



Peacebuilding Following Conflict

The Stanley Foundation

June 19-21, 2009
New Paltz, New York

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Mohonk Mountain House, Lake Mohonk
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Opening Remarks

by Richard H. Stanley

Welcome to the Stanley Foundation's conference on "Peacebuilding Following Conflict." For more than 50 years, in various forms and at various locations in the United States and abroad, we have organized conferences of policy experts to exchange thinking and explore and develop multilateral solutions to important global concerns.

This conference deals with peacebuilding, a critically important function to encourage and help countries emerging from conflict return to ongoing peace and sustainable social and economic development. The 2005 Millennium Summit established the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) with this objective in mind. Its purpose, as set forth on its Web site, is: to bring together all of the relevant actors involved in immediate post-conflict peace-building or early recovery; to marshal resources; and to advise on and propose integrated strategies for post-conflict peacebuilding and recovery and, where appropriate, highlight any gaps that threaten to undermine peace.

Concurrent General Assembly and Security Council resolutions that came out of the Millennium Summit also established the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) and Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO). The PBF was launched in October 2006 in response to the growing global demand for sustained support to countries emerging from conflict. Its role is to establish a crucial funding bridge between conflict and recovery at a time when other funding mechanisms may not yet be available. The PBF assists countries before the PBC—currently Guinea-Bissau, the Central African Republic, Burundi, and Sierra Leone. It is also available to countries in similar circumstances as designated by the secretary-general, as well as for individual projects funded under the PBF Emergency Window. The PBSO's role is to support the PBC, administer the PBF, and serve the secretary-general in coordinating UN agencies in their peacebuilding efforts.

In its Presidential Statement of 20 May 2008 (S/PRST/2008/16), the Security Council invited the secretary-general to provide advice on how to support national efforts to secure sustainable peace more rapidly and effectively, including in the areas of coordination, civilian deployment capabilities, and financing. His report, just released for translation, focuses on the challenges that post-conflict countries and the international community face in the immediate aftermath of conflict, defined as the first two years after the main conflict has ended.

Our goal for the next two days is to explore how the world can best address the extra-ordinary challenges presented by post-conflict societies. We intend to assess the status and progress of peacebuilding. In doing so, we hope to advance thoughtful consideration of the secretary-general's report on Peacebuilding in the Immediate Aftermath of Conflict and lay groundwork for the planned 2010 Security Council review of peacebuilding.

Background and Context

Before we begin our consideration of this important subject, it is helpful to remind ourselves of some of the background and context for our discussion.

First, we know with certainty that emerging from conflict and building a peaceful future is imposingly difficult and complex. The record of success is less than good. Indeed, a participant at one of our recent conferences offered that the best predictor of where conflict will emerge in the future is to consider where there has been conflict in the relatively recent past.

Next, country leadership is an essential ingredient of successful peacebuilding. The international community can do much to assist and support, but external imposition of peace is a contradiction in terms. A critically important part of peacebuilding is country capacity building so that country leadership is better able to take ownership and build for the country's future common good.

Third, peacebuilding is not a separate isolated function. Rather, it must be understood as a part of an integrated effort that also includes peace-

keeping, peacemaking, and humani-tarian aid. All are triggered by achieving a peace agreement that will end a conflict. All require prior planning and coordination to maximize the chances for a smooth transition from conflict and a transparent interface between them. All must be a part of a coherent effort within and beyond the United Nations. That being the case, there is no room for "silo" or "stovepipe" thinking or operations. Integration and coordination among functions and organizations are paramount.

Fourth, it is useful to remind ourselves that peacebuilding should be considered in the context of a continuing series of initiatives to integrate and strengthen the overall peace focus of the United Nations. Various initiatives have been and are being taken to improve UN coherence, reduce "turf" issues, focus on results and those served, increase the role of "field" rather than "headquarters" perspectives, and minimize overlaps and redundancies. UN leadership in recent years should be applauded for these initiatives and our consideration of peacebuilding should be consistent with them.

Requirements for Effective Peacebuilding Following Conflict

As we begin our exploration of this important subject, let me offer, subject to your review, several guidelines that incorporate some of the concepts learned from prior peacebuilding experience.

The Strategic Peacebuilding Plan Must Be Country Focused

There is no "one-size-fits-all" generic strategic peacebuilding plan. Rather, the strategic country framework that will most likely succeed is one built on the particular background, situation and circumstances in the country as it approaches emergence from conflict. Plan development should center around the question of "What needs to happen in this country, and how can the country be helped to do this? The plan should provide a common vision that will guide all peacebuilding activity in the country.

This places a premium on early understanding, assessment, and analysis. On the ground knowledge is critically important, and the most capable people must lead elaboration of the plan with support from all helpful quarters. These factors argue for in-country rather than headquarters leadership of plan development.

Our discussion agenda includes exploration of how, when, and by whom effective assessment, planning, and strategy for peacebuilding can best be achieved. Early agreement on priorities and sequences, with alignment of resources behind them is the goal.

Early post-conflict strategic peacebuilding planning will necessarily be relatively short term and iterative in nature. It should focus on the most urgent and highest priority needs and objectives. At the same time, it should provide the basis for future actions that will help the country get onto a sustainable development path.

While each plan is country specific, the secretary-general's report identifies five recurring areas where international help is often requested as a priority in the immediate aftermath of conflict. These are support to: basic safety and security, political processes, the provision of basic services, restoring core government functions, and economic revitalization. Restorative justice and post-conflict reconciliation and other areas may also merit consideration. But all efforts should include attention to capacity building so that the country will be able to gradually reduce its need for assistance.

Country Ownership of the Country Framework and Plan Is Essential

The secretary-general “underscores the imperative of national ownership as a central theme of this report....” This recognizes that peacebuilding is an inherently political process that cannot be imposed from outside. But achieving national ownership in the immediate aftermath of conflict is a real challenge.

War-ravaged and severely weakened states emerging from conflict generally suffer from major deficits in leadership, functioning state institutions, social services, and basic public safety, a situation some analysts have described as a “gap in sovereignty.” Levels of trust in nearly all sectors of a post-war society are usually dangerously low—whether one is talking about trust between political groups, ethnic groups, genders, local and national leaders, citizens and political elites, and perhaps between domestic actors and the international community as a whole.

Under such circumstances, how can country ownership and support of the country framework and plan be achieved? As already mentioned, this will be a part of our discussion over the next two days.

But for your consideration, let me suggest that both plan development and country ownership will be enhanced by in-depth assessment and planning for early recovery before the conflict has stopped. And this, as well as early implementation of the plan, is probably best led by a stronger and more empowered international “country team” working with a full spectrum of nationals through involvement at provincial and national leadership nodes. This country team should likely involve close UN-World Bank cooperation, and leadership from a special designee of the secretary-general, whether a special representative of the secretary-general (SRSG) or an empowered resident coordinator. Cooperation among and support from multiple UN agencies and departments, as well as national and civil society entities, are also vital.

Give Priority to Coherence, Fast Action, and Flexibility

A core finding of many country case studies is that all elements of society must be incorporated in the state-building process as quickly as possible. This includes civil society actors such as media, human rights NGOs, women's groups, farmers, business-people, provincial officials, tribal chiefs, national administrators, and others. The whole of society can and must be a part of early post-conflict recovery and sustained capacity building. Otherwise, dangerous long-term dependencies on international aid can take root, eroding citizen confidence in national leaders. Feelings of marginalization and unfairness by excluded groups can grow, threatening the legitimacy of the peace process. In such situations, as peacekeepers are inevitably withdrawn and aid actors inevitably decrease their activities, the continued lack of national capacity can all too easily lead to renewed tensions and conflict.

The November 2006 report of the High-level Panel on UN System-wide Coherence, entitled *Delivering as One* presented proposals to strengthen the management and coordination of United Nations' operational activities. Among their recommendations was establishing “One UN for Development” at the country level. By this, they meant that all UN development activities in a particular country should have

one leader, one program, one budget and, where appropriate, one office. It seems to me that these ideas, applied to peacebuilding at the country level with adjustments as warranted, will help to assure coherence, fast action, and flexibility.

Establish Real Partnership and Collaboration

Throughout his report, the secretary-general emphasizes the need for real partnership both within and outside the United Nations. Many of his recommendations and initiatives are intended to accomplish this.

The importance of real partnership and collaboration is obvious. Many diverse entities are involved in peacebuilding and their contributions are far more likely to be effective if integrated and coordinated.

One aspect of this is integration across the UN system, working to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of its post-conflict response. This involves overcoming or working around the differing mandates, governance structures, organizational practices, personalities, and financing arrangements of the various entities. A second aspect is achieving mutual collaboration and support with entities outside the United Nations, including the World Bank, other international financing institutions, regional and subregional organizations, national programs and initiatives, civil society organizations, and others.

Our discussion agenda includes an opportunity to explore how to achieve this essential objective.

Provide Predictable, Reliable, and Sufficient Resources

Both human and financial resources are needed for peacebuilding. How can their availability and mobilization be improved?

While a continuing priority of peacebuilding is country capacity building, predictable international and other technical support is necessary. Here, the challenge is how to increase the readily available pool of capable people to fill human resource needs on short notice. Various mechanisms have been proposed as a part of the solution, and these issues are on our agenda.

Closing the funding gap is also necessary. Peacebuilding must be fast acting and flexible. Hence, funding availability must be the same. But most funding processes are ponderous and slow. The PBF is intended to help with this need and some other fast-disbursing means exist. What changes are needed to make sufficient early funding available? Longer-term funding is also a need. Are there opportunities for streamlining and fast-tracking commitment decisions so plans can move forward?

While proven procedures and operating methodologies should not be easily abandoned, the need for flexibility and fast action would seem to warrant a greater tolerance for risk-taking by the United Nations, financial institutions, national donors, and other intergovernmental organizations.

Conclusion

Let me conclude these remarks with a direct quotation from the secretary-general's report. With respect to the immediate post-conflict period, he states:

The threats to peace are often greatest during this early phase, but so too are the opportunities to set virtuous cycles in motion from the start.

The immediate post-conflict period offers a window of opportunity to provide basic security, deliver peace dividends, shore up and build confidence in the political process, and strengthen core national capacity to lead peacebuilding efforts thereby beginning to lay the foundations for sustainable development.

If countries develop a vision and strategy that succeeds in addressing these objectives early on, it substantially increases the chances for sustainable peace—and reduces the risk of relapse into conflict. In too many cases, we have missed this early window.

Seizing the window of opportunity requires that international actors are, at a minimum, capable of responding coherently, rapidly and effectively to support these recurring priorities.

The secretary-general has put forth a strong and thoughtful report that analyzes past efficiency and effectiveness of post-conflict response. It advances some 27 initiatives and recommendations to strengthen peacebuilding in the immediate aftermath of conflict.

Our discussions here this weekend give us the opportunity to review these initiatives and recommendations. They permit us to consider other actions needed to improve the capacity of the international community to support peacebuilding following conflict. They offer an opportunity for us to propose steps to foster consideration of these ideas within the UN system and elsewhere.

From its inception in 1956, the Stanley Foundation has sought a secure peace with freedom and justice, built on world citizenship and effective global governance. Achieving effective peacebuilding following conflict is undeniably an important part of that effort.

Again, I welcome your participation in this conference as we work together to advance this noble objective. I look forward to our discussions.

Executive Summary

The Current Picture

Progress in peacebuilding, particularly in the immediate aftermath of conflict, has been measured. While there has been progress on developing a set of tools to address peacebuilding, there are still difficulties in using them to implement strategies and plans. Overall, participants believed that even though individual member states and intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) such as the United Nations, the World Bank, and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) have accepted the rhetoric or language of peacebuilding, this task has not been significantly operationalized in practices on the ground. Peacebuilding still competes against more high-profile conflict and crisis situations in capturing the interests of the Security Council, and in this regard tends to be viewed as an ancillary issue on the UN agenda.

