

Note for Effective Joint Endeavours for Peacebuilding

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Introduction

Over the past year, I have had the privilege of engaging in extensive dialogues with the board stakeholders in the peacebuilding community as the Chairperson of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC). On those occasions, I have kept two questions in my mind, namely, 1) what we can do to meet “peacebuilding gaps” to better pave the way for a country on its long-term track for durable peace, and 2) what is the role of the PBC to “add real value” in this process of institutionalization of peace in post-conflict countries? At our Retreat as well as at our regular Organizational Meeting, including the sessions of Strategy and Policy Discussion and informal briefings, each and every moment I had with fellow members of the PBC, with their diverse backgrounds and expertise, was stimulating. Furthermore, each and every single interaction I had with our partners in various outreach settings – from the political leaders of the countries to be placed on the PBC agenda to the top leadership of UN organs and international financial institutions, and from professional and civil society experts to the general public – was instructive and inspiring.

Through these rich dialogues, I have recognized a growing common understanding on the importance of fostering constructive interdependence among three undertakings, i.e., peacekeeping, peacebuilding and socio-economic development, in the overall peace continuum in post-conflict countries and the true need to bring together all the positive forces and resources to that end. Peacebuilding, in this sense, is our joint endeavour for the common good, not to benefit just the post-conflict countries alone but all of us in this globalized world.

How then can we strengthen and solidify peace in post-conflict situations in a more effective and structured way?

How can we make the best use of the PBC’s convening and advocacy role?

The following is an indicative set of self-check points in the form of nine critical questions emanating from the above dialogues for effective peacebuilding efforts. I hope this checklist will help sharpen our focus in formulating and implementing integrated peacebuilding strategy to achieve real change on the ground.

Nine Critical Questions

1. Aren’t we trying to apply the same template to many different cases?

A basic premise of post-conflict peacebuilding is that all peacebuilding efforts are unique, as the nature and context of individual conflicts are different or *sui generis*. On that basis, it is established that the “no-one-size-fits-all” principle should apply in support of a country-specific situation, and the strategic framework for a transition should be flexible and adaptable, taking full account of local conditions.

2. Are firm national ownership and the primary responsibility of national authorities for peacebuilding present, respected and supported?

Peacebuilding is squarely a nationally-owned process. You may recall that H.E. Mr. Chissano, Chairperson of the Africa Forum for Former African Heads of State and Government, particularly emphasized this point by saying that “peace must come from within and not from outside” and “the people are at the centre of peacebuilding”.

Although they face enormous capacity challenges, governments and people in post-conflict situations must demonstrate their firm national commitment to improve accountability and good governance. The role of the international community is to encourage and facilitate national efforts by aligning its support to local priorities in individual country-specific contexts. The international community can best facilitate local peacebuilding efforts when national authorities make a strong commitment to manage the economy and policy, and deliver on their commitment through an open, inclusive and consultative process.

3. For ensuring a smooth handover from peacekeeping activities, are the linkages between security, development and human rights and rule of law adequately prioritized and sequenced as vital building blocks for peacebuilding?

Peacebuilding is a multidimensional task that requires a comprehensive approach. In a fragile post-conflict situation, long-term security is certainly the key prerequisite to fulfill. However, it is also essential to recognize the linkages between security, development and human rights and rule of law, among other considerations, in the planning and implementation of total peacebuilding strategies. They cannot be adequately considered in isolation from another. They are mutually reinforcing. They should be integrated to provide a coherent approach. This is important in order to mitigate immediate threats and sustain political as well as socio-economic gains. Moreover, it is important to acknowledge that UN peacekeeping operations should not leave the ground prematurely, while some peacebuilding actions have to start from day one, as a part of an overall framework for peace.

It is of strategic added value for longer-term stability to ensure comprehensive and mutually reinforcing planning for security sector reform (SSR), disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) and the promotion of justice and reconciliation in time of transition.

4. For consolidating peace, are steady efforts for advancing a constructive political process for peace made effectively?

A durable peace depends on a viable political framework. Thus, peacekeeping and peacebuilding efforts should advance a politically inclusive process for peace, in which all parties are expected to play a constructive role in implementing peace agreements and rebuilding the country in a cooperative way. It is important to avoid a “winner-take-all” mentality. Mr.Chissano told of his experience listening most attentively to the complaints of the opposition groups.

5. For capable and accountable nation-building, is an appropriate mix of support provided to ensure effective checks and balances in government affairs and promote institutional capacity-building and reform?

National ownership is truly meaningful when it is backed by national capacity and accountability. It is therefore essential to promote institutional reforms which can help to

develop a broadly representative and accountable government that delivers security, basic services and economic opportunities for the people.

