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Report of the Secretary-General on the Peacebuilding Fund

Peacebuilding Fund

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

In 2019, the Peacebuilding Fund approved investments worth \$191 million for activities in 34 countries, up from \$183 million in 2018, continuing along a trajectory of modest growth. In 2019, 30 per cent of the Fund's investments were in transition settings, totalling \$57.8 million. New cross-border investments, amounting to \$7.8 million, were also approved. The Fund approved a record amount of \$40.1 million to United Nations entities and civil society organizations through its annual competitive call on the inclusion of women and young people, up from \$37.1 million in 2018. A number of Member States responded to the call for increased funding to sustain the Fund's investments. In 2019, the Fund received \$134.8 million from 25 Member States. However, demand for funding continued to outpace available resources significantly. As a result, in 2019, the Fund was required to reduce its initial programming target by nearly \$60 million by postponing some investments and scaling down others considerably.



I. Introduction

1. The present annual report, covering the period from 1 January to 31 December 2019, is the tenth report submitted to the General Assembly pursuant to its resolution [63/282](#). It covers the third and final year of the Peacebuilding Fund's strategic plan for 2017–2019. The present report will be complemented by a certified financial report issued by the Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office no later than 31 May 2020. Detailed information can be found at www.un.org/peacebuilding, and complete information on individual projects can be found on the Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office Gateway (<http://mptf.undp.org>).

II. Global performance and lessons learned

2. In 2019, for the first time in four years, the number and complexity of violent conflicts rose, taking a heavy toll on civilians. Today, more than 70 million persons are forcibly displaced, double the level of 20 years ago and 2.3 million persons more than just 1 year ago. The costs of responding to conflict rather than investing in its prevention remain unsustainably high. The reform process of the organization is aimed at rebalancing its efforts towards prevention to effectively live up to the ambition of the Charter of the United Nations in order to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war. The year 2019 was the first full year of operations for the restructured peace and security pillar and the repositioned development system, with increased coherence throughout the system, including more integrated analysis and strategies across pillars.

3. As part of those efforts, and as anticipated in a previous report on peacebuilding and sustaining peace ([A/73/890-S/2019/448](#)), the Peacebuilding Fund continued to play a central role in prioritizing prevention through cross-pillar strategies. As highlighted by its membership and confirmed by independent evaluations, the Fund consistently provides timely and catalytic support for the United Nations system to seize peacebuilding opportunities in a coherent manner while remaining more tolerant to risk than other instruments. The Fund continued to complement other funds, such as the Central Emergency Response Fund and the Sustainable Development Goals Fund, as well as other support mechanisms, notably those provided through the multi-year appeal of the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs. In 2019, the Fund maintained that track record, driving joint results and improving the impact of peacebuilding strategies while responding to an unprecedented number of requests from the largest set of countries since its inception. The Fund was also key in following the recommendations of the Executive Committee and the good offices of regional Special Representatives of the Secretary-General by providing specific programming.

4. In 2019, the Fund approved investments of \$191 million in 34 countries, up from the \$183 million approved in 2018, continuing along a trajectory of modest growth (see table 1). The Immediate Response Facility, designed to respond to specific requests from any country for one-off support not surpassing \$3 million, accounted for \$82.7 million, while the Peacebuilding Recovery Facility, responding to eligibility requests and full-fledged joint conflict analysis and prioritization, accounted for \$108.5 million. Since 2017, the Fund has approved a total of \$531 million in 51 countries, surpassing the target of its strategic plan for 2017–2019, to approve \$500 million in 40 countries, and more than doubling the \$218 million approved in the previous three-year cycle. Although it is not yet enough, it is an important stepping stone towards the goal, set out in the above-mentioned report on peacebuilding and sustaining peace, of the Fund investing at least \$500 million annually. Reaching that goal will require a quantum leap of support.

5. In 2019, in response to government requests, and following thorough conflict analysis and prioritization exercises under the leadership of the Resident Coordinators, I declared Cameroon, Haiti and the Sudan eligible, and Mali re-eligible, to receive Peacebuilding Fund support. At the same time, the eligibility period of 9 countries came to an end, bringing the current total number of eligible countries to 19. The Fund's investments towards supporting the implementation of peace agreements and the establishment of essential administrative services grew in comparison with 2018. The Fund made investments in Rwanda and Uzbekistan, in which it had not previously invested.

6. In 2019, 30 per cent of the Fund's investments were in transition settings, totalling \$57.8 million. The investments were consistent with my new planning directive on transition processes and were focused on alleviating the impact of the regular gap in funding that accompanies the closure of a mission by engaging before and after the mission's drawdown or throughout its reconfiguration. The Peacebuilding Support Office supported every strategic assessment mission in transition settings, and the Fund approved investments that contributed to addressing the peacebuilding and development challenges that countries continue to face during and after mission transitions. For instance, through an evaluation of the Fund's portfolio of projects in Côte d'Ivoire, it was found that the Fund had filled a critical gap during the transition phase from a peacekeeping configuration, allowing it to maintain a focus on peacebuilding and avoiding a dispersion of capacities. Beyond transitions, the Fund's support for the peacebuilding mandate of peacekeeping and special political missions grew. In 2019, 39 per cent of the Fund's investments were in peacekeeping mission settings, up from 27 per cent in 2018, and 12 per cent were in countries with special political missions. In that context, the Fund served as an important integrator between United Nations country teams and missions.