Nonetheless, there was an atmosphere of measured optimism among the participants in regards to the future potential evolution of the PBC and PBF, specifically in regards to their ability as strategic instruments to transcend the narrower political and institutional prerogatives of nationally-led, bilateral foreign aid programs. Many participants agreed that the PBC is a 21st century creation that distinguishes it from other UN structures, one that more accurately reflects the political, economic, and social realities of the world. Participants saw the results of the 2005 Summit Outcome Document as an explicit acknowledgment by the world of the unique challenges of a post-conflict environment, which led several to argue that within the next decade, peacebuilding has the potential to become a core pillar of the United Nations, along with peace and security, development, human rights, and humanitarian affairs.

For instance, issues which are undermining peacebuilding efforts today were all challenges that the humanitarian field faced twenty-odd years ago. Today, however, humanitarian aid is delivered effectively, and the international community should look at this example and aspire to achieve the same results for peacebuilding.



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Further, numerous participants agreed that on-the-ground efforts have made identifiable progress in the last few years. In particular, they pointed to successes in Sierra Leone and Burundi. Sierra Leone has successfully transitioned from a conflict to a post-conflict society that is actively consolidating sustainable peace and fostering economic growth and social progress. There have been real reforms in the security and justice sectors, including the creation of key institutions for anticorruption and human rights. In Burundi, there has been extensive progress in the peace process and the nurturing of an inclusive political dialogue.

The “Principles of Peacebuilding”

Several participants argued that peacebuilding is about setting up emergent processes of cooperation and mediation in the target society; i.e., speaking directly to “how things are done” within a country. Because of this reality, the international community must accept peacebuilding as an “integrated infusion of intense engagement.” While the international community cannot fully address historical, deep-seated, structural grievances in the short term—and arguably cannot even be the main enforcer in the long term, either—international actors can, and should, fund and shape “emergent interactive capabilities” at the domestic level for accomplishing discrete, short-term tasks via intergroup cooperation. International funding should encourage more cooperation, mediation, and conflict management, rather than less, between contending domestic groups.

Finally, to be done right, peacebuilding should not be viewed or used as an “exit strategy” for a peacekeeping and humanitarian mission that has not gone as planned.

The Advantages of the United Nations in Applying the Principles of Peacebuilding

A preplanned, strategic, and inclusive peacemaking-cum-peacebuilding approach does put pressure for performance on the *recipient* of aid. The United Nations was seen as “naturally advantaged” as an external player since all parties viewed it as a more neutral judge (at least in

comparison to the often equally-parochial special interests of individual donor states and other external parties.) The United Nations is the only forum where the country concerned is not the *object* of discussion, but rather, the *subject*. The United Nations also has the capacity to conduct an integral peacebuilding mission from the start as well as the ability to bring a full range of actors from the humanitarian, justice, development, and security sectors.

Further, the unique composition of the PBC reflects the variety of actors that can be brought together to promote a more strategic discussion on peacebuilding: the PBC was deliberately constructed to represent major troop contributing countries (for peacekeeping), major financial donors, three main UN organs (ECOSOC, the UN General Assembly [UNGA], and the UN Security Council [UNSC]), countries representing regions, and finally, governments from among those countries receiving assistance (or which had gone through peacebuilding in the past). This political, regional, financial, and military representation is unique among all the world’s bodies—although as many participants noted, this reality has not yet led to widespread agreement on the roles and modalities of PBC decision making and action.

Impediments to Peacebuilding Within and Outside the United Nations

Discussions about the above “principles” of peacebuilding naturally led many participants to ask: What’s impeding peacebuilding? Where’s the resistance?

One problem is that donors want conditionality, effectiveness, and more rather than fewer constraints on how aid is precisely used, while the receiving countries want (and objectively need for purposes of building sustainable peace) national ownership, flexibility, and speed.

Another global conceptual division (evident among the assembled participants) is the question of reliance on Official Development Assistance (ODA) versus qualitatively new approaches and instruments. For instance, one participant proposed using Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) as realistic objectives and indicators of success for countries emerging from conflict, and others noted that ODA is

increasing for fragile/post-conflict states. One participant expressed general optimism about the recent adoption of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD) Principles of Good International Engagement in Fragile States and the Accra Agenda for Action, which advance the concepts of national ownership and partnership in peacebuilding work. Others were encouraged by the increasing focus on the security-development nexus in bilateral aid programs, and pointed to an expansion in mandates for ODA funding toward child combatants and de-mining. Overall, 38 percent of all ODA in 2007 went to projects that tackled issues dealing with security and development. In general, some believed that it is in the international community's best interest to broaden the definition of ODA and not to place restrictions on what can be accomplished with ODA funding (i.e. to include peacebuilding as part of ODA).

However, in response, others contended that ODA and peacebuilding funding are not the same. According to one participant, "we fail to recognize the political nature of development aid in the context of an immediate post-conflict situation," where money, technical advice, and provision of security can have the effect of skewing benefits and legitimizing and empowering some actors over others. As noted by another participant, "Our humanitarian and developmental perspectives lack political sophistication in the countries concerned; we are afraid to deal with local interests and politics head on because they constitute awkward issues."

For instance, numerous participants pointed to national ownership as a core function that is instrumental to effective peacebuilding—but, despite its importance, it is too often compromised by the desperate needs of countries to secure any aid they can get. One participant claimed that when the PBC/PBSO (Peacebuilding Support Office) goes in to create a "whole of country plan" with a capacity-building strategy, it inherently cuts across, threatens, and creates friction with existing donor projects and their rules and imperatives. These donor-driven projects are not "nationally owned"—as per the "principles of peacebuilding"—and in virtually no donor-country ODA program is there a real, top-down, strategic "state capacity-building plan" in place. Instead, ODA is nearly always narrowly "project driven," with

specific infrastructure or small-scale, institution-building goals based on narrow metrics for that one project.

Some participants commented on the ongoing confusion over the relationship between *peacebuilding* and *peacekeeping* and suggested establishing a small peacebuilding mission at the start of every peacekeeping mission. On this point, one participant pointed to the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) as a case where the relapse into violence could be partly attributed to the lack of peacebuilding efforts dedicated to security sector reform (SSR), justice reform, and economic revitalization for demobilized soldiers. Overall, participants argued that peacekeeping missions should not alienate themselves from issues pertaining to social and economic development.

Several participants noted that the degree to which peacebuilding is conducted in parallel and in coordination with peacekeeping depends on the Security Council recognizing and mandating a peacebuilding operation alongside a peacekeeping mission, and that, thus far, the P-5 (five permanent members of the UN Security Council) still take a narrow "pure security view" of such operations. The heavy influence of, and emphasize on, expensive peacekeeping missions in countries such as Sudan was viewed as detracting from a more holistic approach to crisis states and post-conflict societies. This leads to heavy reliance on peacekeeping missions that are military in character, and which can and do have the perverse effect of creating receiving-country dependence on armed peacekeepers for basic domestic safety, security, and justice needs, rather than developing their own public security systems in a truly sustainable, capacity-building sense.

Summarizing Alternative Visions for PBC Goals and Role

In addressing these impediments and challenges, several *alternative strategic visions for the role, purpose, and structure of the PBC* were advocated by participants. One participant put it well: "This is an 'identity moment' for the PBC. Is it purely a gap filler, a speedy funder for early peace dividends? Or, is it rather a leader in mainstreaming peacebuilding in the United Nations, and even in the world?"

First, there was majority agreement that an obvious area for “PBC’s valued-added” is as an advocate, leader, and attention-getter for undersupported and underrecognized cases of post-conflict fragility. As put by one participant, “The PBC is confronting an organization [the United Nations] that was not created for prevention or state building. Therefore, the PBC must be a voice for peacebuilding within the system.”

Second, there was majority support for the PBC and PBF to focus on quick-impact “peace dividends” in the immediate “early recovery period” of peacebuilding, which was generally defined as the first two years. There was, thus, majority support for the argument in the SG’s report that the international community must, at the very least, become more effective at leveraging the immediate window of opportunity after a peace agreement, as well as become more effective at shoring up the legitimacy of such agreements via specific projects that the public can concretely see and feel on the ground.

However, agreement proved elusive beyond this area of work. Overall, there seemed to be two visions for the PBC: (1) a body that complements the work of other UN organs and agencies, and many other international actors, by filling the much-needed role of a flexible and fast provider of peace dividends in the early recovery period; and (2) a body that more ambitiously informs the Security Council of needs and potential crises at a strategic level, mainstreams peacebuilding throughout the UN system, raises far more funds than is currently the case for peacebuilding needs, integrates peacebuilding with other existing “pillars” in the UN system (peacemaking, peacekeeping, development), and even acts as a top-down unifier of other global actors via the strategic peacebuilding plan produced by its own country-specific meetings (CSM) mechanism.

For some participants, there was a firm belief that the CSM strategy and planning process of the PBC is crucial *in cases where viable domestic institutions do not exist*, i.e., where the international community is dealing with cases of extreme fragility, in which there is a “sovereignty gap” and peacebuilding is therefore *not* a normal development exercise. For these participants, the strategic process of the CSMs of

the PBC can and should include the peacemaking efforts of the UN Department of Political Affairs (DPA), and together, this represents a short-term substitute for the lack of domestic state institutions.

In this regard, some advocated that the PBC should make sure that all *external efforts in a post-conflict state are directed toward the unified peacebuilding plan, not the often parochial concerns of the external donors*. Many believed that the PBC is needed to “fuse” the European Commission (EC), OECD, international financial institutions (IFI), and regional development banks, all of whom have their own strategy in countries such as Burundi. As a positive example, one participant noted that the PBC successfully set the agenda for Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) in Burundi, bringing together in a coherent fashion a slew of development, financial, and security actors on the ground.

For these participants, it was important that the PBC not be seen or treated as a subsidiary body to the Security Council (SC); it must be seen as an independent advisor in order to gain notoriety, credibility, legitimacy, and add more adherents to the peacebuilding cause.

To fulfill this more ambitious role, the PBC must create the country-specific strategy for peacebuilding through effective engagement of a fractured and divided country *via an intensive, continuous, flexible, but short-term process that starts with the peacemaking efforts of the DPA*. This “*strategy process*” would be key to achieving final national ownership.

According to this viewpoint, peacebuilding as a discipline should *hold individual countries to account for their promises to align with an integrated strategy for peacebuilding in a particular country*, whether that strategy is put forward by the PBC’s single-country process or by some other actor. Furthermore, the PBC could and should act as a “quality control agent” for the question of a country’s “graduation” from peacebuilding mandates. (But, for this to happen, several participants noted that the P-5 must be more receptive to the PBC’s strategic advice).

Some participants argued that there is a lack of a strategic, purposeful approach by the UN organs and agencies to the “*rising middle countries*” such as the “India’s, Chile’s,” and others like them. For participants advocating a stronger PBC role, *this group of middle-to-rising countries could potentially be key to bolstering PBF catalytic funds*, and thus, *pursuing this group of rising nations could be part of a new strategic orientation for the PBC* in terms of its value-added within the global system. This would include dialogue with emerging regional powers.

Other participants, however, were more measured in their views, with some advocating a middle ground of informing the UNSC and UNGA more thoroughly and funding some sharp, focused projects in the early recovery period, so as to avoid negative competition with UNSC mandates and the use of foreign aid by individual major donor countries as a form of influence. For instance, one participant admitted that the Security Council does not consult adequately in its decisions in making its peacekeeping and donor-development mandates. Therefore, the PBC can and should continue to bring the Security Council’s attention to “good information from all relevant actors” involved in some way with peacebuilding in specific cases, whether other donor countries, IFIs, or IGOs.

