

CONSOLIDATING THE PEACE?

Views from Sierra Leone and
Burundi on the United Nations
Peacebuilding Commission



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Makeni. Ex-civil war combatant Aminata Sesav (in yellow), trains in hairdressing.

The PBC's impact has been largely positive and well received, but important challenges remain.

Executive summary

It is often said that winning the peace is at least as hard as winning the war. The creation of the United Nations Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) is in itself a recognition that there are fundamental gaps in the international community's engagement in post-conflict contexts. The Peacebuilding Commission's official mandate and objectives relate to mobilising political attention, additional resources and coordination for consolidating peace in war-torn societies. As such, the PBC is a concept that is long overdue. Published to coincide with the Peacebuilding Commission's own first annual report to the General Assembly in June 2007, this shadow report assesses the first year of the PBC's work in its first two focus countries: Sierra Leone and Burundi. It shows that the PBC's impact has been largely positive and well received, but that important challenges remain.

The PBC's relationship with the focus-country governments has important political and operational implications. Conflict, particularly civil conflict, often results from struggles rooted in governance issues – leaving post-conflict governance a heavy legacy. In other words, governance is usually both part of the solution and part of the problem. For this reason, our study finds that particular emphasis should be placed on the Strategic Peacebuilding Framework (SPBF) between the PBC and the focus government, as a political instrument to facilitate commitment, consensus and action on tackling those governance-related challenges and obstacles. This is particularly relevant for countries in late post-conflict / early development periods, such as Sierra Leone.

To complement the political process mentioned above, Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) resources should offer real added value in tackling the gaps and critical challenges in peacebuilding specific initiatives, and not just provide supplementary funding for existing (development) strategies. Our research on youth in Sierra Leone suggested that “the truly marginalised youth”, in the words of one activist, are largely excluded from the benefits of current aid programmes, therefore increased funding for existing strategies will not reach these youths. Thus the PBC needs to encourage new ways to reach “the truly marginalised”.

Post-conflict countries are frequently awash with programmatic strategies and plans, creating a situation of “strategy fatigue” (as described by one informant in Sierra Leone). Some donors appeared daunted by the prospect of “yet another strategy discussion”. Yet it is for this reason that we emphasise that the PBC's genuine potential for ‘added-value’ lies in its political nature, distinct from other development or donor-recipient relationships. Likewise, if the PBF merely funds gaps related to security (but not specifically peacebuilding) issues in existing development strategies like the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP), then its unique added value will not be clear.

This report emphasises the importance of a more political approach to the PBC's work in certain contexts, reflecting a partnership between the international community and the focus-country government. To ensure effective implementation and follow-up, the Strategic Peacebuilding Framework needs to include clear benchmarks, backed up by appropriate monitoring and accountability mechanisms. In most cases, the SPBF should be the primary entry-point for PBC engagement, with potential PBF or additional resources as an incentive.

In this regard, it is telling that during its initial engagement in the country the PBC had no impact on the heightened political tensions and oppression that characterised Burundian politics during the second half of 2006. Regional and internal political dynamics predominated in resolving the political crisis. However, in contrast, the PBC does appear to have made a quiet, yet significant contribution to improved governance by instituting a government dialogue with civil society on peacebuilding. Although only tentative at this stage, this process could have longer-term benefits for addressing the root causes of conflict in the country.

The PBF could – in theory – be used for ‘quick impact’ peacebuilding needs. This approach is most likely to be appropriate in the immediate post-conflict stabilisation or early post-conflict periods, in which peacebuilding imperatives take priority over sustainable development. It would require an entirely different *modus operandi* from the one used in the first focus countries, Sierra Leone and Burundi. The use of PBF funds for such ‘stabilisation’ purposes should be based on clearer criteria to ensure that interventions add value and ‘do no harm’.

The following key findings highlight the most important issues raised by our research. More detailed recommendations and areas of possible further research are listed at the end of this report. Through this initiative, we hope to contribute to making the Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Fund as effective as possible in improving the lives of the people on the ground most affected by conflict.

