

Peacebuilding Commission, Annual Session 2016
**“Transitions as a challenge to consolidating peace and security:
The role of the PBC in diplomacy and political accompaniment”**
23 June 2016

Chair’s Summary

I. Introduction

The third Annual Session of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) took place on 23 June 2016 under the title “*Transitions as a challenge to consolidating peace and security: The role of the PBC in diplomacy and political accompaniment*”. The session addressed the key challenges of countries undergoing transitions as well as for the UN system. Furthermore it addressed the role of the PBC in efficiently accompanying such processes. In addition to a keynote address and remarks in the opening and closing segments, two informal working sessions brought together Member States, representatives of the UN system, international and regional organizations and civil society organizations.

II. Opening Segment

The Chair of the PBC, H.E. Mr. Macharia Kamau (Kenya), and Deputy Secretary-General Mr. Jan Eliasson, opened the Session. The Former Special Representative for Children in Armed Conflict, Ms. Radhika Coomaraswamy delivered the keynote address.

The Chair of the PBC noted that “sustaining peace” as defined in the resolutions on the Review of the UN peacebuilding architecture required a comprehensive approach, which was particularly important during country and UN transitions. He stated that phases of transitions required special attention and support since they presented particular challenges for countries as well as the UN system and other key actors. In this regard, the Chair noted that the two working sessions of the PBC Annual Session would address three key areas in regard to the PBC’s role as intergovernmental advisory body which convenes key stakeholders: how to provide political accompaniment and advocacy support to countries in transition; how to best work in order to bridge policy and operational gaps among the principal organs and the UN system; and how to best draw in partners, including the regional, non-governmental and private sector to better bring coordinated support to peacebuilding efforts.

The Deputy Secretary-General referred to the new resolutions on the peacebuilding architecture and the concept of sustaining peace and noted that the resolutions placed high expectations on the PBC to play an active role in taking forward this comprehensive approach which spreads responsibility for prevention over the entire UN system. He noted the unique role of the PBC in mobilizing a broad set of actors and highlighted the change in PBC working methods. He furthermore urged Member States, especially those of the Security Council to make full use of the potential of the PBC and its advisory role, especially in regard to transition processes. He noted three key challenges in regard to transitions: firstly,

coherence within and outside the UN system and as well as partnerships; secondly, predictable and sustainable funding, including adequate resourcing for long-term peacebuilding tasks; and thirdly, strengthening the area of political support. He noted the important work of the Peacebuilding Fund in this regard and encouraged Member States to attend the pledging conference in September and contribute generously. Moreover, he highlighted the role of the PBC in filling the gap of decreasing political support through engagement with various stakeholder including regional and subregional organizations.

Ms. Coomaraswamy focused her intervention on the issues of truth, justice, accountability and participation and how these translated back into the concept of sustaining peace, especially in regard to further strengthening the work in the area of prevention. She highlighted the changes in violent conflict since the 1990s and the implications and stated that new paradigms and norms and standards needed to be created in order to address new challenges and have a lasting impact. She stressed the centrality of accountability, truth and healing processes, national ownership and inclusivity, as well as social justice for sustainable peace and referred to the findings of the 15-year review on women, peace and security in this regard. Furthermore, she stated the need for new approaches to peacebuilding including through preventive measures and joint and comprehensive mapping processes and warned about the consequences of the lack of clarity and precision in regard to certain concepts, such as violent extremism and terrorism. Finally, she noted the important recommendations of the three reviews and stressed the need for structural changes in order to address new challenges.

III. Working Session One:

The discussion in the first working session referred to the challenges faced by countries undergoing transitions and highlighted key principles which should be considered when engaging with countries in transitions. In this regard, the discussion noted the importance of taking into account the specific context of a country in transition and stated that the planning and assessments needed to be carried out at an early stage, and peacebuilding should not be left at the last stage of a transition. It was mentioned that peacebuilding was a process that should be implemented throughout a UN mission's mandate and beyond.

Participants also highlighted the importance of national ownership and leadership which are key for a successful transition. It was stated that the country in transition should define its needs, which required an inclusive approach at all levels of society. Thus, marginalized people, including women and youth, should be given a strong voice in transition processes especially at the local level, in order to build confidence and trust to win the hearts and minds of the people. Furthermore, participants stressed that addressing the root causes of conflict, strengthening people's access to justice, national reconciliation, and decentralization were also some of the measures needed to be taken to address the fear and concerns of the people during a mission's drawdown.

Participants further stressed the need for maintaining governance during transitions,

predictable and sustainable financing, as well as partnerships. Participants highlighted in this regard the importance of partnerships with regional, sub-regional and neighboring countries and the need for increased engagement with civil society and parliamentarians.

