Chairman’s Summary

Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace in Africa:
Towards a Coherent Approach to the Peace Continuum

12-13 November 2019
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<th>Acronym</th>
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<td>A4P</td>
<td>Action for Peacekeeping</td>
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<td>APSA</td>
<td>African Peace and Security Architecture</td>
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<td>African Union</td>
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<td>AUC-PCRD</td>
<td>African Union Center for Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development</td>
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THE ASWAN FORUM

Acting in its capacity as the Chairman of the African Union (AU) and the Champion of Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development in Africa, Egypt is taking the initiative to launch the **Aswan Forum for Sustainable Peace and Development**. Owned by Africa, and supported by international and regional partners, the Forum—to be held annually in December—is a high-level, multi-stakeholder platform that brings heads of states and governments, leaders from national governments, international and regional organizations, financial institutions, the private sector, and civil society, together with visionaries, scholars, and prominent experts, for a context-specific, action-oriented, and forward-looking discussion on the opportunities, as well as the threats and challenges, facing the continent. It provides the first-of-its-kind platform in Africa to address the “peace-development nexus”, while championing “African solutions to African problems”, including through strengthening the links between policy and practice.

THE CAIRO INTERNATIONAL CENTER FOR CONFLICT RESOLUTION, PEACEKEEPING AND PEACEBUILDING

Founded in 1994, the **Cairo International Center for Conflict Resolution, Peacekeeping and Peacebuilding (CCCPA)** is an Egyptian public agency; an AU Center of Excellence in training, capacity building and research; and the Arab world’s leading civilian training center on issues of peace and security. It is a major voice of the Global South on a wide range of topics, including conflict prevention and resolution, peacekeeping, peacebuilding, preventing radicalization and extremism leading to terrorism, combating transnational threats, and the implementation of the women, peace and security agenda.

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INTRODUCTION

Addressing the needs of countries and communities affected by or emerging from conflict is amongst the most complex challenges facing Africa. Restoring/building state authority and its ability to perform its basic functions, building trust in new political orders and governance structures, repairing the social fabric torn by violent conflict, and addressing the root causes of conflict in order to prevent relapse are complex and long-term processes that span peacemaking, peacekeeping, peacebuilding and development mandates and efforts. They require comprehensive, integrated and inclusive politics and policies, sustained funding and engagement, and coordination among a wide array of local, national, regional and international actors.

As a result, the international community’s conflict management and resolution toolbox is undergoing a process of adaptation, transformation and reform. This comes as a response to the changing dynamics of conflict, the emergence of new threats and challenges, as well as the lessons learned from previous and ongoing peacebuilding and state-building endeavors. Key to achieving this transformation is ensuring the integration, coherence and complementarity of efforts across the peace and development continuum, including conflict prevention and resolution, peacekeeping, and peacebuilding.

Peacekeeping, in particular, has been high on the reform agenda, with several initiatives on the international and regional levels, including the adoption by the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) of Presidential Statement S/PRST/27/2017, the A4P initiative and the subsequent Declaration of Shared Commitments, and the Cairo Roadmap for Enhancing the Performance of Peacekeeping Operations: From Mandate to Exit. With the requisite political support for comprehensive and mutually reinforcing implementation, these initiatives could significantly enhance the effectiveness of peacekeeping and its contribution to the larger agenda of sustaining peace.

The peacebuilding paradigm is also shifting. There has been growing international recognition of the imperative for sustaining peace across the peace continuum, unleashing the full potential of peacebuilding processes to create the conditions necessary for positive peace to flourish. The twin resolutions of 2016 (A/RES/70/262 and S/RES/2282) first coined this term as “both a goal and a process”, which lies within the prerogatives of member states, as well as the UN and partners. Relatedly, the notions of national and local ownership of peacebuilding processes have gained traction within strategic plans and operations on the ground.

Next year (2020) will mark the 15th anniversary of the establishment of the UN peacebuilding architecture. This will coincide with the third five-year periodic review of the architecture, as mandated by the General Assembly and the Security Council. In Africa, 2020 will also see the revitalization of the AU PCRD policy, and the operationalization of the AUC-PCRD. This will coincide with the conclusion of two strategic frameworks for the engagement of the AU in peace and security, namely the African Peace and Security Architecture Roadmap (2016-2020), and the Master Roadmap for “Silencing the Guns”. With these milestones on the horizon, Africa and the international community are offered a unique opportunity to take stock of progress achieved and to identify challenges and implementation gaps.

