

Peacebuilding Commission
Informal meeting of the Organizational Committee
9 April 2014

Summary of the Discussion

Background

On 9 April 2014, the Organizational Committee of the Peacebuilding Commission convened an informal meeting. The meeting was chaired by the Permanent Representative of Brazil, Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission, and addressed the following agenda items: (1) Briefing by H.E. Mr. Jan Knutsson, Chair of the PBF Advisory Group (via VTC); (2) Civilian capacity in the aftermath of conflict: Briefing by Ms. Susana Malcorra, Chair of the Steering Committee on Civilian Capacities.

Briefing by H.E. Mr. Jan Knutsson, Chair of the PBF Advisory Group

1. The Chair welcomed H.E. Mr. Jan Knutsson, Chair of the PBF Advisory Group, and recalled the very useful briefings which took place following the first three meetings of the Advisory Group under your chairmanship in April and October 2012, and in June 2013. He noted that the Committee was particularly keen to hear from Ambassador Knutsson on the most recent meeting of the Advisory Group, which took place on 31 March and 1 April, and in particular on the status of the first independent global review of the PBF.

2. Ambassador Knutsson noted that the Group welcomed the internal draft PBF 2013 Review report whose initial findings were consistent the Group's own view. He also noted that the Review found that the four existing priority areas for the Fund's work – as identified in the General Assembly's Terms of Reference in 2009 – are appropriate, but highlighted the need for greater efforts to respond to requests in the area of "re-establishment of essential administrative services and related human and technical capacities", and to clarify the kinds of 'peace dividends' that the Fund can and cannot support. He said that the Group also welcomed the continued push for work on gender equality in areas such as political dialogue and leadership, reconciliation efforts and community recovery led by women's economic empowerment.

3. Concerning the relation between the PBC and the Fund, the Chair indicated that the Review noted improved relations and also suggested the articulation of a clearer strategy about the duration of its funding and when it should phase out. It encouraged clearer Fund exit strategy that should be coordinated with the PBC in countries on the agenda.

4. Ambassador Knutsson stated that the Advisory Group also suggested that the review draw some broader conclusions about the circumstances in which the Fund has worked best – or failed – and why. There was particular resonance around the value of

the IRF, the need to continually improve the capacity of PBSO to identify the most strategic investments, clearer guidance on PRF's and more attention to monitoring of implementation.

5. With regard to the Advisory Group's dedicated discussion concerning the Central African Republic, the Chair highlighted how the risk of relapse in the country presented a challenge to the international community. The Chair noted how the Group appreciated the efforts that the Fund was making to be innovative especially in trying to use its position in a crisis response situation to invest quickly but coherently and through partnering with the World Bank for critical re-establishment of the state and trust building. There is acknowledgement that the PBF can add value by incentivizing collaboration across the UN system to help address the crisis in CAR.

6. The Chair also talked about the findings of the recently completed Thematic Review of Gender and Peacebuilding with a focus on PBF-funded initiatives. He reported that the Group was unanimous in its view that the PBF should continue to strive to achieve and even surpass the Secretary-General's 15% target.

7. Ambassador Knutsson also addressed a number of other issues pertaining to the work of the PBF, including the role that UN leadership in the field with respect to identifying, negotiating and overseeing the implementation of PBF-funded programmes; and the relationship between the Fund and the IFIs. He also reported that the Advisory Group received a briefing on the status of the discussions around the Post-2015 Development Framework.

8. Ms. Judy Cheng-Hopkins, Assistant Secretary-General for Peacebuilding Support, concurred with the findings of the Review on Fund maturity and stressed that the instrument had actually emerged stronger from two "low" points in its history in 2008 and 2012. She also noted the findings of the just completed Burundi PBF portfolio evaluation that confirmed the PBF as the sole peacebuilding funding instrument available during the country's post-conflict peacebuilding period.

9. Member States expressed appreciation for the progress made by the Fund, especially in 2013 – 2014, and encouraged PBSO to continue with the improvements. Delegations focused their interventions around the following aspects:

- The Fund's innovative engagement in crisis response situation in CAR was commended as demonstration of the instrument's flexibility and responsiveness. In this regard, a call was made for PBSO to clarify the new approach for Fund engagement in crisis situations with high international attention, e.g. CAR and Mali. PBSO indicated, foremost, the need for flexible and rapid response to crisis in peacebuilding efforts but, more importantly, the unique ability of the Fund to quickly release the much needed resources faster than other bilateral sources.
- Many Member States welcomed the PBF Review and looked forward to the final report and to hold more substantive discussions of its findings. Member States

agreed that PBF is making a strong impact on the ground, especially through IRF, and has grown into a mature financing instrument.

- There was general agreement that gender in peacebuilding needs more work done and that the gender thematic review should provide a useful guide to enhance this area of work.
- Delegations noted that more cooperation with IFIs is needed but recognized the progress made in Liberia - including the work on natural resources and on the Public Expenditure Review with the World Bank -, and in CAR – support to the transition authorities.
- Delegations welcomed the greater synergy between the Commission and the Fund.
- Some speakers noted that there have been more robust M&E guidelines at the Headquarters level but that the UN in the field should still improve its capacity.
- Member States were encouraged to contribute generously to the Fund. In response to a suggestion for PBF to consider alternative sources of contributions (e.g. private foundations and donors), PBSO explained how its willingness is constrained by limited capacity to devote full attention to such an endeavor. Delegations stressed that the PBF needs to retain its catalytic aspect because it is a small fund with limited engagement capabilities. In this regard, the PBC, in concert with the PBF, was also called to play its role in helping conflict affected countries to mobilize resources.

