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EDITOR'S NOTE

This issue of *Disarmament Forum* focuses on the recently established Peacebuilding Commission. A robust and effective Peacebuilding Commission is in all of our interests. What can be done now, in its early stages, to support it and assist in its success? Contributors to this issue consider how the PBC can be strengthened by the whole of the international system, address maximizing the effectiveness of civil society engagement with the PBC, examine the challenges of peacebuilding coordination as well as identify possible challenges and opportunities in both the shorter and longer term. In this issue, we have placed particular emphasis on the valuable contribution that Geneva-based actors could make to the PBC. As Mr Sergei Ordzhonikidze, Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva and Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament, has noted, "The rich presence here of United Nations entities, intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations, research and academic institutions—many of them with direct experience 'on the ground'—is an important asset, with significant potential for feeding into the deliberations of the Peacebuilding Commission."

Information and communication technologies are embedded in every aspect of our lives—from national security and defence, to infrastructures such as power and telecommunications, to entertainment and leisure. The next issue of *Disarmament Forum* will examine security of information and communication technology (ICT). Experts will explore the implications of cyberwarfare, information security, cyberterrorism, critical information infrastructure protection, legal aspects of cyberspace and information warfare on national and international security.

On 2–3 April, UNIDIR held the conference "Celebrating the Space Age: 50 Years of Space Technology, 40 Years of the Outer Space Treaty". This was our sixth annual conference on the issue of space security and the prevention of an arms race in outer space. This year's conference examined the historical importance of the Outer Space Treaty and considered its future. The current space security situation and different measures that can be taken to improve that situation (for example confidence-building measures and debris issues) were also discussed. The conference was attended by representatives from numerous Conference on Disarmament delegations, UN agencies, non-governmental organizations, the private sector and research institutes. As in previous years, UNIDIR will produce an edited volume of conference proceedings later in the year.

The UNIDIR research project "Disarmament as Humanitarian Action: Making Multilateral Negotiations Work" (DHA) examines current difficulties for the international community in tackling disarmament and arms control challenges. The project seeks to show how, in practical terms, new thinking can benefit those tasked with developing collective security goals in multilateral processes, in order to improve the security of human beings.

An important emphasis of the DHA project's work in 2007 is to communicate its research findings to multilateral practitioners, including diplomats, researchers and representatives of relevant international

and non-governmental organizations. As one element of these efforts, the DHA project created the Disarmament Insight initiative with the Geneva Forum (www.geneva-forum.org)—a joint initiative of UNIDIR, the Quaker United Nations Office and the Programme for Strategic and International Security Studies of the Graduate Institute of International Studies. This initiative is prompting constructive and creative engagement in the multilateral disarmament community through a range of activities, including workshops and online resources building on the previous work of both DHA and the Geneva Forum, respectively. One of the innovative elements of this collaboration is the Disarmament Insight blog (www.disarmamentinsight.blogspot.com), which includes links to podcasts of Disarmament Insight events.

This year marks the tenth anniversary of the Provisional Technical Secretariat of the CTBTO Preparatory Commission. In honour of this event, the Geneva Forum hosted the seminar "Verifying Compliance with the Nuclear Test Ban: 10 Years of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization" on 19 March 2007. Mr Tibor Tóth, Executive Secretary of the CTBTO, Ambassador Sha Zukang of China and Dr Patricia Lewis, Director of UNIDIR, discussed both the technical and political roles of this global verification regime as well as its future potential. The Geneva Forum seminar coincided with the CTBTO exhibit "Verifying the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban". The exhibition details the unique verification regime of the CTBTO, with explanations of the International Monitoring System and the International Data Centre.

There is growing momentum within the international community to confront the issue of cluster munitions. In addition to the recent issue of *Disarmament Forum* dedicated to this topic (no. 4, 2006), UNIDIR has also published two short case studies of cluster munition use and consequences, *Cluster Munitions in Albania and Lao PDR*. This work, supported by the UN Working Group on Cluster Munitions, explores the use and consequences of these weapons in Lao PDR and Albania. Both publications are available free from UNIDIR and are posted on our web site. In addition, UNIDIR's ongoing project examining practitioners' perspectives on cluster munition use has just finished its case studies on Cambodia and Lebanon. A publication on this topic will be produced later in the year.

Kerstin Vignard

SPECIAL COMMENT

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

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

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

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

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

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

Carolyn McAskie
Assistant Secretary-General for Peacebuilding Support

The United Nations Peacebuilding Commission: origins and initial practice

Richard Ponzio

In September 2005, the United Nations (UN) World Summit in New York brought together representatives from more than 170 states to discuss global challenges, including security, poverty and UN reform. Among the more significant reforms introduced at this unprecedented gathering of world leaders was the commitment to establish at the United Nations, no later than 31 December 2005, a Peacebuilding Commission.[1]

This article provides a brief overview of the conceptual and institutional context in which the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) was created. This is followed by an examination of the PBC's mandate, structure and the "state of play" toward the end of its inaugural year. Finally, some strategic and operational priorities are outlined, which could overcome shortcomings in the design and initial efforts of the Commission. Upon the arrival of the new Secretary-General, this article aims to further the debate on what can be done to ensure the progressive development of this potentially powerful new instrument for building sustainable peace.

The origins of the Peacebuilding Commission

The concept of peacebuilding

Coined in the 1970s by Johan Galtung,[2] peacebuilding gained significant currency in the 1990s, when UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali defined post-conflict peacebuilding as "action to identify and support structures which will tend to strengthen and solidify peace in order to avoid a relapse into conflict".[3] The United Nations continues to situate peacebuilding squarely in the realm of post-conflict recovery, contrary to the view of many scholars and practitioners, who assert that peacebuilding has as much to do with prevention as recovery.[4]

Peacebuilding should be distinguished from the narrower concept of peacekeeping (although the two are often undertaken simultaneously). Peacekeeping is defined by Marrack Goulding as an operation to prevent fighting from re-starting, which includes military (and often police) personnel and "…is deployed with the consent of the [feuding] parties … and is required to be neutral and impartial between them".[5]

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The United Nations' peacebuilding activities

A central aim of any peacebuilding activity is to leverage political, financial and technical resources to bring warring factions together in support of the aims of a peace process. The United Nations' peacebuilding activities include drafting or amending constitutions; implementing disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes; channelling urgent humanitarian assistance to communities; facilitating transitional justice systems; strengthening state institutions and the delivery of public services; fostering independent civil society and media organizations; placing the security sector under democratic, civilian control; and organizing elections.

The end of the Cold War and the reduction in ideological tensions created the political space for traditional peacekeeping operations to extend their mandates to a wide range of peacebuilding activities. The United Nations Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG) in Namibia (1989–90) was the first such operation; its mandate included the supervision of elections, policing and demilitarization. It was the first time that the United Nations actively assisted the creation of a democratic sovereign state through a peace operation. According to V.P. Fortna, UNTAG successfully monitored and reinforced a climate of security and "most important, it was to build confidence in and to legitimize the peace process, the elections, and the result of the transition: the new state of Namibia".[6] The Namibia operation was soon followed by far larger and even more complex operations in El Salvador (ONUSAL, 1991–95), Angola (UNAVEM II, 1991–95), Cambodia (UNTAC, 1991–93)[7] and Mozambique (ONUMOZ, 1992–94). These extended mandates included, among other things, human rights monitoring and education, temporary jurisdiction of state ministries, the demobilization and reintegration of former combatants into civilian life, police strengthening, instituting permanent electoral bodies, and even the promotion of economic liberalization.

By 1999, interventions in Kosovo (UNMIK), Timor-Leste (UNTAET), and Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) represented the most sophisticated, costly and intrusive peacebuilding operations to date. Kosovo and Timor-Leste, in particular, were unique—full-fledged international transitional administrations. These operations were soon followed by large missions in Afghanistan (UNAMA), Burundi (ONUB), Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI), Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC), Haiti (MINUSTAH), Liberia (UNMIL) and Sudan (UNMIS). Together, these constitute the largest number of concurrent, sizeable peacebuilding operations ever: by 2006, the United Nations had deployed over 90,000 military and civilian personnel in the field.[8]

The United Nations is represented in the field by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (which currently directs and supports 18 peace operations of various types), the United Nations Development Programme (the world's largest grant-making agency, which has a Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery and field operations in most developing countries), the Department of Political Affairs (currently administering ten regional and country-level missions) and some 31 other agencies, funds and programmes. In addition, a wide range of actors participates in today's international peacebuilding operations as members or representatives of the "international community". These actors include international financial institutions, regional organizations, individual UN Member States and coalitions, national development agencies, intergovernmental organizations outside the UN structure and international non-governmental organizations.

The coordination and integration of peacebuilding activities have emerged as significant concerns.

The involvement of so many players in peacebuilding means that the coordination and integration of peacebuilding activities have emerged as significant concerns. As Michael W. Doyle and Nicholas Sambanis write:

> The need for better strategy coordination when several international agencies intervene in the same conflict is a lesson that is frequently heard in policy circles, but seldom addressed by the responsible agencies. The United Nations currently has a Department of Political Affairs staffed predominantly with diplomats whose major responsibility is "peacemaking," political analysis, and support for mediated peace processes. It has a Department of Peacekeeping Operations that manages the deployment of military forces for peacekeeping. Peacebuilding is assigned to the Department of Political Affairs, but expertise that focuses on the nexus between institution building and economic development is scattered across the UN system in the United Nations Development Program [*sic*], the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the World Bank, and (most significantly) among the officials who manage peacebuilding efforts in the field.[9]

Some progress was made in the area of coordination following the recommendations of the Brahimi Report on UN peace operations.[10] For instance, in October 2001 the first full-time Integrated Mission Task Force was established in New York to encourage joint planning among UN bodies for the new mission in Afghanistan. But the task force was prematurely disbanded in February 2002, well before the new mission was fully deployed. Efforts to foster greater coherence and support for UN system-wide peacebuilding missions continue to fall short of needs and expectations.[11]

The United Nations has contributed to the reduction in civil conflict of recent years;[12] however, despite the best of intentions, the organization itself recognizes that it has regularly failed to prevent the recurrence of war and establish functioning and inclusive political institutions in war-torn societies.[13] According to Charles Call and Susan Cook, of 18 conflict-affected countries where the United Nations sought to facilitate political transformations between 1998 and 2002, 13 were still classified as authoritarian regimes in 2002.[14] Of 11 peacebuilding operations launched between 1989 and 1998, Roland Paris concludes that only two were successes (Croatia and Namibia), two were obvious failures (Angola and Rwanda) and the seven remaining operations fell somewhere between these two extremes.[15]

It was in this context that in September 2003 the UN Secretary-General tasked a High-level Panel to propose major reforms to the UN institutions that seek to promote peace and security. Evidently, the Secretary-General and influential UN Member States were unsatisfied with the Security Council and General Assembly's ability to mobilize sustained support for countries in conflict, especially over the medium to long term;[16] concern was also raised about the performance of operational units in coordinating, sharing limited resources and steering their respective peacebuilding activities toward common ends. According to Jehangir Khan, former Deputy Director of Policy Planning in the UN Department of Political Affairs and former coordinator of the Iraq Team:

> We desperately needed a high-level political body to support political processes and help countries implement peace accords. Historically, the Department of Political Affairs had been the lead UN body for peacebuilding, but it is not set up to be operational, even though past attempts were made to establish a Peacebuilding Unit in support of field operations. The Commission can help to create better coordination and leadership on peacebuilding across the UN system.[17]

The High-level Panel recommended the creation of two new bodies: a Peacebuilding Commission and a Peacebuilding Support Office.[18] The Secretary-General endorsed this proposal in his March 2005 report *In Larger Freedom,* setting the stage for its consideration at the 2005 World Summit.[19] As proposed by the High-level Panel, the new organs would have two core objectives: to help states avoid collapse and the slide to war and to assist states in their transition from war to peace. The PBC was expected to build bridges and facilitate joint planning across the UN system as well as with partners in

New York and on the front lines of peacebuilding interventions. It would provide high-level political leadership, additional funds and expert advice. Although some developing countries voiced concern about increasing external political intrusion in what have traditionally been considered the domestic affairs of sovereign states, the initiative quickly gathered momentum.

First steps

Mandate and structure

> Emphasizing the need for a coordinated, coherent and integrated approach to post-conflict peacebuilding and reconciliation with a view to achieving sustainable peace, recognizing the need for 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, and recognizing the vital role of the United Nations in that regard, we decide to establish a Peacebuilding Commission as an intergovernmental advisory body.[20]

It was agreed that the PBC would serve as a subsidiary body of both the General Assembly and the Security Council. Given the perennial tension between the Security Council (whose permanent members often view significant matters of international peace and security as falling exclusively within the Security Council's domain)[21] and the General Assembly (which may discuss matters of international peace and security and derives its legitimacy from near universal membership), it is not surprising that both UN organs claimed authority over the functioning of the Commission. This dual authority, however, raises questions about reporting lines and the follow-through of PBC recommendations.

Following consultations in late 2005, concurrent resolutions adopted by the General Assembly and the Security Council on 20 December 2005 detailed the main purposes of the Peacebuilding Commission:

(a) To bring together all relevant actors to marshal resources and to advise on and propose integrated strategies for post-conflict peacebuilding and recovery;

(b) To focus attention on the reconstruction and institution-building efforts necessary for recovery from conflict and to support the development of integrated strategies in order to lay the foundation for sustainable development;

(c) To provide recommendations and information to improve the coordination of all relevant actors within and outside the United Nations, to develop best practices, to help to ensure predictable financing for early recovery activities and to extend the period of attention given by the international community to post-conflict recovery.[22]

It is important to emphasize that the PBC is only a *consensus-based advisory body.* Its influence within the UN framework stems entirely from the quality of its recommendations, the relevance of the information it shares, and its ability to generate additional resources for a conflict-affected state whose perceived importance on the international agenda has receded.

Due to this lack of formal authority, even when consensus is reached, it might be difficult to achieve the level of coordination envisaged in the third point of the resolutions. Furthermore, it is remarkable that after these three points (the first two of which are repetitive), the remainder of the five-page resolution deals with essentially procedural issues, particularly concerning the PBC's relations

with major UN organs and the composition of the Commission's two main bodies: the Organizational Committee and the country-specific meetings. Paradoxically, the Commission—presented as a major UN reform that would help to streamline and rationalize the United Nations' work practices in New York with important dividends in the field—immediately became bogged down in mainly procedural matters during its creation and first year of operation.

