

Ambassadorial-Level Meeting of the Peacebuilding Commission

2020 Review of the Peacebuilding Architecture: *“Effective Support in UN Transition Contexts”*

20 February 2020

Chair’s Summary

1. On 20 February, H.E. Mr. Marc-André Blanchard chaired an ambassadorial-level meeting of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) on the 2020 review of the Peacebuilding architecture titled ‘effective support in UN transition contexts.’ The purpose of the meeting was to inform the formal phase of the 2020 review and provide input for the 2020 report of the Secretary-General on peacebuilding and sustaining peace. In accordance with the Terms of Reference for the 2020 review, the meeting was open to all UN Member States. The meeting offered an overview of UN and Member States’ efforts and tools to enhance coherence and to ensure stability and continuity of peacebuilding activities during UN transitions.
2. In his opening remarks, the Chair welcomed the briefers and underscored that planning for the draw-down of UN Peacekeeping Operations or Special Political Missions brings all aspects of peacebuilding and sustaining peace into practice and puts coherence and coordination to the test. He noted that the Commission offers a platform for bringing together different stakeholders and partners before, during and after transitions, in support of national-led peacebuilding priorities with a view to develop good practices and identify remaining challenges. The Chair informed the participants that the convening, bridging and advisory role of the Peacebuilding Commission had proven to be effective in enhancing coherence amongst stakeholders and in ensuring continued attention of the international community to the long-term needs of countries undergoing transitions, including in Sierra Leone and Liberia, and would continue to accompany Guinea-Bissau during its transition. The Chair stressed the need to also promote economic security and factor in economic dimensions when making security risk calculations, as these dimensions are crucial for sustaining peace in the long-term. In this regard, he underscored the relevance and interrelatedness of the areas of focus of the World Bank Group Strategy for Fragility, Conflict and Violence to the work of the Commission. In conclusion, he reiterated that the review process was an opportunity to renew efforts and be pragmatic in finding concrete ways to further implement what was agreed as a result of the last review five years ago.
3. The Deputy Secretary-General, H.E. Ms. Amina J. Mohammed, thanked the Chair for convening the meeting and underlined that effective transitions were critical in sustaining peace and development over time. The DSG called for a shift in focus from UN centered processes and emphasized that transitions could only be successful when anchored in nationally led and

owned processes. She underscored that transitions presented an opportunity to accompany national efforts to strengthen social fabric and create socio-economic opportunities to address the root causes of crisis and vulnerabilities. The DSG informed the Commission about a number of efforts underway in support of this objective: i) UN reforms that were now well-advanced and provided new tools to allow the UN to better respond in a tailored manner to transition related needs; ii) the joint project of DPO, DPPA and UNDP on transitions, which DCO had recently joined in line with the UN Development system reform; iii) the Secretary-General's Planning Directive issued in 2019 for the development of consistent and coherent system-wide UN transition processes. The DSG highlighted the valuable platform offered by the Commission in transition processes and its role in accompanying Liberia during the departure of UNMIL, while recognizing that transitions required long-term engagement and strong focus on institutions. The DSG highlighted that the integrated strategic framework for Haiti that was being finalized was an opportunity to offer more ambitious and coherent support to the country. The DSG explained the financial cliff resulting from the assumption of increased security, peacebuilding and development responsibilities by national authorities and communities, and stressed in this regard that years of investment in peace could be lost without continued support from the international community during transitions. The DSG noted that the partnership between the UN and International Financial Institutions could be further leveraged and that the Secretary-General's Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) could help ease the transition financing cliff and catalyze additional resources if sequenced well with other instruments. The DSG also cited the importance of ambition and pragmatism in addressing climate-related risks while seeking to support and empower national-level ownership for peacebuilding. The DSG stressed that success would require new approaches and encouraged Member States to be ambitious when identifying practical ways in which to transform and further strengthen support in UN transition contexts.

4. The Deputy Joint Special Representative for the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur, Ms. Anita Kokui Gbeho, underlined that the transition in Darfur was one of the most complex transitions that the UN had ever undertaken. This was primarily due to the continually evolving political situation; the lack of a comprehensive peace agreement; the 1.8 million Internally Displaced Persons; and the persisting pockets of conflict and associated risks of violence and insecurity facing civilians. The DJSR highlighted that there would never be an ideal time to transition and that the key question was how to bring an element of order into transition processes, which are complicated by nature. The DJSR emphasized the importance of planning and implementation tools, which in the case of Darfur had allowed the Mission to work in an integrated fashion with the UN country team and jointly coordinate with the Government on peacebuilding and stabilization activities. The DJSR informed the Commission that a total of 49 UNAMID civilian staff were embedded with the UN country team and 40 police were either embedded or co-located with the Sudanese Police Force to ensure transfer of institutional memory and further development of joint analysis. Furthermore, the DJSR stressed

the need for flexibility as the tools were only as good as their ability to address challenges in an everchanging political environment. In Darfur, the State Liaison Function (SLF) programmes had been adjusted in the rule of law and human rights pillars following the suspension of the constitution and the declaration of a state of emergency. The DJSR also highlighted the need to ensure that protection gaps and challenges currently faced by civilians in Darfur were not exacerbated by UNAMID's transition. The DJSR also underscored the importance of political will and stressed that the ongoing peace talks in Juba constituted an unprecedented opportunity for a comprehensive and inclusive peace in Sudan. In conclusion, the DJSR highlighted challenges worth noting for future UN transitions utilizing the SLF model, including the need for adequate managerial capacity as well as enough time for effective planning, execution and monitoring of implementation.