Civilian Capacities in the aftermath of conflict

10. The Chairperson welcomed Ms. Susana Malcorra, Chef de Cabinet and Chair of the Steering Committee on Civilian Capacities, and invited her to brief the Committee on the evolving thinking on civilian capacities.

11. Ms. Malcorra underlined the importance of civilian capacities for both the UN and governments in post-conflict countries, and reiterated the role of the PBC as a key partner in supporting the initiative. She recalled that the Commission's focus on national ownership, national institution-building and the link between peace and development is reflected in the principles which guide the initiative, and underlined her appreciation for the support of the Commission in consultations and collaboration with Member States.

12. She recognized that the objectives of the initiative have not always been clear to Member States. To address this, the latest report of the Secretary-General on civilian capacities emphasizes results achieved at country level over the past years.

13. Ms. Malcorra highlighted some examples of progress at the country level:

- The development of guidance on how the UN system can support national institution-building in post-conflict settings, which was applied in Somalia.
- The facilitation of South-South exchanges in (i) Côte d'Ivoire, where expertise from Burundi, Liberia and Senegal supported the Government's security sector reform; (ii) in Liberia, Rwanda provided specialised capacities in the areas of police management and administration, with the support of Sweden to the Ministry of Finance; (iii) the UN Mission in South Sudan benefitted from expertise from Sierra Leone for legislative drafting.
- The designation of DPKO and UNDP as the global focal point for police, justice and corrections in the areas of rule of law in post-conflict and other crisis situations, shows that shared solutions are possible without additional resources.
- Close partnerships with international financial institutions and regional institutions have been established. Future work includes maximizing opportunities for innovative financial models to support South-South and triangular cooperation, which will complement the ongoing efforts of the Peacebuilding Commission.

14. Ms. Malcorra noted that the initiative was always intended to be a temporary one, developing and piloting new approaches and then mainstreaming them within the permanent mandated structures. She laid out three key lessons learned from Civcap, which build on previous reports on peacebuilding and will guide future action:

- In supporting institution-building grounded in national ownership, the UN must align planning with national decision-making cycles and national priorities. Institution-building is a political as well as a technical process which requires time and sustained financing.
- In strengthening its approach to broadening and deepening the pool of civilian expertise for peacebuilding, the UN will reach out to Member States in search of specialized expertise for the implementation of its mandate.
- Operational support to the UN through UNDP is necessary to enhance regional, South-South and triangular cooperation in response to a need for post-conflict countries and a willingness to engage with Northern and Southern Member States. Going forward, stronger partnerships with international financial institutions will be sought, including through regional development banks.

15. Ms. Malcorra concluded her briefing by emphasizing that as the Civcap initiative draws to a close, Member State backing in the General Assembly and its subsidiary bodies is crucial in taking forward these lessons learned, and in successfully mainstreaming strong support for national institution-building into existing structures.

16. Member States welcomed Ms. Malcorra's briefing and the Secretary-General's last report on civilian capacities in the aftermath of conflict. Delegations:

- Expressed support for the initiative and for the lessons outlined in the report. The important role of the PBC in taking the latter forward through the Working Group on Lessons Learned as well as within the framework of the 2015 review of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture was stressed.

- Recognized that national institution-building and national ownership are key for sustainable peacebuilding and in preventing relapse into conflict.
- Noted the achievements of the global focal point for police, corrections and justice, both at headquarters and in the field. It was noted however that more progress in needed to guarantee resources for further work.
- Welcomed the results at country-level achieved within the framework of the initiative, particularly the increased collaboration between different United Nations entities. The importance of drawing on the strengths and comparative advantage of the presence of the UN at country level was reiterated. It was proposed that the PBC might support recommendations for improved country level implementation, for example in strengthening national capacities for effective institution-building.
- Reiterated the importance of broadening and deepening the pool of civilian expertise from the global South, with an emphasis on women, as well as the support the Peacebuilding Commission might provide in this area.
- Emphasized the importance of South-South, triangular cooperation and regional peacebuilding and recognised results achieved through Civcap, for example in the Sahel and the Great Lakes. With regional and sub-regional support through the Peacebuilding Commission, these results might be replicated and more systematically mainstreamed within existing structures of the Organization.
- Noted the progress that has been made with regard to innovative financing models. Partnerships with international financial institutions have been strengthened. The potential role of the Peacebuilding Commission in taking forward similar partnerships with international and regional financial institutions was underlined.
- Stressed the importance of maintaining the momentum which has been created after the temporary team is disbanded. Member States also recognized the positive outcome of recent discussions in the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations regarding the scope and distribution of future activities, and demonstrated support for upcoming discussions in the resumed session of the Fifth Committee.
