

**Peacebuilding Commission
Working Group on Lessons Learned**

**Meeting on Local Governance and Decentralization:
Comparative Lessons in Post-conflict Settings**

*13 December 2007- 10AM to 1PM
Conference Room 6*

Objectives of the Meeting

To be sustainable, peacebuilding efforts must take place at multiple levels: national, local and at the grassroots. While promoting synergies between these levels is essential, appropriate strategies have to be tailored for each. In many instances, local governance receives the least attention from both national and international actors. Yet, local governance and decentralization are critical issues to be addressed in post-conflict settings because they lay the foundation for managing economic, political and social affairs at the level that most participants in a society interact with the government. They comprise the mechanisms and processes for citizens and groups to articulate their interests, mediate differences, receive public support and social services, and exercise legal rights and obligations. Participation, transparency, and accountability are key principles that must be upheld in facilitating local governance and decentralization.

In the last decade, there has been a growing understanding of the “local governance approach” to post-conflict recovery and a corresponding body of practice on building local capacities as part of a larger peacebuilding strategy. Local governance refers to the legal, policy and institutional framework through which essential post-conflict needs are addressed at the sub-national level; it entails the provision of political, administrative, and budgetary and financial services through an appropriate division of responsibilities and power-sharing between the central and local authorities.

Although there is considerable variation across different contexts and countries, key challenges and features of a viable “local governance approach” to post-conflict recovery are beginning to emerge. In this meeting of the Working Group on Lessons Learned, some key questions that will be examined are:

- How does implementation of decentralized governance efforts differ in development contexts versus post-conflict situations? What considerations must be taken into account in post-conflict settings to ensure that efforts can lead to sustainable peace?
- What are some specific strategies that should be considered for local governance reform in post-conflict settings?

- What are some key implementation challenges that have arisen in the past with regard to local governance and decentralization efforts in post-conflict contexts? How were these addressed?
- Who are the partners in local governance and decentralization efforts? What is the role of civil society organizations and the private sector?
- How can the international community best support governments in facilitating and implementing decentralization efforts?

Format and Structure

The meeting will involve short presentations (10-12 minutes) by each of the expert panelists, facilitated by the Chair. A dialogue with Member States and PBC observers will follow. The meeting will take place from 10AM to 1PM.

Chair

H.E. Mrs. Carmen María Gallardo Hernández, Permanent Representative of El Salvador to the United Nations

Panelists

John-Mary Kauzya, Governance and Public Administration Branch, Division of Public Administration and Development Management, DESA

Siphosami Malunga, Governance, Conflict and Peace-Building Advisor, Oslo Governance Center, UNDP

Robertson Work, Director of the Hillside Institute, former UNDP Principal Policy Advisor on Decentralized Governance.

Output

A Chair's summary report of the meeting with relevant insights and lessons learned of direct relevance for the PBC.

Background Documents

An introductory note that provides short briefing of some of the issues will be circulated before the meeting. Other resources will be available to delegations.