

**Remarks by the Chair of the PBC
at the Organizational Committee
31 January 2018, 10:00 am**

- The last one year was a very special and rewarding year for me personally: Special because I was given the honor to serve as the Chair of the PBC working together with such distinguished colleagues as Ambassador Kamau of Kenya and Ambassador Gomez-Camacho of Mexico as Vice-Chairs, as well as Ambassador Lauber of Switzerland, Ambassador Hilale of Morocco, Ambassador Vieira of Brazil, Ambassador Skoog of Sweden, and Ambassador Blanchard of Canada as Chairs of the five country specific configurations; Rewarding because I was able to make small contributions to moving the Commission towards a body that is more visible, relevant and effective in the peacebuilding architecture of the United Nations, working closely together with ASG Oscar Fernandez-Taranco of PBSO and his staff. Without their full cooperation and commitment, the small achievements I made as the Chair would not have been possible and I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the entire team in PBSO for their dedicated support to me. I also wish to thank all the members of the Commission for your strong support and encouragement in fulfilling my duties as the Chair.
- The progress made in the work of the Commission last year was also possible because I took over the chairmanship at the most opportune time for reinvigorating the role of the Commission mainly thanks to the political momentum created by the twin resolutions on the review of the peacebuilding architecture in 2016 and the strong commitment of Secretary-General Guterres towards prevention and sustaining peace. Building upon the progress made under the leadership of my predecessors, the Commission continued to work hard to take advantage of the window of opportunity provided by this newly created momentum.
- Let me highlight some of the achievements made last year, and share with you some of my thoughts on how to build on this progress to further strengthen the Commission in the coming years.

- First, in addition to the good work of the existing country specific configurations on Burundi, Central African Republic, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, and Sierra Leone, the Commission continued to expand its work by considering other countries and regions in the Organizational Committee.
- Most notably, the PBC started to assist The Gambia in its critical time of transition by sustaining international attention on the country after the Security Council stopped deliberations on its situation.
- The Commission also discussed the situation in the Solomon Islands, Colombia and Sri Lanka at their request, which contributed to increasing the synergies between the PBC and PBF. 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 those countries firmly in the driver's seat.
- The PBC also continued to take on a regional approach by discussing the Sahel, Lake Chad Basin and the Great Lakes. Making specific progress on the Sahel this year, I believe, is particularly important to enhance the credibility of the Commission as an advisory body to the Security Council, because the Commission took up this regional issue at the request of the Council.
- During these meetings, it was encouraging and heartwarming to see the moral and political support offered to the countries by the members of the Commission. In my view, this is one of the added values unique to this body that can encourage other countries to engage more with the Peacebuilding Commission.
- It would be critical that these engagements do not end with one-off meetings. Rather, in the coming years, we should focus our efforts on identifying and implementing practical ways to help these countries in achieving their peacebuilding priorities. This to me is the greatest task of the Commission if it is to play its envisioned role.
- Second, the Peacebuilding Commission continued to strengthen its partnerships with stakeholders within and outside the United Nations.

- Most notably, the Commission agreed with the World Bank to hold annual meetings on the countries supported by the PBC. In fact, when we met with the President, senior officials and Executive Directors of the World Bank in Washington last June, I was very encouraged to see the Bank's strong interest in the Commission's work. I believe the participation of Mme. Kristalina Georgieva, CEO of the Bank, at the PBC Annual Session in June attests to this interest. We should seize upon this opportunity, especially the annual meetings with the Bank, to help mobilize resources for the countries supported by the PBC. Building partnership with the African Development Bank is another remaining task of the Commission in this regard.
- As for the partnership with regional organizations, building on the work of my predecessor, Ambassador Kamau, I visited the AU last December together with the Ambassador himself and other PBC Ambassadors. I was impressed by the seriousness with which the AU engaged in the discussions with us during the visit. We agreed to hold an expert level meeting this year to explore concrete areas of cooperation between the two bodies.
- The Commission also started to explore ways to engage with the private sector, starting with the preliminary contacts with the representatives of the Global Compact last December to see how we can work together for peacebuilding. The focal points for financing, Norway and Indonesia, also took the initiative to help convene an expert level meeting on this subject. And we should build on these efforts throughout this year. In fact, during the Asian Conference on Peacebuilding, convened by Korea, PBSO and the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation in Seoul in November last year, several Asian countries, including Korea, emphasized that engaging with their domestic private sector and strengthening the public-private partnership (PPP) was key for economic growth, and in turn building and sustaining peace.
- We should continue to strengthen these partnerships, including with the civil society, and thereby reinforce the convening role of the Commission and enhance the quality of its service to its parent bodies.

- Within the United Nations, the interaction between the PBC and the Security Council in particular has been improving. Last year, the Council asked the Commission to advise on a number of regional and country-specific issues including, among others, the Sahel and the Great Lakes as well as Liberia and Burundi. In order to continuously improve the perception of the PBC within the UN, the Commission should continue to mobilize relevant stakeholders and provide quality advice to its parent bodies.
- Towards this end, the Commission also held a joint meeting with ECOSOC in June to address the social and economic dimensions of the challenges of the Sahel. We should continue to deliberate on how to better work with these bodies to bring about a cross-pillar, coherent, and integrated approach to peacebuilding.
- Third, the Commission further diversified its working methods last year.
- In addition to the regular bureau meetings with the two Vice-Chairs last year, the Chairs of the country specific configurations briefed the Organizational Committee on a quarterly basis with a view to promoting the idea of a 'one PBC'. PBSO also regularly briefed the PBC on the activities of the PBF, helping to enhance their synergies.
- The Commission also appointed focal points on thematic issues such as gender, youth, financing, institution-building and national ownership. We should continue to explore ways for all members to actively engage in the work of the PBC, especially in the countries supported by the Commission. In my view, the PBC's convening role should not necessarily be confined to holding meetings only. PBC members can consider more practical ways to support the countries, which may include regular visits to, or exchange of visits with, international financial institutions to advocate for mobilizing resources, engaging with potential bilateral and multilateral donors, and connecting relevant stakeholders in areas of interest to the countries concerned , among others.

- And for all of this to happen, we should continue to strengthen the capacity of PBSO so that it can better support the PBC. When the Secretary-General briefed the PBC last year for the first time in nine years, he mentioned that the PBC's mandate was the source of his inspiration for his vision of the UN reform, and expressed his commitment to strengthen the Commission as well as the hinge role of PBSO. I hope we will continue to support the Secretary General's vision and leadership to this end.
- As Vice-Chair of the Commission for this year, together with my German colleague, I will remain committed to further strengthening the Commission by supporting the incoming Chair, Ambassador Jinga of Romania.
- Expressing once again my wholehearted congratulations to you, Ambassador Jinga, I now invite you to assume the Chair.