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PEACEBUILDING COMMISSION

Introduction

This Special Research Report analyses the first year of operation of the UN's new Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) and follows up on Special Research Report No. 3 of 23 June 2006 which reviewed the lead-up to and establishment of the PBC.

The PBC spent its first year focused on Burundi and Sierra Leone, at the request of the Security Council. Its report on its first year of activities and outcomes is now before the Council and the General Assembly.

The PBC's achievements in its first year are more substantive than generally appreciated. Although its outcomes are not only documents, four key documents have been produced:

1. a concept note on integrated peacebuilding strategies (IPBS);
2. the Burundi IPBS/strategic framework;
3. the Sierra Leone draft IPBS/Framework for Cooperation; and
4. the PBC's annual report.

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Background

The Commission was established on 20 December 2005 by concurrent resolutions of the Security Council (S/RES/1645) and General Assembly (A/RES/60/180) as an inter-governmental advisory body with an Organisational Committee of 31 member countries to coordinate and reinforce the UN peacebuilding architecture. In accordance with these founding resolutions, the membership of the PBC's Organisational Committee consists of:

- seven members from the Security Council;
- seven from the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC);
- five top providers of assessed contributions to UN budgets and of voluntary contributions to UN funds, programmes and agencies, excluding committee members already selected from the Security Council and ECOSOC;
- five top providers of military personnel and police to UN missions, excluding committee members already selected from the Security Council and ECOSOC or selected based on assessed and voluntary contributions to the UN; and
- seven members determined by the General Assembly with consideration given to equitable regional distribution and post-conflict experience.

The PBC emerged as part of the UN 2005 institutional reform package. It met for the first time officially on 23 June 2006 in New York when then Secretary-General Kofi Annan launched the PBC.

On 21 June, the president of the Security Council, in a letter to the Secretary-

General (PBC/1/OC/2), requested the PBC to advise on the situation in Burundi and Sierra Leone. (Both countries had already expressed their desire to be included in the Peacebuilding Commission agenda. Under the founding resolutions, a country can be included on the PBC's agenda by a request from the Security Council or the Secretary-General—and in "...exceptional circumstances [where the country is] on the verge of lapsing or relapsing into conflict...", by request from ECOSOC or the General Assembly or the country itself—but in these three cases only if the country is not on the agenda of the Security Council.)

Burundi and Sierra Leone were formally placed on the agenda of the Commission at the Organisational Committee's second meeting (PBC/1/OC/SR.2) on 13 July 2006.

The PBC established a "country-specific" approach based on what it calls country-specific "configurations" or meetings for each of these two countries, comprising the 31 Organisational Committee members plus the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF), the UN Country Team, relevant neighbouring countries, and other countries and regional and international organisations with an interest in either Burundi or Sierra Leone. These country-specific committees held numerous meetings and conducted a mission to each of the two countries.

The UN's Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) and Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO) were also created through the same December 2005 Council and General

Assembly resolutions, and both come under the administration of the Secretary-General. While the Fund is not institutionally linked to the Commission it can request the Secretary-General to allocate funds to countries on its agenda, as it did with Burundi and Sierra Leone.

The PBSO, headed by Assistant Secretary-General for Peacebuilding Support Carolyn McAskie, has three functions: to support the Commission, manage the Fund, and assist the Secretary-General to bring together the peacebuilding actors in the UN system.

Resolutions 1645 and A/60/180 established three main functions for the PBC. In practice these can be broken down into the following main tasks:

- extend the period of attention given by the international community beyond the initial post-conflict phase;
- bring together all relevant actors to marshal resources;
- provide recommendations to improve the coordination of all relevant actors;
- focus attention on reconstruction and institution-building efforts;
- advise on and support the development of integrated strategies;
- provide recommendations to develop best practices; and
- help ensure predictable financing.

Recent Developments

Annual Report

On 27 June the PBC finalised its annual report which was adopted on 16 July and forwarded to the presidents of the Council and the General Assembly on 25 July as documents A/62/137 and S/2007/458, with identical cover letters from the PBC's outgoing Chair, Ambassador Ismael Gaspar Martins of Angola.

The adoption of the annual report also marked the end of the PBC's first session

and the start of its second. Japan was elected as the new chair and Ghana was elected and El Salvador was re-elected as the two vice-chairs.

NGO Report

On 28 June, an NGO consortium (Action-Aid, CARE, and Catholic Agencies for Overseas Development) released their "shadow report" analysing the PBC's first year of activity, and, among other points, recommended that peacebuilding strategies be developed before PBF funds are allocated, and that funds be linked to political commitments.

Burundi IPBS

The Burundi country-specific meeting of 20 June finalised the integrated peacebuilding strategy, currently called a "strategic framework", and agreed to later add benchmarks and monitoring provisions. Previously, an international donors' roundtable in Bujumbura on 24-25 May had resulted in pledges of \$655.6 million, which was higher than expected. On 21 May the chair of the PBC's Burundi configuration, Ambassador Johan Løvald of Norway, addressed the Security Council and highlighted Burundi's need for transitional justice mechanisms, implementation of the ceasefire agreement and peacebuilding-development links.

Sierra Leone

The Sierra Leone IPBS (or "Framework for Cooperation"), which is in the process of being developed jointly by the government and the UN Country Team, was discussed at a 22 June Sierra Leone country-specific meeting. Final development was postponed in light of the 11 August parliamentary and presidential elections. (It is expected to be finalised soon now that the elected government is in place.)

Civil Society

After a year of discussing how and when to allow civil society representatives to attend PBC meetings, the Organisational Committee on 6 June approved restrictive guidelines on participation of civil society (PBC/1/OC/12) making participation possible only under fairly complicated procedures. These are expected to continue to be contentious.

