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# In Pursuit of Peacebuilding for Perpetual Peace

Where the UN's Peacebuilding Architecture Needs to Go

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**Working Paper**

The Future of the Peacebuilding Architecture Project

# **In Pursuit of Peacebuilding for Perpetual Peace**

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## Preface – From the Project Director

At the 2005 World Summit in New York City, member states of the United Nations agreed to create “a dedicated institutional mechanism to address the special needs of countries emerging from conflict towards recovery, reintegration and reconstruction and to assist them in laying the foundation for sustainable development”. That new mechanism was the UN Peacebuilding Commission and two associated bodies: a Peacebuilding Support Office and a Peacebuilding Fund. Together, these new entities have been characterized as the UN’s new peacebuilding architecture, or PBA.

This Working Paper is one of nine essays that examine the possible future role of the UN’s peacebuilding architecture. They were written as part of a project co-organized by the Centre for International Policy Studies at the University of Ottawa and the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs. All of the contributors to the project were asked to identify realistic but ambitious “stretch targets” for the Peacebuilding Commission and its associated bodies over the next five to ten years. The resulting Working Papers, including this one, seek to stimulate fresh thinking about the UN’s role in peacebuilding.

The moment is ripe for such rethinking: During 2010, the UN will review the performance of the PBA to date, including the question of whether it has achieved its mandated objectives. Most of the contributors to this project believe that the PBA should pursue a more ambitious agenda over the next five years. While the PBC and its associated bodies have succeeded in carving out a niche for themselves, that niche remains a small one. Yet the need for more focused international attention, expertise, and coordinated and sustained assistance towards war-torn countries is undiminished. It remains to be seen whether UN officials and the organization’s member states will rise to the challenge of delivering on the PBA’s initial promise over the next five years and beyond, but doing so will at least require a vision of what the PBA can potentially accomplish in this period. The Working Papers produced in this project are intended to provide grist for this visioning effort.

Roland Paris  
Ottawa, January 2010

# Summary

This paper suggests that the new focus on the immediate aftermath of conflict supported by the UN's Peacebuilding Architecture (PBA) crowds out important debates surrounding potential core drivers or building blocks of sustainable peace. Strengthened efforts are needed to conceptually and practically link this 'early recovery' period with longer-term peace. To respond to new and changing contexts and live up to its mandate to support peace sustainability, the PBA will need a robust strategy and structure that allows it the dynamism and flexibility needed to be responsive and effective, learning and incorporating lessons along the way. This will require the PBA to scale up in certain areas, acquiring critical skills and substantive knowledge to ensure its three bodies add value in peacebuilding contexts and better achieve their mandates. Only then will the PBA have the legitimacy and leverage it needs to play more strategic advisory and coordination functions, supporting the Secretary General in coordinating the system on matters of peacebuilding.

The paper examines five *core drivers of peace sustainability*, briefly assesses the PBA and its vision as laid out in the new SG's report on 'Peacebuilding in the Immediate Aftermath of Conflict', before discussing six key areas that fall under the two streams of *knowledge development and management* and *coordination, advising and capacity development* aimed at strengthening the PBA's potential contributions to supporting national efforts, globally, to sustain peace.

## 1. Introduction

What drives peace sustainability? Despite an encouraging decrease of wars in the last two decades, this question remains as critical today as ever. War reversion is too common, occurring in approximately 40% of countries, within five years after achieving peace. While evidence suggests that prospects for peace to sustain are improving with increased international attention, the success rate could be vastly improved, alongside our understanding of the particular forces that can facilitate or undermine this success.

In 2006, the United Nations sought to institutionalize a stronger commitment to peacebuilding in response to the global recognition that the combined efforts of the United Nations funds, agencies and programs

were not sufficiently ensuring sustainability of peace efforts. A three-pillar ‘peacebuilding architecture’ (PBA) – the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), the Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO) and the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) – was constituted. Taking stock three years later it is clear that while some progress has been made towards the achievements of each body’s mandate, there remain critical gaps in understanding and practice towards the achievement of this vision.

In 2009, the PBSO was tasked to lead the UN system in the drafting of a ‘Report of the UN Secretary General on Peacebuilding in the aftermath of conflict’ (hereafter ‘SG’s Report’). Importantly, the report shines a light on the two years following conflict seeking to address many of these critical gaps in the peacebuilding response of the international community that have been identified in recent years, and the PBSO is now tasked coordinating implementation of the report’s recommendations in partnership with other UN partners, while the PBC is expected to champion and promote the agenda.

This paper argues that, despite the numerous areas of strategic value in the SG’s Report, the focus on the immediate aftermath has submerged the critical focus of peace sustainability (a driver of the peacebuilding architecture’s original *raison d’être*) beneath a sea of operational and procedural concerns focused on gap filling and assigning tasks, crowding out important debates on what are the ingredients of an effective strategy and the potential building blocks or ‘substance’ of sustainable peace. The findings of this analysis suggest that more efforts are needed to conceptually and practically link the immediate aftermath or early recovery period following a peace agreement with longer-term peace.

To respond to new and changing contexts and live up to its mandate to support peace sustainability, the UN’s PBA *will need a robust strategy and structure that allows it the dynamism and flexibility needed to be responsive and effective, learning and incorporating lessons along the way*. There will not be one model of engagement, but rather a need for critical skills and substantive knowledge to ensure the three pillars can cogently ascertain how to engage in different situations and articulate clearly their added value and contribution. This is and will be a strategic role, and one that involves supporting the Secretary General (SG) in coordination of the system on matters of peacebuilding. But it must be based on a much stronger knowledge base; only this will give the PBA the legitimacy and leverage it needs to effectively carry out coordination and advisory functions. towards improving prospects for sustaining peace.

A strong knowledge base encompasses robust skills in context and conflict analysis, and in designing and applying methodologies to mainstream peace and conflict sensitivity in programming, policy and strategy. While there is a laudable if not very late recognition in the UN of the need for context awareness to drive analysis and strategy, this must be addressed seriously, and coupled with ongoing research and analysis that informs the development and actual sharing and use of lessons to inform better policymaking and practice. Presently there is surprisingly little research on the challenged contexts peace operations are facing, with actions that suitably follow. Contexts *are* changing; yet models are more often than not being implemented in the same uncritical manner – something the PBA is itself guilty of to date, i.e. with respect to the implementation of integrated peacebuilding strategies in the countries on its agenda, although it is making efforts now to learn and change. The PBA has a critical role to play in these areas, but needs to seriously build its capacity to do so.

The paper now considers five *core drivers of peace sustainability*, before turning in the third section to a brief review of the PBA and the vision as laid out in the SG's Report which directly affects the PBA's priorities and direction. The final section lays out analysis and recommendations in six key areas that fall under the two streams of *knowledge development and management* and *coordination, advising and capacity development*. The analysis draws on interviews with staff from the three pillars as well as Department of Peace-keeping Operations (DPKO), Department of Political Affairs (DPA) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP),<sup>1</sup> as well as my own experience with UNMIL as a Policy Advisor on Peacebuilding to the D/SRSG from 2006-2007, and other work with DPKO, UNDP and affiliated with the PBSO since then.

## 2. What Drives Sustainability?

Much of the research being undertaken on peace sustainability is of a quantitative nature and does not give much insight into the *how* and *why* particular factors may promote peace. Research is usually based on measurements associated with 'negative' peace, or the absence of

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<sup>1</sup> Interviews were held with 15 mid-level and senior staff in the PBSO, DPKO, and UNDP's Bureau of Crisis Prevention and Recovery (BCPR), at Headquarters, in September-October 2009. Interviewees were asked about their views on the PBA and wider UN section/agency roles and capacities to support peacebuilding, and the priorities for and capacity gaps around the UN's efforts to promote peace sustainability.

violent conflict, as this is deemed easier to measure. As such, there is considerable consensus that:

- More old wars have ended than new ones begun;<sup>2</sup>
- War reversion constitutes a persistent problem – approximately 40% revert to war within a decade.<sup>3</sup>

Consensus begins to dissipate, however, on the precise mechanisms or drivers of sustainability, and around factors associated with a more *positive* peace. This has much to do with causality challenges that deter researchers from focusing research in this area. Yet despite the relative lack of substantive knowledge in this area, analysts are deducing that maintaining peace is the most strategic way to reduce civil war.<sup>4</sup> The policy community tends to support this logic, with references to ‘peacebuilding principles’ that often rest on assumptions unsubstantiated by research or hard data.

