



General Assembly

Seventy-third session

82nd plenary meeting
Monday, 20 May 2019, 3 p.m.
New York

Official Records

President: Ms. Espinosa Garcés. (Ecuador)

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

In the absence of the President, Mrs. Imene (Namibia), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Indonesia would like to emphasize the following.

First, while no single actor alone can mitigate conflicts, the PBC has a unique role to play in advancing intergovernmental coherence through its cross-pillar mandate. It is an indispensable body among the principal organs and other relevant United Nations entities. Therefore, we welcome the joint meetings of the PBC with the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, as well as last year's more comprehensive focus on the Sahel. We hope that this collaborative approach, including with the Security Council, will intensify. There are important advantages for the Security Council in meeting the complex challenges before it by fully utilizing the Commission's longer-term perspective and expertise, not only on the countries considered by the Commission, but also on the review of peacekeeping operations and special political mission mandates.

Agenda items 32 and 113 (continued)

Report of the Peacebuilding Commission

Report of the Peacebuilding Commission (A/73/724)

Report of the Secretary-General on the Peacebuilding Fund

Report of the Secretary-General on the Peacebuilding Fund (A/73/829)

Mr. Koba (Indonesia): We thank the President of the General Assembly for convening today's important joint debate. We also thank the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission for their valuable stewardship.

As an Organizational Committee member of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) at its inception and having served in it four times, Indonesia appreciates the comprehensive approach to ensuring that sustaining peace remains a vital theme of the Commission. Indonesia hopes that today's joint debate, in keeping with the aims of the 2018 twin resolutions (General Assembly resolution 72/276 and Security Council resolution 2413 (2018)), will encourage not just the PBC but other United Nations bodies, as well as non-United Nations partners and regional organizations, to work with greater synergy.

Secondly, a key point in the restructuring of the United Nations peace and security pillar last year was to prioritize conflict prevention and sustaining peace and to align the pillar closely with the development and human rights pillars to promote cross-pillar coordination. Now that the restructuring has unfolded, an analysis by the PBC as to how the aim has been fulfilled successfully, in particular regarding the impact on the ground, where it matters most, will be very useful to the Secretariat and Member States. A formal or informal exercise by the PBC in that regard, with a view to course correction, will be welcomed.

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Thirdly, as crucial as the sustaining peace agenda is, it will not succeed if sufficient financial resources are not available for it. Indonesia and Norway worked together as the PBC co-focal points on financing for peacebuilding in 2017-2018. We hope that the promotion of a financing option as a key policy area with the PBC will only expand. In addition to aid and grants, it is vital to harness both domestic and international investment, trade and innovative financial resources. Social media and modern information technologies should be utilized for more effective microfinancing, as well as skills education in far-flung areas. Indonesia has first-hand experience in many of those areas. Through South-South and triangular partnerships, we are ready to further share our knowledge and lend assistance. We also facilitated a PBC policy task force in 2008 on how to engage with the private sector by focusing on non-traditional elements. Its outcome has continued to be very useful for the PBC's work.

Fourthly, Indonesia commends the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) as a catalytic and responsive source of financing in so many critical situations. Its record of approval of \$183 million for 40 countries in 2018, with an increased resource base, demonstrates the confidence that stakeholders have in its functions. We commend the fact that 40 per cent of the funds approved for financing last year was aimed at women's empowerment, an essential element in peacebuilding. However, we also believe that the most recent investment allocation, of 27 per cent and 20 per cent to peacebuilding and special political missions, respectively, could be increased. Indonesia continues to be a strong supporter of the PBF. We welcome the measures mentioned in the Secretary-General's report (A/73/829) for strengthening the oversight of funds and projects, as well as the meeting to hear about countries' experiences. However, as we mentioned last year, that should also be complemented with direct feedback via media from communities where the Fund's finance projects are operationalized.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate that if peacebuilding, sustaining peace and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development are to endure, there must be strong partners, companions and allies fully committed to actualizing their responsibilities both inside and outside the United Nations. For its part, Indonesia has been working tirelessly to help ensure peace and stability for all, and will continue to do so.

Mr. Kuzmin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We are grateful for the convening of today's

meeting, and we thank the current and former Chairs of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), Ambassador Guillermo Fernández de Soto Valderrama, of Colombia, and Ambassador Ion Jinga, of Romania, for their informative briefings (see A/73/PV.81) and diligent efforts at the helm of the Commission.