Institutional Donors

The PBC's Organisational Committee on 16 May agreed to allow the IMF, the World Bank, the European Community, and the Organisation of Islamic Conference to participate in PBC meetings, with some exceptions.

UN Secretariat

By 22 May senior UN Secretariat officials had reached internal agreement on a working definition ("conceptual framework") of peacebuilding for the UN system and an outline for the role of the Peacebuilding Support Office. The PBSO is now, finally, fully operational with 15 professional staff.

The Fund

The PBF is now fully operational, with a central Advisory Group comprising ten eminent individuals nominated by their governments, and steering committees of local stakeholders in Burundi and Sierra Leone. Of the PBF's \$250 million target, \$230 million (92 percent) had been pledged by 3 October from 38 donors, and \$144 million had been received. The Secretary-General announced the allocation of \$35 million to Burundi during his 29 January address to the summit of the African Union, and \$35 million to Sierra Leone on 1 March. As of 3 October 12 projects had been approved for Burundi totalling \$26.883 million and seven projects in Sierra Leone totalling \$15.982 million. On

4 October, the Secretary-General announced that Liberia would be eligible for support from the PBF. The PBF has also allocated emergency funding to two countries not on the PBC's agenda: \$700,000 to UNDP Côte d'Ivoire for the Director Dialogue project (17 August) and \$800,000 to the Central African Republic for the Inclusive Dialogue project (13 September). In another related development, on 12 September the Fund received its first private donation of \$19,000 from former President of the General Assembly Sheikh Haya Rashid Al Khalifa. The Advisory Group met for the first time on 6 September, under the chairmanship of Finland's Marjatta Rasi.

Expected Action

Security Council

The PBC's annual report is now before the Council. The Council, in resolution 1646, decided that it would hold a debate on the report. This is currently scheduled for 17 October. As this will be the first such debate there is no precedent for the format. A previous Council open debate on the PBC took place under the presidency of Russia on 31 January 2007. (For more details please see our Update Report of 25 January 2007.)

General Assembly

Under the founding resolutions, the General Assembly is also to debate the report, and a possible date is 10 October. The Support Office's bi-annual budget request for approximately \$4 million for 2008-9 has passed through the General Assembly's Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and has moved to the Fifth Committee where it is currently under consideration.

Thematic Meetings

The PBC is expected to continue exploring thematic issues through topic-specific meetings. Some of these are likely to involve the collaboration of interested academic institutions and think tanks. The Lessons Learned Working Group's first thematic meeting in the Second Session is scheduled for 18 October.

Additional Countries for the PBC Agenda

The addition of one or two new countries to the PBC agenda is also likely to be considered. As discussed below this may prove to be a complex exercise. The PBSO may undertake exploratory visits to countries under consideration to assist the process.

Field Visits

The PBC and PBSO are expected to build into their schedules and budgets one mission to each of the PBC countries per year. Members of the PBC's country-specific committee on Sierra Leone will visit the country, scheduled for the week of 8-12 October.

Peacebuilding Strategies

Development of the IPBS or "compact" for Sierra Leone is expected to be finalised now that the new government has been elected. (Informal consultations resumed on 22 August.) For Burundi, benchmarks and monitoring mechanisms will be developed between the government and the PBC in the coming months.

PBC Chair

Ambassador Yukio Takasu replaced Ambassador Kenzo Oshima as Chair of the PBC on 12 September.

Policy Committee

Policy papers on four thematic areas of direct relevance to peacebuilding are likely to be approved by the Secretary-General's Policy Committee in coming months, covering security sector reform, employment and income generation, rule of law and justice, and constitutional reform and constitution making. These are internal Secretariat papers not PBC documents.

The Fund

The PBF has \$8 million yet to disburse to Burundi projects, and \$14 million for forthcoming projects in Sierra Leone. Projects are proposed by the respective governments and are then considered by local steering committees independent of the PBC.

Structure and Methodology Adopted in the First Year

Working Structure

In the first year the PBC worked through five committees or groups:

1. the Organisational Committee, comprising the core 31 countries, appointed its own chair and vice-chairs;
2. a country-specific configuration on Burundi,
3. a country-specific configuration on Sierra Leone,
4. a working group on lessons learned, which held thematic meetings that focused on some of the issues arising from the priorities identified by the Burundi and Sierra Leone committees, chaired by El Salvador; and
5. an ad hoc working group on pending issues, established in October 2006 to consider the provisional rules of procedure, especially the participation of institutional donors (this group has finished its work and is no longer operational).

A sixth group, an expert group to review the Organisational Committee's provisional rules of procedure, which was decided at the 12 December Committee meeting, has yet to be established.

Mixed Methodology

When the PBC was being established in the first half of 2006, the buzz word was "innovative". Some key member states saw this new body as an opportunity to not follow conventional UN methods, but to be different and innovative in its membership, in configuring its meetings, and in its *modus operandi*.

To its credit, the PBC has employed a range of working methods, not least the establishment of the informal and flexible country-specific configurations. It conducted many of the Burundi and Sierra Leone meetings with video-links to Bujumbura and Freetown. It invited high-level UN officials to address meetings. It had briefings by NGOs and specialists outside the UN, and it undertook field missions to Burundi and Sierra Leone.

Commission Activities

After a slow start in the first seven months, the PBC moved more rapidly from early February. In the next 21 weeks (to the end of June) it held 38 meetings. Added to this were the field missions to Bujumbura and Freetown.