Strengthening the “Peacebuilding Pillar” at the United Nations

Regardless of opinions about the ideal future roles and capacities of the PBC and PBF, many participants cited the concrete and practical challenges that must be overcome for these new instruments and mechanisms to be effective. The list included:

- Dealing frankly with a badly fractured and fragmented agency-dominated UN system. Many participants believed that 40+ different parts of the United Nations simply cannot be sent in to a small country such as Haiti or Burundi to make the initial peacebuilding strategic plan; *there must instead be a small team who spend weeks or even months there, interacting with both the government and society*. In short: *the creation of the peacebuilding strategy for a specific country cannot be “agency driven.”* In addition, *rapid finance for*

the strategy team’s efforts is key to any effort to keep the 40+ agencies from dominating in the short term, during the early recovery period. Despite some early and ongoing successes in inter-institutional dialogues, the PBC needs to concentrate on improving its coordinating role, because partnership among external actors is a critical element of national ownership. It is important for a country to know that it has external partners that are willing and able to work with each other in realizing the objectives the country itself aims to achieve.

- Addressing the tremendous shortfalls of the UN staffing system, or in other words, dealing openly with the ineffectiveness of the UN human resource system via *direct political dialogue* in the UNGA and elsewhere. One participant summarized the issue by saying that more and more rules have been incrementally added to what is ultimately a “rotten foundation,” which has created a situation of “slower rather than faster” as the main ethic of UN human resources. Incentive systems for personnel throughout the United Nations are still siloed, which feeds into the fragmentation noted above.
- Becoming more efficient and effective at “rapid coherence” in the early recovery period, even if that means questioning the current contracting systems, methods, and guidelines of key UN agencies that the PBF still relies upon to turn the “fast funds” into actual, implemented activities on the ground. PBF efficiency is paramount, if it is to gain more funds and more requests for aid. It cannot be less efficient than traditional agencies and IFIs. As noted by one participant, even after the SG approved \$1 million for Port-au-Prince in Haiti, and other monies for Guinea-Bissau, there were delays in finding and tasking contractors. Another participant commented on a gap in PBF disbursements for Burundi that strapped the government of cash, leaving it unable to pay its civil servants.
- Connecting better with *international support from the regions*. Participants encouraged the PBC to organize regional tours where countries that have benefited from the PBC are able to share their experiences, and to better link up with conferences and dialogues now being planned in the Asia-Pacific, in Indonesia, and in Latin America.

- Diversifying “entry points” to the PBC and PBF for countries in post-conflict situations. Participants questioned why countries emerging from conflict were not allowed to write directly to the General Assembly or the Security Council to be included on the PBC’s agenda.
- Addressing the hard reality of diminishing interest in the PBC from countries emerging from conflict. When the concept of a peacebuilding commission was being floated around the United Nations, countries clamored to be included on the agenda. Today, this enthusiasm has largely been lost. There is a great deal of uncertainty over what the PBC can deliver.
- Correcting widespread negative (mis)perceptions about the nature of PBF funding and spending rules, as well as negative political evaluations about the PBC’s capacity to take on “hot cases.” For instance, some countries which are natural candidates for the PBC do not come onto the commission’s agenda because of the perception that they may lose bilateral or IFI aid. However, as some participants pointed out, money from the peacebuilding fund is additional and complementary to other sources of financing. *The aim of the peacebuilding funds is to mobilize resources for situations seen as risky by traditional development actors*—but, currently, there are a great deal of misperceptions held by many different actors on this score, and more needs to be done to change such perceptions.
- Focusing on national ownership by the post-conflict society. Because of the central importance of national ownership of the domestic capacity-building process after conflict, the PBC needs to ensure that its priorities are akin to those of the country concerned so that the PBC acts as an enabler of national ownership. This means respecting the peacebuilding priorities of legitimate domestic actors rather than imposing top-down lists of priorities created in New York.
- Coordinating with other actors to avoid and prevent “spillover effects” across regions of insecurity. Given porous borders and fragile environments, coordination among national leaders of neighboring countries to protect the escalation of instability is critical. For

instance, Sierra Leone will remain fragile if there is no coordination with the leadership in Guinea Bissau.

Next Practical Steps

To respond to these problems, several participants expressed the need to look closely at the institutional gaps in the Organizational Committee, which is the PBC’s operational “committee of the whole.” Due consideration has not been given to all five constituents making up the committee. Indeed, confusion still reigns about “who does what” within the PBC. The Organizational Committee should do more to pool all its members to conduct its own assessments. Thus far, while the committee is called upon as an advisory board, it has not been given (or has not taken) the opportunity and time to do its own analysis.

To support these goals, the future chair of the Organizational Committee could remain at the helm for two years, instead of one, so that he/she can work more effectively with ECOSOC and all other relevant actors. Additionally, member states could do more to empower the PBC Chair by providing funds for his or her work, including trips to regions and to states being treated by PBF funds. At present, no such funds exist, and the chair must rely on his or her own country’s national resources.

Conference Report

On September 16, 2005, leaders of the United Nations Member States unanimously agreed to commit resources to countries emerging from conflict and transitioning toward stability and peace. The brainchild of this commitment was the new Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), supported by an office and a standing fund. On December 20, 2005, the United Nations Security Council and the United Nations General Assembly formally endorsed the commitment by establishing the Peacebuilding Commission with Security Council Resolutions 1645 and 1646, and General Assembly Resolution 60/180. The resolutions affirmed that the Peacebuilding Commission's responsibilities will be to:

1. Bring together all relevant actors to marshal resources, and to advise on and propose integrated strategies for post-conflict peacebuilding and recovery.
2. Focus attention on the reconstruction and institution-building efforts necessary for recovery from conflict, and to support the development of integrated strategies in order to lay the foundation for sustainable development.
3. Provide recommendations and information to improve the coordination of all relevant actors within and outside the United Nations, to develop best practices, to help to ensure predictable financing for early recovery activities, and to extend the period of attention given by the international community to post-conflict recovery.

In response to a Security Council Presidential statement of May 20, 2008, requesting the secretary-general (SG) to provide advice on how to support national efforts to secure sustainable peace more rapidly and effectively, including in the areas of coordination, civilian deployment capabilities, and financing, the secretary-general released his report on peacebuilding. This report examined and addressed the challenges faced by post-conflict countries and the



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international community in the first two years after a main conflict in a country has ended.

To encourage frank and full discussion of peacebuilding results to date under this new UN structure and set of policy instruments, the Stanley Foundation sponsored a conference on “Peacebuilding Following Conflict,” at Mohonk Mountain House in New Paltz, New York, between June 19 and June 21, 2009. This conference roundtable provided a forum for United Nations Member States, officials from UN departments and programmes, and experts from leading US think tanks to assess efforts to date on peacebuilding, and to discuss the secretary general’s landmark report on peacebuilding in the immediate aftermath of conflict.

This full conference report will summarize the discussions. Subjects under review include assessment of progress on peacebuilding; proposals on how to ensure an effective transition from conflict to sustainable peace; the tools required (existing and yet to be created) to achieve effective peacebuilding, including the role of the Peacebuilding Commission; and the next steps in enhancing peacebuilding efforts.

I. Progress on Peacebuilding and Issues for the Future

The post-conflict period is a highly charged political context where the government is weak, adversaries have open wounds, the private sector is enervated, and a multitude of donors are struggling to get a foothold in ways that can undermine efforts for coherence. As one example, one experienced official noted that the application of the traditional toolsets and pillars to Haiti has failed to make any significant headway in creating a peaceful society, citing the fact that the international community has undertaken no fewer than eight separate interventions across two decades, with “little to show for it” but a “surface peace” that is always in danger of falling apart. In the course of the discussions, several participants noted that peacekeeping is expensive—up to 8 billion dollars per year—and that typical Security Council mandates privilege peacekeeping over other approaches by issuing mandates that implicitly define post-conflict situations and post-conflict goals in narrow, security-heavy terms. In turn, this often

results in a routine dependence of target countries on foreign peacekeepers for basic internal security, safety, and policing, which can “leach away” from true long-term capacity building, thus endangering sustainable peace.

These musings about the failures or limited successes of past Security Council peacemaking and peacekeeping mandates naturally led to the question, “Why do some countries resist improvement?” The general answer cites structural factors and conflict drivers. Several participants insisted that there needs to be a clearer understanding of the structural factors that foster grievances and cause violent conflict. Thus, in *any* peacemaking, peacekeeping, and peacebuilding intervention by the international community, an up-front strategic question is, “What are the structural factors that have caused conflict?”

Many claimed that the international community still doesn’t understand these factors. Rather, under the traditional (and still favored) ODA-driven approach, the rhetoric has been: “It’s education. If you just do mass education of the populace, then peace will stabilize.” Or, “It’s economic performance. If we just create jobs, and a market, then people will avail themselves of the opportunities, leading to peace.” But, as argued by one participant, “No. It’s persistent state weakness.”

This raises a central question of peacemaking: who are the real stakeholders in the post-conflict country in question? Increasingly, for instance, DPA practitioners believe they must make investments into involving more than the warring factions, including women and civil society. As put by one participant, priorities in the country in question can themselves be skewed by elites; thus, “we must get domestic consultative mechanisms set up even as peacemaking is proceeding,” or immediately after the peace agreement is signed.

In this regard, several participants pointed to a distinct difference in the behavior of the ruling elites in post-conflict countries today with the past behavior of ruling elites in countries that have successfully developed. In the words of another participant, “Warring factions often have no real commitment to carry through on promises for their people; often, 60-70 percent of employment in post-conflict countries

is based on patronage.” The elites who head the warring factions tend to appoint most judges, feed the private sector with funds, and so on. So, often, “peacemaking is an exercise in power consolidation by warring elites.” One key example given was of the Congo and Congolese elites’ incentives, which are focused on external friends, external cultures in Europe, and external benefactors. According to one participant with direct, first-hand experience in that country, many of the political leaders do not really see the need for domestic schools, hospitals, and the like.

To get out of this trap—a reality that often leads to eventual state breakdown again—peacemaking efforts must keep peacebuilding objectives in mind by becoming more inclusive, wider, and more participatory as the diplomacy proceeds. As argued by one participant, “we must remember that politicians are a vehicle for the people to have peace.” In general, several participants noted that a participatory peace process that considers the various needs of diverse stakeholders will enhance the chances for sustainable and durable peace and ongoing successes in the peacebuilding stages.

Along these lines, another participant noted that peacebuilding is about setting up emergent processes of cooperation and mediation in the target society; i.e., addressing “how things are done” within the country. In this, civil society nodes can be crucial in being better “modelers” of the “right” intrasociety behavior. As one participant stated, “We tend to think of civil society in terms of ‘service delivery,’ but, they can be part of the mediation process in their own right.” It was also noted that civil society groups will usually be riven by some of the same ideological, religious, ethnic, or economic divides as the political elites themselves; thus, their involvement in the peacemaking and ensuing peacebuilding process will ensure that the main divisions in a given country are squarely addressed.

But this, in turn, requires interventions by external people on the ground who are “culturally aware,” with high levels of “political intuition” as well as specific technical or functional skill sets. Because of this latter reality, one participant argued that the international community must accept that peacebuilding is an “integrated infusion

of intense engagement.” While the international community cannot address such historical, deep-seated, structural grievances in the short term—and the international community arguably cannot even be the main enforcer in the long term, either—some participants argued that international actors can, and should, fund and shape “*emergent interactive capabilities*” at the domestic level for accomplishing discrete, short-term tasks via intergroup cooperation. This funding should do so in a way that encourages more cooperation, mediation, and conflict management, rather than less, between contending groups.