7. The Fund continued to emphasize support for cross-border and regional strategies as a growing priority area, although the multiplicity of actors and the complexity of programmes involving multiple country teams result in a slower pace of approval of new projects than for single-country programmes. In 2019, new cross-border investments, amounting to only \$7.8 million, were approved. The Sahel remained a critical priority, with funding reaching a total of \$137 million in the past three years in support of the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel. Overall, the cross-border portfolio during the strategic plan period amounted to \$44 million, corresponding to 8 per cent of the investments. New guidelines on programming in cross-border areas have been developed for Fund applicants and recipients.

8. The empowerment of women and young people through innovative and bottom-up approaches continued to be central to the Fund's portfolio. In 2019, the Fund approved a record amount of \$40.1 million to United Nations entities and civil society organizations through its annual competitive call, the Gender and Youth Promotion Initiative, up from \$37.1 million in 2018. Roughly half of the approvals, \$20.4 million, were invested in young people's leadership, making the Youth Promotion Initiative the largest funding initiative in support of the implementation of Security Council resolutions [2250 \(2015\)](#) and [2419 \(2018\)](#), on youth and peace and security. In partnership with the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the United Nations Volunteers programme (UNV), the Fund expanded its support for innovative projects that promote the meaningful participation of women and young people in peacebuilding. In 2019, the call was focused on diversifying partnerships and engaging with local partners, in particular organizations led by women and young people. The Fund approved the direct funding of \$12.9 million to civil society organizations, including five national organizations in Colombia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Madagascar and Sierra Leone. In

its strategic plan for 2017–2019, the Fund approved a total of \$106.6 million through the Gender and Youth Promotion Initiative, of which \$29.8 million (28 per cent) was directed to 27 civil society organizations.

9. In 2019, 40 per cent of all Fund investments supported gender-responsive peacebuilding, exceeding the target of 15 per cent stipulated in my Seven-Point Action Plan on Gender-Responsive Peacebuilding for the fifth year in a row, a first for any United Nations fund.

10. The Fund and the Peacebuilding Commission continued to strengthen their collaboration in 2019. In January, the Chair and Vice-Chairs of the Commission had an informal exchange with the Fund's Advisory Group on ways to foster greater synergies between the Commission and the Fund. Throughout 2019, the Peacebuilding Support Office regularly briefed the Commission on the activities of the Fund. In November, Member States were briefed on the Fund's new strategy. Systematic dialogue with the Commission on the activities of the Fund will further strengthen the Commission's work while maintaining the independence of the Fund. Building on the positive engagements on Chad and Papua New Guinea in 2019, for example, I encourage countries receiving support from the Fund to utilize the convening platform of the Commission to share their peacebuilding experiences and mobilize additional resources. Stronger synergies were noticeable in many other country settings in 2019. For example, in February, the Chair of the Commission's Central African Republic configuration travelled to Bangui with the Assistant Secretaries-General for Africa and for Peacebuilding Support and members of the Commission to mobilize support for a peace agreement and identify key areas of support for the Fund. The Fund rapidly approved a new \$19.8 million package to support the implementation of key priorities of the agreement.

11. The Fund contributed to further advancing the implementation of the United Nations-World Bank Partnership Framework for Crisis-Affected Situations with a \$4.4 million investment in the establishment of the Humanitarian-Development-Peacebuilding and Partnership Facility. The Facility offers grants to United Nations entities at the country level seeking strategic partnerships with the World Bank through the sharing of joint data and analysis, as well as assessment and planning. Grants will enhance partnerships on prevention at the country level and leverage the nineteenth replenishment of the International Development Association, in addition to supporting partnership efforts in countries with mission transitions. Early support was deployed to Burkina Faso to enable the launch of a prevention and peacebuilding assessment jointly conducted by the United Nations, the World Bank, the African Development Bank and the European Union.

12. A number of Member States responded to my call for increased funding to sustain the Fund's investments. In 2019, the Fund received \$134.8 million from 25 Member States, many of whom increased the size of their contribution from previous years. In 2019, the Fund received, for the first time, contributions from the European Union and New Zealand, further expanding its range of donors. Nevertheless, more than 96 per cent of resources continue to be provided by only 12 Member States, while fewer than a handful provide multi-year commitments. From 2017 to 2019, the Fund's income was \$479 million, just under the minimal target set for the strategic plan, including \$356 million in contributions and a carry-over of \$116 million plus interest from 34 Member States. Nonetheless, demand for funding continued to outpace available resources significantly. As a result, in 2019, the Fund was required to reduce its initial programming target by nearly \$60 million by postponing some investments and scaling down others considerably.

13. More support is needed to respond to growing requirements and leverage the unique role of the Fund. As the Fund enters a new five-year planning period, I call

upon Member States to step up their support through unearmarked contributions provided for a longer term to ensure that the Fund is able to prevent and respond to critical situations – at scale – with adequate, predictable and sustained funding. In that regard, I welcome the initiative of Sweden to convene the first annual strategic dialogue on the work of the Fund, together with the top 12 contributors. In addition, I am grateful for the continued engagement and support of the Friends of the Peacebuilding Fund, convened by Sweden and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and the Group of Friends on Sustaining Peace, convened by Mexico.

