

**Peacebuilding Commission**  
**Informal meeting of the Organizational Committee**  
**30 March 2011**

**Chairperson's Summary of the Discussion**

**Background**

On 30 March 2011, the Organizational Committee of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) convened an [informal] meeting. The Vice-Chair of the PBC presided over the meeting. The agenda for the meeting included the following items: (1) Briefing by the Chair of the Advisory Group of the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF); and (2) other matters.

**1. Briefing by the Chair of the Peacebuilding Fund Advisory Group**

The Chair of the Peacebuilding Fund Advisory Group, Mr. Dan Smith, opened his remarks by stating that the Advisory Group strongly believes in the key role the PBF has to play in supporting peacebuilding processes, and the specific niche it occupies. Progress made by the PBF to date is encouraging. The Advisory Group noted the stable and committed leadership of PBSO and its positive influence. The Advisory Group noted the positive rating of PBF by DFID's rigorous Multi-lateral Aid Review process, as well as areas for continued attention (results focus, reporting and transparency).

However, without strong action to ensure a solid financial basis, the Fund will face a funding deficit in 2013. The Advisory Group therefore hopes that future funding can be made available for the PBF, so that it can be sustainable in its efforts, build a body of experience and take forward lessons learnt. The Chair urged that action to avoid the future deficit should be initiated in 2011 and 2012.

Mr. Smith further briefed the members of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) on the outcomes of the seventh meeting of the PBF Advisory Group, held on 29 and 30 March 2011.

- Much work has been carried out to improve the work of the Fund on all levels. A Business Plan was developed which includes a Performance Management Plan (PMP) and the intention to focus its efforts on a maximum of 20 countries. The Advisory Group received a presentation on the PMP and advised PBSO to proceed with the roll out of the Plan, with amendments to be made along the way through a structured review process. The Chair cautioned that as the Peacebuilding Fund is different from a regular development Fund – largely because of its willingness to support risk-taking and because of the political nature of peacebuilding – it needs to be judged differently. The PMP is therefore a good start, but also an experiment.
- The Chair observed that the Fund “now operates in an evaluation rich mode”. The Advisory Group commends the willingness of the Fund to be transparent, by conducting independent evaluations on both country level and cross-cutting

thematic reviews. The Advisory Group received a presentation of the independent evaluation of the PBF projects in Sierra Leone, which found that the overall impact of the PBF in Sierra Leone was positive and identifiable. Considering the fact that Sierra Leone was one of the first recipients of the Fund, without institutional history and learning on how to undertake this area of work, this is surprisingly good. The Chair added that in any country it can be expected that some projects will be less successful in meeting their objectives, considering the politically volatile environment in which peacebuilding activities are conducted.

- The Advisory Group received a briefing by a number of recipient agencies on activities funded by the PBF. Whilst noting some challenges encountered due to such issues as delay in fund disbursement, recipient agencies cited various examples of how the Fund had been catalytic in financial terms and in unblocking a stalled process or kick starting a larger peacebuilding effort.
- The Chair pointed to the Advisory Group's recurring emphasis on the need for the PBF to be flexible, innovative and risk tolerant. In its previous meeting, the Advisory Group had discussed countries that had expressed interest in PBF support, but were considered less characteristic cases for PBF support – specifically, Guatemala and Lebanon. The Advisory Group was briefed on the decisions taken by the Fund with regard to both countries, and deemed these decisions fully justified. For example in the case of Guatemala, it was clear that there were aspects of the peace accords that were still not addressed, even many years later. At this meeting, the Advisory group received a follow-up briefing on how the decisions had been implemented; in the case of both countries, the Advisory group found the action taken appropriate and commendable.
- The Chair reported that the Advisory Group also discussed the question of how the PBF can assist in South Sudan, and advised that in line with the founding objectives of the Fund to be risk-tolerant, rapid and flexible, that the PBF pursue possibilities rapidly, even in advance of formal independence.
- With regard to synergy between the work of the PBC and the PBF, the Chair noted that interaction between both institutions is increasingly regularized. This interaction should be reflected at the country level. The Advisory Group considers the expanded priority plan, which is being developed for Liberia, an interesting path to explore. It is likely that the expanded priority plan could be a model for other countries, but should not become a blue print. It is essential to remain flexible and context specific.
- PBSO presented the Advisory Group with a new initiative to increase PBF funding to projects that advance gender equality, promote women's empowerment and address women's needs, within its PRF arrangements, through the use of a competitive selection procedure. The Advisory Group endorsed the idea and commends PBSO in its efforts of finding innovative ways to meet the 15% funding

