



Workshop on
Regional Aspects of Peacebuilding:
Identifying Gaps, Challenges and Opportunities

24-25 November 2014
Fairmont Nile City, Cairo

Concept Note

Background

By reaching 2015, the international community will mark the end of the second five year review cycle for the UN Peacebuilding Architecture. As mandated by the General Assembly and the Security Council resolutions (A/RES/65/7 and S/RES/1947) of 29 October 2010, a further comprehensive review will be initiated in 2015 to assess the progress made in the implementation of key recommendations from the 2010 review by the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) and other United Nations actors, and to identify the remaining challenges.

The 2015 review is expected to make concrete recommendations aimed at repositioning and reorienting the PBC to maximize its impact in support of national, regional and international efforts to ensure successful transition to durable peace in countries where it is engaged. Furthermore, the review provides an opportunity for the international community to take stock of the functions, orientations and institutional structures of the PBC in light of developments in both global and regional peacebuilding practices since 2005.

Over the past decade, the regional dimension of conflicts and peace has had ample illustrations, particularly in Africa. In operationalizing the decision to establish the PBC and its accompanying entities, the PBF and the PBSO, in 2005, the Security Council and the General Assembly recognized the important role of regional and sub-regional organizations in post conflict peacebuilding. In recent years, the role of these organizations, particularly in Africa, has gained prominence in maintaining and sustaining peace and security. Despite its engagement in six African countries, the PBC has had only scant focus on the regional aspects of peacebuilding, and is yet to find a practical framework to engage regional actors and organizations.



In this regard, it is crucial for Africa to engage actively in the 2015 review next year in order to reaffirm the necessity for the PBC to establish dynamic partnerships with regional and sub-regional actors and organizations and to ensure that regional efforts receive the required attention and support from UN and other global peacebuilding actors.

To this end, the Egyptian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in cooperation with the Cairo Center for Conflict Resolution & Peacekeeping in Africa (CCCPA) and the UN Peacebuilding Support office (PBSO), will organize a two-day workshop in Cairo on 24-25 November 2014. The workshop is intended to offer an African perspective of the regional aspects of peacebuilding, drawing upon the experience of the African Union, sub-regional organizations and individual African countries with a view of providing a substantive input to the upcoming review of the peacebuilding architecture.

Rationale

Since 2005, Africa has increasingly affirmed its readiness and capacity to engage in post-conflict peacebuilding activities. In 2006, the AU launched its “ Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development Policy (PCRD) aimed at laying the foundation for social justice and sustainable peace, based on principles similar to those underpinning the mandate of the UN peacebuilding architecture, including: i) prevention of relapse into violence, ii) national ownership; iii) complementarity of security and development strategies; and iv) coherence of regional and international engagement .

After almost a decade of establishing the UN ‘peacebuilding architecture’ and of launching the AU PCRD, there is a need to take stock of how the UN and African actors have approached and addressed peacebuilding-related challenges. The complexity of the challenges facing several African countries emerging from conflict confirms the need for joined up efforts at the national, regional and international levels. Most importantly, there is a need to develop shared analysis and understanding of the regional dynamics which affect the consolidation of peace and the existing potential for long term regional solutions that are internationally supported.

The Cairo workshop will therefore offer an opportunity to:

- a) Identify appropriate entry points for the PBC to address the regional dimension of post-conflict peacebuilding;
- b) Explore ways for the PBC to establish practical partnerships with regional and sub-regional actors drawing upon its unique membership structure; and



- c) Learn the perspectives of African regional and sub-regional organizations with respect to the challenges they face when formulating and implementing regional peacebuilding policies and practices.

Defining “Regional Aspects of Peacebuilding”

In recent years, the notion of “regional aspects of peacebuilding” in Africa has been associated with cross border risks, threats and dynamics that are primarily manifested in narcotic and illicit arms trafficking , movement of mercenaries and terrorists, influx of refugees, environmental challenges affecting several countries, and most recently the spread of epidemics such as Ebola. These will continue to be important aspects that affect security and stability in Africa and will require collective regional and international attention and action.

