

Helpdesk Research Report: Peacebuilding Commission

Date: 29.01.2010

Query: Please identify literature on the effectiveness of the Peacebuilding Commission in terms of encouraging peacebuilding in the four countries on its agenda and more widely in terms of how the new peacebuilding architecture particularly the Commission has performed overall.

Enquirer: DFID

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1. Overview

The Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) is an intergovernmental advisory body, which formally came into existence in June 2006. The PBC, the Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO) and the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) comprise the UN's new peacebuilding architecture. 'The PBC (and by extension, the PBF and PBSO) were designed to:

- bring sustained attention to the pressing needs of countries emerging from conflict;
- promote better coordination and coherence among the myriad actors involved in peacebuilding;
- marshal resources for peacebuilding; and
- increase the knowledge base for more effective peacebuilding policy and practice' (Tschirgi, 6).

There are a wide range of views on the effectiveness of the Peacebuilding Commission. Some of the common points made are that while the PBC has generally failed to improve coordination within the UN and among external actors, it has managed to increase linkages between political and financial actors. Processes of dialogue and consultation, while often cumbersome, have contributed to growing awareness and incorporation of alternate viewpoints on peacebuilding and development. In addition, the PBC has achieved sustained attention to the countries on its agenda; however, it has been less successful in mobilising resources. The following elaborates on these points in addition to others.

Coordination, Dialogue and National Ownership

The PBC has sought to increase coherence and coordination through Integrated Peacebuilding Strategies (IPBS), based on partnerships between national and international actors and the development of 'compacts' or 'frameworks'. These are monitored at biannual review meetings which provide a forum for inclusive dialogue amongst all partners. The IPBS process and framework have been critiqued for being too time-consuming and cumbersome; and for merely duplicating existing home-grown, carefully developed plans. Others note that although cumbersome, they have contributed to coherence and that the process of consultation and dialogue has contributed to strengthening linkages between political and financial actors. In addition, the fact that the PBC includes in its deliberations on individual country cases a selection

of other aid-recipient governments results in a strong alliance among these governments. This alliance has increased alternative views and has successfully pushed for national ownership and in some instances, effectively countered the international financial institutions' dominance over economic policy and governance reform. Some of the literature note that the governments of Sierra Leone and Burundi have been fairly successful in shaping the contents of the strategies. Civil society actors, as well, while initially left out of consultations, have since been able to participate in consultations and input into the process. There are concerns, however, that the involvement of civil society in Sierra Leone and Burundi is largely limited to state-appointed and urban-based organisations.

Monitoring and tracking

A key innovation with the IPBS is the provision for 'mutual commitments' and mutual accountability – which seeks to track not only progress made by national authorities but also the progress of donors. The aim is to ensure the translation of pledges into concrete commitments and timely disbursements. In practice, however, the PBC has not been vigilant in addressing identified gaps between pledges and disbursements. Moreover, some of the literature highlight that the monitoring and tracking provisions are unlikely to influence the behaviour of government authorities or donor agencies as the frameworks lack viable enforcement mechanisms.

Mobilising resources and sustained attention

The PBC has been successful in securing funds from the Peacebuilding Fund for countries on its agenda in order to bridge funding gaps; however, it has not been successful in mobilising resources from the broader international community. This is attributed in part to the vagueness of the intended period of engagement. The PBC has managed to keep political focus on all four countries on its agenda long after they normally would have received attention. There is a lack of strategy and criteria however to determine how and when to wind down and disengage from countries. As pressure for the PBC to take on a wider range of countries increases, this will become an increasingly pressing issue.

Knowledge management and innovation

There has been some disappointment with the performance of the PBC and PBSO in increasing the knowledge base on peacebuilding and in serving as a source of innovation. The PBC has been criticised for adopting traditional UN processes resulting in long delays; and traditional views of peacebuilding (i.e. that prioritize security sector stabilisation over economic recovery and social cohesion; and that focus on neo-liberal economic structures). The Policy-Planning Branch of the Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO) and the Working Group on Lessons Learned (WGLL) have been critiqued for not having added much value nor produced many relevant knowledge products. They have, however, created a platform for reflection on key peacebuilding issues and there are some indications that PBSO senior staff are seeking to strengthen the role and impact of the WGLL.