Further, the strategies must allow for five years if needed; while it is practical to focus on “catalytic projects” or immediate “peace dividends” for the first two years, the international community must accept that the final cost of peacebuilding (especially if “peacebuilding” means “state building” for the most fragile cases) will be high and sustained over time, going well beyond the first two years. As argued by one participant, “In the first two years, the international community manages; in the subsequent years, it funds.”

Although participants acknowledged that the “management function” cannot last indefinitely, and that immediate benefits from peace must be concretely felt by the populace via “quick-impact” projects, many contended that the international community must still accept that the price of peacebuilding success is long term by definition. Further, as argued by one participant with strong experience in mediation and peacemaking efforts of the UN Department of Political Affairs (DPA), peacebuilding, to be done right, must be done right away, not as an “exit strategy” for a peacekeeping and humanitarian mission that has not gone as planned and has hit major roadblocks, failing to create stability over time.

But, this type of preplanned, strategic, and inclusive peacemaking-cum-peacebuilding approach does put pressure for performance on the recipient of aid. As noted by one participant experienced in development assistance in fragile state environments, “they themselves [both political elites and civil society] must deliver and not play one agency, project, or donor against another for parochial benefit.” Here on this point, many saw the United Nations as “naturally advantaged”

as an external player since all parties viewed it as a more neutral judge (at least in comparison to the often equally-parochial special interests of individual donor states and other external parties). In other words: when there is no cohesive government or leadership group, international peacebuilding attempts must necessarily support “government shaping” or “sovereignty shaping”—and many participants believed that, despite its flaws, the United Nations is uniquely advantaged in this area by virtue of its neutrality.

What is Impeding Peacebuilding at the Global Level? Discussions about these “principles” of peacebuilding naturally led many participants to ask: What’s impeding peacebuilding? Where’s the resistance?

Several answers were given. One participant broke it down to the basic values and goals of the two categories of actors: those that give aid, and those that receive it. The problem is that donors want conditionality, effectiveness, and more rather than fewer constraints on how aid is precisely used, while the receiving countries want (and objectively need for purposes of building sustainable peace) national ownership, flexibility, and speed.

One of the principal global conceptual divisions (which were evident among the assembled participants) was the question of reliance on Official Development Assistance (ODA) versus qualitatively new approaches and instruments. For instance, one participant proposed using Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) as realistic objectives and indicators of success for countries emerging from conflict, and others noted that ODA is in fact increasing for fragile/post-conflict states. One participant expressed general optimism in regards to the advances in ODA and remarked that the international community (beyond the United Nations) has made impressive strides on many fronts. For instance, the adoptions of the OECD’s Principles of Good International Engagement in Fragile States and the Accra Agenda for Action were listed as great achievements in advancing the concepts of national ownership and partnership in peacebuilding work. One participant was also encouraged by the increasing focus on the security-development nexus in bilateral aid programs, and pointed to an expansion in mandates for ODA funding toward child combatants

and de-mining. This speaker informed the group that up to 38 percent of all ODA in 2007 went to projects that tackled issues dealing with security and development. In general, some believed that it is in the international community’s best interest to broaden the definition of ODA and to not be restrictive on what can be accomplished with ODA funding (i.e. to include peacebuilding as part of ODA).

However, in response, another participant remarked that ODA and peacebuilding funding are not the same, and indeed, viewing them as such could set a dangerous precedence which would deter many countries from seeking funding from the PBC and PBF’s general pool of monies in fear that they could also lose viable bilateral ODA financing. As argued by one participant critical of the ODA approach, “we fail to recognize the political nature of development aid in the context of an immediate post-conflict situation,” where money, technical advice, and provision of security can have the effect of skewing benefits and legitimizing and empowering some actors over others. Along these lines, one participant complained that in Burundi, “you have some development actors on the ground acting as if they are in Malawi”—i.e., applying traditional development aid—“with the United Nations having a traditional political section reporting out.” Another participant added, “Our humanitarian and developmental perspectives lack political sophistication in the countries concerned; we are afraid to deal with local interests and politics head on because they constitute awkward issues.” For instance, in one participant’s experience in creating a new office within the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) that holistically tackled peacebuilding, the traditional bureaucracy of both USAID and the State Department resisted going beyond traditional approaches, and the office in question is still not widely accepted by Congress. In addition, looking beyond the case of the US bureaucracy, one participant observed that “instruments define possibilities,” and the United Nations was not originally built for conflict prevention and state building after conflict.

There are further political and bureaucratic frictions between a “collective pooled approach” that tries to coordinate and organically fuse multiple efforts, and the reality of a world in which nation-states,

IGOs, and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) act according to their own internal mandates. As noted by one participant, when the PBC/PBSO goes in to create a “whole of country plan” with a capacity-building strategy, it inherently cuts across, threatens, and creates friction with existing donor projects and their rules and imperatives. One concrete example given was of a \$20 million donor-state allotment for energy and education projects, which led one country to refuse PBC offers. These latter donor-driven projects, however, are not nationally owned—as per the “principles of peacebuilding”—and in virtually no donor-country ODA program is there a real, top-down, strategic “state capacity-building plan” in place. Instead, ODA is nearly always narrowly “project driven,” with specific infrastructure or small-scale, institution-building goals based on narrow metrics for that one project. Because of these generic, global dynamics, there is “no truly regular funding of pooled approaches such as the PBF.”

Participants pointed out that this is hardly only a challenge facing the United Nations. For instance, in Official Development Assistance (ODA)—especially US assistance—funds are routinely micro-managed and subjected to strict accounting rules that are too much of a burden for what is objectively needed in early recovery in post-conflict states. Within the United States itself, as one participant argued, there is a need for people to make a strong argument for a peacebuilding and conflict prevention fund in USAID that is separate from the rules, norms, and constraints of “normal” US ODA. The same applies, to somewhat lesser extents, for many other donors around the world, including many OECD countries.

Progress and Challenges Within the UN System

Participants widely agreed that efforts by the international community since the establishment of the peacebuilding commission (PBC) and the peacebuilding support office (PBSO) in addressing peacebuilding following conflict have produced limited but significant progress. However, the progress achieved by these new UN-specific instruments or mechanisms has occurred mostly at the conceptual and broadly political level, and has not yet been translated into significantly new actions on the ground. As a whole, participants thought that even though individual member states and IGOs such as the United

Nations, the World Bank, and the IMF have accepted the rhetoric or language of peacebuilding, this task has not been significantly operationalized in institutional tools and practices on the ground. It is therefore advisable that member states (both on the PBC and in the UNGA) think in “big picture” terms about these new instruments.

Several participants stressed that peacebuilding in its unvarnished form means getting squarely into governance and capacity issues by UN organs, instruments, and agencies such as the Department of Political Affairs (DPA), the PBC, and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO)—especially including the need to go beyond the warring countries’ top elites and including “all relevant stakeholders” in society to achieve truly sustainable peace based on a more nuanced and solid legitimating of the peace agreements. This political institution-building focus of peacebuilding was commented on by many participants as separating it from traditional UN “pillars” such as humanitarian relief, peacekeeping, and diplomatic peacemaking between combatants.

Despite these challenges, most expressed their strong belief in the United Nations as uniquely placed to conduct peacebuilding activities and monitor a country’s transition from conflict to peace, most importantly its capacity to conduct an integral peacebuilding mission from the very start as well as its ability to bring a full range of actors from the humanitarian, justice, development, and security sectors. The United Nations is also the only forum where the country concerned is not the *object* of discussion, but rather, the *subject*. One participant pointed to the UN’s mobilization tools, including the unique composition of the PBC as reflective of the variety of actors that can be brought together to promote a more strategic discussion on peacebuilding: the PBC was purposefully constructed to represent major troop-contributing countries (for peacekeeping), major financial donors, three main UN organs (ECOSOC, the UNGA, and the UNSC), countries representing regions, and finally, governments from among those countries receiving assistance (or which had gone through peacebuilding in the past). This political, regional, financial, and military representation is unique among all the world’s bodies—although as many participants noted, *this reality has not yet led to*

widespread agreement on the roles and modalities of PBC debates and action, and some members (including the P-5) are still not treating the PBC as a primary venue for political and operational decision making and action.

Several speakers remarked that one of the key achievements in UN-specific peacebuilding efforts has been the *sustained attention raised toward countries emerging from conflict*, observing that countries tend to benefit from widespread and continued support from the international community once they are officially put on the PBC's agenda.

In the end, it is imperative to gauge success by events on the ground. Numerous participants agreed that on-the-ground efforts have made measured but identifiable progress in the last few years. In particular, they pointed to successes in Sierra Leone and Burundi. In Sierra Leone, the country has transitioned from a conflict to a post-conflict society that is actively consolidating sustainable peace and fostering economic growth and social progress. There have been real reforms in the security and justice sectors, including the creation of key institutions for anticorruption and human rights. In Burundi, there has been extensive progress on the peace process and the nurturing of an inclusive political dialogue. In both cases, national elites have voiced praise for the partial contributions that the PBC and PBF have made to this success.

Integrating Different “UN Pillars” in Post-Conflict Settings. There was a general sense that the links among institutions that work on peacemaking, peacekeeping, and peacebuilding are still weak and need to be integrated. Associated with this concern, numerous participants explored time horizons for when to commence peacebuilding activities. Several agreed with the SG on the “window of opportunity” that opens in the immediate aftermath of conflict, defined in the SG's report as two years. In this respect, two participants pointed to the need to start peacebuilding along with peacekeeping at the outset, to capitalize on the peace dividend in this early period. Participants emphasized that peacebuilding and UN peacekeeping are not isolated functions, and they needed to be approached simultaneously to ensure a smooth transition from conflict to peace. However, some commented on the confusion over the relationship between peace-

building and peacekeeping and suggested establishing a small peacebuilding mission at the start of every peacekeeping mission.

On this point, one participant cited the DRC as a case where the relapse into violence could be partly attributed to the absence of peacebuilding efforts dedicated to security sector reform (SSR), justice reform, and economic revitalization for demobilized soldiers. Another noted that the experience in Cambodia, where the United Nations successfully managed administrative issues in tandem with peacekeeping in the period immediately following conflict, was a learning experience that highlighted the value of deploying an early peacebuilding operation. An additional discussant remarked that the degree to which peacebuilding is conducted in parallel and in coordination with peacekeeping depends *on the Security Council recognizing and mandating a peacebuilding operation alongside a peacekeeping mission*. Overall, participants argued that peacekeeping missions should not avoid tackling issues related to social and economic development.

Several participants suggested that integration among peacemaking, peacebuilding, peacekeeping, and traditional development would be helped by extending the time horizon for peacebuilding activities, allowing the latter to overlap more organically with the other pillars of the UN humanitarian system. One participant argued that the short time frame dedicated to peacebuilding is sometimes one of the causes of a relapse into conflict, reminding everyone that one of the main purposes of peacebuilding is to have countries on the international agenda for a longer, more extended period of time. Thus, there were cautionary notes in discussions that the international community has to be careful in rushing to “graduate” countries from peacebuilding to the next step on the continuum for reasons of political convenience.

National Ownership and UN Peacebuilding Efforts. Numerous participants pointed to national ownership as a core function that is instrumental to effective peacebuilding and peacekeeping, noting that national ownership has to occur from the outset—but, despite its importance, it is too often compromised by the desperate needs of countries to secure any aid they can get. One participant recounted his

experience in Burundi, where he witnessed numerous donors offering support in areas ranging from health, infrastructure, to education. The participant noted that the government of Burundi had no choice but to say yes to all the projects; sadly this decision was governed by necessity rather than national priorities.

