

## Implementation of Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace: What comes after Resolution 2558 (2020)?

2 February 2021, 8.30 – 10.00 AM EST

### *Summary note*

The 2020 peacebuilding architecture review (hereafter, the 2020 review) concluded on 21 December 2020 with the adoption of dual resolutions on Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace by the United Nations General Assembly (A/RES/75/201) and Security Council (S/RES/2558).<sup>1</sup> The resolutions call on Member States, the UN and other stakeholders to “continue to take action to implement the resolutions on peacebuilding and sustaining peace, and to advance efforts to bring greater coherence to peacebuilding efforts” (S/RES/2558, OP1). In line with this call, the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation (DHF), the Global Network of Women Peacebuilders (GNWP) and the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC) are continuing a series of roundtable discussions to examine the strategies and pathways towards the operationalization of the 2016 resolutions on Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace.

The fifteenth roundtable discussion, and the first since the adoption of the 2020 dual resolutions, provided an opportunity for UN staff, Member State delegates and civil society representatives working at the expert level on peacebuilding and sustaining peace to reflect on the full scope of the 2020 review, including its informal and formal phases. Roundtable participants exchanged views on the process and outcomes of the 2020 review, and discussed what implementation of the Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace agenda could look like between now and the comprehensive review in 2025.

The following summary captures key reflections shared during the discussion, as well as ideas on the next steps in the implementation of the Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace agenda.

### **Key takeaways from the 2020 review:**

- The review exposed persistent **political sensitivities and differences** among Member States with respect to the Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace agenda – for example, on the extent to which peacebuilding should be integrated across the work of all UN entities, and the linkages between the Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace agenda and the Women, Peace and Security agenda. In particular, Member States have different interpretations of the concept of *sustaining peace* and, subsequently, of what implementation should look like. Greater efforts are needed to reach out to Member States which may have different perspectives on implementation, and to develop a common vision and implementation strategy. This also includes reaching out to Member States minimally engaged in discussions on sustaining peace – especially those which may not have the capacity to have a dedicated peacebuilding portfolio.
- **The participatory process used to carry out the review helped to strengthen coordination around the agenda and should become a standard for future review efforts.** The review process focused heavily on utilizing an inclusive approach, with an emphasis on shared responsibility across the UN, governments, non-governmental

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<sup>1</sup> Dual resolutions on Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace by the UN General Assembly (A/RES/75/201) and the Security Council (S/RES/2558): [https://undocs.org/en/S/RES/2558\(2020\)](https://undocs.org/en/S/RES/2558(2020))

organisations and others, as well as consultations with diverse local civil society. The UN Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO) played an important role in identifying critical actors and in connecting civil society with Member States. Civil society coordination was also an important element in amplifying the most important findings from various processes.

- The **COVID-19 pandemic** has accentuated vulnerabilities to and risks of conflict and crisis, and made planned consultations more difficult, leading to the extension of the informal phase of the review. While the extension resulted in a compressed timeframe for the formal phase and negotiations on the resolutions, it also allowed for more time to interact with local civil society and reach out to additional actors outside of the traditional peacebuilding space, including human rights actors. Going forward, peacebuilding efforts will have to take into consideration the effects of the pandemic on conflict, as well as support efforts to recover from the pandemic.
- A great deal of **important and useful data was collected throughout the informal phase of the 2020 review, including the consultation process**<sup>2</sup>. While much of this input was not captured in either the Secretary-General's report or the Peacebuilding Commission's letter, it can still support efforts to advance the agenda in the five years leading up to the next review. There is a need to reflect on what opportunities exist to use this data in the implementation phase. In preparation for future reviews, it would also be important for the UN, Member States and civil society to come to a common understanding of how consultations will feed into the review, including expected outcomes, inputs and follow-up processes.
- **Efforts should be made to reflect on how future review efforts could more meaningfully engage a broader spectrum of civil society actors and perspectives throughout the process, while recognizing that reviews are state-driven processes.** While the 2020 review involved greater civil society involvement and coordination than previous reviews, the lack of civil society engagement in the formal phase may have contributed to some of the key messages from the civil society consultations not being reflected in the resolutions. It was also primarily INGOs with existing access to the UN that were engaged in the review, with less space for local and grassroots civil society to participate in the process.

