



Operationalising Sustaining Peace: Learning from the Sustaining Peace Roundtable Series

Recommendations for the 2020 Secretary-General's Report on Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace and the 2020 Peacebuilding Architecture Review

This submission draws from the findings of the Sustaining Peace roundtable series organised by the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation (DHF), the Global Network of Women Peacebuilders (GNWP), the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflicts (GPPAC), and the International Peace Institute (IPI). This document serves to inform the 2020 Peacebuilding Architecture Review by presenting key recommendations critical for the continued advancement and implementation of peacebuilding and sustaining peace.

Recommendation 1: The United Nations should support long-term, flexible, sustainable and accessible funding for peacebuilding:

Funding remains a critical prerequisite for enabling the implementation of peacebuilding and sustaining peace. In recent years, the UN has made some progress, including on engaging in stronger partnerships with the private sector and international financial institutions and on increasing voluntary contributions by Member States to the Peacebuilding Fund.

However, the continued shortage of adequate, sustainable and accessible funding for peacebuilding continues to be a major concern, especially for local civil society, including women and youth peacebuilders. Administrative requirements governing the provision of funding to UN partners and their lack of flexibility often strain smaller organisations working to support innovative and responsive solutions. The Peacebuilding Fund's Gender and Youth Promotion Initiative (GYPI), for example, is now available to a few large international non-governmental organisations but remains inaccessible to smaller, grassroots organisations. Moreover, too much of the funding for peacebuilding remains project-based, which leads to organisations becoming overwhelmed with delivering donor-requested activities and unable to remain flexible and innovative in their approach. Flexible and core funding, in contrast, would allow peacebuilding organisations to build institutional capacity, respond and adapt to crisis situations in a more effective way, and focus on long-term strategies for peacebuilding and sustaining peace.

GOOD PRACTICE => The Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund (WPHF) was designed to increase women's participation and leadership in conflict contexts through pooling and channeling flexible funding directly to local women's groups and civil society organisations working in local communities directly affected by conflict, or to humanitarian agencies. Civil society is also included in the Fund's global board and country-level steering committees, meaningfully participating in defining priorities and decision making at all levels.

The United Nations Peacebuilding Architecture should:

- Prioritise the implementation of the 2020-2024 Peacebuilding Fund's Strategy which commits to “**provide more flexible funding to local-level organisations**, with modalities adjusted to different capacity levels from context to context”¹;
- Utilise the convening role of the Peacebuilding Commission to **bring together various actors** to discuss concrete strategies to increase accessible funding for peacebuilding and mobilise support from **a wider array of financial stakeholders**, including regional development banks, philanthropists, private sector and international financial institutions;
- Scale up **donor engagement in prevention and early warning** by encouraging donors to support funding for sustainable, long-term programs that address root causes of conflict;
- Advocate for improved **mapping of peacebuilding activities**, including those implemented by women and youth-led grassroots organisations, to avoid duplication of planned and existing efforts;
- Ensure **community-led and local expertise** is included at all stages of the funding cycle, including from the design of priorities;
- Encourage a shift from earmarked and project-based funding towards **flexible and core funding** that allows effective and timely adjustment in the contexts of crises.

Recommendation 2: The United Nations should continue to work towards greater operational and policy coherence for peacebuilding and sustaining peace:

The work of many civil society organisations, especially those working at the grassroots level, does not fall within a specific agenda or framework (i.e., sustaining peace, development, women, peace and security) and remains cross-cutting in practice, addressing a variety of economic, social and peacebuilding issues. This approach provides a good practice for all peacebuilding stakeholders on the operationalisation of peacebuilding and sustaining peace through coherence – a systematic promotion of mutually reinforcing policy actions. There are numerous ongoing efforts within the United Nations to promote greater coherence, with the leadership shown by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) to update and reform their internal framework for conflict analysis based on the sustaining peace resolutions being an example of an attempt to advance coherence in practice. However, existing structures, competing incentives and other factors often make coherence difficult to achieve. Advancing policy and operational coherence requires planning, staff capacity, financial resources and dedicated systems.

GOOD PRACTICE => **The Common Country Analysis (CCA)** provides an opportunity for all United Nations agencies to come together with key national and international stakeholders to identify conflict risks, national development challenges and common approaches to addressing these. It thus holds the potential for ensuring that support provided by United Nations agencies, funds and programmes in a country is coherent and complementary, drawing from each entities' expertise, resources and mandate².