Key findings

Appropriate sequencing of the Strategic Peacebuilding Framework and the Peacebuilding Fund is critical. In late post-conflict/early development phases, greater emphasis should be placed on the political strategy (the SPBF), with PBF funding as an incentive to encourage political consensus on tackling challenges to peacebuilding.

Don’t let accountability or impact assessment be an afterthought.

Mechanisms and processes should be developed to assess genuine PBC contributions to peace, rather than project outputs, in a joined-up way across programme and political levels.

Focus on the critical gaps and political challenges in peacebuilding processes. Post-conflict countries frequently suffer “strategy fatigue”, with multiple strategies featuring a largely programmatic perspective. The PBC’s greatest potential for added value lies in promoting political consensus (both within country and between the country and its international partners) to overcome bottlenecks and obstacles to consolidating peace.

Rethink the PBF timeframe. The one- to two-year period for PBF implementation should be reviewed as sustainable peace cannot be achieved, nor can impact be evaluated, within this timeframe.

Develop criteria for ‘PBF only’ scenarios. Engagement in early post-conflict stabilisation would require a radically different *modus operandi* to that used in Sierra Leone and Burundi. Criteria should be developed to ensure that such use of PBF funding adds value and does no harm.

Particular emphasis should be placed on the Strategic Peacebuilding Framework (SPBF) between the PBC and the focus government, as a political instrument to facilitate commitment.

1. Peacebuilding in the 21st Century

Former UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali coined the term 'peacebuilding' in his 1992 *An Agenda for Peace*. Peacebuilding, he suggested, could be defined as 'comprehensive efforts to identify and support structures which will tend to consolidate peace and advance a sense of confidence and well-being among people'.

The lives of people in communities and among the poor often continue to be blighted by fear, insecurity and, for women, the threat of sexual violence and rape. Some 40% of countries fall back into conflict within five years.

Making the transition from peacekeeping to longer-term development strategies remains a chronic weakness in the international response to post-conflict countries. Countless evaluations and studies have pointed to the multiple policy, institutional and funding gaps that lead to failings on the ground. In terms of security, the frequent constraints and limitations imposed by UN peacekeeping mandates and capabilities are well known, and are evident today in East Timor, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Haiti. In terms of assistance, the gaps between humanitarian, recovery and development funding are also widely recognised, and yet persistent. Witness the present failure to bring about a tangible peace in southern Sudan. Long after the end of fighting, the multi-donor trust fund for southern Sudan has failed to disburse to any major programmes. Another classic example is support for the reintegration of ex-combatants, with gaps emerging between the Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) programmes facilitated by peace operations and the longer-term development funding.

Since the end of the Cold War, the frequency and forms of UN engagement in post-conflict transitions after civil war have expanded considerably. UN missions now get involved in a diverse range of activities, including organising elections and promoting democratic institutions and security sector reform. This year, the budget for UN peacekeeping operations was US\$5.5 billion dollars, with 18 Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) led missions around the world, deploying more than 100,000 serving civilian and military personnel from 118 countries. Yet despite this vast allocation of resources and a number of notable successes, UN efforts have too often failed to foster strong and lasting political institutions, support the social and economic development that is essential for a sustainable peace, or prevent relapses into conflict. The lives of people on the ground, in the communities and among the poor, often continue to be blighted by fear, insecurity and, for women, the threat of sexual violence and rape. Some 40% of countries fall back into conflict within five years.

The UN Peacebuilding Commission was created in December 2005 to address these weaknesses in the international response to post-conflict transition. As such, the PBC followed previous efforts to improve the UN and wider international system. Previous milestones included the 1994 UNDP *Human Development Report*, which set out the concept of 'human security', and the 2000 *Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations* (also known as the Brahimi Report). Subsequent analyses have recognised the fragmentary nature of peacebuilding in many countries.¹ Too often, peacebuilding programmes are characterised by the absence of a clear 'theory of change' in terms of their planned impacts or monitoring actual outcomes. A recent evaluation of peacebuilding in Kosovo, for example, has found that a project-orientated approach resulted in a disconnect between programmes and peacebuilding efforts at the diplomatic level.² Projects frequently applied formulaic approaches to inter-communal dialogue or economic interdependence, without a strategic analysis of their potential contribution to consolidating peace. Evaluations of peacebuilding are frequently based on project outputs rather than a strategic impact assessment.