The PBC held eight meetings in February, two in March (excluding field mission meetings), eight in April (excluding field mission meetings), nine in May, and 12 in June, and according to the PBC's annual report these were spread across the four main groups:

- the Organisational Committee held eight formal and six informal meetings;
- the Burundi country-specific committee held two formal and eight informal meetings;
- the Sierra Leone committee convened two formal and five informal meetings;
- the working group on lessons learned held three thematic meetings and three informal procedural meetings; and
- the Commission held one informal meeting combining the two country-specific committees.

Organisational Committee

After approving the provisional rules of procedure at the inaugural meeting on 23 June 2006, and agreeing to consider Burundi and Sierra Leone at the 13 July meeting, the Organisational Committee had three key tasks that required its attention:

- the contentious issue of participation of institutional donors;
- the even more controversial question of the role of civil society; and
- the annual report to the Council and the General Assembly.

At the final meeting of the first session, on 27 June, in addition to electing Ambassador Kenzo Oshima of Japan as the new chair, the committee agreed that

- Ambassador Carmen Maria Gallardo Hernandez of El Salvador would continue as vice-chair;

- Ambassador Leslie Kojo Christian of Ghana would replace Ambassador Johan Løvald of Norway as vice-chair;
- Ambassador Johan Løvald (who during the first session was also doubling as chair of the Burundi configuration) will continue in the Burundi role; and
- Ambassador Frank Majoor of The Netherlands will continue as chair of the Sierra Leone configuration.

Country Focus

The country-specific meetings for Burundi and Sierra Leone drew attention to some of the peacebuilding challenges on the ground. In addition they have covered thematic issues, including rule of law, security sector reform, transitional justice, and youth unemployment. They devoted several meetings to developing the respective integrated peacebuilding strategies for the two countries. Many of the country-specific meetings were open to relevant stakeholders including NGOs in New York and via video-links with Bujumbura and Freetown.

Important decisions were also taken regarding participation in the two country-specific committees. It was agreed that in addition to the 31 organisational committee members, the World Bank, the IMF, the European Commission, the African Union, the African Development Bank, the Economic Commission for Africa and the Organisation of the Islamic Conference should participate.

In addition, a further seven UN member states sat on the Burundi committee (South Africa, Uganda, Rwanda, DRC, Kenya, Nepal and Canada) plus the Economic Community of Central African States, East African Economic Commission, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Burundi, and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region.

For Sierra Leone, an additional country participated, Ireland, as well as six other participants (ECOWAS, the Mano River Union, *Banque Centrale des Etats de l'Afrique*, the European Union, the Executive Representative of the Secretary-General for Sierra Leone and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for West Africa).

Activities of the Burundi Configuration

The Burundi government, the UN, donors and civil society were asked by the PBC to collectively identify the most critical areas that could threaten the consolidation of peace, and the resulting priority tasks identified were:

1. *Promoting Good Governance*: a history of poor governance was recognised by the government as one of the primary root causes of the conflict;
2. *Strengthening the Rule of Law*: strengthening the justice system, combating impunity, ensuring the independence of the judiciary, modernising correction services, creating an independent national human rights commission and ombudsman's office, revising national legislation, and establishing a truth and reconciliation commission and a special court;
3. *Strengthening the Security Sector*: ensuring that it is appropriately sized and effectively managed, under civilian control, and respectful of human rights; and
4. *Ensuring Community Recovery*: improving the livelihoods of Burundians, with particular attention to youth unemployment, street children, land issues, inequitable access to resources, and reintegration of returning refugees, displaced persons and ex-combatants.

The PBC approached these issues, first by convening thematic meetings, tackling each issue at a time, and inviting UN and non-UN specialists to present their

views to the group, and second, by visiting Burundi so members could see for themselves the situation on the ground. The third activity was to facilitate the government and the UN Country Team to develop the peacebuilding strategies (see following section).

Activities of the Sierra Leone Configuration

From the first country-specific meeting on 12 October 2006, it was clear that Sierra Leone was further down the transition from the conflict path than Burundi. It already had a number of strategic frameworks and planning guides including the government's Vision 2025 and the Peace Consolidation Strategy, the Poverty Reduction Strategy, the report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and the Improved Governance and Accountability Pact. However, they had only been partly implemented, largely due to the government's limited capacity, and, secondly, the root causes of the conflict were not being addressed. With these in mind, the government, in consultation with key stakeholders, identified four crucial peacebuilding areas for attention:

1. *Addressing Youth Unemployment and Disempowerment*: this was said to be one of the most serious threats to stability and was linked to agriculture, improved infrastructure (including electricity and water), good governance and anti-corruption measures, support for entrepreneurs and self-employed people, and natural resources management;
2. *Justice and Security Sector Reform*: the lack of access to formal justice for the majority of the population, the severe lack of capacity of the judiciary, and a backlog in court cases were seen as serious concerns for peace and stability; security issues included the sustainability, size, and living/working conditions of the armed forces, as well as community-police relations;
3. *Democracy Consolidation and Good Governance*: challenges included strengthening the parliament, the judiciary, the National Electoral

Commission and the Anti-Corruption Commission; and

4. *Capacity-Building*: especially in the civil service, capacity-building was identified as a tool rather than a thematic area.

These are the four areas that the Sierra Leone configuration focused on in its thematic meetings, in its visit to Freetown and in the draft IPBS or "compact" that was produced at the end of the configuration's first year.

