



**Policy Coherence Through Meaningful Inclusion:  
The Key Priorities Ahead of the 2020 Peacebuilding Architecture Review**

**6 March 2020 8:30 – 10:00am  
3 Dag Hammarskjöld Plaza, 10th floor**

To strengthen the implementation of the UN Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace resolutions, especially at the country and regional levels, the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation (DHF), the Global Network of Women Peacebuilders (GNWP), the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC), and the International Peace Institute (IPI) have initiated a series of roundtable discussions to examine the strategies and pathways towards the operationalization of Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace. The series aims to convene member states, UN staff and civil society representatives working at expert level on peacebuilding and sustaining peace to discuss key thematic areas of relevance to the implementation of Sustaining Peace resolutions and to ongoing processes of reform that aims to make the UN more effective in living up to its prevention mandate.

Coherence, as a systematic promotion of mutually reinforcing policies and actions, is one of the key tenets of the dual resolutions on Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace (A70/262 and S/RES/2282). The resolutions emphasize that “sustaining peace requires coherence, sustained engagement, and coordination between the General Assembly, the Security Council, and the Economic and Social Council, consistent with their mandates as set out in the Charter of the United Nations”. Successful implementation therefore relies heavily on various bodies within the UN System, beyond the UN Security Council and Peacebuilding Commission, to take an integrated approach to policy-making, with policy coherence at its core.

With the 2020 peacebuilding architecture review (hereafter, the 2020 Review), mandated by the Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace Resolutions, currently underway, the ninth workshop of this series provided a space for Member States, the UN, and civil society to reflect on the progress and lessons learned in operationalizing a comprehensive action on policy coherence in peacebuilding.

Below are the key take-aways from the discussion:

- *Learning from Women and Peace and Security (WPS):*

As recognized by the dual resolutions on Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace and the 2018 Secretary-General's Report on Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace (S/2018/43), women's leadership and participation are critical to conflict prevention, resolution and peacebuilding. As a normative framework for women's meaningful participation in decision-making, conflict resolution, conflict prevention and peacebuilding, the women and peace and security (WPS) agenda brings forth a set of cross-cutting issues at the core of peacebuilding and sustaining peace. The adoption of UNSCR 1325 in 2000, the foundational document of the WPS agenda, was a major achievement and a result of the tireless work of the women's movement and women peacebuilders around the world. Together with nine subsequent resolutions, it provides a clear vision and standards on ensuring women's meaningful participation at all levels and building and sustaining an inclusive and gender-sensitive peace. Its transformative nature requires stakeholders to look beyond women's involvement and requires application of an in-depth and rigorous gender lens in conflict analysis and policy-making.

Advancing this transformation and ensuring that gender analysis is at the core of all of the UN's work to build and sustain peace is the central role of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC). Mandated to "support the development of integrated strategies" and "to provide recommendations and information to improve the coordination of all relevant actors within and outside the United Nations," the PBC's founding resolutions call for it to "integrate a gender perspective into all of its work."<sup>1</sup> In 2016, the PBC adopted a comprehensive gender strategy to "ensure a more structural integration of gender perspectives in all its work."<sup>2</sup> Through its advisory role to the UN Security Council, the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, the PBC has a unique function in promoting interactive and coherent dialogue on gender analysis and effective implementation of the WPS agenda among various legislative bodies. This role is further strengthened by the acknowledged link between sustaining peace and human rights, and efforts to promote cooperation between the PBC and the Human Rights Council.

During the roundtable, participants noted that recently, the PBC has strengthened its efforts to consult with women's rights organizations, and to ensure a more structured integration of gender perspectives in all its work.<sup>3</sup> This includes the PBC's annual reporting on the implementation of its gender strategy, as well as briefing the UN Security Council at its annual WPS open debate, as well as the efforts of the UN Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO), UN Women and UNDP to work with women's organizations in South Sudan to develop a gender-sensitive conflict analysis framework. A woman peacebuilder from South Africa was also scheduled to brief the PBC during a meeting dedicated to WPS, which has been postponed to a later date due to the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. Further, the Seven Point Action Plan on Gender-Responsive Peacebuilding, which resulted from the 2010 Secretary-General's Report on women and peace and security (S/2010/173) and was recently reaffirmed as an important policy instrument for ensuring the WPS agenda is included in conflict prevention work across the UN pillars, is currently

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<sup>1</sup> A/RES/60/180 and S/RES/1672(2005)

<sup>2</sup> 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](https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/sites/www.un.org.peacebuilding/files/documents/07092016- pbc_gender_strategy_final_1.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

being updated and reviewed, to include clearer linkages with the 2030 sustainable development agenda as one example.

