

Peacebuilding Commission Working Group on Lessons Learned
Meeting on Peacebuilding Strategic Frameworks, Indicators, and Monitoring Mechanisms
19 September 2007

Summary Note of the Chair

1. In developing their integrated peacebuilding strategies, Burundi and Sierra Leone, the two countries under consideration by the PBC, have highlighted the need for peacebuilding to align political and security objectives with aid coordination frameworks. Recognizing the variety of approaches and challenges faced by integrated peacebuilding efforts, the fourth meeting of the Working Group on Lessons Learned focused on select experiences from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (Country Assistance Framework), Liberia (An Agenda for Peacebuilding), and Afghanistan (Afghanistan Compact) in considering best practices in the formulation and implementation of peacebuilding strategic frameworks and their associated monitoring mechanisms. In preparation for the meeting, the PBSO produced, background materials which provided an overview of lessons learned from strategic frameworks in five cases, including Iraq (International Compact with Iraq), Kosovo (Kosovo Standards Implementation Plan), Sudan (Sudan Framework for Sustained Peace, Development, and Poverty Eradication), the DRC, and Afghanistan.¹ The meeting was chaired by the Permanent Representative of El Salvador H.E. Carmen Maria Gallardo Hernandez and included expert panelists from the Department of Political Affairs, Department of Peacekeeping Operations, and academia (see attached programme). As introduced by the Chair, key questions to be explored in the session included:

- What has been the level and types of engagement of the government, civil society, the UN system, and the donor community in preparing a peacebuilding strategic framework?
- Have Peacebuilding Strategic Frameworks built on and helped to reinforce existing strategies by focusing on critical factors that could impede the transition to sustainable peace?
- And have their monitoring mechanisms helped to facilitate national leadership, strategic coordination, and a commitment to building long-term national capacity?

2. The first speaker (UN Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs Mr. Haile Menkerios) underscored the need to link political and security objectives with aid coordination frameworks, noting that peacemaking, peacekeeping and peacebuilding require a systematic and integrated approach. He also emphasized that aid coordination depends on an objective needs assessment (including the use of security and political risk indicators), and that conflict prevention and addressing the causes of conflict through improved governance should figure prominently in aid coordination. Establishing inclusive governance through dialogue and building institutional capacities take time, and the first five post conflict years are the most critical to avert a relapse into violence.

¹For this session, a briefing paper titled “Lessons Learned from Peacebuilding Strategic Frameworks since the late 1990s” and an information note titled “Key Instruments related to Peacebuilding Strategic Frameworks” were produced.

3. The second speaker (Ms. Lise Grande of MONUC) focused on the experience of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). Following consultations involving the Government and donors, the DRC's Country Assistance Framework (CAF) focused on several critical areas including: i) rebuilding key parts of the state; ii) security sector reform and good governance, including the disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration of ex-combatants; and iii) providing a peace dividend to the general population. Based on pragmatism, reducing fiduciary risk, and the equitable distribution of resources to the poorest, the CAF focuses twenty major donors (accounting for as much as 90 percent of projected aid) on channeling support toward a few key priority sectors aimed, in part, to facilitate rapid recovery and peacebuilding. It provides an "authorizing framework" for the financing of peacebuilding projects and employs a select number of indicators for monitoring progress.

4. The third speaker (Dr. Erin McCandless of the New School for General Studies) reflected on the case of Liberia. Drawing from the UN in Liberia's "Agenda for Peacebuilding in Liberia", she described how severe capacity constraints and a multiplicity of demands and strategic frameworks in country have ensured agreement around an approach focused on infusing peacebuilding within existing policy frameworks, in particular the Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) and the UN Development Assistance Framework for Liberia. A Peacebuilding Working Group, attached to the PRS process and made up of government, civil society, the UN and other donors is working to drive this process, while also developing an integrated peacebuilding programme proposal. Among the key lessons from Liberia include: 1) Such processes are more likely than not, if developed on the ground and in light of on the ground realities, to be multi-dimensional and somewhat 'messy'—the challenges is to harness different processes, build a dialogue between them, and work in a participatory manner yet with effective leadership; and 2) Infusing peacebuilding within existing frameworks requires attention to questions of whether they offer sufficient entry points and flexibility for new ideas. Dr. McCandless noted that the PBC can contribute to peacebuilding in Liberia through the sharing of best practices on integrated peacebuilding strategies, by supporting efforts to strengthen consensus around conflict factors, by steering attention toward the need for peacebuilding to go beyond issues of socio-economic development, and by supporting local efforts to impact the development of monitoring and evaluation systems with a peacebuilding lens.