With the above in mind, CCCPA—in partnership with the Egyptian Embassy in Addis Ababa, the AU Commission and the UN Peacebuilding Support Office)—organized an expert workshop, titled “Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace in Africa: Towards a Coherent
Approach to the Peace Continuum.” The workshop, which took place on 11-12 November 2019 at the AU Headquarters was the first in a series of regional consultations in connection with the upcoming review of the UN PBA. This Chairman’s Summary captures the key messages and recommendations emerging from the workshop discussions.

**An Evolving Peacebuilding Paradigm in Africa: Challenges and Opportunities for the Operationalization of Existing Normative Frameworks**

According to the landmark UN-World Bank study, “Pathways for Peace”, interstate conflicts steadily declined in the post-cold war era, with conflicts between states remaining low. Meanwhile, intrastate conflicts have increased significantly, with more countries experiencing violent conflict in than at any time in the previous 30 years. Such violence has plagued low- and middle-income countries alike.

However, most of the world’s violent conflicts are concentrated in a few regions, most notably, in Africa and the Middle East. This trend is accompanied by the proliferation of non-state armed groups and a surge in the use of violence against civilians. Furthermore, conflicts have not only become deadlier but also more transnational in nature, as well as regionalized and internationalized. **This evolving nature and scope of the threat environment in Africa underscores the need for an integrated and holistic approach across the peace continuum, with special attention given to cross-border and sub-regional challenges.**

On the continental level, there are several AU policy frameworks on prevention and peacebuilding, most notably the AU PCRD policy, which is anchored in national and local ownership. While attempts to revitalize it have taken place in recent years through deployments in The Gambia and the Sahel, a robust implementation framework of the policy is still needed. Equally important is the need to clearly define the role of the AU in the implementation of PCRD engagements on the continent, as primarily a convener or an implementer.

The AU PCRD could potentially transform APSA’s orientation beyond 2020 by integrating peace and development imperatives in AU policy and decision-making, as well as defining the contours of its partnerships with the UN, international financial institutions and other bilateral partners. In this context, there is a need to ensure that the implementation frameworks for the PCRD and other APSA-related engagements utilize robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, which inform AU/RECs policy and decision-making, adaptation of the tools deployed in specific contexts, and measurement of the impact of initiatives, programs and projects. The AUC-PCRD, to be hosted in Cairo, will have a significant role to play in realizing the needed reforms, as an executive arm of the AU PCRD policy.

**The UN PBA:**

**Taking Stock of Progress and Shortcomings since 2015**

An important contribution of the 2015 UN PBA review was the coining of the term “peace continuum” i.e. the understanding that sustaining peace applies before, during and after conflict. **The “peace continuum” concept is transformative.** Across the UN system, there has been considerable improvement in enhancing coherence, strengthening leadership and capacities, and advancing partnerships in support of member states’ efforts to build and sustain peace.
Coherence across the peace and security pillar is driving the UN’s holistic approach to peacebuilding and sustaining peace. This is, most notably, manifested in the merger of the UN’s Peacebuilding Support Office and the Department of Political Affairs into the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs. The alignment of regional strategies and peace operations in the Sahel, Great Lakes and Horn of Africa regions are further positive developments in this regard. The 2020 review should assess this progress to ensure that integrated and coherent solutions across the UN system are standard practice, not ad hoc measures.

The 2015 Review enshrined several guidelines and principles critical to the effectiveness and sustainability of peacebuilding efforts, moving beyond quick fixes and short-term stabilization to creating the conditions conducive to positive peace. A central aspect in this regard is the emphasis on strengthening national ownership and advancing inclusivity, including by building national and local capacities. The upcoming review should examine how UN whole-of-system efforts can better support member states in realizing their national peacebuilding priorities, particularly in (mission) transition settings.