target called for by the Secretary General in his Report on Women's Participation in Peacebuilding.

- The Chair concluded by pointing out that it would be paradoxical if, after all these efforts, the Fund would have to slow down due to a shortage of funds.
- The Assistant-Secretary General for Peacebuilding Support noted the value of briefings of the Chair of PBF Advisory Group to the PBC, and recommended that this be continued.
- Interventions by member states revolved around the strategic positioning of the Fund. Guatemala noted that the UN has a comparative advantage when it concerns peacebuilding. The fact that the UN has its own small but importance leverage through the PBF, gives it an important voice and better seat at the table in discussions with International Financial Institutions. Norway noted that the current development aid landscape is characterized by both an increased focus on result measurement and simultaneously the need for more risk taking, and inquired how the PBF intends to respond to these seemingly contradictory trends. Norway also asked how to ensure financial stability when donors tend to support annually. Japan pointed out that the PBF should be used strategically and commended the approach taken in Liberia through the expanded priority plan, which will guide the PBC in its fundraising role. Japan also noted that the Working Group on Lessons Learned is also looking at resource mobilization at its meeting scheduled for 6 April 2011. Egypt agreed with the approach the PBF has taken for Liberia and South Sudan, noting that engagement in South Sudan will require a formal request from the Sudanese government until formal independence. It furthermore inquired how impact of PBF support is evaluated through the PMP, and how the PBF could be used as a tool to encourage countries to enter the agenda of the PBC, within the understanding that the PBF is managed by the Secretary General.
- In response, the Chair pointed out that the Advisory Group has observed a number of improvements made by the PBF. The PMP of the PBF is based on an evaluation structure through which country level results feed into a global level framework. In response to Egypt's inquiry, he noted that both Liberia and Guinea had enjoyed funding from the PBF before requesting to be on the agenda of the PBC and observed a number of potential incentives for countries to enter on the agenda of the Commission.
- Concerning the PBC, the Chair noted that the motivation for a country to join may be summarized in three points: 1) increased funding from PBF, 2) higher political profile internationally and the receipt of strategic advice on peacebuilding, and 3) the combination of the first two should result in increased (financial) support.

- Concerning Norway’s interventions, the Chair noted that although actual financial commitments often come annually, there are ways to signal politically multi-year commitments.<sup>1</sup>
- The Chair concluded by noting that whilst the UN has indeed a certain comparative advantage when it concerns supporting national peacebuilding efforts, it also has some disadvantages. Whilst the UN is present almost everywhere, it might not always be so with the right capacities and skill sets at its disposal. The PBF can address this comparative disadvantage. As the Fund is not operational, it needs partners. Because of this reliance on partners, care should be taken when analyzing flaws that deficiencies of the system are not laid at the Fund’s door. The Fund hence works jointly with the UN in shaping the quality and efficiency of its peacebuilding work. The PBF should hence be seen as an opportunity to improve the system’s peacebuilding work as a whole.

## **2. Other matters**

There were no other matters raised by the Chairperson or other members of the Committee.

---

<sup>1</sup> The PBF benefits from several formal multi-year commitments, including Australia, Canada, China, Japan (their contribution was “for at least two years”) and the UK. Other countries have indicated informally or through practice annual commitments, including Finland, Luxembourg, Spain, Sweden and Turkey.