The roundtable participants underscored that the WPS agenda's cross-pillar approach can provide good practices and lessons for promoting policy coherence among the many stakeholders engaged in sustaining peace. For example, the process of developing National Action Plans on WPS and methodologies for ensuring broad-base consultation and ownership of these policy documents can serve as a guide in identifying strategies for encouraging policy and operational coherence on peacebuilding and sustaining peace. Similarly, years of advocacy by women's rights activists and peacebuilders to strengthen the synergies between WPS and the Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) offers a possible model for strengthening the links between the Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace resolutions and the human rights treaty bodies and mechanisms, as well as the Human Rights Council (HRC).

- *Strengthening implementation of the Youth, Peace and Security (YPS) Agenda.*

The implementation of the Youth, Peace and Security (YPS) agenda is another policy process that is inherently linked to the successful implementation of the Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace resolutions. Security Council Resolutions [2250](#) and [2419](#) on YPS, as well as the 2018 Report of the Secretary-General on peacebuilding and sustaining peace (S/2018/43) recognize the important contributions youth make to peacebuilding and sustaining peace. The Progress Study on Youth, Peace and Security, *The Missing Peace*, called for an end to harmful stereotypes that posit youth as problems or threats, and instead urged that young women and men be seen and supported as agents and partners for peace.<sup>4</sup>

Roundtable participants noted that innovative peacebuilding strategies developed by young peacebuilders at the local level were recognized at the recent PBC meeting on YPS. Innovative methodologies such as the use of participatory video conferences in Kyrgyzstan and the Occupied Palestinian Territories, help drive powerful social change in some of the most polarized conflict settings by ensuring engagement of the whole of society and bridging divides to promote sustaining peace.

However, as some participants pointed out, there are currently neither dedicated strategies nor assessment mechanisms to advance implementation of the YPS agenda. This is a critical gap in ensuring mutually reinforcing actions aimed at operationalizing Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace. It is essential to continue to explore the ways in which the UN as a system and peacebuilding actors specifically can further implement the YPS agenda and support the innovative efforts of young peacebuilders.

- *Ensuring capacities and resources for coherence*

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.youth4peace.info/ProgressStudy>

Several participants at the roundtable noted that while intergovernmental coherence is understood to reduce overlap between streams of work and to enhance effectiveness, in practice, structures, competing incentives and other factors often make it difficult to achieve. As one member state representative pointed out, there can be significantly different visions and purposes that are not aligned *within* governments, both between divisions with geographic and thematic responsibilities within a single ministry, and across different ministries working on security, development and humanitarian issues. These challenges are magnified when trying to achieve coherence *across* bilateral donors, UN entities, IFIs, and other stakeholders. Participants acknowledged that there are numerous ongoing efforts within the UN to promote greater coherence, with the leadership taken by the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) to update and reform their internal framework for conflict analysis based on the sustaining peace resolutions being an example. Various resources and tools are already available within each agency to advance policy coherence through respective unique contexts. This and other examples should be more widely shared and recognized, while taking note of various mandates and sets of priorities.

Building on the lessons learned from the work of civil society is critical for advancing policy coherence. The work of many civil society organizations, especially those working at the grassroots level, does not traditionally fall under 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 and social issues. Supporting their cross-cutting, inter-sectoral work through capacity building and adequate resourcing, as well as ensuring their meaningful participation in priority and program design and implementation would be key to effectively strengthen coherent policy and action across various pillars of work that is context-specific, addresses the key challenges for peace and builds on effective local practices.