The United Nations Peacebuilding Architecture should:

- Recognise the need for **increased capacities and funding** to support effective operational and policy coherence and measure the cost or implications of a lack of coherence;

¹ Secretary-General's Peacebuilding Fund 2020-2024 Strategy

https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/sites/www.un.org.peacebuilding/files/documents/pbf_strategy_2020-2024_final.pdf

² 'Common Country Analysis, UNDAF Companion Guidance' <https://unsdg.un.org/sites/default/files/UNDG-UNDAF-Companion-Pieces-2-Common-Country-Analysis.pdf>

- Advocate for the **meaningful participation of civil society** in priority and program design and implementation, in order to effectively strengthen coherent policy and action across various pillars of work that is context-specific;
- Develop **a robust system to track the implementation** of sustaining peace at all levels;
- Clearly articulate **the interlinkages between all pillars of the United Nations' work** (development, human rights, peace and security) and create specific guidance on how to work to strengthen these interlinkages;
- Support the development of standardised information-sharing processes between United Nations entities and promote **greater clarity on the implementation of the Secretary-General's management reform**;
- Develop and strengthen the channels, structures and resources in place to support **cross-sector strategic engagement and collaboration** between Member State's permanent missions as they have a key role in strengthening coherence.

Recommendation 3: The United Nations should build on the cross-cutting nature of the Women, Peace and Security and Youth, Peace and Security Agendas in advancing coherent and cross-pillar approaches to sustaining peace:

The women, peace and security (WPS) and youth, peace and security (YPS) agendas recognise the variety of roles women and youth play in conflict and peacebuilding, and break with the pervasive narratives that depict women, including young women, as victims, and young men as violent perpetrators. Such recognition – and effective and meaningful engagement of women and youth as partners for peace – is critical to the implementation of the Sustaining Peace agenda. Through its advisory role, the Peacebuilding Commission has a unique function in promoting interactive and coherent dialogue that contributes to more inclusive analysis and effective implementation of both agendas. However, more work remains to be done to ensure inclusion of a gender lens, and a meaningful participation of women – including local women peacebuilders – in the work of the Peacebuilding Commission. Moreover, the Peacebuilding Commission is yet to place the YPS Agenda among its priorities. While a Gender Strategy exists, there are currently neither dedicated strategies nor assessment mechanisms to advance the implementation of the YPS agenda in the Commission.

GOOD PRACTICE => In 2016, the Peacebuilding Commission adopted **a comprehensive gender strategy** to “ensure a more structural integration of gender perspectives in all its work.”³ Since then, the Peacebuilding Commission increased its engagement with women's organisations and ensured a more structured integration of gender perspectives in all its work. This includes the Peacebuilding Commission's annual reporting on the implementation of its gender strategy, as well as briefing the United Nations Security Council at its annual WPS open debate.

The United Nations Peacebuilding Architecture should:

- Strengthen comprehensive action for sustaining peace by **aligning processes** around the 20th anniversary of UNSCR 1325 (2000) on Women and Peace and Security (WPS), the 25th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the fifth anniversary of UNSCR 2250 (2015) on Youth and Peace and Security (YPS), the fifth anniversary of the adoption of sustainable development goals, and the 2020 United Nations Peacebuilding Architecture Review;

³ Peacebuilding Commission's Gender Strategy, Available at: https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/sites/www.un.org.peacebuilding/files/documents/07092016- pbc_gender_strategy_final_1.pdf

- Ensure that **women, including local and rural women, and diverse civil society are meaningfully included** in the design, implementation and monitoring of peacebuilding and sustaining peace initiatives;
- Adopt a **comprehensive strategy for meaningful engagement of youth** in an inclusive and participatory way to ensure that innovative work of young peacebuilders is recognised and contributes to building a more coherent operational approach to peacebuilding;
- Accelerate the **implementation of its Gender Strategy**, and hold annual substantive meetings on gender-responsive peacebuilding, to track progress of its implementation, and to ensure that WPS resolutions are integrated into the Peacebuilding Commission's work;
- Review the Seven Point Action Plan on Gender-Responsive Peacebuilding to reflect the need to prioritise **gender analysis and women's participation throughout the peace continuum**;
- Support the implementation of **locally-led and gender-responsive peacebuilding interventions** in crisis responses from early stages;
- Facilitate **dialogue** and support **joint analysis** on peacebuilding and sustaining peace among different actors within and outside of the United Nations system, including through greater inclusion of local and national women and youth peacebuilders as briefers.