Because normal ODA approaches already often undermine national ownership, the PBC needs to ensure that its priorities are akin to those of the country concerned so that the PBC acts as an enabler of this important goal. One participant indicated, unfortunately, some countries have shown increasing reluctance to be on the PBC agenda because of concerns over the PBC meddling in their national affairs, most notably in their development agenda. One participant pointed to the case of Haiti, which has voiced concerns on constraints outweighing the benefits of being on the PBC's agenda because of fears that PBC management would undermine, rather than support, national ownership.

The Question of Leadership in UN Peacebuilding Efforts. Many participants agreed that establishing a stronger and better supported country leadership team on the ground would be beneficial for peacebuilding. In this regard, the SG's *emphasis on leadership teams* is a huge improvement from that of focusing on individual leaders. The speaker noted that the SG can play a critical role in bringing together and empowering a specialized team on the ground.

For instance, due to the ongoing reality of fragmentation at both headquarters of organizations and in the countries receiving support, one participant applauded the momentum around the SG's recommendation for an integrated strategic framework, which enables the senior UN leadership in the field to convene all UN actors to agree on priorities and the division of responsibilities in the field. One participant, however, voiced some concerns with regards to the SG's recommendations, specifically paragraph 44, noting that a convening and prioritizing role for the senior UN representative on the ground might duplicate efforts of the Country-Specific Meetings (CSMs) that are the main operational approach of the PBC's member states.

The United Nations and Partnerships Among External Actors. One of the positive aspects of the Peacebuilding Commission has been its collaboration with partners such as the World Bank, UN Development Program (UNDP), UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), and regional and subregional organizations. Partnerships with the World Bank and with regional and subregional organizations were specifically emphasized by many participants.

At the same time, there were cautionary notes and disagreements among participants: one argued that while the United Nations has an established track record of working with the World Bank, it has to improve its relationships with regional and subregional organizations. Another countered that regional and subregional organizations were less important overall than “global functional” organizations, particularly in the first six months, where the parameters of partnerships between the World Bank, United Nations, and the European Union (EU) are most crucial.

On working with the World Bank, one participant wondered whether there would be tensions in having the United Nations lead integrated projects on the ground. Another participant clarified that the World Bank has agreed to recognize the leadership of the United Nations—should the United Nations be able to present it with a credible country team leader. However, one participant pointed out that even though the World Bank has agreed to a secondary role, its incentive system for its own employees does not necessarily reward taking a backseat. In response, another participant pointed out that *if there is a joint plan which assesses the delineated roles*, the incentive structure within the United Nations and other organizations such as the World Bank will adapt accordingly.

One speaker noted that *partnership among external actors is a critical element of national ownership*. While it is important for a country to own the processes it undergoes, it is equally important for it to *know that it has external partners that are willing and able to work with each other* in realizing the objectives that the country itself aims to achieve.

Finally, several participants wondered why so many people had to be directly employed by the United Nations instead of engaging in partnerships with NGOs, particularly for quick impact projects. To this, one participant replied that this was indeed happening, and others commended the UN Office for Partnership for fostering linkages and mobilizing awareness among interested constituents. Another participant informed the group of the OECD's *International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding* which promotes constructive dialogue to guide partnership efforts in peacebuilding and state building. The participant suggested that the forum might be a particularly interesting venue for the PBC and the PBSO to continue its discussions on improving partnerships in peacebuilding.

The United Nations and Coordination Among Both Donors and Country-Based Actors. One speaker suggested the PBC focus seriously on improving its coordinating role, both within and outside UN headquarters. A few participants pointed to the “Delivering as One” initiative as a program or initiative to emulate for peacebuilding.

Two challenges were identified in regard to intra-UN coordination and global coordination more generally. The first challenge is that funds, programmes, and agencies operate within their own mandates and answer to their own headquarters. The problem could be that different departments believe that they have made enough progress in their own areas and they are not inclined to integrate with other areas.

The second obstacle lies outside the United Nations, with partners such as the World Bank and the EU, and with the fractured nature of individual countries' foreign policies. There is a need to define responsibilities and ensure that partners are held accountable, possibly through mechanisms such as premandated assessments. Just as importantly, *member states themselves have to commit to one message toward the international community. Both the United Nations and the World Bank are creatures of the same member states, and therefore, if there are conflicting priorities, it comes back to the member states themselves*, and thus pressure must be put on countries to speak with one consistent voice.

Another participant reiterated that the responsibility eventually lies with member states and recalled a recent trip to Brussels where the EU commission had mentioned different priorities from those of the EU mission in New York. One area of concern was better coordination between foreign and finance ministers from donor countries.

II. Planning, Assessment, and Technical Support: Moving From Conceptual Frameworks to Realities on the Ground

The Importance of Strategy

Generally speaking, countries in the earliest stages of post-conflict, usually in the first six months, depend on planning tools and frameworks. However, numerous participants pointed out that there was a significant deficit in meeting this need for an authoritative, legitimate, coherent, and effective strategy in post-conflict contexts. One participant stated that *there is still no joint vision on how to approach peacebuilding*, and in this respect the PBC has failed to deliver.

To this, an additional interlocutor suggested creating strategies that are tailored for zero to two years, and that after five years, the international community should no longer be bureaucratically engaged in in-country planning and support (although financial support could still be possible). In response, another participant gave an initially positive recent example, noting that the United Nations endorsed a joint strategy for Sierra Leone on June 10, which would coordinate and streamline assistance to the country. The participant remarked that such a strategy would also serve as a monitoring mechanism for the government's national strategy.

Two participants underscored that without good analysis a strategy is “lost,” because central political and developmental challenges have to be taken into consideration. One challenge to initial strategy and analysis, however, is that a strategy's implementation hinges on contacts on the ground, which are sometimes difficult to foster in post-conflict settings due to the lack of trust among divergent groups.

In this regard, the role of the PBC could be helpful in realizing a strategy that caters to an “intense” timeframe in “evolving” condi-

tions. For instance, in Guinea Bissau, a strategy was being implemented but had to be put on hold when a new government came to power. The participant hoped that in such unstable environments the PBC could be helpful in ensuring a more coherent approach to implementing a strategy.

The Importance of Forward Planning

Numerous participants agreed on the need to begin planning for peacebuilding activities very early, even before the cessation of hostilities or along with plans for peacekeeping operations. The DPKO already agrees on integrated planning in advance of mission deployment, including Technical Assessment Missions (TAM) and other preparations which can help the United Nations hit the ground running as an integrated unit in the country concerned. Participants also emphasized the need to balance the financing for peacebuilding and peacekeeping activities when drafting a strategic vision for a country. For instance, in Sudan, a great deal of money is spent on peacekeeping and on direct humanitarian relief, but very little is spent on peacebuilding.

One participant noted that planning for the early recovery period should not be overly ambitious because the priorities of the government are to perform and provide basic security services. The same participant noted that while the United Nations needs to prepare for longer-range projects, it also should engage in short-term and quick impact projects in the very early stages.

There seemed to be consensus on this point. However, given earlier cautionary notes among the same participants about “premature exit strategies” before nascent institution building had succeeded, this consensus on the need for the PBF to deliver early peace dividends and benefits for society was balanced by an equal concern that international parties, including the PBC and PBF, might exit before the attitudes and tools for true sustainability at the domestic levels had taken root.

Finally, in response to *whether peacebuilding should be an integral component of a peace agreement*, one participant said it could be, but its absence in a peace agreement should not prevent planning or implementing peacebuilding activities.

The Roles and Challenges of Country-Specific Assessments (CSMs)

To grapple with post-conflict realities, participants encouraged a thorough assessment of in-country needs and capacity. One participant noted that while donor countries are at times concerned about the distribution of resources in post-conflict environments, they should approach this issue with more humility as they often suffer from similar political and financial interests of a parochial nature.

To guard against parochial interests by external parties, including donors, one participant highlighted the benefits of a steady field-level engagement by the PBC to ensure accurate planning and assessment. The participant informed the group of the PBC’s interactions with actors on the ground in Burundi as being extremely helpful in enhancing the PBC’s understanding of the political sensitivities and security dynamics in the country. The participant noted that as a result of this dialogue, the PBC was able to adjust plans for a trip to Burundi in October 2008.

Finally, some participants cautioned the group on the question of conducting the CSM process on a very compressed schedule, despite the obvious need for quickly-delivered peace dividends in the early recovery period. One speaker noted that, while speed on specific projects may be required (e.g., delivering electricity, health, salaries, and other immediate needs), *speed in finishing the strategic process* can result in a flawed, heavy-handed approach to a country.

Delivering “Rapid Coherence” in the Early Recovery Period. Some of the discussions on resources focused on improving UN structures and policies to provide rapid response and mobilization of human as well as financial resources. However, as noted by one participant, there is often uncertainty and a lack of clarity over roles and responsibilities of different actors inside and outside the UN system. As such, *there is some ambiguity on how the human resource side should respond.*

As one partial answer to this conundrum, several participants suggested reaching out to the local community for immediate resourcing needs, while also looking within the region and the global North for special expertise. Numerous participants echoed the need to make use of

national capacities, and argued that “the enabling environment” in a post-conflict situation should encourage local participation. Another participant agreed that greater use could be made of local capacity, noting that the international community sometimes gravely undermines the local market.

Many participants thought it would be necessary to initially *map the need for capacity*, and if there is a shortage of capacity evident in the early “mapping” assessment, the international community should begin by engaging in capacity development, followed by the deployment of international civilian experts through national rosters and regional organization rosters. This participant emphasized *the value-added of UN Volunteers system* in meeting these needs.

Several participants agreed with this approach. One participant, however, remarked that UN volunteers have been extensively and successfully used in humanitarian work, but that their use in peacebuilding activities might be met with some hostility, given the qualitatively different nature of the tasks being undertaken (i.e., relief delivery versus the more political and social task of sustainable infrastructure and “rule of law” institution building).

Another participant pointed to the use of personnel from the global South as being another issue enveloped in political sensitivity as well as some operational legal challenges on the ground. The participant claimed that the SG report emphasized the need for assistance from the global South, but did not offer solutions on how to do so. In fact, the participant noted, the reality is that resources from the global South are still scarcely used, even though over 85 percent of UN volunteers are from the global South.

All of the above questions and issues point to the need for a new structure or methodology to determine what human resource requirements in the short and long term can be met locally, regionally, and externally. For instance, there often is a lack of clear understanding regarding the different levels of specialized expertise needed. Several participants noted a chronic lack of clarity in regard to construction of “national rosters” of potential experts, including the questions of

when and where to use rosters. One participant noted that people are being added to national rosters without clarity on what their ultimate responsibilities would be in a deployment.

One participant commented on a more “macro” level about the different needs of expertise required for peacebuilding work, whether provided by IGOs or countries or NGOs. For instance, a technical expert is often deployed (for instance, in an area like policing) who does not have requisite regional or in-country expertise of a cultural, social, or political nature, while in other cases, there are experts who understand cross-country cultural nuances but who lack any sort of “functional,” technical skills. In this participant’s view, this division between types of volunteers, contractors, or other international experts is a continuing structural problem in aid provision, complicating the peacebuilding phase. In this participant’s view, more people are needed who combine regional/country expertise, or strong “political intuition,” with a specific functional background.

Some participants discussed international technical and support capacity as it relates to the United Nations. One participant observed that the United Nations is constantly hampered by rigidity and slowness in the area of human resource affairs. The participant added that while the SG speaks of mobility and the need to have a flexible pool of staff, there is a lot of micromanagement by the member states in this area. The participant believed that addressing this will require *harmonization of conditions of contracting* which will help in the long term to get the right people in the field. Another participant agreed with the former speaker, noting that finding the right people *and* deploying them remains a hard task.

