

Peacebuilding Commission
Informal meeting of the Organizational Committee
11 June 2014

Chairperson's Summary of the Discussion

Background

On 11 June 2014, the Organizational Committee of the Peacebuilding Commission convened an informal meeting. The meeting was chaired by the Permanent Representative of Brazil, Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission, and addressed the following agenda items: (1) Update on the preparations for the PBC Annual Session (23 June 2014); (2) Advanced preparation for the 2015 Review of the Peacebuilding Architecture.

Update on the preparations for the PBC Annual Session (23 June 2014)

1. The Chair briefed Member States on the ongoing preparations for the PBC Annual Session of 23 June. He stressed that the event, which takes place for the first time, represents an important opportunity to position the PBC to play a visible and useful role of tackling issues requiring policy development at the intergovernmental level. He noted that the topics identified by the Organizational Committee for the two working sessions – namely 1) *Mobilization of international and domestic resources and revenue generation* and 2) *Lessons learned on the development of national capacities and sustainability of resources in the context of UN missions' transitions* – represent important areas where the political support of the Commission can improve outcomes for the people in countries emerging from conflict.
2. Presenting the updated programme of the annual session, the Chair informed that the meeting would be opened by the UN Deputy Secretary-General and that former President of Timor-Leste, H.E. José Ramos-Horta, would deliver the keynote speech. With regards to the two working sessions, the Chair informed that the interactive discussions in both sessions would be led by panelists, which include the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Sierra Leone, and the Minister of Human Rights of Guinea, as well as representatives of the World Bank. The Presidents of the General Assembly and of the Security Council would deliver remarks in the closing session.
3. The Chair noted that side events had been scheduled in the margins of the Annual Session, including a breakfast organized by the Permanent Mission of Colombia on Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration, and a lunchtime policy forum on the Central African Republic organized by the Permanent Mission of Italy, the International Peace Institute and PBSO. He also noted that the annual stakeholders meeting of the Peacebuilding Fund would take place on 24 June. The decision to organize the two events back-to-back was intended to encourage Member States to encourage representation by Capital-based officials. The Chair called upon Member States to expedite registration of their respective Capital-based officials and participants , according to the guidelines for participation which can be retrieved from the website of the PBC (<http://www.un.org/en/peacebuilding/annualsession2014.shtml>).

4. Member States welcomed the update by the Chair and noted that the Annual Session should also be a platform to discuss concrete actions that can benefit people in countries emerging from conflict. One delegation emphasized that it would be important to discuss the follow-up to the Annual Session in the context of the Commission's intergovernmental process. The Representative of Sweden announced that his Mission intended to organize a side event at lunchtime on 24 June to discuss issues related to the transition of UN missions.

Advance preparation for the 2015 Review of the Peacebuilding Architecture

5. The Chair noted that advance preparation for the 2015 review of the UN Peacebuilding Architecture (PBA) is stipulated in the 2014 Forward Agenda. He stressed that it is natural for the PBC to discuss the preparations for the review, given the mandate given to it by the General Assembly and the Security Council to annually report to both organs on progress and challenges in the implementation of recommendations from the 2010 review. The Chair further emphasized that the purpose of the advance preparation is to help the General Assembly and the Security Council design the next review on the basis of shared understanding and buy-in from Member States on the objectives, scope, Terms of Reference, methodology and process management.
6. In this connection, the Chair recalled that the Organizational Committee held two working-level informal consultations on 22 May and 5 June that focused on the suggested scope for the review. He referred to the "options" paper prepared by PBSO to facilitate consideration of the appropriate scope of the review and indicated that interventions at the 11 June meeting should provide further guidance in this regard. The Chair confirmed that, following understanding on the scope, there is need for the Committee (at the working-level) to initiate and advance the discussion on the possible suggested Terms of Reference for the review before the summer break, if possible.
7. In introducing the three options presented to the Committee, PBSO emphasized that they sought to reflect the diverse positions raised by Member States in the discussion that took place at the working-level and was not intended to suggest a preferred scope. The **first option** raised by some Member States was the broadest in scope as it seeks to review the UN system machinery engaged in peacebuilding operational activities in order to establish how the PBA can further support or help address the challenges facing a more responsive and effective UN system. The **second option** raised would take the original vision behind the establishment of the PBA as the point of departure and analyze the continuing relevance of this vision against the progress made and the continuing gaps in the international community's and the UN's response to post-conflict challenges. Accordingly, the outcome of the review would help adapt the PBA to the new realities and needs of the international system's engagement in post-conflict situations. The **third option** is narrower in focus as it seeks to design the review around the capacities, orientation, mandate, working methods and institutional structures of the PBA (with greater emphasis on the PBC). This option also seeks to take stock of the impact made by the PBC in the countries on its agenda and propose ways of adapting the PBCs working methods and approach in order to maximize its impact and consistency of outcomes.

