

Lessons Learned and Strategic Operationalisation of Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace in Latin America and the Caribbean

Virtual Expert-Level Consultation
for the 2025 Review of the United Nations Peacebuilding Architecture
October 18th, 2024

The expert-level consultation¹ for the 2025 Review of the United Nations Peacebuilding Architecture (2025 PBAR) provided an opportunity to discuss the expectations from the UN Peacebuilding Architecture in support of national prevention and peacebuilding goals across the LAC region. This summary note offers substantive input for the consideration of Member States during the formal phase of the 2025 PBAR.

During the consultation, Member States expressed that the 2025 PBAR should guide continuous adaptation of the UN Peacebuilding Architecture in being capacitated to provide more concrete and targeted support in response to the needs of diverse Member States and the communities they serve. This includes improving the UN's capacities in supporting the development and strengthening of national prevention/peacebuilding strategies and infrastructures for peace, improving the quality and quantity of financing for peacebuilding and prevention, and providing effective political accompaniment through the role of the Peacebuilding Commission (hereafter, the Commission). These changes are expected to strengthen the impact of existing action to build sustainable peace and prevent conflicts and violence.

Background

The peace and security landscape in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) presents a valuable case study for assessing policies and programming on peacebuilding and sustaining peace. Each country in the region takes a unique approach to peacebuilding and sustaining peace, contributing to creating a very dynamic and complex peacebuilding architecture with diverse actors involved in the process from national governments and regional organisations to financial partners and local peace actors. While the risk of open conflict in the region is still present and the levels of violence remain relatively high, various peacebuilding and conflict prevention arrangements have proven to be successful in preventing and peacefully resolving conflict.

¹ The consultation is organised with technical support of the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC) and its regional network in Latin America and the Caribbean coordinated by La Coordinadora Regional de Investigaciones Económicas y Sociales (CRIES).

The key takeaways from the consultation include:

1. Peacebuilding and sustaining peace should be understood holistically.

➤ ***Member States could consider further alignment in the holistic universal understanding of peacebuilding and sustaining peace.*** Each country across the LAC region has their own distinct approach to and understanding of peacebuilding and sustaining peace. As defined in the dual United Nations General Assembly and Security Council resolutions ([A/70/262-S/RES/2282](#)), sustaining peace is ‘a goal and process [...] aimed at preventing the outbreak, escalation, continuation and recurrence of conflict’ (PP8). This definition signals the interest to move beyond the traditional understanding of peacebuilding, which often focuses on post-conflict reconstruction, towards a more holistic approach that starts with prevention and includes work to prevent violence and escalation across the conflict cycle.

➤ ***The UN Peacebuilding Architecture should provide concrete and targeted support to peacebuilding and sustaining peace needs as they are articulated by people in the region.*** In the LAC context, peacebuilding and sustaining peace could include addressing cross-border issues, such as illicit arms trade across borders and migration flows. Many countries across the region highlight corruption, the presence of criminal groups, and the impact of climate change as barriers to peacebuilding and sustainable peace. Approaches for peacebuilding and sustaining peace action include efforts to strengthen democracy, build strong and accountable institutions, strengthen the promotion of human rights, ensure reliable justice systems, develop early warning systems, and adapt national prevention strategies. This specific context highlights the complementarity and interdependence of peacebuilding and sustainable development. Member States can engage with the Commission on these issues to seek targeted advice from diverse stakeholders and encourage cross-regional alignment and South-South cooperation with countries in other regions facing similar challenges.

2. The 2025 PBAR could enhance the UN Peacebuilding Commission to realise its full potential.

The Commission functions as an intergovernmental body that has 1) a convening capacity to bring together all relevant actors to marshal resources and to advise on and propose integrated strategies for post-conflict peacebuilding and recovery, 2) an advisory role to other intergovernmental bodies (i.e., UN Security Council (UNSC), Human Rights Council (HRC), and Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)) on peacebuilding and sustaining peace, and 3) a bridging role to improve the coordination of all relevant actors within and outside the United Nations ([A/RES/60/180-S/RES/1645](#)). The engagement of the Commission is steadily increasing, as it engages with more countries and on a greater variety of thematic issues.

