

**Letter from the PBC Chair to the President of ECOSOC on the contribution of the
Peacebuilding Commission to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable
Development for the High-level Political Forum**

27 April 2018

Excellency,

I am writing in reply to your letter of 27 November 2017 in which you requested me to offer substantive inputs to the 2018 High-level Political Forum on the contribution of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The resolutions on the review of the peacebuilding architecture (A/RES/70/262 and S/RES/2282 (2016)) recalled the “comprehensive, far-reaching and people-centered” vision of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The resolutions stressed the importance of the PBC to serve a bridging role among the principal organs and relevant entities of the United Nations by sharing advice on peacebuilding needs and priorities, in line with the respective mandates, competencies and responsibilities of these bodies. They also noted that peace and security, development and human rights are closely interlinked and mutually reinforcing.

In that connection, I would like to submit the following inputs, from a peacebuilding perspective, and according to the headings that you provided.

- (a) An assessment of the situation regarding the principle of “ensuring that no one is left behind” at the global level

The High-Level Meeting on Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace on 24 and 25 April 2018 assessed efforts undertaken and opportunities to strengthen the United Nations' work on peacebuilding and sustaining peace. Among other things, the meeting discussed the connection between sustaining peace and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, with several delegations noting the complementarity of the two approaches and the importance of inclusive approaches. Violent conflict is one of the serious obstacles to sustainable development. Leaving no one behind requires a particular focus on conflict-affected countries because a significant and increasing share of the extreme poor is living in such countries. This requires not only addressing the root causes of violent conflict, but also ensuring that progress on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is made with respect to the marginalized, excluded and difficult to reach populations.

His Excellency
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If the world is to achieve the SDGs by 2030, we will have to focus our efforts among other things on making progress in conflict-affected countries as well. The continued focus by the PBC on this matter is consistent with the agreement reached in the 2030 Agenda to leave no one behind and prioritize those furthest behind first. Moreover, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda emphasized among other things that “countries in conflict and post-conflict situations also need special attention.”

During the High-Level Meeting on Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace (24-26 April 2018), the General Assembly and the Security Council adopted resolutions confirming the intention to further discuss the recommendations and options contained in the report of the Secretary-General and asked the Secretary-General to provide two more reports related to peacebuilding and sustaining peace issues (A/72/L.49 and S/RES/2413 (2018)).

(b) The identification of gaps, areas requiring urgent attention, risks and challenges

With the increase in number and intensity of violent conflict in recent years, addressing root causes is more urgent than ever – noting in particular the challenge violent conflict poses to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030.

The report of the Secretary-General on peacebuilding and sustaining peace (A/72/707–S/2018/43) updates on progress made in the implementation of the resolutions on the review of the peacebuilding architecture (A/RES/70/262 and S/RES/2282 (2016)) and proposes recommendations to address existing gaps. These include the fragmentation in the support that the UN system provides to Member States, a lack of sustained and adequate financing, and risk aversion among donors. These challenges were also identified in the report of the Advisory Group of Experts on the Peacebuilding Architecture Review.

First, the 2030 Agenda recognized that the interlinkages and integrated nature of the SDGs are critical in ensuring that the purpose of the Agenda is realized. This is an acknowledgement of the complexity, multi-faceted nature and interlinkages of our world, in particular regarding the changing nature of violent conflicts. The 2030 Agenda aims to also address the various factors that may drive conflict in many contexts around the world, including socio-economic inequalities, joblessness, inequitable access to social services, climate change, corruption, absence of the rule of law, and weak institutions. The Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review adopted in December 2016 recognized the positive role that sustainable development can play in mitigating root causes of conflicts, disaster risks, humanitarian crises and complex emergencies and called upon the entities of the UN development system, in full compliance with their respective mandates, to enhance coordination with humanitarian assistance and peacebuilding at the national level in countries facing humanitarian emergencies and in countries in conflict and post-conflict situations (A/RES/71/243, para. 24). The resolutions on the review of the peacebuilding architecture (A/RES/70/262 and S/RES/2282 (2016)), also emphasize the bridging and advisory role of the PBC among the principal organs and relevant entities of the UN. The PBC also convenes a broad range of actors outside of the UN, including regional