Advancing policy and operational coherence requires planning, staff capacity, financial resources and systems. This often incurs significant transaction costs in time, effort, and resources, which can put a strain on smaller organizations. Some initiatives have been undertaken to improve financial practices in the interest of coherence, including the work of the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund that includes civil society in decision-making on how funds are disbursed, and guarantees that at least 50% of funds are channeled directly to grassroots women's organizations. At the member state level, some positive developments highlighted during the discussion include the integration of the Development and Cooperation Agency within the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs in Switzerland, which allowed the Agency to ensure better coordination between development activities, humanitarian aid and foreign policy by promoting integrated teams and using integrated or pooled funding mechanisms to reduce fragmentation.

Amid efforts to enhance collaboration between different UN pillars to sustain peace, one participant cautioned against creating hierarchies among these pillars, or prioritizing the goals of one over that of another.

- *Taking a whole of society approach:*

The regional thematic consultations for the 2020 Review that have already taken place in Geneva and Stockholm have emphasized the importance of partnerships both when it comes to civil society, as well as for the private sector. Country-level consultations with a thematic focus on gender and WPS in the 2020 Review also took place in Bogota, Colombia, Kampala, Uganda and Pretoria, South Africa. There was a sense that more could be done with a wider range of stakeholders at the local, national, regional and international levels, ensuring inclusive engagement with all parts of society. The role of civil society is especially crucial to guide and hold the UN accountable for ensuring that peacebuilding is undertaken in a holistic way, and that inclusive ownership is not squeezed out by efforts at coherence. Local peacebuilders provide valuable expertise and contextual knowledge that should inform analysis of conflict dynamics, power relations, and actors, and enable early warning and response. Due to context-specific approaches and close relationships with diverse constituencies, local peacebuilders are often able to access and engage with areas and actors that official government officials or international actors cannot. Building similar partnerships with the private sector remains difficult and requires further platforms to ensure that the dialogue continues.

- *Assessing the impact of UN Reforms*

The UN reforms initiated by Secretary-General Guterres are intended as a major step towards reducing fragmentation and increasing coherence across the UN system. As discussed in previous roundtable discussions in this series, the newly empowered, independent Resident Coordinator (RC) system has created opportunities to connect resources, expertise and networks to strengthen the prioritization of conflict prevention and peacebuilding in UN operations at the country level. The 2020 peacebuilding architecture review should take stock of how these initiatives have contributed to greater coherence at country level, as a complement to processes specifically designed for reporting on changes to the UN development system, with the findings used to further refine the ongoing reforms.

Participants at the roundtable noted that 2020 also marks the 20th anniversary of UNSCR 1325 (2000) on Women and Peace and Security (WPS), the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the fifth anniversary of UNSCR 2250 (2015) on Youth and Peace and Security (YPS), and the fifth anniversary of the adoption of sustainable development goals, underscoring that strong interlinkages between these different processes is essential to support comprehensive action on policy coherence in the context of peacebuilding and sustaining peace. The following are a set of recommendations for pursuing greater coherence:

**Recommendations:**

- 1) UN entities and agencies, as well as other international and regional actors working on peacebuilding and sustaining peace should build and strengthen strategic and operational partnerships with local peacebuilders, including women peacebuilders and youth groups, national actors and regional and sub-regional organizations.
- 2) The PBC should utilize its advisory role to promote better collaboration with other UN agencies and entities, beyond the UN Security Council and Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), including the Human Rights Council (HRC). More dedicated platforms are

needed to allow for a joint analysis and dialogue among different actors within and outside of the UN system.

- 3) The UN system should identify and learn from existing strategies that advance policy coherence, including the work of women peacebuilders at the local level. To make the case for increased capacities and funding to support coherence, the UN should document the impact of policy coherence as well as the cost or implications of a lack of coherence. Many lessons relating to intergovernmental and policy coherence can be learned from the already existing strategies and engagement mechanisms practiced in the WPS agenda.
- 4) The PBC should adopt a comprehensive YPS Strategy in an inclusive and participatory way to ensure that innovative work of young peacebuilders, which promotes synergies between various pillars of work and advances sustaining peace is recognized and contributes to building a more coherent operational approach to peacebuilding.
- 5) The 2020 Review should provide concrete suggestions/recommendations for a robust system to track the implementation of sustaining peace at all levels, and a community of practice to exchange lessons learned and good practices to strengthen implementation, based on lessons learned from the implementation and monitoring efforts over the past 4 years.