The following are a set of five peace drivers, concerned with both the nature and scope of international attention and substantive priority issue areas. This is not a definitive list, but rather illustrative. While there is a high degree of consensus that each of these areas is vital in sustaining peace the *how* is more contentious, or characterized by major knowledge gaps in vital areas that generally have consensus overall with what should guide the PBA efforts in knowledge development and management.

## 2.1 Peace Operations and Sustaining International Commitment

There is emerging agreement based on multiple studies that UN peace operations are having a beneficial effect. Andrew Mack has convincingly argued that a key factor in the decline in armed conflict since the end of the Cold War has been the unprecedented upsurge of international activism designed to stop ongoing wars and prevent old ones restarting – in particular, related to UN peace operations.<sup>5</sup> While de-

<sup>2</sup> Mack, Andrew, *Global Political Violence: Explaining the Post Cold War Decline*. Coping With Crisis Working Paper Series (New York: International Peace Academy, March, 2007), 4.

<sup>3</sup> Collier, Paul, 2009, *Wars, Guns and Votes: Democracy in Dangerous Places*. New York: Harper Collins, p.77. Estimates range between 1/3-1/2, with divergence due, according to Cousens and Call (2007), in part to confusion around whether a renewed war is due to the recurrence of an old fight or outbreak of a new one, and to scholars defining data differently. Cousens and Call, ‘Ending Wars and Building Peace’, *Coping With Crisis Working Paper Series*, (New York: International Peace Academy, March 2007).

<sup>4</sup> Collier (2009:77) argues that since war reversion accounts for half of the world’s civil wars, maintaining peace is the most strategic way to reduce civil war (Collier 2009:77). Cousens and Call (2007) alternatively argue that these facts reinforce the argument that successful peacebuilding may be as important – if not more – than conflict prevention.

<sup>5</sup> This includes a six-fold increase in UN preventive diplomacy missions between 1990 and 2002; a five-fold increase in UN peacemaking missions between 1989 and 2002, a near four-fold increase in UN peace operations between 1987 and 1999, and an eleven-fold in-

termining whether or not the increased efforts to stop wars caused the decline in armed conflicts, or were simply associated with them is not easy, a growing body of quantitative and case study evidence suggests that these initiatives are improving the odds of attaining and sustaining peace.<sup>6</sup> Others point to the fact that the UN has undertaken peacebuilding roles in half of the wars that have ended since 1988.<sup>7</sup>

Two studies on peacekeeping have also shown promising trends. In a 2008 study, Sambanis found that UN missions have a ‘large, significant, positive effect on peacebuilding.’ Transformative peacekeeping (multidimensional, missions, enforcement, or transitional administration) was found to be more successful than facilitative peacekeeping (observer missions or traditional peacekeeping); the probability of peacebuilding success in such cases increases by 36%.<sup>8</sup> The study suggests results are robust to an array of specification tests and alternative estimation methods.<sup>9</sup> Collier’s research, focused on troops rather than the combination of troops and civilians, found that if \$100 million spent per year over a decade, the risk of civil war is reduced by 21%. The ratio of benefits to cost of peacekeeping to conflict is 4-1, where the estimated cost of conflict is \$20 billion versus a peacekeeping mission, \$4.2 billion.<sup>10</sup> Both Sambanis and Collier are in agreement that UN missions have more impact in the early stages of peacebuilding but that economic growth is needed to sustain piece.

This research now needs to be complemented with strong qualitative research that digs deeper into examining the peacebuilding dimensions of these multidimensional missions, the types of economic development that provide a clear ‘exit strategy’ as Collier suggests for peacekeeping missions, and the nature of transition strategies that ensure increasing government ownership over the process.

## 2.2 Coordination, Integration, Transition, Strategy

There is little disagreement that poor strategic coordination, particularly around issues of transition, undermines peacebuilding. Scholars have adequately covered this terrain,<sup>11</sup> and international policy efforts such as the Paris Declaration and ‘Three C’s Initiative’, have targeted attention on the need to improve strategic coordination amongst inter-

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crease in the number of ‘Friends of the Secretary General’ and other mechanisms designed to support local actors in ending wars and preventing them from restarting between 1989 and 2004.

<sup>6</sup> Mack, 2007, p.9

<sup>7</sup> Cousens and Call.

<sup>8</sup> Sambanis, Nicholas, 2008, ‘Short-Term and Long-Term Effects of United Nations Peace Operations’, *The World Bank Economic Review*, 22:1. p.9

<sup>9</sup> Sambanis, 2008, p.9

<sup>10</sup> Collier 2009.

<sup>11</sup> Richard Caplan’s review of ‘Measuring Piece Consolidation and Supporting Transition’ for the PBSO reviews the literature and debates on this topic.



national actors to ensure greater effectiveness of aid and intervention. Within the UN, as witnessed for example in the recent report ‘A New Partnership Agenda: Chartering a New Horizon for UN Peacekeeping’ or (hereafter, the *Horizon Study*),<sup>12</sup> the language of ‘partnerships’ appears to be rivalling that of ‘integration’, alluding to the recognition that the UN cannot achieve the ambitious goals of peace and development by turning inward only to align its strategies. Nonetheless, efforts towards developing a UN integrated strategic framework (ISF) and ensuring the rolling out of the integrated mission planning process (IMPP) illustrate an institutionalization of the belief that greater UN integration and collective strategy will serve intended impact.

While these are noteworthy efforts, they are not adequately engaging the lessons that scholars, practitioners and even policymakers have been pointing to with respect to the need for *peacebuilding* strategy to drive sustainability. Scholars, practitioners and policymakers over the last five years<sup>13</sup> have highlighted the need for the development of a strategic planning mechanism involving key UN, Government and civil society stakeholders which would undertake a number of tasks, including: a rigorous context and conflict analysis and response assessment; agreement on goals, values and principles; a prioritization process, involving analysis of sequencing and the layering of multi-dimensional efforts, as well as how cross-cutting issues link into strategic phases; determination of the timeliness and appropriateness of initiatives; resource mapping and building of partnerships; and, the setting up of monitoring, evaluation, and impact assessment mechanisms that are conflict sensitive. The ISF and IMPP do not offer guidance towards ensuring how issues of sequencing, the interaction of, and impact of different activities and variables on each other, and on the conflict context will play out – issues that lie at the heart of peacebuilding. While the PBC has had the promotion of integrated peacebuilding strategies (IPBS) at the core of its mandate, the lack of clarity about what this means and how to promote them effectively, appears to be resulting in ‘throwing the baby out with the bathwater,’ or movement to do away with this approach in PBC case countries.

At the heart of coordination and integration around strategy is the contentious question whether and how to address the root causes of conflict, and whether this is inimical to sustaining peace. This is centrally

<sup>12</sup> DPKO and Department of Field Support, “A New Partnership Agenda: Chartering a New Horizon for UN Peacekeeping” July 2009, <http://www.un.org/Depts/dpko/dpko/newhorizon.pdf>

<sup>13</sup> See Report of the Secretary-General, ‘No Exit Without Strategy: Security Council Decision-Making and the Closure or Transition of UN Peacekeeping Operations’, 20 April 2001, S/2001/394. Other reports have included: Smith, D. 2004, ‘Towards a Strategic Framework for Peacebuilding: Getting their Act Together, Overview report of the Joint Utstein Study of Peacebuilding’, Norway: Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Norway. See also, McCandless, Erin and Sam Doe, 2007, ‘Strengthening Peacebuilding Efforts in Liberia: A Discussion Document for UNMIL and the UNCT.’ Liberia: UN.

ties to the debate amongst experts on what constitutes an effective transition to sustainable peace. While there cannot be evidence for an approach that has not been systematically implemented, most would probably agree that counterfactual evidence does exist: not addressing the reasons why people went to war will undoubtedly lay seeds for future conflict. Examples here are not hard to come by, i.e. Rwanda, Angola, and Somalia and still today in Afghanistan, Iraq, DRC, and Darfur. On the other hand, the increasing acceptance of the need to have context driven approaches suggests a recognition that understanding causes of conflict must lie at the heart of strategy.

The shift in international relations from strict notions of ‘war termination’ and *realpolitik* methods of diplomacy, towards an acceptance of the need for more inclusive peacemaking and peacebuilding is indicative of this recognition. There is general agreement around the notion of pillars of peacebuilding, indicating that security, political, rule of law and development priorities need to be addressed to ensure a country is on the path to peace – although there are different views on the categorisation of these pillars. Even within the UN however, there are disagreements about which pillars are critical. There remain gaps in knowledge and understanding however, around the context specific end conflict sensitive approaches and activities within each of these pillars, as well as the nature of their interaction, and how their smooth sequencing will support peace consolidation.

