



Concept Note

United Nations Security Council Arria-Formula Meeting

“Mind the gap: enhancing the dialogue and cooperation between the Security Council and the Peacebuilding Commission”

December 20th 2023 – 3pm, CR-11

Overview:

Since the negotiations that led to the establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), its relationship with the Security Council has been marked by gaps that need to be addressed and overcome.

The 31 members of the PBC are chosen among member states from the General Assembly (7), Security Council (7), ECOSOC (7), major troop contributors (5) and major financial contributors to the UN (5).

Since seven members of the Security Council, including permanent members, are also represented in the PBC, it would be expected that the relationship between the two bodies would be more constant and well structured. Not only some of their respective areas of competence are meant to be complementary, but there is also an overlap in their respective competences, especially concerning the mandates of peacekeeping operations, which can include peacebuilding tasks. This complementarity should be reinforced and, at the same time, help guiding the implementation of Council’s decisions.

Nevertheless, in practice, the dialogue and cooperation between the UNSC and the PBC falls short from exploring its full potential and occurs in most cases in a casuistic manner.

The 2015 report of the of Advisory Group of Experts on the Review of the Peacebuilding Architecture (A/69/968 – S/2015/490) states that “(...) for many states Members of the United Nations and United Nations entities alike, peacebuilding is left as an afterthought: underprioritized, underresourced and undertaken only after the guns fall silent”. A more nimble and synergized relationship between the UNSC and the PBC is fundamental to bridge the gap between peacekeeping and peacebuilding and setting the basis for a more stable and solid transition to peace in post conflict situations.

Considering that new perspectives on peacekeeping and peacebuilding do not perceive those two dimensions of conflict resolution as sequential steps¹, the avenues of cooperation between the UNSC and the PBC should be reinforced. Moreover, there is a growing need, as highlighted in the Secretary General’s New Agenda for Peace, to enhance conflict prevention efforts, which must be considered as part of peacebuilding and peacekeeping actions.

This approach can only be fully successful with a deepened commitment by the UNSC to more regularly request and draw upon the advice from the PBC on the peacebuilding dimensions of its mandates. In this vein, the Commission should be adequately supported by the Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO) and work in coordination with relevant UN entities, international financial institutions (IFI’s), regional organizations and civil society.

In spite of the fact that the interaction between the PBC and the UNSC is not structured, there has been a considerable increase in participation of the Chairs of the PBC in UNSC meetings in recent years. In 2022 and 2023,

¹ A detailed account of this perspective can be found in section II of document A/69/968 –S/2015/490

the Chairs of the PBC have briefed the Council respectively in 4 and 5 occasions. In 2023, it reached the mark of the 5 participations last recorded in 2018 (the highest number in participation was in 2015 with 7 meetings), and considering that the COVID pandemic years were exceptionally low for understandable circumstances. The participation of the Chairs of the PBC in UNSC meetings is definitely above average since this exercise started in 2013, but it is still inconsistent. It depends, by and large, either on the initiative of the informal coordinator of the relations between the PBC and the Council or of the Presidency to request that participation.

As for the presentation of written advice, the UNSC received 8 and 9 written advices, respectively in 2022 and 2023, which are the highest figures ever recorded since this exercise started.

Nevertheless, it can be argued that the quality of the cooperation and dialogue between the UNSC and the PBC is far from ideal and must be improved. Moreover, those states and topics that are in the agenda of the Council could benefit from a more predictable and institutionalized interaction between the two bodies. The PBC “has a unique convening roll and the potential to leverage information and funding and coordinate operational activities in support of the fulfillment of the Council’s peacebuilding objectives and transition of a country off the Council’s agenda.”² This is in line with Resolution 2282 (2016), particularly its paragraph 8.

As the peacekeeping model has been currently facing challenges, member states should be able to explore different modalities of UN support to foster stability and development in their countries. Furthermore, as the debate on conflict prevention evolves and gains more attention, especially

² United Nations Security Council Conflict Management Handbook – Anwar Gargash Diplomatic Academy (2023)

the need to address the root causes of conflicts, the PBC is well positioned to lead this discussion and bring this important and long-overdue approach to the Security Council.

Objectives

As the informal coordinator of the relations between the PBC and the Security Council in 2023, Brazil convenes this Arria-Formula Meeting in order to contribute to the debate on possible ways to enhance the relationship between the two bodies and to seek for new or rather more institutionalized forms of interaction to increase the synergies among them.

This debate is timely and appropriate notably in relation to two landmarks. The first is the launch, in July 2023, of Secretary-General's *A New Agenda for Peace*. In his Policy Briefing, the SG underscores the importance of enhancing “the role of the Peacebuilding Commission as a convener of thematic discussions on cross-pillar issues, with a focus on the interdependent and mutually reinforcing nature of peace and development.” More specifically, according to the SG, “the Security Council should more systematically seek advice of the Commission on the peacebuilding dimensions of the mandates of peace operations”³.

The second is the 2025 Peacebuilding Architecture Review and its preparatory process that starts in 2024. This will be an opportunity to discuss and, most of all, make proposals to improve the work of the PBC and, in particular, its relationship with the Security Council.

³ Our Common Agenda – Policy Briefing 9 - A New Agenda for Peace – page 22 – July 2023

Briefers

The Arria-Formula Meeting will be chaired by HE Ambassador Sérgio França Danese, Permanent Representative of Brazil and chair of the PBC configuration of Guine-Bissau, who will deliver opening remarks.

The invited briefers for the meeting will be:

- HE Ambassador Ivan Simonovic – Permanent Representative of Croatia and current Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission
- Mrs Elizabeth Spehar, United Nations Assistant Secretary General for Peacebuilding Support
- Mrs Karin Landgren, Executive Director of Security Council Report
- Professor Adriana Abdenur, Special Advisor, Presidency of Brazil (TBC)

Guiding Questions

- How can the relationship between the UNSC and the PBC become more regular, institutionalized and predictable?
- Besides issuing written advice and delivering briefings to the Council, what could be other forms of collaboration between the two organs to the benefit of better discharging their duties? Should the PBC also work as a technical advisory body to the UNSC?
- How the PBC could meaningfully and timely contribute to the adoption and review of peacekeeping mandates negotiated in the Security Council? Should there be an automatic dialogue between the two bodies before mandate renewals, in a similar format to TCC meetings?
- Which other forms of dialogue and cooperation could be established between the Council and the PBC?
- How can the work of the PBC informal coordinator be improved?
- How could the two bodies work together in conflict prevention?

- Which concrete proposals to improve the relationship between the two bodies could be presented at 2025 Peacebuilding Architecture Review?
- What is the role that can be played by the PBSO in improving the synergies between the UNSC and the PBC?
- How could the PBF be involved in an enhanced collaboration between the PBC and the Security Council?

Format

The Arria-Formula meeting will take place on 20 December 2023, Wednesday, 3.00pm, at the United Nations Headquarters in New York, at CR-11. Interpretation will be provided in the six UN official languages. The meeting will be webcasted via UN WebTV.

Member States, or Observers speaking on behalf of a group of States will be invited to deliver statements after the UN Security Council Members. Delegations should limit their statements to no more than 3 minutes. All Member States and Observers are invited to attend.

To be included in the list of speakers, please email ana.tolentino@itamaraty.gov.br, with the subject “Speakers list-Arria-Formula UNSC-PBC”, no later than 10am on 20 December 2023.