Field Visits

The PBC's Organisational Committee decided on 21 February to make field visits to Burundi and Sierra Leone, to gain first-hand information and assess for themselves the priorities, gaps and challenges on the ground. Assistant Secretary-General Carolyn McAskie visited both countries in March in advance of the PBC missions. In Sierra Leone this visit flagged the need to clarify, and differentiate, the roles of the PBC and the PBF, and the need for improved relations between the government and donors. During her visit to Burundi, (where she had been the Special Representative of the Secretary-General during 2004-5) community recovery was brought to the forefront, as was the need to ensure broad civil society consultation.

PBC members returned from Bujumbura and Freetown invigorated, better informed, and more committed. The Burundi mission (9-15 April) highlighted three areas that required attention: implementation of the 2006 ceasefire agreement with Palipehutu-FNL, the establishment of transitional justice mechanisms including national human rights and truth and reconciliation commissions, and consolidating inclusive and participatory governance. The mission's report (PBC/1/BDI/2) noted: "The country is facing a famine due to climatic changes, and a great proportion of the population remains extremely insecure because of poverty, the absence of employment opportunities and a lack of access to justice."

The Sierra Leone mission (19-25 March) in its report PBC/1/SLE/2 agreed that the IPBS should not replace or supersede existing frameworks, especially the Poverty Reduction Paper and the Peace Consolidation Strategy. Unofficially, several members commented on how the visit changed their perception of civil society and the value of including NGOs in the consultative process.

Integrated Strategies

The founding resolutions mandated the PBC "to support the development of integrated strategies". A concept note prepared by the PBSO (dated 23 January 2007) was accepted by the Organisational Committee as the framework for the development of an integrated peacebuilding strategy. In principle, an IPBS is an agreement, or compact, between the PBC and the government of the country under consideration. As the concept note said, an IPBS would:

"commit the country to follow an agreed upon course of action which will be monitored by the PBC...also would require PBC members to provide continuing political and financial support."

It stressed that an IPBS should cover all aspects that are critical to sustain a country's transition from conflict to sustainable peace, including security and public order, justice and reconciliation, governance and participation, and socio-economic recovery and reconstruction. The purpose of an IPBS, according to the PBC's annual report, is "to ensure coherent, prioritised approaches that involve international donors and agencies."

The PBSO and the UN Country Teams in both Burundi and Sierra Leone began preparing an IPBS, in consultation with each government and relevant stakeholders including international donors and civil society.

In the Burundi context preparation of the "strategic framework" put considerable strain on the UN Country Team, and also on the government, which was already

suffering a shortage of experienced civil servants. At the Burundi configuration's meeting in New York on 20 June, the Executive Representative of the Secretary-General Youssef Mahmoud made a plea, via video-link, for the PBC to accept the framework as it was, and not burden the government at this stage with requests to further develop it into a full IPBS. In response, the PBC decided to defer work on monitoring mechanisms for a later time.

A draft of the Sierra Leone IPBS was prepared in Freetown and forwarded to the country committee in June. As indicated above, however, finalising it was postponed until the new government is established in Freetown.

Lessons Learned Group

In December 2006, the Organisational Committee established a Working Group on Lessons Learned as a means of gathering best practices and lessons on peacebuilding issues that were critical and timely for the Burundi and Sierra Leone discussions. The Group sought advice from countries that had emerged from conflict as well as outside specialists. It also hosted three thematic meetings.

1. "Post-conflict elections risk reduction and confidence-building" on 20 February touched on some of the characteristics of so-called "second elections" with a particular focus on Sierra Leone's pending election (originally scheduled for 28 July, then postponed to 11 August). Guest speakers and a panel in Freetown discussed refugees, the media, big business, unemployed youth, former combatants, the diaspora, and events in neighbouring countries.
2. "Post-conflict frameworks, or compacts, of agreement for cooperation" on 17 April was organised in cooperation with the International Peace Academy and the Center for International Coop-

eration. It focused on relevant experiences from other countries including Afghanistan, Liberia and Iraq. They discussed how compacts can be potentially useful instruments for supporting peacebuilding and provide a framework for engagement and joint commitment between the government and international community. The meeting highlighted the importance of national ownership, a consultative process with all relevant stakeholders, effective prioritisation and sequencing, an effective mechanism for monitoring and evolution, and a limited number of measurable qualitative and quantitative benchmarks.

3. "Regional approaches to peacebuilding" on 8 June looked at the experiences of four sub-regional initiatives: the Great Lakes Region, West Africa, the Contadora-Esquipulas peace process in Central Africa, and the International Conference on Refugees in Central America. Guest speakers included a former minister of foreign affairs from El Salvador, via video-conference facilities. Participants noted that programming and funding is usually focused on individual countries and rarely takes a regional perspective, and the PBC could add value by urging donors to consider a regional approach to issues such as refugee flows, small arms, youth gangs, natural resource management, and also regional economic integration and trade, which can further enhance peacebuilding.

High-Level Presentations

The PBSO has been arranging external specialists to address many of the PBC meetings, including a number of high-level presentations with a specific focus on peacebuilding. They included presentations on human rights generally and in the Great Lakes Region specifically, as well as the rights of refugees

and internally displaced, and children in and after armed conflict:

- 2 May: joint presentation to the PBC by the High Commissioner for Refugees António Guterres and the Representative of the Secretary General on the Human Rights of the Internally Displaced Persons Walter Kälin;
- 29 May: presentation by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict Radhika Coomaraswamy;
- 30 May: presentation by the High Commissioner for Human Rights Louise Arbour, following her Great Lakes visit; and
- 13 June: Ambassador Liberata Mula Mula, Executive Secretary of the Great Lakes Conference Secretariat, briefed the Burundi country-specific meeting.