Strategies and methodologies for identifying and addressing conflict factors within peace missions are slowly finding their way into guidance, i.e. in the DPA developed Integrated Strategic Assessment (ISA), while actors in peace missions on the ground in some contexts have endeavoured to address these issues in innovative ways. Additionally, experiences with different forms of benchmarking and transition planning need to be further compared and evaluated, and data collection methods for measuring peace consolidation agreed to and put into practice. Cases need to be studied and lessons learned in the commitments made by senior leadership both at headquarters and within missions to implement these approaches in order to test their utility.

### **2.3 National Capacity Development, in Particular, for Conflict Management**

National ownership of peacebuilding is an accepted imperative, supporting the fundamental principle in international relations of state sovereignty. In the last couple of years peacebuilding discourse within the UN has witnessed a transition from a primary focus on the building of state institutions, or state-building, to a wider notion of building

*national capacities* for conflict management. While this has been a recognised priority in the practitioner literature on peacebuilding for years,<sup>14</sup> the language is now present in the Secretary General's Policy Committee reference to peacebuilding, and within DPKO's 2008 *Capstone Document*.

Despite this rhetorical shift one is hard pressed to find a UN commitment to building national capacities for conflict management in post-conflict settings, in the strict sense of the term. It can be argued that the work that Civil Affairs or Political Affairs officers facilitates a return to a peaceful state of affairs where conflicts are handled non-violently and politically rather than through war. This does not however, address the personal, interpersonal, inter-group skills that are needed in a post-conflict setting to help people adopt or reconnect with ways of relating that can support the peace building process.

Effective institutions remain at the core of state functioning, and there appears a fairly strong consensus that building state institutions is a vital priority and pillar of both the early recovery and longer-term peacebuilding. Paris' path-breaking thesis of the need for institutionalization before liberalization has no doubt contributed to broad acceptance that security and political issues in early post-conflict setting have priority over perceived economic liberalization imperatives. But the technical and political challenges surrounding sequencing, no doubt contextually based, remain in need of great attention by scholars and the policy world. Moreover, as the work of the International Peace Institute, and scholar-practitioner Chuck Call in particular have illustrated, there remain significant challenges towards ensuring that state-building strategies and peacebuilding strategies are complementary and do not undermine one another.<sup>15</sup>

The linking of needed state capacity with the exiting of the peace-keeping operation was identified at least as early as the report of the Secretary General (2001) *No Exit with Strategy: Security Council decision-making on the closure or transition of United Nations peace-keeping operations*,<sup>16</sup> and has been reaffirmed to the priority since then, for example, (former) Under Secretary General Jean-Marie Guehenno's 2008 underscoring of the significance of a conceptual shift from 'exit' and 'withdrawal' to 'transition' and 'handover' of tasks for sustainable peace and development. And yet, the logical need to systematically assess capacities across state institutions linked to bench-

<sup>14</sup> The language and approach of building 'local capacities for peace' initiated by Mary Anderson's Collaborative for Development Action has over the last decade become a principal for the work of many developments in peacebuilding organizations worldwide.

<sup>15</sup> See for example Call, Charles T. with Vanessa Wyeth, *Building States to Build Peace*, (Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Rienner, 2008).

<sup>16</sup> S/2001/394, 20 April 2001.

marking for transition and handover purposes has not been methodologically developed as a principal tool to facilitate these tasks. The new SG's report also importantly points to the need for these efforts to start immediately in a post-conflict setting.

## **2.4 Economic Recovery**

It is now fairly widely accepted that economic recovery is necessary to sustain peace. While past practice has witnessed the tendency for economic recovery in war-torn countries to resume as 'normal development' policies, with strategies and tools designed for poor but otherwise stable developing countries, the last decade has seen an emerging recognition that economic recovery must be done differently in post-conflict settings. There is also an increasing awareness of the need for early recovery and longer-term development efforts to be conflict sensitive – that is, to factor awareness of contextual and, specifically, conflict issues into their design and implementation to ensure that they serve, rather than undermine, peace.

While peace and development links have always been at the heart of UN discourse, and despite this rising awareness about the need for economic recovery policies to be different in post-conflict settings, the UN and its partners have to date not made much headway in practically linking peacebuilding thinking and practice with economic recovery for maximum effect. Two recent reports however, hold more promise in this regard: BCPR published a major report on 'Post-Conflict Economic Recovery', and the new SG's report highlighted the importance of increased attention to this area. The SG's report highlights that jumpstarting economic recovery 'can be one of the greatest bolsters of security, and provides the engine for future recovery' (para. 18). Three of the six 'recurring priority areas where further clarity and predictability are needed, both within the United Nations system and among key partners' are: early employment generation, other aspects of economic revitalization, and the rehabilitation of basic infrastructure. There is however, no reference to the types of economic policies needed, a critical variable in the equation.

Ensuring that economic recovery drives peace sustainability is not a challenge that can be left to the World Bank, or to traditional macro-economists who work from assumptions that economic growth is, automatically, the driver of development and peace. The centrality of growth to post-conflict economic recovery efforts is consistently accepted by international organizations without critical debate surrounding the need to contextualize this priority and understand its relationship with other priorities. The UN's own concepts of human development and pro-poor growth are rarely visible in discussions of eco-

conomic recovery, where World Bank officials take the lead in these discussions, even where there are peace operations and critical security issues remain. Identifying economic policies that promote growth while not increasing poverty and inequality, in particular horizontal inequality, and that do not exacerbate other conflict factors is a challenge requiring attention across relevant sections, agencies and organizations.

More critical analysis both within and outside the UN suggests that economic recovery is an approach focused on enabling government and communities to rebuild and economically recover from war and other crises in new and transformative ways that can facilitate the consolidation of peace. Economic recovery efforts should build upon and maximize the utility of earlier humanitarian efforts, and lay foundations for sustainable and longer-term development. Such efforts should seek to transform the societal economic structures that were part and parcel of the conflict era. In so doing, economic recovery strategies should support the survival needs of local populations, build basic capacities for economic governance, support livelihood creation at the community level, and assist in the protection and rehabilitation of productive assets and infrastructures. It is also believed that increases in production in agriculture, manufacturing, and construction, the resumption of savings and credit are needed for supporting the establishment of small enterprises and commerce, and building capacity a raising domestic revenue are likely to constitute important priorities. Given high demands for expenditure in such settings it is likely that foreign donors with financial resources will need to play a significant role in economic recovery.<sup>17</sup> Tough questions about the nature and methods of integration into the world economy for these vulnerable post conflict economies need to be addressed.

## 2.5 Addressing Obstacles

Driving peace also involves addressing the obstacles to peace. Finally, the largely unaddressed topic of what undermines peace sustainability is in dire need of attention. In addition to the obvious counterpoints to the issues noted above, i.e. poor coordination and economic insecurity, there are other serious problems for peace sustainability. A recent report commissioned by DPKO's Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) section comparatively analyses contextual obstacles to sustain DDR, which effectively undermine the wider goal of peacebuilding. These include:

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<sup>17</sup> The Peacebuilding Initiative has done extensive research on economic recovery and peacebuilding, comprehensively reviewing the literature and debates. <http://www.peacebuildinginitiative.org/>; BCPR's 2008 report, 'Post-Conflict Economic Recovery: Enabling Local Ingenuity' comprehensively considers the key elements of economic recovery in post-conflict settings.

- Proliferation of unregulated armed groups and their lack of regular inclusion in DDR and SSR processes;
- Poorly regulated natural resources, illicit drugs and organised crime;
- Lack of trust in the peace process;
- Lacking political will and appropriate mandates for which progress can be measured and held accountable.

While some of these issues are studied in ‘pockets’ within the UN, there is little coordinated strategic effort to address them systematically, and this is visibly undermining peace operation effectiveness.<sup>18</sup>

## 3. The UN’s Peacebuilding Architecture: Refining the Vision

### 3.1 Vision and Mandate

The PBC is an advisory subsidiary organ of the General Assembly and the Security Council. The core pillars of its mandate focus around *marshalling resources and sustaining attention* through predictable early and sustained financing, supporting *coordination and strategy* of all actors through information and the development of integrated strategies, and developing *best practices*.

