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Peacebuilding Commission

Fourteenth session

Organizational Committee

Summary record of the 1st meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Wednesday, 29 January 2020, at 10 a.m.

Chair: Mr. Fernández de Soto Valderrama..... (Colombia)
later: Mr. Blanchard..... (Canada)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda (PBC/14/OC/1)

1. *The agenda was adopted.*

Draft report of the Peacebuilding Commission on its thirteenth session (PBC/13/OC/L.1)

2. **The Chair** recalled that the draft report of the Peacebuilding Commission on its thirteenth session (PBC/13/OC/L.1), which reflected the Commission's work in 2019, had been provisionally and informally approved by the Organizational Committee during informal consultations, pending its translation into all United Nations official languages. The final version of the report would be considered by the General Assembly and the Security Council.

3. *The draft report was adopted.*

Election of officers

4. **The Chair** said that, in view of prior consultations among regional groups and members of the Organizational Committee, it was his understanding that the Committee was prepared to elect the Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission for its fourteenth session.

5. *Canada was elected Chair by acclamation for a term ending on 31 December 2020.*

6. **The Chair** said that the Group of Asia-Pacific States had endorsed Japan for the position of Vice-Chair of the Commission for its fourteenth session.

7. *Japan was elected Vice-Chair by acclamation for a term ending on 31 December 2020.*

8. **The Chair** said that the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States had endorsed Colombia for the position of Vice-Chair of the Commission for its fourteenth session.

9. *Colombia was elected Vice-Chair by acclamation for a term ending on 31 December 2020.*

10. *Brazil was re-elected as Chair of the Guinea-Bissau configuration; Canada was re-elected as Chair of the Sierra Leone configuration; Morocco was re-elected as Chair of the Central African Republic configuration; Sweden was re-elected as Chair of the Liberia configuration; and Switzerland was re-elected as Chair of the Burundi configuration for a term ending on 31 December 2020.*

Statement by the outgoing Chair

11. **The Chair** said that members of the Commission had been able to observe at first hand the challenges

faced by peacebuilders on the occasion of its first ever meeting away from United Nations Headquarters, held in January 2020 in Cartagena, Colombia. In 2019, the Commission had conducted a visit to Sierra Leone and two other member States of the Mano River Union, Ivory Coast and Liberia. Consideration had been given to the request by the President of Sierra Leone that his country be withdrawn from the Commission's formal agenda. Meetings had been held with the African Union Peace and Security Council and the World Bank, and had included the latter's fragility, conflict and violence team. The Commission had also been represented at the seventh meeting of the Ministerial Coordination Platform for the Sahel.

12. The Commission's proposed terms of reference for the 2020 review of United Nations peacebuilding architecture were focused on implementation on the ground. The review process would take place in two stages, one informal and one formal, and focus on strengthening collective efforts to build peace, based on the principle of national ownership. The Commission was working to deepen its relationship with the Security Council, to which it had acted in an advisory capacity in 2019 through interactive dialogues and information sessions. The German delegation had played a key role as informal coordinator of relations between the two bodies. The Commission had also conducted joint events with the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council and thematic meetings on issues such as its gender strategy, the youth, peace and security agenda, and the link between the Commission's work and South-South cooperation.

13. In addition to the World Bank, the Commission had also held a meeting with the African Development Bank in 2019. Moreover, representatives of the Inter-American Development Bank had attended the Commission's meeting in Colombia. All those meetings served to underline the importance of better coordinating efforts to build peace. The Peacebuilding Fund had played a vital part in financing projects and promoting coherence in the United Nations system. The Secretary-General had recently renewed his call to Member States for a "quantum leap" in contributions to the Fund and members of the Commission had equally stressed the importance of augmenting its resources.

14. *Mr. Blanchard (Canada) took the Chair.*

Statement by the incoming Chair

15. **The Chair** said that the Commission's priorities for 2020 included: deepening the Commission's engagement with interested Member States that were at risk of lapsing or relapsing into conflict; reinforcing its

role as advisor to the Security Council; developing closer links with the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and regional development banks to ensure better integration into decision-making by the United Nations in connection with macroeconomic risks, fiscal and economic priorities, and the livelihood needs of populations affected by conflict; reinforcing the Commission's bridging role across the United Nations and with regional and subregional organizations so as to better align support with national peacebuilding priorities; and convening inclusive consultations open to all Member States in the informal phase of the 2020 review of United Nations peacebuilding architecture.

