

THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

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REMARKS TO THE HIGH-LEVEL REPLENISHMENT CONFERENCE FOR THE PEACEBUILDING FUND Tuesday, 26 January 2021

Excellencies, Ladies and gentlemen,

Thank you for joining us today. I am happy to co-chair this Replenishment Conference for the Peacebuilding Fund.

The scale of turmoil around the world requires concerted efforts to ease tensions and prevent further escalation.

The unprecedented challenge of COVID-19 has further exacerbated situations that were deteriorating even before the pandemic.

I have appealed for a global ceasefire to focus on our common enemy, the pandemic.

We need a renewed approach to multilateralism and international cooperation.

An approach that goes beyond crisis response and boosts long-term investments in prevention and peacebuilding, hand-in-hand with our efforts to deliver the Sustainable Developments Goals.

To secure a better future, we need to increase support to women and young people as agents for peace and stewards of inclusive development. Without their full participation, neither peace nor prosperity can be sustainable.

Today, you will hear from local peacebuilders, like Miss Josette Anibanda from the Central African Republic.

While the country continues to face many challenges, I saw during my visit efforts supported by the Peacebuilding Fund to help stabilize Bambari – which for years had been at the crossroads of conflict – through a strategic combination of cash-for-work, rehabilitation, socio-economic revitalization and support to local peace committees.

Our experience in countries with peacekeeping missions shows that PBF Funding and Peacebuilding Commission engagement, when aligned with national and UN priorities, can be invaluable tools.

Peacebuilding in fragile contexts requires political courage and leadership at national and local levels, but also the right support at the right time from the international community.

We need to take risks for peace and enable stakeholders with the resources and space to seize opportunities.

We have a responsibility to bring down the institutional siloes and bring together, in an agile and responsive manner, the full range of the United Nations' system capacities.

The Peacebuilding Fund aims to do just that.

Its impact and cost-effectiveness have been widely recognized and appreciated by the 50 nations it has supported.

Yet, we continue to massively underinvest in it.

The Fund prioritises areas that may otherwise be considered too risky, or that are chronically underfunded, notably engaging women and youth and cross-border and regional initiatives.

It mobilizes vital additional funding at national and regional levels. Over the past three years, for each dollar invested through the Fund, countries have mobilized almost eight additional dollars for peacebuilding.

It fosters joint action across the United Nations system, from needs analysis to coordinated planning in support of national priorities.

It also enables partnerships with a wide range of stakeholders, from civil society actors to regional organizations and the World Bank, often kick-starting initiatives that others can scale up.

With additional resources, the Fund would also be uniquely placed to promote coordination between the United Nations and other development partners, specifically during periods of mission start-up. Early and reliable funding by the Fund is also essential in 'transition' settings where large peace operations are drawing down.

Finally, in a global context with significant volatility, the Fund's flexibility is vital.

As part of the United Nations Comprehensive Response to COVID-19, the PBF quickly responded to the risks and tensions heightened by the pandemic,

working with national partners and Resident Coordinators to adjust ongoing programs as needed and respond to emerging prevention priorities.

As the medium-term effects of the pandemic become more apparent, it is more important than ever to ensure the Fund is adequately and predictably resourced.

Many Member States recognize this, as acknowledged by the twin resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council on the 2020 Peacebuilding Architecture Review.

In 2020, the Peacebuilding Fund mobilized over \$180 million – an important sign of the trust the Fund has garnered over the years and its demonstrated ability to deliver in the most difficult contexts.

But its resources are now depleted.

We must urgently replenish it.

Doing so will save lives and serve as a clear demonstration of multilateral support.

So far this cycle, only 24 Member States have contributed, with four of them accounting for 70 percent of total resources.

If all Member States and partners contributed, even a small amount, to the Fund, we will finally accomplish the much needed ‘quantum leap’ and send a clear signal to the world: together, we can successfully invest in building and sustaining peace.

I urge those that have not yet contributed, in particular Members of the Security Council and the Peacebuilding Commission, to act on your commitments and provide a contribution to this essential global instrument for peace.

Thank you.