## **Implementation of the Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace agenda**

Roundtable participants underscored that while the adoption of the new dual resolutions is an important step in terms of further solidifying commitment to the Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace agenda at the policy level, going forward, a greater focus on monitoring impact and gathering evidence at the country level is essential for implementation. The main themes that were raised by participants are elaborated below.

- As emphasized in the letter of the Independent Eminent Persons, **inclusivity** is critical to advancing the Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace agenda. Efforts should be taken to enhance multi-stakeholder participation its operationalization, and elevate the voices of local peacebuilders, including women, youth and grassroots initiatives. Local civil society is uniquely placed to support efforts to develop a common understanding of what implementation looks like, as well as evidence gathering and analysis that can shed light on the agenda's impact on the ground. Moving forward, the UN should strengthen efforts to work with and support a broad spectrum of civil society actors. The recently published **Community Engagement Guidelines** provide an opportunity for UN Country Teams to

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<sup>2</sup> The summaries of the Regional and Thematic Consultations for the 2020 Peacebuilding Architecture Review can be found at: <https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/content/regional-and-thematic-consultations>

develop strategies for actively enhancing civil society engagement. It is important to support their rollout and implementation, and monitor their use.

- The **Peacebuilding Commission** has an essential role to play in advancing the agenda, including by utilizing its convening and advisory powers to bring different stakeholders together and advance critical conversations, including on financing for peacebuilding.
- **Financing** remains the core challenge to implementing the agenda. Adequate, predictable and sustainable funding needs to be accessible to local peacebuilders. A lot of work can take place over the next year, ahead of the high-level meeting in the General Assembly to advance, explore and consider options for financing peacebuilding. Some of this work has already started, looking specifically at innovative financing and good peacebuilding donorship. The Peacebuilding Fund Replenishment Conference was an important step in the right direction, with an increased number of Member States indicating an interest in ensuring sustainable and predictable peacebuilding financing. In moving forward, it is important for the UN and Member States to explore other options from that of voluntary contributions, including potential partnerships with international financial institutions and the private sector. Best practices from countries that sit on the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)'s Development Assistance Committee on developing clearer ways to measure financing for peacebuilding should also be considered. Bearing in mind that the key indicator of progress on implementation of the Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace agenda is the impact in communities, funding models that support local ownership and leadership need to be better understood, developed and replicated. Civil society can also advance the discussion on peacebuilding financing by playing a convening role in bringing different actors together for this purpose.
- Greater **coordination across the UN system and its three pillars** is needed to advance the agenda at the regional and country levels. Instruments and efforts for shared analysis (including conflict analysis) and joint programming across agencies should be strengthened. Coordination requires leadership from UN Headquarters, regional offices and UN Country Teams. The UN's development and management reform efforts provide important opportunities to promote peacebuilding and sustaining peace as a system-wide approach. In particular, the newly-empowered Resident Coordinator function should be recognized and utilized as a key force for ensuring that sustaining peace is prioritized across UN agencies, funds and programs.
- The work of the UN should be impact-driven and results-oriented through appropriate **monitoring and evaluation** processes. Much more evidence is needed on how the resolutions are leading to change and having an impact on peacebuilding at the country level. The 2020 resolutions themselves call for more regular reporting focused on outcomes. Civil society actors have a particularly important role to play in gathering, documenting and sharing evidence on how the agenda is being implemented at the country level and what is needed to strengthen its operationalization. Further conversations should help to identify more specifically what this support could look like. When requesting reporting from the Secretariat, Member States can also ask that analyses touch on how the resolutions are impacting work at the country level, including local communities.
- The Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace agenda and its implementation cannot move forward without the **support of and prioritization from Member States**. At the global level, Member States active in discussions on sustaining peace can make a greater effort to engage missions that are less supportive of the agenda, as well as those that have no dedicated (or else minimal) capacities to engage on peacebuilding.