

# United Nations Nations Unies

HEADQUARTERS • SIEGE NEW YORK, NY 10017  
TEL.: 1 (212) 963.1234 • FAX: 1 (212) 963.4879

REFERENCE:

15 March 2019

Excellency,

I am writing in reply to your letter of 30 October 2018 in which you requested the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) to offer substantive inputs to the 2019 High-level Political Forum on the contribution of the PBC towards the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The resolutions on the review of the peacebuilding architecture (A/RES/70/262 and S/RES/2282 (2016)) recalled General Assembly resolution 70/1 which adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The resolutions stressed the importance of the PBC to serve a bridging role among the principal organs and relevant entities of the United Nations by sharing advice on peacebuilding needs and priorities, in line with the respective mandates, competencies and responsibilities of these bodies. They also noted that peace and security, development and human rights are closely interlinked and mutually reinforcing. According to the General Assembly Resolution on Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review adopted in December 2016 (A/RES/71/243), “the development work of the entities of the United Nations development system, in accordance with their respective mandates, through their support for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in countries in conflict and post-conflict situations, contributes to peacebuilding and sustaining peace, at the request of those countries and in accordance with their national ownership, plans and priorities”.

In that connection, I would like to submit the following inputs, from a peacebuilding perspective.

(a) the identification of progress, gaps, areas requiring urgent attention, risks and challenges in achieving the SDGs; and, or in relation to the theme within the area under the purview of your intergovernmental body

Sustainable development cannot be realized without peace and security; and peace and security will be at risk without sustainable development. With the increase in number and intensity of conflicts in recent years, addressing root causes is more urgent than ever.

Her Excellency  
Ms. Inga Rhonda King  
President of the Economic and Social Council  
United Nations

The 2018 Report of the Secretary-General on peacebuilding and sustaining peace (A/72/707–S/2018/43) updates on progress made in the implementation of the resolutions on the review of the peacebuilding architecture (A/RES/70/262 and S/RES/2282 (2016)) and proposes recommendations to address existing gaps.

First, the 2030 Agenda recognized that the interlinkages and integrated nature of the SDGs are critical in ensuring that the purpose of the Agenda is realized. This vision is based on an acknowledgement of the complexity, multi-faceted nature and interlinkages of our world. The resolutions on the review of the peacebuilding architecture (A/RES/70/262 and S/RES/2282 (2016)), also emphasize the bridging and advisory role of the PBC among the principal organs and relevant entities of the UN. The PBC convenes a broad range of actors outside of the UN, including regional organizations, international financial institutions, and civil society to promote an integrated, strategic and coherent approach to peacebuilding. The 2018 Report of the Secretary-General on peacebuilding and sustaining peace (A/72/707–S/2018/43) further recognized the unique role the PBC can play in advancing intergovernmental coherence. The report welcomed that the PBC had diversified its working methods to enhance flexibility and noted that coherence and complementarity between the principal organs of the UN and its governing bodies with full respect to their respective mandates is critical to support the advancement of peacebuilding and sustaining peace. The Secretary-General also welcomed the PBC's convening role and encouraged cooperation with regional and sub-regional organizations: information-sharing, coordination and joint approaches. The report also noted that an ecosystem of partners working in support of governments is critical for sustaining peace. In that regard, a number of Member States reflected on the Secretary-General's recommendations on strengthening partnerships with relevant stakeholders and they highlighted the key role the PBC could play in taking forward several areas for joint collaboration between the UN and the AU in the field of peacebuilding, as identified by the "Joint United Nations-African Union Framework for Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security" that was signed in 2017. This was highlighted in July 2018, when the PBC convened an informal interactive dialogue with the African Union Peace and Security Council (PSC) to enhance cooperation and coherence with the African Union in support of peacebuilding and sustaining peace in Africa, and some Member States also underlined the 2030 Agenda and the Agenda 2063 as mutually reinforcing frameworks that could provide a solid foundation to address the root causes of conflicts as well as build and sustain peace. This meeting led to formalizing the agreement for an annual interactive dialogue between the two bodies to discuss issues of mutual concern.

Second, the aforementioned resolutions adopted by the General Assembly and the Security Council emphasized “the need for predictable and sustained financing to United Nations peacebuilding activities, including through increased contributions, and strengthened partnerships with key stakeholders.” While this continues to be a challenge, the Secretary-General has presented options for adequate resourcing of peacebuilding activities, through voluntary and assessed contributions, in his report on peacebuilding and sustaining peace (A/72/707–S/2018/43), including more active engagement with the private sector, where relevant, as well as innovative financing. These options are currently being considered by Member States.