8. The ensuing discussion reflected areas of convergence, as well as differences in Member States perspectives on the objectives and scope of the 2015 review. The majority of delegations converged around the need for an ambitious scope, while also retaining the focus on producing actionable and concrete recommendations aimed at strengthening the PBA. Some delegations also agreed that Member States should be ready to address difficult and sensitive systemic questions. In this regard, several delegations emphasized the need for revisiting the original vision behind the PBA in 2005 and to take stock of the nature of the gap which it was established to address. The review, it was noted, should be able to analyze whether the expectations that accompanied the establishment of the PBA matched the mandate, resources, structures and authority given to it. Many delegations reiterated the positions already expressed at the working-level meetings, regarding different options and combinations of options. The interventions made around these points showed that option 2, in the Chair's understanding, is present in most of the preferred combinations and positions.
9. Some delegations also noted that there is a need to review the progress made in the implementation of the 2010 review recommendations, especially in areas such as the links with the Security Council and with the wider UN operational entities, as well as questions related to national ownership and the reasons for the stagnation in the number of countries seeking the PBC's support since 2011. Several delegations were of the view that the review should examine the need for the PBC to introduce lighter and more flexible forms of engagement than country-specific configurations and to take stock of the Commission's role in the area of resource mobilization. The main thrust of the interventions made by these delegations favored a scope for the review that would combine elements of options 2 and 3, with strong emphasis on the need not to dilute the focus away from the PBA.
10. Several other delegations viewed the review as an appropriate moment to take stock of the effectiveness of the UN's overall approach to and engagement in peacebuilding. They agreed that the review should take the original vision and foundation as the point of departure, but should be ambitious enough to address the developments in the broader peacebuilding landscape since 2005 within and outside the UN, and the evolving role of the IFIs in peacebuilding support. These delegations were of the view that the review should include stock taking of the effectiveness and coherence of activities undertaken by operational actors (especially UN agencies, funds and programmes) in the countries emerging from conflict. The interventions made by these delegations tend to favour a scope for the review that would combine elements from options 1 and 2.
11. Other delegations spoke in favour of a review that is more focused on the impact, functions, capacities and structures of the PBA, thus expressing preference for a narrower scope around the elements of option 3, while noting the importance of taking stock of the developments since 2005 along the lines presented in option 2. One delegation was of the view that if the review is to raise existential and difficult questions about the PBA, then none of the options under consideration would be sufficient.
12. In addition to the suggested scope, delegations have converged on the need for well-articulated Terms of Reference that would correspond to the agreed scope and clarify the objectives of the review. The majority of the delegations expressed preference for a methodology that would combine country case studies and analyses with broader

policy and institutional review. Other delegations also expressed determination for the review to be undertaken under Member States' guidance and authority, while also expressing interest for the review to benefit from contributions by relevant UN entities and field operations, civil society experts, think tanks, and, most importantly, national perspectives from the countries on the PBC agenda and others emerging from conflict.

13. In concluding the discussion, the Chair noted that there is significant convergence on the broad objectives of the review and that it will not be difficult to arrive at an agreement on a scope that would reflect such convergence. He noted that he intends to convene dedicated discussions in the second half of the year on process management, where greater clarity on the questions of "by whom" the review will be conducted can be attained. Until then, the Chair emphasized, there is a need to begin consideration of the suggested Terms of Reference for the review.
14. As for the immediate next step, the Chair requested PBSO to revert with a discussion paper synthesizing the views expressed by Member States on the scope in a coherent proposal for further discussion at the working level. He also outlined the subsequent steps in the process of advance preparation for the 2015 review leading up to the development of suggested Terms of Reference and to, subsequently, engaging the Presidents of the General Assembly and the Security Council who are expected to formalize the initiation of the review before the end of the year.
