

Peacebuilding Commission
Electronic consultation on the 2020 review: Institution building and
system-wide engagement for peacebuilding and sustaining peace

Statement by Portugal

Portugal aligns itself with the statement of the European Union and, in its national capacity, would like to add the following points:

The challenges posed by the current global pandemic have clearly underscored the need for effective, accountable, inclusive and responsive institutions.

Strong national and local institutions are the backbone of the States' ownership in their peacebuilding efforts. As such, institution building and capacitation should be mainstreamed and prioritized throughout the whole peace continuum, including in efforts related to conflict prevention. Their importance traverses all of the priority areas for the peacebuilding architecture: institutions have a key role in addressing the root causes of conflicts, in promoting the participation of women and youth and in fostering reconciliation; they are crucial in ensuring the success of transition processes; and they should provide the necessary stability for mid to long-term action in areas such as climate related security risks, combining the different time-lengths of climate analysis and project cycles.

Inextricably linked as it is to education and skills, institution building and capacitation in a peacebuilding context could perhaps benefit from lessons learned in areas such as Security Sector Reform – the desired and desirable stability of national and local institutions across the whole public sector could entail a 'broadening of the base' for capacity-building, taken also as an effort towards reconciliation, and diminishing the possible negative impacts of institutional instability.

The Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), with its unique role in bringing together development and security, may play a relevant role in the efforts towards institution building, particularly through the work of its Country-specific Configurations. Their concrete focus on the field allows for a permanent feedback loop between headquarters and the actors on the ground, enabling the promotion of local appropriation and a better integration and coordination of regional and international efforts.

The ongoing UN Development System reforms, including the promotion of stronger decision-making authority by Resident Coordinators, can further

improve the UN's response to the complex and evolving challenges of fragile post-conflict societies. Alongside with the leadership, scale, and resources of UN country-teams on the ground, the capacity, accountability and transparency of national and local institutions will be of central relevance for countries undergoing transitions, after the departure of peacekeeping or special political missions.

Institution building requires adequate, predictable and sustainable funding. The Peacebuilding Fund (PBF), with its catalytic and risk-tolerant role, remains a critical tool to leverage key projects in institution and capacity-building. Furthermore, the strengthened engagement of UN's Agencies, Funds and Programs, of regional and sub-regional organizations, international financial institutions, civil society organizations and the private sector in the work of the PBC should be further promoted.

Partnerships are indeed fundamental to tackle a challenge with the dimension of institution building. We have some good examples of cooperation between the UN and regional organizations, but we can do more. The cooperation between the UN and the European Union demonstrates that regional organizations can act as security providers and engage in long-term peacebuilding efforts. Also, the joint commitment between the UN, the EU and the African Union to increase coordination and cooperation at the political, economic and operational levels demonstrates that complementarities can contribute to address the root causes of conflicts.