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organizations, international financial institutions, and civil society to contribute to coherent actions, among others. The report of the Secretary-General on peacebuilding and sustaining peace (A/72/707-S/2018/43) further recognized the unique role the PBC can play in advancing intergovernmental coherence. The report welcomed that the PBC had diversified its working methods to enhance flexibility and noted that coherence and complementarity between the principal organs of the UN and its governing bodies is critical to support the advancement of peacebuilding and sustaining peace. The Secretary-General also welcomed the PBC's convening role and encouraged system-wide engagement with regional and sub-regional organizations: information-sharing, coordination and joint approaches.

Second, the aforementioned resolutions adopted by the General Assembly and the Security Council emphasized “the need for predictable and sustained financing to United Nations peacebuilding activities, including through increased contributions, and strengthened partnerships with key stakeholders.” While this continues to be a challenge the Secretary-General has presented options for adequate resourcing of peacebuilding activities in his report on peacebuilding and sustaining peace (A/72/707-S/2018/43).

Third, providing assistance to conflict-affected countries is risky, and results might be elusive for some time. The Peacebuilding Fund is a timely, catalytic and risk tolerant instrument to support efforts to build resilience and drive integrated UN action for prevention, working together with national partners. The Secretary-General has called for a quantum leap in the resources allocated to UN peacebuilding activities with an aim of \$500 million annual target for the Peacebuilding Fund, noting the increased demand for UN peacebuilding support (A/72/707-S/2018/43). It may take a decade or longer to be able to report tangible results on the strengthening of institutions that are critical to build and sustain peace. The international community should remain focused on the long-term objectives of sustainable peace and sustainable development.

Fifth, the Security Council recently hosted an open debate informed by the Progress Study on Youth, Peace and Security that was mandated by Security Council Resolution 2250 (2015), and developed by an independent lead author, Graeme Simpson and an Advisory Group of Experts appointed by the UN Secretary-General. The study concludes that throughout the world, young people consulted for the study expressed a loss of faith and trust in their Governments, the international community and systems of governance, contributing to a strong and ongoing sense of injustice. The study recommends that these issues be addressed in order to support and benefit from young people's contributions to peace, and to realize the potential of 1.8 billion young people globally.

(c) Valuable lessons learned on transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies

To achieve the SDGs by 2030, the international community needs to be better at supporting transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies. This includes addressing the root causes of violent conflict to build and sustain peace at all stages of conflict, with the aim to prevent the outbreak, escalation, continuation and recurrence of conflict. The report of the Secretary-General on peacebuilding and sustaining peace (A/72/707-S/2018/43) and

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the resolutions on the review of the peacebuilding architecture (A/RES/70/262 and S/RES/2282 (2016)) recognize that development is a central goal in itself and acknowledge the important contributions of the United Nations development system to peacebuilding.

The international community has in recent years been in a state of crisis management, reacting to events rather than proactively addressing the drivers of conflict, and supporting the long-term capacities and institutions that are required for sustainable peace and development. The development of the institutions and capacities to address the needs of all segments of the population, including the most marginalized, takes a long time. On the other hand, by one estimate, the timeframe of donors and assistance programmes has declined from about a decade to one year. This needs to be reversed if we want to reach the SDGs by 2030.

(d) Emerging issues likely to affect building sustainable and resilient societies

The rise in violent conflicts and insufficient financial, technical and political support to peacebuilding are serious impediments to building sustainable and resilient societies. The resolutions on the review of the peacebuilding architecture called for better intergovernmental coherence, partnerships, as well as the operational and policy coherence, and the Secretary-General has provided options on increasing, restructuring and better prioritizing funding dedicated to UN peacebuilding activities as requested by the General Assembly and Security Council. These options are currently being considered by Member States. The PBC has been recognized as the platform for partnerships in support of peacebuilding and sustaining peace by mobilizing relevant stakeholders, including during the PBC Annual Session in June 2018.