16. The Commission would focus on economic drivers and risks to peace. More needed to be done earlier to help countries to lay the foundations for inclusive, sustainable economic growth. The Commission should address issues such as debt sustainability, macroeconomic policy reform, corruption and illicit financial flows, and the development of a private sector that promoted peace and conflict-sensitive business practices. The security risks posed by climate change and inequalities in countries affected or potentially affected by conflict could in part be addressed by the large-scale expansion of sustainable infrastructure. More must also be done for young people. The work of the United Nations in those areas needed to more effective.

17. The Commission would seek to harness the expertise and support of international financial institutions, regional development banks and the private sector. Member States should do their part by boosting contributions to the Peacebuilding Fund. The Commission should build a gender perspective into all of its country and regional discussions and do more to implement the youth, peace and security agenda. Members of the Commission were encouraged to serve as coordinators with other United Nations bodies, in particular the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council.

Work of the Peacebuilding Commission

18. **The Chair** said that the representatives of the European Union, the Gambia, Morocco and Switzerland had asked to participate in the discussion of the item under consideration.

19. *At the invitation of the Chair, Mr. Skoog (European Union), Mr. Jaiteh (Gambia), Mr. Halfaoui (Morocco) and Mr. Lauber (Switzerland) took places at the Committee table.*

20. **Mr. Fernandez-Taranco** (Assistant Secretary-General for Peacebuilding Support) said that the

Commission would play an important role in the 2020 review of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture. The 2020 report of the Secretary-General on peacebuilding and sustaining peace would be focused on results and impact on the ground. The intention of the Chair of the Commission to continue to expand its role was welcome, as was the growing strength of its partnerships with international financial institutions and regional and subregional organizations. The meetings held by the Commission in 2019 with the African Union, African Development Bank and World Bank had been steps in the right direction. There was great potential for similar engagement with other regional and subregional organizations. The success of the Commission's meeting in Colombia should encourage Member States to organize more such events away from Headquarters.

21. Synergies between the Commission and the Peacebuilding Fund had been strengthened. The Fund had kept Member States informed of its activities and had made better use of the Commission's policy discussions to inform its own decisions, without compromising its independence. Demand for support from the Fund was outstripping contributions to it. In 2019, it had been unable to respond to some requests for investments in critical situations. The \$500 million a year goal for contributions to the Fund was equivalent to just 0.029 per cent of annual worldwide military spending and should be easily attainable. In his report in 2018 on peacebuilding and sustaining peace, the Secretary-General had outlined options on financing peacebuilding activities from voluntary, assessed and innovative sources. They had gone unheeded and represented a missed opportunity.

22. The Commission was a valuable platform for bringing together the relevant actors to achieve more coherent and effective engagement by the international community in conflict settings. Since the Peacebuilding Support Office had become part of the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, the ability of the United Nations to do early, strategic and joined up planning had improved. That had been reflected in better support provided by the Office to the Commission in terms of meeting preparation and the setting of priorities.

23. **Mr. Osuga** (Japan) said that ownership the key to consolidating peace was to ensure that the countries involved retained ownership of the peacebuilding process. The best course of action for the Commission was to share with the countries in which it worked the good practices and lessons learned in other parts of the world. The Commission should therefore deepen its discussions on thematic issues, in particular those relating to institution building. Ultimately, the most

important goal was to enable people, including the most vulnerable people in conflict-affected countries, to lead peaceful and fulfilling lives. The nexus between peace and humanitarian actions, along with efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, guided by the concept of human security, was the key to achieving that objective. Because the Peacebuilding Fund was instrumental in making a real difference on the ground, there was a need for greater synergies between its work and that of the Commission.

24. **Mr. Singer Weisinger** (Dominican Republic) said that in 2019 the Commission had been successful in deepening its links with the Security Council, the General Assembly and international financial institutions. It was important to continue reinforcing those links and cooperation with those bodies. His delegation concurred with the priorities set forth by the Chair, in particular with regard to the youth, peace and security agenda. Equally, the Commission should continue to look at ways of including women in peacebuilding processes.