5. The Executive Director of the Security Council Report, Ms. Karin Landgren, highlighted the three conclusions most pertinent to transition contexts from the Security Council Report's publication "*Prioritisation and Sequencing of Council Mandates: Walking the Walk?*". Ms. Landgren informed the Commission that the first recommendation was for the Security Council to progressively shift its focus, when establishing mandates, from tasks to strategic objectives guided by sustainable political solutions. Landgren stressed the need to ensure a common understanding of a peace operation between the Security Council, the Secretariat, Troop Contributing Countries and Police Contributing Countries, as articulated in the High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations (HIPPO) report of 2015. Landgren highlighted that independent strategic assessments were a recent and potentially strong tool for greater clarity on desirable outcomes and how to achieve them. Landgren added that the Security Council should apply longer timelines in the mandates for UN peace operations, which would allow the Council and the Secretariat greater flexibility in prioritizing and sequencing mandated activities. She also encouraged multi-year budget projections for peace operations and noted that a multi-year frame of reference could help ensure earlier transition planning. In conclusion, she stressed the importance of integrating UN Agencies, Funds and Programmes into early planning to create better conditions for a seamless transition, and noted that PBC Member States on the boards of UN Agencies, Funds and Programmes could play a critical role in advancing this voluntary engagement.

6. Member States welcomed the briefings and made the following observations:

- They recognized increased efforts to ensure effective transitions, noting the importance of recent UN reforms in this regard, including on strategic and integrated planning. Some suggested that those efforts should be underpinned by a multi-stakeholder accountability framework that measures success in terms of impact rather than outputs. They stressed the need for joint assessments in transition contexts early on and to replicate good practices by building on past experiences, and welcomed the work of the

joint UN transitions project in this regard. They highlighted the UN's coordinating role and the importance of building capacity within the UN system, for which existing structures could be relied on.

- They reiterated that the UN reforms had prepared the system to better to deliver results in terms of peacebuilding and sustaining peace, including with stronger UN country teams, reinforced by Peace and Development Advisers and with the Peacebuilding Support Office being integrated in DPPA. They recommended taking a critical look into UN country team capacities and equipping them to respond to transition-related risks. They also encouraged better integration of UN country team actors into analysis and planning for transitions. Noting that transitions were inherently political processes, some Member States highlighted the Commission's role in accompanying the work of UN Resident Coordinators in support of national peacebuilding strategies during transitions.
- They stressed the importance of strengthening the Commission's advisory role to the Security Council, with emphasis on early warning, prevention and addressing root causes of instability and conflict. They noted that the Commission could play a critical role in ensuring forward-looking integrated planning and in furthering a well-coordinated cross-pillar approach during transitions.
- They underscored that peacebuilding was multi-stakeholder by nature and that the Commission was well-placed to advance complementarity and coherence among actors. They underscored the importance of strengthening cooperation with International Financial Institutions, regional and sub-regional organisations, civil society actors and local communities, and the private sector, and noted the added value of the Commission in convening these actors. Some Member States noted that the Commission also offered a platform to further South-South Cooperation in the area of transitions.
- They highlighted the role of the Commission in sustaining political attention and advocating for predictable and adequate financing during transitions. They called for early and joined-up analysis and planning among national, regional and international partners with a view to ensure predictable financing, and urged donors to deliver consistent messages about financing in different multilateral fora and in bilateral engagements.
- They stressed the role of the Secretary-General's Peacebuilding Fund in easing the financing cliff during complex transitions and catalyzing additional resources. They underlined the need to consider the entire funding spectrum when planning for transitions, including making use of the SDG Fund and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda

to fund priorities during drawdowns. Some Member States called for the inclusion of innovative suggestions on financing in the Secretary-General's report on peacebuilding and sustaining peace.

- They emphasized the importance of strengthening the link between sustainable peace and sustainable development in transition contexts with a view to reinforce synergies. They also highlighted the importance of economic strategies for transitions and of comprehensive conflict analysis, taking into account economic insecurity.
- They underscored the centrality of inclusive national-led transition processes and noted that the desired outcome was to leave the host country with the right capacities and stronger institutions. They further stressed that exit strategies should be anchored in a comprehensive political strategy, informed by the situation on the ground, and take into consideration risks of conflict and violence against civilians. Some Member States highlighted the importance of people-centered approaches to transitions, stressing the need to engage civil society and communities in peacebuilding and sustaining peace.
- They reiterated that more efforts were needed to ensure meaningful participation of women and youth in national peacebuilding and sustaining peace initiatives in transition settings. Some Member States stressed the need to integrate human rights and noted that the Secretary-General's Call to Action for Human Rights, could reinforce peacebuilding and sustaining peace. Some Member States underscored the urgency of addressing climate change as a threat multiplier in the context of transitions.
- Some Member States underlined the importance of promoting transitional justice and reconciliation. They also emphasized that mental health and psycho-social support should feature as a core consideration in peacebuilding efforts with a view to creating conditions for sustaining peace.

7. The Chair adjourned the meeting.