While envisaged as a small office to support the work of the PBC, the PBSO has had difficulty carving out an identity and gaining traction for its work in the collective efforts and interests around peacebuilding within the UN. This has much to do with the competing visions of Member States for the PBC more generally, and the turbulence of PBSO leadership which has seen four leaderships (one Acting), with different visions of the body’s role, during its short period of existence.

The PBSO has generally articulated its role as helping to sustain peace in conflict-affected countries by garnering international support for nationally-owned and -led peacebuilding efforts, with key tasks including:

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<sup>18</sup> The report examines DDR ‘2<sup>nd</sup> generation’ activities across various missions, pointing to the increasing presence of these obstacles to the sustainability of DDR, and by association, peace. McCandless, Erin, ‘2<sup>nd</sup> Generation DDR Practices in UN Peace Operations: A Contribution to the New Horizon Agenda’ (Paper commissioned by DPKO, DDR Section, 2009).

- Providing support to the work of the PBC;
- Administering the PBF;
- Coordination and strategy – catalyzing the UN System, on behalf of the SG, and partnering with external actors to develop IPBS and marshal resources;
- Serving as a knowledge centre for lessons learned and good practices on peacebuilding.

The PBF, launched on 11 October 2006, aims to address immediate needs as countries emerge from conflict. With initial funding target set at US\$ 250 million, the PBF has, as of 31 July 2009, gone beyond this target, with US \$309,686,180 deposited in its accounts. The PBF focuses on providing support during the very early stages of a peacebuilding process, specifically to:

- Address critical funding gaps and provide support to interventions of direct and immediate relevance to peacebuilding processes; and,
- To provide catalytic funding and encourage sustained funding mechanisms and engagement by other agencies and donors.

In response to two recent evaluations, one by the UN Office for Internal Oversight Services (OIOS)<sup>19</sup> and one initiated by donors,<sup>20</sup> the PBF has recently revised its ToR in two ways. It now has a new objective of supporting efforts to revitalise the economy and generating immediate peace dividends to the population at large. Secondly, the Fund's three-window architecture has consolidated into two: an Immediate Response Facility (IRF), which provides emergency funding for immediate peacebuilding and recovery needs, and a Peacebuilding and Recovery Facility (PRF) which provides longer-term peacebuilding and recovery support.

The PBF evaluations otherwise produced broadly positive assessments while recognizing challenges and suggesting areas in need of improvement. The OIOS argued that the PBF needed to become faster, more efficient and more strategic to fulfil its vision. The donor evaluation highlighted the body's difficult start and political demands from headquarters to disburse rapidly, before PBF systems were in place. Achievements highlighted included the PBF's promotion of learning about peacebuilding issues and processes, and its raising of funds. Beyond management and operational challenges, strategic issues included lack of conceptual clarity around peacebuilding and consequent priorities and criteria to inform selection at different phases, as well as a lack of clarity and shared understanding about the PBF's

<sup>19</sup> OIOS Evaluation Report, Assignment No. IED-08-06, 30 December 2008.

<sup>20</sup> Governments of Canada, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and the United Kingdom.

role, capacities and limitations amongst stakeholders.

While the PBF has been thoroughly and recently evaluated, the PBC and the PBSO have not. Various institutional reports and scholarly papers, as well as interviews conducted for this study, have called attention to the following:

- ***Marshalling resources and sustaining attention:*** Several point to evidence of the PBC facilitating long-term attention on its official case countries, but insufficient achievements with respect to marshalling resources and early financing – the latter is logical given that the first cases chosen were well beyond the early recovery period.<sup>21</sup>
- ***Coordination and strategy:*** Coordination performance is considered mixed, with the principal challenge lying in the multiple centres of deliberation and decision-making around the PBC’s work, although the limited engagement by the Secretary General, needed to drive coherent strategy across the UN, has also been highlighted.<sup>22</sup> Resistance from member states to the idea of a UN body holding them financially and politically accountable for their commitments, has also been highlighted, resulting in a lack of rigour and a failure to empower the PBC to effectively monitor commitments.<sup>23</sup> While many consider that the PBC has illustrated value in creating linkages between political/ security and financial/development actors on the ground in its case countries,<sup>24</sup> the lack of clarity about the nature of a ‘peacebuilding strategy’ has been a major problem, exacerbated by the lack of best practice to draw from.<sup>25</sup> Problems of sequencing and coordination between the interventions of the PBC and PBF have been pointed to, where the PBF was funding short-term projects disengaged from, and prior to, the wider strategic framework spearheaded by the PBC.<sup>26</sup> There are divergent views on PBC achievements in terms of encouraging broader citizen and regional organization engagement.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Center on International Cooperation (CIC) and the International Peace Institute (IPI), “Taking Stock, Looking Forward: A Strategic Review of the Peacebuilding Commission”, (New York: CIC/IPI April 2008); Scott, Amy, “The Peacebuilding Commission: An Early Assessment”, *Journal of Peacebuilding and Development*, (4:2:7-19, 2008).

<sup>22</sup> CIC/IPI 2008. A point also highlighted in interviews with PBSO and other UN section staff.

<sup>23</sup> Scott.

<sup>24</sup> Street, Anne M., Howard Mollet and Jennifer Smith, 2008, ‘Experiences of the PBC in Sierra Leone and Burundi’, *Journal of Peacebuilding and Development*, 4:2:33-46; CIC/IPI 2008.

<sup>25</sup> Scott.

<sup>26</sup> Street.

<sup>27</sup> Kwesi Aning and Ernest Ansah Lartey, in this volume, and Tim Murithi, 2008, have criticized the lack of institutional collaboration with its regional partners. Murithi argues that if the PBC wants to avoid ‘UN-building’ and contribute to genuine peacebuilding it will have to overcome UN tendencies toward bureaucratic ‘turf battles’ and work to partner



- **Best practices:** In general it is felt that this role has not been particularly well-developed.<sup>28</sup> The value of the Working Group on Lessons Learned (WGLL) within the PBC is not felt to have achieved much, in particular with little follow-up from its other bodies such as the Organisational Committee or the Country Specific Configurations (CSCs). Within the PBSO, while its Policy-Planning Branch is tasked with conducting research, analysis and knowledge management, the nature and scope of this role has been much deliberated, and not particularly valued or given space to develop. These are discussed in more detail in the next sections.

Various reports highlight the PBC's slow start, and excessive focus on procedures and process, while providing considerable leeway to the bodies given the difficulties of a new actor having to establish itself within a contested peacebuilding environment. Ironically, the problem with many of these early assessments is that they are guilty of the very critique they launch against these institutions – they remain comfortably in the realm of critiquing process rather than substance. Several speak about advances made by the PBC in moving the political and financial aspects of recovery into greater interaction, and, for example, the need to streamline modalities for interaction with the World Bank and the IMF.<sup>29</sup> None, however, addresses the substance of recovery, and specifically what the PBC, PBSO and PBF are doing to help us understand and support policies and programs that will actually help sustain peace. Additionally, with the exception of Street's assessment highlighting sequencing problems between the PBF and the PBC, there has been little analysis examining the strategic interaction of the three bodies, and how they can work more actively together to produce optimal results.

### 3.2 The Immediate Aftermath Report: Arguments, Strengths and Weaknesses

The new 'SG's Report on peacebuilding in the immediate aftermath of conflict' (A/63/881-S/2009/304) now constitutes a focal point of the PBC and PBSO's work and as such, deserves consideration before assessing future directions.

At its core, the SG's report argues that the immediate post-conflict environment (first 2 years) offers a window of opportunity to deliver on immediate peacebuilding priorities, which it outlines as: provision

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with and empower local institutions to meet the challenges at hand. Murithi, Tim, 2008, "Peacebuilding" or "UN-Building"? African Institutional Responses to the PBC', *Journal of Peacebuilding and Development*, 4:2:47-59.

<sup>28</sup> Interviews with staff. See also: MacKinnon, Michael G. 'The United Nations Peacebuilding Architecture: Bridging the Knowledge Gaps' (Unpublished paper, presented at the International Studies Association, New York, March 2009).

<sup>29</sup> CIC/IPA, 5.

of basic security; peace dividends; shore up and build confidence in the political process; and the need to strengthen core national capacity to lead peacebuilding efforts. The report admits failures, in particular that the UN has failed to catalyze a response that delivers immediate, tangible results. Capacities and resources have been too limited to meet the needs on ground. In response, an agenda is set forth around themes of:

- Stronger, more effective and better supported teams on the ground;
- Early agreement on priorities with resources to back them;
- Strengthened national ownership and capacity building, from the outset;
- Enhancing the UN's ability to respond, in concert with other partners.

