

Written Statement by the Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission to the Security Council High-Level Open Debate on

**"peace and security in Africa: addressing root causes of conflict while promoting
post-pandemic recovery in Africa"**

19 May 2021

Mr. President, Excellencies,

At the outset, I would like to congratulate the People's Republic of China on assuming the presidency of the Security Council, and extend my wishes for a successful tenure. I also thank you, Mr. President, for this timely reflection on "Addressing Root Causes of Conflict while promoting post-pandemic recovery in Africa".

This important debate coincides with ongoing deliberations within the Peacebuilding Commission on ways of strengthening relations between the two bodies in support of peacebuilding in Africa. During an informal exchange between the PBC and the President of the Security Council on 10 May, Member States noted that the pandemic has exacerbated existing economic, health and societal pressures, particularly in conflict-affected countries, and advocated for equitable access to vaccines. They emphasized the importance of coherence between all three pillars of the United Nations' work, in accordance with respective mandates, and stressed that the PBC is uniquely placed to foster a more effective response, as is the PBF. They reiterated the importance of strengthening partnerships with the African Union and subregional organizations and highlighted the need to empower women and youth to play an equal role in post-pandemic recovery efforts. They further emphasized the need to integrate peacebuilding and sustaining peace into efforts to build back better.

This debate also comes after finalizing the PBC's first of its kind advice to the General Assembly on "causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa", in which I reported on the Commission's continued engagement in helping to build and

sustain peace, address the root causes of conflict and to promote sustainable development in a number of conflict-affected countries in Africa under its consideration, in line with national priorities and the principle of national ownership, while emphasizing that inclusivity is key to advancing national peacebuilding processes. Moreover, the PBC's advice contained recommendations for the consideration of the General Assembly and further encouraged the latter to draw upon the convening role of the Peacebuilding Commission in mobilizing attention and commitment from all relevant stakeholders and partners for peacebuilding needs of conflict affected countries.

In this context, I wish to reiterate that peacebuilding and sustaining peace require coherence, sustained engagement, and coordination between the General Assembly, the Security Council, and the Economic and Social Council, consistent with their mandates as set out in the Charter of the United Nations.

Mr. President,

From the onset of the pandemic, the Commission has served as a platform to discuss ways to help mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on development and peacebuilding in countries under its consideration. The Commission has created space for national and regional leaders, in peacebuilding contexts under its consideration, to share their experiences and seek support for efforts to build back better from the pandemic.

Governments as well as regional organizations and civil society representatives from across Africa consistently conveyed to the Commission that the COVID-19 pandemic is exacerbating existing economic, health and societal pressures, particularly in conflict affected countries, underscoring the imperative of addressing the root causes of instability and strengthening collective action for inclusive and sustainable development.

They called for further support to empower women to undertake leadership roles in peacebuilding and COVID-19 recovery initiatives. During a recent meeting of the Peacebuilding Commission on the Sahel region, Ms. Fatchima Nayaya from the NGO WARAKA based in Niger presented examples of positive change in Niger brought about by empowering women and

youth to lead local community development initiatives. She joined other women peacebuilders from Africa, who in their recent briefings to the PBC, stressed the importance of adequate funding for Women, Peace and Security and Youth, Peace and Security initiatives.

During an informal consultative meeting held between the African Union Peace and Security Council (AUPSC) and the PBC in October last year, the two bodies recognized the unprecedented challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic in the countries and regions under the consideration of the PBC, and the crucial role of women and youth to help address them. They called for stronger support for AU-owned and –led Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development efforts, and in that regard welcomed the establishment of the AU Centre for PCRD as a positive step to further advance the implementation of peacebuilding strategies in Africa. In the same meeting, Member States recalled the powerful testimonies of women peacebuilders from across Africa since the outset of the pandemic, which clearly expressed concerns about the COVID implications on women including their meaningful participation in peace processes. AUPSC and PBC members agreed that they should work closely together to ensure greater support to women- and youth-led peacebuilding organizations and initiatives.

More recently, I represented the Peacebuilding Commission at the second edition of the “Aswan Forum for Sustainable Peace and Development”, where the need to prioritize institution building in conflict-affected countries was emphasized, particularly in view of the socio-economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Forum recognized that the pandemic has exacerbated governance gaps across the African continent affecting the health, economic and social sectors and causing additional strains on social cohesion with implications for the peace and security landscape, most notably through exploitation by armed groups and terrorist organizations. During the deliberations, there was wide recognition that, in order for peacebuilding and sustaining peace efforts to be successful, governments must invest in building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at the national and local levels while promoting inclusive governance through a whole-of-government approach.

The messages at the Aswan Forum echoed concerns from several members of the PBC that adequate, predictable and sustained resources for peacebuilding remain a critical challenge in ensuring conflict-sensitive recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and building back better.

In this respect, mandated by the 2020 twin resolutions on peacebuilding and sustaining peace, the Commission has been convening relevant stakeholders with a view to generating action-oriented recommendations for consideration by the General Assembly during a high-level meeting on financing for peacebuilding at the 76th session. In this context, the Commission has recognized the flexibility and adaptability of the Peacebuilding Fund to COVID-19 related recovery needs and has welcomed DPPA/PBSO's work in support of United Nations Resident Coordinators in multiple countries in Africa to advance joint data and analytical work with the World Bank for the integration of new risks posed by the COVID-19 pandemic into their programming.

To conclude, the Commission remains committed to identifying ways for collective action from the international community to help address root causes of conflicts and lay the foundation for effective recovery from COVID-19 and building back better in Africa. In this respect, Member States have recently recognized that critical role of the PBC in fostering a more inclusive and effective multilateralism in support of peacebuilding in Africa and agreed that the Commission should scale up and expand its activities. I would like to reiterate this message. I therefore take this opportunity to encourage the Security Council to more systematically seek input from the PBC on the peacebuilding aspects of peace operations' mandates when these are created, renewed, reviewed or withdrawn. To facilitate this process, on countries and regions considered by both the Security Council and the Commission, PBC members would welcome receiving a copy of the Secretary-General's relevant reports to the Council with, as far as practicable, enough anticipation to allow timely PBC input.

I thank you, Mr. President.