Peacebuilding assistance remains one of the most effective tools in the United Nations toolkit for providing support to States in post-conflict situations and preventing such conflicts from recurring. The PBC has been playing a key role in those efforts for almost two decades now, both as an intergovernmental consultative body and as a bridging platform whereby participants can find information about the views of a broad range of stakeholders on current issues. The interest that States themselves have shown in being included on the PBC's agenda is indicative of how effective its work and potential assistance are. It is no coincidence that in addition to the country configurations for Burundi, Liberia, Guinea-Bissau, the Central African Republic and Sierra Leone, requests for assistance from the PBC are also coming from other countries in need of peacebuilding support from the international community, and the practice of discussing regional issues with the agreement of all the States in the region concerned also continues to develop.

At the same time, the central principle guiding the work of the Commission and all other peacebuilding and sustaining-peace initiatives remains national ownership, with Governments defining and implementing their peacebuilding priorities and strategies based on their societies' needs. As we have seen in practice, international peacebuilding assistance is most effective when it is provided in full respect for host countries' sovereignty and based on their priorities. We support the PBC's efforts to improve the effectiveness of international assistance to post-conflict countries through the United Nations. However, it is crucial to ensure that the PBC acts strictly within its mandate and does not attempt to replace other bodies.

Many peacebuilding and sustaining-peace assistance programmes for States require both proper coordination and an appropriate division of labour. Only collective, targeted actions that do not create conflicts among bodies' remits can achieve the desired results. In that context, with regard to the theoretical interlinkages between human rights, development, peace and security, it is essential to understand that development alone cannot guarantee peace, while a peaceful life does

not necessarily guarantee development. It is therefore vital not just to consider such linkages but to clearly understand the differences between the purposes of these processes and which United Nations organ or body is responsible for promoting each of those areas.

We see the PBC as having the potential to improve the quality of the advisory services it provides to the Security Council at its request on country-specific subjects that are on both bodies' agendas. The Council's December 2018 presidential statement (S/PRST/2018/20) on the issue was additional confirmation of that. We believe that the Commission's value lies in its ability to transmit the peacebuilding needs of States hosting peacekeeping missions to the Council. A comprehensive approach, including analysis of host Governments' priorities, the views and expectations of civil society, and assessments of United Nations system representatives and other national and international stakeholders, would be an extremely useful addition to the Secretary-General's reports, especially during the transition stages of the work of peacekeeping operations. It is that added value and relevancy of the PBC's recommendations that have decisive significance when it comes to their possible consideration in the work of the Security Council, the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council.

Three years have passed since the General Assembly and the Security Council's adoption of twin resolutions (resolution 70/262 and resolution 2282 (2016)) on the review of the peacebuilding architecture, but the discussion in the United Nations on further improvements to the Organization's assistance to States in the areas of peacebuilding and peacekeeping is as intense as ever. Secretary-General António Guterres made a significant contribution to that discussion with his 2018 report on the subject (S/2018/43). Through the twin resolutions adopted last year by the General Assembly and the Security Council (resolution 72/276 and resolution 2413 (2018)), the States reaffirmed their intention of continuing to study its proposals. We also look forward to the Secretary-General's next report, which will expand on his recommendations, including for issues related to the financing of United Nations peacebuilding activities.

The Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) has an important role to play in that regard, having proved itself to be a reliable tool for rapid, targeted financing. The general improvement in the results of the PBF's programmes and the greater effectiveness in its implementation

of its primary projects speak to that and are noted in the Secretary-General's annual report (A/73/829). It is important that many of them are aimed at supporting national reconciliation, encouraging political dialogue, implementing projects in the social arena and strengthening State institutions. We believe that it is important to improve the PBC and PBF's coordination and complementary actions, which will help to eliminate the fragmentation of peacebuilding assistance, avoid any duplication of effort and make the Fund's own activities more transparent. Any international support through the Fund must be fully in line with the strategies and priorities defined at the national level.

Ultimately, it is important to remember that the primary goal of United Nations peacebuilding and peacekeeping activities is to help States build their own capacities so that in the future they can manage without international assistance and themselves be able to help others in need.

Mr. Bin Momen (Bangladesh): We thank the Secretary-General for his report (A/73/829) on the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) and the Chair of the twelfth session of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) for the PBC report (A/73/724). We congratulate them on the significant achievements that have been made during the reporting period in various areas of peacebuilding and sustaining peace around the world.

I deeply appreciate the pragmatic leadership in taking forward the Commission's work of Ambassador Fernández de Soto Valderrama, the Permanent Representative of Colombia, whose wonderful country I am just returning from after a Joint Board of funds and programmes field visit. In Colombia's Nariño department, we met with stakeholders of a PBF project and learned first-hand the challenging work of building peace as part of the peace and reconciliation process following the signing of the landmark peace deal.