While the peacebuilding community has significantly advanced its thinking around sustaining peace, significant challenges persist. Much remains to be done to fully operationalize the outcomes of the 2015 Review and the recommendations of the 2018 Secretary-General Report on Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace. Most notably, fragmentation and siloed approaches of peacebuilding actors continue to limit the effectiveness of peacebuilding responses to pressing dynamics, such as inequality and transnational crime. This is further compounded by persisting financing gaps for peacebuilding on the global, continental and regional levels. As such, financing for peacebuilding remains insufficient, unpredictable, and ad hoc in nature.

Additionally, peacebuilding responses are often designed from a state-centric point of view, resulting in a theory of change where states are viewed as creators of wars and peace. This often leads to an unhealthy obsession with big events and milestones, such as elections, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, or security sector reform. As such, while peacebuilding is intended to be a long-term process centered on fostering leadership, agency and political will, it is often translated into a short-term technical process.

The 2020 UN PBA review is an opportunity to take stock of progress and challenges, consolidate the gains since 2015, and push forward on implementation, particularly in the field. While the 2015 Review was focused on the dynamics within the UN itself, the upcoming review should pay special attention to how the UN interacts with other actors, most notably the AU, in line with the existing AU-UN partnership frameworks.

The 2020 review should advance coherent partnerships across the peace continuum; particularly, between the UN, the AU and RECs/RMs. The joint UNSC and AU Peace and Security Council statement on the Democratic Republic of the Congo (2018) emphasizes the efficacy of cooperation when the two councils speak in one voice. In addition to increasing the number of meetings between the UNSC and the AU Peace and Security Council, the upcoming review should push for closer collaboration and information-sharing between the two organizations on the operational and programmatic levels. This should include mid- and senior-level staff of the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, the AUC-PCRD and the AU-Conflict Prevention and Early Warning Division. An equally important feature of the 2020 review should be the promotion of interlinkages and synergies with international
financial institutions, the private sector, and civil society, including women and youth organizations.

Additionally, the review should be field-informed and focused on impact, promoting a people-centered approach, and translating policies into conflict-sensitive programming. To that end, the instrumental role played by the PBC in convening actors across the humanitarian-development-peace nexus continues to expand. On the margins of the 2019 General Assembly meetings, for instance, the PBC convened to discuss the situation in Burkina Faso, at the request of the Burkinabe Government. The meeting included the UN, the AU, the World Bank, the African Development Bank, the European Union, and other actors.

The above is one example of the transformative effect of the sustaining peace resolutions on the PBC, enabling it to bring together relevant stakeholders in support of member states’ peacebuilding efforts, and to focus on pertinent issues relevant for sustaining peace, such as human and economic development, climate change and reconciliation. The 2020 review should better utilize this unique platform to link national, regional and international strategies across the humanitarian-development-peace nexus, which is critical for regions facing multidimensional and transnational threats, such as the Sahel and the Horn of Africa.

The revitalized role and stature of the PBC allowed it to adopt new working methods, such as informal dialogues and expert meetings. Additionally, it expanded its advisory role to the UNSC. The upcoming review should be an opportunity to effectively increase the advisory role of the PBC to the UNSC, the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the wider UN system, including closer coordination with special representatives of the Secretary-General and country teams.

Another UN instrument, which has proven central for sustaining peace in Africa is the UN Peacebuilding Fund (UNPBF). In the Central African Republic, for instance, the benefits of synergy between the UNPBF and the PBC are clear. The PBC’s steadfast advocacy on the critical importance of addressing the country’s long-term peacebuilding needs and its advice to the UNSC ahead of the renewal of the peacekeeping mission mandate, are in line with the fund’s longstanding support to the country, including most recently through the quick disbursement of funding to support the implementation of the 2019 peace agreement.

Towards Sustainable, Predictable and Flexible Financing of Peacebuilding in Africa

Pathways for Peace, the UN-World Bank joint study, underscores the strong case for scaling up financing for prevention and peacebuilding efforts, in order to preempt the need for much larger investments in conflict management at later stages. According to the report, every dollar invested in prevention and peacebuilding saves USD 7-15 spent on peacekeeping and humanitarian action. Despite the above, statistics on official development assistance (ODA) to conflict-affected countries show a different trend. While its percentage share of total ODA has stopped decreasing in 2017, potentially reversing a decade long trend of declining support, ODA to conflict prevention and peacebuilding continues to decline\(^1\).