Country-specific impact

Better assessment tools need to be developed and agreed upon in order to determine the real impact of the PBC's work on the ground. There are mixed views on whether the PBC has made a difference on the ground in the countries on its agenda. Some argue that there is no evidence that the countries have fared better as a result of PBC involvement; whereas others point to specific incidents and achievements as evidence of value added. These include: the securing of resources for quick impact projects in all four countries; resolving tense moments such as the fiscal crisis in Burundi in 2007 by pressuring international financial institutions to prioritise the fragility of the country over macroeconomic stabilization; and more generally keeping an international spotlight on these countries. Other examples can be found throughout this report.

2. Key Literature

I. Reviews and Reports

Jones, B., 2008, 'Taking Stock, Looking Forward: A Strategic Review of the Peacebuilding Commission', Center on International Cooperation and the International Peace Institute, New York <http://www.cic.nyu.edu/peacebuilding/docs/takingstocklookingforward.pdf>

This review assesses the Peacebuilding Commission against the UN peacebuilding problems that it was established to resolve: weak coordination and political-financial linkages; lack of timely and adequate funding; and insufficient medium-term political attention to post-conflict countries. It finds that despite a slow start, the PBC is beginning to rectify some of these problem areas and has had a positive impact on the ground in Burundi and Sierra Leone:

- Linking political/security and financial/development actors: The PBC sought to fulfill this function through the articulation of 'integrated peacebuilding strategies' (also known as 'compacts' or 'frameworks'). The process of dialogue this fostered among the relevant stakeholders has contributed to strengthening linkages between political and financial actors.
- Coherence and UN coordination: Performance here has been more mixed. Establishment of the PBC and Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO) has not yet led to renewed efforts to ensure effective coordination within the UN. Although the process of formulating strategic frameworks has contributed to improvements in coherence, it has also been cumbersome for both the UN and national government. This is in large part due to the multiple centers of deliberation and decision-making involved in the PBC's work. Key stakeholders that are active at the country level, in New York, and from their own capitals have not always engaged with a coherent voice.
- Mobilising resources and early financing for (re)building institutions: Performance on early financing has yet to be tested, since the countries selected are past the early recovery phase. In terms of mobilising resources, the absence of a realistic mapping of current resource flows and activities makes it difficult for the PBC to ensure that existing and new resources are channeled effectively to support the government's efforts to consolidate peace. To support its resource mobilisation mandate, the PBC needs a clear picture of assistance from the outset.
- Sustained attention: The PBC's involvement in Burundi and Sierra Leone has promoted continued attention to the countries past the point until which they would normally have received attention from the UN Security Council.

Regarding the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF), there have been differing views about its role. Some PBC members, mostly non-donors, believed that the PBF should operate more closely under the direction of the PBC; whereas others, mostly donors, viewed the PBF as the key resource mobilisation function of the PBC. The paper advocates instead that the Secretary-General retain flexibility in the use of the PBF to rapidly meet critical needs that do not attract traditional development assistance in post-conflict contexts. This the paper argues was well illustrated by the use of the PBF to fund time-critical activities in the lead-up to the Sierra Leone elections.

Jenkins, R., 2008, 'Organisational Change and Institutional Survival: The Case of the UN Peacebuilding Commission', Seton Hall Law Review, vol. 38, pp. 1327-1364
http://heinonline.org/HOL/Page?handle=hein.journals/shlr38&div=47&g_sent=1&collection=journals

This paper highlights a number of successes of the PBC as well as some of the Commission's constraints and challenges. The following are some of the key findings:

Coordination and integrated peacebuilding strategies

The paper finds that there is little evidence that the PBC has promoted substantive coordination among the donors and other external actors operating in Burundi and Sierra Leone. The Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO) has taken the lead in developing Integrated Peacebuilding Strategy (IPBS) or 'framework' documents. Although they largely reflect existing national strategy documents in Sierra Leone and Burundi, the process of devising a framework document provides the PBC the opportunity to influence national priorities. The framework documents assign general responsibilities to government actors, external donors, and the PBC. However, the PBC does not have the authority to insist that independent donor agencies restructure their country strategies if these appear to duplicate (or in some other way undermine) the work of domestic or external peacebuilding actors, domestic or external. Further, it is unlikely that the "monitoring and tracking" mechanisms devised for each of the two countries' peacebuilding frameworks will influence the behaviour of government authorities or donor agencies - partly because the frameworks lack viable enforcement mechanisms.

