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Report of the Peacebuilding Commission****Security Council
Sixty-ninth year****Letter dated 8 December 2014 from the Permanent Representative
of Egypt to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General**

Please find attached the outcome report of the Cairo workshop on regional aspects of peacebuilding: identifying gaps, challenges and opportunities (see annex).

The workshop was held on 24 and 25 November 2014 by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Egypt, in collaboration with the Peacebuilding Support Office and the Cairo Regional Centre for Training on Conflict Resolution and Peacekeeping in Africa, with the aim of providing an African perspective on the regional aspects of peacebuilding, drawing on the experiences of the African Union, subregional organizations and individual African countries, to the upcoming review in 2015 of the peacebuilding architecture.

I would highly appreciate if the text of the present letter and the outcome report would be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under item 29 of the agenda, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Amr **Aboulatta**
Permanent Representative



Annex to the letter dated 8 December 2014 from the Permanent Representative of Egypt to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

**Outcome report
Cairo workshop
Regional aspects of peacebuilding: identifying gaps, challenges and opportunities
24 and 25 November 2014**

Background

1. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Egypt, the Cairo Centre for Conflict Resolution and Peacekeeping in Africa and the United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office organized a workshop in Cairo on 24 and 25 November on the theme “Regional aspects of peacebuilding: identifying gaps, challenges and opportunities”. The workshop was designed to offer an African perspective on the regional aspects of peacebuilding, with a view to providing substantive input to the upcoming review in 2015 of the peacebuilding architecture of the United Nations.
2. The workshop drew upon the experience of the African Union, subregional organizations and individual African countries, the United Nations, the World Bank and the African Development Bank, as well as the views of leading African and international scholars and researchers. The workshop also benefited from the participation of the Chair of the United Nations Peacebuilding Commission, the Commission’s chairs of the configurations for Burundi and the Central African Republic, senior representatives from African countries on the Commission’s agenda, the Government of Japan and the United Nations Development Programme.

General observations

3. Participants welcomed the timely organization of the Cairo workshop, taking into consideration a number of parallel, yet mutually reinforcing, processes, notably:
 - The review in 2015 of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture
 - The review of peacekeeping operations mandated by the Secretary-General of the United Nations
 - The post-2015 development agenda
 - The ongoing development of the African Union’s Agenda 2063 (The Africa We Want).
4. In this regard, the interdependence between security and development was highlighted as a central component of all international, regional and subregional efforts aimed at sustaining peace. Many participants framed their understanding of “peacebuilding” in this context. In view of the multitude of actors and the complexity of post-conflict challenges, participants welcomed the focus of the workshop on regional dimensions: (a) in sustaining credible political processes; and (b) in support of building viable national institutions. Many participants underscored the necessity of establishing effective partnerships in order to ensure that regional efforts contributing to these two critical peacebuilding objectives are factored into the planning and mandates of United Nations peace operations and into the actions of other bilateral and multilateral peacebuilding actors.

5. The importance of aligning the approaches of the United Nations to peacebuilding with the African Union post-conflict reconstruction and development policy framework and the African Solidarity Initiative was repeatedly emphasized. Many participants alluded, however, to the challenges facing the African Union post-conflict reconstruction and development and African Solidarity Initiative as policy frameworks that are not supported by programmatic capacities. As a result, the potential role of Africa's regional economic commissions was underscored, while recognizing their current limitations in terms of funding and specific programmatic expertise.

6. Furthermore, several participants acknowledged that the capacity of the African Union is overstretched. The numerous security challenges and the competing demands on Africa's peacekeeping and mediation efforts deprive the operationalization of the African Union post-conflict reconstruction and development policy framework and the African Solidarity Initiative of the requisite political attention. Many participants emphasized the need for Africa's investment in security and stabilization efforts to be matched by investment in long-term and sustained political and economic engagement. Participants called for political commitment from the African Union, coupled with strengthened partnerships and improved coherence with the United Nations and other global peacebuilding actors.

