

# The UN Peacebuilding Architecture: Institutional Evolution in Context

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## Introduction

There is a broad agreement that the United Nations' "Peacebuilding Architecture" (PBA) has failed to live up to the high hopes that existed when the 2005 World Summit agreed to establish the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) and its related entities, the Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO) and the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF). This paper explores why this is the case.

We briefly review the initial logic and expectations of the PBA in part 1, and sketch out the factors that have affected the PBA's impact both positively and negatively in part 2. We also think it is important to understand the PBA in the context of the evolution and expansion of wider UN peacebuilding efforts, and further detail the existing relationships with UN peace operations in part 3.

## The original logic and expectations of the PBA

During the 1990s, an increase in intra-state conflicts generated a growth in focus by the international community on peacebuilding. A sequential approach to the transition from war to peace that had characterized inter-state conflicts did not hold in the complex civil conflicts after the Cold War.<sup>1</sup> Such conflicts did not tend to end in a decisive military victory and post-conflict reconstruction phase, but rather countries were fragile, trapped in cyclical cycles of conflict, with complex causes that repeatedly risked violence flaring as states formed. As international understanding of the links between political, security and development processes underpinning state formation and conflict grew, the UN and other actors started to develop peacebuilding as a field in its own right.

<sup>1</sup> Carolyn McAskie (2010), *2020 Vision: Visioning the Future of the United Nations Peacebuilding Architecture*. Norwegian Institute of International Affairs. Available at: <http://cips.uottawa.ca/eng/documents/McAskie.pdf>

The Geneva Peacebuilding Platform is a joint project of four institutions:



The concept of peacebuilding was first introduced at the UN by Boutros Boutros-Ghali's *Agenda for Peace* in 1992.<sup>2</sup> The document defined peacebuilding as "action to identify and support structures which will tend to strengthen and solidify peace in order to avoid a relapse into conflict." Initially conceived as part of a conflict sequence from preventive diplomacy through to peacemaking and peacekeeping to post-conflict peacebuilding, the UN developed the peacebuilding concept further in the 2000 "Brahimi Report"<sup>3</sup> and the 2004 report of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges, and Change<sup>4</sup>, to encapsulate a cyclical view of the causes of conflict and relapse and responses to addressing them.

These analytical reports identified a series of deep challenges within the UN system in effectively carrying out peacebuilding efforts. In many instances, UN and member state capacity and focus had been dispersed, which had resulted in gaps, duplication of efforts and missed opportunities to support national peacebuilding processes.<sup>5</sup> In particular:

- the UN had struggled to identify and deploy staff with expertise in a timely manner;
- peacebuilding efforts between UN peacekeeping operations and political missions and the UN development system were siloed, dispersed and poorly coordinated;
- a body of best practices and policies on peacebuilding was needed for the whole UN system;
- the UN lacked rapid funds that could respond to peacebuilding crises, opportunities and gaps as they emerged; and
- the international system as a whole – institutions, traditional donors and emerging powers - lacked coherence on the ground.

By the time of the 2005 World Summit, there was widespread recognition of the need for new institutions that would strengthen strategic coherence in addressing the needs of a range of countries affected by violent conflict, and that would help to bridge the gap between international political, security and development efforts.<sup>6</sup> This consensus led to the adoption of the PBA at the World Summit in 2005.

The original logic of the PBA was to build synergies and coherence of the UN's (institutional and member-state) peacebuilding efforts; it was not intended as a new operational arm or set of self-standing entities. Many argued then and now that the PBA includes not only the PBC, PBSO and PBF, but the full spectrum of UN institutions, tools and member states; to which the PBC, PBSO and PBF should bring greater coherence.

