

Peacebuilding Commission

Working Group on Lessons Learned

“Economic Revitalization and Youth Employment for Peacebuilding – with a focus on Youth Employment and Natural Resource Management”,

8 July 2011

Chairperson’s Summary

I. Introduction

1. On 8 July 2011, the Peacebuilding Commission’s (PBC) Working Group on Lessons Learned (WGLL) held a meeting on the topic of “Economic revitalization and youth employment for peacebuilding – with a focus on youth employment and natural resource management.” The meeting was chaired by H.E. Mr. Tsuneo Nishida, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Mission of Japan to the United Nations and Chair of the WGLL.

The panel was composed of four speakers:

- Dr. Stephen Ndegwa, Adviser in the Fragile and Conflict Affected Countries Group (OPCFC) of the World Bank.
- Mr. Ichiro Tambo, Director – General of the African Department of the Japan International Cooperation Agency, JICA.
- Mr. Oli Brown, Environmental Affairs Officer for the United Nations in Sierra Leone.
- Mr. Owen Shumba, Team Leader, Livelihoods and Economic Recovery Group of UNDP Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery.

2. In his opening remarks, Ambassador Nishida firstly introduced the theme of the meeting: *Economic revitalization and youth employment for peacebuilding – with a focus on youth employment and natural resources management* which is a follow-up to a series of meetings on the subject. He mentioned the need to match the increasing awareness in the international community with practical solutions to address the fragmentation in the approach to economic revitalization and youth employment in post-conflict settings. He added that economic revitalization requires a wide spectrum of policies. Among the various measures, the WGLL decided to focus on youth employment and the management of natural resources and to explore ways to make the response of the international community more coherent, timely and adequate. The Chair noted that economic revitalization and natural resource management can be conducive to peacebuilding if complemented by adequate guidelines, policies and regulatory frameworks.

II. Presentations by Panelists:

3. Dr. Stephen Ndegwa reported lessons learned from the work of OPCFC at the World Bank. He noted that in order to generate employment, three measures are important, namely a) create an attractive environment for private sector investment and to not overly depend on labour focused interventions, b) promote and develop the agricultural sector through technological interventions, which also creates related jobs in the value chain, and c) early interventions by the public sector to provide jobs sometimes are necessary to induce private sector entry. He highlighted the importance of incentives for the private sector, human resource skills, such as in agriculture, and fostering marketplace confidence through predictable governance of market exchanges and having more information available. He also underlined the need for strengthening the collaboration between UN agencies and the African Development Bank. In suggesting roles for the PBC, Dr. Ndegwa noted that the PBC could raise the issue of developed countries' agricultural subsidies that affect economic recovery in post-conflict states.

4. Mr. Ichiro Tambo's presentation focused on lessons learned from JICA's experience in skills and vocational training and community development in Africa. Mr. Tambo highlighted the importance of monitoring for changes in labour market demand and carrying out pilot trainings. In addition, he stressed that training should not be just about skills, but improving discipline and self-confidence which is critical in post-conflict situations. The labour market needs to be demand driven opposed to supply driven. Additionally, policies that promote inclusiveness and equality among vulnerable people are important and he cited as a successful example training programs that mixed ex-combatants of different origins and civilians. For community development, Mr. Tambo emphasized the importance of accurate community profiling and the socio-economic impact of rehabilitating roads. He noted that land issues, due to a lack of formal land system and documentation, can be contentious, often constrain development activities, and require a cautious approach.

5. In his presentation, Mr. Oli Brown discussed the role of natural resource management for economic revitalization and youth employment in Sierra Leone. The effective use of a country's natural resources depends on effective governance in three areas: benefit sharing (the distribution of revenues between companies and state), livelihoods (to maximize the number of jobs created for nationals and minimize the displacement of livelihoods) and legacies (to reduce or avoid negative social and environmental consequences). He discussed the importance of environmental assessments. He noted that currently in Sierra Leone, many contracts are not transparent and some are disadvantageous to the government. Mr. Brown also described some of the negative consequences from natural resource business activities such as livelihood displacement, social

problems and environmental damage.¹ Some of the lessons learned from UNEP's work in Sierra Leone include: a) the first 5-10 years after a conflict are very significant since concessions signed during this period will have an impact for decades; b) countries need to know the value of their resources to be able to manage them well; c) often natural resources are used to generate youth employment 'activity' opposed to sustainable employment and; d) natural resource management is politically challenging which includes high expectations for dividends from the population that need to be managed.

6. Mr. Owen Shumba's presentation focused on the creation of employment in fragile environments and the difficulties faced in this context. Mr. Shumba reviewed several new approaches to employment creation and emphasized the importance of disaster/conflict sensitivity in employment programming. Lessons learned from the UNDP's work in various countries include: a) the need to link temporary and emergency employment measures in crisis and post-crisis situations to the overall local economic development strategy; b) ensure livelihoods/economic recovery initiatives are market driven; c) ensure peacebuilding strategies involve a link with livelihoods; d) strengthen women's economic empowerment; e) improve macro-micro policy linkages in Livelihood and Economic Recovery programme implementation; f) link youth employment to governance and financial inclusion: place emphasis on the link between governance, inclusive financial services and youth employment interventions; g) avoid a single sector approach for youth employment; h) rethink and re-orient education policies, vocational training and labour market policies; i) Provide start-up grants/kits or equipment in order to create self-employment and; j) support youth to engage in green jobs. While discussing areas for further PBC engagement, Mr. Shumba suggested a potential role for the PBC in promoting Public-Private Partnerships, such as PPP's in waste management.

III. Discussions on Lessons Learned

7. Member states raised questions about the allocation of benefits from natural resources and contract transparency. In response, Mr. Brown emphasized that it was important to build countries' capacity to establish relevant laws and institutionalize royalty payments. He noted the problem of strict stabilization clauses in contracts in many African countries. In regard to transparency, Liberia's policy of publishing all mining contracts online was highlighted. This had resulted in qualitatively improved contracts because the government and companies know they will be held accountable.

¹ The UN operation in Sierra Leone has a specific programme on environmental cooperation for peacebuilding as part of its strategy 'The Joint Vision for Sierra Leone'. Jointly implemented by UNEP, UNDP, FAO and WHO, it currently focuses on sustainable management of extractive industries, environmental governance and awareness raising, land and water management, climate change and disaster risk reduction and chemicals and hazardous waste.

8. On youth employment, it was stressed that an integrated approach is needed which goes beyond skills training and builds social capital. It was noted that access to mentors and peer support has been shown by studies to be more important than access to financial support or skills training. Discussions also highlighted the need to increase the risk tolerance of investors in order for African countries to attract foreign investment and generate more jobs. The PBC could play an important advocacy role to address this issue. Other issues raised included land ownership, where in many African countries there are often no written records. In this regard, information sharing, including sharing lessons and experiences among development partners, is very important.

9. Participants mentioned the need to improve regional and technical cooperation among countries from the Global South. Points raised in this regard included a role for the PBC in supporting forums that bring together practitioners from the South and the advantages of civilian expertise from the South in peacebuilding. Areas that were discussed for further regional cooperation included assistance in conducting environmental impact assessments.

10. In addition, questions were raised about how to address the gap in quality data, in particular to have more information on employment structures which is critical for developing job creation policies. The World Bank's initiative to create a knowledge platform around fragile countries for development actors to share information was cited as something that would be online soon. There was also a suggestion that the PBC could support the work of national statistical institutions in post-conflict countries. It was noted, however, that in post-conflict settings where there is weak government capacity, data collection was likely to always be a challenge.