

PBC Chair's statement

REPORT TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY – PBC ANNUAL REPORT

27 April 2016

Mr President,

I am very pleased to be here today on behalf of the members of the Peacebuilding Commission, to present the annual report of the Commission on its ninth session, as contained in document A/70/714–S/2016/115.

Let me at the outset congratulate the facilitators, as well as all members of the GA on the adoption of the resolution on the review of the Peacebuilding Architecture. This is truly a remarkable achievement, and one which will not only help enhance the work of the commission, but strengthen the collective ability of the entire UN system to sustain peace.

Mr. President,

I will now turn to the task at hand; to present the activities and outline the achievements of the PBC over the past year. I wish to pay tribute to my fellow PBC chairs, as well as representatives of the countries on our agenda and all the members of the PBC. It has been a productive year for the commission, with several important processes successfully completed, and this could not have been done without your active engagement and dedicated support.

The ninth session of the PBC coincided with the first phase of the review of the Peacebuilding Architecture, which inspired the work of the PBC. Over the past year, we have taken important steps to improve the effectiveness and flexibility of the PBC, thereby striving to further enhance the relevance of our work, broaden the scope and reach of the work, and improve the accountability of the Commission. This includes adopting more transparent and strategic working methods, a more flexible agenda and increasing inclusivity; improving partnerships with regional and sub-regional organizations; and highlighting peacebuilding needs in the Ebola recovery.

Let me highlight three particular areas of progress from the annual report, and also pass on some reflections on how this work can be built on and leveraged in light of the review.

First, regarding the flexibility and effectiveness of the work of the commission:

During its ninth session, the PBC was able to leverage the inherent flexibility of the commission to convene regional and country-specific discussions concerning situations beyond the PBC's established agenda. The Organizational Committee has had opportunities to discuss peacebuilding needs and lessons learned in several contexts, such as the peace process in Papua New Guinea, the elections in Burkina Faso and financing for peacebuilding in Somalia.

Going forward, this work can, and should be, further leveraged. In my view, there is great scope for the commission to keep evolving, and the recently adopted resolution gives the PBC a clear mandate to diversify its working methods in support of sustaining peace.

Second, on regional issues:

The commission has over the past year moved to highlight thematic and regional issues of relevance to its work. For example, to draw attention to the peacebuilding needs within the Ebola recovery, building on the successful work of my predecessor, a PBC chairs trip to West Africa was undertaken, which informed participation at the World Bank Spring Meeting.

Furthermore, a regional discussion on trends and threats to peacebuilding in West Africa was convened in the beginning of this year, where USG Jeffrey Feltman, head of the Department of Political Affairs was invited to identify conflict prevention priorities, and inform the commission's work in the region. It is encouraging that the PBC is already building on what was started during previous sessions, with additional regional discussions convened in this month. The PBC can further use the momentum from the reviews to deepen and institutionalize cooperation with regional and sub-regional organizations both in the commission as a whole and in the country specific work. The fundamental peacebuilding and conflict prevention work carried out in particular by the Regional Economic Communities is something the PBC can better link with in its advocacy work and accompaniment. In a similar vein, the PBC is well placed to listen to and incorporate local perspectives and bringing such understandings and approaches to peacebuilding to the fore.

Thirdly, regarding inclusivity:

Few bodies at the UN have a mandate to interact with and draw upon the expertise of such a wide range of actors, as does the PBC. During the ninth session, the PBC worked to advance interaction with a more diverse group of actors. The drafting of a Gender Strategy for the Peacebuilding Commission was initiated, which will help the Commission to systemize the way it works on gender issues, and to put empowerment of women at the core of the work.

A special session was organized to discuss how to advance the youth, peace and security agenda and champion youth participation for sustainable peace. This is an agenda I hope the PBC can keep on championing, building on the momentum of Security Council resolution 2250.

Mr President,

Beyond these three topics that I have had a chance to touch upon, there are of course many more achievements that deserve the attention of this body, not least within the country-specific configurations of the commission, as the annual report makes clear.

It is also important to note that many of the areas that I have highlighted are clearly captured in the Forward Agenda of the annual report, which charts the work of the tenth session. 2016 will be another important year for the commission, and I have am confident that the Commission will continue to evolve under the able stewardship of the Kenyan Chairmanship.

Before concluding, Mr. President, I would be remiss if I did not dedicate a special word of thanks to ASG Oscar Fernandez Taranco, and to his entire team at the Peacebuilding Support Office, for the steadfast support throughout the ninth session and their never-ending determination to advance the Peacebuilding agenda at the UN.

I thank you.