

# Peacebuilding Commission Working Group on Lessons Learned

## *The PBC Working Group on Lessons Learned – “Taking Stock and Looking Forward”*

### Chair’s Summary

#### **Introduction**

1. On 9 December 2009, the Peacebuilding Commission’s Working Group on Lessons Learned (WGLL) convened a special meeting on the theme “**Taking Stock and Looking Forward**”. The meeting was intended to engage the entire PBC membership in an in-depth dialogue on the past contribution by and future orientation of the WGLL.

2. The Chairs of the four PBC country-specific configurations or their representative served as panelists for the discussion: Ambassador John McNee, Chair, Sierra Leone Configuration; Ambassador Maria Luiza-Ribeiro Viotti, Chair, Guinea-Bissau Configuration; Ambassador Peter Maurer, Chair, Burundi Configuration; and Ambassador Thomas Lambert, Deputy Permanent Representative of Belgium, replacing Ambassador Jan Grauls, Chair, Central African Republic Configuration.

3. In her opening remarks, the Chair of the WGLL, H.E. Mrs. Carmen Maria Gallardo Hernandez noted that in spite of progress made, the potential of the WGLL was yet to be fully explored and that the added value of the WGLL to the overall functioning and development of the PBC could and should be further maximized. Furthermore, she underlined that the WGLL was yet to forge deeper links with the larger peacebuilding community and, in doing so, promote synergies and utilize lessons learned. The Chair stressed that the meeting was, therefore, intended to start this important discussion, which should also feed into the upcoming PBC review.

4. The Chairs of the PBC country configurations made brief introductory remarks followed by an interactive discussion during which participating member states offered their views and suggestions. Overall, there was a general agreement that the WGLL can further contribute to the evolving body of knowledge on peacebuilding which would be essential for the continuing evolution of the PBC’s advisory role. The discussion confirmed the need for further refining the work of the WGLL by addressing: the specific challenges facing the countries on the PBC agenda; the unique policy dilemmas posed by peacebuilding; and by drawing on a wider array of expertise from outside the UN. The ensuing presentations and discussions at the meeting have been organized around three issues:

#### **A) Purpose of the WGLL**

5. The WGLL could potentially become a central and informal platform for knowledge sharing and dissemination on peacebuilding. To this end, the WGLL would

- Identify common and recurrent gaps in and challenges for peacebuilding drawn from the experiences of PBC's engagement in the countries on its agenda.
- Extract lessons learned from these experiences and provide concrete recommendations to help improve PBC's advisory role/engagement in country-specific situations.
- Forge deeper links with and facilitate outreach to the wider peacebuilding community, such as academics, policymakers, and NGOs, as well as existing platforms such as the "Geneva Peacebuilding Platform".
- Tap on and disseminate knowledge on peacebuilding within the UN system; a broad range of regional and international actors and countries emerging from conflict;
- Become a platform for cross-learning on process related issues among different country configurations (e.g. good practice in the use of Strategic Frameworks).

## **B) Working Methods**

6. In fulfilling the aforementioned purposes, the WGLL's working methods needs to be further adapted. In this regard, the WGLL would:

- Remain an informal, open and inclusive forum in order to facilitate partnerships with a wide range of actors (e.g. countries, regional and sub-regional organizations, financial institutions, civil society, and academia).
- Utilize existing platforms such as the "Peacebuilding Platform" in Geneva, the various INCAF Working Groups.
- Become a platform to utilize uncharted tools of communications with and outreach particularly to the field and practitioners (e.g. web-based discussions...etc).
- Convene upon request from the Organizational Committee or country configurations to examine any proposed topic.
- Meet in different public formats that would engage more productively the broader peacebuilding community.

## **C) Issues for Discussion**

7. Members identified a number of critical issues which the WGLL will be most suited to address. These issues were organized around three broad categories:

- Thematic and cross-cutting issues for peacebuilding (e.g. reintegration, elections, reconciliation, role of women, youth employment...etc);
- Process related issues (e.g. financial tools for peacebuilding, engagement with regional organizations, etc.).
- Policy and strategic questions of particular conceptual relevance to the evolution of the UN peacebuilding agenda (e.g. sequential vs. synchronized approaches to peacebuilding, criteria for country selection, linkage between peacekeeping and peacebuilding, entry and exit strategies, measuring peace consolidations, etc.).

### **Concluding remarks**

8. The Chair announced that she would produce a comprehensive report reflecting the outcome of eighteen sessions of the WGLL over a period of three years. This report should facilitate further consideration of the way forward in the evolution of the WGLL. She further announced that she would circulate a questionnaire to ascertain the views of member states on some of the suggestions made during the meeting. That questionnaire is attached as an annex to the present report.

*Prepared by PBSO*

*10 December 2009*