WGLL draw more effectively on the work of the UN system, especially the operational agencies and entities that have

programming on the ground. While previous sessions included presentations from various departments, agencies, funds and programs, their input on selected topics could be based on a more systematic analysis of capacities and gaps.

Links with peacebuilding organizations around the world: Beyond the PBC and the UN system at large, several member states highlighted the need for the WGLL to engage more effectively with the larger peacebuilding community including regional and sub-regional organizations, non-governmental organizations, academic and research institutions and think tanks. It was noted that such collaboration would yield greater systematization of knowledge on peacebuilding.

Promoting synergies and knowledge utilization: It was proposed that the WGLL should strive to facilitate greater synergies across different actors and stakeholders with a view to promoting the sharing and application of knowledge to help advance peacebuilding policy and practice. In specific, it was noted that the WGLL should ensure that good practices and lessons learned are systematized and targeted to relevant policy and operational actors as appropriate.

Annex
WGLL Meetings 2007-2008

Peacebuilding, Elections, and Risk Reduction in Post-Conflict Contexts	20 February 2007
International Compacts	17 April 2007
Regional Approaches to Peacebuilding	8 June 2007
Peacebuilding Strategic Frameworks, Indicators, and Monitoring Mechanisms	19 September 2007
Buttressing the State's Fiscal Capacities: Comparative Lessons from Budget Support	8 November 2007
Local Governance and Decentralization Efforts in Post-conflict Countries	13 December 2007
Gender and Peacebuilding: Enhancing Women's Participation	29 January 2008
Justice in Times of Transition	26 February 2008
Comparative Lessons from Addressing Internal Displacement in Peacebuilding	13 March 2008
From Conflict to Peacebuilding: The Role of Natural Resources and Environment	8 May 2008