

**Ambassadorial-level Consultation of the Peacebuilding Commission
2020 Review of the Peacebuilding Architecture**

“Institution Building and System-Wide Engagement for Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace”

22 May - 2 June 2020
Online platform

Background and rationale

Building peace is about much more than ending war. It also involves promoting sustainable development and putting in place the institutions and trust that will strengthen the social contract and carry people forward into a peaceful future.ⁱ Effective, accountable, inclusive and responsive institutions have been acknowledged as an important element in Governments’ efforts to identify, drive, and realize national and local priorities, strategies and activities for building and sustaining peace and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in a responsive and inclusive approach to development and peacebuilding.ⁱⁱ The character of public sector institutions, notably their level of inclusion and accountability, can be a key structural prevention instrument in deepening the political settlement and ensuring ownership of peacebuilding outcomes. The decade of action, accelerated by the recent COVID-19 pandemic, is already witnessing a strong demand from governments and stakeholders, especially those impacted by conflict, for the international community to help them build institutional capacities for steering both immediate response and future recovery pathways to ensure human security and build peaceful, just, inclusive and resilient societies.

Following the launch of the 2020 review of the peacebuilding architecture on 22 November 2019, the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) is convening all UN Member States in discussions on themes relating to peacebuilding and sustaining peace as part of the informal phase of the review. The 2016 twin resolutions on the review of the peacebuilding architecture (A/RES/70/262 and S/RES/2282 (2016)) recognized that an integrated and coherent approach among relevant political, security, developmental and human rights actors, within and outside of the UN system, consistent with their respective mandates, and the Charter of the UN, is critical to peacebuilding and sustaining peace and essential for building institutions. The 2016 resolutions also stressed the importance of the PBC as a platform to develop and share good practices in peacebuilding among those actors.

The 2015 review of the UN peacebuilding architecture enshrined several guidelines and principles critical to the effectiveness and sustainability of peacebuilding efforts, moving beyond quick fixes and short-term stabilization to creating prosperous and positive peace. A central one of these is strengthening national ownership and building national and local institutions and capacities. The review should examine how UN whole-of-system efforts can better support member states in realizing their national peacebuilding priorities through inclusive and capacitated institutions.

This consultation will be dedicated to exploring ways to improve the peacebuilding architecture and strengthen UN system-wide engagement in a coordinated and coherent effort to strengthen national and local institutions as a core peacebuilding area for building and sustaining peace,

including through partnerships with national and local actors, as well as international financial institutions (such as the World Bank), and other multilateral and bilateral partners.

A diverse range of UN entities and other multilateral and bilateral partners support peacebuilding and sustaining peace by strengthening effective, accountable, inclusive, and responsive institutions at the national and local levels, especially in conflict-affected contexts around the world, including with the support of the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF). Institution building is a long term and multifaceted process, which requires continued attention and effort on the ground, including the capacity development of those who run each institution. This consultation will hear from UN actors and Member States on how their support to strengthening institutions contribute to conflict prevention, peacebuilding and sustaining peace. The PBC will provide a platform for a discussion among Member States, UN actors and other partners with a view to identifying lessons learned, good practices and remaining challenges for strengthening coherence, coordination and cooperation in efforts to build and sustain peace and support institution building. In view of the COVID-19 pandemic, this meeting will take place on an online platform.

The discussion will focus on how the UN system is working coherently and across its three pillarsⁱⁱⁱ to help strengthen national and local institutions to deliver universal access to services and address the root causes of conflict and peacebuilding challenges. Institutions are an important component of consolidating a strong foundation for long-lasting peace and stability. This includes, for example, those core governance institutions that are critical for ensuring the basic functions of government in conflict-affected contexts, including centers of government mandated with stabilizing political settlements and decision-making, local governance capacities for basic service delivery such as health, education, water and sanitation, rule of law, security and justice mechanisms, electoral processes, human rights protection systems; grievance management, dialogue and reconciliation mechanisms, to name a few. In view of the socio-economic impact of the COVID-19 outbreak, which is putting to test health systems all over the world, the discussion will also focus on public health institutions.

The Secretary-General's Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) has proven its effectiveness in increasing cooperation and coherence across the system in peacebuilding and sustaining peace. The Fund has demonstrably led to a greater number of joint projects and programmes, works across pillars and designs integrated responses that engages UN Agencies, Funds and Programmes (AFPs) to build on their comparative advantages in jointly supporting countries in building and sustaining peace, including by strengthening national institutions.

