

Concept Note

Asia-Pacific Regional Consultation on the 2020 Review of the Peacebuilding Architecture

Virtual Conference, KST 9:00-11:00 am (GMT+9), 10 June 2020

Background and rationale

On 27 April 2016, the General Assembly and the Security Council adopted resolutions on peacebuilding, concluding the 2015 review of the United Nations Peacebuilding Architecture. These resolutions are the most comprehensive and far-reaching resolutions on peacebuilding. Whereas during the 1990s, peacebuilding was mostly understood in the UN as post-conflict peacebuilding, the resolutions defined peacebuilding as aiming to prevent the outbreak, the recurrence or the continuation of armed conflict, offering an opportunity to increase the focus of the UN system to preventing conflicts, so that not only the symptoms, but also the root causes of conflicts are addressed. The key messages from the resolutions on the review of the UN peacebuilding architecture are about the importance of prioritizing prevention, addressing root causes of conflict, and devising long-term peacebuilding strategies.

The Republic of Korea has made efforts to mainstream peacebuilding and sustaining peace. Following the 2017 Asian Conference on Peacebuilding and Conflict Prevention which was co-hosted by the ROK, the UN Peacebuilding Support Office(PBSO), and Dag Hammarskjold Foundation, by hosting a regional consultation on the 2020 Review of the Peacebuilding Architecture, the ROK reiterates its commitment to continue providing a platform for the Asian-Pacific countries to share their perspectives and experiences, and contribute to the comprehensive review process.

While the advent of COVID-19 has brought about a global health crisis with profound social, economic and political consequences, risking reversing decades of progress in peacebuilding in many parts of the region, the Consultation will be an opportunity to explore the ideas on how to coordinate the peacebuilding goals and implement them and for key countries in the region to craft joint messages to respond to the current crisis and sustain peace in the post-COVID-19 era.

Objective

The objective of the Consultation is to inform the ongoing process of the 2020 Review of the Peacebuilding Architecture with a focus on the experience and perspectives of the Asia-Pacific countries. The Consultation will offer an opportunity to feed the experiences and perspectives of actors from the Asia-Pacific region into the review process; share good practices; assess progress on recommendations made on peacebuilding; identify priorities where there has been little of uneven progress.

Agenda

Programme		Speakers
Welcome and Opening Remarks		Mr. Byung-ha Chung, Director-General for International Organizations, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the ROK
3 Thematic Areas	1. Conflict Dynamics in the Asia-Pacific Region	Panelist 1
	2. Socio-Economic Outcomes and Development Tools	Panelist 2
	3. Inclusivity in the Peacebuilding Process	Panelist 3
Tour de Table		Country Representatives (4 minutes each)
Closing Remarks		Mr. Byung-ha Chung, Director-General for International Organizations, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the ROK

Structure of the Consultation

The consultation will be organized by 3 primary themes: conflict dynamics in Asia and the Pacific and its implication in the peacebuilding work; socio-economic outcomes and development tools; and inclusivity in the peacebuilding process. Country cases from the Asia-Pacific region will be central to discussions across the three thematic areas.

1. Conflict Dynamics in the Asia-Pacific Region

The Asia-Pacific region is highly diverse in terms of the historical experiences, the socio-economic development process, and the political system, making it exceedingly difficult to draw generalized conclusions or summarize the regional peace and conflict dynamics.

Despite the diversity, there is great value in better understanding the specificities of conflicts and drawing out the lessons learned and good practices to build on. For example, the majority of conflicts in the Asia-Pacific region were ethnic identity-driven or religion-relevant ones. The conflicts triggered by political mobilization based on ethnicity or religion were exacerbated by the socio-economic inequalities and exclusion, and poor management of natural resource in many parts of the region. Plus, most of the world's low-intensity conflicts occur in the Asia-Pacific region, according to the *Pathways for Peace* report that the UN co-authored with the World Bank in 2018.

It implies that for the UN at large to be relevant to the region, it needs to further tailor its approaches to the specific context, and thoroughly inform its peacebuilding strategies and programmes with history and contextual knowledge.

Issues to discuss:

- What are the particular dynamics of the conflicts in the Asia-Pacific region? What is its implication to the peacebuilding in the region?
- How can the UN peacebuilding process be well-informed with a thorough

understanding of conflict dynamics and the specific context? What are the challenges to conducting conflict and risk analysis and evaluation?

- How can the Peacebuilding Commission further strengthened in conducting joint analysis and accumulating relevant data?

2. Socio-Economic Outcomes and Development Tools

In the peacebuilding process, it is important to look beyond immediate response to crisis and short-term conflict management. Indeed, when the UN set the peacebuilding agenda in many cases in the region, socio-economic outcomes were frequently proposed as a goal: for example, access to justice and social services, rule of law, accountable police and corrections, sustainable economic growth and poverty eradication.

Since the root causes of conflict are often related to socio-economic aspects, the World Bank's *World Development Report 2011* and the UN-World Bank's *Pathways for Peace* report reexamined the role that development can play in the peacebuilding processes. The 2016 twin resolutions on sustaining peace also acknowledged an integral role for the development pillar in producing the socio-economic outcomes and sustaining peace. In paragraph 16, the resolutions: "Recognize[s] that development is a central goal in itself and recognize[s] the important contributions of the UN development system to peacebuilding, particularly through economic development and poverty eradication."

Issues to discuss:

- What were the goals of the peacebuilding work in the Asia-Pacific region, and how were they shared with other stakeholders engaged in peacebuilding efforts?
- What are the challenges to improving collaboration between peace and development actors to produce substantial socio-economic outcomes?
- What are the lessons learned in the cases in the Asia-Pacific region in taking into account the socio-economic impact and outcomes in the peacebuilding process, and how can we apply them to responding to the current COVID-19 crisis in the conflict-prone countries and addressing its mid and long-term impact?

3. Inclusivity in the Peacebuilding Process

The UN-World Bank's *Pathways for Peace* report presents that economic and social exclusion and inequalities are one of the primary drivers of conflict. Indeed, in many cases, it was a key to ensure the people's engagement in the continuum of peace processes so that the needs of all segments of society are taken into account. The specific focus has been put on women and youths so far.

The Report of Advisory Group of Experts (AGE) on the *Challenge of Sustaining Peace* highlighted the importance of broad and inclusive participation involving state and civil society stakeholders all the way down to the grass-roots level in reaching reconciliation and sustainable peace.

Issues to discuss:

- In conflict-affected countries, what is the inclusive approach? How can the UN strike the balance between the national ownership and the inclusive approaches?
- What have been the roles and experiences of civil society in peacebuilding processes in the Asia-Pacific region?
- What would be the role of the digital technology in encouraging further participation of more stakeholders?
- What are the barriers that exist to women's full participation in efforts to build and sustain peace?
- What is the potential of the region's youth as a positive force for peace and development?

/END/