The Organizational Committee consists of seven members of the Security Council (including all permanent members), seven members of the Economic and Social Council, five top providers of assessed and voluntary contributions to the United Nations, five top providers of military personnel and civilian police to UN missions and seven additional members, giving due consideration to regional representation. All Organizational Committee members are invited to participate in the country-specific meetings, in addition to the country under consideration, relevant regional organizations and countries engaged in the post-conflict process, senior UN field representatives, and all major contributors of finance, troops and civilian police. At present, the formal relationship between the PBC and non-state actors remains unclear.

Alongside these bodies, the General Assembly and Security Council requested the Secretary-General to establish both a small Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO) and a multi-year standing Peacebuilding Fund. Currently staffed with 12 professional officers and led by Carolyn McAskie (Canada) at the rank of Assistant Secretary-General, the PBSO was created *within existing resources* to provide secretariat support to the Commission.[23] The PBSO is expected to gather and analyse information relating to the post-conflict countries on the agenda of the PBC: this includes financial resources, development planning, assessing progress toward recovery goals and best practices in peacebuilding. The PBSO's Policy and Analysis Support Section is also developing a web-based knowledge platform to serve as a locus of best practices and lessons learned on peacebuilding across the UN system.

With a target of US$ 250 million, US$ 210 million have been pledged to the Peacebuilding Fund as of early March 2007.[24] The fund is managed by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and is intended to enable the quick release of resources for high-impact peacebuilding activities.

State of play

The PBC Organizational Committee met for the first time on 23 June 2005. In April 2007 its seemingly unwieldy 31 members include the five permanent members (China, France, Russian Federation, United Kingdom, United States) plus Panama and South Africa from the Security Council; Angola, Brazil, Guinea-Bissau, Indonesia and Sri Lanka from the Economic and Social Council (two seats are currently vacant); Germany, Italy, Japan, Netherlands and Norway as major UN financial contributors; Bangladesh, Ghana, India, Nigeria and Pakistan as major providers of military and police officers to UN missions; and Burundi, Chile, Croatia, Egypt, El Salvador, Fiji and Jamaica as the seven additional members elected by the General Assembly. The Commission elected Angola as its first Chair and El Salvador and Norway as its first Vice-Chairs. This membership is reported to have been negotiated in a climate of suspicion, and its first six months were preoccupied with procedural issues.[25]

The PBC's real added value will come from the work of the country-specific meetings.

Many observers argue that the PBC's real added value will come from the work of the country-specific meetings, and following a letter from the Security Council's President, Ambassador Ellen Margrethe Løj of Denmark, to the head of the PBSO, the Organizational Committee agreed that Burundi and Sierra Leone would be the first two cases on the PBC's agenda.[26] The first two rounds of country-specific meetings on Burundi and Sierra Leone were held in New York in October and December 2006. Immediately, the PBC's

work was perceived as equating to a pledging conference: in November the PBSO sent missions to Burundi and Sierra Leone to take stock of the situation on the ground, clarify the focus of the Commission and dispel this misperception.

The first country-specific meeting on Burundi agreed on three broad priority categories: good governance, rule of law and security sector reform, and community recovery; within these categories several further priorities were identified, including strengthening national dialogue, the role of women and regional states in peace consolidation and the delivery of basic public services.[27] At Sierra Leone's first meeting, it was agreed that four critical areas would be addressed: youth empowerment and employment; consolidating democracy and good governance; justice and security reform; and capacity-building.[28] It was also agreed that detailed peacebuilding work plans would be prepared for both countries prior to the next round of meetings (expected to be held in mid-2007).

The Peacebuilding Commission has already succeeded in allocating US$ 35 million to both Burundi and Sierra Leone, as announced by the Secretary-General to the African Union Summit in January 2007.[29] But the PBC's "shaky beginning"—the acrimony generated in deciding on its composition, and the fact that "even at the initial stage, the Commission has very little to show", as noted by the Brazilian Representative at the PBC, Ambassador Piragibe dos Santos Tarragô—is undeniable.[30]

Greater than concern about it doing little, however, is concern about the Commission duplicating, confusing and diverting scarce resources by developing the Integrated Peacebuilding Strategies (IPBSs) that many UN Member States have insisted upon in an effort to "find its niche". Ambassador Thomas Matussek, on behalf of the European Union, commented that "promoting the development of a viable peacebuilding strategy which has broad ownership is where the Commission can really add value"; Ambassador Raymond Wolfe, speaking on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, has argued that a "holistic, coherent and inclusive approach" must follow from the recommendations of the PBC.[31] The PBC is currently devising an IPBS in partnership with each of the countries on its agenda.

On one hand, such strategies are a logical and often useful component of any post-war reconstruction effort, especially when the governments receiving foreign assistance lead the preparations and learn from the experience. On the other, how could yet another strategic peacebuilding framework benefit a country such as Sierra Leone, which, with the support of the international community, already maintains a Poverty Reduction Strategy, a Medium-Term Expenditure Framework and a Peace Consolidation Strategy? It would be difficult to name a candidate country for the PBC that does not already have similar home-grown, carefully developed plans in place. Local strategic planning exercises are a far better means of empowering local counterparts than efforts in New York, and such local exercises are likely to better analyse and reflect the core peacebuilding priorities of the country.

Moreover, Member States determining at UN Headquarters specifically how UN bodies should work with one another and on which activities in a particular country context is a highly bureaucratic exercise. Rather than adding a layer of confusion at the international level, the PBC would be better suited to coordinate and align donor resources behind locally designed and agreed integrated peacebuilding strategies—the real gap within the UN system remains the need to augment significantly the resources to support the civilian components of UN peace operations, such as establishing permanent electoral management bodies, training parliamentarians and devising anti-corruption strategies.

Strategic and operational priorities

Many innovative ideas have already been put forward to focus the efforts of the Peacebuilding Commission—several are presented in this issue. Here three substantive and three operational priorities are outlined.

Strategic focus

Peacebuilding means different things to many people. The PBC's country-specific meetings to date have underscored a long list of priority areas, including good governance, employment, youth empowerment, the role of women and regional states in peace consolidation, justice and security sector reform, community recovery, strengthening national dialogue and capacity-building. But the PBC cannot be successful if it tries to take everything on. A sharpening of the Commission's focus would clarify and distinguish its role *and* add significant value to the UN system as a whole. Naturally, an in-depth debate among UN Member States and other relevant actors would be necessary to decide which strategic priorities the Commission should concentrate on, which at this stage Member States still have the opportunity to do. Here are three initial proposals for the Commission's attention:

Preventing violent conflict

The High-level Panel's proposed emphasis on conflict prevention as one of two key pillars of the Peacebuilding Commission was removed during negotiations in the lead-up to the 2005 World Summit. Despite the United Nations' advances with the concepts and practice of preventive diplomacy and conflict prevention,[32] this area was omitted from further discussion. Ostensibly, powerful UN Member States shared a concern for any challenge to the pre-eminence of the Security Council in this area. Their reluctance might have also stemmed from a fear of equipping the United Nations with intelligence-gathering capabilities that could potentially be used against them.

This decision to focus solely on the "post-conflict" dimensions of peacebuilding runs counter to the advice of countless international conferences, scholarly studies and UN-sponsored reports, which all place conflict prevention at the heart of the United Nations' mandate. At a time when warfare technologies can kill and maim an unprecedented number of civilians, current UN capacity to avert violent conflict is woefully inadequate, particularly in gathering and analysing early warning data. From moral, political and economic perspectives, prevention makes sense (as shown, for example, through the United Nations' experience in preparing for and reducing the effects of natural disasters). The General Assembly's and the Security Council's resolutions regarding the PBC should expand its mandate: conflict prevention should be central to the work of the PBC.

Sequencing the expansion of effective democratic governance

Since the end of the Cold War, the United Nations has managed or initiated 30 country-level peace operations with a significant political institution-building component.[33] The most successful missions have succeeded in helping a country to build stable and democratic governing institutions—including an independent judiciary—to mediate competing domestic interests and to address the root causes of a conflict peacefully. However, the literature suggests that most peacebuilding initiatives focus "on the immediate or underlying causes of conflict—to the relative neglect of state institutions".[34] Skilfully sequencing the expansion of democratic authority in a war-affected society is rarely simple or inexpensive. The Peacebuilding Commission, as it is starting to illustrate in the cases of Burundi and Sierra Leone, can facilitate this delicate and resource-intensive process by helping local and international actors work together to strike a proper balance between local democratic governance capacity-building and near-term political-security imperatives. Learning from the initial experience of Afghanistan, donor–recipient

government "compact mechanisms" could serve as a major instrument for tracking progress toward concrete democratization benchmarks and ensuring domestic and international accountability.[35]

Combating corruption

Few problems can erode local and international confidence in new democratic authorities and their ability to deliver vital public services more than perceived endemic corruption. Corruption can undermine the peace process and facilitate a slide back to violent conflict.[36] The PBC is in a position to champion a culture of "zero tolerance for corruption"; it can influence honest behaviour in a country in exchange for sustained international engagement. Strategies advocated by the Commission should include regular assessments (for example, on perceptions and estimated costs of corruption) and stressing a multi-prong approach—specific steps to foster prevention and enforcement, raise awareness and address the root causes of corruption.

Operational reforms

The current peacebuilding architecture of the UN system—in terms of staffing, financial resources and partnerships—provides insufficient assistance considering the complexity, costs, geographic distances and long duration associated with modern international peacebuilding interventions. Several operational changes could be envisaged to improve this state of affairs.

Expand the size and purpose of the Peacebuilding Fund

Increased expectations of UN political and technical leadership in post-conflict situations should be matched by increased financial resources. Given the billions spent annually on peacebuilding, capping the Peacebuilding Fund at the paltry sum of US$ 250 million is short-sighted. The 2004 and 2005 presidential and parliamentary elections in Afghanistan alone cost US$ 318 million.[37] In addition to proposed annual assessed budgetary contributions for UN peacebuilding operations, which could be recommended by the PBC and authorized by the General Assembly, a Peacebuilding Fund of *at least* US$ 2 billion should be made readily available for a range of projects intended to jump-start government activity and improve its performance at key, time-sensitive junctures (e.g. following an election). Perhaps the UN Trust Fund for Human Security could ultimately be merged with the Peacebuilding Fund.

Strengthen partnerships with civil society and regional organizations

Successful peacebuilding cannot be achieved by any one actor or a small group of actors, however politically and financially powerful, working in isolation. It is therefore unfortunate that well into the PBC's first year the subject of civil society's formal representation at the Commission is still contested. Similar to the precedents set in other UN bodies, such as the Commission on Sustainable Development (established in 1992), civil society organizations should be given ample opportunity to make substantive contributions as well as monitor the proceedings of the Peacebuilding Commission. With financial and

logistical support from the UN Secretariat, it is especially important that local civil society organizations from countries under consideration by the PBC are systematically given the chance to have their views heard at formal country-specific meetings. Similarly, regional organizations should be allowed to contribute formally to all country-specific meetings and, occasionally, to the work of the Organizational Committee (after issuing a formal request to the Chair of the Commission).

Increased support for field operations

With only 12 professional staff, and drawing on existing UN resources, the Peacebuilding Support Office is barely equipped to fulfil the Commission's secretarial, monitoring and analytical needs, let alone provide the necessary substantive and administrative support to field operations. At present, no one department or agency of the UN Secretariat maintains adequate resources to effectively support peacebuilding interventions. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) is thinly staffed with personnel more suited to political reporting and assisting the military aspects of peacekeeping operations, and the Departments of Political Affairs and Economic and Social Affairs are too overstretched to provide dedicated support staff to a peacebuilding operation in the field. One possibility would be to transfer parts of UNDP's headquarters operations into relevant sections of the UN Secretariat.

Alternatively, a more imaginative and arguably more suitable proposal would be to create a new Department for Peacebuilding and Reconstruction. This permanent and well-resourced body would assure dedicated, around-the-clock support to the Peacebuilding Commission and its multiple, concurrent field operations. This would significantly reduce confusion, overlap, ad-hocism, contradicting mandates and the waste of resources among UN actors, and would lead efforts to mainstream conflict prevention approaches across the work of the United Nations. Admittedly, this might be a more radical proposal than UN Member States would be willing to accept at present: Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's proposal to restructure DPKO through a new Department of Field Support received support from the General Assembly in March 2007, but the proposals will still be subject to a review process that could extend until June 2007. And even then, these proposals do not provide sufficient UN Headquarters support for the range of civilian field activities that characterize twenty-first-century peacebuilding.

A more imaginative and arguably more suitable proposal would be to create a new Department for Peacebuilding and Reconstruction.

Conclusion

The Peacebuilding Commission has come a long way. Almost overnight, it has elevated post-war peacebuilding concerns on the international political agenda. It performs a valuable service in shining a spotlight on forgotten countries that are no longer deemed "high priorities" but have yet to consolidate a durable peace. To further advance the UN system's performance to a level commensurate with current peacebuilding challenges, it is not too late to refocus the energies of the PBC along the lines outlined above, particularly in the sensitive realm of conflict prevention. Moreover, in the spirit of building a twenty-first-century international organization that can respond resolutely to its fiercest critics (and to preclude "coalitions of the willing" from supplanting it), far greater technical and financial resources are needed to ensure that the United Nations can support and monitor the performance of its ever-growing and increasingly complex peacebuilding operations.

