

PEACEBUILDING COMMISSION WORKING GROUP ON LESSONS LEARNED

Concept Note

The PBC Working Group on Lessons Learned – Taking Stock and Looking Forward

Conference Room 4
9 December 2009, 10.00 a.m. – 01.00 p.m.

I. Introduction

As part of its mandate “*to develop best practices*”, the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) established the Working Group on Lessons Learned (WGLL) as an informal platform to enhance dialogue on issues of particular relevance to countries on its agenda. Since its creation in January 2007 the WGLL provided a platform open to all member states, including countries that have experienced post-conflict recovery, institutional donors and representatives of civil society for sharing lessons learned from existing and past peacebuilding experiences. To date, the WGLL held **eighteen meetings** which addressed a number of critical lessons for peacebuilding strategy and activities.

The Working Group’s proceedings have been largely guided by the founding resolutions of the PBC. To this end, the WGLL explored the inter-linkages between socio-economic development, security and human rights, as well as examples of practical support to national peacebuilding efforts.

In approaching its mandate, the WGLL also provided a platform for interaction and dialogue between member states, the UN system, external and national experts, as well as representatives of institutional donors and civil society organizations

II. Acting on the recommendations of the midterm review (June 2008)

On 12 June 2008 the WGLL convened a special meeting of the WGLL in order to discuss emerging lessons from its work. At that meeting, members made a number of recommendations which in five specific areas, namely: (1) **working methods**; (2) **selection of topics**; (3) **links with the UN system**; (4) **links with the larger peacebuilding community**; and (5) **promoting synergies and utilization of lessons learned**.

Since that review, the WGLL made considerable efforts in the area of topics’ selection, which were identified on the basis of one or more of the following criteria:

- Direct relevance to specific priorities for countries on the PBC agenda (e.g. sustainable reintegration, rule of law assistance and national dialogue...etc); or
- An attempt at further exploring lessons in recurring peacebuilding priorities in countries emerging from conflict (e.g. national capacity development...etc); or

PEACEBUILDING COMMISSION WORKING GROUP ON LESSONS LEARNED

- An attempt at further elaborating on earlier discussions in the WGLL (e.g. Experiences in regional approaches to DDR...etc)

In this regard, the WGLL was able to take forward another key recommendation from the mid-term review, namely by drawing more effectively on the work of the UN system. The Working Group tapped on the experiences of relevant UN operational entities (e.g. UNODC, UNDP, DPKO/OROLSI and DPA) that have programming on the ground, as well as on the experiences of the World Bank (e.g. Experiences in regional approaches to DDR). Progress has been also made in the area improving working methods, in particular by early planning for the meetings, identifying appropriate panelists and disseminating critical lessons to all PBC configurations.

However, the WGLL is yet to forge deeper links with the larger peacebuilding community and, in so doing, promote synergies and utilization of lessons learned.

III. Purpose and key issues for consideration

Generally, the potential of the WGLL is yet to be fully explored. With its contribution to a growing body of knowledge on critical peacebuilding experiences and priorities, the added value of the Working Group to the overall functioning and development of the PBC could and should be further maximized. The upcoming meeting would provide the initial steps in this direction. To this end, the following issues would be considered:

- To what extent has the WGLL supported the engagement of the PBC with countries on its agenda?
- What are the notable areas of progress in WGLL working methods and its linkage with operational UN entities, countries with past experience and PBC country configurations?
- How can the WGLL further support the development of the PBC's contribution to a growing body of knowledge on peacebuilding priorities and approaches? (e.g. links with the larger peacebuilding community)
- How can the WGLL be utilized to draw on lessons and experiences in specific themes of relevance to countries on the PBC agenda? (e.g. supporting regional efforts to combat narcotics trafficking).
- How can the WGLL become a vehicle for generating broader UN system synergies in critical peacebuilding priorities?
- How can the WGLL creatively engage countries seeking to share their own or draw upon existing experiences in critical peacebuilding priorities?

IV. Format and Structure

This meeting will be in the format of an informal and interactive panel discussion. The panel consists of the Chairs of the country configurations who will be invited to reflect on one or more of the aforementioned issues. Following brief introductory remarks by the

PEACEBUILDING COMMISSION WORKING GROUP ON LESSONS LEARNED

Chair and the panelists, members and guests from the UN system and civil society will be invited to share their perspectives on the issues under consideration.

The meeting will be held from 10:00 a.m. – 01:00 p.m. on Wednesday, 9 December 2009.

Chair:

H.E. Mrs. Carmen Maria Gallardo Hernandez, Chair of the PBC Working Group on Lessons Learned

Panelists:

H.E. Mr. Heraldo Muñoz
Chair, Peacebuilding Commission

H.E. Mr. Peter Maurer
Chair, Burundi Configuration

H.E. Mr. Jan Grauls
Chair, Central African Republic Configuration

H.E. Ms. Maria Luiza-Ribeiro Viotti
Chair, Guinea-Bissau Configuration

H.E. Mr. John McNee
Chair, Sierra Leone Configuration

Outcome

Following the meeting, the PBSO will prepare a Chair's Summary of relevant ideas and recommendations drawn from the presentations and discussions.