Overall the report importantly assumes security – development linkages and highlights the importance of getting new emphasis to economic recovery in early peacebuilding efforts. It also tries to link mechanisms and processes and frameworks, and usefully suggests a UNCT role in early efforts, and the need for peace operations to build upon UNCT capacities, although without addressing the reality that they may not in some cases have the requisite capacities. At the same time, there are a number of weaknesses within the report that arguably undermine the UN's ability to sustain peace and at the same time, present problems for a strong and effective PBA. These include that it:

- **Limits its focus on the first two years without clear conceptual or practical linkages to issues of sustainability:** Notably, the PBA's work has not even been in this two-year period, and therefore it cannot derive and share lessons from any of its own work in this area. Similarly, there is insufficient attention to transition strategies; a two year timeframe does not provide the time required for a smooth humanitarian-development response;
- **Assumes that development will sustain peace:** The emphasis on early recovery, with embedded assumptions that agencies will then pick up the peacebuilding effort simply by undertaking development is problematic. Peacebuilding is more than development;
- **Assumes political conditions are supportive:** In many current peace operations political conditions are not supportive - a key obstacle to peace consolidation – and yet there is a little concentrated research and analysis on this topic (see above, drivers and obstacles);
- **Assumes international community knows how to build capacity to sustain peace:** Methods and strategies for capacity development you need to be examined, strengthened and taught to staff

going to work in the field towards ensuring coherence and effectiveness;

- **Suggests the usual pillars of peacebuilding without serious discussion of strategy and sequencing:** There is no guidance or suggestion that guidance must be developed or that capacities are needed here;
- **Lacks alignment of strategic assessments, frameworks and tools:** While there are vague references to the creation of an ‘iterative process’ between them, aligning these tools and ensuring complementarity and harmonization, in some cases, it is vital for improved coordination. This was also a missed opportunity to suggest how the UN could be an honest broker between the international community and the host country through such frameworks and mutual accountability mechanisms;
- **Does not explain how the UN will support peace dividends:** It is suggested that the UNCT can support early peace dividends, although this is an area that needs examination and drawing out of best practices – towards ensuring they are conflict sensitive and tied to potentially longer-term, sustainable impacts, lest they simply raise expectations that cannot ultimately be fulfilled;
- **Economic recovery references vague:** While they are importantly highlighted, as suggested earlier, they are not well elaborated, and the role of economic policy is not mentioned;
- **Does not discuss how research and data collection will be undertaken to inform priorities in early setting:** In many post-conflict settings there is a dearth of data. This constitutes a critical early priority that should inform strategic planning and the ongoing development of strategic frameworks.

Perhaps most importantly, the report does not ask tough questions or allude to the need for ongoing critical reflection, or a mechanism to ensure this: Given questioned progress on sustaining peace to date, this should be an obvious priority – hard and ongoing attention towards the question of *are we doing the right thing*.

## 4. Strengthening the UN Peacebuilding Architecture to Facilitate Sustaining Peace

The increased contributions of the PBC, the PBSO and the PBF to peace sustainability will logically derive from, firstly, increased

shared understanding about what sustains peace, and secondly, from the PBA having a clear and legitimate role in promoting and driving efforts that work towards this. There are of course multiple variables that are difficult to assess that will no doubt affect strategy development and effectiveness.<sup>30</sup>

While there is a fair amount of consensus on the role of the PBF, there are very different visions for the PBC, which have ramifications for scope of work of the PBSO. Some suggest two views operating are that the PBC should be: (1) a body that complements the work of other UN organs and agencies and international actors by filling the much-needed role of a flexible and fast provider of peace dividends in the early recovery period; and (2) a body that informs the Security Council of needs and potential crises at a strategic level, mainstreams peacebuilding throughout the UN system, raises funds to meet peacebuilding needs, integrates peacebuilding with other existing ‘pillars’ in the UN system and works to unify international actors through IPBS and the country-specific configurations (CSCs).<sup>31</sup> Analysis here suggests something more nuanced and adaptive, though definitely going beyond the first view in terms of the early recovery time phase – which incidentally the PBC does not have experience with, and while not engaging in ambitious overstretch suggested by the second view.

The discussion that follows focuses on two key priority areas in need of attention for the PBA to make a greater contribution to peace sustainability: *knowledge development and management* and *coordination and capacity development* – both of which build upon and seek to strengthen clarity around their existing place in the PBA mandate.<sup>32</sup> This paper argues that *the latter must be built on the former; for the PBC and PBSO to be able to effectively support the Secretary General’s efforts to coordinate the international community in peacebuilding and support capacity development efforts both within the UN and respected national actors, this must emerge from a strong knowledge base.*

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<sup>30</sup> These include how other sections and agencies develop and understand their own peacebuilding work, and what space the system overall will allow. Interviews with DPKO and DPA staff suggest their growing ambitions in areas that may be considered peacebuilding and strong perceptions of the need to limit the actual and potential role for the PBA, which is not operational in peace missions. What scope the Security Council moves to create for the PBC to operate independently is also a central factor that will shape the peacebuilding institutions’ strategic development and effectiveness.

<sup>31</sup> From report by the Stanley Foundation on a conference brought together representatives of member states and senior UN officials 2009:11. Stanley Foundation, “Peacebuilding Following Conflict,” A Report of the Conference Organized by the Stanley Foundation on 19-21 June 2009

<sup>32</sup> <http://www.stanleyfoundation.org/publications/report/PeacebulidingRpt809.pdf>  
 Knowledge development and management captures both the PBC’s mandate to identify best practices and the PBSO’s work in the area of research, analysis and knowledge management for peacebuilding – both of which, to date, are still in their nascent stage of development. The coordination and capacity development role of the PBC with the support of the PBSO builds upon existing interpretations and actual work in these areas.

While the focus here is more on the PBC and PBSO, it is vital that much more attention is given to consideration of how the three bodies work together. The valuable work that the PBF is doing, not to mention the power that comes with the resources it has to offer, must be used for maximum strategic effect that are will be found in the three bodies harmonizing efforts. Related to this, the analysis does not suggest that other areas, such as the marshalling of resources and sustaining international attention, should not continue to be critical priorities of the PBA. Rather, given the breadth of the topic this analysis simply focuses on two foundational elements that, if strengthened, will positively impact the effectiveness of other areas.

#### 4.1 Knowledge Development and Management

Despite an SG's Policy Committee decision for the PBSO to 'serve as a knowledge base for peacebuilding lessons learned, drawing upon the range of capacities and knowledge in the UN system,' there has generally not been a strong commitment by PBSO leadership in this area. This lack of commitment, buttressed by some member states and senior leadership, is compounded by more pervasive weaknesses within the UN and other large bureaucracies in learning, absorbing, applying and sharing lessons.<sup>33</sup> As well, there remains astonishingly little discussion of the substantive drivers of, and obstacles to, sustainability – needed foundational elements of this knowledge base. The somewhat new and intensive focus on context, as noted earlier, is laudable, but should be approached more critically. Adherence to 'context' may actually prove a way to avoid engaging in substantive research and analysis across cases on substantive issues. At the same time, while the UN is exceedingly strong on its traditional areas of thematic expertise, there is a dearth of robust contextual knowledge of the countries and regions within which the UN is operating.

In spite of these challenges PBSO staff, particularly within the Policy and Planning Section, have sought to develop knowledge products, in some cases succeeding, and in other cases, not<sup>34</sup>. On the other hand, the Community of Practice for UN Peacebuilding (PBCoP) is making an extraordinary contribution through regular on-line thematic discus-

<sup>33</sup> Former PBSO Senior Policy Analyst Richard Ponzio has written that a strong role for the PBC and PBSO as a 'knowledge hub' on peacebuilding policy matters has been deeply questioned – where it was often inferred that 'suggesting that everything that needs to be known about successful peacebuilding has already been learned and absorbed by the relevant institutions'. Ponzio, Richard, *Life after exit: UN reform and the new peacebuilding architecture*, unpublished manuscript, p.10.