Dialogue and collective deliberations

The paper stresses that one of the successes of the PBC's intergovernmental collective deliberations is that it has become a forum for alternative views and a counterweight to the IFIs' dominance over economic policy and governance reform issues: "By broadcasting donor-recipient squabbles to a wider audience of member-states and other important stakeholders, the PBC's structured deliberations have created openings for a coalition of (mainly) developing country member-states, abetted by motivated elements within the United Nations' extended bureaucracy, to counter what is widely regarded as the excessive influence of the Washington-based IFIs in fragile and post-conflict countries" (p1341). "Some PBC members claim that on certain rare but significant occasions during the PBC's first 18 months in existence the World Bank and the IMF felt compelled to modify (or at least be seen to be rethinking) their approaches to Burundi and Sierra Leone. These course corrections, it is asserted, resulted from pressure by PBC members deliberating collectively" (p1347). "The view that conflict-reducing measures must increasingly trump economic policy preoccupations has been a consistent theme among a vocal minority of scholars and practitioners" (p1352).

The paper cites as an example of this development the PBC's response to Burundi's budgetary crisis during 2007 (see pp1347-1351). The government had become bankrupt, yet IMF financial rules prohibit the disbursement of aid until the government's handling of the macroeconomy is certified by the IMF. Country members of the Non-Aligned Movement supported Burundi's request that the fragile nature of Burundi's political situation be given greater priority. The PBC recommended that the IFIs take this into consideration and allow for early disbursement of financial support. An exceptional waiver was granted by the IMF and the government was able to stabilize its fiscal position, alleviating political uncertainty and the potential for unrest.

Jenkins, R., 2008, 'The UN Peacebuilding Commission and the Dissemination of International Norms', Working Paper Series, no. 2, Crisis States Research Centre, London
<http://www.crisisstates.com/Publications/wp/WP38.2.htm>

This paper reflects on the roles played by the UN Peacebuilding Commission in its first two years of existence. It argues that while the Commission has found it difficult to fulfill its core mandate of increasing coordination among the multilateral agencies, bilateral aid programmes, and non-governmental organisations involved, it has been more successful as a mechanism for reaffirming international norms. Specifically, the paper finds that it has boosted the norm of state sovereignty in development cooperation.

The paper stresses that one of the key benefits of the PBC, in contrast to other aid-coordination institutions, is that its framework for deliberations and stakeholder engagement substantially alters the negotiating dynamic between donor agencies and recipient governments on the PBC's agenda. Whereas, coordination has typically take the form of bilateral donor and aid-recipient

engagement; or multi-donor coordination; the PBC includes in its deliberations on individual country cases a selection of other aid-recipient governments. Their presence in deliberations and pressure to strengthen the norm of national ownership has contributed to furthering the state sovereignty agenda. The paper finds evidence for this in the 'integrated peacebuilding strategies' (IPBSs) that have been developed for Burundi and Sierra Leone. The government of these two countries were fairly successful in molding the contents of the strategies and in blocking certain substantive and procedural provisions that donors wished to include.

Gourlay, C., 2009, 'EU–UN Cooperation in Peacebuilding: Partners in Practice?', United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, Geneva
<http://www.unidir.org/pdf/ouvrages/pdf-1-92-9045-009-G-en.pdf>

This report explores the differences and commonalities in EU and UN peacebuilding strategies and architecture. Part 3 focuses on the UN Peacebuilding institutional architecture. It discusses the evolution of the PBC and highlights some of the findings of reviews of the PBC by scholars and practitioners:

Coherence and coordination

The report argues that the PBC's coordination mandate is unrealistically ambitious. Its internal coordination role is difficult as its institutional location and composition is not designed to bring UN operational actors together, nor does it have the authority to direct them. In addition, its mandate is also dependent on the ability of national actors to act coherently. The report also finds that the 'PBC arguably exacerbates the coherence challenge rather than reducing it, by adding yet another set of external actors to the "stakeholders" that have a direct interest in a country's political, social and economic development. At an operational level, it has also increased the coherence challenge for participating Member States (and institutional actors) by requiring a complex chain of consultations in country, in capitals and in New York in order to agree on broad priorities that are not in themselves controversial and do not provide much guidance in relation to the critical questions of *how* best to address the broad priorities identified' (p. 135).