Table 1
Peacebuilding Fund decisions in 2019

	2019 approvals		Total
	Immediate Response Facility	Peacebuilding Recovery Facility	
	(United States dollars)		
Albania ^a	812 665	–	812 665
Burkina Faso	2 327 444	–	2 327 444
Burundi	1 500 000	–	1 500 000
Cameroon	–	7 336 769	7 336 769
Central African Republic	7 872 954	16 038 422	23 911 375
Chad	–	6 568 699	6 568 699
Colombia	916 369	2 000 000	2 916 369
Côte d'Ivoire	3 509 467	2 930 379	6 439 846
Democratic Republic of the Congo	7 971 886	–	7 971 886
El Salvador	1 500 000	–	1 500 000
Gambia	499 999	3 349 997	3 849 996
Guatemala	5 200 000	1 381 284	6 581 284
Guinea	3 895 195	2 026 890	5 922 085
Guinea-Bissau	–	2 800 511	2 800 511
Haiti	–	2 500 000	2 500 000
Kyrgyzstan	1 450 000	–	1 450 000
Lebanon	3 000 000	–	3 000 000
Liberia	3 000 000	4 635 799	7 635 799
Libya	2 950 705	–	2 950 705
Madagascar	3 467 000	8 689 478	12 156 478
Mali	3 157 896	8 088 920	11 246 816
Myanmar	2 843 137	–	2 843 137
Niger	1 643 159	1 071 922	2 715 081
Rwanda	1 499 999	–	1 499 999
Sierra Leone	300 000	3 000 000	3 300 000
Solomon Islands	–	2 149 820	2 149 820
Somalia	2 500 000	8 000 000	10 500 000
South Sudan	2 898 463	6 000 000	8 898 463
Sri Lanka	1 939 907	–	1 939 907
Sudan	–	20 000 000	20 000 000

	2019 approvals		
	<i>Immediate Response Facility</i>	<i>Peacebuilding Recovery Facility</i>	<i>Total</i>
	<i>(United States dollars)</i>		
Tajikistan	2 000 000	–	2 000 000
Uganda	2 487 750	–	2 487 750
United Nations ^b	5 205 507	–	5 205 507
Uzbekistan	2 199 370	–	2 199 370
Yemen	4 186 460	–	4 186 460
Total	82 735 332	108 568 890	191 304 222

Source: Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office, January 2020.

Note: The table reflects funding decisions taken in 2019, not funds transferred or implemented.

Updated data on the transfer and implementation of funds can be found on the Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office Gateway.

^a As part of a regional project.

^b Includes the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Initiative, a joint effort by the United Nations and the World Bank Group; and the monitoring and evaluation capacity of the Peacebuilding Fund, including the programme support roster.

III. Country-specific engagements of the Peacebuilding Fund

A. Latin America and the Caribbean

14. Following a request from the Government of Haiti, I granted eligibility for Fund support to Haiti following the closure of the United Nations Mission for Justice Support in Haiti, the completion of its programme activities and its transition to the United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti. As part of the Fund's support package, a \$2.5 million project, which was aimed at strengthening access to justice, in particular for women and children, and was focused on implementation of a legal assistance law of 2018, was approved. The project is innovative because it is aimed at improving the quality of access to justice through the combined efforts of institutions, civil society and young people, including through the use of mobile units for the provision of legal aid.

15. In Central America, the regional initiative of El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras, initially approved in 2017, has helped to strengthen national mechanisms for the protection and reintegration of migrants. In El Salvador, the Fund supported returning migrants through the returnee reception centre in San Salvador, which, through the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the World Food Programme and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), provided more than 29,000 men and women with psychosocial support, legal assistance and opportunities for livelihood. The Fund also approved a project addressing the issue of violence in society, in particular against women and girls riding on public transportation, through cooperation with the police and civil society and media campaigns. In Guatemala, the Fund expanded on existing initiatives on democratic governance and dialogue, including by providing additional funding for the Supreme Electoral Tribunal in the lead-up to the general elections of 2019, and provided an additional investment towards the consolidation of national capacities to improve the access of victims of the internal armed conflict to truth, justice, reparations and measures of non-repetition.

16. In Colombia, the Fund continued to finance key initiatives to support the implementation of the peace agreement between the Government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia-People's Army through contributions to the United Nations multi-partner trust fund for sustaining peace in Colombia. An additional investment was approved to allow the Truth Commission to expand its reach to 22 municipalities outside the capital, allowing for the participation of a wide range of sectors, institutions and victims in conflict-affected areas. Through existing support provided to Humanicemos DH, a demining organization made up of former combatants, more than 100 of them, along with their families, were reintegrated economically, helping to increase confidence and foster reconciliation within communities affected by the war. The project was scaled up with funding from the European Union trust fund, demonstrating the financially catalytic role of the Fund in innovative peacebuilding approaches. Responding to my call to explore innovative finance solutions to peacebuilding, the Fund is supporting seven private-sector investments in conflict-affected areas through blended finance mechanisms. The initial \$2.2 million has leveraged private resources at a ratio of 1 to 7.

B. Asia and the Pacific

17. The Fund supported the national Government of Papua New Guinea and the Autonomous Bougainville Government to work jointly towards a referendum on the future political status of Bougainville, which was held at the end of 2019. The Fund facilitated, together with the Mediation Support Unit of the United Nations, the Electoral Assistance Division and the Asia and Pacific Division within the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and the Bougainville Referendum Commission, the creation of an enabling environment for a peaceful referendum. The Fund also assisted in the signing of the parliamentary partnership agreement between the National Parliament and the House of Representatives of Bougainville, pledging to increase collaboration during and after the referendum, and enhanced the role of women and young people in preparing the referendum. In addition, the Fund helped the two Governments to address a major area of long-standing dispute through a decision on a compromise formula for the calculation of a restoration development grant. Lastly, the first United Nations peacebuilding project in the country's Highlands region commenced in 2019.

18. In Solomon Islands, Fund-supported initiatives continued to provide an inclusive forum to address peacebuilding challenges through the participation of caucuses composed of women and young people in the provinces of Guadalcanal, Western Province and Malaita. In Western Province, advocacy by the women's caucus led to the adoption by the provincial government of gender-based budgeting, including the dedicating of 20 per cent of the provincial budget to the province's gender policy. At the national level, the Fund also supported consultations with women and young people on the reparations framework and policy. Through extensive technical support provided to the Ministry of Traditional Governance, Peace and Ecclesiastical Affairs, a draft reparations policy has been developed. Moreover, the Fund's support for peacebuilding training and dialogue on mediation and peacebuilding in key hotspots near the capital contributed to community leaders near Honiara persuading young people not to engage in violence as unrest flared in the wake of the elections of April 2019.