Financing for peacebuilding is one of the key priorities of the 2016 twin resolutions and the 2018 Secretary-General Report on Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace. Out of the 42 recommendations in the 2018 report, only the 4 related to financing, which lie within the

prerogative of member states, have not been implemented, constituting the “unfinished business” of the sustaining peace agenda.

Regarding UN leadership, the Secretary-General has shown great commitment through accomplishing the goals set out within his prerogative related to financing, such as scaling up capacities in Resident Coordinator Offices to support member states in planning and financing national plans for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. In line with this, Resident Coordinators will be allowed to draw upon three principal funding mechanisms to facilitate the humanitarian, development and peacebuilding work of their respective UN country teams, namely the Central Emergency Response Fund, the Sustainable Development Goals Fund and the UNPBF.

Additionally, the UNPBF has witnessed a quantum leap of contributions, further enabling its critical role in driving UN coherence and reducing competition. The fund has experienced an 85 percent growth in capitalization over the last year; moving from an instrument that financed USD 60-80 million worth of programs a year, to USD 183 million last year. Specifically, the fund enables the UN to start anticipating and programming in a different manner, focusing on supporting transitions, cross-border and regional programs, and the empowerment of women and youth, especially on the African continent, to which 70 percent of the UNPBF resources are currently being allocated.

Another positive development within the UN system is the allocation of resources from assessed budgets of peacekeeping missions to mandated programmatic activities in support of peacebuilding, especially during mission transitions in order to prevent “financial cliffs” post-mission exits. Paving a new frontier, USD 15 million have been allocated from the budget of the African Union–United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur to supporting residual tasks of the UN country team, with a view to building and sustaining peace.

Despite large sums of money flowing into Africa, sustaining peace engagements do not effectively address local issues of contention and the needs of populations left behind, underscoring that development has to be done differently, and that economic growth alone is not going to build and sustain peace.

To that end, donor countries must change the way they operate, going beyond providing funds to the UNPBF, to engage bilaterally with conflict-affected countries and to target the money directly towards the priorities set out by the PBC and the conflict-affected countries themselves. Moreover, donors who are seated on the boards of international financial institutions should do more to align their actions there with discussions in the PBC.

Investing in the sustainability of systems requires balanced and predictable financing across the whole of the peace continuum. Political processes need to be linked with economic and development processes, as well as human rights capacity development. Moreover, funds needs to be deployed rapidly. If peacebuilding tools are not rapidly deployed after the signing of peace agreements, the peace dividend may not be harnessed, and the necessary processes for the sustainability of the agreement, such as transitional justice and reconciliation, security sector reform, and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, do not bear their fruits.

As such, realizing fast, flexible and catalytic funding for peacebuilding necessitates advancing multi-stakeholder processes that include the private sector and international financial institutions as critical partners. Such partnerships must be firmly guided by the
needs set out by the countries concerned. Meanwhile recognizing that financial instruments have different appetites for risk, flexibility and speed, the comparative advantages of each instrument must be identified and utilized.

**Joint assessments between the countries concerned and relevant stakeholders are critical to identify funding priorities**, as proven recently in case of Burkina Faso. The Burkina Faso assessments highlighted the limited ability to address contentious issues in real time, rather than a lack in financing at large. Interventions addressed issues that were relevant three to five years ago, instead of current ones, which can be partly traced back to heavy bureaucratic systems of the funding organizations, and to shortfalls in regular impact assessment, monitoring and evaluation. Moreover, analysis of the humanitarian crisis in the north of the country highlighted the real danger in scaling up financing, without considering state capacity.

In settings with weak state capacity, alternative mechanisms for rapid deployment and implementation must be explored, while ensuring that the state is not bypassed but is consulted beforehand. Engagements otherwise risk creating parallel structures that prolong pockets of fragility and violence. Sustaining peace efforts should always seek to **capacitate national and local authorities, especially those operating in periphery areas**. In this context, strengthened state capacities can be induced by providing the necessary incentives for reforms.

