

General Assembly debate on the PBC and PBF annual reports

24 May 2018

Statement of the former Chair of the PBC

Mr. President,

Excellencies,

I am pleased to be here today, in my capacity as former Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission, to present the annual report of the Peacebuilding Commission on its eleventh session, as contained in document A/72/721-S/2018/83.

The eleventh session marked another important year for the Peacebuilding Commission. In implementing the twin resolutions on the review of the peacebuilding architecture that were adopted in 2016, the Commission undertook a number of activities to assist relevant countries and regions with their peacebuilding priorities and to enhance coherence in the UN.

I wish to focus on three priority areas that marked the work of the PBC in 2017.

First, the advisory and bridging role of the PBC.

The Commission continued to make efforts to improve the quality of advice to enrich the deliberations of its parent bodies, the General Assembly and Security Council, while strengthening its bridging role among the intergovernmental bodies to pursue a coherent, integrated approach to building and sustaining peace.

As a result, the interaction and dynamics between the PBC and the Security Council, in particular, are becoming more active, especially with respect to country-specific situations on the agenda of both bodies, such as Burundi, Liberia, Central African Republic (CAR) and Guinea Bissau. The Commission, at the request of the Security Council, also discussed the Sahel region by using its convening role to assist, as appropriate, the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS) in mobilizing relevant stakeholders with the view to advance the implementation of the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel (UNISS). At the same time, an Informal Interactive Dialogue (IID) was held between the Council and the Commission last June to discuss regional peacebuilding challenges in the Sahel and Lake Chad Basin, with the consent of all states of the region.

The Commission also held a joint meeting with ECOSOC last June to focus on the social and economic dimensions of the Sahel. The PBC will continue to engage on the Sahel this year, including at the PBC Annual Session this coming June.

We should continue to deliberate how the Commission can work better with the relevant intergovernmental bodies to bring about a coherent, integrated approach to building and sustaining peace.

Second, partnerships.

Today, many actors, including international financial institutions and the private sector, with the financial resources, technology and expertise are increasingly showing interest in working with the UN, and the UN should take advantage of this change. As Secretary-General Guterres said, the world already has the resources to deliver the 2030 Agenda. The only question is how to connect the dots. The UN, which has a brand like no other, is best poised to convene these different actors..

In this regard, the key value of the PBC rests in its convening role, and the Commission continued to strengthen its partnerships with key stakeholders. For instance, in June last year, I led a delegation of PBC Members to Washington where we met with the leadership of the World Bank, including the President, Vice-Presidents and members of the Executive Board. At the meeting, we discussed ways to enhance our collaboration to better assist the countries and regions considered by the PBC and to promote an institutional partnership between the Commission and the Bank. That partnership was further strengthened during the PBC Annual Session held later that month, when the Commission and the Bank issued a joint statement to hold a dialogue on an annual basis between the Members of PBC and senior representatives of the World Bank, including members of its Executive Board. We should make use of these annual meetings with the Bank to help mobilize resources for the countries supported by the PBC.

In December, building on the good work of my predecessor, Ambassador Kamau, former Permanent Representative of Kenya, I led a delegation of the Commission to Addis Ababa to discuss ways to reinforce the cooperation between the Commission and the African Union. The PBC should continue to take advantage of the growing momentum to strengthen the partnership between the UN and the AU to better assist the countries considered by the Commission.

The Commission's Annual Session in June focused on ways to enhance the partnerships for financing for peace with a range of stakeholders. The participants recognized that adequate financing for peacebuilding and sustaining peace needs stronger partnerships and alignment of financial flows. In this connection, the Secretary-General's call for a quantum leap in support of the PBF deserves the serious consideration by the Commission as an instrument to support nationally-owned peacebuilding processes, but also a driver of coherence for UN activities.

Third, the flexibility of the PBC.

Since the adoption of the resolutions on the review of the peacebuilding architecture, the Commission has been improving its working methods to become more efficient and flexible and to promote the idea of a 'one PBC'.

Going beyond the good work in its existing country-specific configurations on Burundi, Central African Republic (CAR), Liberia, Guinea Bissau and Sierra Leone, the Commission expanded its work by considering in the Organizational Committee other countries, upon their request, and regions. , .

Most notably, the PBC has been assisting The Gambia at its critical time of political transition by sustaining international attention on the country after the Security Council stopped its deliberations on the situation. As Chair of the PBC, I visited The Gambia in March of last year, together with the Assistance Secretary-General of PBSO and the Permanent Representative of The Gambia, and followed up on this visit by convening several meetings on The Gambia with the relevant partners.

In addition, the Commission for the first time deliberated the situations in the Solomon Islands, Colombia and Sri Lanka at their request. The meetings illustrated how countries eligible for the PBF can use the PBC as a platform to secure global political support for their peacebuilding priorities, with the countries firmly in the driver's seat. They also contributed to creating synergies between the PBF and PBC that PBC Members have been calling for.

Such efforts by the Commission to diversify the regions for discussion in addition to Africa has been contributing to raising global awareness of the importance of building and sustaining peace.

In this regard, the Republic of Korea, as Chair of the PBC, also organized the Asian conference on peacebuilding and sustaining peace in Seoul in November last year. The conference served as a good opportunity to raise awareness on peacebuilding and sustaining peace in Asia and to explore opportunities for partnerships between the PBC and relevant actors in Asia.

And finally, the Commission held discussions on thematic issues, such as gender, youth, financing, institution-building and national ownerships, that were championed by the interested Members. We should continue to explore ways for the PBC Members to actively engage in the work of the PBC, especially in providing more practical and tangible support to the countries supported by the Commission.

All in all, the PBC convened discussions on a range of themes, countries and regions last year. Two messages emerged from this. First, building and sustaining peace is important to achieve sustainable development and longer term stability. Second, each country's historical, cultural and socio-economic context may be unique, but the experiences and lessons learned from one country's experience can be relevant to others. Therefore, providing a space where Member States can learn from each other's experiences is another important way the Commission can support countries in their efforts to build and sustain peace.

Mr. President,

While chairing the PBC last year, I was greatly encouraged and heartened by the strong moral and political support offered to the countries considered by the PBC by its Members. In my view, this is one of the greatest added values that the Commission can offer to the countries that are undergoing transitions. And I hope that in the coming years, the Commission can continue to provide this assistance, while identifying and implementing practical ways to help these countries achieve their peacebuilding priorities.

Let me conclude by congratulating Ambassador Jinga, Permanent Representative of Romania, current Chair of the PBC, for the excellent work done so far, and by thanking the Peacebuilding Support Office for its dedicated support to the Commission.

As the Vice-Chair of the Commission this year, together with Germany, I will remain committed to further strengthening the Commission.

I thank you.