Notes

1. Indeed, it is interesting to note that as of April 2007, under the heading "Follow-Up" at the very top of the 2005 World Summit web site, the only items mentioned are the UN General Assembly and Security Council resolutions establishing the Peacebuilding Commission (see <www.un.org/summit2005/documents.html>).
2. Johan Galtung, 1975, *Peace, War and Defence - Essays in Peace Research*, vol. 2, Copenhagen, Christian Ejlers, pp. 282–304.
3. *An Agenda for Peace: Report of the Secretary-General,* UN document A/47/277 – S/24111, 17 June 1992, at <www.un.org/docs/SG/agpeace.html>, paragraph 21. For a comprehensive review of how 24 governmental and intergovernmental bodies conceptualize peacebuilding, see Michael Barnett, Hunjoon Kim, Madalene O'Donnell and Laura Sitea, 2007, "Peacebuilding: What is in a Name?", *Global Governance,* vol. 13, no. 1, January–March, pp. 35–58.
4. Michael Doyle and Nicholas Sambanis view peacebuilding as fostering the "social, economic, and political institutions and attitudes that will prevent … conflicts from turning violent. In effect, peacebuilding is the front line of preventive action" (Michael W. Doyle and Nicholas Sambanis, 2000, "International Peacebuilding: A Theoretical and Quantitative Analysis", *American Political Science Review,* vol. 94, no. 4, p. 779). Charles Call and Susan Cook refer to peacebuilding as "efforts to transform potentially violent social relations into sustainable peaceful relations and outcomes" (C.T. Call and S.E. Cook, 2003, "On Democratisation and Peacebuilding", *Global Governance,* vol. 9, no. 2, p. 240).
5. Marrack Goulding, 2002, *Peacemonger,* London, John Murray, pp. 14–15.
6. V.P. Fortna, 1994, "United Nations Transition Assistance Group in Namibia", in W.J. Durch (ed.), *The Evolution of UN Peacekeeping*, New York, St Martin's Press, p. 362.
7. With reference to the UN Transitional Authority in Cambodia, Michael Doyle writes, "Not since the colonial era and the post-World War II Allied occupations of Germany and Japan had a foreign presence held so much formal administrative jurisdiction over the civilian functions of an independent country". Michael W. Doyle, 1995, *UN Peacekeeping in Cambodia: UNTAC's Civil Mandate*, Boulder, CO, Lynne Rienner, p. 13.
8. Center on International Cooperation, 2006, *Annual Review of Global Peace Operations,* Boulder, CO, Lynne Rienner, p. ix.
9. Michael W. Doyle and Nicholas Sambanis, 2006, *Making War and Building Peace: United Nations Peace Operations*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, p. 344.
10. *Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations,* or the Brahimi Report, reproduced in UN document A/55/305 – S/2000/809, 21 August 2000.
11. Besides the work of the Peacebuilding Commission, efforts are under way to further improve UN system coordination in peace operations through the Integrated Mission Planning Process. See Department of Peacekeeping Operations, *Integrated Mission Planning Process,* 2004 Heads of Mission Conference, UN document DPKO/HMC/2004/12, 23 January 2004.
12. See, for example, Human Security Centre, 2005, *Human Security Report 2005: War and Peace in the 21st Century,* Oxford, Oxford University Press. According to a RAND study of eight recent UN peacebuilding operations, the decrease in deaths from armed conflicts—from an average of over 200,000 per year during the 1990s to an estimated 27,000 in 2003—can be attributed, in part, to the efficacy of UN peacebuilding. James Dobbins et al, 2005, *The UN's Role in Nation-Building: From the Congo to Iraq,* Santa Monica, CA, RAND Corporation, p. xxxvi.
13. "Over the last decade, the United Nations has repeatedly failed to meet the challenge [of ending the scourge of war], and it can do no better today", states the Brahimi Report, op. cit., Executive Summary.
14. Call and Cook, op. cit., pp. 233–234.
15. Roland Paris, 2004, *At War's End: Building Peace after Civil Conflict,* Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, p. 151.
16. As David Harland, then head of DPKO's Best Practices Section, remarked: "The UN Security Council should have carried out its role of convening all relevant peacebuilding actors better. It could have held proper discussions with, for example, the World Bank and IMF among others". Interview with the author, 28 June 2005.
17. Interview with the author, 28 June 2005.
18. High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change, 2004, *A More Secure World: Our Shared Responsibility,* United Nations.
19. *In Larger Freedom* does not mention the two objectives specified by the High-level Panel; as discussed later in this article, the debate was already moving away from a conflict prevention role for the PBC *(In Larger Freedom: Towards Development, Security and Human Rights for All: Report of the Secretary-General*, UN document A/59/2005, 21 March 2005).
20. 2005 World Summit Outcome, United Nations General Assembly resolution 60/1 of 16 September 2005, UN document A/RES/60/1, 24 October 2005, paragraph 97.

21. UN Charter Article 12(1) states: "While the Security Council is exercising in respect of any dispute or situation the functions assigned to it in the present Charter, the General Assembly shall not make any recommendation with regard to that dispute or situation unless the Security Council so requests."
22. United Nations General Assembly resolution 60/180 of 20 December 2005, UN document A/RES/60/180, 30 December 2005; Security Council resolution 1645 (2005), UN document S/RES/1645(2005), 20 December 2005.
23. "A small support office was chosen … to avoid replication and to promote coordination, standard setting, and quality control", explains former UN Deputy Secretary-General Louise Fréchette (interview with the author, 26 July 2006).
24. "UN Grants Sierra Leone $35 million to Help It Build up Institutions for Peace", *UN News Service,* 1 March 2007.
25. See, for example, Security Council Report, *Special Research Report: Peacebuilding Commission,* 23 June 2006; Security Council Report, *Update Report No. 5: Peacebuilding Commission,* 25 January 2007, available at <www.securitycouncilreport.org>.
26. It is estimated that the Commission will take up to four to five cases each year. New countries for possible consideration by the PBC include the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti, Liberia and Timor-Leste.
27. *Chairman's Summary, Burundi Country-Specific Meeting, Peacebuilding Commission,* 13 October 2006, at <www.un.org/peace/peacebuilding/pdf/burundi-chair-13oct2006.pdf>.
28. *Chairman's Summary, Sierra Leone Country-Specific Meeting, Peacebuilding Commission,* 12 October 2006, at <www.un.org/peace/peacebuilding/pdf/sierraleone-chair-12oct2006.pdf>.
29. Secretary-General's address to the summit of the African Union, Addis Ababa, 29 January 2007. Although these funds are now available for Burundi, the allocation for Sierra Leone will only be released once the review process for its priority plan is completed.
30. United Nations General Assembly, Sixty-first Session, 87th plenary meeting, UN document A/61/PV.87, 6 February 2007, p. 9.
31. United Nations General Assembly, Sixty-first Session, 86th plenary meeting, UN document A/61/PV.86, 6 February 2007, p. 8 and p. 6.
32. Boutros Boutros-Ghali defined preventive diplomacy as "action to prevent disputes from arising between parties, to prevent existing disputes from escalating into conflicts and to limit the spread of the latter when they occur" (*An Agenda for Peace: Report of the Secretary- General,* op. cit., paragraph 20). Building on this definition, Kofi Annan argues persuasively that the UN Charter "provides the foundation for a comprehensive and long-term approach to conflict prevention based on an expanded concept of peace and security" (*Prevention of Armed Conflict: Report of the Secretary-General,* UN document A/55/985 – S/2001/574, 7 June 2001, paragraph 20).
33. The UN country-level missions are Afghanistan (UNAMA 2002–), Angola (UNAVEM II, III and MONUA 1991–1999), Bosnia and Herzegovina (UNMIBH 1995–2002), Burundi (ONUB 2004–), Cambodia (UNTAC 1992–1993), Central African Republic (MINURCA, BONUCA 1998–), Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI 2004–), Croatia (UNTAES, 1995–1998), Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC 1999–), El Salvador (ONUSAL 1991–1995), Guinea-Bissau (UNOGBIS 1999–), Guatemala (MINUGUA 1997), Haiti (UNMIH, UNSMIH, UNTMIH 1993–1997, MINUSTAH 2004–), Iraq (UNAMI 2003–), Kosovo (UNMIK 1999–), Liberia (UNOMIL 1993–1997, UNMIL 2003–), Middle East (UNSCO 1999–), Mozambique (ONUMOZ 1992–1994), Namibia (UNTAG 1989–1990), Nepal (UNMIN 2007–), Nicaragua (ONUCA and ONUVEN 1989–1992), Papua New Guinea (UNOMB 1998–2004), Rwanda (UNAMIR, 1993–1996), Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL 1999–2005), Somalia (UNOSOM II and then UNPOS 1993–), Sudan (UNMIS 2005–), Tajikistan (UNTOP 2000–) and Timor-Leste (UNTAET, UNMISET, UNMIT 1999–). Only peace operations with a political institution-building component are included in this classification. Immediately successive UN missions are recorded as one continuous mission.
34. Michael Barnett et al, op. cit., p. 36.
35. Now used in Afghanistan, Haiti, Iraq, Sudan and Timor-Leste, compact mechanisms detail concrete, time-bound benchmarks agreed by donors and the host country on a range of peacebuilding and recovery issues.
36. See, for example, Alix J. Boucher, William J. Durch, Margaret Midyette, Sarah Rose and Jason Terry, 2007, *Mapping and Fighting Corruption in War-Torn States*, report no. 61, Washington, DC, Henry L. Stimson Center, at <www.stimson.org/fopo/pdf/Mapping_and_Fighting_Corruption_in_War-Torn_States.pdf>; Daniel Large (ed.), 2003, *Corruption in Post-War Reconstruction: Confronting the Vicious Circle*, Baabda, The Lebanese Transparency Association, TIRI and UNDP.
37. "Q&A: Afghan Election Guide", *BBC News*, 3 October 2005, at <news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/south_asia/4251580.stm> and calculations based on financial data collected from the Afghanistan Joint Electoral Management Body, at <www.jemb.org>.

The UN Peacebuilding Commission and civil society engagement

Renske Heemskerk

First proposed in the report of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change, *A More Secure World: Our Shared Responsibility*,[1] the establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) at the United Nations (UN) was taken up by the Secretary-General as part of the UN reform agenda and heralded as one of the few successes of the World Summit meeting in September 2005. The General Assembly and the Security Council founded the Peacebuilding Commission in concurrent resolutions in December 2005.[2]

These resolutions laid out the main purposes for the PBC:

- to propose integrated strategies for post-conflict peacebuilding and recovery;
- to help ensure predictable financing for early recovery activities and sustained financial investment over the medium to longer term;
- to extend the duration of the international community's attention to post-conflict recovery; and
- to develop best practice on issues that require extensive collaboration among political, military, humanitarian and development actors.

The Peacebuilding Commission is welcome as the first intergovernmental body with a focus on long-term involvement in activities to promote sustainable peace in post-conflict countries. It will fill a gap in the UN system, and will become the focal point on peace-related issues within the UN family.

The Commission will fill a gap, but it will not operate in a policy vacuum; to varying degrees, post-conflict countries already have national leadership strategies and benchmarks, and systems of coordination and resource mobilization, and the PBC will have to find its place among these arrangements. Rather than simply adding another layer of complexity, the PBC must define its "added value".

A commonly agreed element of this added value is the need for Integrated Peacebuilding Strategies (IPBSs)—strategies based on genuine partnerships between international and national actors. The PBC will inform the design of high-quality strategies in partnership with national governments and experts in the field, and promote their implementation by helping to mobilize a coalition of international interests within the affected country. The PBC will have an overarching coordinating role, ensuring that all actors operate from the same strategic framework and realistic plan for implementation. A plan that links political and security and development goals and develops clear transition benchmarks to bridge the gap between relief and development.

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Long-term, sustainable peace requires a "culture of prevention" and a "culture of peace", generated from the bottom up as well as from the top down. It also demands a functioning state that is citizen-focused, that can protect and provide for its population. Thus, in order to build sustainable peace, *all* peacebuilding actors—the United Nations, regional organizations, governments and civil society—must be involved.[3] Civil society is crucial; the engagement of large segments of society in peacebuilding will make the changes needed to support sustainable peace both deeper and more durable.[4]

The value of civil society engagement

In recent decades, the influence of civil society organizations (CSOs) in global debates has increased considerably. In the areas of human rights, development and the environment, large lobby groups have successfully influenced the agendas of several important UN conferences. Cooperation between governments, civil society and the United Nations led to the Mine Ban Treaty, opened for signature in 1997, and the establishment of the International Criminal Court in 1998.

The United Nations has recognized the importance of constructive and strategic engagement with civil society in carrying out its tasks. As former Secretary-General Kofi Annan stated in an address to the Security Council on 22 June 2004: "engagement with civil society is not an end in itself, nor is it a panacea, but it is vital to our efforts to turn … peace agreements into … peaceful societies and viable States. The partnership between the United Nations and civil society is therefore not an option; it is a necessity."[5]

As the nature of conflict has shifted to more intra-state violence, and civilians are victimized on an unprecedented scale, CSOs have found themselves in a unique position for peacebuilding. The roles they play vary—from relief and development to local conflict resolution, advocacy, civic engagement and non-violent accompaniment—and so do their relationships with the United Nations. There is no one modality of civil society engagement applicable for all the various departments, agencies and funds of the United Nations. Rather, each body has its own procedures. For example, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) can apply for accreditation with the Department of Public Information (DPI), as well as Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) accreditation. However, these accreditations do not provide access to all UN bodies, and this includes the PBC.

The relationship between civil society and the United Nations still constitutes a "hot" issue when new institutions are born and rules of procedures are drafted. From the first, civil society was involved in lobbying for language on civil society interaction to be included in the resolutions establishing the PBC. The global conference "From Reaction to Prevention: Civil Society Forging Partnerships to Prevent Violent Conflict and Build Peace" (organized by the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict, GPPAC, in partnership with the UN Department of Political Affairs) at UN Headquarters in July 2005 provided an opportunity for civil society organizations to interact with governments and the United Nations on prevention and peacebuilding. Parallel to the organization of the conference, GPPAC engaged in dialogue with the informal Group of Like-minded States on Conflict Prevention (co-chaired by Germany and Switzerland). The main purpose of this group is to emphasize conflict prevention as a central priority of UN reform, to engage Member States in dialogue with civil society and GPPAC, and to advance the conflict prevention and human security agenda by the systematic follow-up of reforms, in particular regarding the PBC and the Peacebuilding Fund.[6] After discussions at working and ambassadorial level and with input from GPPAC, the group prepared a document with text on prevention and peacebuilding issues for the debates on the World Summit Outcome document. It was handed to the President of the Fifty-ninth Session of the General Assembly, Mr Jean Ping, with the signatures of

32 ambassadors. These efforts, as well as input from other civil society actors, helped to get language on civil society written into the resolutions establishing the PBC.

The respective resolutions "*encourage*… the Commission to consult with civil society, non-governmental organizations, including women's organizations, and the private sector engaged in peacebuilding activities, as appropriate".[7] However, the PBC is still negotiating the modalities for civil society engagement. Some Member States are calling for an innovative form of relationship with civil society, while others view the PBC as an intergovernmental body in whose informal discussions civil society actors do not have the right to take part. So far, engagement has been ad hoc, and no formal procedures have yet been created.

For a peacebuilding strategy and implementation to be effective and sustainable, it must be the result of dialogue among all actors involved.

But for a peacebuilding strategy and implementation to be effective and sustainable, it must be the result of dialogue among all actors involved rather than the sole decision of governments. Not including civil society in developing strategies for sustainable peace leads to a process that is not owned by the people affected by conflict, who feel it is externally imposed. It is vital that peacebuilding strategies and initiatives are locally derived and internationally supported;[8] it therefore follows that civil society should have input at all stages of the process. Civil society engagement will be particularly critical in the following areas.

