

The Advisory Role of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) to the Security Council (SC)

Working-level meeting of
members of the PBC that are members of the Security Council, countries on the PBC agenda,
and members of the PBC Chairs' Group

13 April 2016

Coordinator's summary

Background

1. On 19 February 2016, the Organizational Committee of the Peacebuilding Commission designated Egypt as coordinator to succeed Malaysia in organizing periodic stock-taking exercises on the PBC's advisory function to the Security Council. On 13 April, Egypt convened an informal meeting to take stock of how the PBC exercised its advisory function to the Council in connection with the situations in Burundi, Guinea-Bissau, and Liberia. Furthermore, members were briefed on the recent regional engagements of the Security Council and the Peacebuilding Commission in West Africa.

Main points from the discussion

2. The coordinator opened the meeting underlining that discussions on the relations between the Security Council and the Peacebuilding Commission assumed particular importance in view of the envisaged adoption of the Security Council and General Assembly identical resolutions on the Review of the Peacebuilding Architecture on 27 April. Focusing on the first quarter of 2016, the coordinator invited Member States to share their perspectives in respect to the following country-specific and regional issues:
 - Burundi: to what extent has the PBC's engagement with Burundi, including its most recent visit in February, been helpful to SC deliberations leading to the adoption of SCR 2279? In light of SC resolution 2279, what can the PBC do to fulfill its advisory role to the Council, including through the mobilization of regional and international support to the mandate of the SG's Special adviser on conflict prevention?
 - Guinea-Bissau: How has the role of the PBC evolved during the political crisis in Guinea-Bissau? To what extent can the SC count on the PBC's role in catalyzing greater engagement and attention from regional and international partners (ECOWAS, CPLP, EU..etc)?
 - Liberia: To what extent could the practical operationalization of the new Statement of Mutual Commitment (SMC) with Liberia contribute to the Council's consideration of UNMIL's transition?
 - West Africa: In light of the two most recent field visits by the SC and PBSO to West Africa, as well as two cross-cutting discussions in the PBC on the sub-region, can the SC

draw upon the advisory role of the PBC as it seeks to address the multi-faceted security challenges in West Africa and the Sahel?

3. With regard to Burundi, Member States noted that the PBC plays a complementary role in support of the Security Council Delegations noted that both the recent PBC meetings on Burundi and the briefings of the Chair to the Council provided useful inputs from the field, leading to the Council's negotiations and adoption of SCR 2279. Members particularly highlighted the PBC's convening role of the IFIs whose inputs provided a more complete picture of the economic situation in the country. However, some delegations noted that more coherence of messages should be sought when both SC and PBC seek to make pronouncements on the political situation through statements.
4. On Guinea-Bissau, delegations noted that the Security Council delivered an unequivocal message to the political leadership in the country, which it expects the PBC to reinforce and complement. In this connection, and in view of its convening power of key regional, multilateral and bilateral partners of Guinea-Bissau, it was noted that messages from the PBC to the political class in the country could place greater emphasis on the positive implications of a political solution to the crisis in Guinea Bissau.
5. On Liberia, Member States recognized that the revised Statement of Mutual Commitments (SMC) soon to be adopted by the PBC and the Government of Liberia represents an important tool at a time when the Security Council is considering UNMIL's drawdown. The inclusive nature of the SMC provides a unique opportunity for the PBC to foster coherence among Liberia's partners and to keep the Government and its partners focused on key priorities of particular relevance to plans related to a seamless transition of UNMIL.. Delegations noted that the PBC has an important role to play in the post-UNMIL transition but they also underlined that expectations should be managed in view of the fact that the Commission is not an operational body and does not have presence on the ground. In this connection, some speakers noted that, based in New York, the Commission should facilitate coherence and help solve problems at the level of headquarters. Member States noted that the transition period will be a crucial phase of Liberia and that a Special Political Mission or UNCT with a strong political mandate will be indispensable to avoid relapse. Some participants referred to the fact that the drawdown of UNOCI should also be seen in a similar light.
6. On West Africa, the Coordinator invited Senegal to brief on the Security Council's visit to Guinea-Bissau, Mali and Senegal, and PBSO to brief on ASG Fernandez-Taranco's visit to Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, and Senegal. Building on the presentations, the Coordinator underlined the important work done by PBSO and the PBF to bring coherence to the UN work in the region. He also noted that the political role of the PBC can be a valuable addition to these efforts. In view of the upcoming (and first) report by the Secretary-General to the Security Council on the newly configured UN Office for West Africa and the Sahel, and in light of the recent PBC meetings on cross-border challenges in the region, the coordinator suggested that the next periodic stock-taking meeting could further reflect on the potential role of the PBC in support of the Security Council's consideration of a comprehensive approach to the cross-border challenges in West Africa and the Sahel regions.

7. In addition to country-specific aspects of the PBC's advisory function, several delegations underlined the need to avoid overlaps between the Council and the Commission when considering situations in countries on their respective agendas. In this connection, the Coordinator noted that relevant provisions of the envisaged PBA review resolutions should help avoid these overlaps by redefining the notion of "agenda countries". In this regard, it was noted that the provision of greater guidance from the Security Council on the specific areas of advice, and by allowing greater flexibility for and ownership by the countries concerned to seek such advice within a defined time frame, the PBC can provide more strategic and targeted advice.
8. In addition, a number of delegations also referred to the need for a clear division of labour between Council and Commission. Some speakers underlined that the Council should look at the political and security dimensions, while the PBC should address a broader set of issues, starting from the root causes of conflict. One delegation noted that, unlike Burundi, where the Security Council is re-engaged because of the resurgence of violence, the PBC should have a more prominent role in contexts that do not experience resurgence of violence in order to help focus and sustain attention on a broader range of peacebuilding priorities and challenges.

Next steps

9. Participants welcomed the meeting as a useful platform for informal discussions of the practical manifestation of the Peacebuilding Commission's advisory function to the Security Council. They agreed with the proposal of the Coordinator to organize a second quarterly discussion in July.