Objective

The objective of the consultation is to inform the formal phase of the 2020 review of the peacebuilding architecture and provide input for the 2020 report of the Secretary-General on peacebuilding and sustaining peace. Against this backdrop, this consultation will aim to stimulate discussion on:

- a) good practices and experiences from Member States and diverse UN Agencies, Funds and Programmes on their contributions to strengthening institutions as a core instrument for peacebuilding and sustaining peace;

- b) progress made by the UN system entities since the 2016 resolutions to strengthen system-wide approaches to peacebuilding and sustaining peace, remaining challenges and where there could be improvements.

The speakers' perspectives and the response from Member States will provide the basis for the development of focused recommendations to further enhance the role of the UN Peacebuilding Architecture in supporting institution building efforts and to strengthen performance throughout the entire UN system in coordinated efforts in peacebuilding and sustaining peace.

Questions for guiding discussion

Institution building

- How could the UN Peacebuilding Architecture better support efforts on institution building in countries affected by conflict? In particular, how could the PBC better serve as a platform to share good practices and experiences from multilateral and bilateral assistance for institution building?
- How has the UN system more broadly adapted towards strengthening institutions as a core instrument for building and sustaining peace? What is different about AFPs' strategic direction and prioritization of these issues since 2015? How have they adapted their policy and programmes? What are the challenges and remaining obstacles?
- What are the challenges and/or opportunities facing the UN system in order to realize a paradigm shift in the level and quality of financial and technical investment in support of building state institutions and their related national and local capacities in the countries concerned?
- What could Member States and the UN intergovernmental architecture do to support UN system efforts in strengthening institutions, and to improve multilateral and bilateral assistance towards institution building?

UN system-wide engagement

- How has the UN system (Secretariat, Agencies, Funds and Programmes, UN missions and UN Country Teams) adapted since the 2016 resolutions, the SG's 2018 report and the UN reforms to deliver more effective system-wide efforts to better support peacebuilding and sustaining peace efforts in the field? What have been the successes and what more can be done to improve system-wide coherence?
- How have AFPs responded to the UN reforms in the way they work, to enhance cross-pillar coherence and coordination in analysis, planning and programme delivery to support peacebuilding and sustaining peace? What are the remaining challenges and possible solutions? Are there other ways to encourage stronger system wide coherence?

- How can an institutional culture of sustaining peace support cross-pillar coordination and a system-wide engagement? How can we ensure inclusive participation of stakeholders like women and youth in peacebuilding processes?
- What could Member States and the UN intergovernmental architecture do to support coherence of UN system efforts in peacebuilding and sustaining peace?

Format

The consultation will take place on an online platform. The Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission will circulate a link to a website containing video presentations from speakers. Subsequently, Member States will be invited to submit their statements in writing, responding to these presentations and to the guiding questions, which the Secretariat will upload on the website.

Speakers

- Opening remarks by H.E. Mr. Marc-André Blanchard, Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission
- Presentation by Mr. Achim Steiner, Administrator, UN Development Programme (UNDP)
- Presentation by Mr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director General, World Health Organization (WHO)
- Presentation by Mr. Qu Dongyu, Director General, UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)
- Presentation by Ms. Izumi Ohno, Director, Ogata Sadako Research Institute for Peace and Development Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)
- Presentation by Mr. Jake Sherman, Director, Brian Urquhart Center for Peace Operations, International Peace Institute (IPI)
- Presentation by Ms. Jennifer Widner, Director, Innovations for Successful Societies, Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs, Princeton University

ⁱ UN (2009), Secretary-General's remarks to the Security Council, SG/SM/12376-SC/9713, 22 July 2009, available at <https://www.un.org/press/en/2009/sgsm12376.doc.htm>

ⁱⁱ UN (2019), Review of SDG implementation and interrelations among goals Discussion on SDG 16 – Peace, justice and strong institutions; UN (2019), Report of the Secretary-General on SDG Progress 2019

ⁱⁱⁱ The central message underscored in the 2018 report of the Secretary-General on peacebuilding and sustaining peace (A/72/707-S/2018/43) was the need for a more integrated, comprehensive, strategic and coherent approach across the UN system and among Member States.