25. **Mr. Edrees** (Egypt) said that his delegation welcomed the Commission's focus on Africa in 2019. His country had engaged early in regional consultations with a view to bringing the African viewpoint to the peacebuilding architecture review process in 2020 by organizing a workshop on peacebuilding and sustaining peace in Africa, which had been held in November 2019 in Addis Ababa, and by hosting the Aswan Forum on sustainable peace, security and development in Africa in December of the same year. His delegation would like to see the Commission engaged in more operational work in the field.

26. **Mr. Vieira** (Brazil), speaking as the Chair of the Guinea-Bissau configuration, said that, after recent presidential and parliamentary elections in that country, the configuration was well placed to foster synergies between the United Nations and regional and international actors in their efforts to help Guinea-Bissau to reach its peacebuilding goals. It stood ready to support the process of reconfiguring the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau. Future changes in the United Nations presence in Guinea-Bissau should not, however, hinder its capacity to strengthen peacebuilding there.

27. **Mr. Lauber** (Switzerland), speaking as the Chair of the Burundi configuration, said that he and the Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations would soon be meeting Government officials in Burundi. In 2020, the configuration would continue to focus on the economic and social aspects of peacebuilding in Burundi, in support of that country's

national development plan. Efforts were being made to ensure that elections scheduled for May 2020 were held in a transparent, credible and peaceful manner.

28. **Ms. Byrne Nason** (Ireland) said that her delegation agreed that links with other United Nations bodies, in particular the Security Council and the Peacebuilding Fund, should be strengthened. She welcomed the efforts of the Commission to foster discussion on the role of women and youth in promoting peace and security.

29. **Ms. Juul** (Norway) underscored the importance of the Commission's work on the women and peace and security agenda and its advisory role to the Security Council. Reinforcing the Commission's relations with the Economic and Social Council was also vital, given the close link between development and peacebuilding. Norway was particularly concerned about financing for peacebuilding and would continue to make substantial contributions to the Peacebuilding Fund.

30. **Mr. Rai** (Nepal) said that the Commission had been instrumental in facilitating the participation of women and young people in peacebuilding activities and political processes, promoting consensus among national stakeholders, addressing the root causes of conflict and finding domestically developed and owned solutions. The Commission had collaborated successfully with Governments to reform and strengthen national institutions and had engaged effectively with regional and international organizations.

31. Coordination, coherence and cooperation between the Commission and the Security Council should be strengthened. International support and national priorities should be properly aligned, to ensure complementarity. The Commission should partner with national, regional and international actors to provide technical and vocational training to women and young people, with a view to creating employment and entrepreneurship opportunities. The Commission should also ensure that it consulted women, young people and members of civil society, which would help it to develop pragmatic and innovative solutions. With climate change fuelling intercommunity conflict, the Commission should partner with relevant organizations to develop a framework for preventing climate-induced conflict. The Commission needed predictable and sustainable financing in order to fulfil its mandate. Accordingly, his delegation supported the Secretary-General's proposal for innovative sources of funding.

32. **Mr. Popolizio** (Peru) said that his delegation welcomed the Commission's efforts to promote the participation of women in peacebuilding processes, in line with Security Council resolution [2493 \(2019\)](#), and

hoped that further progress would be made in 2020. He underscored the importance of the Commission's advisory role to the Council and urged both entities to continue exploring new ways of working together, in particular with regard to countries in transition or emerging from conflict. The Commission should continue to discuss cross-cutting issues, such as electoral assistance, the participation of young people and institutional strengthening. The Commission needed stable and predictable financing in order to carry out its important work on the ground.

33. **Mr. Amde** (Ethiopia) said that, during the previous year, the Commission had effectively utilized its intergovernmental role to strengthen coordination, synergies and complementarity, and thereby reinforce United Nations support for peacebuilding. The Commission had successfully addressed country-specific, regional and thematic issues and had enhanced its advisory role, drawing the attention of the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council to the importance of preventing conflict and building and sustaining peace. He welcomed the Commission's efforts to strengthen its partnerships with the African Union, the European Union, the World Bank and other organizations.

34. In addition to bridging gaps in the peace, security and development nexus, the Commission must strengthen prevention, with a view to addressing the drivers of conflict. To be effective, the 2020 review of the peacebuilding architecture must address fragmentation within the United Nations system and provide a road map on how to mobilize predictable and adequate financial resources for peacebuilding efforts.