Increasing the transparency and accountability of both nationally- and externally-financed expenditures (including budgetary transparency through strong mechanisms to monitor revenues and expenditures) is also crucial, so that the population trusts that resources are well used and national institutions progressively take on more responsibility for delivery.

International support to local capacity-building is essential to complement the local efforts for institution-building. It is, however, important to take utmost care not to create parallel structures competing with the state.

6. For ensuring a seamless transition to recovery and economic development, is the speedy and timely provision of tangible dividends for peace made available to the people?

It is essential to take advantage of the “golden hour” in post-conflict situations for meeting the immediate needs of people such as basic services and infrastructure (e.g., electricity, water, schools and clinics) as well as providing economic opportunities (including youth employment and empowerment). It is also important to encourage and facilitate financially (through access to credit) and technically the active involvement of economic actors, including the private sector and small- and medium-sized enterprises.

We heard Mr. Chissano say that one definition of peace is “the normalization of the life of the people”. No peacebuilding can be successful without winning the hearts and souls of the people. In this vein, his successful experience of introducing a market economy alongside political reform for democratic governance in Mozambique was instructive.

Rapid response projects (including access to credit and other resources) are often quite useful to demonstrate visibly the benefits of peace and international partnership. It is critical to ensure that the mechanisms are in place to develop adequate economic and social infrastructure and promote local private sector growth together with conscious efforts to create a business-friendly environment, to ensure that gains in early recovery are continuing and sustainable to a later stage.

7. For orchestrating national and international efforts to promote a smooth transition on the ground, are coordinated, coherent and integrated approaches properly planned by bringing all the relevant actors together under effective leadership?

Mutually accountable partnership between international and national actors and coordination among UN and non-UN actors, including most certainly the International Financial Institutions at Headquarters and the field level, are key necessary conditions for sound planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of peacekeeping and peacebuilding activities. To better ensure the success of joint actions, a shared sense of priorities and urgencies are needed and must be forged. In addition, these actors should take into account the following:

- (a) Sharing appropriate prioritization and synchronization of security, political and development needs;
- (b) Concrete and transparent benchmarking for assessing peace consolidation efforts and for supporting transition and handover planning;
- (c) Incorporating regional and sub-regional cooperation;

- (d) Integration of a gender perspective in all activities;
- (e) Marshalling of resources in a more predictable way.

In this regard, the PBC's "integrated peacebuilding strategy" (IPBS) model, with a monitoring and tracking mechanism, can be a useful strategic framework tool for country-specific peacebuilding that encompasses national ownership, mutual accountability and sustained engagement among all relevant actors – political, security and development actors together with those engaged in humanitarian and human rights efforts – in an integrated manner. The establishment of benchmarks to measure progress and proposed timelines to guide efforts will be useful to monitor the commitment of each actor. IPBSs should not duplicate but enrich existing mechanisms, including national development and poverty reduction strategies. Where a country and its international partners decide to develop an IPBS, this should be used as the overall framework to guide national development, poverty reduction and budgetary priorities.

8. Is the political will to take a longer-term view in favour of sustainable engagement demonstrated?

Substantial and sustained financial and technical support in post-conflict situations is critical. Peacebuilding requires long-term and substantial investment from inside and outside the country. Act fast and stay engaged long enough. The PBF plays only a catalytic role to bridge to substantial commitment from external partners. The role of the PBC is to ensure sustained attention on the international agenda and to mobilize traditional as well as new and non-traditional resources and expertise to support local peacebuilding efforts in a longer-term perspective. On resources, it is incumbent upon us to creatively explore more predictable resources that can cover peacebuilding activities in the long run.

In his keynote address at the PBC Retreat, the Secretary-General reminded that we are here to address the needs of the poorest of the poor ("the bottom billion") both through development assistance and the efforts at building durable peace after conflict. He stressed the important role that the PBC can play as the only body that embodies all aspects of the security, development and human rights agenda of the United Nations. The Secretary-General also noted that peacebuilding needs to be predicated on three pillars: building **trust** to help avert wider conflict, mobilizing **support** through appropriate mechanisms and the **commitment** of all actors to a common and coherent approach. My foregoing observations and critical questions are in line with promoting these three pillars. I expect that the work of the PBC will effectively contribute to the goals that the Secretary-General has set to help the poorest of the poor in their peacebuilding efforts.

So my last question to ask you and ourselves is:

9. Is each of us ready to respond to the call of countries that require international attention and support?

I have no doubt that our answer to this question is emphatically "yes". We should realize the commitments of national leaders are interdependent with our own commitment to do everything possible to support their efforts. With this note on our future commitment, it is hoped that these observations can provide useful insights for better planning and implementation of our joint peacebuilding endeavours in post-conflict countries as well as stimulating the future work of the PBC.