**National and local ownership is critical.** The recent progress in Somalia’s debt relief process can be traced back to the government’s ability to mobilize and generate domestic revenues. For example, the infrastructure program leveraged on the private sector, chamber of commerce, local communities and the general public. This signifies how a country can accelerate its peacebuilding progress, if it can generate political will, and follows a whole-of-government approach.

**In the same vein, continental ownership by the AU is vital.** The AU’s main financial mechanism is the AU Peace Fund, launched in 2018. As early as 2016, the AU Assembly of Heads of State and Government decided to endow the fund with USD 400 million in Member State contributions, to be fully realized by 2021. This is intended to be drawn from the 0.2 percent levy on continental trade that has been set in motion, in order to finance the overall AU budget, providing a degree of predictability. Since 2017, the Fund has received over USD 130 million: the highest level of contribution since its establishment. **Nevertheless, the funds allocated to PCRD efforts remain strikingly low, at an estimated 6 percent of the AU’s overall budget**. With the soon to be established Africa Humanitarian Agency, the AU must ensure that its financial instruments operate in a complementary manner and do not compete for resources.

Ongoing reforms within both the UN and the AU provide an unparalleled opportunity to shift away from “business-as-usual”. Both organizations should strive to go beyond drawing fault lines to realizing the paradigm shift from conflict management to conflict prevention. In line with this, **synergies and coherence between the different financial instruments are to be advanced**, namely, between the UNPBF and the AU Peace Fund.

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2 Forthcoming in research conducted by Michelle Ndiaye Ntab, Director of the Africa Peace and Security Programme at the Institute for Peace and Security Studies (IPSS) and the Head of the Tana Forum Secretariat.
Coherence of Peacebuilding Efforts in Africa: Do the UN and AU Speak the Same Language?

Coherence of peacebuilding efforts, especially between the UN and AU as the two main actors in Africa, is crucial to ensuring impact. The organizations’ joint efforts are guided by the UN-AU Enhanced Partnership Framework on Peace and Security (2017) and the framework for the implementation of agenda 2063 and the 2030 agenda for sustainable development (2018). The 2017 Memorandum of Understanding on UN-AU partnership in peacebuilding provides a framework to strengthen (i) cooperation in support of peacebuilding and sustaining peace efforts in Africa, and (ii) UN-AU partnership in areas of conflict prevention, political dialogue, national reconciliation, democratic governance and human rights.

Despite these frameworks, promoting synergies and complementarities between UN and AU peacebuilding efforts is not taking place systematically. This is especially evident in the Sahel region, which faces a myriad of multidimensional and transnational peace and security challenges. The two organizations have different strategies guiding their operations, namely, the UN Integrated Sahel Strategy (2013) and the UN Support Plan for the Sahel (2018) on one side, and the AU Strategy for the Sahel region (2014) on the other. These strategies do not leverage each other’s respective tools for implementation, nor do they make explicit reference as to how the partner organization’s strategy can be aligned with their own.

The inability to explicitly recognize each other’s strategic entry points is further exacerbated by diverging philosophies on peacebuilding: The UN views peacebuilding as a continuum of efforts exerted across the peace continuum, guided by the centrality of prevention. In contrast, the AU continues to use the term “post-conflict reconstruction and development,” which limits efforts to post-conflict settings, primarily geared towards stabilization.

Different technical and financial capacities, in favor of the UN, are an additional challenge for the partnership. While the AU PCRD policy is comprehensive, encompassing six pillars, including security, humanitarian relief, development and economic recovery, its operationalization continues to lag behind, largely due to insufficient funding and capacities.

As such, the AU is exploring new frontiers for innovative and cost-effective engagement. A recent example is the technical peacebuilding mission in The Gambia undertaking targeted capacity building programs. The mission is integrated within the government, providing it with direct and quick access to information, as well as cost-efficiency.

This recent innovation, together with ongoing AU reform efforts, presents an opportunity to revitalize the AU PCRD policy, so as to realize its intended purpose and to align it with the “peace continuum” approach. The AU PCRD could act as the needed catalyst of AU reform, transformation of the APSA and other restructuring efforts.