Thematic Briefings

The Burundi, Sierra Leone and lessons learned meetings covered a range of thematic issues, all with presentations or input from outside specialists, as well as from within the UN system. Although these meetings were hastily convened and may have initially appeared unstructured by the end of June, collectively, the PBC had touched on some of the critical issues in peacebuilding. While future thematic meetings need to cover additional subjects, and in more depth, the PBC should be commended for starting a process of spotlighting these issues.

Participation by Institutional Donors

For most of the first 12 months, PBC members were in dispute over the "participation" of the World Bank, the IMF and other institutional donors at PBC meetings. The founding resolutions allow for "representatives from the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and other institutional donors [to] be invited to participate in all meetings of the Commission" (para 9), but do not indicate whether "participate" means

these representatives could only attend, or also speak at meetings, or were part of the consensus required for decisions. The World Bank, IMF, the European Community and the Organisation of Islamic Conference lobbied to be recognised as full participants. In October, the Organisational Committee established an internal ad hoc Working Group on Pending Issues, predominantly to resolve the question of the level of participation by institutional donors and what role civil society organisations should have. On 16 May, the Organisational Committee announced its decision to issue a standing invitation to these four organisations to “participate” in all meetings of the Commission, except where the Chair deems certain meetings are for member states only (PBC/1/OC/SR.7).

Civil Society

The founding resolutions recognise the importance of civil society in peacebuilding and specifically mention regional and local actors (para 19), and NGOs including women’s organisations, and the private sector (para 21). They speak of encouraging “the Commission to consult with civil society...engaged in peacebuilding activities, as appropriate”. However, not all PBC members were keen on civil society participating in all of the Commission’s deliberations. It took 12 months before agreement could be reached on the operational meaning of “consult...as appropriate”. Finally, on 6 June the Organisational Committee adopted provisional guidelines prepared by the ad hoc group. These guidelines were circulated as document PBC/1/OC/12**.

Despite the preamble to the guidelines that the “Commission recognizes the important contribution of civil society...” the guidelines significantly curtail the participation of civil society. Before any NGO representatives can be invited to “make oral statements and provide information” the chair will circulate to all PBC members, one week prior, information on the organisation’s constitution, source of funding, governing body, and current programmes and activities, and

a biography of the representative being proposed. Many consider that this requirement may, in practice, be unworkable and point out that during the PBC’s first year very few documents were circulated more than 24 hours before a meeting, and some only minutes before. Further, according to the provisional guidelines, the invited organisation “shall have a democratic and transparent decision-making process, and operate in accordance with the laws regulating the activities of civil society in the country of origin.” The guidelines are subject to review after six months.

Outcomes and Analysis

As the PBC is an advisory body, traditional UN outputs such as reports and resolutions were not expected to be numerous. Indeed, many of the outcomes are behind the scenes, and immeasurable, for example, how much extra funding was committed at the Burundi donors’ roundtable because of the PBC’s focus on Burundi. Some outcomes—especially those that were aimed at avoiding or preventing detrimental developments tend to go unnoticed—particularly if they are successful. Some outcomes were intangible, such as changed attitudes.

In addition to the chairs’ summaries of meetings and field missions, and the internal decisions on participation of institutional organisations and civil society, four key documents have come out of the PBC in its first year, as mentioned earlier:

1. concept note on integrated peacebuilding strategies (IPBS);
2. Burundi IPBS/strategic framework;
3. Sierra Leone draft IPBS/compact; and
4. PBC’s annual report.

Other outcomes included the following:

PBF Funds

The most tangible short-term outcome for the two countries involved was the allocation of \$35 million for each from

the UN’s Peacebuilding Fund. The Commission recommended \$25 million each for Burundi and Sierra Leone, but the Secretary-General allocated \$35 million each, based on a budget and plan of action submitted by the respective governments and vetted by an independent steering committee in each of the two countries.

Roundtable Funds

The \$655.6 million in funds pledged from international donors to Burundi in May would probably have been much lower if it had not been for the Commission, in particular the influence of Norway’s Ambassador to the UN, Johan Løvald, who chairs the Commission’s Burundi committee. (Norway’s commitment to long-term engagement with Burundi is reflected in its opening of an embassy in Bujumbura in May.)

Integrated Process

A third outcome, probably more significant than the dollars because it will have longer-term benefits for these two countries and others, is the integrated approach to peacebuilding strategy which has been developed with Burundi and Sierra Leone. What is important here is the process as much as the outcome documents. As in many developing countries, Burundi and Sierra Leone each had a Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper prepared by the World Bank and IMF, but “owned” by the governments. What the PBS has achieved with the IPBS process is different in three aspects:

- it focuses only on areas that build peace, (i.e. areas that if not dealt with may threaten peace);
- it is holistic in that it integrates political, social, economic, cultural, ethnic and gender issues; and
- it was prepared in a more collaborative and consultative way than the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers.

By contrast Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers tend to focus on macroeconomic and financial issues.

A significant outcome of the IPBS approach was improved relations

between the government and stakeholders, especially in Burundi. The process could no doubt be much improved in the future, particularly allowing more time for local stakeholders. Also more time might allow the PBC to avoid the need for the initial draft to be prepared by the UN alone. It is noteworthy that some international NGOs with significant in-country experience felt they were not sufficiently consulted. However, although far from perfect, the process in both countries has set a model that can be enhanced for the next countries to come on the Commission's agenda.

Governance

The PBC seems also to have quietly been of important assistance in respect of governance issues. On Burundi, it may have helped to avert potentially damaging actions against political figures and journalists following the alleged coup plot in early August 2006, including the arrest of former President Domitien Ndayizeye on 21 August. The government was reminded by several sources, including the Secretary-General that the world was watching. The PBC's focus on Sierra Leone seems to have underlined to all parties the importance of agreeing to accept the outcome of the 11 August 2007 election. It may therefore have helped those involved in preparing for the election, in both the government and UN, to be more alert to potential disruptions before and after the election.