<sup>34</sup> For example, serious efforts were made within the Policy and Planning section over an extended period to develop a proposal and mobilize support for a *Peacebuilding Policy Research Network* designed to support research and networking among researchers and practitioners in war affected countries and to inform and facilitate policy dialogue. The PPRN however, did not achieve its funding aims, a result it is believed, of lack of donor confidence in the body during a time of leadership tumultuousness. Since this time, commitment has waned.

sions leading to the establishment of a variety of knowledge products, uniting over 800 peacebuilding practitioners from across the UN system. The PBSO's long-awaited "Monitoring Peace Consolidation: UN Practitioners Guide to Benchmarking" also promises to be an important knowledge product – with potential to contribute to conceptual and practical coherence on these issues beyond the PBA and conceivably beyond the borders even of the UN.

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The *PBC Working Group on Lessons Learned* (WGLL) is also an important mechanism for knowledge development and management, aiming to inform PBC engagement by distilling lessons from previous national and international experiences in post-conflict engagements. While to date the WGLL's effectiveness has been deeply questioned PBSO senior staff are exploring how to strengthen its role and impact, especially in linking it to more formal deliberations on norms, principles, and policy issues taken up in the PBC's Organizational Committee.

The following are three suggested priority areas that substantively ground and consolidate the PBSO and PBC's knowledge management role, clarifying its added value and strengthening its legitimacy for convening and coordination.

#### **4.1.1 Shaping consensus around concepts and goals**

As one senior PBSO official noted, 'we can't measure if we can't define'. And yet, achieving consensus on the meaning of peacebuilding has been highly contentious and in practice there is little shared understanding to guide collective strategic action. Interviewees expressed concern that trying to achieve consensus might do more harm than good, that the term presently means everything and nothing and doesn't lend itself to rigour, and is regularly being conflated with integration. A particularly troubling concern shared by several interviewees, was the prevailing real lack of understanding of the meaning of peacebuilding on the part of much of senior management across the UN – particularly troubling considering the more than three year institutionalization of the PBA. Moreover the new SG's report does not bring clarity on the relationship between the immediate post-conflict period and longer-term peacebuilding.

There is now more use, it seems, of the terms 'stabilisation' and 'peace consolidation', which are not officially 'owned' by any one section or agency, and as such, there seems to be less anxiety about defining them. Peacebuilding has been defined by the SG's Policy Committee, which in 2007 adopted the following definition:

Peacebuilding involves a range of measures targeted to reduce the risk of lapsing or relapsing into conflict by strengthening national capacities at all levels for conflict management, and to lay the foundations for sustainable peace and development. Peacebuilding strategies must be coherent and tailored to the specific needs of the country concerned, based on national ownership, and should comprise a carefully prioritized, sequenced, and therefore relatively narrow set of activities aimed at achieving the above objectives.

In practice interpretations waiver with implications for the operationalisation of peacebuilding. While DPKO's 2008 *Capstone Document* used the first part of this definition it departed over the second, referring to a more maximalist notion of the need to address the structural roots of conflict. A more cautious direction is however reflected in the more recent 'Horizon Study', which emphasizes the 'core capacities and comparative advantage' of UN peacekeeping in more traditional areas of supporting the national political process and provision of basic safety and security. With DPKO leading in the rolling out and management of multidimensional, integrated missions, it's understanding of peacebuilding and how the requisite civilian staff capacities for which it is responsible are operationalised will be pivotal in determining peacebuilding outcomes.

The PBA should not shy away from these debates but rather work to build consensus and greater shared understanding through the provision of clear documentation and analysis around the status of disagreements and accord. Such efforts should be led by the policy side of the PBSO, in full coordination with other parts of the house. While the adoption of one definition may not be feasible or necessary, ensuring a greater awareness of the concepts and debates, and a commitment to actors being explicit about their concepts underlying their strategies is fundamental to making progress on enhancing effectiveness of the UN peace operations.

Related to this is the need for a shared communications strategy for UN peacebuilding. This is important at the international level, as well as at the national level where the UN has peace operations. A national level communications strategy will no doubt have to be somewhat contextualized given the importance of national ownership of peacebuilding. The PBSO can work with the public information sections of other departments and agencies in this endeavour.

#### **4.1.2 Undertaking, promoting, and consolidating knowledge development around conflict and context analysis**

The UN is beginning to recognise that conflict and context analysis are vital components of strategic assessment and planning for effective peace operations – something scholars and practitioners have long

been calling for.<sup>35</sup> In most countries where there are peace operations there is no shared conflict analysis guiding operations.<sup>36</sup> Worse still, the impressive political analysis undertaken within the mission as well as the wider political, social and even economic analysis undertaken by Political and Civil Affairs Officers, is rarely shared horizontally in ways that support strategic coordination. Recently adopted DPA developed UN Strategic Assessment Guidelines<sup>37</sup> place strong emphasis on conflict analysis, analysis of priority objectives for peace consolidation, and the articulation of UN strategic options to address the situation in the country. At the same time, this is an internal UN document, which conflicts with the desire to have jointly owned (and government-led) peacebuilding strategies. It remains to be seen if these political analyses will support wider strategic coordination around peacebuilding and the development of robust transition strategies. This is what is needed.

The PBC, PBF and PBSO do not have expertise in conflict analysis, and nor have they positioned themselves, to date, to have an added value in this regard – i.e. by even coordinating other sections and agencies' work and contributions in this area to support contextual analysis for peacebuilding. If anything, the cart has led the horse within the PBA on this matter, as the PBF's request for countries to develop a Priority Plan involving articulation of peacebuilding priorities, which logically derive from analysis of its existing conflict issues and overall strategy, whose development is supported by the PBC/PBSO. In the case of Burundi, the Priority Plan development came before the PBC's efforts to support the development of an integrated peacebuilding strategy, which raised appropriate questions and critiques about the proper sequencing of PBC and PBF efforts on the ground.

While non-conflict experts and in fact many UN staffers from different departments often assume that anyone can do this work, and that by simply having a representative from each section and agency present in any given assessment all the bases will be covered for a good conflict analysis, this is simply not the case. *Such assumptions ensure practice replicates the persistent peacebuilding problem of addressing*

<sup>35</sup> For example, see: Smith, Dan, 2004, 'Towards a strategic framework for peacebuilding: getting their act together' Overview report of the Joint Utstein Study of Peacebuilding. Norway: Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Norway. Also: McCandless, Erin and Samuel Doe, 2007.

<sup>36</sup> While there are security threat analyses, different sections have their sectoral analysis, i.e. political analysis, rule of law analysis, etc. One is hard-pressed to find a shared conflict analysis across sections, and in fact a culture of vertical analysis and reporting mechanisms mediates against this. Liberia is an exception, where conflict analysis was prioritized at the start efforts to strengthen the UN's approach to peacebuilding with the government. For detailed explanation of this, see McCandless, Erin, 2008, 'Integrated Approaches to Peacebuilding in Transitional Settings: Lessons from Liberia', *ISS Paper*, South Africa: Institute for Security Studies.

<sup>37</sup> Approved by the SG in May 2009.



*everything without being strategic.* Conflict analysis both requires a specialized process, and substantive context-based knowledge that is best derived from national actors or people who have been in-country for a long period of time.

Conflict analysis lies at the heart of peacebuilding and will serve to ensure that planning is based on needs rather than, as one interviewee offered, ‘who shouts the loudest from the supply-side’. The PBC, PBF and PBSO should have considerable capacity in conflict analysis. This would both serve to ensure that strategic assessment processes leading to the development of peace operations, or transition from one type of operation to another, rest on a thorough conflict analysis, and that they can support capacity development of headquarters and field staff, and potentially even national actors in peace operations settings. The three bodies are also well-placed to ensure that assessments are not only security/political or developmental, but bridge each of these important areas.

#### **4.1.3 Conducting research on drivers and obstacles to sustainability; consolidating best practices and lessons learned**

The PBC’s mandate for *disseminating, and basing recommendations on, relevant best practices and lessons learned* is being actualized primarily through the WGLL as well as periodic Thematic Working Group sessions of the CSCs, and Strategy and Policy Dialogues organized through the Organizational Committee. The PBCoP is also materialising into a critical tool for consolidating best practices, with consistently impressive participation across missions in strategic discussions and debates. How the derived lessons are assessed, packaged, and shared will be vital to strengthening PBSO’s role in this area.