Specifically, the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) was established "to identify countries which are under stress and risk sliding towards State collapse; to organize, in partnership with the national Government, proactive assistance in preventing that process from developing further; to assist in the planning for transitions between conflict and post-conflict peacebuilding; and the efforts of the international community in post-conflict peacebuilding over whatever period may

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<sup>2</sup> Vanessa Wyeth (2011), *Peacebuilding at the UN over the last 10 years*. International Peace Institute. Available at: <http://www.frient.de/en/publications-service/news-details/article/peacebuilding-at-the-un-over-the-last-10-years.html>

<sup>3</sup> Lakhdar Brahimi (2000), *Report of the Panel on the United Nations Peace Operations* .. United Nations: New York. Available at: [www.undocs.org/s/2000/809](http://www.undocs.org/s/2000/809)

<sup>4</sup> General Assembly (2004), *Report of the High Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change*. . United Nations: New York. Available at: [http://www.unrol.org/files/gaA.59.565\\_En.pdf](http://www.unrol.org/files/gaA.59.565_En.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> Vanessa Wyeth (2011), *Peacebuilding at the UN over the last 10 years*. International Peace Institute. Available at: <http://www.frient.de/en/publications-service/news-details/article/peacebuilding-at-the-un-over-the-last-10-years.html>

<sup>6</sup> Dan Smith (Dec. 2013), *Study on the impact of the Peacebuilding Commission: To play to its strengths*.

be necessary." The 2005 World Summit Outcome Document,<sup>7</sup> listed the PBC's core peacebuilding functions as to:

- promote coordination and coherence,
- support resource mobilization,
- facilitate peacebuilding strategy,
- serve as a knowledge hub; and
- to conduct advocacy for peacebuilding and for countries' needs.

Alongside the PBC, a multi-donor Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) was created to fill gaps and catalyze longer-term funding, and the Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO) was entrusted with administering the PBF, advising the PBC and coordinating peacebuilding strategy and policy learning within the UN.<sup>8</sup>

## **Factors that positively and negatively shaped the impact of the PBA**

The initial strategic concept for the PBA began to unravel during the early negotiations on the founding resolutions. Parallel attempts to reform the Security Council's permanent membership in 2005 had failed, and the PBC quickly became a safety valve for discontent. The bargains upon the founding of the PBA reflected these tensions. While officially serving as an advisory body to the Security Council and General Assembly, it had no independent authority or decision making power over other bodies.<sup>9</sup> Regardless, some member-states, mostly of the South, perceived the PBC as a potential opportunity to influence the Security Council and to recalibrate inequities in global governance.<sup>10</sup> Permanent members of the Council on the other hand were uncomfortable with this potential "encroachment" into peace and security policy, at least in geopolitically charged contexts.

As a result, whilst the PBC had originally been intended to provide an agile platform where all actors engaged in peacebuilding in a given context could discuss and agree upon a common strategy and priorities, during the negotiations, the PBC membership became significantly more fixed and formulaic. Eventually, the formula for the core membership of the PBC's "Organizational Committee" was composed of 31 members, drawn from seven countries from the Security Council, including the P5, seven from the General Assembly, seven from the Economic and Social Council, five from the top-ten UN troop contributors and five of the UN's top ten financial donors. In parallel, it was decided that each country to join "the PBC's agenda" was to have a unique formal grouping and the "Country-Specific Configuration" (CSC) was invented. The CSC was drawn from the PBC's membership, the country itself, international organizations, neighboring states, and key bilateral partners.<sup>11</sup> An even wider range of countries have joined the CSCs – today around 50+ members can be found in a CSC whether or not they offer capital or a presence on the ground in a country undergoing a process of peacebuilding.

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<sup>7</sup> General Assembly Resolution (2005), *2005 World Summit Outcome*. United Nations: New York. Available at: [www.undocs.org/a/res/60/1](http://www.undocs.org/a/res/60/1)

<sup>8</sup> General Assembly Resolution 60/180 (2005), *The Peacebuilding Commission*. United Nations: New York. Available at: [http://www.un.org/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/60/180](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/60/180)

<sup>9</sup> Rob Jenkins (Feb. 2013), *Peacebuilding: From Concept to Commission*. Routledge: New York. Excerpt available at: [http://books.google.nl/books?id=fZdVtK1qjVMC&pg=PT215&source=gbs\\_toc\\_r&cad=3#v=onepage&q&f=false](http://books.google.nl/books?id=fZdVtK1qjVMC&pg=PT215&source=gbs_toc_r&cad=3#v=onepage&q&f=false)