## **Concept note: Operationalizing Sustaining Peace - A Series of Expert Roundtables**

Sustaining Peace, as defined in dual UN General Assembly and Security Council resolutions (A/70/262 and S/2016/2282) is “a goal and a process to build a common vision of a society, ensuring that the needs of all segments of the population are taken into account, which encompasses activities aimed at preventing the outbreak, escalation, continuation and recurrence of conflict, addressing root causes, assisting parties to conflict to end hostilities, ensuring national reconciliation, and moving towards recovery, reconstruction and development”. This definition contextualizes peacebuilding as a process that is relevant and necessary throughout the conflict cycle, rather than solely an action taken after conflict termination, and correspondingly shifts the starting point of analysis to understanding risk and resilience in a society, and preventative rather than reactive operations.

In January 2018, the Secretary-General released his report outlining ways in which the UN is implementing the Sustaining Peace approach and proposing ways to further the process. And, in April 2018, another set of dual resolutions were passed endorsing the continued implementation of the recommendations on Sustaining Peace. These resolutions requested an interim report on Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace in 2019 and a second report following up on the implementation in connection with the 2020 review of the UN’s peacebuilding architecture.

Despite all the endorsement for continued work on embracing the word and spirit of the parallel resolutions, there is still a gap in understanding what this means in practice and the implication of the changes that are called for at regional and country level. To support and inform preparations for the 2020 report and the 2020 PBA review, the International Peace Institute (IPI), the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC), the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation (DHF) and the Global Network of Women Peacebuilders (GNWP) are convening a series of roundtable discussion to examine the operationalization of Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace.

The overall objective of this series is to strengthen the implementation of the UN’s Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace agenda, at the country and regional levels. The discussion series aims to contribute to this objective through:

- Creating a space for key global policy- and decision-makers to develop a shared understanding of the UN’s Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace agenda at the practical level, informed by the perspectives of the practitioners, women’s rights organizations and other civil society groups working on the ground.

- Fostering discussions on how to advance efforts at Sustaining Peace in practice at the country level and identifying concrete steps that need to be taken for effective and locally-driven implementation.
- Contributing to the assessment of the ongoing efforts to change the way peacebuilding is undertaken, by the UN and other actors on the ground and highlighting examples and cases that demonstrate whether the UN is having positive influence on the way peacebuilding is undertaken.

### The Series

This series aims to convene experts in peacebuilding and sustaining peace to discuss key thematic areas that emerge in connection to the implementation of the Sustaining Peace resolutions. Participants will include experts from civil society, member states, UN Agencies, Funds and Programs and the UN secretariat. The roundtables will be by invitation only and will be held as off-the-record discussions. A short non-attribution summary note is developed based on the discussions held and is made available at

<https://www.daghammarskjold.se/peacebuilding-and-sustaining-peace>.

The aim is to hold one roundtable per month focused on topics related to implementing the Sustaining Peace Resolutions in practice. The topics are identified based on what UN representatives, Member States and civil society partners deem to be timely and useful. As much as possible the discussions are grounded in country cases with experiences of local, national and regional actors as well as international actors working at country and regional levels presented.

### Topics Thus Far:

- 1) How do we understand the operationalization of Sustaining Peace? - glancing backwards before moving ahead (December 2018)
- 2) Pathways to Peace and Sustaining Peace: the UN-World Bank partnership at country level (January 2019)
- 3) Tools to implement Sustaining Peace: The role of the Youth, Peace and Security Agenda (March 2019)
- 4) The UN Development System Reform and Sustaining Peace: Realities and Opportunities (April 2019)
- 5) Building Strategic Partnerships for Sustaining Peace at the Regional Level (September 2019)
- 6) Women as the pioneers in conflict prevention and peacebuilding: The linkages between Sustaining Peace and the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda (October 2019)
- 7) Advancing Nexus of Human Rights and Peacebuilding (December 2019)
- 8) Looking Ahead: The 2020 UN Peacebuilding Architecture Review (January 2020)