- Local ownership and engagement. Local ownership of the peacebuilding process and local engagement in the development and implementation of rebuilding strategies are central to successful peacebuilding. CSOs are uniquely equipped to mobilize individuals in peacebuilding activities and may constitute some of the remnants of social networks in post-conflict situations.
- Linking the PBC with local populations. CSOs can be important sources of local knowledge and expertise in various sectors related to rebuilding societies after conflict (such as disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, justice and social reconciliation). They can liaise between the PBC and the local population, helping to identify local priorities for the PBC and transmitting information about the coordinated peacebuilding strategy to citizens.
- Providing goods and services. There are often a number of CSOs already operating on the ground in post-conflict areas, providing humanitarian relief and coordinating other essential activities, including justice mechanisms. This work can be effectively adapted to aid the strategies of the PBC.[9]

Collaboration between the PBC and civil society should be accountable, flexible and inclusive. Developing mechanisms to enable transparency, participation, evaluation, information sharing and complaints and redress ensures that the PBC's work is accountable to those most affected by it. At the same time, the functioning of the PBC must be flexible to meet changing needs as the Commission itself evolves and as circumstances in the countries in which it works alter. A flexible approach will also assist effective engagement with civil society; for example, finding a way to allow the participation of local civil society representatives in PBC meetings even when they do not have ECOSOC or DPI accreditation. An inclusive approach, embracing CSOs at all levels and from diverse geographic and thematic areas, will mean that the PBC can draw on a world of expertise and experience. It will also help the Commission to ensure more sustained support: at the regional level, CSOs can help to organize national civil society groups, advocating for their involvement in the PBC's processes and building links with the Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO, the office supporting the work of the PBC); national civil society leaders can foster support for peacebuilding among the population. By early engagement with civil society at the international level, the PBC Organizational Committee can develop working methods and set standards to ensure that the Commission gains the utmost benefit from CSO involvement at all levels.

Coordinating civil society engagement with the PBC

GPPAC is an international network of civil society organizations working in conflict prevention and peacebuilding.[10]

One of the main tasks of its International Secretariat is to function as a bridge between regional (and national and local) concerns and developments and the international agenda. In relation to the Peacebuilding Commission, the International Secretariat plays a liaison role between New York and GPPAC's regional and national partners—translating developments at the PBC to GPPAC partners and informing PBC members and PBSO staff of relevant civil society activity in the countries with which the PBC is concerned. In New York, the GPPAC secretariat works closely with the World Federalist Movement-Institute for Global Policy (WFM-IGP) to monitor Commission meetings. Successful lobbying efforts with WFM-IGP have so far ensured that civil society representatives from Burundi and Sierra Leone (the two countries on the PBC's agenda as of April 2007) have participated in both sets of the PBC's country-specific meetings.

In Geneva, several organizations, including civil society and UN agencies, are in the process of defining "International Geneva's" potential added value to the work of the PBC.[11] GPPAC's International Secretariat aims to link this process of meetings and research papers to the civil society processes taking place in New York and in-country, so that all actors can work together.

GPPAC has made both horizontal and vertical connections possible, and there is already a network of actors from both civil society and the PBC in constant dialogue. By actively engaging CSOs in Burundi and Sierra Leone, and at the same time paying regular visits to UN officials and UN Member States at their Permanent Missions in New York, an opening has been created in which players can share knowledge and information. This is helping to promote trust and openness between governments and civil society actors, which will perhaps lead to modalities for civil society engagement with the PBC.

National civil society consultation: Burundi and Sierra Leone

The inclusion of civil society at all stages of the peacebuilding processes in Burundi and Sierra Leone will ensure ownership, efficiency and transparency; it will ensure that the PBC and governments' activities are coherent with existing peacebuilding activities. One way that GPPAC makes sure of civil society engagement is the facilitation of consultations on the PBC. Locally and regionally driven, these consultations familiarize civil society with the work of the PBC and prepare CSOs to give timely and informed recommendations to the Commission. Consultations are currently taking place in Burundi and Sierra Leone, and it is through these consultations that local civil society representatives were designated to present recommendations to the Peacebuilding Commission during its country-specific meetings of October and December 2006. The representatives had the opportunity to address the Commission both formally at the official meetings and informally at briefings arranged prior to the meetings. This participation allowed the PBC to hear civil society's priorities for peacebuilding, enabled contacts to be built between local civil society and the government and UN peacebuilding teams, and ensured that civil society received a first-hand account of the meetings and the decisions made by the Commission.

The inclusion of civil society at all stages of the peacebuilding processes in Burundi and Sierra Leone will ensure ownership, efficiency and transparency.

Sierra Leone

Since Sierra Leone's independence, CSOs have played a significant role in ensuring democracy, popular participation and good governance. However, political infiltration and weak institutional infrastructure meant that by 2003 civil society cooperation had disintegrated. In order to enhance their influence and recognition in peacebuilding, several CSOs formed umbrella organizations, such as Network on Collaborative Peacebuilding NCP-SL, Partners in Conflict Transformation and the National Forum for Human Rights. Today, civil society organizations are working on various community capacity-building programmes, for example in conflict transformation and management and peace education.[12]

From 19–20 July 2006, the West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP, which is steering the GPPAC process in West Africa), in partnership with its national network NCP-SL, organized a civil society consultation in Sierra Leone involving around 30 participants from civil society organizations working in various thematic areas across the country, as well as representatives from government agencies, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), the Special Court for Sierra Leone and the United Nations Integrated Office in Sierra Leone (UNIOSIL).

During the meeting, participants identified gaps in the current peacebuilding initiatives, such as piecemeal implementation of TRC recommendations, a lack of effective monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, and a lack of adequate resources for the effective performance of public institutions. They also noted problems in the relationship between the government and civil society, which in the past has been characterized by poor communication and interaction: CSOs feel that government does not consult them in policy processes, while the government believes that it does. The programme "Enhancing Interaction and Interface Between Civil Society and the State to Improve Poor People's Lives", has been set up as a first step to improve the relationship.[13]

The participants emphasized that peacebuilding in Sierra Leone can only be effective if resources are refocused and a holistic approach adopted. They identified eight priority areas, which are in line with the Sierra Leone government's four priority areas presented at the PBC's October 2006 country-specific meeting (youth employment and empowerment, justice and security sector development, democratic process development and institutional capacity-building). The additional priority areas identified by civil society were strengthening effective collaboration among governments and civil society in the Mano River Basin, gender mainstreaming in peacebuilding, the establishment of a research and resource unit to develop research and analysis skills, and the establishment of monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.

After the PBC's country-specific October meeting, members of the civil society working group (which had been elected during the civil society consultation) held meetings with their constituencies, as well as with government and UN officials. The feeling is that a relationship is developing between civil society and the government of Sierra Leone in their bid to design the next steps for the realization of the PBC's work in the country. In the December country-specific meeting, successful lobby efforts from GPPAC, WFM-IGP and like-minded members of the Commission again resulted in the participation of a representative of the in-country civil society consultation. A follow-up meeting, organized by civil society in Sierra Leone but including presentations from the government and the United Nations, took place on 19 January 2007. It was decided during this meeting that the civil society representatives on Sierra Leone's joint UN–government peacebuilding committee (on which civil society has observer status) would be NCP-SL and the Mano River Women's Peace Network.

The next formal country-specific meeting for Sierra Leone is planned to take place in mid-2007 in New York. The next phase of the PBC's work on Sierra Leone will focus on developing an IPBS, which will have clear benchmarks and indicators against which progress will be measured. The PBC will

meet for regular, informal country-specific thematic discussions in between its formal country-specific meetings. The PBSO will facilitate regular information sharing with relevant actors in the country, including civil society. A small group of PBC members has visited Sierra Leone, and there are plans to organize meetings on lessons learned.

Burundi

The Forum for Reinforcement of the Civil Society, in collaboration with GPPAC and Search for Common Ground, organized a consultative workshop on 2 October 2006 in Bujumbura. There were around 35 participants from national and international CSOs. They discussed strategic priorities for peacebuilding and civil society commitments in implementing these priorities. A representative of this consultation presented its priorities at the PBC's October country-specific meeting. These included the installation of transitional justice mechanisms, adapted to the Burundian context and subject to broad popular consultation; institutional capacity-building in democratic governance for members of parliament, the government, political party leaders, communal and village councils, the army and police, as well as leaders of civil society organizations; the creation of a planning and coordination mechanism among all actors to ensure participatory design of projects and activities that respond to the true concerns of the population; the promotion and protection of human rights; and the promotion of the healthy management of public goods, in particular through the installation of an independent national observatory on corruption and economic embezzlement.[14] The government's priorities, set after the PBC's October meeting, are similar and include promoting good governance, strengthening the rule of law and the security sector as well as ensuring community recovery—but they do not cover everything identified by civil society, such as the promotion and protection of human rights, and the promotion of a permanent social and political dialogue between all actors.

A civil society steering committee, elected during the meeting in Bujumbura, came together after the PBC's October meeting to discuss its outcomes and next steps. They organized another national consultative workshop on 23–24 November 2006. This brought together 83 participants from 68 different CSOs and focused on the priority areas identified by the government, looking at how civil society could engage effectively in addressing these areas. The participants produced a plan of action and expected results for interventions in each of the identified priority areas. Thanks to lobbying by GPPAC, WFM-IGP and like-minded members of the PBC, civil society was invited to participate in the PBC's formal country-specific meeting in December 2006.

Similar to the process in Sierra Leone, a joint committee of the government and United Nations has been established in Burundi to deal with the PBC's work, and civil society has been invited as an observer. At the end of January 2007, 90 representatives of civil society met and established an eight-member committee to follow up the PBC process. The chair of this committee, Biraturaba (the GPPAC national focal point), will also serve as the observer to the joint government–UN committee.

The PBC's work is now to develop an IPBS. The civil society committee set up to follow the PBC process will identify what CSOs can contribute to the development of this strategy. Several meetings of the PBC's joint committee are planned, as well as a donor roundtable to mobilize resources for peacebuilding activities. The next formal country-specific meeting on Burundi in New York is planned for mid-2007.

The relationship between civil society and the government in Burundi is challenging. The Government of Burundi did not reach out to civil society when preparing for the country-specific meetings of the PBC in New York. Nonetheless, civil society organized its own meetings and continued to invite government and UN officials to take part; the invitations were turned down. Possible openings

for civil society engagement with the government are gradually appearing, however. One positive sign is the Burundian government's vote to extend invitations to civil society representatives for the country-specific meetings of the PBC. It is hoped that in the development of the IPBS, civil society will be involved not just as a potential operational partner, but as a vital collaborator in strategy design.

Building peace with civil society

The PBC's establishment recognized a significant deficiency in the UN system: there was no central department dedicated to the promotion of peace, despite the UN's mandate to "save succeeding generations from the scourge of war".[15] Early success will establish strong grounds for the expansion of the PBC's work and vital extra funding. It is therefore of great importance that all stakeholders—international organizations, national governments, donors and civil society—build on each other's strengths.

Considering the multitude of national and international actors that must cooperate effectively to bring about peace, an open, inclusive, structured and long-term consultative process is crucial, and the creation of the Peacebuilding Commission provides an excellent opportunity to create this kind of process. The PBC is in a position to facilitate the bringing together of all stakeholders and to stimulate dialogue and cooperation. In developing an IPBS based on input from all the various actors, the PBC can ensure that everyone involved in peacebuilding works from the same agenda, with agreed goals. This will enhance national ownership and, most importantly, sustainable peace. Rather than creating a situation of ad hoc meetings, starting work with a structured schedule and an inclusive meeting policy will help the PBC to establish an effective peacebuilding process. CSOs are all too often unable to contribute fully to current peacebuilding processes; the PBC is able to engage civil society and thereby strengthen the peacebuilding process in a variety of ways.[16]

The PBC is in a position to facilitate the bringing together of all stakeholders.

Building effective partnerships

The PBC is well placed to promote effective partnerships among governments, CSOs, intergovernmental organizations and donors. It could provide a joint platform for all those involved in peacebuilding to discuss and share their experiences. Discussions on specific countries or more general themes could take place in the field, at UN Headquarters or in Geneva. The PBC does not necessarily have to organize these meetings; rather it could stimulate and promote such initiatives. The joint committees set up in Burundi and Sierra Leone could take the lead in establishing a long-term, structured and inclusive in-country consultation process that includes civil society, and thus ensures transparency and avoids duplication.

Early local engagement

Early engagement with civil society in the countries concerned is critical to national ownership of the peacebuilding process. It can foster local buy-in for the peacebuilding strategy; build confidence in the work of the PBC, the UN country team and the national government; capitalize on existing peacebuilding efforts; and pave the way for better governance by connecting civil society with local and national governments.

One mechanism for achieving this early local engagement would be to support the in-country civil society processes currently organized by GPPAC. This could be done by promoting interaction with civil society to national governments and UN officials in-country (such as participation in civil society consultations and regular meetings with representatives of these consultations) and providing financial support. The PBC could further help by ensuring that local civil society has access to its documents and reports in local languages. It is vital that the PBC continues to extend invitations to representatives of local civil society processes to participate in its country-specific meetings (although the actual representatives should be designated locally). This increases the legitimacy of the work of the PBC in the country at stake, as the civil society representative is able to tell its constituencies how and why decisions are made.

It is impossible for the PBC to set to work in all countries affected by armed violence, and it is understandable that the Commission can only deal with a limited amount of cases. But those countries unlikely to be selected should not be completely ignored. The PBSO could track these countries and make sure lessons learned from selected cases are shared with governments dealing with similar situations. Civil society organizations can also play a role, sharing their knowledge, expertise and experience.

Consultation at UN Headquarters

Civil society participation is equally important at the international level, and the development of formal and informal consultation mechanisms would aid collaboration between civil society actors and the PBC. NGOs could observe and monitor PBC meetings based in principle on the arrangements set forth in the ECOSOC resolution on consultative relationships between the United Nations and NGOs.[17] Relevant arrangements include access to the provisional agenda of PBC meetings, the right to attend public meetings and the right to submit written statements relevant to the work of the Commission. Consideration could be given to local organizations that do not have ECOSOC consultative status—the PBC has been flexible about extending invitations to civil society representatives that do not have ECOSOC accreditation thus far, and it is hoped that this practice will continue.