19. The Fund-supported project in the Mindanao region of the Philippines has continued to be instrumental in advancing the Bangsamoro peace process, including advocacy to raise public awareness regarding the plebiscite held in Mindanao from January to February 2019 on the ratification of the Bangsamoro Organic Law, which

had been passed by the parliament in 2018. The successful outcome of the plebiscite resulted in the creation of the Bangsamoro Transition Authority in March 2019.

20. The initiatives approved by the Fund in previous years continued to support transitional justice and reconciliation efforts in Sri Lanka. In 2019, the Government established the Office for Reparations, appointing five commissioners to fulfil the body's mandate of identifying and providing for persons eligible for post-conflict reparations. The Fund also continued to support the Office on Missing Persons and its regional offices, which, since their establishment in 2018, have enhanced the accessibility of services to the public. The Office on Missing Persons carried out a successful communications campaign, with more than a million views recorded on social media alone, which greatly increased the visibility of its mission. In the framework of the implementation of Security Council resolutions [2250 \(2015\)](#) and [2419 \(2018\)](#), a project implemented by UNFPA, UNV and UN-Women launched a 30-member youth peace panel, providing a platform for young people to advocate for their participation in decision-making and peacebuilding processes.

21. In Myanmar, the Fund awarded approximately \$2.8 million to three projects under the Gender and Youth Promotion Initiative, to be implemented by civil society organizations. The projects will provide peace education programmes, establish interfaith platforms and enhance the media literacy of women and girls. An ongoing project supported by the Fund used innovative mobile applications and social messaging to amplify the voices of young people from diverse backgrounds on peace and security issues and to provide their views and experiences to key decision makers. The project also contributed to the reintegration of more than 250 children and young people formerly associated with armed forces and groups, through the provision of psychosocial and socioeconomic support.

C. Central and Southern Africa

22. This year, I declared Cameroon eligible to receive support from the Fund. Priorities identified by the Government were decentralization, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and multiculturalism. The eligibility opened the way to a \$7.3 million investment with a focus on the meaningful participation of women and young people in conflict prevention, dialogue and peacebuilding initiatives; the reduction of tensions around natural resource management; and the strengthening of local governance and social cohesion nationwide. In the framework of the ongoing Fund support to create a conducive environment for elections and promote social cohesion, more than 500 youth ambassadors for peace were trained and a young mediators' network was launched. In addition, early warning systems were created at the community level in 10 regions.

23. In Rwanda, following engagement of my Special Envoy for the Great Lakes with the Government of Rwanda, the Fund approved a \$1.5 million project supporting the reintegration of former Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda combatants and dependents repatriated to Rwanda from the Democratic Republic of Congo. The investment has a strong focus on women's empowerment and gender equality by strengthening the capacities of the Rwandan Demobilization and Reintegration Commission to mainstream gender equality into its repatriation and reintegration service. The successful reintegration of combatants in families and communities will generate more trust in the repatriation and demobilization process on the part of those members of the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda still in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

24. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Fund's investments contribute, through the Stabilization Coherence Fund, to joint international and national efforts

in the Eastern provinces of the country. UNDP, IOM and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), in cooperation with the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, have begun to support communities in the provinces of Kasai, Kasai Central and Tanganyika, where significant numbers of combatants have demobilized and returned to their communities of origin through interventions focused on local reconciliation, transitional justice and local-level and inclusive economic revitalization. The Fund invested \$6 million in that initiative, which is aimed at seizing the unique window of opportunity offered by the spontaneous surrender of combatants with planned interventions in the provinces of Kasai and Tanganyika around the humanitarian, development and peace nexus.

25. In the Republic of the Congo, the Fund's first project approved in 2018 is making an important contribution to peace consolidation in the Pool region following the signing of the ceasefire agreement in December 2017 between the government and local Ninja rebels. The project significantly contributed to an improved security environment, the resumption of free circulation, and the restoration of trust between former Ninja rebels, local communities and local state officials around common livelihoods and the restoration of basic social infrastructure such as health centres and vocational training centres.

26. In the Central African Republic, thanks to the mediation of the African Union, which led to the signature of the Political Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation between the Government and the 14 main armed groups, the Fund approved \$23.9 million to support the implementation of key priorities of the agreement, focusing on support to the joint security units, which combine elements from the Defence and Internal Security Forces and the former combatants from armed groups; communication around the agreement and social cohesion; support to the agreement coordination mechanism; and support to transitional justice and local governance. Additional funding also supports the extension of existing projects including to the Interior Security Forces, the mediation support of the African Union and community violence reduction.

27. In Chad, the growing Fund portfolio enabled nine United Nations agencies to support peacebuilding initiatives in remote regions of the country and cross-border areas. The Fund promotes, inter alia, resilience to climate change, improved management of transhumance and the strengthening of local governance in the context of increased migration. As a result of the work with host communities, internally displaced persons and refugees in Farguimé, successful negotiations between different village chiefs and the authorities led to an agreement on the distribution of fishing areas between the communities. As part of the ongoing Chad-Central African Republic cross-border initiative, the institutional dialogue between the two countries on transhumance has resumed this year for the first time since 2012. In addition, a detailed map of pastoral infrastructure was finalized as an important step towards a stronger system aimed at managing transhumance movements.

