



Joint Meeting of the Economic and Social Council and the Peacebuilding Commission

Fostering global solidarity and conflict sensitive responses to the COVID-19 pandemic and its socio-economic impacts

19 November 2020 (10:00 - 13:00)

Introduction

Collaboration between the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), including through joint meetings, has been encouraged since adoption of General Assembly resolutions [60/180](#) (2005) and [61/16](#) (2006) and ECOSOC resolution 2009/32 (2009), and further strengthened in 2016 by GA and Security Council resolutions A/RES/70/262 and S/RES/2282(2016) on the review of the peacebuilding architecture. Over the years, the two bodies have exchanged views on a broad array of topics related to durable peacebuilding and sustainable development, including development, security and humanitarian challenges affecting West Africa and the Sahel and, more recently, on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on development and peacebuilding gains.

The challenges of the pandemic have underscored like never before the imperative of enhanced collaboration between the ECOSOC and the PBC in the shared attainment of inclusive and sustainable development, anchored in the protection and promotion of human rights, gender equality, and the goal of leaving no one behind, and supported with adequate and predictable financing, as the best defense against conflict.¹

ECOSOC, PBC and COVID-19

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020, both the ECOSOC and the PBC shifted focus to help mitigate the impact of the pandemic by supporting the efforts of governments and their partners to respond, rebuild and recover from its devastating effects and ensure an inclusive approach that benefits from the experiences of a diverse group of national actors, including the private sector and women- and youth-led organizations.

Member States at ECOSOC have recognized that the COVID-19 pandemic exposes and exacerbates vulnerabilities and inequalities in both developing and developed countries, and that it puts the most vulnerable at risk of being left further behind, particularly in conflict affected contexts. With its Ad Hoc Advisory Group on African Countries Emerging from Conflict, the ECOSOC has promoted a comprehensive approach to political stability and economic and social development, and fostered interaction and coordination among United Nations system and other actors. Through the Financing for Development Forum, the Council called for global action to scale up resource mobilization from all sources, to invest into a sustained recovery from COVID-19. The ECOSOC high-level virtual [briefing](#) on COVID-19 offered valuable opportunities for dialogue and solutions for an effective and coordinated multilateral response to COVID-19. Furthermore, various ECOSOC segments addressed the impact of the pandemic. ECOSOC operational activities segment in particular held detailed discussions on how the UN development system supports countries' responses to the pandemic and how the reforms of the recent years have prepared UN country teams for providing effective support. Calls were made for the ECOSOC to continue to provide

¹ *United Nations Comprehensive Response to COVID-19, September 2020*, <https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/un-comprehensive-response-to-covid-19.pdf>.

an inclusive platform to explore integrated policies to respond to the current and longer-term crises, harnessing the work and expertise of the ECOSOC subsidiary bodies and the UN system. The 2020 high-level political forum on sustainable development (HLPF), convened under the auspices of the Council, demonstrated the commitment of Member States and stakeholders to a multilateral response to COVID-19 and to international solidarity. The response to the pandemic was seen as an opportunity to introduce the kind of systemic changes needed to realize the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and get back on track for the Decade of Action. Accordingly, in its resolution 74/298, the General Assembly decided that the thematic focus for ECOSOC 2021 session and the 2021 HLPF will be “Sustainable and resilient recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic that promotes the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development: Building an inclusive and effective path for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda in the context of the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development”.

