



Building Sustainable Peace:

Recommendations for the 2020 Peacebuilding Architecture Review

May 2020



This submission builds upon the long-standing programming conducted in partnership by the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC) and the Quaker United Nations Office (QUNO). Past work has informed previous Reviews of the Peacebuilding Architecture and explored the practical understanding and implementation of Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace, including its progress and continued challenges.¹ This document serves to inform the 2020 Peacebuilding Architecture Review by presenting key messages and recommendations on: structural and operational partnerships; financing for peacebuilding; and operational and policy coherence.

I. Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace is a critical evolutionary UN development, and its implementation is a shared responsibility of all governments and national stakeholders.

Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace builds upon decades of progress in the United Nations' (UN) understanding of peacebuilding and conflict prevention. With the adoption of the dual resolutions on Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace (A/RES/70/262; S/RES/2282), Member States created a comprehensive framework that runs throughout all UN policy and programming to ensure greater coordination and coherence towards achieving the objectives of the UN Charter. Additionally, Member States collectively expressed that peacebuilding must no longer be understood solely as a post-conflict enterprise, but rather as a central tenet for peace and security throughout the conflict continuum. While the risk of conflict and fragility varies, with some situations requiring greater immediate and/or long-term focus, the dual resolutions recognise that no state is immune and, therefore, Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace needs to be fulfilled by all governments and other national stakeholders.

Recommendations:

- All governments should adopt and implement measures, and where relevant seek UN support, to strengthen inclusive national capacities for Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace.² Such measures must include addressing root causes and drivers of conflict and fragility; maximising capacities for peace, including by building upon endogenous structures and existing factors that contribute to resilience; and ensuring adopted measures are aligned with the commitments under other UN peace agendas.
- All governments should use multilateral platforms, including but not limited to the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), to ensure cross-learning and collective action on progress and challenges in the development and implementation of measures to advance Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace.

¹ Some of the examples of the GPPAC-QUNO joint work include, but are not limited to:

Filling the Gap: How Civil Society Engagement can help the UN's Peacebuilding Architecture Meet Its Purpose. (2015).

Retrieved from: <http://www.quno.org/sites/default/files/resources/Filling%20the%20Gap.pdf>

Building Sustainable Peace: How Inclusivity, partnerships and a reinforced UN Peacebuilding Architecture will support delivery. (2018). Retrieved from: https://gppac.net/files/2019-08/Building%20Sustainable%20Peace_Final.pdf

²*Report of the Secretary-General: Peacebuilding and sustaining peace*; Retrieved from:

<https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/content/report-secretary-general-peacebuilding-and-sustaining-peace>

II. Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace requires strategic and operational partnerships with diverse civil society actors, including at the community level.

Civil society actors and community representatives in all their diversity play a range of key peacebuilding roles, particularly in situations of transition or extreme fragility. They possess localised expertise and institutional knowledge acquired from long-term engagement that is often missing from regional and international policy and action. Therefore, peacebuilding practitioners and organisations must be recognised as central to the fabric that builds societal resilience. Their work must be upheld and supported, and strategic and operational partnerships between civil society and policy makers need to be developed and strengthened. Civil society perspectives need to be included in analysis, planning, implementation and monitoring of approaches and activities needed for preventing the outbreak, escalation, continuation or recurrence of conflict. Such institutionalised engagement will support and strengthen the capacities of governments and all other national stakeholders, as well as intergovernmental bodies to sustain peacebuilding activities in the long-term. The recent UN System-wide Community Engagement Guidelines for Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace (CEG) serve as one key avenue to develop new or strengthen existing UN methodologies and capacities for engagement with civil society, including at the community level, for Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace.

Recommendations:

- The UN Peacebuilding Architecture should establish more consistent, sustained and transparent modalities to ensure partnership with diverse civil society in policy development relating to Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace. This can be achieved through the convening of informal discussions between the PBC Chair, Vice Chairs and civil society organizations to inform the Commission's work, and the creation of joint UN-civil society standing bodies or informal working groups to contribute to coherence and coordination at both the Headquarters and field level. Such measures should include consideration of the financial and logistical capacities needed to facilitate meaningful partnerships.
- Member State representatives of the Peacebuilding Commission should make a consolidated effort to consult with diverse civil society and community representatives, including women peacebuilders and members of other underrepresented communities, ahead of and during their field visits as part of a Commission's Delegation or country-specific-configuration Chair visits to learn more about national and local peacebuilding contexts and existing programming.
- The Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA) should support field level operations in the implementation of and delivery of the CEG, including through the maintenance of the Reference Working Group and provision of continued operational guidance. DPPA regional offices should then coordinate access to information on CEG implementation across UN agencies and organs. This could include a regular implementation update in the annual Secretary-General's reports on Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace and other appropriate processes.

III. Dedicated funding for local civil society and local peacebuilding is critical for Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace.