28. In Burundi, the Fund continued to strengthen dialogue, social cohesion, the reintegration of refugees, following their voluntary return, and building resilience at the local level, including through the empowerment of women and young people. A new initiative brings together young women and men affiliated with the ruling and opposition parties to build trust and common commitments to non-violence, and to constructively participate in the political life of the country. As a result of a project approved in late 2018, new mediators were trained to strengthen the existing women's mediation network at the community level, with skills-building and peer-to-peer support.

29. In Uganda, a new project was approved which is focused on including young people in the existing dialogue and mediation mechanisms at local and national level and on strengthening trust between communities and security institutions.

D. East Africa

30. In October 2019, following recent developments in Sudan and the establishment of a transitional civilian government and ongoing peace talks, I declared Sudan eligible to receive Fund support. In response, the Fund approved five peacebuilding initiatives in Darfur supporting the transition of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) and the subsequent handover to national institutions. The portfolio includes projects in each of the five states to be implemented by UNHCR, UNDP, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), IOM, the United Nations Human Settlements Programme and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). It is focused on creating durable solutions to address forced displacement while also creating an environment that is conducive for the return and integration of displaced populations; strengthening the rule of law; and enhancing local peacebuilding capacities and platforms for local conflict resolution with the strong participation of women and young people.

31. The United Nations system in South Sudan leveraged the Fund to support both national and local peace processes. One example includes technical, logistical and financial assistance to the national dialogue, which was designed to give political leaders and the public a space to interact, voice concerns and create a foundation for peace. Taking into consideration developments on the ground, the Fund allowed flexibility in programming by approving an initiative which aims to: address gender-based violence and women's inclusion in peace processes; strengthen justice and accountability mechanisms at the subnational and national levels to increase the access of young people to justice; and, to enhance women's access to land.

32. In Ethiopia, the first ever Fund-supported project approved in 2018 assisted the newly established Ministry of Peace in devising an inclusive process for the development of a national peacebuilding strategy, and strengthen capacities in Oromia, Somali and the Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples' Region states to resolve community conflicts, including in the Gedeo-Guji and Oromia-Somali border zones. The Fund was instrumental in establishing the Women Peace Forum in Oromia as a platform to elevate priorities of women in peacebuilding and to inform future consultations on the peacebuilding strategy. In support of local-level conflict management, the Fund helped to create community dialogue platforms addressing displacement-related challenges between host communities and returnees in Oromia and the Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples' Region states.

33. In Somalia, the Fund continued to support the consolidation of peacebuilding gains achieved since the establishment of the Federal Government of Somalia in 2012. In 2019, more than 800,000 persons from internally displaced person, returnee and host communities benefited directly from the rehabilitation and construction of community prioritized schools, hospitals and markets and five community action plans were developed in Hirshabelle and Galmudug states. The Fund further increased its investments with five new projects to be implemented together with the Government by IOM, UNDP, UNICEF, the United Nations Office for Project Services and the World Health Organization, in partnership with the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia. The Fund will contribute to ensuring a peaceful electoral process through support to the national independent electoral commission with the establishment of an electoral dispute resolution mechanism and supporting coordination of electoral security. Amidst ongoing security-sector reforms in the

country, the Fund approved a project to prevent the recruitment of child soldiers and to provide community-based reintegration support to children released from armed groups. As part of the Fund's annual Gender and Youth Promotion Initiative, two projects centred on young people were also awarded funding, including a one that was focused on the link between mental health and peacebuilding and a local peacebuilding initiative implemented by the Life and Peace Institute in partnership with Somali Peace Line.

34. The Fund continued to support the strengthening of good governance and anti-corruption institutions in Madagascar. In 2019, the country's first Anti-Corruption Hub, established in 2018 in Antananarivo with Fund support, successfully judged 313 cases related to corruption, up from 47 cases in 2018. The Independent Human Rights Commission, established with investments from the Fund and now funded by the Government, has processed 126 human rights complaints. The Fund also continues to play a unique role in the Grand Sud region, including through infrastructure support to five new advanced posts of the gendarmery and a legal clinic which is now operational in Betroka. More than 50 community platforms have been established in that region, leading to a peaceful resolution of 56 community disputes through those platforms. With Fund support, the United Nations continues to be the only international presence in the region with an office established as part of the Fund's investment. In 2019, the Fund approved new projects with a focus on a third anti-corruption hub, strengthening relations between citizens and local authorities, tackling climate change-induced migration as well as further support in the Grand Sud region.

E. Europe and Central Asia

35. In the Western Balkans, the Fund has been central to the promotion of multi-country and subregional approaches to the engagement of young people and enhancing trust in government institutions. Following national dialogue meetings in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia UNDP, UNICEF and UNESCO hosted the "Dialogue for the Future" regional summit in Sarajevo, bringing together 200 young people from the three countries to discuss their common priorities and challenges with regard to achieving social cohesion in the region. The Fund also approved an expansion of the existing Regional Youth Cooperation Office project based in Albania to support the office in identifying the peacebuilding needs, challenges and priorities of young people in the region and enhance their communication with and trust in their governments for positive peacebuilding results.

36. In Central Asia, the Fund expanded its portfolio support to Uzbekistan for the first time, through a \$2.2 million project to be implemented by UNDP, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and UNESCO to support young people in the Fergana Valley to better adapt to the rapid reform process in Uzbekistan, empower young women and men as actors of positive change, and pilot new models for the government to deliver reform and services inclusively. A new project in Tajikistan is aimed at promoting the inclusion of young people in social, economic and political processes at various levels, while constructing effective models for the prevention of violent extremism. The Fund's first cross-border project between Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, which was concluded at the end of 2019, was assessed to have contributed to conflict prevention and risk mitigation among local communities along the disputed sections of the border.