Integrated peacebuilding strategies (IPBSs) and country specific meetings (CSMs)

The IPBS has been criticised for being too labour-intensive and for merely duplicating existing home-grown, carefully developed plans. Further, representatives of the Burundi and Sierra Leone governments have argued that the process has been New York centric and has not empowered local governments even if it intended to.

There is still consensus though of the importance of promoting integrated and strategic approaches to peacebuilding that address political, development and security priorities. The paper stresses that on occasion, PBC has been able to bridge headquarters and field-level and development-security divides, and influence both national decision makers and donors in line with peace consolidation objectives. For example, the CSM chair, backed by the PBC and the Security Council, has in both countries been able to influence decision-making on governance issues. In addition, in the case of Burundi, the CSM chair was able to broker a solution that arose when IMF threatened to delay completion of its Sixth Review.

Candidate country selection

The Central African Republic and Guinea-Bissau were the next two countries to be placed on the PBC agenda. Although both countries requested this, the decision was not automatic. In the case of Guinea-Bissau, it took the Security Council five months to transmit the request. This reflects confusion within the Security Council over what criteria should guide selection and over the role of PBC, including whether it should deal primarily with countries in relatively late phases of peace consolidation.

Policy guidance and best practice

The PBC's mandate "to develop best practices" has been pursued through the Working Group on Lessons Learned, thematic CSMs, e-discussions of the peacebuilding community of practice, and policy input by the PBSO staff to UN strategic documents. Although WGLL meetings have been criticized for not always linking to the country work of PBC and for failing to inform policy and/or operational developments in the broader UN system, they have provided a platform for reflection on key peacebuilding issues. This has contributed to a number of constructive suggestions on how the work of PBC could be strengthened. The report states that while the PBC has been good at developing policy guidance regarding peacebuilding issues, more generally, it has been less effective in tailoring advice for specific countries that could support national and UN actors at the field level.

Sustained attention

'Reviews of its work all agree that PBC has increased the attention of the international community, in general, and the Security Council, in particular, to the otherwise "forgotten countries" on the PBC agenda. It has also sustained attention in the cases of Burundi and Sierra Leone beyond the timeframe of the peacekeeping presence. However, as pressure for PBC to take on a wider range of countries increases, the issue of how and when to wind down, disengage or "graduate" a country from the PBC agenda, while sustaining international attention, have come to the fore. These considerations have contributed to the widely shared view that the level of PBC attention must be scalable and compatible with existing monitoring and tracking mechanisms' (p. 128).

Rugumamu, S. M., 2009, 'Does the UN Peacebuilding Commission Change the Mode of Peacebuilding in Africa?', Briefing paper, no. 8, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, New York
<http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/iez/global/06505.pdf>

This paper reviews the work of the Peacebuilding Commission in Africa. It identifies some shortcomings of the Peacebuilding Commission's performance in Burundi and Sierra Leone. They include:

- Problems with promoting coherence and coordination among international actors; and among representatives of Burundi and Sierra Leone;
- Difficulties in achieving sustained attention on candidate countries, reflected in the limited amount of resources pledged and given. This is attributed in part to the vagueness of the intended period of engagement;

Although the PBC has consulted with civil society organisations in the two countries, there are criticisms that these organisations have not necessarily been representative in that many were state-appointed and largely urban-based. Nonetheless, many stress that the PBC has still had a positive impact in terms of promoting productive national dialogues in post-conflict societies.

II. Working Papers

Note: The following three working papers are part of a series of nine essays commissioned by the University of Ottawa (Centre for International Policy Studies) and the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs. They examine the possible future role of the UN's peacebuilding architecture. These three papers have been made available by the authors. The entire series will be published shortly and will be accessible at: <http://www.socialsciences.uottawa.ca/cepi-cips/eng/policybriefs.asp#pba>

Tschirgi, N., 2010, 'Escaping Path Dependency: A Proposed Multi-Tiered Approach for the UN's Peacebuilding Commission', Center for International Policy Studies, University of Ottawa; Norwegian Institute of International Affairs

This paper assesses the role and performance of the PBC and argues that the PBC needs to improve upon its engagement with countries on its agenda. It evaluates the PBC through three criteria:

- How other critical actors view the role of the PBC: The paper concludes that based on the limited awareness of the PBC beyond its own immediate constituencies, it has yet to become a significant player in peacebuilding.
- How PBC has carried out its responsibilities: There has been limited consensus or clarity on the role and functions of the PBC (i.e. whether it should focus exclusively on specific countries or take on a broader advisory role; whether it should be proactive or respond to country requests). The paper argues that the PBC has not proven to be an innovative actor bringing new and multi-dimensional perspectives to peacebuilding. Rather, it has adopted a "path dependency": largely replicating its approach in each new country; and falling into the same UN tradition of holding numerous meetings with few concrete results. There have been long delays between the time of country requests and their referral to the PBC (Guinea-Bissau and Central African Republic); and between the time of referral to the completion of IPBSs (Sierra Leone and Burundi).
- The link between the PBC's work and outcomes on the ground: The paper cautions that it is difficult to attribute causality given the many actors involved in peacebuilding. In addition, in the absence of a formal evaluation, assessments tend to be subjective. Still, it finds some indications that the impact of PBC work has been modest: 'There is no evidence that the two countries where the PBC was involved for the last three years (Sierra Leone and Burundi) have fared better than other countries (such as Liberia or Rwanda) where the PBC was not involved. While analysts recognize the PBC's positive contributions at certain critical moments in both Sierra Leone and Burundi, it is difficult to assert that the PBC's role was essential or indispensable [...] On the other hand, there is evidence that the PBC's extensive engagement in these countries generated new tensions and considerable additional work for the national and international actors on the ground. [...] Perhaps most serious of all, violence erupted repeatedly in [Guinea Bassau] and PBC was largely a bystander in the process' (pp. 11-12).

The paper recommends that the PBC adopt a differentiated and tailored strategy with the countries on its addenda, requiring varying levels of engagement (a 'multi-tier approach'). In doing so, it should come up with innovative approaches -- a new range of instruments beyond the IPBS; and new configurations beyond country strategy meetings (e.g. 'Groups of Friends' or 'Special Observers'). In addition, the paper stresses that the PBC should move beyond a country-specific role also take on important systemic, policy or institutional peacebuilding issues.

Aning, K. and Lartey, E., 2010 'Establishing the Future State of the Peacebuilding Commission Perspectives on Africa', Center for International Policy Studies, University of Ottawa; Norwegian Institute of International Affairs

The paper discusses the strategic role of the PBC in the attainment of the new peacebuilding vision and architecture and examines its potential implications for sustainable peace in Africa. In so doing, it evaluates briefly what has been achieved by the PBC to date:

- The PBC has adopted the same Integrated Peacebuilding Strategy (IPS) approach to coordinate and carry out national programmes in all the countries on its agenda. However, this approach has still allowed individual countries some flexibility in determining their goals and priorities. A comparative analysis of programme areas in Burundi and Sierra Leone although the PBC has focused on the same key areas in both countries, the distribution of funding for these programmes has been different – indicating some flexibility in setting local priorities.

- The paper critiques, however, the PBC's prioritization of security factors over development priorities.
- The paper also critiques the IPS for not allowing for inter-country integration. It considers this to be a big challenge in the way the PBC operates. Although, the working group on lessons learned is supposed address this challenge, regional coordination has still be limited.

The paper recommends that the PBC move away from the traditional notion of peacebuilding that prioritizes security sector stabilization over economic recovery and social cohesion; and that focuses on neo-liberal economic structures. In addition, it stresses the importance of the formulation and implementation of integrated regional strategies.

McCandless,E., 2010, 'In Pursuit of Peacebuilding for Perpetual Peace Where the UN's Peacebuilding Architecture Needs to Go', Center for International Policy Studies, University of Ottawa; Norwegian Institute of International Affairs

This paper advocates for greater attention by the UN's peacebuilding architecture to addressing the substance of recovery, exploring core drivers of peace sustainability, and making conceptual and practical links between the 'early recovery' period and longer term peace.