One participant strongly questioned the efficacy of the existing UN personnel or human resource system in *all* respects, noting that *the focus should remain on finding human resource solutions for the whole UN system and not only for peacebuilding.* Numerous participants complained about the UN’s recruiting mechanism, the Galaxy system, and the need to make some structural organizational adjustments. No participants seemed to believe that the United Nations would be able to manage national rosters in a rapid, effective, and

coherent manner. Indeed, one participant pointed out that if the UN human resources and staffing system were more coherent and transparent, there would be no need for the country-level standby capacities currently in use.

On a positive note, numerous participants pointed to several standby arrangements that have proven effective. Two such mechanisms were from UNDP. The first UNDP mechanism is the UNDP SURGE plan, which identifies and mobilizes a staff member with the technical expertise to be deployed to a crisis zone within 48 hours. The second UNDP mechanism is the UNDP ExpRes which is a roster for external consultants. The participant noted that the biggest challenge with rosters is the huge amount of time it takes and the fact that sometimes they do not present the most qualified candidates, since the scheme is voluntary. The speaker thought that the UNDP ExpRes mechanism, which has a pre-existing list of experts that are ready to be deployed immediately, is an excellent way to avoid problems with lag time and personnel quality. Another participant made note of DPKO's Standing Police Capacity (SPC) which has thirty trained individuals ready to be deployed. The participant pointed out that the system was created when the Security Council mandated a peacekeeping operation in Chad which required trained police officers. The participant emphasized that such instruments are possible, noting that the police officers are soon going to be relocated to DRC. Another participant described a program at United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) which, at one point, had a system similar to that of the UNDP's SURGE program that recruited forty people at different levels of the organization, trained them as a team, and deployed them on short notice. The participant contended that having such a mechanism is a small commitment on behalf of the organization, but one that is worthwhile. The participant also commented on the UNDP's ExpRes system noting that national rosters, including the US government roster, should be revised to reflect the features of the ExpRes system.

Branching out from the topic, another participant thought that the whole concept of having *experts for the short term*, whether consultants or staff members on secondment, is a contradiction in terms. The participant thought that if a police officer was deployed

to a post-conflict country, the officer should not only be engaged in performing his/her role for a short period of time, but also help to build national capacity by training local officers.

However, one participant's professional experiences led him to believe that while experts can be useful, *they can also sometimes be "too qualified" for the task at hand, in terms of the inherent personal rigidities that develop naturally over a person's lifetime with experience and age*—i.e., family, professional, and personal living preferences that mitigate against a desire to relocate flexibly for indefinite periods. The participant noted that for peacebuilding work *there is often a need for creativity and a sense of adventure—characteristics generally attributed to younger people*. As such, the participant surmised, it's not just the qualification that counts, but also the mentality of the person.

Several people discussed the use of incentives. One participant noted that the UN system is allergic to incentives and that whenever a proposal on incentives comes up it is discarded by the member states. The participant pointed to a real need for a *political discussion on incentives* and a hard look at what elements agencies, funds, and programmes have used as incentives (i.e. monetary, benefits, recognition, and other). One participant agreed, noting that incentives were completely "silo-based," thereby working against attempts at coordination and integration among UN actors.

In sum: *it was clear from the discussions that the PBC should keep momentum on the topic of technical and support capacity and to foster intensive and serious discussions with the wider membership on these issues.*

III. Structure and Operations of the New UN Peacebuilding Instruments

Challenges Surrounding the PBSO

One participant voiced his concerns regarding the lack of support capacity within the PBSO. The speaker pointed out that there is a bureaucratic challenge in dealing with the PBSO. The PBSO had been

created to assist the PBC, but it is overwhelmed with its own work which entails tasks like managing the PBF, and traveling. In turn, the PBC receives very little support, resulting in a human resource gap.

In response, one participant expressed her sympathies for the PBC chair, who has to produce “miracles with little support.” The speaker noted that the PBSO has six staff members who work on four country configurations, in addition to preparations for intergovernmental bodies. The participant hoped that the outcome of future debates will be to add more positions in the PBSO so as to add value and help the chair accomplish his/her goals. Another participant reiterated his concerns, noting that if the PBC aspires to be a center of excellence in peacebuilding, it will have to recognize that a staff of fewer than ten persons at the PBSO is insufficient.

Assessing the PBF

Discussions on closing “the funding gap” in immediate post-conflict (early recovery) operations emphasized many positive aspects of the PBF, including its ability to act as an important vehicle for risk sharing for rapid resource mobilization and its ability to attract funding from a diverse set of donors. One participant argued that the PBF is a new flexible, fast, and risk-tolerant financing mechanism that allows for the channeling of resources. He praised the fund’s ability to raise money well above its intended target of \$250 million and noted that while the fund is a purely voluntary mechanism, the strong outpouring of contributions (relative to modest initial goals) has demonstrated that member states place a high value on the UN’s peacebuilding activities.

Participants were energized by the diversity of donors for peacebuilding, with some arguing that one of the main strengths of the PBF was *its ability to attract nontraditional donors* to support operational spending on peacebuilding activities. Another participant welcomed funding from *middle-income countries* and suggested that the SG should continue to explore opportunities to raise capital through such channels. A third participant believed that more could be done within the *regional arena* to raise funds targeted to peacebuilding activities.

Increasing Tolerance for Risk. One participant pointed out that a major emphasis for peacebuilding success must be on improving

existing mechanisms with an eye for *risk tolerance*. Another participant agreed, noting that the added value of the PBF is that it is an important vehicle for risk, and therefore, the focus should remain on improving the features which allow risk to be shared.

Operational Hurdles Facing the PBF. One participant proposed mapping all the available instruments to see how to benefit from such synergies, noting that many national legislatures are asking, “Why give to all of these instruments? What is the value-added of each one?” In response to these arguments, one participant informed the group that a process is underway to coordinate the PBF with the EU, World Bank, and the UNDP Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery (BCPR).

One participant voiced concerns over the selectivity of donors in supporting specific countries on the PBC agenda, noting that some donors earmark funds for specific projects and countries. To this, another participant noted that this was a misperception, since all funds in the PBF are, by definition, pooled and act as an unbiased mechanism for transferring money to countries—i.e., *contributors to the PBF do not have the authority or power to “ earmark” funds in a discretionary manner.*

Overall, several participants insisted on *the need for pooled funding for improving operational coordination and donor alignment in peacebuilding projects.* However, it was noted that some countries, including many if not all of the P-5 countries, prefer bilateral aid because they view their foreign aid programs as a key instrument of national power and political leverage, a continuing reality that impedes PBF and PBC progress.

Flexibility, Speed, and Predictability of PBF Funding Mechanisms. Some participants wondered about the *predictability* of funding for additional peacebuilding activity. For instance, if one project is funded, how can there be certainty that there is enough money to cover future projects? Thus, *participants pointed to the need for the PBF to meet several operational goals simultaneously: speed, flexibility, predictability, and risk tolerance.*

In this regard, several participants felt that the expectations for rapid and risk-tolerant funding have not been met. One participant pointed to delays in fund disbursement for Sierra Leone and Burundi, remarking that the PBC was not off to a great start in these two countries. Another participant was concerned about the relationship between the PBC and the PBF, noting that the PBC has, unfortunately, no control over funding speed. By way of solution, one speaker proposed seeking nonbudgetary funding for rapid action. However, responding to the discussion on speed, two participants cautioned the group that rapid financial disbursements have to be balanced with considerations on the *absorptive capacity* in the country concerned.

Another participant pointed to delays in funding for emergency situations even in cases where funding had been approved by the SG, because even if the PBF does quick emergency approvals, ultimately the awarding of contracts and the finding of contractors goes through the same agency contracting systems that already exist for development, humanitarian, and other work. Thus, a “*quick approval*” does not mean “*quick action*” in actually using the approved monies, a defect that is potentially structural and requires more fixing than within the boundaries of the PBC, PBF, and PBO alone.

PBF Transparency. One participant indicated that donors to the PBF and members of the PBC were not well-briefed on the rationale for disbursements for countries approved by the SG, known as “Window II.” This lack of transparency has, unfortunately, created a level of distrust among some PBC members. Others agreed, noting that the relationship between the donors of the PBF and the SG is clouded with mystery and a lack of transparency.

Mobilizing Funds: Expanding the PBF to Meet On-the-Ground Requirements. Several participants pointed out the need to mobilize more resources to allow the PBC and PBF to meet collective expectations about their performance. For instance, there are no real finances available to support the chair of the PBC, who has to rely on his own country’s resources to travel to places like Ethiopia, the EU, and Washington, DC. To this, another participant remarked that it is an embarrassment that the PBC chair has to use his own funds to finance

meetings on peacebuilding and that one of the main member state priorities should be to raise funds to support the PBC chair.

On the topic of mobilizing funds, one participant believed that the PBF already has the momentum and support to raise up to \$500 million and suggested holding a fundraising annual conference similar to that of the UN Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF). Another participant mentioned the important role of the private sector as potential contributors to the PBF. The participant added that the PBC is currently engaged in an outreach effort to reach donors outside of traditional circles. In particular, the participant noted that the PBC was trying to create an outreach advisory group with leaders from philanthropic organizations and civil society to collect advice and mobilize resources. The participant also noted that there is also a direct outreach effort with celebrities to rally interest and increase the visibility of peacebuilding.

The PBC: Roles, Structure, and Relations With Other Actors

Participants explored the evolving role of the PBC and its relationship and division of responsibility with the Security Council, the General Assembly, and ECOSOC. One participant reflected on the rationale for the PBC and wondered whether the body should be redesigned to respond to a variety of countries in different stages of the post-conflict continuum. The participant proposed a multitier agenda that would allow the PBC to deviate in some cases from the “all or nothing” CSM strategic process, on a more opportunistic basis. The participant added that it is not necessary for all countries emerging from conflict to start an entirely new peacebuilding process with the PBC. Rather, the PBC needs to work with existing mechanisms that are already in place, figure out the core issues, and provide support where it can.

Another participant noted that in his experience, some countries do not *want* to be under specific country configurations, and thus, he was encouraged by the discussions on a multitier approach. Continuing the discussions, one participant agreed that a multitier approach could be beneficial as it would allow countries the option of having control over their own affairs while still being able to delegate a particular problem area to the PBC.

Overall, many participants felt there was a political and diplomatic reason for restructuring the PBC-PBF interactions for greater flexibility. One participant noted that a multitier approach would allow countries to engage incrementally with the PBC over time, thus allowing for mutual trust and confidence building between the PBC and the receiving country, and also allowing the PBC to complement the existing mechanisms on the ground. Another participant concurred, noting that a multitier approach can help overcome reticence toward the PBC and permit an initial engagement. In particular, the speaker thought that a multitier approach could be helpful for countries with full peacekeeping operations that are shy about coming on the PBC's agenda. Finally, one interlocutor argued that a multitiered approach would allow the PBC to provide better advice to the Security Council on countries emerging from conflict.

PBC Relations With the Security Council. In the discussions on the relationship between the PBC and the Security Council, one participant welcomed regular dialogue between the two bodies, highlighting that countries on the PBC's agenda are also on the Security Council's agenda. The speaker noted that not all Security Council members are members of the PBC (only seven, including the P-5), so the rest of the council members could benefit from greater dialogue with the commission. For this reason, the participant expressed an interest in having joint meetings, including briefings by PBC country coordinators at council meetings. Another participant wanted to see more dialogue in the early recovery stages, when the PBC was in a position to provide advice on reconstruction and capacity building.

However, some wondered if the PBC's advice would be valuable given that the commission does not have the resources to formulate its own opinions and ideas. These participants thought that there should be more discussions on how to enhance the PBC's ability to provide independent advice to the Security Council and, as a starter, suggested granting observer status at Security Council meetings to the chair of the relevant PBC country configuration.