1 Smith, Dan, 'Towards a Strategic Framework for Peacebuilding: Getting their Act Together' Overview Report of the Joint Utstein Study of Peacebuilding, PR10 (2004)

2 'Has peacebuilding made a difference in Kosovo?' Research Report by CARE International and CDA (forthcoming 2007)

State-building and aid policy in 'fragile states'

The PBC's aspiration to promote coherence between diplomacy and aid policy should be understood in the context of wider trends. So-called 'fragile states' have risen up the international donor agenda. Various definitions, fragile states are described by DFID as those states that are 'unwilling or unable' to meet pro-poor development goals.³ Donor interest in these countries is partly inspired by post-9/11 foreign policy priorities. However, it is also informed by a longer-term donor interest in the nexus between governance, conflict and development. Shifts in policy, funding and programmes reflect the recognition that the traditional reliance on humanitarian approaches in chronic crises or post-conflict environments leaves underlying problems of 'bad' governance or instability unaddressed. As such, donors have increasingly channelled funding to programmes that address state fragility and promote 'state-building'.

Donor policy on 'fragile states' emphasises the pursuit of coherence and aid coordination, bringing new impetus to longer-term trends in so-called 'integrated approaches' to conflict management and donor harmonisation. Yet some critics suggest that the donor approach to fragile states risks merely reiterating the 'Paris Declaration' agenda's emphasis on donor harmonisation, developed with largely non-conflict contexts in mind.⁴ In doing so, donors neglect the potential to promote more innovative approaches to aid based on a concerted conflict analysis and political strategy. Furthermore, donor support for state-building has predominantly emphasised central institutions, with a relative neglect of extending support to the local levels.

The PBC became the first UN body of its type to be set up by simultaneous resolutions in both the UN General Assembly and the UN Security Council.

2. The UN Peacebuilding Commission⁵

The creation of the Peacebuilding Commission emerged from a wider United Nations reform process. In 2003, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan convened a High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change to come up with proposals on reforming the UN bodies working on peace and security. The panel's report, published in December 2004, included a recommendation to establish a Peacebuilding Commission, with secretariat support from a small Peacebuilding Support Office⁶. The 2005 UN World Summit in New York⁷ confirmed this proposal, and subsequently the General Assembly and the Security Council passed concurrent resolutions in December 2005 formally establishing the Peacebuilding Commission⁸. The PBC thus became the first UN body of its type to be set up by simultaneous resolutions in both the UN General Assembly and the UN Security Council.

Purpose

The PBC is an intergovernmental advisory body. Its purpose is to advise on strategic priorities for integrated peacebuilding, development and reconstruction in countries emerging from violent conflict. It aims to bring together international donors, the international financial institutions, national governments and troop contributors, to play an advisory role, build consensus around priorities and where appropriate, highlight any gaps that threaten to undermine peace.

3 'Why we need to work more Effectively in Fragile States', DFID (2005)

4 Submission by International Alert on DFID's Conflict Policy Paper, 9 Nov 2006

5 Annex I contains a detailed description of the Peacebuilding Commissions Structure

6 High Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change, 'A more secure world: Our shared responsibility', New York, United Nations, 2004

7 Outcome Document, The World Summit 2005, United Nations, 15 September 2005, paragraph 97

8 General Assembly resolution A/RES/60/180 and Security Council resolution S/RES/1645, United Nations, 2005

The PBC intends to bring together, in a coherent way, the UN's experience in the areas of mediation, peacekeeping, respect for human rights, the rule of law, humanitarian assistance, reconstruction and long-term development.

Main Tasks⁹

- 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 support the development of integrated strategies in order to lay the foundation for sustainable development.
- 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.