From the start, the delegation of Bangladesh has been engaged in all aspects of peacekeeping and peacebuilding in a productive and constructive manner that is premised on a value-driven approach. We look forward to continuing our sustained contributions with other members of the PBC to ensure the appropriate implementation and follow-up of the forward-leaning agenda of the reports.

For obvious reasons, the two reports have many common threads. Both reports put stress on building coherence and synergy across various actors,

agencies and processes, including various organs of the peacebuilding architecture. The reports value the centrality of national ownership and leadership in peacebuilding, which indeed is of paramount importance.

Essentially, the PBC report reflects the commendable work of the country-specific configurations. While their respective work differs in many ways, there are also some important similarities. We can gain enrichment from each one by cross-referencing, sharing experiences and creating platforms for lateral dialogues among country-specific configurations. We feel encouraged by the sight of efforts geared towards breaking down the silos in implementing peacebuilding and the sustaining peace agenda. Through its convening and advisory roles, the PBC must consistently work to further consolidate those efforts, particularly towards bringing the actors of the three United Nations pillars closer together. The Secretary-General's management reforms, even at this very early stage, have created a good impetus towards that important goal.

We appreciate the focus of the PBC report on establishing linkages between recommendations and implementation through national ownership and partnership-building. As the Commission's primary role is about serving as a bridge among the principal organs and relevant entities of the United Nations, we see merit in the Commission's renewed emphasis on implementation by strengthening partnerships, including with the World Bank and regional and subregional organizations. We believe that this approach can contribute a lot to achieving various peacebuilding and sustaining peace objectives across the board, in particular the protection of civilians, institution-building and the empowerment of women and youth.

We are happy to see the success of the PBF in attracting funds from multiple donors, even surpassing the targets of its current strategic plan. Indeed, the PBF has evolved as a pool fund success story and has withstood the test of time as a flexible and catalytic endowment for complementing global peace efforts. On a cautionary note, however, we would like to suggest that it not take too much of an expansionary approach in terms of its priority and focus areas. Over the years the Fund has created its own operational niche and comparative advantages. It is only to be expected that investments in those areas will yield the best results. Its value-added work in the areas of promoting social cohesion, public service delivery, institution-building,

gender and youth promotion is praiseworthy. We are heartened by the fact that this year 40 per cent of the Fund was dedicated to promoting gender equality and women's empowerment.

As part of enhancing the transparency and accountability of the Fund's management, efforts to strengthen the linkage between the Peacebuilding Commission and the Fund through an improved flow of information are indeed encouraging. But to continue those efforts, what is perhaps most important is to ensure the increased, predictable and sustainable financing and mobilization of further political support towards the work of the Peacebuilding Fund. In that regard we echo the Secretary-General's call for a quantum leap.

Before I conclude, let me share my delegation's initial thoughts about the 2020 review of the peacebuilding architecture. As we look forward, we must also take stock of the implementation of the current review cycle, particularly our shared commitments in the landmark twin resolutions (General Assembly resolution 70/262 and Security Council resolution 2282 (2016)), and the recommendations of the Secretary-General's report on peacebuilding and sustaining peace (S/2018/43), which we endorse. Let us put together our collective wisdom for a successful review of the peacebuilding architecture in 2020 to continue our work towards building durable and sustainable peace across the globe.

Mr. Jaiteh (Gambia): The Gambia would like to congratulate Mr. Ion Jinga, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Romania to the United Nations, on his successful chairmanship of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), and his successor, the current Chair of the Commission, Mr. Guillermo Fernández de Soto Valderrama, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Colombia to the United Nations, for the manner in which he is chairing the work of the Commission.

My delegation would like to thank the President for convening this joint debate on agenda item 32, "Report of the Peacebuilding Commission", and agenda item 113, "Report of the Secretary-General on the Peacebuilding Fund".

The Gambia today enjoys peace and stability through the support and solidarity of the United Nations and our bilateral and regional partners. The Peacebuilding Commission, the Peacebuilding Support Office and the Peacebuilding Fund have played a critical role in supporting peace and transitional justice

in the Gambia. We remain grateful for the continued and relentless engagement of the Peacebuilding Commission, the Peacebuilding Support Office and the Peacebuilding Fund in the Gambia. Through policy advice and immediate financial support, we have been able to embark on transitional justice, rule of law and security sector reform programmes. We are now building and consolidating the peace we have earned.