Building on its previous experiences, the PBC has reviewed its working methods to enhance efficiency and flexibility. The PBC has convened thematic, country-specific and regional discussions, with the consent of all the relevant states concerned, available to all countries seeking sustained international attention and support to their peacebuilding and sustaining peace efforts. In addition to the rise in violent conflicts, increasing inequality is a major obstacle to building sustainable and resilient societies – particularly if these inequalities systematically put particular segments of society at a disadvantage. Addressing inequalities is not only important for economic growth, development and progress on the SDGs, but also for promoting peace and stability.

The PBC provides a platform for International Financial Institutions (IFIs) and the PBC membership to address the interlinkages of rising inequalities in fragile political contexts and the peacebuilding challenges they pose. The PBC has convened numerous meetings involving IFIs in relevant discussions..

(e) Areas where political guidance by the high-level political forum is required

The adoption of the resolutions on the review of the peacebuilding architecture gave renewed impetus to the United Nations system's focus on peacebuilding and sustaining peace by all actors at all stages of conflict through a comprehensive and coherent approach

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among relevant political, security and development actors. The resolutions also reaffirm “that development is a central goal in itself and recognizes the important contributions of the United Nations development system to peacebuilding” ...and stress “the need to continue strengthening cooperation and coordination for that purpose in the field through United Nations Country Teams and at United Nations Headquarters, in accordance with their respective mandates, and with respect for national ownership and priorities of countries-affected by conflict...”.

ECOSOC and the PBC have held a number of joint meetings since June 2016. Most notably, in January 2017 a high-level dialogue brought together the Secretary-General, the President of the General Assembly, the President of the Security Council, the President of the Economic and Social Council, and the Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission for the first time to promote coordination and coherence across peace and development efforts. Such efforts follow the recommendations set forth by the Secretary-General (A/70/684, 15 January 2016, para. 44), who noted that “the Economic and Social Council could strengthen its interaction with the Peacebuilding Commission and utilize its operational or humanitarian segments to review development, peace and humanitarian issues as a nexus, thus addressing related aspects of the 2030 Agenda.” In turn, the resolutions on the review of the peacebuilding architecture (A/RES/70/262 and S/RES/2282 (2016)) stress “the importance of closer cooperation between the Economic and Social Council and Peacebuilding Commission, in accordance with their respective mandates, including through enhanced dialogue in support of promoting coherence and complementarity between the United Nations’ peace and security efforts and its development, human rights and humanitarian work, and encourages the Peacebuilding Commission to draw on the expertise of relevant Economic and Social Council subsidiary bodies, as appropriate.” Noting the importance of intergovernmental coherence for the purpose of sustaining peace, the Secretary-General’s report (A/72/707–S/2018/43) stressed that “coherence and complementarity among the principal organs of the United Nations, including the governing bodies of United Nations entities, are critical. The role of the Economic and Social Council in the oversight of operational activities for development, development cooperation and humanitarian assistance and its overall coordination of the United Nations development system complement the valuable work of the Security Council and the Peacebuilding Commission.”(A/72/707–S/2018/43, para 12)

The PBC stands ready to further advance its dialogue with ECOSOC with a view to further strengthening their collaboration.

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- (f) Policy recommendations on ways to accelerate progress in establishing sustainable and resilient societies

A number of policy recommendations follow from the above: (a) leave no one behind and focus on those furthest behind also includes conflict-affected situations, and addressing the root causes of conflict; (b) for the UN to support Member State in peacebuilding and sustaining peace requires need to work together beyond individual silos in order to support peaceful, prosperous and sustainable societies; (c) to explore financing options for peacebuilding activities;; (d) emphasis should be placed on longer-term development of institutions and capacities even if they are harder to quantify and as a result timeframes need to increase. To this end, the PBC can play a role in close collaboration with other relevant stakeholders.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.



Ion Jinga
Chair
Peacebuilding Commission