F. Middle East

37. In Yemen, the Fund invested in projects to mitigate the impact of the conflict and to strengthen resilience at the community level. One project implemented by FAO and IOM to help to empower women in the Governorates of Sana'a and Lahj mitigate water-based conflicts that affect farming communities has effectively supported women to act as agents of peace. Through partnerships with the Water User Associations, 15 water-related conflicts were resolved, and an estimated 27,000 farmers obtained increased access to irrigation water. A continuing project in detention centres has contributed to improving basic living conditions for detainees in areas covered by the United Nations-brokered Hudaydah Agreement, notably through the rehabilitation of six prisons and the provision of vocational training and literacy courses, as well as human rights training provided to prison staff. The project also helped to improve alternatives to detention and access to legal aid for children and minors. Through these interventions, the project helped to rebuild trust of the community towards State-provided services; and lay the foundation for confidence-building measures and will serve as an entry point for further work on rule-of-law assistance.

38. In Lebanon, the Fund continued to support a project implemented by UNDP and the International Labour Organization was focused on employment and dialogue initiatives which engaged Lebanese and Syrian young people. The Fund also approved a new \$3 million project focused on supporting government and civil society in their efforts to foster truth and reconciliation around the legacy of the war, including through the work of the National Commission investigating the fate of missing and forcibly disappeared persons.

G. North Africa

39. In Libya, an investment implemented by UNDP, UNFPA, the World Food Programme and UNICEF in Sirte will offer young men and women support in a safe space providing psychosocial services and health information and also engaging them in the rebuilding of their community through leadership, vocational training and employment opportunities. The young people will participate actively in political forums and meetings with municipal authorities to ensure that their voices are recognized and reflected in local decision-making.

H. West Africa

40. This year, I declared Mali re-eligible to receive Fund support. The Fund approved a new set of initiatives to be implemented jointly by nine United Nations agencies, funds and programmes and civil society organizations, in coordination with the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA). The new phase draws lessons from an evaluation on the Fund's portfolio of projects implemented in Mali between 2014 and 2019. It supports strategic priorities such as conflict prevention through improved access to justice; strengthened social cohesion, including in cross-border areas; and increased capacities of local governments to provide basic services. It also supports the development of community-based mediation and reconciliation initiatives in the southern and central regions, with a particular focus on young people. As part of the Gender and Youth Promotion, the Fund awarded \$800,000 to a project implemented by UNIDO and UNCDF that helps to address intercommunal conflicts prompted by environmental degradation through innovative community-level financing mechanisms.

41. Addressing the drivers of national and transnational conflict, with a major focus on the empowerment and social cohesion of women and young people, is at the centre of the Fund's efforts in the Niger. The Fund's initiatives successfully involved communities and authorities, including security and defence forces, in promoting peace and security at the local level. In Dosso and Maradi, the Fund established over 350 Dimitra clubs in 60 villages, comprising more than 10,000 members, the majority women, and deployed 150 women mediators to 20 land commissions for the first time, contributing to the prevention of local farmer-pastoralist conflicts. In Tillabery, 120 young men and women from 30 communities developed a local conflict analysis that will constitute the basis for local peace action plans to be designed jointly by the young people and local authorities. In Diffa, dialogue and early warning mechanisms contributed to increased trust between host communities and refugees benefiting more than 25,000 people and more than 200,000 between refugees and internally displaced people. In Diffa, the Fund also continued to support the Government's efforts to demobilize 245 former associates of Boko Haram and promote their socioeconomic reintegration through a community-centred approach.

42. The Fund contributes to conflict prevention in relation to the use of natural resources, increasingly limited by climate change, in a context of displacement and migration in Mauritania. The Fund enables UNDP, FAO, UNICEF and OHCHR to work with Malian refugees and host communities in the border region of Bassikounou. The initiative has provided local authorities and communities with a georeferenced map of natural resources, including forests, pastures, ponds, water points complemented by an integrated management framework for natural resources, thus enabling a participatory approach to the use of natural resources. Local committees in 49 villages are also contributing to defusing tensions between host communities and refugees, which are also being made aware of the need to protect the environment through reforestation, and the fight against bush fire that destroys grazing land. Local committees have also designated 68 gender focal points and 15 female associations focusing primarily on human rights issues and gender-based violence.

43. The Fund continued to support the Emergency Programme for the Sahel in Burkina Faso with a view to enhancing social cohesion, increasing trust in institutions and preventing violent extremism in the north and east regions with a particular focus on local engagement and peace infrastructure, in line with the recommendations by my Special Representative for West Africa and the Sahel. Early warning mechanisms were established in 110 villages with more than 1,000 community leaders and local authorities becoming agents for peace; more than 60 clubs for young people were established in 40 villages; and 411 women-led community dialogue platforms were created. In addition, dialogue platforms between young people, local authorities and communities were established in three villages affected by violent conflict, Yirgou, Foubé and Barsalho, to prevent further escalation. In the security sector, 15 security municipal coordination mechanisms were established, and civic-military activities were organized to strengthen mutual trust. In that framework, more than 6,000 birth certificates and 5,000 identity cards were delivered to marginalized populations.