➤ ***The awareness of the Commission’s value proposition among Member States needs to be enhanced.*** Member States rarely bring to the Commission topics relevant to their needs in peacebuilding and sustaining peace, such as illicit arms trade across borders and challenges

associated with migration flows. This is often due to the lack of awareness of the Commission's value proposition and of the procedures for bringing these important issues to its attention. This is especially the case for countries that are not members of the Commission. Notable exceptions include a July 2023 Commission's meeting held on Indigenous Peoples, Peace and Reconciliation in Norway, Canada, and Colombia which sought to highlight the importance of conflict prevention, resolution, and peacebuilding². To build on such initiatives and support Member States' specific peacebuilding needs, there is a need to enhance the awareness among Member States about the Commission's work and the opportunities it offers. In this regard, Member States recently recognised in the Committee on Information³, the importance of raising awareness both within and outside the UN about the peacebuilding architecture and requested the Department of Global Communications to cooperate in developing a communication strategy in consultation with the PBC, country-specific configurations, the Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO) and the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF). The PBSO, which serves as the Commission's Secretariat, should follow up on that recommendation, develop clear communication resources, and conduct awareness sessions to ensure that diverse Member States understand its mandate and know how to engage with the Commission. Additionally, countries like Colombia, have dual experiences with the Commission, both as a member, as well as a country that shares its experiences with the Commission and benefits from its assistance. Therefore, countries like Colombia could provide valuable guidance to their regional colleagues about the possibilities available within the Commission.

➤ ***The convening capacity of the Commission needs to be enhanced.*** The convening role of the Commission positions it as a key political platform to share good lessons and practices on the holistic view of peacebuilding and sustaining peace in the spirit of the South-South and Triangular Cooperation. For example, the Commission has the potential to bring support to the UN System and diverse stakeholders for the development and strengthening of national prevention and peacebuilding strategies by sharing lessons learned. To enhance the impact of the Commission, it is essential to strengthen its capacity to meet growing expectations from Member States. Strengthening the capacity of the PBSO to ensure sufficient support for the practical implementation and operationalisation of the Commission's activities, including knowledge management, is the key. More Member States should take active leadership roles within the Commission. Beyond holding meetings in the Chair's absence, Vice-Chairs should engage more in strategic efforts to advance the Commission's action. Further, the High-Level Advisory Board for Multilateralism recommended the Commission be provided with an expanded mandate to address a broader range of risks and be resourced with greater investigative and decision-making powers⁴. This was also recognised in Action 44 of the Pact for the Future ([A/RES/79/1](#)), where Member States committed to strengthening the Commission. This could lead to the transformation of the Commission into a Peacebuilding Council.

² UN Peacebuilding. (2023, June 19). PBC Meeting on Indigenous Peoples, Peace and Reconciliation in Canada, Colombia and Norway. Retrieved from:

<https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/content/pbc-meeting-indigenous-peoples-peace-and-reconciliationcanada-colombia-and-norway>

³ Report of the Committee on Information in its Forty-sixth Session (A/79/21), para. 107:

<https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/n24/163/34/pdf/n2416334.pdf>

⁴ High-Level Advisory Board for Multilateralism. (2024). A Breakthrough for People and Planet: Shift Five | Peace and Prevention Empower Equitable, Effective Collective Security Arrangements. Retrieved from:

https://highleveladvisoryboard.org/breakthrough/pdf/highleveladvisoryboard_breakthrough_Shift5.pdf

- ***The Commission's engagement with international financial institutions (IFIs) needs to be strategic and systematic.*** First, the engagement of the Commission with IFIs is a critical issue that has garnered significant attention in the context of Latin America and the Caribbean due to the region's ongoing economic challenges and developmental needs. As countries seek to address issues such as poverty, inequality, and the impacts of climate change, the role of IFIs becomes increasingly significant in providing financial resources and technical assistance. If more systematically engaged with the PBC, IFIs could utilise insights and recommendations from the PBC as complementary information to better support the developmental needs of countries in the region. The Commission can engage with IFIs more systematically and strategically ([A/RES/79/1](#), Action 44(c)). Concrete options to facilitate such an engagement need to be discussed during the 2025 PBAR process.