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>11</sup> Rob Jenkins (June 2008), *The UN Peacebuilding Commission and the Dissemination of International Norms*. Ralph Bunche Institute for International Studies, CUNY. Available at: <http://www.lse.ac.uk/internationalDevelopment/research/crisisStates/download/wp/wpSeries2/WP382.pdf>

The PBC and PBSO's intended strategic role was diluted early on. While the mandate envisaged in the 2005 World Summit outcome document placed international strategy at the forefront, the PBC's founding resolutions negotiated through the General Assembly crafted a diplomatic body charged with raising awareness of a country's peacebuilding priorities and needs; with mobilizing resources; and with promoting coherence; but not with international strategy.<sup>12</sup> Inclusion of a country on the PBC's agenda would be largely driven by the Security Council. Initially, PBSO was to provide strategic input alongside the national governments seeking assistance, but this mandate quickly unraveled as some countries and UN departments pushed back on a leadership role for the new office; a point from which PBSO has not recovered. In addition, the founding resolutions of the PBC required it to operate by consensus of its 31 members (double the Security Council), which curbed decision-making.

The Center on International Cooperation first reviewed the PBA in 2008. In the PBA's first year in 2006, we found that the PBC's immediate procedural and negotiation obstacles had resulted in long delays, frustration, and confusion in the field and at headquarters about what the PBC was for.<sup>13</sup> Cumbersome negotiations had already resulted in the development of an institution that was considerably larger than first envisioned, but with no institutional weight, resources or other tools to assert itself.<sup>14</sup> By the end of its first year, a degree of self-fulfilling skepticism about whether the PBC could fulfill its mandate effectively or efficiently had already started to set in.<sup>15</sup>

Within the first year of establishment, Burundi and Sierra Leone (2006) joined the agenda of the PBC, followed by Guinea-Bissau (2007), the Central African Republic (2008), Liberia (2010), and lastly Guinea (2011).

From the early days, the PBC did have some successes. When Dan Smith (2013) analyzed evidence for the UN of the impact of the PBC, he found evidence even of early wins in the first countries to join the PBC - Burundi and Sierra Leone. In Burundi, the PBC had enabled bilateral donors and multilateral agencies to discuss and coordinate peacebuilding assistance with the government. The PBC was credited with aiding and mobilizing development aid for Burundi. A donor conference led by the CSC chair in Bujumbura in March 2007 pledged over \$680 million dollars, which was more than expected and can partly be seen as a consequence of the PBC's advocacy efforts.<sup>16</sup> In Sierra Leone, a study by IPI (2009) found that the PBC had enabled the Executive Representative of the Secretary-General (ERSG) to bring UN actors on board with a joint vision for the country. ERSG Von der Schulenburg had leveraged the PBC to provide the political support that he needed to exercise his role as coordinator of the UN on the ground. This helped foster political support for a more coherent in-country approach.<sup>17</sup>

In parallel, the UN's peacebuilding efforts in the field continued to expand. The UN development system and both types of UN crisis management operations - military peacekeeping operations and civilian led special political missions - directly contribute to peacebuilding. Over the past two decades, peacekeeping operations evolved from carrying out primarily military tasks to include multidimensional mandates involving a broad range of peacebuilding tasks. Of the 15

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<sup>12</sup> Dan Smith (Dec. 2013), *Study on the impact of the Peacebuilding Commission: To play to its strengths*.

<sup>13</sup> NYU Center on International Cooperation/ International Peace Institute (April 2008), *Taking Stock, Looking Forward: A Strategic Review of the Peacebuilding Commission*. Available at: <http://ipinst.org/media/pdf/publications/pbcsrev08.pdf>

<sup>14</sup> Dan Smith (Dec. 2013), *Study on the impact of the Peacebuilding Commission: To play to its strengths*.

<sup>15</sup> NYU Center on International Cooperation/ International Peace Institute (April, 2008), *Taking Stock, Looking Forward: A Strategic Review of the Peacebuilding Commission*. Available at: <http://ipinst.org/media/pdf/publications/pbcsrev08.pdf>

<sup>16</sup> Dan Smith (Dec. 2013), *Study on the impact of the Peacebuilding Commission: To play to its strengths*.