5. Written remarks provided by the fourth speaker who was unable to attend (Mr. Adib Farhadi of the Afghanistan Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board—JCMB) described the JCMB as an action-oriented, decision-making body that ensures mutual accountability in the fulfillment of the Compact's commitments in the areas of security, governance, and development. Besides the momentum generated by its design as a nationally-driven monitoring and coordination mechanism, the JCMB's progress to date stems from: i) its emphasis on concrete, measurable, and time-bound indicators; ii) its close linkages with existing frameworks, including the interim-Afghanistan National Development Strategy; and iii) its embrace of the 2005 Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness. A key characteristic of the JCMB is its leadership role in building and sustaining a national and international consensus around fundamental policy issues that threaten peace and stability, as well as wider recovery efforts in Afghanistan.

6. Finally, the session's discussant (Ms. Madalene O'Donnell of DPKO) welcomed the opportunity presented by the Working Group on Lessons Learned to examine how monitoring

mechanisms for the PBC's integrated peacebuilding strategies can reflect the goals of mutual accountability and selectivity. Operationalizing these strategies can prove challenging given their largely political nature, and monitoring may require heavy emphasis on subjective, qualitative approaches. Peacebuilding is a dynamic process, and a flexible methodology is required to determine the often-evolving "Achilles Heel" of a peace process.

7. The five presentations were followed by comments from the floor. Speakers affirmed the centrality of peacebuilding strategic frameworks in aligning international political, technical, and financial resources behind strategic objectives agreed with national actors. They also raised additional issues which further enriched the discussion. The concrete observations and recommendations that are particularly relevant for the work of the Commission are as follows:

- Integrated approaches to peacebuilding are difficult to achieve, especially when there appears to be a gap between financing for peacekeeping (with assessed contributions) and peacebuilding (where funding is on a voluntary basis).
- Peacebuilding concerns should be prioritized from the outset of an intervention, alongside peacekeeping concerns. When this is not the case, UN strategy should be rethought.
- Achieving sustainable peace requires participation, dialogue, ownership, and leadership. The Peacebuilding Commission can play a role in supporting the leadership of national actors in a manner that expands national participation, dialogue, and ownership.
- The role of the high-level Joint Coordination and Monitoring Mechanism in Afghanistan provides many specific lessons to the PBC's work on Monitoring and Tracking Mechanisms for Burundi and Sierra Leone, such as the need for sector-specific working groups and a well-staffed secretariat.
- Consultations need to be meaningful to have a sustainable policy impact, and it is difficult for the international community to undertake dialogue with a counterpart government that is not fully functioning.
- States within a region near-by a conflict-affected country can play a significant role in providing political and other forms of support. On the other hand, donor conditionality can often undermine a peace process.
- Peacekeeping achieves nothing if it only separates warring parties. The key is addressing the causes of conflict. A major role for the international community during a transitional period is the building of tangible national capacities.
- It is essential to bring together the different frameworks and approaches to peacebuilding under one umbrella to achieve more deliverables at the ground-level.
- The problem is not that no one is doing peacebuilding at the outset of an intervention. Rather, everyone is doing peacebuilding, but often in isolation from one another. The disparate peacebuilding actors need to coalesce around one common vision.
- Peacebuilding strategic frameworks should help to sustain a political process rather than be viewed as simply another document. Public hearings and other forms of dialogue should be encouraged to sustain engagement and facilitate the implementation of agreements.
- The international community should consider seriously the need to cover recurrent costs in post-conflict situations, but the public sector should not be seen as the employer of last resort.

8. Following the thematic discussion, the Chair suggested that it would be helpful to consider various ideas on how the discussions of the Working Group on Lessons Learned (WGLL) can better help to: 1) improve the PBC's deliberations and outputs in the Country Specific Configurations, and 2) make a substantive thematic contribution to the thinking and practice of peacebuilding across the UN system, in accordance with the mandate of the Peacebuilding Commission. Among the comments made by PBC member states in this regard include:

- The discussions of the WGLL need to be made more pragmatic and results and action-oriented. Modalities should be explored to enhance thematic discussions in both the WGLL and the Organizational Committee, as appropriate, and the results of such discussions should be disseminated widely. The PBC Chair's notes could be prepared in such a way as to outline essential and common strategic peacebuilding principles in relation to a particular thematic issue, and these could be shared with the UN system and the wider peacebuilding community.
- The added-value of the WGLL is that its exchanges are not official in nature. If they become more official they will become more political.
- The WGLL should remain informal, but what matters is the provision of analysis that is complementary to the work of the CSMs and the UN's field-level peacebuilding activities.
- It is important for the WGLL to develop best practices that are mutually reinforcing. It can offer pragmatic guidance on various thematic issues related to peacebuilding. Policy guidance notes could help the PBC to better implement its mandate. For example, a policy guidance note could stress the importance of taking a regional approach to peacebuilding, distilling core principles from a variety of post-conflict situations.

9. In closing, the Chair highlighted the relevance of the topic of the session to the work of the Peacebuilding Commission and thanked the panelists and all the participants for their contributions to the meeting.