Evolving Attitudes

Of the many intangible outcomes, foremost is the broader understanding and appreciation by some Commission members of the importance of peacebuilding generally and the hard work which it takes on the ground to make it a reality. Secondly, regarding civil society, many members initially saw peacebuilding very much in security and economic terms, without including social, political,

cultural and environmental issues. Furthermore, some initially underestimated the role of regional organisations and of civil society in actual post-conflict rebuilding on the ground. Finally, many who had expected the PBC to primarily provide financial assistance to countries on its agenda came to appreciate its wider potential.

Complementary Effect

In addition to the significant PBC-generated activity, the Commission's mere existence has spurred other UN organs to look more closely at conflict prevention, peacebuilding and post-conflict development. First, the Council held an open debate on post-conflict peacebuilding (31 January); then the General Assembly held a plenary session on peacebuilding (6 February); the Department of Economic and Social Affairs is redefining its policy on conflict prevention, peacebuilding and post-conflict work; and relevant Secretariat officials were consulted within the UN system for six months on the UN's operational definition of peacebuilding before releasing its decision (22 May). Outside the UN, an NGO consortium established "pbc-info", a network to track PBC activities and share documents. Harvard University's Program on Humanitarian Policy and Conflict Research launched a pilot peacebuilding website on 18 July as a direct result of the establishment of the PBC.

Looking Ahead

When the resolutions establishing the Peacebuilding Commission were passed there were no precedents and little guidance for establishing this new kind of body. So, virtually everything before it was a challenge. At the time, analysts posed four basic questions:

1. how to select a country for the PBC to consider;

2. what should the PBC do when a country is on its agenda;
3. how should a peacebuilding strategy be developed and its impacts measured; and
4. when should a country be removed or released from the Commission's agenda.

A year later some progress has been made on two of these issues.

The PBC's annual report identified seven challenges facing the Commission in the coming year:

1. to maximize its impact on the ground to make the UN peacebuilding architecture an effective instrument of international collaboration;
2. to ensure that current peacebuilding processes remain on track;
3. to ensure that challenges and gaps are addressed in a timely and coherent manner;
4. to further develop the Commission's working methods;
5. to develop monitoring mechanisms for the IPBS;
6. to enhance operational relationships with other intergovernmental bodies and regional and subregional organisations; and
7. to improve interaction with the field.

In the broadest sense, all these relate to the PBC developing its working methods, be it interaction on the ground, working with other organisations, identifying gaps, or developing monitoring mechanisms. Several specific areas will require the PBC's attention in the coming months if the Commission is to maintain its momentum and the credibility it has gained so far. These are:

- working through the delicate issues around process and substance for new countries to come onto the agenda;
- developing benchmarks and monitoring mechanisms;
- developing its relationship with key

bodies, including the Security Council, the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council;

- establishing strategic and coherent relations between the three pillars of the UN Peacebuilding architecture, and between them and the UN system, regional organisations, international financial institutions and the donor community at large; and
- finding flexible ways to accommodate reasonable participation of civil society.

The Agenda-Country Selection

The wording of the founding resolutions complicates the task of choosing which countries, if any, might come onto the agenda in the next twelve months. The resolutions are not easy to interpret. It seems clear that the issue is likely to involve both procedure as well as substance. The “exceptional cases” provision could prove problematic if members wish to raise problems—since it is hard to envisage the intergovernmental bodies easily making a finding that countries are “on the verge of relapsing into conflict”. Also problematic is the language which seems to limit who can make a decision to seek advice from the PBC. This is particularly the case where the proposed new country is still on the Security Council agenda. In practical terms it may be that in such circumstances only the Secretary-General and the Security Council can trigger the necessary formal request. What seems clear is that in practical terms the PBC itself will not be in control of the matter. The procedure therefore has potential for considerable political difficulty.

Also of interest will be the type of referrals that will be made to the Commission for consideration, that is whether they will take the form of a general one or one highlighting specific areas of focus, as well as the expected role of the Security Council in that regard.

As to the substance, in April-June last year, in the lead up to the establishment of the Commission, several countries in addition to the two selected were considered as possible candidates. These

included Timor-Leste, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti and Afghanistan.

It is now generally accepted, in the light of recent events that the UN’s first peace-keeping mission in Timor-Leste was wound down prematurely in 2005. One of the consequences of the renewed violence and political uncertainty is that it may be thought it is now too soon to shift Timor-Leste onto the PBC agenda. On the other hand, with Japan, a major donor in Timor-Leste, now in the chair of the Commission it is possible that this option will gain traction.

Guinea-Bissau has formally requested to be considered by the PBC, and is therefore a possible candidate. Also being discussed in the corridors are Guinea, Nepal, Liberia and Haiti.

Haiti seems unlikely this year, because of the size and complexity of its problems, at least while the Commission is still “learning by doing”.

Both Guinea and Nepal pose interesting issues. When Guinea’s Prime Minister Lansana Kouyate visited the UN in June, in private discussions with PBC members he asked if his country could come onto the Commission’s agenda, although a formal request has not been received yet. However, Guinea is considered by some observers to be more of a case of conflict prevention rather than post conflict peacebuilding. And the difficulty in that regard is that the conflict prevention category was ruled out of the PBC mandate during the intense negotiations on the founding resolutions. Moreover there was a sense in 2006 that it was important to diversify the countries on the agenda beyond Africa.