Recommendation 4: The United Nations should advance the nexus between human rights and peacebuilding:

Human rights violations are both a root cause and a consequence of conflict. Therefore, it should be a cross-pillar priority for the United Nations to make use of existing human rights mechanisms, such as special procedures, treaty bodies, the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) process and its recommendations, to inform the work on development and peace; and to integrate human rights considerations into deliberations on peace and security, and planning on peacebuilding.

GOOD PRACTICE => The strengthening of **the synergies between the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda** is an example of progress in breaking down the silos between human rights and peace and security. The adoption of the CEDAW Committee's landmark General Recommendation 30, explicitly examining human rights of women in conflict, post-conflict and conflict-affected settings is perhaps the clearest sign of progress.

The United Nations Peacebuilding Architecture should:

- Provide strong leadership, demonstrate political support and give recognition to **the role of national human rights institutions and human rights defenders** in peacebuilding, both at policy and operational levels;
- Work more proactively to connect the **processes and work done in New York and Geneva** and create additional entry points for linking human rights and sustaining peace;
- Utilise the 2020 Peacebuilding Architecture Review (PBA) to identify and create a **catalogue of positive examples** of collaboration and exchange between human rights and peacebuilding actors and mechanisms at country level in a variety of contexts;
- Fully exercise the advisory role of the Peacebuilding Commission to promote operationalisation of **peacebuilding and sustaining peace with other United Nations agencies and entities**, including the Human Rights Council (HRC).

Recommendation 5: The United Nations should regularly assess the ability of the United Nations Development System (UNDS) to support peacebuilding and sustaining peace:

As recognised by the dual resolutions on Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace, sustainable development is critical to sustaining peace, and vice versa. On January 1, 2019, the United Nations Development System (UNDS) reform took effect, building on and putting into effect the United Nations' commitment to create a development system that is stronger, better unified, and better positioned to provide support to countries in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The reform, which is still being rolled out, aims to create a system of empowered resident coordinators with a stronger mandate to drive forward efforts at sustaining peace at country level and a new generation of UN Country Teams more responsive and coordinated in their work.

GOOD PRACTICE => With the United Nations development system reforms, **the resident coordinator system (RC system) is funded** through a three-tiered formula outlined and agreed in General Assembly Resolution 72/279 and managed by the Development Coordination Office (DCO). To date, thirty-four member states and nineteen United Nations entities have contributed to the Special Purpose Trust Fund for the RC system and total resources amount to close to \$145 million in pledges, commitments, and contributions received, leaving a gap of almost \$136 million for 2020. During the 75th session of the General Assembly the Secretary-General is expected to submit a comprehensive review on the functioning of the resident coordinator system, including the funding arrangements.

The United Nations Peacebuilding Architecture should:

- Promote stronger **communication structures** between the UN Country Teams and United Nations Headquarters;
- Encourage mandatory reporting of all **United Nations individual agencies to the resident coordinator** and improve formal communication structures;
- Increase **awareness and understanding of the United Nations' work** within a broader range of stakeholders in-country, including grassroots, women and youth peacebuilders, and support capacity-building to engage with the United Nations;
- Encourage forthcoming reviews on the UNDS reform to include an assessment of its contribution to sustaining peace;
- Institutionalise **the role of the Peace and Development Advisors** in all Resident Coordinator offices, and secure assessed contributions to fund these positions on a regular basis.

Recommendation 6: The United Nations should strengthen its collaboration with Regional Intergovernmental Organisations and civil society to operationalise peacebuilding and sustaining peace at the regional level

The 2019 Interim Report of the United Nations Secretary-General on Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace (A/73/890-S/2019/448) notes that "strategic partnerships with regional and sub-regional partners on peacebuilding and sustaining peace remain a priority for the United Nations." However, implementation of the United Nations reforms and the recommendations in the 2018 Secretary-General's Report aimed at the regional level require greater clarity, as the information on how regional peacebuilding architecture is being built up is largely missing from the discussions, and due to the complexity of the United Nations frameworks, relevant terminology and processes make it complicated for a variety of actors to engage proactively.