General perspectives on approaches to peacebuilding

Ownership

7. Ownership was a common theme of particular focus by lead discussants and participants throughout the workshop. It was agreed that national ownership would continue to be a key principle underpinning peacebuilding-related processes. Several participants noted, however, that while national governments should remain the primary interlocutor, the views and aspirations of local, political and civil society actors do play a decisive role in formulating a credible and sustainable vision of the countries concerned. Inclusiveness of the political process would serve long-term and sustainable peace based on a more inclusive vision and priority-setting exercise.

8. In a complex, post-conflict environment, where needs are enormous and resources are scarce, the issue of defining "priority" and sequencing engagement assumes particular importance. One lead discussant argued that the approach taken by the United Nations and other operational actors has been predominantly biased towards either priorities set by donors (e.g., rule of law, democracy and human rights) or by the national actors in power, often with narrow political interests. Many participants agreed that there is an urgent need for a "people-centric" approach to priority-setting in post-conflict situations.

9. Several participants agreed that inclusive dialogue among government, political parties, civil society and local actors is extremely important during a country's transition from conflict to sustainable peace, especially during major milestones, such as elections, constitution reviews and the drawdown and exit of United Nations-mandated missions. The development of institutions (or institutional mechanisms) that are capable of managing priority-setting exercises, possible tensions arising from the implementation of national road maps, the delivery of basic services and/or dividends, and the generation of economic activities, is the cornerstone of ownership. Participants agreed that the end-state of a peacebuilding

process is the establishment of national and local institutions that can effectively guide and manage a country's long-term trajectory towards peace and socioeconomic development.

Peace-development nexus

10. The peace-security-development nexus should underpin the overall approach adopted by the United Nations, notably in designing and mandating multi-dimensional and integrated peacekeeping operations and special political missions. Participants stressed that partnerships with the African Union, the regional economic commissions, the World Bank, the African Development Bank and bilateral donors must be conceived during the early stages of Security Council deliberations leading to the deployment of those missions.

11. The role of South-South cooperation in maintaining peace and stability in Africa was repeatedly highlighted. Several participants acknowledged the continuing relevance of international cooperation and official development assistance, while emphasizing the need for inter-African innovative partnerships to promote sustainable development. One lead discussant suggested that Africa should consider, as a matter of urgency, the establishment of an African network for trade, investment and finance that would help develop a model of cooperation based on ownership, solidarity, non-conditionality and mutual benefit.

12. In addition, participants emphasized the necessity of ensuring harmonization and greater cooperation among African development agencies, through the implementation of a multidisciplinary approach that would prioritize capacity development for institution-building and economic development.

Coherence, coordination and partnerships

13. Participants agreed that despite the acknowledgment of the central role of regional actors in support of peacebuilding-related processes in the United Nations and international policy documents, the practical reality does not support this narrative. There is a need to identify practical and effective frameworks and mechanisms that would help integrate the perspectives, interests and concerns of regional actors in the planning and implementation of international security and development strategies for countries emerging from conflict.

14. Participants also underscored the need to adopt comprehensive regional strategies, around the main elements of which international actors can design and channel their support to policies and programmes. In this regard, there is a need to conceive security-related strategies in the immediate aftermath of conflict that would integrate long-term and context-specific socioeconomic development objectives. Regional mechanisms that would respond to cross-border security challenges need to be reinforced with policies and programmes that would turn problematic border dynamics into economic opportunities. This is an area where international support and investment is critically needed.

The role and performance of international, regional and subregional actors

15. The workshop addressed the aforementioned observations and general perspectives on peacebuilding approaches in the context of the synergy in the role and performance of relevant international, regional and subregional actors.

Role and focus of the peacebuilding commission

16. The 2015 review of the peacebuilding architecture will offer an opportunity to revisit the role, orientation and performance of the Peacebuilding Commission. Several participants underscored the need for the 2015 review to examine the untapped potential of the Commission to serve as a platform for forging coherence and partnerships among international and regional actors. While recognizing its inherent limitations in generating fresh resources or taking mandatory decisions, participants reaffirmed that the Commission can play a unique and significant role in bridging the widening gaps between regional and international perspectives and dynamics on long-term peace objectives. The Commission's engagement in Burundi and in Guinea-Bissau confirms that it can play a crucial role in empowering regional actors at the United Nations.