However, experience gained through the engagement of the PBC, the AU and African sub-regional organizations in post-conflict situations confirms that consolidating and sustaining peace require: **a) credible political processes;** and **b) viable national institutions.** These are two critical elements of a new regional peacebuilding paradigm that the workshop will focus upon.

a) Support to credible political processes:

In situations where the conflict has ended either with a negotiated settlement or with an agreement on a set of principles and objectives, a political process is launched with specific commitments and timelines. Regional actors and organizations in Africa, backed by UN and international support, have been in the forefront in mediating and overseeing the implementation of these settlements and agreements. Regional and international efforts have been most successful when national actors uphold their commitments to the political process. At the same time, experience confirmed that these efforts require close engagement and coherent messages that are best offered by regional actors with sustained support from the UN and the international community.

b) Support to building viable national Institutions:

A political process may be challenged and undermined by the overwhelming demand for real and positive changes in the lives of people and societies in countries emerging from conflict. As indicated in recent publications by the UN¹ and the World

¹ The most recent report of UN Secretary-General’s “Report on peacebuilding in the aftermath of conflict” A/69/399–S/2014/694



Bank², national institutions are critical for realizing these changes. Institutions determine that security and basic services are delivered effectively, that economic benefits are shared fairly, that social tensions are managed peacefully, and that access to justice is guaranteed. For post-conflict societies, rebuilding and strengthening national institutions is a long-term endeavour, which is costly and fraught with enormous challenges, including lack of sustained attention and support from the international community.

Through the recent launching of the African Solidarity Initiative (ASI) within the framework of the AU PCRD, Africa affirmed its commitment to draw upon the existing capacities and expertise within the Continent to rebuild critical institutions in countries emerging from conflict. At the same time, and as a number of post-conflict African countries develop compacts with their main international partners, the role of regional actors in support of the implementation of these compacts cannot be overemphasized.

Overview of Agenda & Key Questions for Discussion

Day 1

Regional Support to credible political processes

Interactive session 1

What are the lessons learned from Africa-led regional and sub-regional engagement in support of the implementation of post conflict political settlements/ agreements?

Featured example: Country on the PBC agenda - Burundi/CAR

Interactive session2

What are the factors that would enhance convergence of national, regional and international approaches and efforts aimed at addressing the political risks of relapse? What could be the role of UN mandated missions and leadership in the field? How would the PBC support continued UN engagement following the drawdown and exit of mandated missions?

² World Development Report 2011: Conflict, Security and Development:
<http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/EXTDEC/EXTRESEARCH/EXTWDRS/0,,contentMDK%3A23252415~pagePK%3A478093~piPK%3A477627~theSitePK%3A477624,00.html>



Interactive session 3

How can the PBC practically help foster a more coherent and sustained regional support of the political processes in African countries emerging from conflict? Which forms and modalities would best enable the PBC to do so?

Day 2

Support to building viable national institutions

Interactive session 4

What are the lessons learned from Africa-led regional engagement in support of national capacity and institution-building in post-conflict countries with focus on the African Solidarity Initiative. What are the opportunities and challenges facing Africa to Africa exchange of expertise and experience? What can be learned from similar experiences in other regions (South East Asia)?

Interactive session 5

How can regional actors be engaged in the design and implementation of compacts between African countries emerging from conflict and their international partners? What role can the PBC possibly play to ensure a broad-based regional ownership and support to these compacts?

Interactive session 6

What are the prospects for regional and international partnership (UNDP, African Development Bank; the World Bank) in support of institution-building in countries emerging from conflict and in support of greater inter-African cooperation in this area? What would be a realistic and useful role, if any, for the PBC in support of such partnership given its political role and broad-based membership?

Output:

The organizers will compile the final findings in the form of a working document that will be submitted to the PBC and to the advisory group of experts designated to conduct the case studies for the 2015 review of the UN 'peacebuilding architecture'. The content may also be used as an input to the section on the 2015 review process which is expected to be included in the PBC annual report on its eighth session.