

Peacebuilding Commission Working Group on Lessons Learned

The PBC's role in resource mobilization: Support of the organization of donor/partner conferences

Chairperson's Summary

I. Introduction

1. On 3 April 2013, the Working Group on Lessons Learned (WGLL) of the Peacebuilding Commission convened a meeting to discuss the role of the Commission in support of the organization of donor/partner conferences.

2. The main topics discussed in the meeting were: 1) Key lessons learned from previous PBC engagement in support of donor/partner conferences for CAR and Burundi; 2) Defining "success" and measuring the results of donor/partner conferences; and 3) Defining the role and contribution of the Commission in supporting the organization and conduct of these conferences.

3. In his opening remarks, the Chair highlighted three main points to frame the discussion: 1) donor/partner conferences undertaken in the development context, in which the PBC has an important role in linking peacebuilding priorities to the development sector; 2) the crucial importance of national ownership throughout the preparatory process of the conference and the role which the Commission should play in support of the national authorities of the country concerned; 3) donor/partner conference must be seen as a process, in which the follow up is just as important as the preparation.

4. The Chair invited the following panelists to reflect on the subject:

- H.E. Mr. Paul Seger, Chair of the Burundi Configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission, Permanent Representative of Switzerland to the United Nations.
- Ms. Clare Lockhart, Co-founder and Director, Institute for State Effectiveness.
- Ms. Mary Morrison, World Bank Partnership Advisor, Peacebuilding Support Office (currently seconded from the World Bank).

II. Presentations by Panelists

5. Ambassador Seger opened his presentation by stressing the importance of national ownership, especially during the preparatory phases of donor/partner conferences. In these phases, it is crucial to clarify the respective roles and responsibilities of the government of the country concerned and of the PBC. He noted that in the case of the Burundi Partners Conference of 2012, the Commission opted for a supporting role rather than that of a co-Chair in order to underline that the conference was a nationally-led process. He agreed with the Chair that donor conferences should not be considered a one-time event and that the follow-up phase is of crucial importance.

6. Ambassador Seger underscored key elements that should be prioritized when planning a conference:

- identifying the purpose;
- determining the location and attention to logistics. For example, the Burundi conference was held in Geneva instead of Bujumbura mainly to facilitate travel of key partners;
- drawing the attention of the international community through intensive advocacy and communications efforts;
- seeking partnerships with traditional and non-traditional donors – IFIs, regional organizations and private sector and aligning messages of these partners to the government, both in New York and in the field;
- building on the work of existing mechanisms within the country and drawing upon previous country-specific lessons learned; and
- managing expectations of the national actors regarding the desired outcome of the donor conference. In this regard, it is usually desirable to stress that the monetary outcome is not the only goal of the conference and that increased attention and interest in the needs of the country are equally important.

7. Ms. Lockhart noted that the following elements need to be considered during the planning and follow-up phases of a donor conference:

- Appropriate timing of organizing a donor/partners conference must be carefully identified (for example, keeping in mind electoral cycles);
- A comprehensive approach is needed where the peacebuilding and the socio-economic objectives are aligned, and the short and long-term objectives requiring attention from international partners should be well sequenced;
- Focus should be centered on a limited number of priorities so as to be realistic ;
- Appropriate re-branding of the country through firm commitment from the government could be an important outcome of donor conferences;
- An honest approach to understanding the challenges and constraints, possibly through a “balance sheet” which clarifies national assets, liabilities and limitations. Such an approach helps donors develop a comprehensive view of the situation;
- The preparation for donor conferences represents an opportunity to deepen national ownership, which is of crucial importance, by fostering national consensus on priorities and on the overall orientation of the country;
- Donor conferences should be viewed as part of an ongoing process of deepening partnerships and fostering internal cohesion. Therefore, focus on follow-up and implementation would help sustain the momentum generated by the conference;
- A mutual accountability mechanism is crucial in order to monitor commitments. Trust Funds and other mechanisms should be established to help monitor the disbursement of pledges;

- Mapping out key and potential stakeholders, such as civil society organizations, private sector and foundations; as well as potential new donors and partners, represent a key outcome of donor/partner conferences which could help orient the follow-up communications and outreach strategy; and
- Communication is an essential element in ensuring a re-branding of the country and the dissemination of a narrative about the positive change taking place.

8. Ms. Lockhart noted that one important area where the PBC could add value during the preparation and the follow-up phase is to support the country concerned in formulating its priorities, fostering partnerships and ensuring sustained support to them. This is particularly challenging where the engagement of the private sector and foundations are sought.

9. Ms. Morrison underlined the following elements:

- The success of a donor conference could be defined and measured by looking back after 1-2 years to assess its realistic outcome;
- There is a need for the Government to have sufficient capacity in place to measure and monitor the disbursement and implementation of pledges, including through simple national donor coordination mechanisms.
- The preparatory and follow-up phases must be inclusive and nationally owned, therefore partners can help national actors focus on the substance and content rather than be distracted with the arduous logistics details of the donor conference.
- Documentation must be concise and strategic in order to be easily used by donors to prepare for the conference.

10. Ms. Morrison concluded by highlighting the role of the PBC as follows:

- Support national actors in establishing an accountability system to monitor disbursement and implementation of pledges; and
- Advocate for the inclusion of peacebuilding priorities in national development strategies for which donor conferences are traditionally organized.

III. Member States' views

11. The majority of member states focused their interventions on how the PBC can support the countries on its agenda in the organization of donor conferences and how the success of these conferences can be measured:

- **National ownership:** Several member states noted that the PBC should ensure that the support of the international community is aligned with national plans and priorities. At the same time, the lead time for the preparatory process should be sufficient enough to forge consensus on priorities and strategy. In addition, members stressed the need to encourage national revenue generation through different means (e.g. natural resource management, private sector investment, etc.). One speaker noted that the Commission should help support recipient countries in improving their

capacity for planning, programming and project formulation. Another representative underscored the role of the PBC in ensuring that national peacebuilding priorities receive due attention and called for increased focus on economic activities with greater likelihood to create jobs and support the empowerment of women and youth.

- **Prioritization:** A number of member states emphasized the importance of increased focus and prioritizing of the issues addressed for which donors are requested to support. The PBC could play an important role in supporting national actors to articulate, sustain focus on and help address gaps within these priorities. The PBC was also called upon to identify practical ways to intensify advocacy efforts using its remote location in New York for global outreach.
- **Accountability:** Member states stressed the need to hold donors accountable for their pledges. One delegate highlighted the importance of an aid management system to monitor disbursement and strengthen accountability. Another member suggested establishing a follow-up mechanism to monitor pledges. One representative noted that it is crucial for disbursement to be channeled through government systems in order to empower the authorities and to ensure accountability. The PBC could play an important role in monitoring and reporting on mutual accountability between the Government and its partners.