Building long-term peace requires sustained attention and funding that is risk-informed and flexible to the societal needs and context. Critical to this is sustained funding to civil society who are oftentimes the primary long-term peacebuilding practitioners in a country or community. The Peacebuilding Fund's (PBF) Gender and Youth Promotion Initiative (GYPI) is a positive example of providing a funding stream to civil society, particularly international non-governmental organisations (INGOs). While the measures to support INGO peacebuilding programming should be applauded, similar opportunities for local civil

society organisations are limited or inaccessible. Furthermore, funding streams are becoming increasingly less flexible and project-based, meaning that program funding may be solely for short-term, output driven projects. The current modalities therefore are often unsustainable in the context of humanitarian, political or socio-economic emergencies or shocks. This is most notable in the current context as the peacebuilding community grapples with the immediate and long-term impact of the ongoing COVID-19 global health crisis. Thus, the successful implementation of Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace must include long-term and flexible funding. This will require major shifts in funding approaches and prioritisation by the global donor community.

Recommendations:

- UN funds and programmes and the donor community should take necessary measures to diversify the breadth of funding opportunities and modalities available to civil society organisations. Steps to diversify funding must include opportunities for peacebuilding organizations to obtain long-term and flexible funding, which is especially critical in fragile contexts or during times of crisis, such as the ongoing global health pandemic. This should also include the provision of direct and core funding to local civil society organizations as modeled by other funding mechanism such as the Women’s Peace and Humanitarian Fund (WPHF).
- UN funds and programmes and the donor community should make a consolidated effort to build capacities of diverse civil society organisations to comply with relevant applications and reporting processes, taking into consideration the contexts in which they operate. This can include developing templates and conducting trainings for application and reporting processes, and allocating funding for administrative “hubs” for recipient organisations that provide access to office and internet supplies necessary to sustain programmatic and administrative activity.
- The donor community, including donor countries, should sustain and increase their financial contributions to existing funding modalities that support peacebuilding programming and organizations, including the Peacebuilding Fund.

IV. Protected and vibrant civic space is a precondition for the implementation of Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace.

The presence of robust, diverse and active civil society is a strong indicator for a society’s capacity for building and sustaining peace. Despite this, civil society organisations continue to face increasing restrictions throughout the world, both through legal and illegal means of oppression. The ever-growing crackdown is hindering or halting the work of peacebuilding organisations and practitioners, and risks breaking down the social fabric needed for building sustainable peace and resilience. It is essential that free and open space is maintained to allow for the flourishing of a vibrant civil society. All Member States should adopt national laws aimed at promoting and protecting civic space and, where needed, work with the United Nations to develop or strengthen strategic partnerships with civil society.

Recommendations:

- The United Nations working at both headquarters and the country levels should highlight the centrality of diverse civil society engagement and serve as a model for strategic partnership with peacebuilding practitioners and organizations.
- The United Nations must strategically encourage and support capacities for safety and protection for civil society actors, and such measures must be integrated in the broader partnership strategies between the United Nations and national and regional stakeholders.
- Any UN-led efforts to foster civil society participation in formal and informal meetings and relevant platforms should be carried out in a risk-informed and conflict-sensitive manner that

ensures the safety of participants during and after meetings.

- The UN agencies and organs should start their engagement with diverse civil society in programming and field visits with a comprehensive contextual analysis and stakeholder mapping. All field engagements should be supported by concrete strategies to ensure the safety and security of civil society engagement.

V. Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace requires the United Nations to continue to enhance operational and policy coherence.

Breaking down silos for Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace requires cross-sectoral operational and policy coherence, as well as improved coordination. In the years since the adoption of the dual resolutions, the United Nations Secretary-General and system as a whole have begun to undertake widespread reform measures to make the United Nations more coordinated, coherent and effective in its actions to build and sustain peace. While the widespread reform efforts must be applauded, overcoming existing and deeply rooted fragmentation requires not only the implementation and assessment of the ongoing reforms, but also a change in the working methods and culture of the United Nations and its membership, as well as the broader peacebuilding community of practice.

Recommendations:

- The outcome of the 2020 Peacebuilding Architecture Review should include a resolution that mandates ongoing assessment by the UN Secretary-General of the System-wide implementation of Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace, including as it relates to progress made on the UN Reforms and relevant initiatives.
- The United Nations should continue to invest capacity and time necessary to successfully deliver on the United Nations reforms, including by continuously assessing progress and challenges in a transparent and inclusive manner. This requires the provision of necessary resources, informal platforms for sharing of approaches and challenges, and accountability measures for addressing the persistent issue of fragmentation.

VI. About the organisations

Quaker United Nations Office (QUNO)

Since 1947, QUNO has worked with diplomats, UN officials, and civil society to support a UN that prioritises peace and prevents war. Grounded in the Quaker belief that there is that of the divine in every person, we seek a United Nations that addresses key drivers of violence; that facilitates and supports change through peaceful means; and whose policies and practices reflect a diversity of voices, such that people around the world can safely and peacefully achieve their potential.

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The Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC)

GPPAC is a member-led network of civil society organisations around the world that are actively engaged in local or regional conflict prevention and peacebuilding work, guided by a belief in preventive rather than reactive strategies for dealing with conflict, and the conviction that locally developed analysis of root causes and inclusion of civil society actors in the formulation as well as implementation of all stages of work is essential to creating sustainable peace.

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