Until now, civil society's invitations to PBC meetings have been last-minute, creating logistical complications that in some cases have resulted in representatives being unable to attend. For effective planning and input from civil society it would be extremely helpful if the PBC made its schedule available in advance. It can also be hard to obtain information on the PBC's activities between meetings, which makes it difficult for national and international CSOs alike to give substantive feedback into the PBC's discussions. Briefings—in New York, but most importantly in-country—could be organized to inform CSOs on the work and progress of the Commission between meetings. The PBSO could also post regular updates on the PBC web site.

Maintaining a focus on neglected areas

For peacebuilding activities to be successful, the international community must adopt a long-term approach in conflict areas and invest in under-resourced peacebuilding activities. There is a need for awareness-raising activities in countries at stake. Citizens need to be informed about the work of the PBC, and this is a task for the Commission, as well as government and civil society. CSOs and media can inform their constituencies about the range of activities going on, how to get involved in them and how to actively participate in policy processes.

To obtain the resources necessary to consolidate peace, the PBC needs the credibility to pressure donors to focus attention on areas that are perpetually under-resourced, for example security sector reform and justice.[18] Civil society organizations can help bolster credibility and apply pressure by visiting policy makers, writing newspaper articles and organizing meetings for a broader public.

Annual dialogue

The PBC could host an annual dialogue between NGOs and the PBC Organizational Committee. This would allow relevant actors from around the world to come to New York and discuss thematic issues as well as progress in the countries where the PBC is working and regional aspects of the PBC's work. Financial assistance would ensure the balanced regional representation of NGOs at these meetings. The dialogue would be most effective if it were to coincide with a scheduled meeting of the PBC, to maximize the attendance of PBC members. Possible output from the dialogue could consist of recommendations for the PBC's annual report to the General Assembly.

Lessons learned and knowledge networks

Although significant peacebuilding experience exists within the UN system, there is no system in place to ensure institutional memory. The PBC will be able to help by becoming a clearing house for expertise on both thematic and country-specific levels. To make sure that expertise is located and placed at the UN's disposal, the PBSO will need to develop a networking role, reaching out to institutions and experts beyond the UN, including civil society. The PBSO will also provide a focus for knowledge on areas that currently lack an institutional home, such as democratic transition and the rule of law.[19] An advisory group could help to build up this bank of knowledge, and the PBSO could organize seminars where actors (both from national governments and civil society) from Burundi, Sierra Leone and other conflict-affected countries can meet to exchange experiences and lessons learned.

Consultative review

Toward the end of 2007, after the first year of its work, the PBC should organize a comprehensive review meeting, inviting actors from Burundi and Sierra Leone to offer their perspectives on the outcomes of the first year of the PBC and challenges faced. After five years there will be a review of the Commission, as mandated by its establishing resolutions. This could include a consultative process to review CSO engagement mechanisms at UN Headquarters and in the countries concerned, in order to assess whether they have proven effective, or if they should be modified.

Conclusion

Although the international community has a vital role, sustainability in peacebuilding ultimately relies on the work of national governments and societies. Armed with the most rigorous analysis and best intentions, international actors have not succeeded where they have attempted to bypass national ownership or fail to understand local contexts.

The key to successful transition to sustainable peace is early engagement with the functioning of the state and with civil society, so that strategies are rooted in a shared compact between the post-conflict society and the international community. To be effective, the PBC must take a coordinated and long-term approach, involving not just UN agencies, but donors, regional intergovernmental organizations and civil society. If the PBC becomes a forum of bureaucrats alone it will surely fail. The work, expertise and commitment of civil society organizations—both on the ground and at the regional and global level—should be drawn on at all levels of the PBC. Equally, the PBC should encourage national governments and other international actors in the field to adopt broader consultation strategies with civil society leaders.

The Peacebuilding Commission has taken an important place within the United Nations family, and several PBC members, in close cooperation with the PBSO, are seeking ways to create innovative mechanisms to help build sustainable peace. GPPAC, in its turn, and in cooperation with other civil society actors, is committed to a collaboration that will make the PBC's work a success and, most importantly, promote sustainable peace.

Notes

1. High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change, 2004, *A More Secure World: Our Shared Responsibility,* United Nations, section XV.
2. United Nations General Assembly resolution 60/180 of 20 December 2005, UN document A/RES/60/180, 30 December 2005; Security Council resolution 1645 (2005), UN document S/RES/1645(2005), 20 December 2005.
3. GPPAC, *People Building Peace: A Global Action Agenda for the Prevention of Violent Conflict,* 9 June 2005, at <www.gppac.org/documents/GPPAC/Global_Action_Agenda/Global_Action_Agenda_final_9_June_05.pdf>.
4. Catherine Barnes, 2006, *Agents for Change: Civil Society Roles in Preventing War & Building Peace*, GPPAC, Issue Paper 2, September, at <www.gppac.net/documents/GPPAC/Research/Rapport2_2.pdf>, p. 8.
5. United Nations Security Council 4993rd meeting, UN document S/PV.4993, 22 June 2004.
6. Detlev Wolter and Jörn Müller, 2005, "Die Vereinten Nationen nach 60 Jahren: Wird Konfliktprävention jetzt ernst genommen?", *Die Friedenswarte, Reforminiativen der Vereinten Nationen,* no. 3–4.
7. United Nations General Assembly resolution 60/180, op. cit., paragraph 21, and Security Council resolution 1645 (2005), op. cit., paragraph 21.
8. GPPAC, 2005, op. cit., p. 4 and p. 6.
9. WFM-IGP, 2006, *Effective Civil Society Engagement with the Peacebuilding Commission: Principles and Mechanisms*, May, p. 3.
10. For more information about the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict, go to <www.gppac.net>.
11. For more on International Geneva and the Peacebuilding Commission, see the article by David Atwood and Fred Tanner in this issue of *Disarmament Forum*.
12. WANEP, *Report of the GPPAC National Civil Society Consultation in Sierra Leone*, 19–20 July 2006, Freetown, at <www.gppac.org/documents/GPPAC/process/UN_Peacebuilding_Commission/Sierra_Leone_Consultation_Report1.doc>, p. 5.
13. Ibid., p. 6.
14. Forum for Reinforcement of the Civil Society, *The Contribution of Civil Society Organisations in Building Lasting Peace in Burundi*, 2 October 2006, Bujumbura, GPPAC, at <www.gppac.org/documents/GPPAC/process/Burundi_Consultation_Report_Oct_06.doc>, p. 5.
15. Charter of the United Nations, signed 25 June 1945 in San Francisco, preamble.
16. Some of these recommendations are based upon WFM-IGP, 2006, op. cit.
17. ECOSOC resolution 1996/31, 49th plenary meeting, 25 July 1996.
18. Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, *The UN Peacebuilding Commission: Benefits and Challenges,* New York Office, 6 June 2006, p. 3.
19. Report on Wilton Park Conference WPS06/2, *Putting Decisions into Practice: How Will the UN Peacebuilding Commission Fulfil Its Mandate?* 9–10 February 2006, at <www.wiltonpark.org.uk/documents/conferences/WPS06-2/pdfs/WPS06-2.pdf>, paragraph 29.

The UN Peacebuilding Commission and International Geneva

David Atwood and Fred Tanner

On 20 December 2005, upon the recommendation of the United Nations (UN) Secretary-General, the Security Council and the General Assembly jointly established the new UN Peacebuilding Commission (PBC).[1] Located in New York, the Commission is responsible for addressing a critical gap within the United Nations and the global system by providing a coordinated, coherent and integrated approach to post-conflict peacebuilding and facilitating dialogue among key actors. This article attempts to show that the work of the PBC will be enhanced by adopting a broad understanding of relevant actors and centres of competence. It focuses on "International Geneva" and discusses the potential implications of the PBC for Geneva-based international and non-governmental organizations concerned with post-conflict reconstruction and related tasks. It demonstrates how far and in which ways Geneva-based organizations engaged in peacebuilding work could contribute to the work of the PBC. Some of the arguments made in the following pages reflect findings of an ongoing project on the PBC and International Geneva being carried out by the Geneva Centre for Security Policy in close partnership with the Quaker United Nations Office, the Programme for Strategic and International Security Studies of the Graduate Institute of International Studies and the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces.

Implications of the changing nature of peace operations: from peacekeeping to peacebuilding

The creation of the Peacebuilding Commission has been a response to the fundamentally transformed nature of peace operations during the last decade. While the peacekeeping operations of the Cold War period were typically limited to the deployment of an interposition force between warring factions, missions since the early 1990s have become much more complex and multi-faceted, comprising not only military but also civilian, humanitarian, political and other aspects. These so-called second-generation missions have taken on tasks such as refugee return, reintegration of former combatants, reconstruction of state institutions and monitoring of elections.

The changing nature of peace operations is demonstrated by the current cases of Afghanistan and Iraq. Although the United States and its coalition partners are involved in war-fighting and counter-insurgency operations in both states, making these interventions significantly different to recent operations elsewhere (in places such as Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Liberia, Sierra Leone or

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Timor-Leste), a broad range of state-building activities are simultaneously being carried out under international auspices, which are similar to those that have occurred elsewhere, such as managing the constitution-making process, holding elections, controlling violence and economic reconstruction.

The successive peace missions in Burundi—the UN Operation in Burundi (ONUB) and the UN Integrated Office in Burundi (BINUB)—are a further example of the evolution of peace operations. From May 2004 to December 2006, ONUB supported disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) and security sector reform (SSR) activities, organized national elections and played a critical role in supporting a negotiation process between the government and remaining rebels, which resulted in a comprehensive ceasefire agreement. BINUB, whose mandate started on 1 January 2007, continues to support DDR and SSR activities.[2] But it also promotes the protection of human rights, pushes for measures to end impunity and supports poverty reduction efforts. These operations demonstrate the comprehensive challenge that peacebuilding presents: its multiple objectives range from providing security in the aftermath of conflict, demilitarizing society, reversing impunity, restoring justice and accountability, to rebuilding rule of law and governance institutions and finally democratizing society and fostering economic and social development.

Peacebuilding entered the UN lexicon and international practice with former UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali's *Agenda for Peace,* published in 1992.[3] Boutros-Ghali distinguishes four sequential but overlapping activities in the conflict management cycle: preventive diplomacy, peacekeeping, peacemaking and peacebuilding. He describes peacebuilding as "action to identify and support structures which will tend to strengthen and solidify peace in order to avoid a relapse into conflict".[4] This highlights the dual and sometimes conflicting task of peacebuilding: to obtain security and an end to hostilities on the one hand, and on the other to engage in the parallel longer term process of consolidating peace (by reconciling people and groups, reforming or rebuilding institutions, structures and economies) to diminish the possibility of a relapse into violence.

The task is rendered even more complex as the conflict cycle is not linear and each conflict dynamic has its own specific needs to which peacebuilding must respond if it is to be successful.[5] The intensity of deadly violence also varies greatly and significantly influences the prospects of successful peacebuilding. The future of peacebuilding thus depends on an accurate understanding of each conflict setting and its potential both for peace and for further violent conflict.

The future of peacebuilding thus depends on an accurate understanding of each conflict setting.

Conflict propensity could be divided into three different types of situation. The first is those places where armed conflict is over but peace is not yet consolidated. One could even include in this category countries where conflict ended very early in the post-Cold War era, where wars have been over for a decade or more—El Salvador, Mozambique and South Africa, for example—but where the legacies of conflict are still apparent and the wounds of war have not fully healed. Elsewhere too—in Angola, Burundi, Guatemala, Haiti, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Timor-Leste—negotiated settlements have been reached, DDR has advanced considerably, new military and police forces have been or are being trained and elections have been held, but the peace is very tenuous, societies are fragile and serious root causes of conflict persist.

Second are those situations in which armed conflict is an acute problem and where international interveners find themselves in the middle of difficult and violent transitions, where peacebuilding is a day-to-day struggle of helping societies slowly to overcome violence, managing spoilers and warlords, and seeing through a troubled political transition. From the UN perspective, Afghanistan is such a situation as is the Democratic Republic of the Congo; both very difficult cases for peacebuilding.

The third category constitutes a large number of countries that are vulnerable to "state failure" because of weak institutions, vulnerability to pressures from exclusionary or radical armed groups, and other factors. Near or actual state failure puts populations at tremendous risk as levels of violence

increase and civilians are made vulnerable. The frequent recurrence of such situations in different parts of the world has forced consideration at the international level of the international community's responsibilities as regards intervention in national settings to protect civilians; what is the "responsibility to protect"? In light of recent advances in global norms, in particular the so–called responsibility to protect,[6] many people are arguing that the future of peacebuilding and its sustainability is really about state- and institution-building.[7]

In view of the multiple conditions and settings of peacebuilding, and multi-stakeholder involvement, an important prerequisite for successful peacebuilding is coordination. In his *In Larger Freedom* report of 2005 former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan referred to the need for coordination as follows:

> at this very point there is a gaping hole in the United Nations institutional machinery: no part of the United Nations system effectively addresses the challenge of helping countries with the transition from war to lasting peace.[8]

The need for greater coordination should be assured and facilitated by the PBC but also by reform efforts proposed by the High-level Panel on System-wide Coherence in the Areas of Development, Humanitarian Assistance and the Environment. This panel called for further strengthening of "the management and coordination of United Nations operational activities" and it particularly makes a case to better coordinate and integrate development strategies into post-conflict peacebuilding.[9]

Creation and horizon of the Peacebuilding Commission

The PBC was born of the recognition that effective and sustainable peacebuilding requires a long-term commitment by the international community in terms of financial and human resources. Given that there is a 44% risk of all civil wars re-erupting within five years of a peace settlement,[10] often due to a lack of sustained commitment by the international community, ensuring that international attention remains focused on countries emerging from violent conflict seems key for sustained peace.

The official mandate of the PBC is as follows:

- to propose integrated strategies for post-conflict peacebuilding and recovery;
- to help to ensure predictable financing for early recovery activities and sustained financial investment over the medium to longer term;
- to extend the period of attention by the international community to post-conflict recovery; and
- to develop best practices on issues that require extensive collaboration among political, military, humanitarian and development actors.[11]

Despite these straightforward goals, expectations about what the PBC should do and how it will operate in post-conflict environments vary widely both within and outside the United Nations. Generally speaking, experts believe that the main added value of the PBC will be in improving coordination between all national and international actors involved in peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction, helping to maintain a coalition of interests around a country in a post-conflict situation, contributing to bridging the "relief to development gap", and generally improving the sequencing of the various phases of peacekeeping efforts.