GOOD PRACTICE => **The Peacebuilding Commission** has recently begun to increase its engagement with regional organisations on shared issues of concern, for example, through the establishment of an annual dialogue with the African Union, and more regular inclusion of senior officials from regional organisations as briefers. Specific attention is given to the partnership with the African Union and other regional organisations on the Sahel, Central Africa and the Great Lakes region, building on the Joint United Nations-African Union Framework for Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security. Nonetheless, peacebuilding remains the most underdeveloped aspect of that partnership, due to differences in concept frameworks, country presences, and access to financing.

The United Nations Peacebuilding Architecture should:

- Provide political and operational support for **peacebuilding and sustaining peace at the regional level**, including engaging with and supporting peacebuilding capacities of regional intergovernmental organisations, and civil society operating at the regional level;
- Support the capacities needed for the development and improvement of **regional monitoring and response mechanisms** informed by real-time community-based conflict information;
- Establish and improve, when needed, formal **regional platforms for dialogue and information-sharing** for various peacebuilding actors, including representatives of the United Nations agencies, regional organisations, local peacebuilding organisations, Member States, financial institutions and donors, that meet regularly to share analysis and coordinate common messaging and strategies;
- Ensure that **the Peacebuilding Commission regularly engages at the regional level** and with regional organisations in diverse contexts.

Recommendation 7: The United Nations should prioritise nationally-led peacebuilding goals in the context of mission transitions:

The aim of a transition is to reconfigure the UN presence to provide continued political, normative and technical accompaniment to a country in order to sustain peace. At the same time, the departure of a peace operation and declining international attention can create a 'financial cliff' for transition countries. Early transition planning can help align the peace operation and the UN Country Team around national peacebuilding priorities, enable a division of responsibility based on comparative advantage, and anticipate potential economic shocks that could undermine peacebuilding gains.⁴

GOOD PRACTICE => Increased employment, local purchases and expatriate spending, alongside Quick Impact Projects (QIPs) in rural areas, contributed to a small economic boom during UNMIL's presence in Liberia from 2003-2018. In particular, speculative international businesspeople reaped high returns and local businesses thrived. However, there was no significant investment in productive assets, there were high levels of capital flight, and corruption continued largely unchecked. Unsurprisingly, therefore, **UNMIL's withdrawal** was accompanied by a significant economic downturn, exposing deep structural and economic issues.⁵

The United Nations Peacebuilding Architecture should:

⁴ OECD (2020), "Mission drawdowns: Financing a sustainable peace: Sustaining gains and supporting economic stability post UN mission withdrawal", OECD Development Policy Papers, No. 28, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://www.oecdilibrary.org/docserver/a0b4c681en.pdf?expires=1592998282&id=id&accname=guest&checksum=4EE9991CA8AECF505996C0C636D139D5>

⁵ Ibid.

- Utilise the mandate of the Peacebuilding Commission to bring visibility to the context of transitions to **enable other actors**, including international financial institutions (IFIs) and bilateral donors, to gradually integrate sustainable peacebuilding projects in advance of a mission's departure;
- Ensure that mission settings include a peacebuilding component and prioritise **effectively building inclusive national capacities** so that the heavy lifting does not fall on UN Country Teams following the transition;
- Encourage transition planning to include **a thorough and regularly updated economic analysis**, undertaken in cooperation with IFIs and other major financial partners, to better ensure predictable financing for peacebuilding during and after withdrawal of a peace operation.

Recommendation 8: The United Nations should ensure early peacebuilding action in conflict and crisis:

The recent COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated structural drivers of armed conflict and violence and placed limitations on the actions of peacebuilders. The 2020 PBA could offer an opportunity to emphasise the importance of conflict prevention and peacebuilding response at all stages of conflict and crisis and ensure that efforts to address conflict and crises encompass a strong peacebuilding element.

GOOD PRACTICE => the **Peacebuilding Commission has held dedicated meetings on the impacts of COVID-19 on countries and regions**, facilitating discussions between multiple stakeholders and actors at different levels to encourage early peacebuilding intervention.

The United Nations Peacebuilding Architecture should:

- Consider developing **joint strategies** in health emergencies and other crises informed by conflict analysis, thus striking a balance between addressing immediate and longer-term effects of crises;
- Encourage Member States to **refrain from militarised and securitised** responses to the crises, such as climate change and COVID-19 pandemic, which are likely to restrict civic space and contribute to aggravating the root causes of conflict;
- Encourage **the donor community to prioritise peacebuilding and conflict prevention** across the peace continuum;
- Assess and strengthen strategies for **the engagement of civil society** during crises to ensure adequate flow of reliable information from communities.