44. In the Gambia, the Truth, Reconciliation and Reparations Commission commenced its work in January 2019, with major technical and operational support from the Fund, with the aim of fostering social cohesion and national reconciliation through a participatory and inclusive process. The Commission's public hearings and outreach activities have generated much public interest and broad popular participation, including by young people and civil society. The Commission has held 10 public hearing sessions, with 188 witnesses testifying. Beyond the hearings, more than 34,000 Gambians have been directly engaged in the context of community-led outreach missions on the transitional justice process, including among the diaspora. Progress has also been achieved on a comprehensive reparations programme, crafted in consultation with victims' associations, while the Commission's reparation fund has been launched with donations from all sectors of society and the Government's

\$1 million contribution. With the Fund's support, the National Human Rights Commission was operationalized in 2019 with five commissioners and national outreach campaigns on the Commission's work. In the area of security sector reform, the country's first national security policy was launched in June 2019, accompanied by an inclusive dialogue.

45. In Liberia, the Fund continues to provide essential funding to key peacebuilding priorities following the withdrawal of the United Nations Mission in Liberia. In 2019, the Fund supported the development of the second phase of the country's national action plan on women, peace and security, as well as the passing of the Domestic Violence Act. As part of those initiatives, gender units in 10 security sector institutions were also created. The Fund also facilitated the three-day National Economic Dialogue in early September 2019, which generated several major recommendations on sustaining peace. Key among them was the establishment of a war and economic crimes court and a call for the implementation of the report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. The Fund also supported more than 40 dialogues on reconciliation throughout the country, leading to the development of six county reconciliation action plans aimed at developing a national reconciliation policy for Liberia. The Fund approved a \$4 million comprehensive new project supporting land conflict issues.

46. In Côte d'Ivoire, after the drawdown of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire, the Fund's investments have continued to facilitate intercommunal dialogue and conflict resolution, involving women and young people in particular, as well as enabling dialogue between the security forces and the communities. More than 30 civil-military committees have been operationalized with the Fund's support and meet regularly to resolve community security concerns. Through a 2019 perception survey, an increase in the population's level of confidence towards security forces was found, from 52 per cent in 2016 to 72 per cent. Similarly, intercommunity dialogues and joint community actions supported by the Fund have led to the strengthening of community relations. Since 2018, 10,500 young persons have reached out to the Fund-supported Peace Information Centre to discuss conflict prevention and resolution, and 1,050 have decided to become youth ambassadors, leading social cohesion activities in their communities. In 2019, the Fund approved additional resources for intercommunity and civil-military dialogues, enabling their expansion ahead of the 2020 elections.

47. In Guinea-Bissau, the Fund is supporting the transition from the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau at the end of 2020. The Fund's support to civil society groups, in particular women's groups, strengthened their agency and helped in the negotiation and signing of the Stability Pact, in February 2019. The Pact, which was aimed at ensuring the continued respect of all political actors for the Economic Community of West African States-brokered Conakry Agreement, paved the way for the holding of peaceful legislative elections in March 2019, which the Fund also supported with domestic monitoring by groups of women and young people. The Fund also supported a media fact-checking team during the elections, as well as the region's first women's radio station, in Bafatá, which helped to defuse tensions in one of the most disputed electoral regions.

48. In Guinea, with the Fund's support, 12 individuals, including 5 women members of parliament from both the majority and the opposition parties, were designated and trained as national mediators, constituting a national contact group for dialogue and peace. Their interventions have helped to strengthen the confidence of the population in the parliament and diffuse tensions, including locally. Increased trust by the population in the police was also observable in the eight regions where a newly established oversight mechanism has led to the doubling of formal complaints filed by citizens, as well as the deployment of mobile policing units to respond to gender-based violence. The Fund also supported the establishment of early warning mechanisms comprising nearly 1,300 young people and the establishment of local youth councils in 19 municipalities in five regions. The councils, in which 36 per cent

of the participants are girls, are elected directly by young people and work with municipal councils. The Fund approved a new \$2 million project aimed at contributing to an environment that is conducive to elections by strengthening the national social peace infrastructure. The project will complement three initiatives on the promotion of gender and young people, for a total of \$3.8 million, that are focused on the inclusion of young people and women in decision-making and mediation activities during the electoral period.

49. In Sierra Leone, the Fund continued to support post-2018 elections dispute resolution mechanisms, including through alternative dispute resolution, community-police exchanges and local reconciliation. The Sierra Leone female parliamentary caucus was also revitalized after a long hiatus.

50. With the Fund's support, the first civilian-military dialogue, which brought together 75 individuals to discuss security priorities, was held in Togo. The dialogue was complemented by the training of 1,553 security forces personnel on human rights and peaceful crowd control. Nearly 40 local peace committees were established with the participation of community members, including representatives of women and young people. Preliminary analysis indicates that these projects contributed to creating an enabling environment for the peaceful June 2019 municipal elections.

Table 2
Global performance of the Peacebuilding Fund, 2017–2019

<i>Peacebuilding Fund priority areas</i>	<i>Project count</i>	<i>On track to deliver outputs (percentage)</i>	<i>On track with evidence of significant contribution to peacebuilding outcomes (percentage)</i>
Priority area 1^a			
2019	35	89	26
2018	33	82	24
2017	25	88	16
Priority area 2^b			
2019	120	80	32
2018	86	84	27
2017	45	87	36
Priority area 3^c			
2019	11	91	36
2018	10	80	20
2017	4	100	50
Priority area 4^d			
2019	20	95	15
2018	16	89	6
2017	6	94	35
Overall 2019	186	84	29
Overall 2018	147	84	19
Overall 2017	91	89	31

Source: Peacebuilding Support Office project assessments, periodic reports and independent country evaluations.

^a Security sector reform; rule of law; disarmament; demobilization and reintegration; and political dialogue.

^b Reconciliation, democratic governance and conflict prevention/management.

^c Employment and equitable access to social services.

^d State capacities, extension of State authority and governance of peacebuilding resources.