Unfortunately, the WGLL has so far been somewhat discredited as a ‘talk shop’ on thematic issues that are not meaningfully connected to the work of the CSC’s, or targeted at achieving broader strategic outcomes.<sup>38</sup> A 2007 WGLL on ‘Peacebuilding Strategic Frameworks’ is illustrative, where many important issues were set out and not followed up on, despite the timeliness: over these next two years other departments picked up steam and consolidated policy frameworks – with little substantive input from the PBA. While some PBSO staff sought to have an impact in this area in general there was not sufficient institutional commitment to ensure results in this critical area for sustained peacebuilding. The result is that peacebuilding considerations are also not sufficiently evident within these new frameworks (see below). Presently there are efforts within the PBSO to try to im-

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<sup>38</sup> MacKinnon (2009:9): writes about a number of PBC members calling for a complete overhaul or its retirement as a component of the PBC.

prove the strategic impact of the WGLL, including closer linkages to policy debates in the Organizational Committee and in the work of the CSCs. Its real added value should be seen as a convener that can bring important partners to the table, but the value of these meetings will ultimately lie in the commitment given to preparation and follow-up – both of which rest on solid knowledge development and management, and effective coordination and strategic planning.

The PBSO's role on these issues should be even wider. It should engage in and consolidate scholar and practitioner efforts to understand the drivers of, and obstacles to, sustainability – both through the understanding of context rich cases, and also any emerging trends across them. While there is emerging wide and positive consensus that contextual factors must shape strategy, the research and analysis of lessons across cases cannot halt. The proposed PPRN could have provided an ideal forum for gathering and dialoguing on these issues. Additionally, the PBSO could have a stronger analytical team to analyze the multiple efforts being undertaken by the three arms of the peacebuilding architecture as well as the incredibly rich shared experiences coming out of the community of practice discussions. This team could analyze and draw lessons, developing different learning tools to disseminate this knowledge. The PBSO could also run regional workshops with PBCoP participants to further consolidate and disseminate lessons learned, much like BCPR does with its Peace and Development Advisors. Finally, the PBSO was a partner with the Humanitarian Policy and Conflict Research (HPCR) and the program on HPCR at Harvard University on the development of the *Peacebuilding Initiative* website, a web-based portal aiming to enhance the work of peacebuilding practitioners and policy makers by facilitating information sharing, promoting critical discussion and building the peacebuilding community. This embodies a wealth of substantive information on peacebuilding that could support these investigations.

Such efforts would also provide a substantive base to inform coordination and advising functions. Substantive knowledge on drivers and obstacles of sustainability could greatly inform thinking about stabilization and peace consolidation benchmarks, giving the PBSO a stronger role in discussions around benchmarking. It could also inform strategic planning for mission start-up, and peacebuilding functions needed at different phases of the conflict cycle to address both obstacles and drivers of sustainability.

Priority issues that require urgent attention include procedural as well as substantive drivers and obstacles of sustaining peace. In addition to the obstacles noted above (section 2.5), these could include:

- Effective sequencing of priorities and robust transition strategies;
- National ownership of peacebuilding and democratic institution-building;
- Conflict sensitive economic recovery strategies and peace dividends.

As alluded to above in the discussion on economic recovery, the UN needs its own competence in this area to ensure that economic policy upholds the values of the UN and contributes to sustained peace. While UNDP/BCPR does some work in this area, research and knowledge development is not a strong priority, and the PBSO can support efforts here to identify effective links between the security/political and development streams of UN activity in support of peacebuilding.

With respect to poorly regulated natural resources, illicit drugs and organized crime, in many countries where UN peace operations exist, it is widely acknowledged that these are problems undermining peace consolidation. Meanwhile the UN's capacity to act on these issues is limited, and its knowledge base on these issues somewhat lacking. Worse still, political elites are often involved in drugs production and trade or natural resource exploitation and/or organized crime, which undermine state authority and legitimacy.<sup>39</sup>

#### **4.2 Coordination, Advising and Capacity Development**

While the precise nature of the PBC/PBSO's coordination role remains contested, this analysis supports a role in this area with advisory functions where appropriate, driven by flexibility and adaptation, with a commitment to working from a solid knowledge base and sound commitment to national capacity development. Critically, these bodies must remain vigilant about only intervening to coordinate where there is need and they have clear added value to do so. Promisingly, the PBC seems to have learned lessons from the somewhat painful efforts to design and implement IPBS, and there seems to be a general recognition of the need to move towards a more nuanced, flexible role that supports bottom-up efforts and strengthens the peacebuilding dimensions of existing strategic frameworks and/or works to fill gaps left by them. As a non-operational intergovernmental advisory body under the UN Security Council and General Assembly the PBC does not have a political mandate or capacity to undertake a strong coordination role in-country and it must be careful about stepping into areas

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<sup>39</sup> McCandless, 2009.

where others have competence, exacerbating the potential for turf wars.

Nonetheless, there are important coordination gaps in peacebuilding that continue to need the PBC's and PBSO's support, suggested here. Each of these areas must be squarely linked to capacity development of national actors, and to supporting the *development of* national ownership of the peacebuilding process – something that cannot be assumed as pre-existing.<sup>40</sup> While the SG's report emphasizes the importance of the PBC in encouraging relevant actors to channel human and financial resources to national capacity development, it does not critically connect these efforts to coordination efforts through strategic frameworks and benchmarking processes. This lies at the heart of understanding and promoting smoother transition processes.

#### **4.2.1 Contributing to the consolidation, coherence and peacebuilding impacts of strategic assessments and strategy frameworks, as well as entry and exit strategies**

While the new SG's report goes some way in laying out a path for greater consolidation coherence of strategic assessment and strategy frameworks within the UN system, there remain some ambiguities which raise questions for consolidation, coherence and peacebuilding impacts. These include the relationships between:

- Strategic Assessments and Post Conflict Needs Assessments (PCNAs); it is unlikely that these can be consolidated given the DPA lead on political/security elements, and the World Bank/UN Development Operations Coordination Office/European Commission lead on development, which occur at different times in the mission planning and with different partners – i.e. governments are involved in the latter;
- The UN's own frameworks: the agency-led UNDAFs and the secretariat-led ISFs; while in some cases the UNDAFs are being considered for their ability to be used as ISFs, this raises obvious questions about the expected leadership of SRSGs in the latter, where SRSGs do not normally participate in the former;
- UN frameworks and national frameworks, namely the ISF and the PRSP, and where and how these relate to the (SG report) proposed 'national framework for peace consolidation and recovery';

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<sup>40</sup> McCandless, 2008, p.9, points out that government ownership presumes sufficient awareness of and belief in a peacebuilding approach, as well as the political will and capacity to undertake and prioritize peacebuilding processes and concerns. Such assumptions may well be overstated in a post-conflict setting where a wealth of competing priorities and interests exist.

- The Priority Plans called for by the PBF and the other strategic frameworks;
- All of the suggested frameworks, and exit/transition strategies; presently there is no discussion about how ISFs, for example, link to benchmarking for exit strategies, while the former is also referred to as an ISF for ‘peace consolidation.’

As argued earlier, the PBSO has not played a strong role in the development of these frameworks, in particular helping to articulate a peacebuilding lens, or simply in conceptualising their linkages to wider processes of peacebuilding.<sup>41</sup> This undoubtedly has a lot to do with changing staff and leadership and hence varying commitment to the process. It also, however, unfortunately has something to do with the turf wars surrounding the ‘ownership’ of tools, and an obsession with developing new tools for the ‘next’ conflict rather than working with/understanding/improving the many already in use.

In 2010 there will be an opportunity for the PBSO to participate in the ‘quality insurance; aspects of the ISF process and the revision process of both the ISF and the Strategic Assessment Guidelines. The ISF applies to all three stages of the lifecycle of the UN presence – mission start up, steady-state, and transition/drawdown. There are opportunities to consider how peacebuilding is factored into each stage. The PBSO should build its capacity in conflict/peacebuilding policy mainstreaming to ensure that such considerations are better infused within both.

The potential added value of the PBC and PBSO with respect to strategic frameworks potentially lies in the following areas:

1. **Security-development links and sequencing:** Building linkages between peace and security, and recovery and development-oriented policy frameworks, and or pillars within policy frameworks – in particular the PCNA and UNDAF, considered traditionally more development-oriented tools, with the ISF and IMPP – led by DPKO with a more security and political priority emphasis. This will require building conceptual and practical linkages at the headquarters level and together with colleagues from DPKO, DPA and the agencies, suggesting guidance and offering support to those on the ground, particularly within the Resident Coordinator’s office, who are increasingly expected to have joint analytical and planning capacity to drive integration. A solid knowledge base on these issues, as discussed above, will ensure the PBSO/PBC has real added value in this area;

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<sup>41</sup> Interviews with some who participated in the process development of the ISF underscored this.