Last year, the Gambia and the European Union, with the participation of our bilateral, multilateral and regional partners, convened a successful donor's round table in Brussels. We thank our partners for their pledges of support and commitment to the long-term development of the Gambia. The Peacebuilding Commission made a substantial financial commitment to peacebuilding and sustaining peace in the Gambia at the Brussels conference. We are grateful to all our multilateral and bilateral partners for their generous commitments. Our task now is to call for the tangible realization of the pledges to which we committed ourselves. We are grateful for the generosity of the Peacebuilding Fund. We also join the call for more resources to be contributed to the Fund, as it helps vulnerable societies overcome the challenges of conflict.

My delegation would also like to commend the convening of the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on peacebuilding and sustaining peace (see A/72/PV.83) last year, at which the Gambia contributed at the highest level and provided an update on the situation in the Gambia, including our sustainable peace priorities. It is our hope that the conclusions of that meeting will contribute greatly to our collective push for peace and security in the various conflict situations around the world. For us in the Gambia, our new national development plan is built around the need to consolidate peace and promote democracy, good governance and respect for the rule of law. Our overarching goal is to achieve economic growth and sustainable development for the people in a peaceful and stable environment.

My delegation has learned useful lessons from our engagement with the Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Support Office and the critical support that they provide through the Peacebuilding Fund. The early mobilization and timely intervention of the United Nations and the PBC made a critical difference in the support they have provided to the new Government of the Gambia. By responding to the specific needs of the Government, a platform for

national ownership was created. Engagement with regional actors, including the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel, was also very critical in terms of finding the right partners for meeting critical transitional challenges. This also allowed for burden-sharing and better coordination between the Government and different actors.

As we consolidate our democratic gains, we will continue to count on the support of the United Nations and its peacebuilding architecture as partners for peacebuilding and sustaining peace. We will also continue to call on our bilateral, multilateral and regional partners to support our national development plan. This is the plan that will usher in a new era of sustainable development, democratic governance, respect for the rule of law and durable peace.

The critical peacebuilding work that the United Nations peacebuilding architecture does deserves more support from all Member States and partners. It is in this connection that absolute transparency in sustaining peace is the order of the day in the Gambia. This transparency is well exercised through the periodic briefings the Attorney General and Minister of Justice of the Gambia delivers to the Peacebuilding Commission. Sustainable peace over the long haul is the business of all and we call on all to continue their unwavering engagement and commitment to this cause.

Mr. Kai-Kai (Sierra Leone): At the outset, I would like to thank the Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission, Ambassador Fernández de Soto Valderrama, of Colombia for his efforts so far in pushing the Commission's agenda. In particular, I would like to thank Ambassador Ion Jinga of Romania for his faithful stewardship of the Commission last year. Special thanks also go to Assistant Secretary-General Fernandez-Taranco of the Peacebuilding Support Office and his team for their efforts in supporting the work of the Peacebuilding Commission, especially with regard to the management of the Peacebuilding Fund.

This debate is timely and critical as we approach 2020, when the present peacebuilding and sustaining peace arrangements come up for strategic review.

As a country that has been a beneficiary of the advocacy and convening power of the Peacebuilding Commission and funding from the Peacebuilding Fund, we are particularly pleased with the progress made by the Commission in supporting countries in conflict or that are in transition. In this regard, we are pleased

to note and acknowledge the work of the Commission on promoting gender issues, prioritizing financing for peacebuilding activities and building partnerships for peacebuilding and sustaining peace.

As a country with one of the oldest configurations, Sierra Leone remains grateful to the Peacebuilding Commission and the donors for their steadfast support over the past 14 years. We can attest that, at the end of peacekeeping operations in a country, four main gaps exist: a financing gap; a coordination gap among key national and international partners; a gap in the population's confidence in their own authorities, especially in communities that have relied on peacekeepers for a considerable period after the war; and finally, a governance gap, especially in the security sector. The Peacebuilding Commission is critical to bridging those gaps.

Today, Sierra Leone has come a long way with its peacebuilding efforts. Since the end of our civil war in 2002, we have had four successive presidential and legislative elections and four local elections. We have also had three changes in Government after those elections, from a governing political party to the opposition, with all the accompanying ramifications. In all these situations, engagement with the international community, including the Peacebuilding Commission and regional partners, has been crucial. Today, Sierra Leone is a contributor to peacekeeping.

Going forward, we share the recommendations made in the report (A/73/724) and by many Member States today. In addition, we want the Peacebuilding Commission to consider the following.

First, we want it to consider a regional approach to peacebuilding. Apart from the Sahel, which is clear, it is perhaps prudent to start thinking of the Mano River Union countries of Sierra Leone, Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire and Guinea as cross-border activities and programmes could contribute to conflict prevention and development in that region.

