

## SPECIAL COMMENT

The Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) is a new intergovernmental advisory body of the United Nations that aims to support peace efforts in countries newly emerging from war by ensuring sustained international attention, and it is a key addition to the capacity of the international community in the broad peace agenda. It reflects the recognition that dealing effectively with the critical post-conflict period has escaped the international community's best efforts despite several attempts to address the need through various transitional mechanisms.

The creation of new architecture to address peacebuilding—the Peacebuilding Commission, the Peacebuilding Support Office and the Peacebuilding Fund—offers a new opportunity to address this crucial and fragile period in the life of a post-conflict country. In the enabling resolutions establishing the Peacebuilding Commission, resolutions 60/180 and 1645 (2005) of 20 December 2005, the United Nations General Assembly and the Security Council mandated it, *inter alia*, “to bring together all relevant actors to marshal resources and to advise on and propose integrated strategies for post-conflict peacebuilding and recovery”; “to focus attention on the reconstruction and institution-building efforts necessary for recovery from conflict”; and “to lay the foundation for sustainable development”. The resolutions also identify the need for the Commission to extend the period of international attention on post-conflict countries.

The question of how best to support the efforts of the PBC in order to assist its success will be based, in the first instance, on helping the PBC to fulfil its mandate. This will require reinvigorated—and in some cases, new kinds of—cooperation, coordination and commitment among a range of actors, including governments, UN entities and other international organizations, and civil society. The cooperation of the governments of the countries under consideration is vital, as they must not only lead and own the peacebuilding process but also ensure coherence in the support offered by the international community for sustainable development. Burundi and Sierra Leone are the first two countries under consideration, and the Commission, working closely with both governments, has already held several productive meetings on their situations.

At the same time, the governments represented in the PBC, the broader membership of the United Nations, and other international and regional organizations must also commit to engage in dialogue with and support the efforts of post-conflict countries to mobilize the resources and sustained political support necessary to meet the objective of avoiding the reversion to conflict. For their part, civil society organizations and research institutions can support the PBC by bringing their knowledge resources, encompassing advocacy and analytical work, to bear on relevant PBC discussions and imparting their technical expertise in helping post-conflict countries to achieve their peacebuilding priorities.

We all have a stake and interest in helping post-conflict countries to avoid relapse into conflict and in paving the way for long-term, sustainable development. The establishment of the PBC reaffirms

this. The critical challenge ahead will be to ensure continued support for the new peacebuilding architecture in order to guarantee that the PBC meets the high expectations of its performance, most importantly with respect to the populations of countries emerging from conflict.

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