

Progress in the implementation of the PBC Forward Agenda in 2013

Chair's Mid-Year Report

17 July 2013

Introduction

1. The report of the Commission on its sixth session (A/67/715–S/2013/63) has mainstreamed the implementation of relevant recommendations from the 2010 Review of the UN Peacebuilding Architecture and has incorporated a forward agenda for 2013 as an implementation framework for these recommendations. The Forward Agenda has highlighted the five priority areas for 2013, namely: a) role of the membership; b) relationship with UN principal organs; c) working methods; d) resource mobilization, partnerships and advocacy; and e) forging coherence.

2. This report provides an overview of the work undertaken by the Organizational Committee and the Working Group on Lessons Learned in taking forward actions suggested under the relevant priority areas. Country-specific work in the implementation of the same and other actions are not covered by this report.

3. The 2013 Forward Agenda has also suggested actions which the Commission is expected to take under two priority themes, namely: economic revitalization and job creation; and national reconciliation. Relevant activities in this respect are planned for the second half of the year.

Role of the PBC membership

4. As an intergovernmental, advisory and non-operational organ, the PBC's main strength lies in its membership structure and composition of key global actors. This area of strength is yet to be fully utilized, especially as a reflection of the PBC's potential impact in the field. Some activities and measures were put in place with a view to broadening the Member States' ownership of the PBC's work. Those preliminary activities and measures include:

a) Potential assets of the membership: The International Peace Institute (IPI) and the Quaker UN Office (QUNO) convened a workshop for new delegates on the Organizational Committee which included a dedicated discussion on "defining the role of the PBC membership" (February). The discussion has highlighted the need to tap into the assets of the membership in specific areas, namely:

- i) comparative learning among Member States which have undergone successful peacebuilding experiences;
- ii) provision of technical expertise in country-specific peacebuilding priority areas; and
- iii) coherence of policies and programmes through the flow of information to and coordination between capitals, resident embassies and permanent missions

b) Representation of membership categories: Between April and May, a series of discussions took place with members of the Organizational Committee that are elected/selected by the three UN Principal Organs. These meetings had the dual purpose of exploring practical ideas to strengthen the linkages with principal organs (*The specific recommendations emanating from these meetings are summarized under the section below on “Relations with UN principal organs”*), as well as of defining the role of the members in guiding the development of the substantive advice of the PBC to the respective organs.

c) Volunteering and issue-specific coordinators: The Organizational Committee opted for reintroducing the function of issue-specific “coordinators” from amongst the members of the PBC in order to undertake specific and voluntary tasks. In this regard, two coordinators from the membership categories of the General Assembly (South Africa) and Security Council (Rwanda) were designated in order to facilitate and deepen the dialogue between the PBC and its parent organs. Similarly and in order to take forward specific policy and working methods-related workstreams, two coordinators were designated to explore ideas to bridge the gap between the PBC’s work in New York and its impact in the field (Norway); and the development of practical modalities for the proposed annual PBC session (Indonesia). The coordinators are expected to report to the Organizational Committee on the outcome of their respective facilitation of discussions amongst member states.

Going forward: There is a need to review and assess the effectiveness of the ideas generated as a result of these activities. For example, there is a need to appraise whether or not these ideas could help country configurations broaden the ownership and buy-in from within its membership. There is also need for the PBC (Organizational Committee and country configurations) to continue to explore other ideas and measures that could help enhance the sense of collective responsibility and ownership vis-à-vis the work of the PBC, especially in the field. These measures could include specific tasking for member states, especially those with resident embassies and bilateral programmes with the countries on the agenda.

Relationship with UN principal organs

5. There is recognition that the workstreams on the role of the membership and the PBC’s relations with UN principal organs are closely linked (as indicated in the previous section). Progress in enhancing ownership and collective responsibility amongst PBC members should be first and foremost manifested in championing a pragmatic and substantive interaction with the three UN principal organs. A number of discussions between the PBC Chairs’ Group and members elected/selected by UN principal organs took place between April and June with a view to agreeing on concrete steps to take forward these relations. (*A separate report on these activities has been previously developed and shared with the Organizational Committee*).

Going forward:

The General Assembly: One or two peacebuilding-related theme(s) of particular relevance to countries on the PBC agenda will be identified for up to two informal interactive dialogues. After consultations with the President-elect of the 68th session of the General Assembly, the coordinator (South Africa) will suggest to the Organizational Committee the theme, objectives

and date of the first informal interactive dialogue, as well as possible follow-up actions to this dialogue.

