

The Evolution of the Role of the Peacebuilding Commission: Strengthening Financing for Peacebuilding through Convening and Political Accompaniment

Hybrid roundtable | 13 October 2022

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 UN General Assembly (A/RES/75/201) and the Security Council (S/RES/2558). 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 (the Foundation), the Global Network of Women Peacebuilders (GNWP), the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC) and the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUI) are continuing a series of roundtable discussions to examine strategies and pathways towards the operationalization of the 2016 resolutions on Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace.

Building upon the recently adopted UN General Assembly resolution (A/RES/76/305), this roundtable focused on strengthening the synergies between the Peacebuilding Commission’s role in political accompaniment and financing for peacebuilding. This discussion provided an opportunity for Member States, international organisations, and international financial institutions (IFIs) to share their expectations for the Commission’s convening role with a particular focus on its capacity to stimulate support for peacebuilding and financing within its advisory, bridging and convening functions. Participants also reflected on and provided suggestions for broadening the inclusion of other actors involved in peacebuilding discussions, specifically civil society, the private sector, IFIs and Member States who are not currently members of the Commission.

Summary

On 12 September 2022, the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution on Financing for Peacebuilding. The resolution reiterates the critical role of the Peacebuilding Commission in ensuring effective implementation of the sustaining peace agenda. It specifically calls upon the Commission to continue to deliver on its advisory, bridging and convening mandate to promote these efforts in both country and regional efforts, and to support increased investments in peacebuilding financing (A/RES/76/305, OP2).

The discussion focused on three opportunities for the Commission to support financing for peacebuilding: (1) through its advisory, bridging and convening mandate in support of resource mobilization; (2) through strategic partnerships and cooperation with IFIs and the private sector, and (3) through engagement with civil society in country-specific and regional discussions.

1. The Peacebuilding Commission's advisory, bridging and convening role in support of resource mobilization

The resolution *calls upon the Peacebuilding Commission to continue to strengthen the delivery of its advisory, bridging and convening mandate in support of resource mobilization for nationally owned peacebuilding priorities in the countries and regions under its consideration, and to continue to strengthen its working methods to enhance its efficiency and impact in support of peacebuilding and sustaining peace, in synergy with the Peacebuilding Fund (A/RES/76/305, OP2)*. Participants noted that the resolution in particular offers further opportunities for the Commission to expand and leverage its convening power, which has been effectively operationalised to support peacebuilding priorities of the countries and regions.

Timor-Leste's PR highlighted their recent meeting with the Commission on 26 September 2022 as an example in this regard, where participants shared good practices and lessons-learned on the country's peacebuilding experiences, and underscored the need for greater South-South cooperation. At the roundtable, references were made to several factors that have helped the country sustain peace, including commitment from local leadership, principles of governance and local community values, and accountability to victims of the conflict. Timor-Leste's PR reiterated what he had raised during the recent Commission meeting, specifically that while challenges remain, strategic accompaniment by the Commission, greater financial resources for peacebuilding, security-sector reform, and building greater partnerships at the country and regional level will lead to the sustainability of peace.

The PR of El Salvador echoed Timor-Leste's PR in noting the value of the Commission, emphasising its unique position in providing a platform for different actors. Drawing on the experience of her own country, the PR of El Salvador highlighted the catalytic investments by the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF), as well as the need to look at other funds beyond the PBF. She underscored that the Fund serves as a critical resource for fragile countries and urged that its work to mitigate the risks of renewed conflict should be made more visible. She further raised the need to strengthen synergies between the PBF and the Commission's work, as well as improving data collection on financing for peacebuilding.

Participants emphasised that expanding the work of the Commission to include more country and regional contexts (with their consent) would both increase opportunities to learn what has sustained peace in post-conflict settings and raise awareness of peacebuilding actors' efforts to advance prevention in contexts considered to be peaceful. At the same time, there is a recognition that the capacities and working methods of the Commission limit the possibility to accommodate the interest in expanding the work of the Commission. It calls for a consideration of options to strengthen the Commission's capacity as well as that of the PBSO which provides it support, as well as for leadership by all its Member States.

In addition to considering additional country contexts, the Commission should expand its inclusion of diverse actors. The resolution *urges efforts to fund initiatives that integrate women's full, equal and meaningful participation in the planning, implementation and reporting of peacebuilding and sustaining peace at all levels, including at the local level [...]* An example shared at the roundtable is the [Central Asian Women Leader's Caucus](#). The Caucus, which includes women parliamentarians from five Central Asian countries, were previously invited to the Commission to discuss the interlinkages of peacebuilding, climate change and the Women, Peace and Security agenda (WPS).

2. Strategic partnerships and cooperation between the United Nations and international financial institutions (IFIs) at headquarters and field levels

The resolution *recognises the important role of international and regional financial institutions in peacebuilding and sustaining peace, and encourages the implementation of the strategies adopted by the African Development Bank [...] as well as the relevant strategies adopted or being developed by other regional and international financial institutions operating in peacebuilding settings[...]* (A/RES/76/305, OP14). It further encourages the UN's continued efforts to build stronger partnerships and cooperation with other IFIs to form collective outcomes that align with the priorities of the countries.