Third, providing assistance to conflict-affected countries is risky, and results might be elusive for some time. It may take a decade or longer to be able to report tangible results on the strengthening of institutions that are critical to build and sustain peace. On the other hand, by one estimate, the timeframe of donors and assistance programmes has declined from about a decade to one year. This needs to be reversed. The international community should remain focused on the long-term objectives of sustainable peace and sustainable development. The Peacebuilding Fund is a timely, catalytic and risk-tolerant instrument for financing national priorities, while enhancing coherence in the UN system with full respect to the existing mandates. The Secretary-General has called for a quantum leap in the resources allocated to UN peacebuilding activities with an aim of \$500 million annual target for the Peacebuilding Fund, noting the increased demand for UN peacebuilding support (A/72/707–S/2018/43).

Fourth, the international community has been in a state of crisis management, reacting to events rather than proactively addressing the causes of conflict, promoting the foundations of peace, and supporting the long-term capacities and institutions that are required for sustainable peace and development. The development of the institutions and capacities to address the needs of all segments of the population, including the most marginalized, takes a long time.

Fifth, noting the need of promoting synergies and greater complementarity of peacebuilding and sustaining peace with the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs, the Peacebuilding Support Office conducted a portfolio analysis of the Peacebuilding Fund during 2015-2018 which linked the Fund’s financial contributions to the SDGs. The analysis showed that the Peacebuilding Fund directed 83 per cent of its investments during 2015-2018 towards achieving the SDGs, with 38 per cent of Peacebuilding Fund investments allocated towards SDG 16 promoting peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development; 11 per cent to SDG 10 on reducing inequalities; 10 per cent to SDG 5 on gender equality; and 8 per cent to SDG 4 on quality education. Peacebuilding Fund funding also frequently went towards SDG 8 on decent work and economic growth, and SDG 17 on partnerships.

(b) valuable successful experiences and lessons learned on promoting inclusiveness and equality;

To achieve the SDGs by 2030, the international community needs to support promoting inclusiveness and equality. Addressing the root causes of conflict through an inclusive approach to build and sustain peace at all stages of conflict, with the aim to prevent the outbreak, escalation, continuation and recurrence of conflict. The resolutions on the review of the peacebuilding architecture (A/RES/70/262 and S/RES/2282 (2016)), among others, emphasize the importance of inclusivity, focusing especially women and youth, to ensure that the needs of all segments of the population are addressed.

The PBC provides a platform for Member States and relevant partners, including civil society, to discuss ways to address the rising inequalities in fragile political contexts and related peacebuilding challenges. Such meetings could include civil society organizations and local peacebuilding actors in relevant discussions. In 2016, the PBC adopted a Gender Strategy which seeks to strengthen its engagement on gender-related aspects of peacebuilding by ensuring an inclusive approach that accounts for women’s perspectives and specific needs, and promotes gender equality in order to make peacebuilding more effective.

Also, in 2018 the Security Council hosted an open debate informed by the Progress Study on Youth, Peace and Security. At that meeting, the Chair, on behalf of the PBC, recognized the indispensable role young people could play in any effort to build and sustain peace and noted that that young people’s favourable participation in peacebuilding is, all at the same time, a right, a demographic necessity in making our societies more inclusive, and peaceful.

(c) emerging issues likely to affect inclusiveness and equality at various levels;

Insufficient financial, technical and political support to peacebuilding and sustaining peace could be impediments to building sustainable, resilient and inclusive societies. The PBF has been acknowledged for its priority windows such as cross-border programming, transitions and women and youth empowerment (through the Gender and Youth Promotion Initiative) to support a wide spectrum of stakeholders, including civil society organizations. The PBC has been recognized as the platform for including a range of partners in support of peacebuilding and sustaining peace by mobilizing relevant stakeholders, including during the PBC Annual Session.

(d) an assessment of the situation regarding the principle of “ensuring that no one is left behind” at the global, regional and national levels;

In addition to the rise in conflicts, increasing inequality may be a major obstacle to inclusive and sustainable development at the global, regional and national level—particularly if these inequalities systematically put segments of society at a disadvantage. Addressing inequalities is not only important for economic growth, development and progress on the SDGs, but also for promoting peace and stability.