The PBC therefore faces the challenge of bringing greater coherence to the network of UN agencies and bodies that can be clearly understood to be dealing with post-conflict challenges, such as the UN Development Programme (UNDP), the Offices of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees

(UNHCR) and the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), in addition to the traditionally involved UN Departments of Peacekeeping Operations and of Political Affairs. In addition, given the growing complexity of peace operations, agencies whose main focus has not traditionally been on post-conflict reconstruction are also becoming increasingly relevant in this field. These include, for example, organizations such as the World Health Organization (WHO), the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS or the Global Fund to Fight Aids, Tuberculosis and Malaria, the International Organization for Migration, the International Bureau of Education or the World Bank. The PBC must seek to incorporate such organizations in its coordinating efforts.

And the Commission will need to go even further in its efforts to reach out to and coordinate relevant actors: UN General Assembly resolution 60/180 and Security Council resolution 1645 (2005) establishing the PBC also "*note*… the importance of participation of regional and local actors, and stress… the importance of adopting flexible working methods, including use of videoconferencing, meetings outside of New York and other modalities, in order to provide for the active participation of those most relevant to the deliberations of the Commission".[12] Finally, the resolutions also make explicit mention of the contribution of civil society actors to peacebuilding: "*recognizing* the important contribution of civil society and non-governmental organizations, including women's organizations, to peacebuilding efforts",[13] the resolutions "*encourage*… the Commission to consult with civil society, non-governmental organizations, including women's organizations, and the private sector engaged in peacebuilding activities, as appropriate".[14]

If the Peacebuilding Commission is to begin to fulfil expectations, its horizon must be raised far beyond its New York base.

Clearly, if the Peacebuilding Commission is to begin to fulfil expectations, its horizon must be raised far beyond its New York base. Coordination within the UN system itself will be a major challenge. But linkages must also be made to the many other actors (intergovernmental, national and non-governmental), processes and settings that can be considered as having the capacity to initiate and implement successful steps in a peacebuilding process.

Implications of the PBC for International Geneva

The Peacebuilding Commission's establishment in New York has implications for Geneva as a major global centre for peace. Geneva offers the promise of important peacebuilding contributions; prominent organizations and respected research and academic institutions concerned with peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction tasks have a strong presence in Geneva. The city is the headquarters of relevant UN agencies such as OHCHR, UNHCR and WHO, and hosts key branch facilities of UNICEF and UNDP, including UNDP's Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery. Geneva also offers training and research activities through the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, the United Nations Institute for Training and Research and the Geneva branch of the University for Peace. In addition, Geneva is home to the International Committee of the Red Cross and international foundations such as the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF), the Geneva Centre for Security Policy (GCSP) and the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining. Academic institutes, such as the Graduate Institute of International Studies and the Graduate Institute of Development Studies (to be joined into an Academic Centre of Competence in International Studies in January 2008), also provide an important basis for policy-relevant research. There is a rich presence of civil society organizations engaged in peacemaking and peacebuilding work in different parts of the world as well, including the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, the International Peacebuilding Alliance (Interpeace), Initiatives of Change and the Quaker United Nations Office (QUNO), to name but a few. Geneva thus offers vast knowledge and practical expertise on such issues as DDR, SSR, the rule of law and transitional justice, human rights, development and other issues relevant to post-conflict peacebuilding.

In order to explore the implications of the new PBC for Geneva-based international and non-governmental organizations, GCSP, in close partnership with DCAF, the Graduate Institute of International Studies and QUNO, launched a project in 2006 entitled "The UN PBC and International Geneva". The main objective of the project was to examine how the PBC can best ensure that Geneva-based stakeholders in post-conflict reconstruction can add value to the work of the PBC in terms of country-specific operations, norms and standard-setting, lessons learned and peacebuilding strategy design.

In the course of the first phase of this project, which involved representatives from a number of Geneva-based organizations in a range of workshops and seminars, it emerged that there is a need to foster awareness of this rich presence in Geneva and to better explore and understand the practical and potential linkages among the various organizations—within Geneva, between Geneva and other peacebuilding centres, and with the countries under consideration by the PBC (Burundi and Sierra Leone in April 2007). Furthermore, it became clear that Geneva hosts organizations that are leaders in their fields and could significantly contribute to the work of the PBC. To give but three examples, the Small Arms Survey is the principal international source of public information on all aspects of small arms and light weapons and its analyses are of considerable relevance to many dimensions of post-conflict peacebuilding; DCAF is one of the leading centres of expertise in security sector reform and governance; and Interpeace has intensive experience in peacebuilding programming.

These early explorations also showed that many organizations thus far do not have an official policy stance on the Peacebuilding Commission, but are still developing their thinking on this new body, though a number do have desk officers or focal points dealing specifically with the PBC. In general, there was agreement that International Geneva has a creative role to play in the activities of the PBC, a role beyond merely plugging in to the discourse in New York. Geneva-based organizations demonstrated a strong interest in working together further to enhance the contribution that International Geneva can make. The United Nations Office at Geneva has endorsed these research efforts, and has in turn initiated a number of activities aimed at greater understanding of the United Nations' contribution to peacebuilding. Given that at this early stage the agenda of the PBC is still fairly open, there is an opportunity to make constructive use of the wealth of knowledge found in Geneva to shape and support the future activities of the Commission.

"Mapping" International Geneva

The first phase of the research project recognized the expertise of International Geneva in various dimensions of peacebuilding, but it also revealed that there exists only a notional understanding of the particular value Geneva could add to the UN peacebuilding project. For this reason, GCSP and its project partners (QUNO, the Graduate Institute of International Studies and DCAF) are currently conducting a mapping exercise in order to produce a comprehensive and structured survey of institutions involved in peacebuilding. The mapping will demonstrate the competencies of Geneva-based organizations in relation to the specific peacebuilding sectors identified in the United Nations Peacebuilding Capacity Inventory prepared by the Executive Office of the Secretary-General.[15] The inventory was undertaken to determine the capacities that exist within the United Nations by asking agencies for information concerning their activities in various sectors relevant to a country in the post-conflict recovery phase. It defined four broad areas as key to peacebuilding: security and public order; justice and reconciliation; governance and participation; and socio-economic well-being.

An initial mapping exercise using these categories was conducted in Geneva in September 2006 among a range of Geneva-based organizations (See Box 1). This mapping revealed that Geneva-based organizations can add value to the UN peacebuilding project, particularly in areas where UN

peacebuilding capacities are very limited or non-existent. The Peacebuilding Capacity Inventory found that the United Nations lacks substantial capacity and knowledge in security sector governance; a Geneva-based centre of excellence like DCAF could certainly add important value to the work of the PBC in this respect. The fuller inventory of Geneva actors (which will be completed in mid-2007) will, it is hoped, reveal a range of areas where Geneva can contribute to the work of the PBC.

Realizing synergies in Geneva

Mapping Geneva-based organizations engaged in peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction will not only provide a fuller picture of Geneva policy, advocacy, research and operational competencies across the range of responsibilities of the Peacebuilding Commission but will also constitute a solid basis for the possible establishment of a coordinated peacebuilding "platform" in Geneva. The respective Geneva-based organizations (both intergovernmental and civil society) could be divided according to the peacebuilding sectors noted in the UN inventory and others, and a mechanism could be established to facilitate communication, knowledge exchange and collaborative planning among organizations. Such a platform could offer beneficial synergies. The various organizations within each sector could group their work in such a way as to provide the PBC with, inter alia, research and coherent policy proposals on specific subjects, experts and personnel or training activities. Such a sector-structured platform could also serve as a direct link between the PBC and civil society practitioners, who could share their field experience, best practices and lessons learned with the Peacebuilding Support Office, the donor community and the war-torn countries under consideration by the PBC.

Geneva as a hub of global initiatives

Creating a Geneva-based peacebuilding platform could add value to the work of the PBC in at least two significant ways. First, it could contribute to the coordination of already existing peacebuilding-related programmes and initiatives. Currently, joint programming between agencies is either limited or is developed on an ad hoc basis. A Geneva-based peacebuilding platform could bring important UN agencies like UNHCR, OHCHR and WHO together to discuss and develop cooperation and coherence with other Geneva-based organizations. This Geneva-based cooperation should help informal coordination and even facilitate the implementation of peace consolidation strategies within a framework of UN integrated offices in the field. A "core group" of participating organizations, representing the early elements of such a platform, is already contributing to establishing patterns of communication between Geneva-based, New York-based and other actors in different parts of the world seeking to contribute to the United Nations' peacebuilding functions. For example, there is a developing relationship between QUNO (on behalf of the Geneva core), the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (based in the Netherlands) and the World Federalist Movement-Institute for Global Policy (based in New York)[16] working to facilitate the effective relationship between the PBC and civil society organizations.

Second, integrated peacebuilding requires linkages across a range of global peacebuilding-related efforts and International Geneva is well placed to bring such initiatives together; Geneva could serve as a hub and mediator of the work of the PBC and other initiatives related to peacebuilding. For example, there is a growing recognition of the link between armed violence and development. In the 2005 World Summit Outcome document, global leaders recognized the strong linkage between development, peace, security and human rights.[17] (The establishment of the PBC was a direct consequence of this recognition.[18]) A Geneva-based peacebuilding platform could function as a focal point for existing and

Box 1. Extract of the Initial Mapping Exercise for Geneva-based organizations

Security and public order

(security sector, law enforcement, defence initiatives, DDR, mine action)

Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue (small arms, armed violence prevention, monitoring)
DCAF (security sector governance)
GCSP
Geneva Call (DDR, mines, child soldiers, armed groups)
Geneva Forum (engagement with diplomats, international organizations, NGOs on small arms, ERW, mine action, DDR)
Nonviolent Peaceforce
ICBL–Landmine Monitor
International Council on Human Rights Policy (current work on political violence)
Oxfam (Control Arms Campaign, responsibility to protect, country-focused advocacy)
PSIS (SSR, DDR, functions of the state)
Saferworld (arms control, SSR, conflict prevention)
UNDP (Burundi, Haiti, Sri Lanka, Timor-Leste, small arms)
UPEACE (non-violent transformation of conflict in Africa, environmental security, international law and HR)

Justice and reconciliation

(transitional justice and community rebuilding, judicial and legal reform, corrections, human rights)

Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue (Burundi: justice and rule of law; Sierra Leone: justice)
Dominicans for Justice and Peace (human rights)
Franciscans International (human rights work in Burundi, Colombia, Guatemala)
International Commission of Jurists (justice and the rule of law)
International Council on Human Rights Policy
Oxfam (humanitarian and HR lobbying, International Criminal Court)
Swisspeace (transitional justice and reconciliation)
UNDP
World Vision (human rights)

Governance and participation

(good offices, peace support, public administration and government, strengthening governance, economic strategy and coordination of international assistance, financial transparency, elections, political parties, civil society, media)

Franciscans International (elections, civil society)
GCSP
Initiatives of Change (Sierra Leone: Moral Foundations for Democracy, Hope Sierra Leone)
International Council on Human Rights Policy
Oxfam (MDG campaign, Make Trade Fair, Control Arms Campaign, lobbying, IFIs)
Saferworld (civil society capacity-building)
Swisspeace (in-country civil society forum, government–NGO platforms)
UNDP

Social and economic well-being

(protection and shelter of vulnerable groups, basic needs, gender, physical infrastructure, employment generation, economic foundations for growth and development)

Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue (protection, survivors, gender)
Geneva Call (gender, women combatants)
ICBL–Landmine Monitor (victim assistance in Burundi, Sierra Leone)
International Council on Human Rights Policy
Oxfam (development, HR and humanitarian programmes in Burundi, Haiti, Sierra Leone, Timor-Leste)
Swisspeace (gender, private sector)
UNDP

Other

Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue (mediation)
International Council on Human Rights Policy
Oxfam (Make Trade Fair)
PSIS (comprehensive approach to post-conflict peacebuilding)
Swisspeace (early warning, conflict sensitivity, mediation support)
UNDP
UNOG (partnership building and facilitating work in support of the work of UN contacts between UN family and civil society)
UPEACE (conflict prevention and peacebuilding in Africa)

Source: Workshop on Civil Society Organisations and the UN Peacebuilding Commission: Mapping the Contribution of Geneva-based Organisations, Appendix B: Mapping Exercise—Civil Society Workshop, 29 September 2006, at <www.gppac.org/documents/GPPAC/process/Mapping_Exercise_Geneva_Meeting_FINAL_24102006.pdf>.

future global initiatives on development and armed violence. Two prominent initiatives on the subject are already being driven from Geneva, namely the Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development[19] and the Armed Violence Prevention Programme.[20]

The Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development is an initiative endorsed by almost 50 states (as of April 2007) with the intention to "promote sustainable security and a culture of peace by taking action to reduce armed violence and its negative impact on socio-economic and human development".[21] It has been described by UNDP as the "the strongest political statement to date that the devastating impact of armed violence must be addressed within development contexts, rather than in the isolated domains of disarmament, peacebuilding and other processes".[22] The declaration's signatories have committed themselves to integrate armed violence reduction and conflict prevention programmes into national, regional and multilateral development frameworks, institutions and strategies. Signatories will meet in 2008 in order to assess progress toward the achievement of the measures outlined in the agreement. The Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation and UNDP are providing important support for this initiative.

The Armed Violence Prevention Programme, jointly coordinated by WHO and UNDP, recognizes that armed violence is a global problem with important development, health and security dimensions. Its goal is "to promote effective responses to armed violence through support for the development of an international policy framework founded on a clear understanding of the causes, nature and impacts of armed violence, and best practices generated from violence reduction and prevention initiatives to date".[23]

Both of these processes are clearly at the heart of peacebuilding and of concern to the work of the PBC. A Geneva-based peacebuilding platform could facilitate the active relationship between the actions being undertaken by these initiatives and the key areas of focus of the PBC, such as community security, and provide expertise, network and conference services for the formulation of new approaches and programmes.

Constraints and opportunities for the PBC and the role of Geneva

The Peacebuilding Commission is still very much an institution in formation and the jury is still out on the real contribution it will be able to make to fulfilling the visions foreseen for the United Nations in post-conflict peacebuilding. It faces many constraints and challenges, some of which relate to the

very nature of its construction and the limited financial and human resources that have so far been committed to it. The internal challenge of bringing coherence and coordination to the many UN agencies involved, including overcoming the inevitable "turf" issues that this implies, is considerable. Added to this is the challenge of moving beyond the rhetoric of recognizing the important contribution of civil society organizations to the many dimensions of peacebuilding with which the PBC will be seeking to engage, to finding effective methodologies of inclusion and partnership.

