

PBC Chair's Remarks

Aswan Forum: Sustaining Peace through Effective Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development

4 March 2021

Remarks

- I would like to thank the Aswan Forum organizers for convening this timely discussion. I am pleased to address this session as the Chair of the United Nations Peacebuilding Commission and reiterate the continuing commitment and engagement of the Commission in support of peacebuilding and sustaining peace in Africa.
- The first edition of the Aswan Forum held in 2019 underscored the imperative of a “paradigm shift” from crisis management to sustainable peace and development and emphasized that the existing normative and legal frameworks at Africa’s disposal are adequate to advance this “paradigm shift”, the primary challenge lies in the operationalization of these frameworks. The Forum also recognised not only the multiple and complex threats and challenges to peace, security and development in Africa, but their unprecedented frequency and magnitude.
- Today, we face the extraordinary effects of the Covid-19 pandemic, which have exposed the weaknesses of our health structures and mechanisms.
- Covid-19 has in some situations compounded already dire humanitarian situations, destroyed livelihoods, exacerbated inequalities, threatened social cohesion, undermined efforts aiming at women’s empowerment, and tested fragile health care systems, strained the capacity of governments to deliver basic services. The socioeconomic impact of the pandemic on people in vulnerable situations is a particular concern.
- The pandemic therefore makes it more important than ever to promote global solidarity and partnerships in support of effective, coherent and multidimensional peacebuilding responses.
- In 2020, 12 out of the 15 country and region-specific contexts where the PBC engaged were in Africa. In all its engagements, the PBC was nimble and quickly adjusted its programme of work to support national and regional responses to the pandemic.
- In this context, I would like to centre my intervention in the following three messages:
 - First, we need to ensure an impact-oriented international peacebuilding support tailored to the national and local needs

- Second, we need to secure adequate, predictable and sustained financing for peacebuilding; and
- Third, the Peacebuilding Commission, through its advisory, bridging and convening roles, can play an important role in Africa's efforts towards sustainable development and lasting peace.
- **Firstly, we need to** ensure an impact-oriented international peacebuilding support tailored to the national and local needs.
- Respecting national ownership and leadership, the PBC works and talks with countries, not to them. It is only with the consent of the relevant country that the PBC initiates an engagement and coordinates political support that is context-specific.
- The twin resolutions of December 2020 underscored the principle of national ownership and emphasised that inclusivity is key to advancing national peacebuilding processes. Recognizing the importance of the full, equal and meaningful participation of women and youth in peacebuilding, the PBC has recently adopted action strategies to strengthen its implementation of the women, peace and security and youth, peace and security agendas.
- It is in this context that the PBC has today multiple *demand-driven and flexible engagements* with countries and regions outside the
- set-up of the current four country configurations [on Burundi, the Central African Republic, Guinea-Bissau and Liberia].
- The PBC is also a platform that listens to, learns from, the voices and work of local peacebuilding stakeholders, including from civil society. It also serves as a *platform to forge solidarity and share good practices and experiences*, including through its engagement on thematic and cross-cutting issues such as women, peace and security; youth, peace and security; the impact of COVID-19 on peacebuilding; financing for peacebuilding; and the crucial role of institution building. In every country and region where the PBC is engaged, we have heard remarkable stories that testify to the resilience of communities, the role of civil society, and the innovation of the private sector.
- The PBC plays an important role to facilitate and scale up the UN system-wide support for conflict-affected countries by strengthening institutions, systems and processes of governance as part of broader peacebuilding initiatives.

- Given the influence of regional context on national peacebuilding efforts, the Commission has increasingly coordinated efforts to *tackle critical cross-border peacebuilding challenges*.
- **Secondly, we need to secure adequate, predictable and sustained financing for peacebuilding.**
- The 2020 twin resolutions have recognized the issue of financing as the most critical challenge facing the UN Peacebuilding Architecture. Therefore, we should spare no effort in helping secure adequate, predictable and sustained financing for peace and development, including through the UN Peacebuilding Fund.
- The Catalytic role of the Peacebuilding Fund is key to supporting peacebuilding efforts. In this regard, I commend the commitment of Member States demonstrated in the high-level Replenishment Conference for the Peacebuilding Fund held on 26 January, including of low and middle-income countries.
- To operationalize the 2020 twin resolutions, we will convene relevant stakeholders in the PBC to generate inputs and action-oriented recommendations to feed into the High-Level General Assembly Conference to be held in the 76th Session.
- **My third and final point relates to the advisory and bridging roles played by the Peacebuilding Commission to build partnerships and mobilise resources.**
- The Peacebuilding Commission is unique in serving as a bridge and connector in advancing the international community's broad peace agenda through strategic advice and briefings to the Security Council, General Assembly and ECOSOC and helping to overcome the current limitations *dealing with the complex set of challenges*.
- We should do more in strengthening the PBC's cooperation with the Security Council, as well as in exploring avenues to do the same with the General Assembly and ECOSOC. In this regard, I am pleased to underline that the PBC will advise the GA on "Causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa". We believe that this agenda item is one of the underutilized tools, which can forge a common understanding and analysis of causes of conflicts in Africa, and better inform peacebuilding efforts.
- In addition to coordinating coherent UN system support, the PBC has to continue to expand and strengthen *partnerships*, particularly with the African Union, the Regional Economic

Communities and Regional Mechanisms as well as International Financial Institutions with a view to ensuring more efficiency and coherence in support of peacebuilding efforts.

- It is also worth noting that strengthened *synergies between the PBC and the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF)* have been critical to supporting peacebuilding efforts.
- In conclusion, as we address the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, scale up efforts to build and sustain peace across Africa, and build a stronger and more resilient recovery, the Peacebuilding Commission will remain a valuable partner at Africa's disposal.
- As an African Chairpersonship of the PBC, Egypt remains fully committed to ensure that the UN peacebuilding architecture's engagement in support of peacebuilding and sustaining peace in Africa will continue to receive the requisite attention.

- Thank you, Chair.