<sup>17</sup> Jenna Slotin (Nov. 2009), *Issue Brief: Perspectives on the Peacebuilding Commission's Coordination Role*. International Peace Institute. Available at: [http://ipinst.org/media/pdf/publications/ipi\\_pbc\\_issuebrief\\_1.pdf](http://ipinst.org/media/pdf/publications/ipi_pbc_issuebrief_1.pdf)

peacekeeping operations currently in the field, 9 are mandated by the Security Council to carry out multidimensional mandates. At the headquarters level, the UN Departments of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) and Field Support (DFS) work with PBSO as well as other partners "to ensure appropriate planning, execution, resourcing and staffing of peacebuilding aspects" of peacekeeping operations.<sup>18</sup> Political missions, run by the Department of Political Affairs (DPA), have also expanded over the years, many working with the PBA. UN peacebuilding offices in Burundi, Sierra Leone, Guinea-Bissau, and the Central African Republic (CAR) have focused on harmonizing efforts of the UN development, peace and security arms to support comprehensive peacebuilding strategies.

Peacebuilding processes are at different stages in each of the countries on the PBC's agenda and the experience of coordination between peace operations and the Commission is varied. In Sierra Leone, Burundi and Liberia combined engagement appears to have contributed to consolidating peace in those countries, while the situations in Guinea-Bissau and the CAR have deteriorated, in the latter case necessitating the replacement of the UN peacebuilding office with a military peacekeeping operation mandated to protect civilians and to establish security.

The reasons for the success or failure in the various countries are wide-ranging and beyond the scope of this short overview. Reviews of the PBC have shown that engagement between, and impact of, peace operations and the PBC is most effective when there is a close working relationship between the head of a UN mission and the Chair of a PBC County Configuration,<sup>19</sup> making the best use of the PBC's ability to advocate, to convene actors and to provide a diplomatic platform for the countries concerned.

The evidence suggested that a body like the PBC, with smart engagement from national governments and UN leaders on the ground, could draw together a broad range of actors, including the UN, International Financial Institutions (IFIs) and in some cases civil society and political parties, to encourage coordination and coherence, add support to existing national resource mobilization efforts, and provide a diplomatic platform for countries to advocate for themselves.<sup>20</sup> Recent success in mobilizing a new round of peacebuilding commitments alongside the World Bank and other institutional and bilateral donors for Burundi (2013), and in Sierra Leone's desire to remain on the agenda of the PBC in the near term even as it successfully graduated from the Council's agenda (2014), lend support to this view.

However, the model of PBC impact that has emerged also reveals that the success of the PBC relies upon the good will and personal commitment of the Chair of the CSC, a collaborative partner on the ground in the UN and a collaborative host government. What has not emerged is a more institutionalized way of working between the PBC, the UN's institutions and wide range of countries undergoing peacebuilding processes.

These strategic weaknesses were brought to the fore when peacebuilding processes relapsed in CAR and Guinea Bissau. In both instances, the PBC struggled to craft a role for itself. Amidst international division on responses to the military coup in Guinea-Bissau in 2012, the Council mandated the Secretary-General and his Special Representative with forging international consensus, but agreed no role for the PBC.<sup>21</sup> As the crisis unfolded in CAR, the PBC could not agree on a Chair for the CAR configuration (the previous Chair had resigned in April 2012 before

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<sup>18</sup> UN Peacebuilding Support Office, *Peacebuilding Review*, October 2010, [http://www.un.org/en/peacebuilding/pbso/pdf/pb\\_review\\_20101022.pdf](http://www.un.org/en/peacebuilding/pbso/pdf/pb_review_20101022.pdf), page 14.

<sup>19</sup> Dan Smith (Dec. 2013), *Study on the impact of the Peacebuilding Commission: To play to its strengths*, page 8.

<sup>20</sup> Dan Smith (Dec. 2013), *Study on the impact of the Peacebuilding Commission: To play to its strengths*.

<sup>21</sup> S/RES/2048 (2012)

the crisis had taken hold), discounting the PBC from the equation until Morocco was elected almost two years later in January 2014.

