

Peacebuilding Commission
Informal meeting of the Organizational Committee
17 December 2014

Chairperson's Summary of the Discussion

Background

On 17 December 2014, the Organizational Committee of the Peacebuilding Commission convened an informal meeting. The meeting was chaired by the Permanent Representative of Brazil, Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission, and addressed the following agenda items: (1) Informal adoption of the PBC report on its eighth session; (2) Briefing by the Chair on the visit to Cairo and Addis Ababa (24 to 26 November); (3) Outcome of the work of the Working Group on Lessons Learned in 2014: Presentation by the Chair of the WGLL; (4) Other matters.

Informal adoption of the PBC report on its eighth session

1. The Chairperson presented to the Member States the draft report of the Peacebuilding Commission on its eighth session. He noted that the Report reflects the range of policy and country-specific works which the PBC has undertaken throughout the year. In particular, he referred to the preparation for and the convening of the first annual session on 23 June; the successful consultative process leading to agreed Terms of Reference for the 2015 review that were subsequently endorsed by the General Assembly and the Security Council; the thematic focus on UN missions transitions and on preventing relapse into conflict; the integration of the regional dimension of peacebuilding; and the cross-cutting issues of the long term implications of the Ebola crisis and women's participation in peacebuilding.

2. The Chair also noted that the report confirms the PBC's potential as an intergovernmental platform for broader policy development and for generating deep and more coherent reflection between Member States and partners within and outside the UN system. He added that the PBC's policy development role would further strengthen its advisory function to the Security Council in areas where the Council would benefit from a broader Member States and regional perspectives.

3. The Chair further noted that the report reflects the continuing development of the PBC's approach with regard to its three core functions of accompaniment/advocacy, resource mobilization and forging coherence in the context of its country-specific engagement. In this regard, the Chair highlighted the role and contribution of the members and chairs of country configurations and the countries on the agenda.

4. The Chair concluded by drawing the attention of Member States to the section on the "Conclusions and forward agenda" which charts the course of action for the PBC in 2015. He said that the Forward Agenda reflects the Commission's determination to follow-up on several thematic and country-specific approaches that were initiated in 2014, in order

to ensure continuity in focus and consistency in approach in a way that would further enhance the PBC's credibility and stature.

5. The Chair expressed his gratitude to all Members for their constructive spirit during the negotiation of the Report and invited the Committee to informally adopt the Report with a view to formally adopt it at the formal meeting of the Committee scheduled for 28 January 2015.

The Committee informally adopted the Report.

6. The ASG for Peacebuilding Support, Mr. Oscar Fernandez-Taranco, congratulated the Chair and members of the OC on the informal adoption of the report; noted the important work of the Commission in 2014, and welcomed in particular the development of a Forward Agenda for 2015 that reflects the continuing focus of the PBC the issues of the fight against illicit financial flows, regional aspects of peacebuilding and the long term impact on peacebuilding efforts of the Ebola crisis. He noted that processes such as the follow-up to the annual session and to the Cairo Workshop, as well as the development of a strategy to strengthen the gender perspective in country-specific engagement would help further clarify and strengthen the PBC's policy function and could inspire the 2015 Review process. He underlined the PBSO's continuing commitment not only to support the PBC's policy and country-specific related activities, but more importantly to bring on board the practical and coherent support from the top UN management, as well as practical engagement by relevant UN system entities.

7. Member States welcomed the Report and focused their interventions on the following issues:

- The comprehensive nature of the report presenting an account of the activities of the Commission during a very busy year. Delegations recalled the important discussion which took place during the first ever Annual Session and the continuing focus of the Commission on women's participation in peacebuilding, the regional dimension of peacebuilding and its role in support of UN transitions;
- The successful preparation for the 2015 Review leading to agreed Terms of Reference (ToRs). Delegations commended the Chair's leadership of the informal consultative process noting that the subsequent formal endorsement by the General Assembly and Security Council of the suggested ToRs confirms the broad-based agreement on the overall objectives and ambitions of the review.
- The forward looking nature of the Report. It was noted that the Forward Agenda contained several important actions and themes that should guide the work of the Commission in 2015;
- The Commission's role in sustaining attention on the needs and challenges facing the three affected countries on its agenda by the Ebola Virus Disease. It was noted that, while the crisis shifted the priorities of the PBC's engagement, the Commission played an important role in keeping the international community committed to long-term peacebuilding needs.