35. **Mr. Skoog** (European Union) said that the Commission had made tremendous progress in the previous five years. He welcomed the Commission's regional approach, its thematic focus on women and young people, and its bridging and advisory role. The importance of the Commission's work had been recognized at the highest level by Member States, including during the Commission's visit to the States members of the Mano River Union. In 2020, the Commission should strengthen its partnerships with the World Bank and other international financial institutions and promote local ownership. He urged all Member States to underpin their political commitments to peacebuilding with financial contributions.

36. **Mr. Cho** (Republic of Korea) said that, as the Commission had played a critical role in raising awareness and mobilizing political support, his delegation hoped that the Commission could continue to help States to mobilize funding and expertise. The

Commission should engage more strategically with other United Nations entities, international financial institutions and the private sector. The Commission should strengthen its advisory role to other intergovernmental bodies, including the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, with a view to providing integrated, cross-pillar support. His delegation hoped that the Commission would continue to focus on strengthening the nexus between peacebuilding and development. As part of the 2020 review of the peacebuilding architecture, the Republic of Korea would hold regional consultations in April to discuss how the Commission and the wider United Nations system could work more closely with the Resident Coordinators to build and sustain peace.

37. **Mr. Schulz** (Germany) said that Germany, as the informal coordinator for the relationship between the Commission and the Security Council, would continue to strive to strengthen the Commission's advisory role. In 2019, the Commission had held an informal interactive dialogue with the Council on the Sahel prior to the Council's visit to Mali and Burkina Faso. It had also organized stocktaking meetings and provided written input to the Council. The Commission must continue to provide timely and specific advice to the Council. Germany was firmly committed to supporting the Peacebuilding Fund, which was essential to making progress on the ground, and had contributed €40 million to the Fund in 2019. However, the number of Member States that contributed was relatively low and the Fund had recently been unable to respond to requests for assistance owing to a lack of resources. He therefore urged all Member States to contribute to the Fund.

38. **Mr. Kakanur** (India) said that development through collaboration and partnership was needed to support peacebuilding. His delegation hoped that the 2020 review process would strengthen the peacebuilding architecture and make it more responsive to the immediate and long-term needs of countries recovering from conflict. Noting his country's unique experience of nation-building in a complex and diverse setting, he said that India was eager to share its development-related experiences with other States and would continue to provide bilateral and multilateral support for nation-building initiatives.

39. **Mr. Mlynár** (Slovakia) said that, during the 2020 review process, it would be necessary to emphasize the importance of coherence, coordination and complementarity; participation and national ownership; and partnerships with other organizations. The needs of the people on the ground must also be taken into account. His delegation was committed to working on cross-cutting issues, including the participation of

women and young people and security sector reform and governance.

40. **Ms. Fatima** (Bangladesh) said that Bangladesh, as one of the leading troop- and police-contributing countries, was keenly aware of the importance of national capacity-building in countries emerging from conflict. Her delegation commended the work of the country-specific configurations and the efforts to share lessons learned and good practices and break down silos. The Peacebuilding Fund was a successful investment model and Bangladesh would continue to support it. Member States must strive to add impetus to the Secretary-General's priorities for 2020, with a view to ensuring that the focus on prevention guided all the work done across the peace continuum. The Peacebuilding Support Office had a critical role to play as the hinge for the Organization's engagement on conflict prevention and sustaining peace across all three pillars of the United Nations. Bangladesh would continue to act as a bridge between the Commission and the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, including by keeping the Movement abreast of the Commission's work.

41. **Mr. Castañeda Solares** (Guatemala) said that the 2020 review process was an important opportunity to strengthen the peacebuilding architecture of the United Nations and ensure that the Organization was fit for purpose and able to meet needs on the ground. The Organization's approach must be coherent, comprehensive and inclusive, with a focus on prevention, sustainable development and addressing the root causes of conflict.