2. **Sustained attention:** Linking donors to these frameworks for sustained attention on countries working to consolidate and sustained peace. Strategic frameworks that encompass and support peacebuilding need to become the key mechanism for a host government, with technical and political support from the UN, to coordinate and hold accountable the commitments made by a range of multi/bilateral partners;
3. **Peacebuilding/conflict sensitive lens:** Ensuring a peacebuilding/conflict sensitive lens within frameworks (discussed in detail below).

#### **4.2.2 Leading the development of, and training in the use of peacebuilding and conflict sensitive lenses for strategic policy frameworks and programming, M&E, and benchmarking**

The capacities of the three PBA institutions need to be greatly strengthened in the design and use of peace- and conflict-sensitive methodologies – an area ideally suited to their mandate and where they can potentially take the lead of and have important added value. These skills are also needed within peace operation contexts – both for UN field staff and national partners. If such skills exist within the PBSO, which can be supplemented with a roster of external experts closely coordinated by PBSO staff, the PBSO can lead on training and capacity development for actors within these settings. Ideally, a roster of external experts working with the PBSO would be small and regularly engaged in developing coherent methodologies that are applied consistently in different cases, with lesson-learning and sharing taking place along the way, continuing to enhance tools and knowledge of best practices within the PBA. They could also provide technical policy advisory services in the design and monitoring of peacebuilding strategic frameworks.

Lessons need to be clearly identified and assessed from the IPBS. It appears that these strategies are on the road to being abandoned, without any clear evaluation of their practice to date, or a well-developed institutional explanation of what will come in their place, other than references to an ‘iterative process’ describing the way different strategic assessments and frameworks will build upon one another. Importantly, PBSO staff in interviews highlighted that peacebuilding strategies cannot be imposed in a top-down manner, or in a ‘Secretariat sort of way’. Similarly, participants at a Stanley Foundation event<sup>42</sup> suggested that a key problem is the ‘badly fractured and fragmented agency dominated UN system’, and that 40+ different parts of the UN system cannot be sent to a small country to undertake an integrated

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<sup>42</sup> 2009, 12.

peacebuilding strategy. Rather a small team that can spend a more significant amount of time on the ground and ensure a less ‘agency driven’ process is vital. The PBC could improve its coordinating role of external actors in this regard – a critical element in fostering national ownership. Sierra Leone is now being informally discussed as an emerging best practice, where the Peace Consolidation and Recovery Framework (or PRSP) was developed on the ground and the PBC, through the CSC, views its role as assessing and monitoring the national framework to ensure this framework captures conflict and peacebuilding priorities.

Liberia, while not an official case of the PBC, offers what many consider to be an example of a good practice in working within existing strategic frameworks to strengthen peacebuilding. Building on conflict analysis, UN and government actors on the ground infused a conflict sensitive and peacebuilding lens into both the UNDAF and the PRSP. It should be noted that this process began in 2006, when the PBA was only establishing itself. Thus, at the time, UN staff on the ground had nowhere to turn for advice on these matters from headquarters. In such circumstances, i.e. where a country is not an official case of the PBC (although this would undoubtedly be useful for countries who are ‘official’ cases) – the role of the PBSO should be to gather, compare and assess, and share practices with UN peace operation and national government staff undertaking such processes.

In sum, and as they are beginning to recognize, the PBC and PBSO should desist from seeking to steer processes on the ground in a peace operation context and rather with work to support, synergize and fill gaps that will support sustained peace. Knowledge and skill-based capacities to undertake and support efforts in these areas are needed in the PBA at headquarters in the following areas:

- Conflict analysis and peacebuilding (including comparative best practices);
- Peace- and conflict-sensitive methodologies;
- Contextual awareness of a given situation and the methods to undertake contextual analysis.

Such knowledge and skills will need to be held in the PBSO, which can support and advise the members of the PBC. Such skills are vital for the PBA to add value in this area.

A PBSO with skills in-house and supplemented by an expert roster can also support national capacity development through trainings in peace operation contexts for both UN staff (DPKO, DPA and UN agencies) and select national government/NGO staff in several areas:

- Developing peacebuilding strategies and infusing peacebuilding/conflict sensitive lenses into UN and government policy frameworks;
- Conflict management; and,
- Peacebuilding and conflict sensitive policy and program design, implementation and monitoring and evaluation.

These should not be approached as one-off trainings but potentially several that ensure training of trainers is undertaken towards leaving capacity on the ground. These people could then work to ensure that these skills are infused within national institutions – a key foundation of peace sustainability as implied by the SG’s Policy Committee’s emphasis on the need for building national capacities for conflict management.

The PBSO (technically) and the PBC (politically) have important roles to play in assisting the development and articulation of benchmarking and transition strategies in different contexts. These include peacekeeping operation (PKO) contexts where a peacekeeping mission will eventually exit, and actors are working to articulate strategies to transition from stabilisation to peace consolidation, where a peacekeeping mission is likely to exit, and longer-term peace sustainability – where the international community has been notoriously weak historically. The P as well as in contexts where a PKO may not exist and the PBA is working in concert with government, UNDP and other UN agencies – i.e. in Guinea-Bissau and the Central African Republic. The new ‘Benchmarking Handbook’ will make an important contribution to help guide thinking and practice in this area.

#### **4.2.3 Building consensus within the UN and its member states around divisive issues**

The PBC should help to build consensus of member states around divisive issues both with respect to countries on the PBC’s agenda, as well as wider thematic issues related to the drivers of, and obstacles to, sustainability. The PBC’s primary added value is *political*, that of a convener with potentially significant power to foster consensus and coherence around critical peacebuilding issues. It is uniquely positioned to do this, given its deliberate construction representing major financial donors, major (peacekeeping) troop contributing countries, three main UN organs – the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), the General Assembly, and the Security Council – as well as countries representing regions, and governments from among those countries receiving assistance or which had gone through peacebuilding processes in the past. At the same time, as noted by participants in a Stanley Foundation event, this reality has not yet led to widespread



agreement on the roles and modalities of PBC decision-making and action—obviously central to its having legitimacy in its coordination role.<sup>43</sup>

The PBSO also has a role to play in forging consensus within the UN around difficult issues as they relate to peacebuilding. In particular, this occurs at the working level, but also as staff support policy level discussions on peacebuilding matters through different fora, i.e. the SG's Policy Committee, and also the PBSO's Senior Policy Group, which brings together Assistant Secretary Generals to discuss peacebuilding matters. The PBSO is well placed to forge discussions around security/political and developmental divides and transitions, based on substantive research and analysis. The PBSO can also seek to provide technical advice in the design, implementation and monitoring of strategic policy frameworks, particularly towards ensuring they address conflict issues. They also should be working towards ensuring coherence and continuity with PBF Priority Plans. While the PBF retains independence from the PBC, there is no reason why PBF funds cannot work at times to address politically divisive issues in post-conflict settings, which PBSO staff, particularly those working in the CSCs, are well placed to identify.

Divisive issues that the PBC could focus on could include issues that arise both of the context of the CSCs as well as wider debates surrounding drivers and obstacles to sustaining peace that emerge through work in the area of knowledge management and development, i.e. economic recovery, organized crime, peacebuilding strategies and sequencing. Additionally, they can include:

- National ownership and capacity development;
- Donor demands for conditionality, effectiveness and more rather than fewer constraints on how aid is used, while receiving countries want and need national ownership, flexibility and speed;
- When and where to use particular policy instruments, and within which contexts, particular instruments should drive the focus of collective planning, coordination, monitoring and evaluation;<sup>44</sup>
- The relationship of peacebuilding and peacekeeping, and more specifically of the PBC's entry within political and peacekeeping mission contexts.

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<sup>43</sup> Stanley Foundation, 9.

<sup>44</sup> The last two points are discussed as 'impediments to peace building' in the Stanley Foundation Report, 2009:10.

In closing, we are reminded that Immanuel Kant's *Perpetual Peace* has inspired debates for centuries without leading to clear consensus about the nature of peace and how we might achieve it. While today our collective global peacebuilding challenges remain grave, we now have institutional architecture through which a higher level of consensus can be sought, and strategies tested as we move closer to achieving intended results. The UN's PBA must rise above political constraints and indeed seek to transform them, and from a strong, substantive knowledge base, work to facilitate more unified efforts to support Member States and citizens globally in realizing this historic yet still prevailing goal.

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**Kwesi Aning** and **Ernest Lartey**: *Establishing the Future State of the Peacebuilding Commission: Perspectives on Africa*

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