On the engagement by the PBC, participants emphasized that it should be long-term and based on the two resolutions adopted in April 2016 on the peacebuilding architecture review and said that the 2030 Agenda could be used as entry points. Participants also pointed to the important role played by the PBC in bridging various actors, in sustaining international attention, providing political accompaniment and its advisory role to the Security Council.

The discussion concluded that while transitions present risks and trade-offs, they also provide opportunities. The United Nations and the international community should provide long-term support to national authorities to help them seize these opportunities. A new architecture for sustaining peace based on up-to-date assessments and analyses on the drivers of conflict and on measures to avoid recurrence of conflicts should be developed. The United Nations and partners of the international community should engage in transitions in a timely, coherent and coordinate manner, building on what has been learned from lessons of previous transitions and from the three UN reviews in 2015.

IV. Working Session Two:

The second working session addressed the role for the PBC in accompanying countries undergoing different types of transitions. It drew attention to the expectations of host countries undergoing transitions to make political processes become more transformative and catalysing agent of social progress, as well as the role of international and national stakeholders to consolidate peace dividends resulting from years of investment, politically as well as financially. Participants discussed the responsibility of the PBC, guided by the momentum created by the revamped peacebuilding architecture, in securing political consensus and fostering effective leadership with inclusion, national ownership of processes and capacity building.

In this context, participants elaborated on issues such as the importance of customized and timely interventions to address a country specific context, meaningful inclusiveness, in particular through the participation of women as agents of peace and transformation, as well as the creation of complementarity and coherence across the UN system and sharing responsibilities with key regional entities such as the African Union as essential in supporting transitions from conflict to recovery. Participants highlighted in this regard the UN's ability to provide necessary technical capacity and predictability of financial resources, for which the complementarity between the PBC and the PBF remains essential and crucial, while regional entities can ensure greater legitimacy of joint efforts. Several member States underscored the ambitious paradigm shift that the peacebuilding architecture is currently experiencing.

The discussion concluded with the understanding that in order to move this momentum

forward and capitalize on the opportunities brought by this consensus, an increasingly flexible PBC approach is required, whereby it can solidify its role as convener, coordinator and partner. Equally important was the recognition of the need for a more robust PBF for which member States were urged to provide increasing support. A new roadmap to expand and adapt to these roles will enable the entities of the peacebuilding architecture to become increasingly relevant actors in bridging a better understanding of how to make investments in peace more durable and legitimate in the eyes of all stakeholders, starting with host countries undergoing transitions.

V. Closing segment

The Vice President of the General Assembly, H.E. Ms. Moses the President of the Security Council, H.E. Mr. Lamek, and the Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission, H.E. Mr. Kamau, addressed the closing session. The need for a comprehensive and coordinated approach of the UN system, as well as with other actors was particularly stressed. In this regard closer cooperation between the PBC and the principle organs was stressed as the way forward. As an inclusive advisory body, the PBC needs to play an ever more active role in providing guidance and support to the General Assembly and the Security Council. Furthermore, the change of working methods of the PBC was welcomed and the added value of the PBC, especially in regard to transition processes, acknowledged.

At the conclusion of this segment it was noted that a common emphasis should be put on serving the people affected and that principles of national ownership, inclusivity, the primacy of political solutions and strong partnerships should be key to engagement. In this regard, the importance of the need to sustain the momentum of the implementation of the resolutions on sustaining peace was stressed. It was highlighted that tools for the effective systematic change needed to be developed.

VI. Policy recommendations and next steps

A. Summary of identified policy recommendations

- The Successful country and UN transitions require context specific assessment, joint planning and coherent implementation, with peacebuilding being a process which needs to be implemented throughout a mission's mandate and beyond. Engagement needs to be timely, coherent and coordinated, while root causes and drivers of conflicts being addressed throughout the transition process.
- National ownership, inclusive processes, sustainable and predictable financing, capacity building, as well as strengthened partnerships are key issues for successful transition processes.

- The PBC should advocate for sustained political, technical and financial support to countries undergoing transitions. It should use its unique role in order to provide targeted and strategic advice to the other principle organs of the UN.
- Partnerships are key. The PBC should work towards the strengthening of its partnerships with regional and subregional actors, as well as other relevant stakeholders in order to promote coherent and systematic approach to supporting country and UN transitions.

B. Next steps

The Organizational Committee will discuss the emerging policy recommendations generated through the working sessions, with a view towards formulating advice to the General Assembly and the Security Council, as appropriate. These recommendations would be reflected in the PBC's next Annual Report, together with key policy conclusions from the PBC's deliberations on the subject. The Peacebuilding Support Office was requested to provide the necessary policy and secretariat support to this exercise.