IV. Peacebuilding Fund oversight and management

A. Advisory Group

51. The fifth Advisory Group, which began its term in 2018, continued its work. At its two meetings in 2019, the Group advised on the content and strategic focus of the Fund's new strategy, relevant resource mobilization approaches and alignment with other instruments. The Group provided recommendations underlining the need to broaden and diversify the Fund's donor base, and the criticality of pursuing options outlined in my 2018 report on peacebuilding and sustaining peace ([A/72/707-S/2018/43](#)) to move beyond reliance on voluntary contributions to the Fund. They recommended engaging the Peacebuilding Commission to advance discussions among Member States and advised on how the Fund's new strategy should balance "quantum leap" growth with the ability to maintain maximum effectiveness and flexibility. Advisory Group members held meetings with key contributing Member States, with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission, the Chair of the Advisory Group of the Central Emergency Response Fund and European Union institutions in Brussels. The Group also exercised its oversight role by participating in partners' visits to the Gambia and the Niger.

B. Budget and personnel

52. The Fund's 2019 operational budget continued to depend on the overhead from donor contributions. The expenditure for 2019 was \$2,175,434. To cope with the capacity constraints of some United Nations country teams, in 2019, the Fund launched a programme support roster of deployable experts to provide additional support in project planning, design and evaluation. The Fund also continues to benefit from staff through arrangements with UNV, through the Junior Professional Officers Programme, and secondees from the International Labour Organization, UNDP, UN-Women and OHCHR. While those measures helped to fill critical gaps, they remain unsustainable in the long run. To ensure adequate oversight of the Fund's investments, the Fund stepped up several management measures. It continued the use of a tranche-based allocation system to better manage risk. The Fund also improved its analytics through a more elaborated project-reporting dashboard and made project development processes more systematic through the roll-out of a project appraisal scorecard.

53. To adequately implement the Fund's mandate to take forward my vision on prevention and sustaining peace within a time of constrained resources, the Fund continues to apply cost containment measures rigorously, including by ensuring that all staff members travel in economy class. The Fund also enhanced its communications capacity to improve outreach and support resource mobilization, including the launch of an online platform for private donations in partnership with the United Nations Foundation.

54. The Fund held a community of practice meeting in Nairobi with 35 Fund secretariats and focal points, covering 23 countries. Participants discussed how the Fund can support the new resident coordinator system and enhance the capacities of United Nations country teams, linking programmatic responses to opportunities on the ground. Throughout 2019, the Fund worked closely with the Peace and Development Advisers network deployed by the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and UNDP through the Joint Programme on Building National Capacities for Conflict Prevention. Peace and Development Advisers offer a critical capacity to Resident Coordinators and ensure that the Fund portfolio remains focused on conflict prevention priorities and adapts to changing circumstances.

C. Enhanced monitoring and evaluation

55. As can be seen in table 2, the Fund has continued to strengthen its monitoring and evaluation function through enhanced guidance, communication and dissemination to contribute to knowledge and learning throughout the United Nations system. This year, recipient agencies completed 19 evaluations of individual Fund-supported projects, while the Fund completed 4 independent third-party evaluations of country portfolios in the Central African Republic, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali and Somalia. In the evaluations, the impact of the Fund's support in the past five years (2014 to 2018) was assessed, and lessons were provided for future Fund investments with regard to programme design, implementation modalities and partnerships. The evaluations were complemented by two thematic reviews on support to transitional justice and young people and peace and security. In addition, an evaluability assessment in the Gambia was conducted. The Fund also underwent its regular audit by the Office of Internal Oversight Services, which confirmed the sound management of the Fund. The Fund also received, for the fourth year in a row, an A+ rating from the review process of the United Kingdom, highlighting the impact of the Fund and the unique role that it had played.

56. Through the evaluation of the Fund's portfolio in Somalia, it was found that the portfolio had been an effective tool in promoting joint approaches by the United Nations in Somalia, providing proof of concept for high-risk and innovative peacebuilding initiatives. The evaluation highlighted several notable achievements, including the effectiveness of community action plans developed as part of Fund-supported projects; the Fund's support for the extension of state authority and the capacity for service delivery of nascent government institutions; and the integration of community participation into decision-making processes, which contributed to building trust between authorities and Somali citizens. In the evaluation of the Mali portfolio, the Fund was commended on its timeliness in responding to the situation in the northern and central regions of the country, as well as the relevance of its cross-border and regional focus, and notable results were highlighted, including widely adopted peace education programmes and legislation to address gender-based violence.

57. In the evaluation of the Central African Republic, it was found that the Fund's support had enhanced the capacity of the United Nations to engage strategically in peacebuilding. The Fund's initiatives contributed to supporting key political processes, including those that led to the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic of 2019. Other positive results included reduced violence in certain targeted communities, the restoration of essential functions of the internal security forces and the enhanced political participation of women.

58. In Côte d'Ivoire, the evaluation found that, in addition to playing a critical role in supporting the drawdown of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire, the Fund contributed to reducing conflict and promoting social cohesion where dialogue initiatives between the population, local government and security forces were established.

V. Conclusion

59. In 2019, the Peacebuilding Fund continued to demonstrate value for money and impact on the ground while growing only modestly since 2018 in terms of approvals and contributions. The Fund also showed its comparative advantage and key role in fostering joint strategies that drive United Nations reforms at the country level,

supporting a new generation of United Nations country teams and empowered Resident Coordinators. Those results have been made possible by the contributions of a key group of Member States and the funding carried over from previous cycles, which is now depleted. The likelihood of global conflict and the expected number of United Nations transitions will make the Fund's support more critical in the coming years. The Fund's next strategy, covering the period 2020–2024, will require unprecedented support from Member States, making my request for a quantum leap more pressing than ever.