There were some differences of opinion over the value of an “integrative effect” between the PBC and Security Council, with some partic-

ipants treating the PBC as its own independent body with its own right to provide timely advice to all organs, and participants at the other extreme feeling that this represented a clear encroachment on the UNSC prerogatives granted by the UN Charter. For instance, one interlocutor believed that there is no conflict in having different UN organs come together and act as an integrative team. Another participant, however, argued that Security Council resolutions provide all the mandates for the United Nations, and therefore, the PBC should provide advice to the Security Council *only* upon request.

There was some debate as to whether this is always the case. For instance, one participant reflected on situations where the country concerned was not on the council's agenda, and according to the participant, could initially be approached by the PBC without infringing on the Security Council's domain. The former speaker disagreed, pointing to the UN Charter as being very clear on the Security Council's superlative authority on any matter dealing with peace and security. A third participant responded to this impasse by adding that, while the Security Council has the authority to ask the PBC for advice, the PBC, using its own monitor, should be able to evaluate whether a country needs help and, thereby, approach the Security Council on its own.

This discussion clearly showed that *there needs to be a greater level of trust between the PBC and the Security Council that would allow the PBC to provide advice to the Security Council without alienating the P-5*. In response, some participants pointed to *PBC operational effectiveness* as the key variable that will allow the Security Council to have confidence in the PBC's ability to sustain attention on countries emerging from conflict. Achieving this, the participant added, could take years, as it will take some time for the nascent body to prove its value within the UN system.

Several participants criticized the Security Council for *viewing peacebuilding as a strict peace and security issue* and expressed a desire to view peacebuilding as a broader concept, so that the SC could fortify its relationship with the PBC. Thus, SC-PBC interactions are not merely an organizational or “inside the house” matter, but connect intimately to

P-5 attitudes toward peacebuilding as a separate “pillar” that requires firm support generally.

The PBC and the General Assembly. Several participants reminded the group that the PBC is a “creature” of both the Security Council and the General Assembly. One worried about the exclusive relationship between the PBC and the Security Council, and noted an instance when the General Assembly wanted to take a closer look at peacebuilding issues in Sierra Leone but was denied the possibility by the Security Council. To address this problem, some encouraged the group to move away from discussing boundaries between the General Assembly and the Security Council, noting that *the PBC was created in a hybrid fashion to draw upon the resources of both organs.*

The PBC and ECOSOC. Two participants voiced concerns over the limited role of ECOSOC in the peacebuilding process, emphasizing the SG’s recommendation to “carry a common position” on peacebuilding related issues and to “work closely” to deliver a more rapid and effective response to countries emerging from conflict. In particular, one participant encouraged the PBC to *make use of ECOSOC’s analysis and advisory groups on countries emerging from conflict.* The speaker regarded ECOSOC’s unique role as critical to contributing to a *holistic picture* for post-conflict reconstruction and stabilization. Others worried about the “light role” of ECOSOC and highlighted the lack of linkages between the work of the PBC and the ad hoc advisory groups within ECOSOC that work on peacebuilding issues. However, in positive response, a third participant reassured the previous speakers that the PBC has been engaging more so than before with ECOSOC, specifically pointing to a joint PBC-ECOSOC dialogue on *the role of the private sector* in post-conflict environments. The participant noted that the PBC will continue to nurture this relationship in the future.

IV. Conclusion: Strengthening the “Peacebuilding Pillar” at the United Nations

Summarizing Alternative Visions for PBC Goals and Role

Over the course of discussions, participants advocated several alternative strategic visions for the role, purpose, and structure of the PBC.

One put it well: “This is an ‘identity moment’ for the PBC. Is it purely a gap filler, a speedy funder for early peace dividends? Or, is it rather a leader in mainstreaming peacebuilding in the United Nations, and even in the world?”

First, there was majority agreement that an obvious area for “PBC’s valued-added” is as an advocate, leader, and attention-getter for under-supported and underrecognized cases of post-conflict fragility. As put by one participant, “The PBC is confronting an organization [the United Nations] that was not created for prevention or state building. Therefore, the PBC must be a voice for peacebuilding within the system.” In short: The PBC can and should be a mobilizer for peacebuilding as a concept, doctrine, and goal.

Second, there was majority support for the PBC and PBF to focus on quick impact “peace dividends” in the immediate “early recovery period” of peacebuilding, which was generally defined as the first two years. There was, thus, majority support for the argument in the SG’s report that the international community must, at the very least, become more effective at leveraging the immediate window of opportunity after a peace agreement, as well as become better at shoring up the legitimacy of such agreements via specific projects that the public can see and feel on the ground.

However, agreement proved elusive beyond this area of work. There seemed to be two visions for the PBC: (1) a body that complements the work of other UN organs and agencies, and many other international actors, by filling the much-needed role of a flexible and fast provider of peace dividends in the early recovery period; and (2) a body that more ambitiously informs the Security Council of needs and potential crises at a strategic level, mainstreams peacebuilding throughout the UN system, raises far more funds than is currently the case for peacebuilding needs, integrates peacebuilding with other existing “pillars” in the UN system (peacemaking, peacekeeping, development), and even acts as a top-down unifier of other global actors via the strategic peacebuilding plan produced by its own CSM mechanism.

For some participants, there was a firm and well-enunciated belief that the CSM strategy and planning process of the PBC is crucial *in cases where viable domestic institutions do not exist*, i.e., where the international community is dealing with cases of extreme fragility, in which a “sovereignty gap” exists and peacebuilding is therefore *not* a normal development exercise. For these participants, the strategic process of the country-specific meetings (CSMs) of the PBC can and should include the peacemaking efforts of the DPA. Taken together, this represents a short-term substitute for the lack of domestic state institutions.

In this regard, some advocated that the PBC make sure that all *external efforts in a post-conflict state are directed toward the unified peacebuilding plan, not the often parochial concerns of the external donors*. Many did believe that the PBC is needed to “fuse” the EC, OECD, IFIs, and regional development banks, each of whom has its own strategy in countries such as Burundi. As a positive example, one participant noted that the PBC successfully set the agenda for Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) in Burundi, bringing together, in a coherent fashion, a slew of development, financial, and security actors on the ground.

For these participants, it was important that the PBC not be seen or treated as a subsidiary body to the SC; it must be seen as an independent advisor in order to gain respect, credibility, legitimacy, and add more adherents to the peacebuilding cause. Indeed, the official PBC mandate, agreed by all member states, does say that the PBC can bring up things “not on the Security Council’s agenda.”

For these participants, the PBC must create the country-specific strategy for peacebuilding through effective engagement of a fractured country via an intensive, continuous, flexible, but short-term process that starts with the peacemaking efforts of the DPA. This “*strategy process*” would be key to achieving final national ownership. Personnel-wise, this would require people on the SG’s and PBC’s team who are not just “programmers,” but staff and officials who have “strong political intuition.”

According to this viewpoint, peacebuilding as a discipline and as a peace-and-security goal should, in a sense of basic principles and values associated with the exercise, *hold individual countries to account for their promises to align with an integrated strategy for peacebuilding in a particular country*, whether that strategy is put forward by the PBC’s single-country process or by some other actor. Furthermore, the PBC could and should act as a “quality control agent” for the question of a country’s “graduation” from peacebuilding mandates. Specifically, the PBC could and should make sure that graduation does not occur too early, due to specific SC interests or other national interests of external parties. (But, for this to happen, several participants noted that the P-5 must be more open to receiving the PBC’s strategic advice).

Finally, some participants argued that there is no strategic, purposeful approach by the UN organs and agencies to the “*rising middle countries*” such as the “India’s, Chile’s,” and others like them. For participants advocating a stronger PBC role, *this group of middle-to-rising countries could potentially be key to bolstering PBF catalytic funds*, and thus, *pursuing this group of rising nations could be part of a new strategic orientation for the PBC* in terms of its value-added within the global system. This would include dialogue with emerging regional powers.

Other participants, however, were more measured in their views, with some advocating a middle ground of informing the UNSC and UNGA more thoroughly and funding some sharp, focused projects in the early recovery period, and others being still more pessimistic, arguing that the PBC has already taken on too ambitious an agenda. Representing the former group, one participant admitted that the Security Council does not consult adequately in its decisions in making its peacekeeping and donor-development mandates. Therefore, the PBC can and should continue to bring the SC’s attention to “good information from all relevant actors” involved in some way with peacebuilding in specific cases, whether other donor countries, IFIs, or IGOs. This said, some participants believed that the United States (and other major states and international donors) still see foreign aid as a narrow “influence tool” and tend to resent PBC influence, which attempts to proceed along more

neutral peacebuilding lines and ultimately rests on pooled monies that are not discretionary in nature.

Finally, there was a cleavage among participants as to the level of analysis or level of operational detail that the PBC should ideally strive to meet. This cleavage was, to some degree, independent of the above issues. For some participants, there was a clear preference for a purely “strategic” approach by the PBC, where the body and its members strictly eschew getting into “micro-level state building details” and avoid frequent and intensive on-site visits to the countries concerned. These participants tended to believe that the PBC members—whether the chair or the CSM country-leader—should strive *not to be an operational field agent*, i.e., a constant country visitor and implementer. Others, however, seemed to argue that for the PBC to be taken seriously, it had to pursue (to some extent) *both* the operational and the strategic levels of interaction in order to arrive at viable, unified strategic peacebuilding plans for specific cases, especially if such plans are meant to unify internal and external actors during the early recovery period. In addition, some believed that the PBC could only truly inform the Security Council if it brought advice, facts, and details based on in-depth knowledge of the case in question. As one participant stated, “Today, you must be both operational and strategic to gather a following.”

Operational, Organizational, and Political Challenges Facing the PBC and Peacebuilding

- Regardless of opinions about the ideal future roles and capacities of the PBC and PBF, many participants noted concrete and practical challenges that must be overcome for these new instruments and mechanisms to be effective. The list included:
 - Reconciling the collective, pooled-fund methods and goals of the PBF and PBC with the development objectives of major donor countries. As several participants pointed out, donors are subject to their own domestic politics and must meet their own ODA targets back home; if PBF funds do not help make ODA quotas demanded by their own legislatures, such legislatures may not approve funding for the PBF at higher levels.
 - Getting beyond the narrow project methodologies and mentalities that already dominate both UN agencies and donor programs. As noted by one participant, the PBF itself, unfortunately, is still very tied to specific, discrete, and overly narrow projects that, in practice, can be indistinguishable from methods and programs already put forward by others. For instance, there are 16 PBF-funded projects in Burundi alone. Some believed that this is where the lessons of the SURF (Sub-Regional Resource Facilities) system, in regard to humanitarian monies and implementation, could be especially useful.
 - Reconciling the tensions between international career professional staff, international volunteers, regional actors, and domestic volunteers, especially in terms of doing more to empower regional and local national actors. As put by one participant, “we put way too much into getting ‘internationals’ in at the ‘front end’ of these things,” which means good houses, good cars, and so on, when instead, the international community could just be giving “straight cash assistance” to local actors (which, if done well, might bypass some of the most corrupt local political elites). Another participant noted that the basic, up-front strategic question is: How much should we use local volunteers and actors “with slight international enhancement;” how much should we leverage regional volunteers and official actors; and how much expertise should we supply from the global level? One example given was of Kenyan instructors supplied to a post-conflict neighbor with the help of UN volunteers, a clear example of the regional and global meeting up concretely on the ground. Finally, one participant said that we should think of the breakdown as “careerists,” “5-year people,” and “2-3 year people,” in terms of personnel makeup and also their duration in-country.
 - Dealing frankly and head on with the current reality of a badly fractured and fragmented agency-dominated UN system. Many participants believed that 40+ different parts of the United Nations simply cannot be sent into a small country such as Haiti or Burundi to make the initial peacebuilding strategic plan; *there must instead be a small team that spends weeks or even months there, interacting with both*

the government and society. In short: the creation of the peacebuilding strategy for a specific country cannot be “agency driven.” And, rapid finance for the strategy team’s efforts is key to any effort to keep the 40+ agencies from dominating in the short term, during the early recovery period.