The Security Council: The informal interactive dialogue of 26 April has scoped and defined the space in which the Council and the PBC should be able to develop their partnership. Concretely: i) in July, the Chair of the Burundi Configuration will share with the Council his analysis emanating from the recent visit to the country; and ii) the Presidency of the Council in September (Australia), the Council's lead countries on Liberia and Sierra Leone and the chairs of the respective country configurations will consult on areas and modality for the PBC's contribution to and engagement in the Council's upcoming consideration of the mandates of UNMIL and UNIPSIL during that month.

The Economic and Social Council: The Office of ECOSOC Support and Coordination and the Peacebuilding Support Office will develop an action plan which will explore the feasibility and realistic timeline for the implementation of specific proposals on: i) mainstreaming peacebuilding in the work of ECOSOC as of the 2014 substantive session; ii) joint thematic meeting (possibly in October); and iii) dialogue with the private sector, philanthropic organizations and the Bretton Woods Institutions.

There is a need to monitor the implementation of and to assess the effectiveness of these ideas in further strengthening and rationalizing the links between the PBC and the three principal organs.

Working Methods

6. The Organizational Committee has initiated discussion on working methods in 2012, as part of a two-stage effort: a) to capture and to place on record the established methods in performing country-specific work in order to facilitate the engagement of both member delegations, as well as external partners; and b) to explore areas of the working methods which would require either further improvement or policy reflection. To this end, a series of working-level informal consultations were convened between February and April and addressed the actions agreed in the 2013 Forward Agenda. These consultations have resulted in:

a) Part I of the PBC working methods compendium: The compendium covers three areas: i) an overview of options for the PBC's engagement in each country on its agenda; ii) aspects related to the organization of the PBC's country-specific engagement; and iii) communications. While it will continue to be considered a living document that will necessarily be guided by emerging wisdom and needs of the PBC, the compendium could be considered a useful reference document for the PBC's working methods around the areas covered therein, and it is currently posted on the PBC website.

Going forward:

- The implementation of certain aspects of the working methods as it relates to the section on meetings planning is already underway. A matrix for tracking the progress in the implementation of the actions contained in the 2013 Forward Agenda has been periodically shared with Member States during the first half of 2013. It has provided a planning and tracking tool of the actions required, as well as an attempt to improve the

predictability in the scheduling of PBC meetings. The activities of the Organizational Committee, the Working Group on Lessons Learned, as well as the PBC Chairs' Group have been incorporated in this matrix. Country configurations are yet to join this new approach to planning, taking into consideration their specific nature. A similar matrix will be developed to guide the planning for activities which will take place during the second half of the year.

- A proposal to convene an annual PBC session was made in the context of the section on effective conduct of PBC meetings of the compendium. Pending agreement on objectives and modalities, that are currently the subject of consultations under the coordination of Indonesia, the first such session could be convened in 2014.

b) Four policy workstreams: Several actions introduced under the working methods cluster of the 2013 Forward Agenda are related to topics which have been found by Member States to demand in-depth and policy oriented discussions. These topics have been, therefore, organized around four policy workstreams that are purposefully related and mutually reinforcing. These **four workstreams** are:

i) ***PBC's field-interface:*** As a NY-based political organ, how can the PBC become increasingly field-oriented and thus enhance its impact?

ii) ***PBC's entry and forms of engagement:*** What are the possible forms of engagement which would enable the PBC to complement the work of other actors; maximize the Commission's effectiveness and impact in the field; and respond to a range of different country-specific needs?

iii) ***PBC's results and impact:*** What would be a practical approach for the PBC to assess impact and measure results – tangible and intangible- of its engagement in the field?

iv) ***PBC's transition and exit:*** Which criteria and strategic actions should the PBC consider and take in guiding a decision on and timing of transition and exit in different scenarios/situations?