17. Participants noted that as an advisory intergovernmental body to the General Assembly and the Security Council, the Commission, with a broad-based membership structure, including regional and international financial institutions, offers great potential for promoting and advocating the nexus between security and development approaches in post-conflict situations. Participants further noted that the role of the Commission in drawing attention to the long-term implications of the Ebola crisis on security, economic recovery, social cohesion and political institutions in the affected countries, as well as to the question of illicit financial flows, should be further developed. Particular focus should be placed on the role of the Commission in convening platforms for policy development, political messaging and coherence.

18. In this vein, the role of the Peacebuilding Commission would assume increasing importance in support of the Security Council, whose capacity is overstretched in responding to acute crises. Participants noted that the Commission could help sustain attention on situations that are no longer characterized as acute and could exercise a preventive function by ensuring long-term commitment from regional and international actors and by addressing risks of relapse into violent conflict in a timely fashion.

19. Participants noted that the Commission, therefore, should adopt a more strategic orientation towards its functions of marshalling resources and forging coherence by:

- exercising political accompaniment in cooperation with regional actors
- drawing attention to the context-specific challenges of institution-building and promoting inter-African/South-South cooperation
- promoting a holistic regional approach to cross-border challenges to peace
- pointing to critical shortcomings in priority-setting and promoting a people-centric approach
- pointing to challenges in domestic revenue generation.

20. Participants stressed, in this connection, that in order for the Commission to perform these strategic functions, a substantial change in its working methods would be imperative. A more flexible, dynamic and light approach to the Commission's modes of engagement would make it more relevant to a broader segment of countries and regions at various stages of their peacebuilding processes. At the same

time, participants noted that the review in 2015 should generate concrete ideas that would revisit the nature and scope of the advisory function of the Commission to the Security Council and the General Assembly.

21. Participants floated more specific ideas on the modes of the Commission's engagement with the African Union and African subregional organizations, with a view to promoting greater coordination and better integration of the regional aspects of peacebuilding in the work of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture, namely through:

- frequent briefings and consultations with the African Union Peace and Security Council on country and regional-specific strategies and approaches
- development of shared analysis with the African Union Peace and Security Council and subregional organizations of the opportunities for and risks to peace in regional and country-specific contexts
- supporting dynamic interface between the African Union Commission and the Secretariat of the United Nations and United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, with a view to identifying and promoting an implementation strategy of the African Union post-conflict reconstruction and development policy framework and the African Solidarity Initiative.

Role of pan-African institutions

22. Participants dedicated much of their reflections during the workshop on ways to strengthen the engagement of pan-African institutions in support of long-term peacebuilding objectives on the continent. In this connection, they underscored the need to place particular emphasis on strengthening mechanisms for experience-sharing and innovative approaches to technical cooperation (drawing on the contribution of the private sector), with countries emerging from conflict in support of institution-building.

23. To this end, several participants noted that the relevance of the African Union post-conflict reconstruction and development and the African Solidarity Initiative as policy frameworks remains undisputed and that both policy frameworks represent the foundation for a regional peacebuilding architecture, as a component of the broader African Peace and Security Architecture. At the same time, there is a need for an implementation strategy for those policy frameworks based on partnerships among the African Union, the regional economic commissions and the African Development Bank.

24. Participants further stressed the need for an implementation strategy that would be grounded in the objective of conflict prevention or avoiding relapse into conflict. To this end, there is a need for a strategy that is realistic and anchored in specific priority areas, such as cross-border threats and crises of regional implications (for example, organized crime or outbreak of epidemics), support to political processes and national reconciliation efforts, improved economic governance, and more dynamic inter-African trade and economic cooperation.