For its part, the PBC has been extraordinarily active over the last several months in adapting its work programme to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and serving as a platform to ensure an early conflict-sensitive multilateral response that contributes to sustaining peace. It has convened demand-driven meetings with a focus on mobilizing support for national and regional efforts in addressing peacebuilding challenges exacerbated by the pandemic and strengthening coordination and coherence among partners and across the UN system. It has encouraged multipronged, people-centered and conflict-sensitive responses to enhance local capacities to address national priorities and generate real impact on the ground, including improved social cohesion, lower levels of inequalities, prevention and redress of violence against women and girls, and increased capacity to peacefully prevent and resolve conflict. At its thematic meetings on the “Impact of COVID-19 on Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace” and “Immediate Socio-Economic Response to COVID-19”, on 8 April and 5 June respectively, the Peacebuilding Commission echoed the Secretary-General’s call for a global ceasefire and urgent action within the framework of his socio-economic response plan to fight the pandemic and deliver on national priorities, including basic services. The Peacebuilding Commission discussed ways to tailor socio-economic responses to COVID-19 to the unique challenges posed in peacebuilding contexts, with special consideration given to community resilience and social innovation. In subsequent engagements, the PBC expressed support for the Security Council’s call for a global ceasefire in resolution 2532 (2020). The need for stronger partnerships, particularly with regional organizations and international financial institutions, was recognized as a priority to better respond to the implications of COVID-19 and, in that regard, several PBC members have welcomed the DPPA/PBSO initiative to fast-track support for joint UN-World Bank risk assessment and analysis. The PBC has also praised the Peacebuilding Fund for quickly positioning itself to respond to the peacebuilding and prevention dimensions of the pandemic and introduced new initiatives to provide support to countries to reinforce crisis management and communications capacities; ensure inclusive and equitable response and recovery; strengthen social cohesion; counter hate speech and stigmatization and address trauma.² Accordingly, the Peacebuilding Commission decided to dedicate its annual session on 2 November to ‘financing for peacebuilding’ with a view to promoting more coherent and sustainable approaches to peacebuilding financing and ensuring conflict-sensitive recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

The work of the Economic and Social Council and the Peacebuilding Commission in the context of COVID-19 pandemic signal the urgent need to support countries, in particular the ones in conflict-affected situations, to safeguard their capacities to fight the pandemic, to recover better and to put them back on track for ensuring sustainable peace, achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and build a healthier and more resilient world for all.

Objectives of the ECOSOC-PBC Joint Meeting in 2020

² https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/sites/www.un.org.peacebuilding/files/documents/covid_brief8.pdf

In view of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and the socio-economic impacts it is having world-wide, particularly in the most vulnerable countries, the 2020 joint meeting of ECOSOC-PBC can help to:

- Increase awareness of the complex challenges related to COVID-19 with emphasis on the pandemic's impact on socio-economic development and peacebuilding;
- Promote the sharing of information and knowledge on the experiences of countries across the world in responding to COVID-19 and its impacts, especially for the benefit of conflict affected countries;
- Identify opportunities for coordinated and coherent action, with the support of the international community in post-COVID recovery, with emphasis on financing for sustainable development and peacebuilding in countries affected by crisis and conflict; and,
- Consider options for predictable and sustained financing for peacebuilding, including ways of scaling up PBF investments in countries that seek such assistance.

Format and participants at the meeting

This will be a virtual meeting co-convened by the President of the Economic and Social Council and the Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission for a three-hour duration.

Efforts will be made to secure participation of the members of the ECOSOC and the PBC at the highest possible level. Efforts will, similarly, be made to secure the participation of the relevant UN entities and other international organization and sub-regional groups and other stakeholders at the highest levels.

Expected Outcomes

The outcome of the meeting will be a joint summary by the ECOSOC President and the Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission, with recommendations for further action for the consideration by the Economic and Social Council and the Peacebuilding Commission.

Tentative agenda

- Opening remarks by H.E. Munir Akram, ECOSOC President, and H.E. Mr. Bob Rae, Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission
- H.E. Ms. Inga Rhonda King, President of the Security Council
- H.E. Ms. Amina Mohammed, Deputy Secretary General, (pre-recorded video message; in-person representation by Assistant Secretary-General for Development Coordination Office, Mr. Robert Piper)
- H.E. Ms. María del Carmen Squeff, Incoming President, United Nations High-level Committee on South-South Cooperation
- Mr. Robert Powell, Special Representative of the International Monetary Fund to the UN
- Dr. Ahmed Ogwel Ouma, Deputy Director of the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention
- Ms. Hindou Ibrahim, SDG Advocate & Co-Chair of the International Indigenous Peoples Forum on Climate Change
- Interventions from the floor
- Closing remarks