Secondly, on financing, the Peacebuilding Commission should also start engaging the private sector much more to see where it can invest in some of these countries in order to help contribute to economic growth and early development.

Thirdly, we recommend that the Peacebuilding Commission accompany Sierra Leone in its current journey to establish a peace and national cohesion

commission, with the sole aim of providing the space to allow ordinary people to take ownership and develop mechanisms for conflict prevention, management and resolution, as well as to build sustainable peace in the country.

Sierra Leone will present its second voluntary national review on the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals at the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development in July. We will, in consonance with the Peacebuilding Commission, do a side event to present the new national development plan of Sierra Leone to further cement the nexus between development and sustaining peace.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on these items.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda items 32 and 113?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 56 (continued)

Comprehensive review of the whole question of peacekeeping operations in all their aspects

Report of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) (A/73/525/Add.1)

The Acting President: The positions of delegations regarding the recommendations of the Committee have been made clear in the Committee and are reflected in the relevant official records. Therefore, if there is no proposal under rule 66 of the rules of procedure, I shall take it that the General Assembly decides not to discuss the report of the Committee that is before the Assembly today.

It was so decided.

The Acting President: Statements will therefore be limited to explanations of vote. May I remind Member States that, under paragraph 7 of decision 34/401, the General Assembly agreed that

“When the same draft resolution is considered in a Main Committee and in plenary meeting, a delegation should, as far as possible, explain its vote only once, that is, either in the Committee or in plenary meeting, unless that delegation's vote

in plenary meeting is different from its vote in the Committee.”

May I also remind delegations that, also in accordance with General Assembly decision 34/401, explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Before we begin to take action on the recommendation contained in the report of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee), I should like to advise representatives that we are going to proceed to take a decision in the same manner as was done in the Committee, unless notified otherwise in advance.

The General Assembly has before it a draft resolution recommended by the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) in paragraph 6 of its report. The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution. The Committee adopted it without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 73/293).

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 56?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 116 (continued)

Elections to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other elections

(a) Election of members of the Committee for Programme and Coordination

Note by the Secretary-General (A/73/608/Add.1)

The Acting President: Pursuant to General Assembly decision 42/450 of 17 December 1987 and upon the nomination by the Economic and Social Council, the Assembly elects the members of the Committee for Programme and Coordination.

Members will recall that, at its 51st plenary meeting, held on 12 December 2018, the General Assembly elected five members to the Committee for a three-year term of office beginning on 1 January 2019 and expiring on 31 December 2021. Members will also recall that, by its decision 2018/201 E of 4 April 2018, the Economic and Social Council postponed the nomination of one member from the Latin American

and Caribbean States and one member from the Western European and other States for election by the General Assembly for a three-year term beginning on 1 January 2019 and expiring 31 December 2021; and one member from the Latin American and Caribbean States for a term expiring on 31 December 2020.

In this connection, the Assembly has before it a note by the Secretary-General contained in document A/73/608/Add.1. As indicated in that document, by its decision 2019/201 C of 7 May 2019, the Economic and Social Council nominated Paraguay for election by the General Assembly to fill an outstanding vacancy in the Committee for Programme and Coordination for a term of office beginning on the date of election and expiring on 31 December 2021.

In accordance with rule 92 of the rules of procedure, all elections should be held by secret ballot. However, I should like to recall paragraph 16 of General Assembly decision 34/401, whereby the practice of dispensing with the secret ballot for elections to subsidiary organs when the number of candidates corresponds to the number of seats to be filled should become standard, unless a delegation specifically requests a vote on a given election.

In the absence of such a request, may I take it that the Assembly decides to proceed to the election on the basis of dispensing with the secret ballot?

It was so decided

The Acting President: The number of States nominated from among the Latin American and Caribbean States is equal to the number of seats to be filled for that group. May I therefore take it that the Assembly wishes to declare Paraguay elected as a member of the Committee for Programme and Coordination for a term of office beginning on the date of election and expiring on 31 December 2021?

It was so decided (decision 73/410 B).

The Acting President: I congratulate Paraguay on its election as a member of the Committee for Programme and Coordination.

Members are informed that the Economic and Social Council, in its decision 2019/201 C, decided to further postpone the nomination of one member from the Latin American and Caribbean States for election by the Assembly for a term beginning on the date of election and expiring on 31 December 2020, and one

member from the Western European and other States for election by the General Assembly for a term beginning on the date of election and expiring on 31 December 2021.

The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of sub-item (a) of agenda item 116.

The meeting rose at 3.45 p.m.