In line with the above, the AU should also consider its role in PCRD efforts, deciding on whether it prefers to act as a convener/coordinator of peacebuilding and sustaining peace activities on the continent, or as an implementer. Particular attention in this context should be given to strengthening the synergy between the AU and RECs/RMs in conflict prevention and

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3 AU Technical Mission to The Gambia
PCRD, with emphasis on complementary military, humanitarian, peacebuilding and developmental efforts (e.g. counter-terrorism efforts in the Sahel).

Ongoing AU and UN reforms, including the upcoming review of the UN PBA, need to draw upon lessons learned and challenges facing the operationalization of the 2017 Enhanced Partnership Framework on Peace and Security. Emphasis should be given to advancing effective division of labor based on comparative advantage and improved programming. In addition to clustering efforts on the short, medium, and long-term, the UN and AU must upscale their adaptation, agility and flexibility.

To that end, the AUC-PCRD should play a central role in realizing the changes needed, especially those related to improved and institutionalized coordination on all levels, in order to translate the UN-AU strategic partnership into effective operations that leverage existing tools rather than create new ones. One such example is the underutilized African Solidarity Initiative, launched in 2012.

**The Contribution of Peace Operations to Sustaining Peace**

Towards a Continuum of Peace and National Ownership

The imperative of viewing peacekeeping as part of a larger and comprehensive political strategy aimed at building and sustaining peace has been recognized by the 2016 Sustaining Peace resolutions, as well as the A4P initiative, the Declaration of Shared Commitments, the Cairo Roadmap, S/PRST/2017/27 and S/PRST/2018/20.

Drawdown and configuration of peace operations in particular represent critical moments in the peace continuum: a moment of heightened risk because the host nation is undergoing a transition. The right timing and management of transitions is therefore key in reinforcing peace and sustaining it.

**Transitions are fundamentally understood as political processes.** In this connection, ensuring the primacy of politics and planning for a mission’s exit must be part and parcel of an agreed-upon political strategy guiding mandate design, implementation and periodic review. This should also include assessing the peacekeeping operation’s contribution to enabling and promoting national and local leadership, capacities, and inclusive dialogue processes.

**There is no substitute to leadership of host nations.** In the case of the UN Mission in Liberia, the government’s recognition of its important role in addressing the root causes of conflict, was one of the key drivers for sustaining peace during the transition. Additionally, the mobilization of domestic resources and the strengthening of civil society organizations were indispensable tasks undertaken by the government.

The transition in Liberia presents a unique model. It allowed the UN to sustain its personnel with relevant expertise, and to continue working closely with the government on addressing local issues of contention and fragility pockets left unaddressed. The mission’s successful transition emphasizes the importance of innovation and seeking new frontiers.

**There is no substitute for leadership within peace operations.** Capable leadership is critical to ensuring that various mission tasks contribute to peacebuilding, especially tasks as sensitive as electoral observation. Mission leadership should integrate national perspectives into the mission’s internal planning. For example, leadership of the UN Mission in the Democratic
Republic of Congo is currently in discussions with the government on how to move forward with the transition.

**Conflict analysis tools need to be more action-oriented whilst capturing local capacities for peace.** The goal is therefore to build on existing structures, and hence provide a valuable and continuous managing instrument for senior leadership of the mission. For instance, integrated analysis is currently being used to analyse the possible transition of the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali.

**All multilateral tools, including peacekeeping, should be viewed as enablers;** hence, peacekeeping engagements and tasks must be people-centred and geared towards building and strengthening local capacities and resilience.

On the part of the wider international community, more effort needs to be exerted to address the gap between peace operations’ ambitions, their mandates as set out by the UNSC, and what is actually funded by the General Assembly Fifth Committee (also known as the Administrative and Budgetary Committee or C5). Functions that are essential to any peace operation are often reliant on voluntary contributions. Thus, the approach to resource management and financing of peacekeeping operations must adapt to the changing political and operational realities within which these operations are deployed.

**To that end, the Cairo Roadmap addresses the need to rethink the UN budgeting process for peacekeeping operations.** It suggests ensuring that all components and objectives of a mission are adequately resourced in order to contribute to peacebuilding and sustaining peace, even after drawdown and exit.