

**ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL
Coordination and Management Meeting
African Countries Emerging from Conflict**

24 July 2018

Statement by the Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission

Madam Vice-President,

I would like to thank you for inviting me to brief the Economic and Social Council on lessons learned from the Peacebuilding Commission's experience with African countries under its consideration that are relevant for addressing the economic and social challenges of peacebuilding.

Since its creation, in 2005, the PBC has served as an intergovernmental advisory body aimed at enhancing coherence in the work of the United Nations in support of conflict-affected countries. The resolutions on the review of the peacebuilding architecture, adopted by General Assembly and Security Council in 2016, reaffirmed that role. They also stressed, inter alia, that the Commission should serve as bridge between principal organs of the United Nations. This is an element that I see as particularly relevant for our discussion today.

Madam Vice-President,

Over the past few years, the Commission has convened an increased number of country-specific and regional meeting, upon request of the countries concerned. While we considered situations in various parts of the world, stressing the fact that peacebuilding is universal, our main focus remains on Africa, where we considered countries such as Burkina Faso, Burundi, Central African Republic, the Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Sierra Leone, as well as regions like West Africa, the Mano River Union, the Sahel and the Great Lakes.

The Sahel remains a clear priority for our work. Last year, the Security Council emphasized the importance of the convening role of the PBC in mobilizing deeper commitment and partnership between the UN, the countries of Sahel and other international and regional partners with a view to advancing the implementation of the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel (UNISS), in collaboration with the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS). The Sahel is also an interesting case for collaboration between ECOSOC and PBC: Member States would recall the joint event ECOSOC and PBC had in June last year, which focused on ways to overcome the multidimensional challenges facing the Sahel region by addressing the root causes of crisis pertaining to the social, economic and environmental factors in the region.

To enhance greater synergies in the region, the Commission's Annual Session, which this year is scheduled to take place in the fall, will focus exclusively on the Sahel. The PBC will bring together Member States, representatives of countries from the Sahel, senior officials of the UN, representatives of regional organizations, international financial institutions, and

civil society organizations. The purpose of this important event will be to discuss ways of mobilizing deeper commitments and partnerships in support of efforts to build and sustain peace in the Sahel under the umbrella of the UN's Sahel Strategy.

I would like to share with you a number of lessons we learned and good practices we developed through the Commission's recent work:

1. National ownership and leadership in peacebuilding efforts are essential for their success. In all the activities of the PBC, the primary voice is that of national authorities. Thanks to its flexibility, the Commission was able to engage with national actors in an inclusive manner. A key lesson is that while national Governments and authorities bore primary responsibility for identifying, driving and directing priorities, strategies and activities, the responsibility for sustaining peace is broadly shared among all national stakeholders. This was confirmed, for example, during a PBC meeting on Colombia, where senior representatives of the Government of Colombia, together with civil society representatives, highlighted the success story of Colombia, welcoming in particular the strong national ownership of the peace process and the advantage of having solid and democratic institutions.
2. Today's challenges have often a cross-border nature. A situation in one country often has implications for others of the same region. We need to enhance the capacity of the United Nations to respond to these challenges in a coherent and strategic way. Therefore, collaboration with regional and sub-regional organizations is important. This was one of the main point discussed last week during a joint event of the PBC and the African Union Peace and Security Council.
3. It is important to consider not only the security dimension of peacebuilding but also its economic and social dimensions. As I mentioned earlier, the case of the Sahel is of particular relevance and the PBC, in view of its convening and bridging role, is uniquely positioned to provide broad, diverse, long-term and coherent peacebuilding perspectives. This is a point I raised less than a month ago during an Informal Interactive Dialogue with the Security Council which explored practical ways to enhance the advisory role of the PBC to the Council during the formation, review and drawdown of peacekeeping operations and special political missions mandates. Allow me to share just a few of the elements that emerged from that meeting:
 - a. the added value and relevance of the PBC's advice lies in the Commission's capacity to bring to the Security Council's attention the perspectives and priorities of host countries, as well as a longer term and more holistic approach to discussions pertaining to the multidimensional nature of peacebuilding and to addressing the root causes of conflict.
 - b. the Commission is expected to complement the reports of the Secretary-General by sharing its peacebuilding perspectives when the Council is considering the formation, review and drawdown of missions in countries under consideration of both bodies.

- c. As underscored by the situation in Sudan and the experience of UNAMID, it is crucial to tackle root causes of conflict, and peacebuilding efforts in this respect should not wait until mission withdrawal begins.
4. Madam Vice-President, while these lessons pertain to the relations between PBC and Security Council, I see them as relevant for today's deliberations. The perspective of ECOSOC on the economic and social challenges of peacebuilding should represent an important element of the advice the Commission shares with the Security Council. The bridging role of the PBC is about that: sharing an advice on peacebuilding priorities and enhance coherence among principal organs. I wish to encourage the seven Members elected from ECOSOC in the PBC to play a leading role in fostering a closer cooperation between our two bodies. You can count of Romania, as one of these seven Members, to do its part.
5. Finally, Madam Vice-President, I want to stress the importance of the gender dimension of peacebuilding. The PBC has always taken into high consideration the gender dimension of peacebuilding, including by adopting, in 2016, its internal gender strategy which we use to guide our engagement. I would also like to note that the Peacebuilding Fund has exceeded its own initial target of allocating 15% of its funds to gender focused programs.

In conclusion, Madam Vice-President, I want to reaffirm the willingness of the PBC to continue its collaboration with ECOSOC with a view to discuss ways to support conflict-affected countries and enhance coherence in the United Nations system.

Thank you.