

Secretary-General's Note on the Peacebuilding Support Office

Background

The Outcome Document of the 2005 World Summit requested the Secretary-General “to establish, within the Secretariat and from within existing resources, a small peacebuilding support office staffed by qualified experts to assist and support the Peacebuilding Commission and drawing from the best expertise available.”

Functions of the Peacebuilding Support Office

The proposed Peacebuilding Support Office will have four primary functions:

- (1) **Strategies for Peacebuilding.** The Office will advise the Commission, through the Secretary-General, on options for comprehensive peacebuilding strategies. The Office will prepare substantive inputs for the Peacebuilding Commission including by gathering and analyzing information in order that the Commission may best work with national authorities in formulating a peacebuilding strategy. At periodic intervals, the Office will assess progress towards peacebuilding goals and advise common, if necessary on suggested changes in overall strategy. The Office will also assess existing coordination between all national, bilateral, regional and multilateral peacebuilding efforts. The Office will provide strategic-level analysis to inform and guide Secretariat operational planning processes for peacebuilding activities. In consultation with Departments and with the Integrated Mission in the field or Country Team as appropriate, the Office will advise the Secretary-General on the options available on the nature, timing, sequencing and strategic management of UN peacebuilding efforts in a given situation as well as on the progress of any peacebuilding strategy. The Peacebuilding Support Office will facilitate improved coherence of UN departments, funds, programmes and agencies and to ensure that UN peacebuilding efforts support national ownership and national capacity-building to the maximum extent possible.
- (2) **Funding of Peacebuilding and Recovery Activities.** The Office provide a comprehensive overview of all assessed, voluntary, grant-based and other financing for all peacebuilding activities in a particular country. The Office will, through the Secretary-General, advise the Peacebuilding Commission on the best ways to ensure sustained financing of recovery and development activities, including those aimed at national capacity-building.
- (3) **Best Practices and Cross-Cutting Peacebuilding Issues.** The Office will systematically collect information on lessons learned in UN peacebuilding missions and will provide advice as requested on best practices relevant to

peacebuilding. The Office will work with the rest of the UN system to develop policy guidelines on UN cross-cutting peacebuilding activities as appropriate.

- (4) Other Support to the Peacebuilding Commission. The Office will prepare any other substantive inputs requested by the Commission. The Office will advise, through the Secretary-General, on appropriate UN Secretariat, Agency, Fund and Programme representation in its country-specific meetings and on other invitations as appropriate. The Office will advise the Commission as requested on the relevance of requests for Member States for advice. The Office will assist the Commission in making the outcome of its discussions available to all relevant bodies and actors of the United Nations, including the International Financial Institutions. The Office will assist as requested in drafting the annual report of the Commission to the General Assembly. And the Office will liaise with the Department of General Assembly and Conference Management which will provide meeting services and related support to the Commission.

The Peacebuilding Office may also need to assist the Secretary-General identify appropriate situations on which he may require the advice of the Commission.

The Peacebuilding Support Office will need to act as a hinge between the UN system on the one hand and the Peacebuilding Commission on the other, working to ensure maximum coordination between UN departments, agencies, funds and programmes and identifying ways in which the UN system can best assist national authorities and the Peacebuilding Commission in formulating and implementing an integrated peacebuilding strategy. The Office will represent the Secretary-General, at his request, at meetings of the Peacebuilding Commission and at external meetings relevant to the work of the Peacebuilding Support Office. The Office will need to maintain an active liaison function not only with other UN departments, agencies, funds and programmes relevant to peacebuilding, but also with the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the regional development banks and, as appropriate, regional and sub-regional economic communities.

The Peacebuilding Support Office will not replace or duplicate the capacities of existing operational actors including Secretariat departments, agencies, funds and programmes. Capacities for operational peacebuilding activities will remain in other parts of the Secretariat and the UN system, including the lead role assigned to the Department of Peacekeeping Operations in the management of peacekeeping missions. The role of the Peacebuilding Support Office will be to facilitate coherence, identify gaps, recommend ways in which these gaps may be addressed, and ensure that the Peacebuilding Commission is able to draw as necessary, in a timely and efficient manner, on the system as a whole.

The Expertise Required

For the Peacebuilding Support Office to provide the support and assistance above, it will need to be multidisciplinary and have within it a range of knowledge or expertise.

Expertise on specific issues (for example civilian policing or elections or refugee reintegration) will remain within the relevant department, agency, fund or programme; the Office should be able to draw on this expertise as required.

The Office will instead require staff with prior experience in the strategic planning and management of post-conflict efforts including, but not limited to: staff with strategic planning experience; staff who have themselves served in the governments of countries undergoing post conflict transitions and are familiar with the challenges facing these governments; staff who have served as advisors and assistants to the head of the UN peace operations who are familiar with the challenges of establishing and managing UN post-conflict efforts, including for example setting up transitional governing arrangements; staff with experience working in post-conflict situations, including in the area of public finance; and staff who have managed funding processes and who are familiar with international donor funding mechanisms

A mix of expertise and backgrounds will be critical to assist and support the Peacebuilding Commission in the functions outlined above, again drawing as required on more issue-specific expertise within (and outside if necessary) the UN system.

The Placement of the Office

The Peacebuilding Support Office will be placed in the Executive Office of the Secretary-General. As the Office will have a system-wide facilitation and coordination functions in support of the Commission, placing the Office in any existing department, agency, fund or programme would severely circumscribe its ability to play this role. Rather the Office should seek to bring together perspectives, plans and best practices from throughout the UN's political, peacekeeping, humanitarian and development bodies.

The Resources Required and the Structure of the Office

The Office will require sixteen professional staff in order to properly fulfill the functions outlined above, assuming that the Peacebuilding Commission will on average examine 4-5 active country situations per year.

The Office will be headed by an Assistant Secretary-General who may be asked to represent the Secretary-General at the Commission (including the Commission's country-specific configurations). He/she would be assisted by a deputy at the D2 level.

The Office will have a strategic planning section headed at the D1 level with six additional professionals as well as a section devoted exclusively to transitional financing issues with two professionals. Gathering and analyzing the information likely to be required and requested by the Commission, working closely with national authorities, the UN mission in country (if any) and the UN system as a whole will require the resources of at least three full-time professionals on any given country situation.

The Office will also have a best practices section of three professionals who will work closely with relevant sections and branches throughout the system as well as with experts outside to jointly develop a repertoire of best practices and ensure that these inform all the work of the Office as well as the proceedings of the Commission. This systematization of collecting best practices should help feed the strategic planning process for future cases.

Two additional professionals will be assigned to other support for the Commission, including the preparation of the annual regular report on peacebuilding and other documentation which may be requested.

Setting-up the Office

The Outcome Document had requested that the Peacebuilding Support Office be prepared to support the Peacebuilding Commission, which was to begin its work no later than 31 December 2005. In order to meet this ambitious deadline, the Secretariat has made temporary arrangements to support preparations for the establishment of the Office. Thus far, however, no one has been hired to work in the Peacebuilding Support Office.