Drawing from various institutional reports and academic papers, and interviews, the paper provides key findings concerning how the PBC's performance:

- Mobilising resources and sustaining attention: While, the PBC has been successful in sustaining attention on the countries on its agenda, it has made insufficient progress in marshalling resources.
- Coordination and strategy: Performance on coordination has been mixed. The PBC has been credited with creating linkages between political/ security and financial/ development actors on the ground in its case countries; however, there has still been a lack of clarity about a 'peacebuilding strategy'. Other key challenges are the existence of multiple centres of deliberation and decision-making; the limited engagement by the Secretary General; and resistance from member states to the prospect of a UN body holding them financially and politically accountable for their commitments. As such, the PBC has not been empowered to effectively monitor commitments. In addition, there have been problems of sequencing and coordination between the interventions of the PBC and the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF).
- Best practices: The Policy-Planning Branch of the Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO), tasked with conducting research, analysis and knowledge management on peacebuilding lessons, has not been valued or given space to develop. Although there has been little commitment by PBSO leadership in this area, some PBSO staff have still sought to develop knowledge products. Other positive aspects are the PBSO's "Monitoring Peace Consolidation: UN Practitioners Guide to Benchmarking" due to be released soon, which has the potential to contribute to conceptual and practical coherence on peacebuilding issues. The Working Group on Lessons Learned (WGLL) has been critiqued for not having achieved much. However, there is some indication that PBSO senior staff are seeking to strengthen its role and impact.

The paper also provides a brief overview of the Peacebuilding Fund. It finds that evaluations have generally made positive assessments – pointing to the PBF's promotion of learning about peacebuilding issues and processes, and its raising of funds. Evaluations, however, have also acknowledged challenges and recommended areas in need of improvement. Cited areas of improvement include: the need for the PBF to operate with greater speed; the need for greater conceptual clarity around peacebuilding and consequent priorities and criteria to inform selection at different phases; and the need to promote better understanding amongst stakeholders of the role, capacities and limitations of the PBF.

III. Briefs

Slotin, J., 2009, 'Perspectives on the Peacebuilding Commission and Mutual Accountability', Issue Brief, International Peace Institute, New York

http://www.ipacademy.org/media/pdf/publications/ipi_pbc_issuebrief2.pdf

This brief looks at the PBC's reliance on country-specific meetings (CSMs) and Integrated Peacebuilding Strategies (IPBSs). The PBC, with guidance from the PBSO, sought to build upon and complement existing plans and strategies in the countries on its agenda. However, these processes have still been critiqued for being time-consuming, overly detailed and for becoming a burden for national authorities and PBC members. Attempts are now being made to make the process less burdensome and more beneficial.

The brief emphasises that despite these difficulties, the IPBS documents have added value to pre-existing documents. In particular, they provide for 'mutual commitments' of national and international actors and the expectation of a regular review of progress against them. In other documents, for example Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs), monitoring and evaluation frameworks were designed to track solely the progress of national authorities. 'Mutual commitments' and mutual accountability, on the other hand seek to also track the progress of donors and to translate pledges into concrete commitments and timely disbursements. This is an attempt to address slow, short-term and unpredictable aid, which has been very challenging for recipient countries. In practice, however, these the PBC has not taken advantage of these new provisions. In Burundi, for example, there has been a large gap between pledges and disbursements. Although this was flagged in a resource document prepared by the PBSO, the PBC did not follow it up as part of the review process. The brief recommends that mutual commitments should be followed up and built upon in the upcoming PBC review.

Otobo, E. E., 2009, 'A UN Architecture to Build Peace in Post-Conflict Situations', Development Outreach, World Bank Institute, pp. 46-49

<http://siteresources.worldbank.org/WBI/Resources/213798-1253552326261/do-oct09-otobo.pdf>

This brief article highlights some of the successes of the UN's peacebuilding architecture in the last three years. They include:

- **Coordination and integrated strategies:** Contributions to developing integrated strategies for peacebuilding, based on partnerships between national and international actors and the development of 'compacts' or 'frameworks'. These are monitored at biannual review meetings which provide a forum for inclusive dialogue amongst all partners.
- **Advisory role:** The PBC has also provided concrete advice and recommendations to other UN organs, including the Security Council and the Executive Boards of UN Funds and Programmes; as well as to operational actors on issues of sequencing and prioritization in the Central African Republic and Guinea Bissau. Such strategies were adopted in the past nine months.
- **Mobilising funds and sustained attention:** The PBC has organized high level stakeholders consultations, for example in Sierra Leone in 2008, that have brought together senior representatives of member states, the UN, IFIs, the private sector and civil society. This helped to broaden the donor base for Sierra Leone. The Commission also played this role effectively in Burundi by keeping the spotlight on the peace process. In addition, the Commission helped to mobilise resources to bridge the funding gaps for the November 2008 Presidential elections in Guinea Bissau. One of the key challenges that the Commission faces, however, is determining when a country should "graduate" from its agenda.