Nonetheless the PBC constitutes an important institutional experiment of tremendous relevance to the ability of the United Nations to meet the security and development needs of today. It represents considerable opportunities for the United Nations. Being a joint creation of the UN Security Council and General Assembly, it commands more democratic legitimacy than many other UN bodies. And if the PBC proves successful it will help improve the credibility of the United Nations as a whole. Finally, the very constraints facing the PBC, including financial ones, could also represent an opportunity for the realization of broader evolutionary potential in the UN system—that of learning to incorporate the contribution of civil society organizations and other non-governmental actors into its activities and functions. The PBC is unlikely to have the capacity to deal with all the aspects of post-conflict peacebuilding with which it is charged. If political and institutional constraints on their inclusion can be overcome, civil society organizations and others will generally have an important role to play both at the planning and the operational stages of post-conflict reconstruction efforts.

We have argued here that settings beyond New York can add important value and resources to the capacity of the PBC, and have highlighted this by showing how Geneva could play an important role, at a minimum by the potential support it could provide to the work of the Peacebuilding Support Office. It is therefore important that the early efforts at developing the capacities and competencies of International Geneva in peacebuilding continue and that all possible efforts be made to put these at the service of the PBC.

Notes

1. United Nations General Assembly resolution 60/180 of 20 December 2005, UN document A/RES/60/180, 30 December 2005; Security Council resolution 1645 (2005), UN document S/RES/1645(2005), 20 December 2005.
2. See United Nations Security Council resolution 1719 (2006), UN document S/RES/1719(2006), 25 October 2006.
3. *An Agenda for Peace: Report of the Secretary-General*, UN document A/47/277 – S/24111, 17 June 1992, at <www.un.org/docs/SG/agpeace.html>.
4. Ibid., paragraph 21.
5. The December 2005 edition of *Security Dialogue* (vol. 36, no. 4), edited by Oliver Jütersonke and Rolf Schwarz, draws attention to a range of peacebuilding challenges. See particularly Rolf Schwarz, "Post-conflict Peacebuilding: The Challenges of Security, Welfare and Representation" (pp. 429–446) and Keith Krause and Oliver Jütersonke, "Peace, Security and Development in Post-conflict Environments" (pp. 447–462).
6. This notion of the responsibility to protect was mainstreamed by the 2005 World Summit Outcome stating "…we are prepared to take collective action, in a timely and decisive manner, through the Security Council, in accordance with the Charter, including Chapter VII, on a case-by-case basis and in cooperation with relevant regional organizations as appropriate, should peaceful means be inadequate and national authorities are manifestly failing to protect their populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity." (2005 World Summit Outcome, United Nations General Assembly resolution 60/1 of 16 September 2005, UN document A/RES/60/1, 24 October 2005, paragraph 139.) See also *Responsibility to Protect: Report of the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty*, International Development Research Centre, December 2001, at <www.iciss.ca/report-en.asp>.
7. See, for example, the work of Roland Paris (in particular, *At War's End: Building Peace after Civil Conflict,* Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2004) and Carl Bildt ("Peace After War: Our Experience", Tanner Lectures on Human Values, 2 March 2005 at Cambridge University, at <www.tannerlectures.utah.edu/lectures/Bildt_2006.pdf>).
8. *In Larger Freedom: Towards Development, Security and Human Rights for All: Report of the Secretary-General*, UN document A/59/2005, 21 March 2005 at <www.un.org/largerfreedom>, paragraph 114.

9. *Delivering as One: Report of the High-level Panel on United Nations System-wide Coherence in the Areas of Development, Humanitarian Assistance and the Environment,* UN document A/61/583, 20 November 2006, at <www.un.org/events/panel>, Annex 1, paragraph 1 and main document, paragraph 26.
10. Paul Collier et al, 2003, *Breaking the Conflict Trap: Civil War and Development Policy,* New York, Oxford University Press and World Bank, p. 83.
11. See the United Nations Peacebuilding Commission's web site at <www.un.org/peace/peacebuilding>.
12. United Nations General Assembly resolution 60/180, op. cit., paragraph 19.
13. Ibid., preamble.
14. Ibid., paragraph 21.
15. Executive Office of the Secretary-General, 2006, *Inventory: United Nations Capacity in Peacebuilding,* September, at <www.undp.org/bcpr/iasc/content/docs/Oct_Links/doc_4.pdf>.
16. The WFM-IGC performs a very useful information service regarding the workings of the PBC. To subscribe, write to pbc-info-subscribe@yahoogroups.com.
17. 2005 World Summit Outcome, op. cit., paragraph 74.
18. 2005 World Summit Outcome, op. cit., paragraph 97.
19. The Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development, made at Geneva, 7 June 2006, at <www.undp.org/bcpr/we_do/Geneva_Declaration_.pdf>.
20. UNDP and WHO, *Armed Violence Prevention Programme: Support to Community Based Violence Prevention Programmes,* project document, no date, at <who.int/violence_injury_prevention/violence/activities/en/avpp_overview.pdf>.
21. The Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development, op. cit.
22. UNDP, "What's New", *CPR Newsletter,* vol. 2, no. 2, summer 2006, at <www.undp.org/bcpr/newsletters/volume_3/index.htm>.
23. See *Armed Violence Prevention Project,* at <www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/violence/activities/armed_violence/en/index.html>.

Prospects for the UN Peacebuilding Commission

Thomas J. Biersteker

The UN Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) is an important new institutional development; one that is, at least in part, a product of individual and institutional learning within the United Nations (UN) from its experiences with the complex and interrelated challenges of conflict resolution, peacemaking, peacekeeping and post-conflict peacebuilding, reconciliation and development. Scores of UN officials have first-hand knowledge of the discouraging frequency with which negotiated settlements re-erupt into armed conflict, and it has been widely observed that countries return to violent conflict within five years of the successful negotiation of a peace settlement nearly 50% of the time.[1]

Such experience with the consequences of abandoning a conflict zone after the termination of armed violence has spurred interest in longer-term peacebuilding efforts. A peace settlement takes a conflict out of the news and removes it from the top of the policy agenda. There is often then a lag in providing, and sometimes even a failure in committing, resources initially pledged and promised in order to achieve a peace settlement.[2] The virtual abandonment of Afghanistan in the early 1990s is a classic illustration of this phenomenon, one with far-reaching, ongoing consequences.

There has also been a growing realization that the achievement of what Johan Galtung termed "positive peace" entails far more than the termination of violent conflict alone. Peacebuilding is a long-term,[3] complex, as well as fundamentally value-laden project that entails core decisions about how to construct the "good" society and involves both formal and informal institution-building. There are neither distinct phases between, nor is there a clear linear progression through, the negotiation of a peace agreement, the deployment of peacekeeping forces, peace maintenance operations and peacebuilding efforts. Rather, these different aspects are interrelated in complex ways and often occur not in sequence but simultaneously and overlapping with one another. Measures taken during the negotiation of peace settlements have important implications for, and are intrinsically related to, longer-term state-building and development. Indeed, the effectiveness and perceived fairness of new state institutions and processes of development can determine whether conflict resolution is sustainable.

It is still early to offer informed judgements on the UN Peacebuilding Commission and its new Support Office, but it is probably useful to explore some of the challenges facing the Commission, as well as to identify early on some of the constraints under which it operates and some of the important opportunities it presents. These reflections should be read as preliminary or speculative perspectives

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on an institution that holds promise and potential, and they are intended to support the purposes of the Commission, not to cast doubt on its ambitious agenda. Individuals working on the Commission or in its Support Office do not need to be reminded of the challenges they face or the constraints under which they operate, but it is hoped that this preliminary articulation of conceptual, organizational and political challenges, constraints and opportunities might help to clarify the issues and is offered in the spirit of supporting their important efforts.

Challenges facing the Peacebuilding Commission

Meeting expectations

One of the first major challenges facing the Peacebuilding Commission is a product of the timing and context of its creation—the challenge of high expectations. Although the origins of the concept of peacebuilding within the United Nations date back at least as far as 1992 and former Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali's *Agenda for Peace,*[4] the Peacebuilding Commission itself grew from recommendations of the High-level Panel on UN reform in December 2004 and was a concrete outcome of the World Summit in September 2005. Its creation coincided with an unprecedented growth in the number, range and complexity of UN peacekeeping missions across the globe.

The Peacebuilding Commission remains the one element of substantive UN reform that seems to show the most sustained promise: prospects for reform of the UN Security Council's composition were derailed before the 2005 summit, and plans for internal management reforms continue. Perhaps the most striking contrast is with the disappointing performance of the other new institutional product of the World Summit, the Human Rights Council, which has been extensively criticized both outside and (more quietly) inside the United Nations.

While attention and high expectations are not necessarily bad things, as Andrew Mack (former director of the Strategic Planning Unit in the executive office of former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan) suggested at the International Security Forum in Zurich in October 2006, it might be sensible to lower the expectations of the Peacebuilding Commission slightly. There is a great deal at stake for the institutional credibility of the United Nations, and the problem with such high expectations is the impossibility of ever fully living up to them. A concerted and well-managed effort at public relations to lower expectations could aid the success of the Commission and wider UN reform efforts, but performance on the ground is ultimately more important.

As with any new institution, performance on its first test cases will prove critical for the PBC's future development; it will set the precedents for the Commission. Thus it is critical to establish early success in the difficult, but very different, cases of Burundi and Sierra Leone. Although both involve the resolution of protracted and violent conflicts, they are at different stages in their peacebuilding efforts and begin with very different historical, sociocultural and political-economic bases. What works well in one country context may be of limited transferability to the other, hence strong initial performance in widely divergent cases will bolster the PBC's reputation.

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To meet expectations as a new institutional entity, the Peacebuilding Commission needs to ensure that it becomes more than just another forum for talking about the issues, or a weak substitute for the reasonably successful inter-agency efforts it replaces (such as the Economic and Social Council's ad hoc advisory groups on countries emerging from conflict).[5]

Defining peacebuilding

There is no strong consensus on the definition of peacebuilding, let alone the best practices for achieving it. Former UN Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali defined peacebuilding expansively as "action to identify and support structures which will tend to strengthen and solidify peace in order to avoid a relapse into conflict" in his *Agenda for Peace*,[6] but as Michael Barnett and his colleagues point out, the operational meaning of peacebuilding varies significantly across multilateral, regional and national agencies.[7] As they illustrate, "when the Bush administration thinks of peacebuilding it imagines building market-oriented democracies, while UNDP imagines creating economic development and strong civil societies committed to a culture of nonviolent dispute resolution".[8] Thus, the broad basis of support for the Peacebuilding Commission may stem partially from the fact that there is no consensus on the meaning of peacebuilding itself.

This lack of an agreed definition could affect the substantive content of the Commission's activities. There is a danger that successes in one context will be picked up and imported wholesale into another, without consideration of widely varying contextual, historical or situational differences between different conflict zones. Individuals and institutions are shaped and influenced by their experiences, and analogical reasoning from the successes (and failures) of previous peacebuilding efforts will necessarily inform and guide their decisions about the present challenges of peacebuilding. The measures that seemingly worked in Timor-Leste might have some relevance for Sierra Leone, but the demographic and resource differences between the two conflict zones may render those same measures of limited utility.

The greater challenge will be to discover how and when to apply specific contextually grounded insights to different settings. Language, cultural understanding and a good knowledge of history are always a good place to start, but more analytically grounded typologies of conflict zones and phases would prevent the misapplication of ideas from one context to another. Given the limited human resources available for most UN operations and the pressing demands on the time of UN officials, this is an area where non-governmental organizations and scholarly analysts could make a positive contribution.

Peacebuilding as a liberal project

Although there is no consensus on the definition of and the best practices for achieving peacebuilding, it is in practice a *liberal* project. That is, peacebuilding is broadly constituted on the premise that democratic institutions and market mechanisms will ultimately provide the stable foundations for peace, both internally and externally. The theoretical underpinnings of the Peacebuilding Commission are profoundly liberal, even if they are not explicitly articulated as such.[9] Support for respect of human rights, the promotion of the rule of law, the construction of representative institutions with periodic elections, the creation of forums for popular participation in politics and encouragement of the emergence of a vigorous and free media are all components of peacebuilding efforts, as well as of the construction of a liberal society. The active and engaged participation of the international financial institutions, a central aspect of the mandate of the Peacebuilding Commission, will inherently reinforce the emergence and strength of market institutions.

Identifying the liberal underpinnings of peacebuilding is not intended to undermine it in any way, only to point out its political basis. The Commission and its agents will have to make many deeply political choices in their work, including how to adjudicate between conflicting goals; there are many situations in which progress on one goal may undercut progress on another (for example, respecting the rights of women may conflict with objectives of local judicial governance). Liberalism may well be

the best approach for adjudicating such choices, but it is important to recognize that the construction of liberal institutions, however desirable, is a political project in and of itself.

As Timothy Sisk has argued, pursuing peace and establishing a democracy can at times work at cross-purposes.[10] According to Sisk, prospective peacebuilders face four types of dilemma: horizontal, vertical, systemic and temporal. Horizontal dilemmas entail decisions about who is included and who is excluded from the peacebuilding process. Vertical dilemmas require decisions about who speaks for the public: are elections sufficient as an expression of political will, or are other, non-electoral mechanisms more appropriate (ranging from appointed councils or assemblies such as shuras and loya jirgas to the informal convening of groups of "representative" non-governmental organizations)? How are historically marginalized groups (sometimes at the root of conflict) to be represented and incorporated in the peacebuilding process? Systemic dilemmas refer to the roles the Peacebuilding Commission and the agencies it represents inevitably play in the peacebuilding process. Does external recognition of a particular group or individual by the PBC favour some possible long-term outcomes over others? And to what extent does external involvement delegitimize local control and ownership of the process? Finally, temporal dilemmas are about the sequencing challenges inherent in any process of peacebuilding. Do the requirements of security always precede considerations of justice? Should electoral processes precede reconciliation efforts or be undertaken simultaneously with them? Under what circumstances should elections take place before an entire territorial space has been secured?

Thus, the effective functioning of the Peacebuilding Commission—coordinating the activities of different agencies and producing an integrated strategy for each case with which it works—will be challenged by the politically charged decisions these functions entail. The PBC will face genuine conflicts of interest and vexing trade-offs—such as whether and how to engage former wartime leaders (some of whom may be perpetrators of extreme violence and potential candidates for war crimes tribunals) in transitional governance structures. There are times when a Faustian bargain will have to be struck in order to maintain order in a given polity, which could come at the expense of other components of post-conflict resolution and efforts toward reconciliation. There are no general rules of thumb to guide any of these decisions, and the Peacebuilding Commission is inevitably going to have to make choices with very real consequences for the peacebuilding effort.