Meanwhile, a larger percentage of the UN's peacebuilding work is conducted through operational settings that are not on the PBC's agenda, including in Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of Congo, South Sudan, Afghanistan and Somalia. Increasingly peace operations are mandated to carry out peacebuilding tasks in extremely volatile and geopolitically-charged country situations.

The original logic of the PBA would have suggested that the PBC engages with the full range of these countries as and when needed in fostering coherence and advocating for their peacebuilding efforts. There are multiple reasons why this has not happened. In part it is because in these country settings, other mandate areas of peace operations (such as security) may take precedence to allow the creation of an enabling environment. In part the challenge is that parts of the UN and the Security Council lack confidence in the PBC and PBSO's strategic capacity and tools in high profile contexts; whilst the Council continues to exercise caution in allowing the PBC onto Council "turf." In part this is because the PBC's cumbersome procedures and working practices have not resonated with countries which have large international presences on the ground. And in part this is because the PBC has not managed to mobilize resources on a scale that alone would attract countries with existing large aid commitments.

The Peacebuilding Fund is widely recognized to have grown in considerable strength following independent reviews of the fund in 2009 by the UN, by donors in 2011, 2012 and 2013 and again by the UN in 2013.<sup>22</sup> Whilst the 2009 review outlined recommendations for measures to urgently improve the Fund's performance and management, by 2011-2013 the PBF was scoring consistently as good value for money and satisfactory to strong along a range of performance indicators. The Fund has supported a broad range of peace operations by filling peacebuilding funding gaps and incentivizing the UN to collaborate around common peacebuilding strategies. Countries on the PBC agenda receive proportionately more from the Fund than "non-PBC" countries.<sup>23</sup> The PBF's donor commitments and disbursements have risen steadily, reaching \$86.4m in global disbursements in 2013.<sup>24</sup> Notwithstanding the PBF's role in a broad range of countries, it remains a fairly small base compared to the large-scale donor commitments in a wider set of countries where there are UN missions. A strategic question for the PBF going forward is how it can further build synergies with, and catalyze a wider range of non-UN funds for peacebuilding.

In the context of the lack of wide traction and institutionalization for the PBA, back in 2010, the UN General Assembly led a review of the Peacebuilding Commission, co-chaired by Ireland, Mexico and the South Africa.<sup>25</sup> Whilst it was still early days for the PBC, the review was somewhat hard-hitting for a UN document. The review acknowledged early impact by the PBC, but also pointedly stated that after five years, the "threshold of success has not been achieved." It confirmed that the momentum that led to the creation of the PBC had waned, and that the PBC lacked overall vision. Countries' initial enthusiasm to join the "agenda" of the PBC had declined as the PBC had struggled to mobilize new resources, and had become associated with heavy bureaucratic processes.

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<sup>22</sup> Nicole Ball, Mariska van Beijnum (2009), *Review of the Peacebuilding Fund*. Available at: [http://www.clingendael.nl/sites/default/files/20090604%20PBF\\_Review.pdf](http://www.clingendael.nl/sites/default/files/20090604%20PBF_Review.pdf); DFID Multilateral Aid Review, PBF, 2011, 2013; Australia Multilateral Aid Review, PBF 2012;

<sup>23</sup> Dan Smith (Dec. 2013), *Study on the impact of the Peacebuilding Commission: To play to its strengths*, page 10.

<sup>24</sup> The Peacebuilding Fund, Report by the Secretary-General (A/68/722), p. 4.

<sup>25</sup> General Assembly, Security Council (July, 2010), *Review of the Peacebuilding Architecture*. United Nations: New York. Available at: [undocs.org/a/64/868](http://undocs.org/a/64/868)

The review laid out a number of recommendations aimed at making the PBC more relevant to the UN system and a wider range of conflict-affected countries. In particular:

- better coordination of all actors in the PBC and with its partners;
- renewed energy for resource mobilization among the PBC membership;
- respect for national ownership;
- above all, it noted that peacebuilding did not follow an automatic sequence of activities and that more flexible, agile and lighter forms of diplomatic engagement were needed to replace the burdensome working practices that had emerged.

To get there, the review recognized that the PBC would need a more empowered relationship with the Security Council; that it would need to be better-supported by a more strategic PBSO and synergies with the PBF; and a strengthened communications strategy to re-make the case for the PBC in the aftermath of the early skepticism.