With respect to Nepal, there were suggestions earlier in 2007 that Nepal was not keen to come under the Commission’s focus, mainly because the added value was not obvious. However, that position may change after the elections, scheduled for November.

Other possible options include Liberia which, in light of the progress made during the past twelve months, may seem

ready for transition to the PBC. The interest in regional diversification could also be a factor here, but it seems that for a number of players this is not seen as an overriding criterion, especially if in other respects the country in question is ready and on balance offers better prospects for successful partnership with the PBC.

Benchmarks, Monitoring and End-Points

High on the agenda in the second session will be developing benchmarks and monitoring mechanisms (yet to be added to the Burundi “strategic framework”) and finalising Sierra Leone’s “compact”. Discussions have already begun on developing Burundi’s Monitoring and Tracking Mechanism. Provisions in these two documents are expected to be designed to assess risks that might threaten the peace process and to review mutual commitments between the PBC and the two governments.

These commitments are expected to generate corresponding commitments from the international community, in particular from PBC members and other donors. Some PBC members and outside observers would like to see international financial institutions and other donors who are members of the country-specific committees commit to (a) dispersing their funds more quickly than has been the tradition, and to (b) making sustained long-term contributions, perhaps three to five years, rather than working on annual budgets. These aspects are also expected to be an ongoing focus for the PBC.

Another crucial issue that the PBC has not yet addressed is deciding when a country should graduate from its agenda. The founding resolutions recommend that:

“the Commission terminate its consideration of a country-specific situation when foundations for sustainable peace and development are established or upon the request by national authorities of the country under consideration” (para 22).

The question then arises is what indicators should determine that the foundations for sustainable peace and development have been established?

The often quoted figure is that 50 per cent (now thought to be closer to 30 per cent) of post-conflict countries relapse into conflict within five years. In the light of these statistics and the obvious vulnerability of the initial period it seems possible that the PBC will want, in most cases, to maintain a country under its consideration for up to eight or possibly ten years.

These two issues of benchmarks and end-points are related, although this has not been recognised formally by the PBC. Even if it may be ten years before a country graduates from the PBC's agenda, some members are of the view that it is important to develop indicators for measuring progress much earlier in the process of transition from conflict to sustainable development. This leads to the conclusion that such indicators should be built into a peacebuilding strategy at the beginning of a country's term, but allowing for some flexibility and adaptation during a country's term.

PBC Role as Subsidiary UN Body

An important issue will be the way the Commission liaises with—and briefs and advises—the Council, the General Assembly and ECOSOC. Calls for better working relations were heard loudly during the 31 January Council open debate on post-conflict peacebuilding and the 6 February General Assembly plenary. Despite those calls, the PBC is still to focus on what meaningful working mechanisms with these bodies would mean in practice.

A priority for the second session will also be for the PBC to clarify its relations with other UN entities, institutional donors and regional organisations. As noted in

the PBC's annual report, the Commission also needs to strengthen its capacities "to provide recommendations and information in order to improve the coordination of all relevant actors within and outside the United Nations."

As noted in our March 2007 *Forecast*, better synergy between the Council and the PBC could be achieved, or at least started, through:

- requesting PBC input at the time of a Council decision on mandate renewal, negotiations on the mandate of a new peacekeeping operation, amending an existing UN mission strategy to enhance collaboration between UN operations and PBC activities, and contributing to the integrated mission planning process;
- receiving early warning on potential setbacks and risk factors in countries on the Council's agenda;
- establishing regular and timely interaction with the PBC, especially on Burundi and Sierra Leone issues, including briefings from PBC chairpersons when the Council considers those situations;
- regular meetings between the presidents of the General Assembly, the Council and ECOSOC; and
- issuing occasional Council statements when significant PBC reports have been received, to encourage synergy and interaction with PBC country-specific strategies.

Civil Society

Although the Commission as a whole now has a better appreciation of the ways in which civil society groups can play a positive role, the relationship with, and acceptance of NGOs in peacebuilding is still tentative. The Commission works by consensus and the reluctance of some members regarding civil society restrained the Commission from fully engaging with NGOs. The General

Assembly plenary session on 6 February on peacebuilding heard many speakers stress the importance of civil society in peacebuilding. The 11 October 2006 briefing to the PBC by international, Burundian and Sierra Leonean NGO representatives, and the PBC's field missions to Burundi and Sierra Leone (where members interacted with NGO representatives on the ground) proved to be very important examples of ways in which NGOs can add value to the PBC's work. Yet it took the PBC five months to agree on modalities for allowing civil society representatives to attend Commission meetings. The modalities surprised many in their restrictiveness. An indicator for the future will be whether, in terms of practical implementation, a flexible and relaxed application of the 6 June provisional guidelines becomes possible.

Conclusion

The PBC has made considerable contributions in its first year, not only in terms of its own systems and processes but also in marshalling international resources and focusing attention on two countries that needed assistance in their transition from peacekeeping to development. These contributions have benefited not only Burundi and Sierra Leone directly, but also indirectly the broader peacebuilding community. UN agencies working on peacebuilding will benefit from a more coherent system-wide approach, through the actions of the Support Office directly, and the PBC. Non-UN actors, who have been working in the peacebuilding arena for more than a decade, are seeing the beginnings of a more focused and articulated approach to peacebuilding. This will be a long process, but an important and valuable beginning has been made.

UN Documents

Selected Security Council Resolutions

- S/RES/1646 (20 December 2005) decided that the five permanent members and two elected members of the Council will have seats on the PBC's Organisational Committee.
- S/RES/1645-A/RES/60/180 (20 December 2005) created the PBC and the Peacebuilding Fund.