42. **Ms. Mwangi** (Kenya) said that the Commission should focus on local peacebuilding initiatives and mechanisms. A reinforced role for the Commission during transition periods, both in mission and non-mission settings, would contribute to the establishment of peacebuilding support offices on the ground. Operationalizing innovative financing options, including strengthened links with regional and subregional financial and development partners, would help to mobilize resources, address context-specific challenges and fill financial and institutional gaps. Providing a platform for sharing cases studies and lessons learned would help Member States to understand the linkages between, for example, climate change and violent extremism and terrorism. Reinforcing the bridging and advisory role of the Commission would contribute to better coherence within the United Nations system. A forward-looking, predictable and flexible calendar of meetings, including regular reviews of the Commission's working methods and discussions of the role of women and young people

in peacebuilding, would enable the Commission to make a more informed contribution to the 2020 review process. Given that the root causes of conflict were multi-faceted, the Commission must also work to strengthen the development sector, in particular in fragile countries, and reinforce its partnerships with Governments and the private sector.

43. **Mr. Jaiteh** (Gambia) said that his delegation supported the Commission's priorities for 2020 and looked forward to continuing to work closely with Commission. In order to build and sustain peace, financial support and the sustained commitment of all Member States were essential.

44. **Mr. Halfaoui** (Morocco) said that his delegation was pleased that the Commission had, in 2019, addressed new thematic issues and strengthened its cooperation with the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly. In its capacity as Chair of the Central African Republic configuration, Morocco had advised the Security Council during the lead-up to the renewal of the mandate of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA). The Commission had also strengthened its partnerships with regional organizations and international financial institutions and contributed to making the work of the Organization more coherent. The Commission's achievements in 2019 were attributable to the bold reforms introduced by the Secretary-General, the cross-cutting and cross-pillar approach to sustaining peace, the focus on national ownership, the Commission's gender strategy, and the consideration given to how to mobilize adequate financial resources for peacebuilding.

45. The Permanent Representative of Morocco would be conducting a visit to the Central African Republic on the occasion of the one-year anniversary of the signing of the peace agreement. In addition to following up on the progress made in the peace process and the preparations for the holding of free and fair elections in December 2020, he intended to meet representatives of MINUSCA and other partners to discuss developments on the ground, including with regard to the rule of law and the justice system.

46. **Mr. Vaverka** (Sweden) said that the Commission had a unique mandate to interact with and draw upon the expertise of a wide range of actors. It was up to Member States to ensure that the Commission was relevant and utilized its potential as a hinge between the three pillars of the United Nations. During the 2020 review process, it would be important to examine the Organization's ability to deliver as one and to highlight ongoing

challenges, including the issue of financing for peacebuilding. The Peacebuilding Fund must be complemented by partnerships with the World Bank, the African Union, the European Union and international financial institutions. Continued efforts to ensure the participation of women and the inclusion of a gender perspective in peacebuilding were also vital. The women and peace and security agenda must be universally integrated in order to achieve sustained peace.

47. His delegation, as Chair of the Liberia configuration, would work with the Permanent Mission of Liberia to promote increased partnerships and collaboration with the World Bank, the African Development Bank and regional actors. The situation in Liberia remained fragile and he urged the international community to continue to support Liberia in its efforts to sustain peace.

48. **Mr. Michon** (France) said that, in 2020, the Commission should continue to refine its gender strategy, strengthen its partnership with the World Bank and examine the impact of climate change on peace and security, with a view to making specific recommendations on conflict prevention. Every effort should be made to make the Commission as effective as possible. Coordination with the Security Council was vital to ensure that the recommendations made by the Commission were timely and relevant. Press releases should be issued after meetings of the Commission in order to increase awareness of its work. Lastly, representatives of civil society and the private sector should be invited to address the Commission on a more regular basis.

49. **Ms. Kalis** (United Kingdom) said that, in 2019, her country had contributed \$20 million to the Peacebuilding Fund. While the Commission's advisory role to the Security Council had become more prominent and Member States increasingly saw the value of engaging with the Commission on a voluntary basis, there was a need to forge better synergies among the Commission, the Peacebuilding Fund and the implementing entities of the United Nations development system. The Commission's approach to engagement with the Council must become more strategic. The Commission's advocacy capability should also be strengthened. During the 2020 review process, her delegation would prioritize financing for peacebuilding, integrating United Nations approaches for better conflict prevention, and stronger partnerships between the United Nations and international financial institutions.

The meeting rose at 12.45 p.m.