- ***The Commission should institutionalise and systematise partnerships with civil society and local peacebuilders, including youth and women.*** The 2 July 2020 Chair's letter encourages measuring the success of peacebuilding and sustaining peace 'in terms of impact rather than outputs' ([A/74/935-S/2020/645](#)). This perspective arises from the growing recognition that the impact of peacebuilding policy and programming is rooted in context-specific actions driven by local realities, experiences, and needs. The engagement of the Commission with civil society becomes more important, as recognised in the Pact for the Future's call upon the Commission to consult with civil society, nongovernmental organisations, including women's organisations ([A/RES/79/1](#), Action 44(b)). To this extent, members of the Commission could establish a clear mechanism for diverse and independent civil society engagement, including women and youth, to hear diverse perspectives on the contexts being discussed. The New York Peacebuilding Group (NYPG) and the CSO-UN Dialogue Initiative on Peacebuilding can support civil society inputs in the Commission's deliberations. Further, the Commission could establish more frequent field visits and meetings with civil society networks and coalitions operating at the regional and country levels.

- ***The Commission's advice to other intergovernmental bodies needs to be strengthened.*** The advisory role of the Commission to other intergovernmental bodies could support the integration of peacebuilding across the work of the UN system. This would ensure that human rights and development considerations are integral to peacebuilding efforts and that human rights and development action are conflict-sensitive. The need to strengthen the cooperation and communication between the Security Council and the General Assembly and its subsidiary bodies, including the PBC was also recognised in the Pact of the Future as a way to strengthen the Security Council's role in the maintenance of international peace and security ([A/RES/79/1](#), Action 41). The Commission should provide high-quality, action-oriented advice in areas where it adds the most value. The Commission's expertise should be further utilised to support political transitions at an early stage through operative and strategic advice to the Security Council and meaningful engagement with the national governments in respective countries. For example, on 11 July 2024, the Commission convened an ambassadorial-level meeting on

peacebuilding in Colombia⁵. The Security Council convened to discuss the mandate of the political mission in Colombia 7 days later and underlined the utility of greater use of the Commission's convening power and advisory role⁶. The Chair of the Commission should further collaborate with Chairs and Presidents of other intergovernmental bodies, including through informal coordinators, to better align schedules and agenda items, enhancing the relevance and timeliness of the advice. The UN Secretariat should share advanced copies of the Secretary-General's reports with the Commission whenever possible.

3. The 2025 PBAR could strengthen the quantity and quality of financing for peacebuilding.

As highlighted by the examples of Colombia, Guatemala and El Salvador, peacebuilding is neither a linear nor an irreversible process, requiring continuous support and investment to sustain the impact of peacebuilding interventions. However, the scarcity of financial resources remains a significant challenge, hindering the effective implementation of prevention and peacebuilding strategies.

➤ ***Peacebuilding financing needs to be diversified.*** To date, the PBF is one of the major contributors to peacebuilding activities across the region, including its support for projects in Colombia, Guatemala, Haiti, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Honduras, Ecuador, Bolivia, and Peru. Progress on strengthening the quantity and quality of financing for peacebuilding has been made with the adoption of General Assembly Resolution [A/RES/76/305](#) (2022) and [A/RES/78/257](#) (2023), both, reflecting the shared responsibility to finance peacebuilding. However, the PBF is just one mechanism with limited resources, restricted channels, and a short timeframe. The 2022 General Assembly resolution on financing for peacebuilding ([A/RES/76/305](#)) highlights the role of other relevant UN funds in contributing to peacebuilding and sustaining peace, including global and country-level multi-donor funds dedicated to peacebuilding and sustaining peace (PP7). A coordinated approach that uses diverse funding mechanisms is crucial for impactful action on peacebuilding and conflict prevention. Several proposed actions from Resolution 76/305 have yet to be implemented, and the 2025 PBAR could provide a space for making progress and analysing how to implement this resolution effectively.