Security Council Resolutions with a Reference to the PBC

- S/RES/1734 (22 December 2006) extended the mandate of the United Nations Integrated Office in Sierra Leone and encouraged the government of Sierra Leone to continue its close engagement with the PBC.
- S/RES/1719 (25 October 2006) requested the Secretary-General to establish a UN Integrated Office in Burundi, which was requested to conduct its activities taking the role of the Peacebuilding Commission into account.
- S/RES/1653 (27 January 2006) addressed conflict prevention and peaceful resolution of disputes in the Great Lakes region, welcomed the establishment of the PBC and underlined its potential importance for the Council's work in the region.

Other Security Council Documents Related to the PBC

- PBC/1/OC/2 (21 June 2006) the president of the Council requested the PBC, via a letter to the Secretary-General, to advise on the situation in Burundi and Sierra Leone
- S/PV.5627 and resumption 1 (31 January 2007) was the Security Council open debate on peacebuilding including a statement by Carolyn McAskie, Assistant Secretary-General for Peacebuilding Support.
- S/2007/16 (12 January 2007) communicated the Council's election of Panama and South Africa to the PBC's Organisational Committee.

Security Council Presidential Statements with a Reference to the PBC

- S/PRST/2007/3 (21 February 2007) requested the PBC to include consideration of security sector reform programmes in integrated peacebuilding strategies.
- S/PRST/2007/1 (8 January 2007) on the Council debate on Threats to International Peace and Security underlined the importance of close interaction between the Council and the PBC.
- S/PRST/2006/42 (8 November 2006) on the Council debate on Women, Peace and Security welcomed the role the PBC can play in mainstreaming gender perspectives into the peace consolidation process.
- S/PRST/2006/39 (20 September 2006) on the Council debate on Cooperation between the United Nation and Regional Organisations in Maintaining International Peace and Security welcomed the intent of regional organisations to be closely associated with the work of the PBC and expressed the Council's commitment to facilitate their participation in the PBC's country-specific activities.
- S/PRST/2006/38 (9 August 2006) on Peace Consolidation in West Africa underscored the importance and role of the PBC in assisting countries emerging from conflict to achieve sustainable peace and security.
- S/PRST/2006/28 (22 June 2006) on the Council debate on Strengthening International Law: Rule of Law and Maintenance of International Peace and Security emphasised the role of the PBC with respect to the promotion of justice and the rule of law.

Selected PBC Documents

- S/2007/458-A/62/137 (25 July 2007) was the PBC's annual report.
- Burundi Integrated Peacebuilding Strategy, or strategic framework
- Report of the mission to Burundi in

April 2007 (21 May 2007)

- PBC Sierra Leone mission report (14 May 2007)
- Launch of the PBC by Secretary-General Kofi Annan (23 June 2006)
- Chairman's summary of the second country-specific meeting on Sierra Leone (13 December 2006).
- Chairman's summary of the second country-specific meeting on Burundi (12 December 2006).
- PBC/2/BUR/SR.1 (10 November 2006) were the summary records of the first country-specific meeting on Burundi.
- Chairman's summary of the first country-specific meeting on Burundi (13 October 2006).
- Chairman's summary of the first country-specific meeting on Sierra Leone (12 October 2006).
- PBC/2/BUR/CRP2 (10 October 2006) PBC Burundi meeting conference room paper.
- PBC/2/SIL/CRP/1 (10 October 2006) PBC Sierra Leone meeting conference room paper.

Selected General Assembly Resolutions

- A/RES/60/287 (21 September 2006) was the resolution on the PBF.
- A/60/891 (18 July 2006) was the Secretary-General's Progress Report on the Prevention of Armed Conflict.
- A/RES/60/261 (8 May 2006) decided on the General Assembly Organisational Committee seats.
- A/RES/60/180 (20 December 2005) established the PBC, concurrent with Council resolution 1645.
- A/RES/60/1 (16 September 2005) was the 2005 World Summit Outcome.

Other

- NGO consortium's report on the PBC's first year
- Chair of the PBC's Burundi committee, Ambassador Johan Løvald's address to the Council on 21 May 2007.
- E/2006/L.2/Rev.2 (12 April 2006)

was the draft resolution adopted with the distribution of ECOSOC seats on the PBC's Organisational Committee.

Selected Secretary-General's Reports

- S/2006/922 (28 November 2006) was a report on Sierra Leone.
- S/2006/838 (23 October 2006) was a report on Burundi.

Webcasts Relevant to the PBC

Can be found at <http://www.un.org/webcast/ga.html>
86th Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly: Integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields [47]: Follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit [113]; United Nations reform: measures and proposals [149]: progress achieved in the work of the Peacebuilding Commission (6 February 2007)

Historical Documents related to Peacebuilding and the PBC

- A/59/2005 (21 March 2005) was the report of the Secretary-General, *In Larger Freedom*.
- A/59/565 (2 December 2004) was the report of the High Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change (*A More Secure World: Our Shared Responsibility*).
- E/2004/86 (25 June 2004) was an assessment of the Ad Hoc Advisory Groups of the ECOSOC on African Countries Emerging from Conflict.
- A/55/305-S/2000/809 (21 August 2000) was the report of the Panel on UN Peace Operations (Brahimi Report).
- A/48/935 (6 May 1994) was the report of the Secretary-General, *Agenda for Development*.
- A/47/277-S/24111 (17 June 1992) was the report of the Secretary-General, *An Agenda for Peace, Preventive Diplomacy, Peacemaking and Peacekeeping*.

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