The brief also discusses the Peacebuilding Fund. It finds that it has demonstrated its value as an instrument to support post-conflict peacebuilding and also as a tool to address problems that could lead to potential lapse or relapse into conflict. It notes, however, that the Fund has often

been slow in disbursing money, which can be attributed to just “getting started” and to other systemic issues in fragile post-conflict situations.

Security Council, 2009, ‘Peacebuilding Commission’, Special Research Report, no. 2, United Nations, New York

<http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/Research%20Report%20PBC%20Nov%2009.pdf>

This special report focuses on the third year of operation of the PBC. It highlights that the PBC has demonstrated an ability to evolve and to adapt based on particular situations. In Central African Republic, for example, it adopted a lighter approach in monitoring the strategic framework than used in Sierra Leone and Burundi. In addition, the PBC Sierra Leone configuration’s decision to endorse the government’s Agenda for Change as the core strategic document to guide future development efforts indicated a willingness to be flexible and to accede to national ownership.

The report also examines the impact of the PBC’s work over the three years of operation. It finds that the Commission has added value to the work of the international community at large, and the UN in particular, in terms of:

- ‘keeping international political and financial focus sustained on the four countries on its agenda which have recently emerged from conflict;
- emerging coherence between different players by providing a platform for attaining a more integrated approach to peacebuilding;
- providing better common ground between the relevant UN bodies (including major organs like the General Assembly, ECOSOC and the Security Council) and reducing the bitter atmosphere that prevailed in the past; and
- helping to steer initial funding from the PBF for countries on its agenda to meet emergency funding gaps’ (p. 13).

Regarding the specific countries on the Commission’s agenda, it notes that Sierra Leone and Burundi have achieved some real success in consolidating peace. In particular, Burundi has made progress with its peace process, including the gains relating to its inclusive political dialogue; and Sierra Leone has made clear reforms in socioeconomic and security sector areas. In addition, the report notes that the PBC’s proactive involvement in both countries helped to overcome some potentially serious setbacks. Regarding Guinea-Bissau, the report states that the PBC contributed to addressing threats to the country’s peace consolidation processes by keeping a global spotlight on the local situation. The PBC has also added value in all four countries on its agenda by securing resources for quick impact projects that have been critical in delivering some immediate dividends of peace. ‘All four countries on the Commission’s agenda have so far received funding totaling about \$86 million (or 62 percent) of the allocated PBF funds’ (p. 13).

The report notes, emphasizes three areas for improvement:

- Although the PBC has secured funds from the PBF for the countries on its agenda, it has been less successful in mobilising resources from the broader international community.
- A strategic approach needs to be developed by the PBC on how to engage emerging middle countries as actors in the peacebuilding architecture in ways that could yield additional funds for peacebuilding purposes.
- Better assessment tools need to be developed and agreed upon in order to determine the real impact of the PBC’s work on the ground.

Note: Other reports from the Security Council on the Peacebuilding Commission can be found at: http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/site/c.gIKWLeMTIsG/b.2400835/k.307C/Publications_on_the_Peacebuilding_Commission.htm

3. Country Specific Literature

Street, A., Smith, J. and Mollet, H., 2007, 'Consolidating the peace?: Views from Sierra Leone and Burundi on the United Nations Peacebuilding Commission', ActionAid, CAFOD and CARE International <http://www.careinternational.org.uk/download.php?id=613>

This report looks at the operation of the PBC and the PBF in Sierra Leone and Burundi in its first year. It stresses two similar findings from the two countries:

The Importance of sequencing the Strategic Framework and PBF Funding:

In both countries, allocating PBF funding upfront, followed by later discussions on the Strategic Peacebuilding Framework (SPBF), led to an overwhelming emphasis on the money and a neglect of the political process underpinning the SPBF concept. This many consider was a lost opportunity to focus on political dialogue and to encourage government commitment to implement difficult or politically sensitive reforms with the promise of funding. It is recommended that in a country a late 'post-conflict' / 'early development' stage, such as Sierra Leone, in which governance issues are critical, the political role and objectives of the PBC should be given primacy.