Briefing by the Chair on the visit to Cairo and Addis Ababa (24 to 26 November)

8. The Chair informed that, between 24 and 26 November, he led a PBC delegation to Cairo, Egypt and Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The delegation was composed by Ambassadors Paul Seger of Switzerland, Omar Hilale of Morocco and Staffan Tillander of Sweden, and ASG Fernandez-Taranco. In Cairo, the delegation participated in a workshop on “regional aspects of peacebuilding: identifying gaps, challenges and opportunities” jointly organized by the Government of Egypt, the Cairo Centre for Conflict Resolution and Peacekeeping in Africa (CCCPA) and PBSO. Participants, including representatives of the African Union, African sub regional organizations and countries, the World Bank, UNDP, AfDB, were invited to focus on the potential role of regional actors in support of two critical peacebuilding-related objectives, namely: a) sustaining credible political processes; and b) supporting the development of viable national institutions. The Chair reported that the discussions underscored the imperative of establishing effective partnerships in order to ensure that regional efforts contributing to these objectives are factored in the planning and mandates of United Nations peace operations, and in the actions of other bilateral and multilateral peacebuilding actors. Several participants also underscored the need for the 2015 review to examine the unfulfilled potential of the Peacebuilding Commission to serve as a platform for forging coherence and partnerships among international and regional actors.

9. The Chair further reported that the Addis Ababa visit included meetings with the African Union Peace and Security Council (AUPSC), the African Union Commission, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) and the African Development Bank (AfDB). In these meetings, the discussions focused on the preparations for the 2015 Review and on the importance to include African perspectives into the review. Following-up on the outcome of the PBC Annual Session, UNECA and AfDB also noted the potential scope for partnership and joint policy development with the Commission following the imminent release of the report of the AU’s High-level Panel on illicit financial flows out of Africa. The discussions also alluded to the need for prioritizing capacity development for African countries in negotiating mining contracts, and in drawing upon the ongoing efforts in Africa to assess the long term implications of the Ebola crisis.

10. ASG Fernandez-Taranco expressed his appreciation for the Government of Egypt for the successful organization of and the substantive discussions during the Cairo Workshop. He noted that the workshop offered interesting perspectives from Africa which presented a solid case for the 2015 review to provide added emphasis on the regional dimension of peacebuilding. He also noted that the discussions held in Addis Ababa demonstrated the importance of a systematic interaction and country-specific collaboration between the PBC and the AU and sub-regional organizations in Africa.

11. Member States welcomed the briefing by the Chair and the Outcome Report of the Cairo Workshop on “Regional Aspects of Peacebuilding: Identifying Gaps, Challenges and Opportunities” which was submitted by the Permanent Mission of Egypt ahead of the meeting. Delegations focused their interventions on the following issues:

- The importance for the 2015 review to take into account the African perspectives, in particular those related to the integration of the regional aspects of peacebuilding in United Nations decision-making related to peace and security

and long-term peacebuilding. The Commission was invited to strengthen its engagement with the Office of the Permanent Observer of the African Union in New York and with the recently established Africa Caucus;

- National ownership, the nexus between security and development and regional partnerships were recognised as the foundation for peacebuilding. In this context, delegations underscored that the PBC should play an important role in linking up the regional and international perspectives on peacebuilding-related objectives, with a view of ensuring sustained and coherent support to the countries concerned.

Outcome of the work of the Working Group on Lessons Learned in 2014

11. The Chair invited the Representative of Japan, Chair of the PBC Working Group on Lessons Learned, to present the report of the WGLL on “Transitions of UN Missions: What role for the PBC?”. He added that the issue of transition, as highlighted in the PBC annual report, represents a critical dimension of the PBC’s advisory role to the Security Council.

12. The Chair of the WGLL noted that the report is the result of extensive consultations with Member States and with representatives of the UN system. In particular, the report has benefited from inputs received at the Ambassadorial-level meeting of the WGLL of 19 November. He further noted that the report identified two main challenges faced by countries following the withdrawal of UN missions, namely, 1) funding and technical capacity gaps for peacebuilding priorities and 2) sustaining inclusive political processes. It also clarified the potential role the PBC, as a political platform, that would facilitate a broad-based dialogue leading to a more conducive environment for transitions, including through its advisory function to the Security Council.

Other matters

13. The Chair informed that during a conversation with Dr. David Nabarro, Special Envoy on Ebola, he was briefed on the progress that the UN system is making in tackling the medical-related aspects of the Ebola Virus Disease. He also noted that Dr. Nabarro praised the PBC for its role in sustaining the attention of the international community on the long-term social, political and economic implications of the disease.