The High-Level Meeting on Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace on 24 and 25 April 2018 assessed efforts undertaken and opportunities to strengthen the United Nations' work on peacebuilding and sustaining peace. Among other things, several delegations noted the complementarity of peacebuilding and sustaining peace and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, both of which note the importance of inclusivity. “Leaving no one behind” requires a particular focus on countries in conflict and post-conflict situations because a significant and increasing share of the extreme poor are living in such countries. This requires not only addressing the root causes of conflict and promoting the foundations of peace, but also ensuring that progress on the SDGs is inclusive, extending to marginalized, excluded and difficult-to-reach populations.

During the High-Level Meeting on Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace, the General Assembly and the Security Council adopted resolutions confirming the intention to further discuss the recommendations and options contained in the 2018 Report of the Secretary-General and asked the Secretary-General to provide two further reports related to peacebuilding and sustaining peace issues (A/RES/72/276 and S/RES/2413 (2018)); an interim report during the 73<sup>rd</sup> session and a full report during the 74<sup>th</sup> session.

(e) areas where political guidance by the high-level political forum is required;

The resolutions on the review of the peacebuilding architecture gave renewed impetus to the United Nations assistance on peacebuilding and sustaining peace to conflict-affected countries in accordance with their priorities. The resolutions also reaffirm the importance of national ownership and leadership in peacebuilding, whereby the responsibility for peacebuilding and sustaining peace is broadly shared by the Government and all other national stakeholders. They also note “that development is a central goal in itself and recognizes the important contributions of the United Nations development system to peacebuilding” and stress “the need to continue strengthening cooperation and coordination for that purpose in the field through United Nations Country Teams and at United Nations Headquarters, in accordance with their respective mandates, and with respect for national ownership and priorities of countries-affected by conflict...”

ECOSOC and the PBC have held a number of joint meetings since June 2016. Most notably, in January 2017, a high-level dialogue brought together the Secretary-General, the President of the General Assembly, the President of the

Security Council, the President of the Economic and Social Council, and the Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission for the first time to promote coordination and coherence across peace and development efforts. The most recent joint meeting between ECOSOC and PBC was held in November 2018, and focused on linkages between climate change and peacebuilding and sustaining peace in the Sahel. During the meeting, participants discussed the possible adverse effects of climate change on the stability of the Sahel region. Such efforts follow the recommendations set forth by the Secretary-General (A/70/684, 15 January 2016, para. 44), who noted that “the Economic and Social Council could strengthen its interaction with the Peacebuilding Commission and utilize its operational or humanitarian segments to review development, peace and humanitarian issues as a nexus, thus addressing related aspects of the 2030 Agenda.” In turn, the resolutions on the review of the peacebuilding architecture (A/RES/70/262 and S/RES/2282 (2016)) stress “the importance of closer cooperation between the Economic and Social Council and Peacebuilding Commission, in accordance with their respective mandates, including through enhanced dialogue in support of promoting coherence and complementarity between the United Nations’ peace and security efforts and its development, human rights and humanitarian work, and encourages the Peacebuilding Commission to draw on the expertise of relevant Economic and Social Council subsidiary bodies, as appropriate.” Noting the importance of intergovernmental coherence for the purpose of peacebuilding and sustaining peace, the Secretary-General’s report (A/72/707–S/2018/43) stressed that “coherence and complementarity among the principal organs of the United Nations, including the governing bodies of United Nations entities, are critical. The role of the Economic and Social Council in the oversight of operational activities for development, development cooperation and humanitarian assistance and its overall coordination of the United Nations development system complement the valuable work of the Security Council and the Peacebuilding Commission (A/72/707–S/2018/43, para 12).”

The PBC stands ready to continue to advance its dialogue with ECOSOC with a view to further strengthening their collaboration.

(f) policy recommendations on ways to accelerate progress in inclusiveness and equality, and achieving SDGs;

A number of policy recommendations follow from the above: (a) in order to leave no one behind and focus on those furthest behind, the international community should scale up efforts to assist those countries in need in addressing the root causes of conflict and promoting the foundations of peace, with full respect to the sovereignty of the countries and national ownership; (b) for the UN to support Member States in peacebuilding and sustaining peace requires working together across the UN system and beyond silos with full respect to the mandates of relevant UN bodies and entities bearing also in mind the importance of the 2030 Agenda; (c) to explore financing

options for peacebuilding and sustaining peace activities; (d) emphasis should be placed on longer-term development of institutions and capacities even if they are harder to quantify; and (e) a focus on inclusivity is required for sustainable development and peace. To this end, the PBC can play a role in close collaboration with other relevant stakeholders.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Guillermo Fernández de Soto  
Chairperson  
Peacebuilding Commission