The Role of Civil Society:

Related to the point above, many civil society informants in Sierra Leone also believed that an opportunity was lost for the PBC to facilitate a national dialogue between the government and citizens regarding the bottlenecks that had prevented effective implementation of previous strategies and interventions that were targeted at the root causes of Sierra Leone's conflict. In terms of access to funding, many civil society organisations expressed concerns over their own lack of capacity to compete and to work as implementing partners. In both countries, PBF funding applications were seen as complex and burdensome. There were also perceptions that urban capital-city based NGOs would be the primary representatives in the PBC processes and recipients of PBF funding, at the expense of wider community perspectives in rural areas.

The report highlights an important contribution that the PBC and PBF have made in Burundi in terms of dialogue. The PBC has supported a modest, yet innovative discussion among various stakeholders at the national level on peacebuilding. In addition, the PBF funded project, *Cadre de Dialogue et de Concertation* (Project on Dialogue and Consultation) brings together a wide, inclusive cross-section of national partners and provides the opportunity to have processes of political dialogue with longer term, beneficial governance outcomes.

ActionAid, 2008, 'The Peacebuilding Commission in Burundi Year 2: An INGO Perspective', ActionAid

http://www.actionaid.org/docs/the%20peacebuilding%20commission%20in%20burundi%20year%202020_an%20ngo%20perspective.pdf

This report looks at the operation of the PBC in Burundi during its first two year, assessing in particular the Strategic Peacebuilding Framework (SPBF). It makes the following findings:

- Civil Society Involvement: The initial conceptualization of the framework was driven by New York and the government of Burundi, without wider consultation of civil society. Nonetheless, civil society organisations managed to carve out spaces for themselves to participate in consultations and provided important analysis and inputs into the process. Consequently, the SPBF identifies responsibilities of a wide range of actors beyond the PBC and the government, such as political parties, civil society organisations, international NGOs, women's groups, religious organisations and the private sector. This has resulted in a widespread sense of ownership of the SPBF.
- Monitoring: The monitoring and tracking framework in relation the SPBF has several weaknesses. Although it is useful in identifying benchmarks and indicators for progress and in elaborating the responsibilities of key stakeholders in each of the priority areas,

- there is no baseline from which to measure progress. In addition, indicators are quantitative rather qualitative, which makes it difficult to measure and track quality of change, and do not focus on measuring impact.
- **Inclusive Dialogue:** This report also emphasises the importance of the *Cadre de Dialogue* project in promoting broad-based dialogue and consultation, necessary to address deep societal divisions. There were some concerns that the PBC was too focused on developing structures at first, but has since come to recognize the importance of involving a wide spectrum of stakeholders and developing processes for healing divisions.

Iro, A., 2009, 'The UN Peacebuilding Commission: Lessons from Sierra Leone', Universität Potsdam [http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/lib.nsf/db900sid/OCHA-7RQG65/\\$file/UniPotsdam_Apr2009.pdf?openelement](http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/lib.nsf/db900sid/OCHA-7RQG65/$file/UniPotsdam_Apr2009.pdf?openelement)

The dissertation is an assessment of the PBC and PBF, based on an analysis of their performance over the last two years in Sierra Leone. In particular, it looks at whether the PBC and PBF have increased political attention to the country, mobilised financial resources, and strengthened coordination and cooperation among key stakeholders. The paper finds that although there are signs of progress, it has been difficult to translate these aims into concrete activities at the country level. Specifically, the report finds that there was no clear strategy for sensitising the country for the involvement of the PBC and PBF and strengthening the capacity of various stakeholders to become involved. Instead the PBC and PBF relied on a “learning by doing” approach that resulted in deficiencies in informing stakeholders about PBC and PBF policies and procedures.

6. Additional information

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Clingendael - Netherlands Institute of International Relations, Chr. Michelsen Institute (CMI), Crisis States Research Centre, FRIDE, GFN-SSR, GSDRC, Google, Ingenta Journals, International Alert, International Crisis Group, International Peace Institute, International Peace Research Institute, International Security Network, Peacebuilding Initiative, Reliefweb, Swisspeace Foundation, USIP

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