➤ ***Peacebuilding financing requires sufficient quality, including flexibility and adaptability of funding allocations.*** Beyond ensuring the availability of resources for peacebuilding, it is essential that funding is tailored to the needs of the region and individual countries. To effectively address critical peacebuilding priorities, resources should be strategically allocated and adaptable to changing circumstances, allowing for timely and flexible responses. The UN funds should carefully consider the quality of its investments and adapt respectively.

⁵ PBC (11 July 2024), Peacebuilding Commission Ambassadorial-level meeting on Peacebuilding in Colombia: https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/sites/www.un.org.peacebuilding/files/documents/pbc_chair_summary_colombia_july_2024.final.pdf

⁶ UN (18 July 2024), Security Council Press Statement on Colombia Following UN Security Council Colombia Session July 2024, <https://press.un.org/en/2024/sc15768.doc.htm>.

4. The 2025 PBAR could support the adaptation of the UN System to better support inclusive national ownership in peacebuilding and sustaining peace.

➤ ***Sustained technical support from the UN System at the field level is required.*** The support of the Commission alone is not sufficient to support their prevention and peacebuilding goals. This necessitates the entire UN System, including at the field presences, to be well-equipped to support inclusive national ownership in peacebuilding and sustaining peace and follow-up on political discussions within the Commission. It includes, for example, the provision of a tailor-made package of support and expertise by the UN Country Teams and Resident Coordinators to establish or strengthen national infrastructures for peace, as highlighted in the Secretary-General policy brief ‘New Agenda for Peace’⁷. The Commission should also consider a more systematic engagement with the UN field presence.

5. The 2025 PBAR could help define the impact of peacebuilding action.

➤ ***More evidence is required to understand how peacebuilding stakeholders can achieve a bigger impact.*** It is important to articulate clearly what ‘impact’ of peacebuilding means, recognising that it may vary across contexts. The development of the Impact Hub by PBSO is a positive step forward. Evidence of the learning from the Impact Hub can then be presented for the consideration of the Commission to enhance its own support and share lessons learned with Member States. The Impact Hub can help generate evidence that national governments can use to develop and strengthen their nationally-led peacebuilding and prevention strategies. Such evidence can also assist the UN in developing more impactful technical support. Relevant experts providing input to the Impact Hub can act as resource persons for Member States and the UN to get additional expertise in strengthening the impact of peacebuilding and prevention action.

6. The 2025 PBAR could further strengthen inclusive peacebuilding action.

➤ ***Peacebuilding must be built on participatory and inclusive democracy based on the whole-of-society approach, (intergenerational) dialogue and respect for human rights.*** Both dual resolutions underline the importance of inclusivity to ensure that the needs of all segments of society are taken into account ([A/RES/70/262-S/RES/2282](#), OP3; [A/RES/75/201-S/RES/2558](#), PP5). It is therefore essential to involve all actors, collectively identify innovative and context-specific solutions, and implement them. Specifically, the role of youth and women must be highlighted in the 2025 PBAR outcome document. As the only intergovernmental body with a Gender Strategy and a Strategic Action Plan on Youth and Peacebuilding, the PBC is well-positioned to support Member States in advancing inclusivity of peacebuilding action. Member States themselves could consider developing fully-funded and cross-cutting national and regional action plans on Women, Peace and Security and Youth, Peace and Security, while

⁷ UN (2023). A New Agenda for Peace, p. 19. Retrieved from: <https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/our-common-agenda-policy-brief-new-agenda-for-peace-en.pdf>.

also giving due attention to other groups in vulnerable situations. UN field presences should provide technical support in developing such plans.