The 2010 review confined itself to reviewing the PBC. However, it pointed to a wider challenging institutional context of the PBA. PBSO continued to struggle to define its niche. The 2010 review noted the lack of institutional memory and knowledge on peacebuilding in the office, a high turn-over of, and reliance on, seconded staff, and a tendency to duplicate the work of others rather than convene the UN system as a "centre of excellence."<sup>26</sup> Above all, the quality of the PBSO's strategic and policy work was, and continues, to be questioned. In 2013, the Center on International Cooperation found in our "deep dive" on fragile states that the PBSO had not yet fulfilled the function of coordinating peacebuilding policy and best practices for which it had been intended.<sup>27</sup>

In the years that followed the 2010 review, recommendations to the PBC were only partly implemented. The review was based on consultations with the PBC members, but commentators noted that it was not a consensus document of the geopolitical camps within the PBC itself. As a follow-up to the review, the chair of the PBC circulated a series of draft "Roadmaps", prepared with the assistance of the PBSO. Analysts have noted that these have remained at a high level of abstraction, permitting various actors to quietly undermine or simply ignore proposals that they do not like, reflecting a sense among the PBC membership that its "Organizational Committee" has lacked teeth.<sup>28</sup> In addition, the UN lead departments had felt insufficiently consulted on the review process and outcomes.<sup>29</sup>

In parallel, a rift emerged from 2011 between the PBC and the International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding (comprised of OECD donors and the g7+ group of fragile states), largely over influence and authority in global peacebuilding policy. OECD members lobbied hard with UN members for its aid effectiveness agenda, the "New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States," without extensive consultations in the first instance. This alienated some members of the PBC, who raised concerns about a Western-dominated agenda, that subordinated development to security concerns.<sup>30</sup> For its part, the PBC failed to capitalize upon

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<sup>26</sup> General Assembly, Security Council (July, 2010), *Review of the Peacebuilding Architecture*. United Nations: New York. Available at: [undocs.org/a/64/868](http://undocs.org/a/64/868)

<sup>27</sup> Jones, B.D., Tortolani, B. "Deep dive on fragile states," in Jenks, B. Jones, B.D., *UN Development at a Crossroads* (Center on International Cooperation, New York University, 2013) Available at: [http://cic.nyu.edu/sites/default/files/jones\\_tortolani\\_drive\\_fragile\\_states\\_0.pdf](http://cic.nyu.edu/sites/default/files/jones_tortolani_drive_fragile_states_0.pdf)

<sup>28</sup> Rob Jenkins, (Feb. 2013) *Peacebuilding: From Concept to Commission*. Routledge: New York. Excerpt available at: [http://books.google.nl/books?id=fZdVtK1qjVMC&pg=PT215&source=gbs\\_toc\\_r&cad=3#v=onepage&q&f=false](http://books.google.nl/books?id=fZdVtK1qjVMC&pg=PT215&source=gbs_toc_r&cad=3#v=onepage&q&f=false)

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>30</sup> For an analysis of the political debates at the UN around the security and development nexus and the objections to the "New Deal" see Jenna Slotin, Molly Elgin-Cossart, "Why Would Peace be Controversial at the United Nations?: Negotiations on the Post-2015 Development Framework" (Center on International Cooperation, New York University,

the opportunity with an institutional response to working with the g7+ countries and International Dialogue, which was left to the individual Chairs to navigate in countries which had joined the g7+. The potential result is an ever-growing network of donor-dominated peacebuilding "compacts" and aid allocations on the ground without the buy-in of all relevant powers; and a PBC that risks being marginalized from much of the action in the field. If correct, this would pose a significant step backwards from the founding days of the PBA when the need for greater international coherence was initially recognized.

A steady decline in PBC ambition and countries' interest in it and a growth in prominence of other UN and international actors who are charged with forging international coherence, coupled with low consensus on the strategic vision, objectives and ambition of the PBA within the PBC and the UN system, have become significant factors preventing the PBC and the PBSO from evolving into a more significant institutional force beyond the recognized efforts of the individual chairs of the CSCs and the PBF.