Managing the process

As one participant in a Geneva Centre for Security Policy workshop of October 2006 observed, "most peacebuilding strategies fail not because of their content, but because of deficiencies in their process". Deciding whom to include in peacebuilding is difficult enough; choosing who should ultimately decide on a peacebuilding strategy is the Peacebuilding Commission's most profound governance question. Is it the Peacebuilding Commission? Is it the government representative of the affected Member State, different factions of the conflict, civil society organizations or the public?

One of the key insights from practitioners with experience of successful peacebuilding is the importance of local participation, support and "buy-in" among key players in the strategy adopted. Such key players can include a wide variety of civil society actors, including private sector business. Given this insight, perhaps the Peacebuilding Commission should consider giving greater attention to facilitating processes and creating spaces for local actors to sort things out among themselves, rather than deciding who should participate, how they should participate and the sequence of peacebuilding activities. There are, of course, occasions when external intervention is crucial for breaking deadlocks among local actors, but one aspect of the assistance provided to countries emerging from deadly conflict could be the provision of space for deliberation, not just answers to technical questions.

Governance

One of the principal reasons for the creation of the Peacebuilding Commission was to facilitate the coordination of different actors engaged in peace support activities. During its first year, most of the Commission's attention has appropriately been directed to improving coordination among sometimes fragmented UN bodies, subsidiary organizations and agencies, as well as their relationships with the Washington-based international financial institutions. Thus, the effort is largely internally directed. As Barnett and his colleagues have pointed out, however, the coordination problem goes well beyond the United Nations.[11] Given the variation in mission and different operational meaning of peacebuilding in different agencies, the need for coordination extends to other multilateral organizations (such as the European Union and other regional bodies) as well as to national bodies. The so-called "New York problem" emerges when the consensus formed in New York is not communicated to, or shared with, or internalized by key players in national capitals, so there is also a need to engage key actors in their home capitals, not only for resource mobilization but also for consistency in policy toward the target country.[12]

An additional governance challenge emerges from the sheer size of the Peacebuilding Commission itself. Since the Commission is a creation of both the General Assembly and the Security Council, it is important that it be representative of both bodies. However, the requirement that 31 Member States act on the basis of consensus may render the new institution less effective than some of the smaller advisory groups it has replaced.[13]

There is a real risk that the size of the Commission, coupled with the lack of a common definition of peacebuilding and other challenges regarding substantive content, will mean that the PBC becomes just another talking-shop, an additional bureaucratic hurdle for getting things done within the United Nations. Fortunately, reaching consensus has not proven to be a problem to date. It may prove more difficult down the line, however, when the Commission takes up even more difficult or more highly politicized cases.

Financing

The final challenge facing the Peacebuilding Commission is financial.[14] A total of US$ 210m has already been pledged to the Peacebuilding Fund, with a stated goal of US$ 250m (as originally recommended by the High-level Panel).[15] Of that amount, the Secretary-General has allocated US$ 35m to Burundi to strengthen governance and the rule of law, and US$ 35m to Sierra Leone for projects in youth employment and empowerment, democracy and good governance, justice and security, as well as public service delivery. The main purpose of the fund is to fill the resource gap for critical needs such as disarmament, demobilization and reintegration during the period between the signing of a peace agreement and the convening (and eventual disbursement) of funds from donor meetings. As Carolyn McAskie, Assistant Secretary-General and head of the Peacebuilding Support Office, stated at the January 2007 meeting of the Security Council on the Peacebuilding Commission, "[t]he Fund, however, can only act as a catalyst. Alone, it cannot address the peacebuilding resource needs of countries emerging from conflict".[16] At the same meeting, the representatives of both Burundi and Sierra Leone concurred with this assessment and stressed the importance of sustained financial resources. As Ambassador Sylvester Rowe of Sierra Leone put it, "the bottom line is 'resources, resources, resources'".[17]

The total funds eventually needed for reconstruction and development will extend into billions of dollars, but the question remains whether the existing goal of US$ 250m for the Peacebuilding Fund will be large enough for the rapid-release funds that will be needed if the Commission extends its work to other countries that could potentially use its support (for example, Afghanistan, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Haiti, Iraq, Lebanon, Liberia, Somalia, Sudan and Timor-Leste). As Ambassador Gaspar Martins, Chairman of the Organizational Committee of the Peacebuilding Commission, has stated, recent contributions to the Peacebuilding Fund are encouraging, "though the amount available is still insufficient when compared to the needs of the two countries and the urgency of meeting those needs".[18]

Constraints placed on the Peacebuilding Commission

The challenges of the Peacebuilding Commission's work are compounded by the constraints under which it must operate. The principal constraint comes from the very nature of the United Nations itself, as a profoundly state-centred organization. States constitute the membership, govern the institution and are given priority in all of its deliberations. Therefore any peacebuilding process undertaken under the United Nations' auspices will tend to privilege state concerns. Although the UN resolutions creating the Commission call for the engagement of actors from civil society and business organizations, these organizations may be marginalized in a process that will invariably give most attention to the priorities identified by Member States, rather than those of civil society.

As a UN entity, the Peacebuilding Commission will inevitably work closely with states—waiting for a Member State to request its assistance, relying on a Member State to host its visits and convene participants in its country-specific meetings and asking a Member State for guidance on its specific project needs and allocation of funds from the Peacebuilding Fund; it assumes that a functioning, representative and viable state already exists. But there may be instances when a viable state has yet to emerge, or when the state itself is a threat to sustainable peacebuilding. If there is no competent national authority with which the PBC can work, its assumption regarding the state could prevent the Commission from taking on some of the most difficult conflict situations.

The state-centred orientation of the United Nations also constrains the Commission because some internal conflicts are generated as much by regional conflicts as they are by actions undertaken and contained within a single Member State; peacebuilding and the long-term resolution of conflict may depend on the engagement of actors operating outside the domain and immediate control of the affected state. Focusing on an individual Member State may not adequately address the real sources of the problem, which could require the engagement of other states, transnational non-state actors and regional organizations. It is important to note, however, that in the Commission's engagement with Burundi, there is sensitivity to the regional dynamics of the conflict and collaboration with the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region.[19]

A further constraint—and potential opportunity—for the Peacebuilding Commission is that the resolutions that created the Peacebuilding Commission, like most UN resolutions, contain ambiguities and compromise language. There is no definition of peacebuilding itself, and although the resolutions recognize the important role of women in conflict prevention and resolution, as well as the important contribution of civil society and non-governmental organizations, they never specify *how* these actors will be engaged. It was relatively easy to form a consensus on creating the Peacebuilding Commission because (as discussed above) it means different things to different people. If pragmatists prevail and interpret the ambiguities in constructive ways, this may prove to be an asset. If not, this could reduce the Peacebuilding Commission to a forum for the kind of political infighting that has compromised the effectiveness and legitimacy of the Human Rights Council.

Opportunities for the Peacebuilding Commission

There has been growing concern within and outside the United Nations about the democratic deficit operating within the organization. No one disputes the non-representative nature of the UN Security Council, and the failure to reform its membership prior to the 2005 World Summit was a real disappointment for many. There are also growing concerns about the global legislative functions increasingly being taken on by the United Nations (especially in the cases of Security Council resolutions 1373 of 2001 and 1540 of 2004). And the absence of any form of judicial balancing of Security Council actions regarding the designation of individuals and corporate entities for their alleged support for acts of terrorism has provoked legal challenges in national and regional courts about whether the UN Security Council may be taking actions that violate regional human rights conventions.[20]

As a joint venture between the General Assembly and the Security Council, the Peacebuilding Commission is a potentially important institutional innovation within the UN system. If it succeeds, it could be seen as a way to address some of the larger democratic deficit concerns and could conceivably become a model for future institutional cooperation between the General Assembly and the Security Council. Developing countries and the Non-Aligned Movement frequently expressed concern about the Security Council's central and authoritative role during the debate on the creation of the Peacebuilding Commission. Some viewed the permanent five's central role in the Commission as a way to allow the Security Council veto into the halls of the General Assembly through the back door, while others expressed concern that the Peacebuilding Commission might simply become an extension of the Security Council. Although these concerns got the Commission off to a rocky start, the Council kept a fairly low profile during 2006 and has been cautious about referring additional conflict situations to the agenda of the Commission.[21]

The general sense of pragmatism at its first substantive meetings in October 2006 bodes well for the future development of the PBC. The leadership of the Peacebuilding Commission (from Angola and El Salvador) has direct experience with successful peacebuilding efforts at home and is firmly committed to the success of the enterprise in other conflict situations. The staff and leadership of the Support Office are widely viewed as highly qualified and in possession of an appropriate background for the complex tasks of the institution. Carolyn McAskie's statement to the January 2007 Security Council session on the PBC was articulate, succinct and clearly cognizant of many of the challenges and constraints facing the Commission. Finally, and most significantly, countries emerging from violent conflict (Burundi and Sierra Leone) are showing serious commitment to their participation in the process.

The historical record of the United Nations on peacekeeping is mixed—at least in part because it deals with the most challenging cases—but the Peacebuilding Commission presents an opportunity to demonstrate the effectiveness of the United Nations. Operational success in the cases of Burundi and Sierra Leone could be important for shoring up the credibility of the United Nations more generally.

Conclusion

Although the challenges are many, and the constraints daunting, there is a very real chance that the Peacebuilding Commission and the institutional experiment it represents could eventually succeed. Ultimately, however, the success or failure of the Peacebuilding Commission is beyond the Commission's effective control: the success of different peacebuilding operations will depend on the political will of key players in the conflict zones themselves. It is hoped that, with the political backing and encouragement of other UN

There is a very real chance that the Peacebuilding Commission and the institutional experiment it represents could eventually succeed.

Member States, those key players can be encouraged along, and the processes of engagement and the provision of resources for urgently needed transitional projects will create the conditions for successful, sustained peacebuilding.

Notes

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8. Ibid., p. 44.
9. Roland Paris, 2004, *At War's End: Building Peace after Civil Conflict,* Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
10. Timothy D. Sisk, "Peacebuilding as Democratization: Findings and Implications", paper presented at the workshop "Establishing the United Nations Peacebuilding Commission", Graduate Institute of International Studies, Geneva, 12 June 2006.
11. Barnett et al, op. cit.
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13. Jochen Prantl, op. cit.
14. For more on the Peacebuilding Fund and the costs of peacebuilding, see the article by Richard Ponzio in this issue of *Disarmament Forum*.
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16. United Nations Security Council, 5627th meeting, UN document S/PV.5627, 31 January 2007, p. 6.
17. Ibid., p. 12.
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19. Ibid., p. 7.
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ACTIVITY

Regional Organizations and the Implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1540

Common values, shared interests and building on existing mechanisms within regional organizations could mean such organizations have the best overall opportunity and leverage to encourage and facilitate the signing, ratification and implementation of international obligations. In particular, regional organizations have the potential to play a significant role in the implementation of UN Security Council resolution 1540 (on the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction). This is especially so in the less developed regions of the world, and for countries with little or no prior experience of such matters.

Some scholars with knowledge of specific regional organizations foresee problems with regional organizations playing a significant role implementing and monitoring compliance of resolution 1540. Lack of institutional capacities, funds and enforcement mechanisms, as well as alternative agendas within regional organizations, are cited as reasons for doubt. However, although there are apparent challenges, there are also windows of opportunity. By definition, regional organizations, in contrast to international or global entities, have the advantage of consisting of states in close proximity to each other with similar political, social and economic cultures and histories. As a result, regional organizations could provide the necessary authority in communicating the security benefits—to the state and to the region—of implementing resolution 1540. There is also reason to believe that peer pressure applied from states within regional organizations will be more effective compared to efforts from other states or international actors. And states might find it more politically acceptable to receive, for example, funds and technical assistance earmarked for resolution 1540 from regional organizations than bilateral contributions. Protecting state sovereignty, fearing that an outside donor will seek to gain political influence over internal affairs, is often a rationale for a state's hesitation in respect to the latter type of assistance. Finally, examples show that subregional organizations, some of them created through treaties within regional organizations, could provide guidance on implementation, monitoring and verification of compliance. Capitalizing on regional organizations' strengths and building capacity in necessary areas will be crucial for regional organizations to significantly contribute to the implementation of resolution 1540.

In each issue of *Disarmament Forum*, UNIDIR Focus highlights one activity of the Institute, outlining the project's methodology, recent research developments or its outcomes. UNIDIR Focus also describes a new UNIDIR publication. You can find summaries and contact information for all of the Institute's present and past activities, as well as sample chapters of publications and ordering information, online at <www.unidir.org>.

In its initial phase, this project has explored an area where regional organizations have, in recent years, played a particularly strong role in implementation—issues related to small arms and light weapons (SALW). This has aided the development of a "template" on the role of regional organizations in implementation efforts, which is being transposed to nuclear, biological and chemical issues associated with resolution 1540—taking into consideration, of course, that in some regions it is very difficult to get political traction on weapons of mass destruction issues whereas SALW have high political value. Differences in salience and urgency between SALW and 1540 notwithstanding, the experience of regional organization activity in implementing goals and objectives provides insight into the potential roles and limitations of regional organizations in so far as matters of implementation and compliance are concerned.

This project is being undertaken in conjunction with Dr Lawrence Scheinman of the Center for Nonproliferation Studies, Monterey Institute of International Studies.

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Cluster Munitions in Albania and Lao PDR: The Humanitarian and Socio-Economic Impact

Cluster munitions have been used in combat in at least 21 countries. Thirty-four countries are known to produce them and at least 73 countries stockpile them. Worldwide, stockpiled submunitions number in the billions.

The use of cluster munitions results in civilian death and suffering both during and after conflict. They are a particularly dangerous weapon type in need of international attention, in that they have a serious and long-lasting humanitarian and socio-economic impact where they have been used.

Presented here are brief case studies on cluster submunition contamination in Albania and the Lao People's Democratic Republic. Together, these studies present a picture of the short- and long-term humanitarian and socio-economic impact of cluster munition use. The case of Lao PDR shows the continual harm—even more than thirty years after the fact—caused by large-scale cluster munition use, while the case of Albania illustrates that even recent, limited cluster munition use can cause harm no less profound.

These case studies demonstrate the devastating impact cluster munitions have on civilians. They provide additional evidence from the field that stronger action needs to be taken to reduce the tragedy these munitions bring to lives, livelihoods and societies.

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