Going forward: The recommendations which these workstreams expect to generate should primarily feed into and applied by country configurations. Through these workstreams, the PBC membership and the UN system will jointly address outstanding recommendations from the 2010 Review. More importantly, however, the topics covered by these workstreams are central to the future orientation of the PBC. They, therefore, represent advanced preparation for the upcoming 2015 review. Concretely, the following next steps could be envisaged:

- **Norway** would continue to coordinate, facilitate and, possibly, champion the preliminary findings of the work undertaken so far on workstream (i) in country configurations;
- A partnership between PBSO and the **Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation, Sweden**, is underway on workstreams ii & iii;
- The work underway by **the Sierra Leone configuration** in support of UNIPSIL's transition will offer the first instance where the PBC could explore strategic actions to inform its own exit strategy.

Resource mobilisation, partnerships and advocacy

7. The PBC has continued to prioritize the identification of practical approaches to performing its resource mobilization, partnership and advocacy function. In taking forward the relevant actions presented in the 2013 Forward Agenda, the work of the PBC has taken the following form:

a) The role of business in support of peacebuilding: A special event of the PBC in June was convened in collaboration with the UN Global Compact in order to highlight the possible scope and significance of private sector engagement in peacebuilding efforts in the countries on the PBC agenda. In particular, the event focused on the role of the private sector as catalyst for economic growth and job creation in post-conflict countries, and the imperative for responsible and conflict sensitive approach to investment, especially in the extractive sector of the economy. The event has generated a number of findings and recommendations (*a separate report on the event is under preparation*).

Going forward: There is need for follow-up discussions within country configurations to further identify practical entry points for the PBC in support of the efforts of the countries on the agenda to develop its local private sector and its local systems to manage and use natural resources and to attract responsible investment.

b) Different approaches to resource mobilization (lessons learned and good practice): The Working Group on Lessons learned (WGLL) has played a leading role in this area by: a) highlighting lessons learned on and drawing initial findings with respect to the role of the PBC in supporting the organization of donor/partner conferences (April); and b) explore the PBC's role in support of building national capacities for domestic revenue generation (July).

Going Forward: Country configurations are invited to draw upon the initial findings and lessons learned and shared through the WGLL discussions, as they: i) prepare to support countries on the agenda to organize donor conferences; and ii) explore the possibility of supporting the cross-sharing of relevant expertise and experience in the area of public finance management and revenue collection systems for peacebuilding funding. In addition, the follow-up to last year's work of the WGLL on the mapping of resource flows to Guinea and support to national capacity development for aid management and coordination is still pending reflection and action within the Guinea Configuration.

c) Partnerships with the World Bank and the African Development Bank: Following last years' progress in reaching out to and enhancing the partnership with the World Bank and the African Development Bank, the actions indicated in the 2013 Forward Agenda are subject to follow-up by relevant country configurations.

Going forward: There is need for stock-taking of progress made in taking forward the partnership with the two institutions at the country-level. The modality of this stock-taking exercise could be undertaken in the context of the process for cross-learning among configurations, as stipulated in part I of the compendium of the PBC working methods.

Forging coherence

8. Two out of the three actions indicated in the 2013 Forward Agenda in this regard refer to areas which fall within the purview of the country configurations. The highlight of the work undertaken in this area was the virtual meeting which took place in March between the PBC Chairs and E/SRSGs in some PBC agenda countries to discuss: a) the nature of the relationship/partnership between the PBC and UN senior leadership in the field; and b) how to reinvigorate this partnership. This discussion has underscored the specific areas where the PBC's added value for the UN in the field could best be captured, namely by:

- Offering a dedicated platform in order to systematically address critical peacebuilding-related issues;
- Broadening the donor base by bringing in new and non-traditional donors that are not represented at the country-level;
- Ensuring coordinated messages of the UN and the international community to the Government;
- Supporting and complimenting the process of UN mission draw-down; including through bringing in support from the PBF to ensure that certain national and UN capacities are in place; and
- Sustaining the attention of the international community and the Security Council with a view to addressing conflict-drivers beyond the draw-down of missions.

Going forward: Addressing the challenge of competing agenda and fragmentation in the field and at Headquarters is a central element of the workstream on the PBC's field interface and orientation (para. 6 (b) (i) above). There is a need to link the efforts of the PBC to identify its role and comparative advantage *vis-a-vis* field-based actors with its role in improving and forging coherence of peacebuilding support in agenda countries. There is also an obvious link here with the workstream concerning the role of PBC membership, because unless there is greater consistency and coherence of decisions made by its Member States on bilateral assistance, as well as positions and actions taken in multilateral fora, the PBC's role in improving and forging coherence will remain largely unfulfilled.