- Addressing the tremendous shortfalls of the UN staffing system, or in other words, dealing frankly with the ineffectiveness of the UN human resource system via both *direct political dialogue* in the UNGA and organizational restructuring. One participant summarized the issue by saying that more rules have been added to a “rotten foundation,” which has created a situation of “slower rather than faster” as the main ethic of UN human resources. Overall, incentive systems for personnel throughout the United Nations are still siloed, which feeds into this fragmentation.
- Working toward the goal of supplying more short-term police and judges during the early recovery period as well as training competent colleagues at the local levels for long-term sustainability. Participants noted that two huge gaps that need attention for short- and long-term peacebuilding are police and judges, both of which fall under the rubric of holistic “security sector reform,” or SSR. One participant noted cases where regional states have contributed money and staff to get 10-30 qualified judges into a post-conflict country “to try pent-up cases” and get the justice system moving again.
- Finally: becoming more efficient and effective at “rapid coherence” in the early recovery period, even if that means questioning the current contracting systems, methods, and guidelines of key UN agencies that the PBF still relies upon to turn the “fast funds” into actual, implemented activities on the ground. As noted by one participant, even after the SG approved \$1 million for Port-au-Prince in Haiti, and other monies for Guinea-Bissau, there were delays in finding and tasking contractors. PBF efficiency is paramount, if it is to gain more funds and more requests for aid. It cannot be less efficient than traditional agencies and IFIs.

Next Steps in Strengthening the “Peacebuilding Pillar” at the United Nations

Making Use of the Organizational Committee. To address the above problems or hurdles, several participants expressed the need to look at the institutional gaps in the Organizational Committee, which is the PBC’s operational “committee of the whole” that includes all PBC members. One participant noted that due consideration has not been given to all five constituents making up the committee (i.e., troop contributing countries, main financial donors, the P-5/Security Council, ECOSOC, and the UNGA as major UN organs, regional representatives, and post-conflict countries themselves). Indeed, confusion still reigns about “who does what” within the PBC. Two speakers particularly emphasized the lack of recognition given toward the troop-contributing countries on the committee.

In the end, all countries on the PBC are there because they bring something to the table (i.e., security, political, financial, human resources); however, some participants argued that countries have drifted away from their responsibilities and could refocus their attentions to mobilize resources and raise awareness for the PBC. For instance, some asked whether members of the Security Council had contributed their fair share, or whether PBC members who are themselves countries in the “post-conflict space” had contributed enough in advancing much-needed dialogue at the conceptual and operational level.

There was a broadly shared sense that the Organizational Committee should do more to pool all its members to conduct its own assessments. Thus far, while the committee is called upon as an advisory board, it has not been given (or has not taken) the opportunity and time to do its own analysis.

In one participant’s opinion, the Organizational Committee should become a strategic committee that *bases its analysis on the experiences of the Country Specific Meetings or CSMs*, which means bolstering the importance of the strategic peacebuilding plans that are created by this process. The participant also suggested that the future chair of the Organizational Committee should be at the helm for two years, instead of one, so that he/she can work more effectively with

ECOSOC and all other relevant actors. There was some agreement with this by like-minded participants who saw more of a strategic role for the PBC (see discussion on the PBC's future above), noting that the Organizational Committee has been blocked thus far in harnessing its inherent strategic strengths due to ongoing political stalemates.

Diversifying Entry Points. There were lively discussions on the possibility of diversifying “entry points” to the PBC by countries in need. One participant asked why countries emerging from conflict were not allowed to write directly to the General Assembly or the Security Council to be included on the PBC's agenda. In this regard, one recommendation was that entry points be diversified so that a country needing assistance could make the initial contact, while another recommendation was that the General Assembly be given the ability to refer countries directly to the PBC.

Public Visibility: Increasing Positive Awareness and Attracting Countries to the PBC. Among the problems besetting the PBC are misperceptions about the nature of its funding and spending rules, as well as negative political evaluations about the PBC's capacity to take on “hot cases.” For instance, some countries which are natural candidates for the PBC do not come onto the commission's agenda because of their perception that they may lose bilateral or IFI aid. However, as one participant noted, money from the peacebuilding fund is additional and complimentary to other sources of financing. The aim of the peacebuilding funds is to mobilize resources for situations seen as risky by traditional development actors—but, currently, there are a great deal of misperceptions held by many different actors on this score, and more needs to be done to correct such perceptions.

There was also strong concern about the diminishing interest that countries emerging from conflict have shown toward the PBC. When the initial concept of a peacebuilding commission was being floated around the United Nations, countries were clamoring to be included on the agenda. Today, this enthusiasm has largely been lost. One participant pointed out that his country was one of the ones eager to be included on the PBC before it was formally established; today, however, his country is very reluctant to being part of the commission's agenda.

“Why?” the participant asks rhetorically. “Because we don't see the added value of the PBC when we have UNDP.” He also noted that while the PBC creates hope, there is a great deal of uncertainty over what it can deliver. In addition, some countries have expressed fears of the PBC replacing the peacekeeping mission in their countries too quickly.

With these challenges and problems in mind, numerous suggestions were put on the table to help shore support and raise awareness for peacebuilding and the PBC. One participant added that the goal should be to convince the public that the PBC is engaged in worthwhile activities and that resources that go to the commission are not lost in a black hole. “We need success stories,” the participant concluded.

Other participants highlighted the importance of *international support from the regions* and encouraged the PBC to organize regional tours where countries that have benefited from the PBC are able to share their experiences. Finally, there was a call for direct outreach efforts that make use of celebrities to rally interest and increase the visibility of peacebuilding in the global community, as is done already with UNICEF goodwill ambassadors.

Promotion of the SG Report and the Upcoming 2010 Review Process. Participants welcomed the SG Report and urged that its recommendations receive full and early consideration by the PBC, the Security Council, the General Assembly, ECOSOC and organizations and groups outside of the United Nations. Overall, participants agreed that there needs to be momentum on the issues highlighted in the report, including outreach and dialogue with and from key regions.

In fact, there have already been regional efforts to discuss peacebuilding. Some Member States have organized regional seminars, which many felt could and should be vehicles for consideration of the SG's report. Such seminars have been organized by Egypt and Ireland for Africa in Cairo, and a similar seminar will take place in Chile to discuss peacebuilding efforts in Latin America and the Caribbean. One participant argued that encouragement for the report might come mainly from countries being considered for the PBC, and in this regard, countries in Central America, as opposed to countries in South

America and the Caribbean, could be instrumental in shoring support for the PBC. In addition, there is some hope for a meeting in the Asia Pacific, as well as Indonesia, where Papua New Guinea and East Timor could share their experiences.

In general, participants thought that it was critical that the political momentum created by the report, including at regional levels, not be sidetracked or be held political hostage by the review process in 2010. To avoid such risks, the SG might consider producing the peacebuilding report at the same time as the normal reports on peacekeeping and mediation, so as to improve on integrating all the different components together. In terms of the regional meetings and the 2010 report, it might also be helpful for the SG and other actors to establish informal timetables for future discussions and interactions on peacebuilding.

In Sum: General Optimism but Continuing Caveats About UN Peacebuilding Success. Numerous participants reminded the group that progress in peacebuilding, particularly in the immediate aftermath of conflict, has been measured. In particular, while there has been progress on developing a set of tools to address peacebuilding, there are still gaps in implementing strategies and plans via these tools, in terms of the country-specific meetings (CSMs) of the PBC leading to a strategy that the entire international community truly embraces on-the-ground for each case. In part, this is because peacebuilding competes against more high-profile conflict and crisis situations in capturing the interests of the Security Council, and in this regard tends to be viewed as an ancillary issue on the UN agenda.

These concerns notwithstanding, there was an atmosphere of measured optimism among the participants in regards to the future potential evolution of the PBC and PBF, specifically in regards to their ability as strategic instruments to get past the narrower political and institutional prerogatives of nationally-led, bilateral foreign aid programs. For instance, one participant pointed out that issues which are undermining peacebuilding efforts today—poor coordination among nations and other actors, weak leadership, lack of country ownership at the domestic level within the target state—were all chal-

lenges that the humanitarian field faced twenty-odd years ago. Today, however, humanitarian aid is delivered effectively, and the international community should look at this example and aspire to achieve the same results for peacebuilding.

Many participants pointed to the PBC as a 21st century creation that distinguishes it from other UN structures, more accurately reflecting the political, economic, and social realities of the world today. Many participants believed that the international community is at a critical “point of inflection”—a testing time—and although achievements and positive experimentations have occurred, unconditional success in peacebuilding has some ways to go.

The rapporteur, Farah Faisal, prepared this report following the conference. It contains her interpretation of the proceedings and is not merely a descriptive, chronological account. Participants neither reviewed nor approved the report. Therefore, it should not be assumed that every participant subscribes to all recommendations, observations, and conclusions.

Chairman's Observations

The Mohonk Mountain House discussions were encouraging. Conference participants readily agreed on the importance of peacebuilding to help countries emerging from conflict progress to establish ongoing peace and sustainable development.

They welcomed the report of the secretary-general on *Peacebuilding in the Immediate Aftermath of Conflict*, and its recommendations and initiatives. These should receive full and early consideration by the Peacebuilding Commission, the Security Council, the General Assembly, United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), and others including civil society. Participants appreciated and encouraged the progress being made by the UN Peacebuilding Commission and its related Peacebuilding Support Office and Peacebuilding Fund (PBF).

Indeed, there was relatively little disagreement on matters of policy and philosophy. Rather, participants focused on several priorities for effective peacebuilding and explored ways to overcome obstacles to these priorities.

One priority is to strengthen the understanding that peacebuilding is not a separate activity, but must be integrated and coordinated with peacemaking, peacekeeping, and development. It must be considered and planned early and be coherent with all other activities that are a part of working to end a conflict and build peace.

Second, a single strategic country plan for peacebuilding is essential. This plan must be country-focused and developed on-the-ground by an empowered “country team” working in full collaboration with national and local leadership and supported by headquarters offices of UN agencies and international organizations. It must have country ownership. Building and strengthening national capacity must be central to it. Creating such a plan is most difficult, considering that a country emerging from conflict and its institutions are likely in disarray. The United Nations must therefore strengthen its capabilities for strategic peacebuilding planning.



UN/DPI PHOTO

A third priority is strong and empowered leadership of peacebuilding work—leadership that can coordinate the many entities involved and direct them to deliver coherently. Efforts to enable the United Nations to “Deliver as One” have been underway for some time. The secretary-general’s report includes initiatives and recommendations to foster coherence. These should receive renewed attention and effort.

Effective peacebuilding requires flexibility and fast action. This means that financial and human resourcing must be more readily available. Action is needed to expand and deepen international technical capacity rosters, close the funding gap, and coordinate resource availability from international and in-country sources.

Peacebuilding can and should become a core United Nations pillar. Its development warrants urgent continuing effort. There is sufficient policy and philosophical consensus to develop effective peacebuilding as a central UN function, but strong political leadership is needed. Key operational challenges include assuring coherence and coordination, and better resourcing. Peacebuilding will be effective if there is one strategic plan, one empowered leadership team, and coordinated and sufficient resources focused on building country capacity.

Timely action on the matters discussed at Mohonk will yield results for the full review of peacebuilding planned for 2010.



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