## UN peace operations and peacebuilding

This part places the PBA in the context of the evolution and expansion of wider UN peacebuilding efforts, and further detail on the existing relationships with UN peace operations. Both types of UN crisis management operations - military peacekeeping operations and civilian led special political missions - directly contribute to the peacebuilding. The intransient link between peacekeeping and peacebuilding has long been recognized. Over the past two decades, peacekeeping operations have evolved from carrying out primarily military tasks such as ceasefire monitoring to include multidimensional mandates that include a broad range of peacebuilding tasks, such as security sector reform. In 2000, five years prior to the establishment of the PBA, the Brahimi report underlined the important roles peacekeepers play in carrying out critical peacebuilding tasks. In January 2013, the Security Council passed resolution 2986, reaffirming the "importance of multidimensional peacekeeping" and highlighted the "contributions that peacekeepers and peacekeeping missions make to early peacebuilding."<sup>31</sup>

Of the 15 peacekeeping operations currently in the field, 9 are mandated by the Security Council to carry out multidimensional mandates. In the field, peacekeeping operations contribute to peacebuilding efforts by i) working with national counterparts and international partners on articulating peacebuilding priorities and providing strategic guidance; ii) assisting in establishing an enabling environment for the implementation of peacebuilding tasks; and by iii) implementing peacebuilding tasks themselves.<sup>32</sup> At the headquarters level, the UN Departments of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) and Field Support (DFS) work with the Peacebuilding Support Office as well as other partners "to ensure appropriate planning, execution, resourcing and staffing of peacebuilding aspects" of peacekeeping operations, while the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) provides crucial support to peacebuilding efforts on the country level.<sup>33</sup>

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2013) Available at <http://cic.nyu.edu/publications/why-would-peace-be-controversial-united-nations-negotiations-toward-post-2015>

<sup>31</sup> UN Department of Public Information, "Security Council Endorses Importance of 'Multidimensional' Approach to Peacekeeping Aimed at Facilitating Peacebuilding, Preventing Relapse into Conflict," 21 January 2013, available at <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2013/sc10888.doc.htm>.

<sup>32</sup> For a more detailed description see, UN Departments of Peacekeeping Operations and Field Support, "Peacekeeping and Peacebuilding: Clarifying the Nexus, September 2010, available at <http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/PKO%20Peacebuilding%20Peacekeeping%20Nexus.pdf>.

<sup>33</sup> UN Peacebuilding Support Office, Peacebuilding Review, October 2010, [http://www.un.org/en/peacebuilding/pbso/pdf/pb\\_review\\_20101022.pdf](http://www.un.org/en/peacebuilding/pbso/pdf/pb_review_20101022.pdf), page 14.



Political missions contribute to the PBA through a network of field-based missions in countries that are also on the Peacebuilding Commission's (PBC) agenda.<sup>34</sup> In addition to the UN office in Burundi, this includes integrated peacebuilding offices in Sierra Leone, Guinea-Bissau, and the Central African Republic that focus on harmonizing efforts of the UN family on the ground to carry out comprehensive peacebuilding strategies. The offices provide the PBC with a direct link to the field, which can inform guidance the Commission provides on integrated peacebuilding strategies. The PBC's proximity to key UN bodies, including the Security Council, meanwhile can benefit efforts in the field through building strategic priorities across the UN system, mobilizing resources for peacebuilding activities and by sustaining attention on post-conflict countries. The Department of Political Affairs (DPA) can apply for PBF funding to support activities and programs in political mission country settings, that functions as a flexible mechanism to fill critical peacebuilding gaps.

Peacebuilding processes are at different stages in each of the countries on the PBC's agenda and the experience of coordination between peace operations and the Commission is varied. In Sierra Leone, Burundi and Liberia combined engagement has contributed to the stabilization of the countries, while the situations in Guinea-Bissau and the Central African Republic deteriorated. Guinea-Bissau's government was toppled by a military coup in April 2012 and saw its elections that would allow for a return to constitutional order postponed until April 2014. In the Central African Republic meanwhile, rebels toppled the government in March 2013 and the ensuing violence forced the temporary relocation of staff of the UN Integrated Peacebuilding Office. Given the worsening of the security situation, the Peacebuilding Office will be replaced by a UN peacekeeping operation later this year that will take over command from the French and African Union forces that are already on the ground. The reasons for the success or failure in the various countries are wide-ranging and beyond the scope of this short overview. However, previous reviews of the PBC have shown that generally engagement between peace operations and the PBC is most effective when there is a close work relationship between the head of a UN mission and the Chair of a PBC County Configuration,<sup>35</sup> enabling closer coordination and coordination of the key actors involved and making use of the PBC's advocacy and resource mobilization role.