The African Development Bank (AfDB) has made private sector development one of its key priorities for reducing poverty and supporting sustainable growth in Africa. Sharing examples at the roundtable, a representative of the AfDB highlighted the recent support provided to the Sahel region for climate change adaptation and the Africa Investment Forum (AIF). [The Transition Support Facility](#), established in 2008 to disburse catalytic development finances to a set of low-income countries to consolidate peace, build resilient institutions and societies, has also complemented efforts by the PBF in financing peacebuilding efforts on the continent. Other initiatives from the AfDB, such as the Africa Resilience Forum and the strategic partnership with the Aswan Forum organised by Egypt, have also brought together key stakeholders including the private sector and international partners to support the continent's conflict prevention, peace and state-building initiatives. The already strong cooperation between the African Union (AU), the UN and the private sector is also expanding, with leadership from previous Commission and Configuration Chairs as well as the Permanent Representative of South Africa and partners, helped draw attention to how the private sector supports economic activities, peace and security on the continent.

In the discussion, participants noted that while Member States are ultimately responsible for peacebuilding financing, involving the private sector will generate more resources and help to fill critical financing gaps. There is an interest from the private sector to be engaged and an interest from governments to channel and leverage this engagement in the right direction – including funding, accelerating results and building technical capacities for peacebuilding on the ground. For example, the Commission has engaged with representatives from the private sector such as the Colombia Coffee Growers Federation that has briefed the Commission on their contribution to the peacebuilding process in Colombia. Participants reaffirmed support for the call in the resolution that encourages the Secretary-General to develop a strategy for resource mobilisation from the private sector in support of financing for peacebuilding, noting that such a strategy would help the Commission define its own work with private sector actors.

Participants urged that partnerships with regional and financial institutions, as well as other development actors, should not only encompass financing for peacebuilding but also opportunities to share ideas and experiences that could help countries facing similar financing challenges. Previous Commission Chairs have sought to align the Commission's programme of work (PoW) with other efforts across the [humanitarian, development and peace nexus](#). For example, more systematic engagement between ECOSOC and PBC could lead to strengthening partnerships with diverse actors and a better alignment of goals and objectives on peacebuilding and sustaining peace.

3. The important role of civil society in peacebuilding and sustaining peace

The resolution stresses that *civil society can play an important role in advancing efforts in peacebuilding and sustaining peace [...] and urges long-term and more flexible funding mechanisms for strengthening capacities of local communities in tandem with national peacebuilding efforts.* (A/RES/76/305, OP8). The resolution makes an important step towards an inclusive action on implementation of the sustaining peace agenda by not only providing an incentive for the Commission to meaningfully engage civil society in its work, but also support conversations on establishing avenues for effective funding of locally-led peacebuilding.

Participants welcomed greater interactions between civil society organisations (CSOs) and the Commission and reaffirmed the importance of recognizing that local actors are best situated to address situations on the ground, noting that sustaining peace requires meaningful involvement of local partners in decision-making. Participants also highlighted the important perspectives of women- and youth-led civil society organisations in sustaining peace and allocating financial resources. Leading up to the adoption of the resolution, the Peacebuilding Support Office supported the integration of local civil society in the high-level roundtables on peace-building financing, including a dedicated session on financing for locally-led peacebuilding. During the 77th session of the UN General Assembly, the opening session also showcased the importance of localising global agendas with the inclusion of diverse and marginalised actors. Recommendations were made for the Commission to consider greater inclusion of local actors, as well as for the PBF to consider increasing its financing of local peacebuilding organisations.

Recommendations moving forward

Based on the key takeaways from the discussion, the following recommendations are offered:

- Strengthen partnerships between the Commission, [g7+](#) and other intergovernmental groups, including International Dialogue for Peacebuilding and Statebuilding (IDPS) advocating for sustainable peace. The Commission could be an important mechanism to advance learning on efforts and strategies to promote and invest in peace and sustainable development, by providing a platform for engagement with and among Member States, including in the Global South and those previously less engaged in peacebuilding policy processes.
- PBSO should support efforts to increase the availability and quality of data on financing for peacebuilding, including all the UN Funds that contribute to peacebuilding. This could include improved data on the impact of peacebuilding financing, particularly for women- and youth-led peacebuilding initiatives, and increased clarity on existing funding, including through support for the improvement of the PBSO Funding Dashboard.
- The Commission should facilitate continuous cooperation and coordination between IFIs and the UN. Other multilateral development banks (MDBs), regional development banks (RDBs) and the OECD should also be included in peacebuilding and sustaining peace discussions to encourage greater coherence of programming across the HDP nexus.
- Sharing best practices from recipient countries should continue in the Commission, as well as in other forums such as the Aswan Forum and the Stockholm Forum on Peace and Development. This should include increased documentation of the impact of peacebuilding work.
- The Commission should continue to explore what role the private sector can and should play in peacebuilding financing and help mobilise private sector investment. The PBC could help to identify existing best practices and to mobilise and evaluate pilot efforts to expand and improve investment. Convening a private sector-specific meeting could be considered by the Commission.