

**Peacebuilding Commission**  
**Informal Meeting on the ongoing reform processes**  
**in the United Nations**

**28 September 2017**

**Chairperson's Summary of the Discussion**

1. On 28 September 2017, the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) convened an informal meeting to hear a briefing by the Secretary-General on the ongoing reform processes in the United Nations on peace and security, development system and management, and how these relate to the resolutions on the review of the peacebuilding architecture. The meeting was chaired by H.E. Mr. Cho Tae-yul, Chair of the PBC.
2. The Chair opened the meeting by thanking the Secretary-General for accepting to brief the PBC, and recalled that the resolutions on the review of the peacebuilding architecture, adopted in April 2016, demonstrated the commitment of Member States towards a more efficient UN system, which can better support conflict-affected countries from prevention to development. He also stated that the resolutions addressed a number of important issues, including strengthening operational and policy coherence within the UN system; improving UN capacity and accountability in Headquarters and the field; strengthening partnerships among the UN, Member States and key stakeholders; improving mission transitions; and supporting equal participation of women and engagement of youth for the benefit of peacebuilding efforts.
3. The Chair noted that the resolutions also reaffirmed the centrality of the PBC. In this connection, the Commission has been undertaking important work to implement the resolutions over the past 18 months by strengthening its bridging capacities among the relevant stakeholders within and outside the UN system, while reviewing its working methods to enhance its efficiency and flexibility in support of peacebuilding and sustaining peace.
4. The Secretary-General began by stating that the overarching goal of the ongoing reform processes was to address the fragmentation across the United Nations system both at Headquarters and the field. He recognized the work carried out by the PBC, which plays an advisory role to the Security Council and the General Assembly, in reducing fragmentation by playing a bridging role between the peace and security and development pillars. He stated that this was a source of inspiration for the current reform efforts.
5. To support the Commission play a more important role, the Secretary-General mentioned that he would try to strengthen and reorganize the support provided to the PBC. As the PBC would be an important bridge for the intergovernmental bodies, he would like the PBSO to also be a “hinge” between the peace and security pillar and the development pillar, and the PBSO should assume a more central role. In this regard, the ASG for Peacebuilding represented in the coordination mechanisms of the United Nations Development Group, Joint Steering Committee for Development and Humanitarian

Coordination, and in the Secretary-General's Executive Committee. He hoped that the capacity of PBSO would be bolstered for this reason.

6. The Secretary-General suggested that the reforms would bring more coherence through the combination of the regional divisions of DPA and DPKO into a single political-operational structure to be shared by the new Departments of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and of Peace Operations.
7. The Secretary-General recognized that synergies between sustaining peace and the 2030 Agenda needed to be further clarified and underscored that development was central and an objective in its own right. Development was probably the most important element for prevention and sustaining peace, but it was at the same time much more than that. We should not transform development into a peace and security instrument, but recognize the role development plays in prevention. Consequently, while it was important to recognize that sustainable development builds resilience and sustains peace, funds should not be diverted from development to security.
8. The Secretary-General highlighted the critical importance of decentralization, particularly in connection with decision-making in the field, as well as more effective management practices that will lead to eliminating bureaucratic constraints and, in turn, better support to the activities on the ground. Better coordination of agencies in the field, through enhanced UN Country Teams (UNCTs) was essential. There were good examples of the UN delivering as one in the field, but these needed to be strengthened and expanded.
9. The Secretary-General stressed the importance of providing more funds to the Peacebuilding Fund that, in view of its catalytic role and quick response, should be much-strengthened in the context of the reforms. The PBF was the "lubricant" to make the "hinge" between the peace and security pillar and the development system work. The PBC had a role to make the PBF more powerful. The Secretary-General stated he wished to appeal to Member States to contribute to the Fund, which required a "quantum leap" in support. This should include consideration of the option of assessed contributions.
10. Member States welcomed the briefing of the Secretary-General and expressed broad support for his reform processes. In their interventions, Member States highlighted the following issues:
  - The new structure of the new peace and security architecture was a positive measure, but it would be important to focus on how the "mechanics" will work, including ways the quality of analysis will be improved. A change of structure would not be enough if not accompanied by a change of culture.
  - The PBC is a central actor in the United Nations system and, through its bridging role and convening power, it has an important role in the implementation of the review processes, including by promoting the required change of culture. The Commission needs to be further strengthened. This, in turn, would require enhanced support from the Secretariat, including both PBSO and the future shared political-operational structure focused on regional strategy, analysis and operations.

- The PBF is playing a critical role and synergies with the PBC should be further strengthened. The Secretary-General should continue his outreach efforts to showcase the work of the Fund in order to increase contributions. Other options to ensure sustainability of the Fund should also be considered. Donors are guilty of picking favorites, contributing to fragmentation. Instead they should support integrated approaches.
- PBSO must be revitalized in order to provide the required support to a more dynamic PBC. It would be important to further clarify how the “hinge” works, how PBSO would have ready access to analysis and information required by the PBC, how the office would be able to work with UNCTs, Peace and Development Advisers, peacekeeping operations, and Special Political Missions. It would also be important that peacebuilding and sustaining peace are not translated only into preventive diplomacy.
- Peacekeeping operations often last too long, and the transition phase to UNCTs is not planned in a coherent and effective way. It would be important to ensure that overarching political strategies drive the missions.
- The gap between policy setting in New York and operational implementation in the field must be addressed. The PBC can help foster coherence in this respect by making use of its linkage with the development system and the agencies, Funds and Programmes, which are more often than not the actors making the difference on the ground.
- Development is a priority and funds to development should not be redirected to other pillars.
- The questions related to the funding of Special Political Missions should be addressed, as has long been suggested.
- More effective work to sustain peace on the ground must include early warning mechanisms.
- The Secretary-General should consider briefing the PBC on a regular basis.

11. The Secretary-General responded to the comments and questions from Members of the PBC and stressed the following points:

- The PBC, being an advisory body to both the General Assembly and the Security Council, has an important role to play in bridging and enhancing coherence among these two bodies. A strengthened PBC would reinforce the change in the way business is conducted in the Secretariat.
- Operating within a pillar, PBSO will have a key role to enhance coherence with the other pillars. This would be ensured by the participation of the ASG for Peacebuilding in the coordination mechanisms of the United Nations Development Group, Joint Steering Committee for Development and

Humanitarian Coordination, and the Executive Committee. This would also ensure a stronger link with the field, particularly with the Resident Coordinators. In this connection, the PBF will be crucial to further strengthen coherence.

- PBSO would not become part of the current DPA but a newly established Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, which would change “the way we do business”. Within the new department, PBSO would have a central role and play the role of a “hinge” to the other pillars. Overall, this would empower and strengthen PBSO, which should also have its capacities reinforced.
- There should be stronger interaction, an organic alignment, between PBC and PBF, while respecting the necessary firewall in decision-making. The Commission should also help make the success stories of the PBF better known. There was an overall communications deficit that the United Nations needed to address.
- Peacekeeping operations are often deployed without the appropriate conditions on the ground. In the future, PKOs should have clear mandates and be deployed in situations where there is peace to keep.
- Early warning is important but information was not usually the challenge; the challenge was to ensure coherent and early action by the UN system.
- The Secretary-General is committed to securing broad support of all Member States on his reforms.

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