Meanwhile, a large percentage of the UN's peacebuilding work is conducted through operational settings of peacekeeping operations and political missions that are not on the PBC's agenda, including in the Democratic Republic of Congo, South Sudan, Afghanistan and Somalia. Increasingly peace operations are mandated to carry out peacebuilding tasks in extremely volatile country situations. In these country settings, other mandate areas such as the protection of civilians and the extension of state authority may take precedence over peacebuilding activities to allow the creation of an enabling environment. Dangerous operating environments may also restrict movement of mission staff, hindering the effective roll out of peacebuilding activities and missions still content with insufficiently flexible staffing processes that make it difficult to acquire peacebuilding experts when needed. As mentioned above, the Peacebuilding Fund can support peace operations by filling peacebuilding funding gaps, though countries on the PBC agenda receive proportionately more from the Fund than non-PBC countries.<sup>36</sup> With \$40.8 million in 2013,<sup>37</sup> the PBF also has a fairly small base, given the large scale funding needs in countries emerging from conflict.

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<sup>34</sup> These are Burundi, Sierra Leone, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia and the Central African Republic.

<sup>35</sup> Dan Smith, "Study on the Impact of the Peacebuilding Commission: To Play to its Strengths," p. 8.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid, p. 10.

<sup>37</sup> The Peacebuilding Fund, Report by the Secretary-General (A/68/722), p. 4.

Despite these obstacles, peace operations do play an important role in peacebuilding, as early peacebuilders that help create enabling environments, in providing strategic guidance to national counterparts, in harmonizing and coordinating peacebuilding activities by the UN Country Team and international actors on the ground, and by implementing peacebuilding tasks themselves. Given peace operations' central role in peacebuilding, there is a need for improved cooperation and coordination between key headquarter based actors including DPKO, DFS, DPA, the Peacebuilding Commission, the Peacebuilding Support Office and the Security Council as well as actors in the field, including national governments, heads of missions and the UN Country Teams.

## Conclusion

Given the complex range of institutional and political challenges that face the PBA on the one hand, and the complexity of current conflicts and peacebuilding requirements on the other, serious consideration needs to be given to the scope of the 2015 PBA review. Its scope should be shaped not just by form (the existing PBA construct), but the wider context in which it operates and the impact the PBA needs to have to be "relevant, catalytic and effective." Recommendations for the future role and tools of the PBA should ultimately be derived from a renewed analysis of the role of an intergovernmental PBA, alongside other international mechanisms, if countries are to finally exit a cyclical dialogue on the "value-added" of the PBA.

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**Methodological Note:** This analysis is based on a review of existing primary and secondary literature sources on the UN Peacebuilding Architecture and key-informant interviews with members of the PBC and Security Council, drawn from North and South, and with a sample of UN representatives charged with peacebuilding policy in New York. In order to make a frank contribution to international discussion, all interviews were conducted under the Chatham House Rule.

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**About the White Paper on Peacebuilding:** The White Paper on Peacebuilding is a collaborative, multi-stakeholder process initiated by the Geneva Peacebuilding Platform and supported by the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs. It has the objective to situate UN peacebuilding within the broader peacebuilding universe and to articulate visions for the future for building peace in violent and fragile contexts. The White Paper places peacebuilding within the changing characteristics of armed violence and security, and within the practical evidence of engagements in peacebuilding contexts emanating from a diversity of fields. Ensuring a better relationship between UN peacebuilding and the broader peacebuilding field is a complementary effort to the existing work surrounding the 10-year review of the UN peacebuilding architecture and an effort to take stock of the nature and evolution of the broader peacebuilding universe.

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