PBC focus countries

Initially it was envisaged that the PBC would take up to four or five country cases a year.¹⁰ However, it made relatively slow progress in the first year, taking over six months to elect its Organisational Committee membership and convene its first procedural meeting. The PBC subsequently announced in June 2006 that only Sierra Leone and Burundi would be the first focus countries of its work.

The Peacebuilding Fund

The concurrent Security Council and General Assembly resolutions setting up the Peacebuilding Commission also included a provision for the establishment of a multi-year fund for post-conflict peacebuilding, "with the objective of ensuring the immediate release of resources needed to launch peacebuilding activities and the availability of appropriate financing for recovery".¹¹

The Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) aimed to raise US\$250 million in voluntary donations from member states. As of 10 June 2007, US\$225,557 million had been pledged by a total of 33 donors.¹² Initially, US\$35 million was made available for each of the focus countries. In principle, other countries identified by the UN Secretary-General will also be eligible for PBF funding in exceptional circumstances, even if they are not currently on the agenda of the PBC. The fund aims to address two problems of existing post-conflict funding:

- the time-gap before donor funding arrives in the immediate post-conflict period,
- the lack of funding for essential early-stability initiatives.

Established with the aim of providing support at the early stages of the peacebuilding process, as well as addressing gaps in the process, the Peacebuilding Fund concentrates on four main areas:¹³

- activities in support of the implementation of peace agreements,
- activities in support of efforts by the country to build and strengthen capacities which promote coexistence and the peaceful resolution of conflict,
- establishment or re-establishment of essential administrative services and related human and technical capacities,
- critical interventions designed to respond to imminent threats to the peacebuilding process.

9 As outlined in Security Council resolution, S/RES/1645, 20 Dec 2005

10 UN peacebuilding Commission website; <http://www.un.org/peacebuilding/questions.htm>, accessed 11 June 2007³⁵

11 Security Council resolution, S/RES/1645, 20 Dec 2005, paragraph 24

12 <http://www.unpbf.org>

13 Terms of Reference for the Peacebuilding Fund A/60/984 available at <http://www.unpbf.org>

The PBF has a two-tier decision-making process with a central allocation of funding to recipient countries and an in-country advisory board, or Joint Steering Committee, comprising representatives from the recipient government, UN, civil society and donors that oversee the broad parameters for the use of the fund. UNDP administers the funds, with the PBC playing an advisory role in setting the funding priorities. The General Assembly plays a guiding role. There is also a PBF Advisory Group consisting of ten eminent persons, nominated by member states. According to the PBF's terms of reference, the in-country Joint Steering Committees must ensure that funded activities will:¹⁴

- support the priorities identified in a Priority Plan,
- seek to address a gap that cannot be funded through any other mechanism,
- not duplicate other on-going interventions.

Strategic Peacebuilding Framework (SPBF)

A key political instrument for the PBC is the potential to negotiate a Strategic Peacebuilding Framework with the focus-country government. During the research period, the concept and scope of the SPBF was still being elaborated. Some stakeholders referred to the SPBF as a potential 'compact', embodying mutual commitments and benchmarks between the international community and the national government.

Role of civil society

The role of civil society, particularly women, is mentioned twice in the concurrent resolutions, which recognise "the important contribution of civil society and non-government organisations, including women's organisations, to peacebuilding efforts".

The resolutions encourage:

the Commission to consult with civil society, non-governmental organisations, including women's organisations and the private sector engaged in peacebuilding activities, as appropriate.

and note:

the importance of participation of regional and local actors, and stress the importance of adopting flexible working methods, including use of video-conferencing, meetings outside New York and other modalities in order to provide for the active participation of those most relevant to the deliberations of the Commission.

There are a number of ways civil society could, theoretically, interact with the PBC both at the level of UN headquarters and in the focus countries.

- Input into political deliberations between the PBC and government,
- Input into procedural and political discussions in New York,
- Participation on the PBF in-country Steering Committees,
- Indirect funding to civil society organisations (CSOs) as implementing partners of PBF projects, through joint implementation of government or UN programmes under the PBF,
- Monitoring and accountability of the country-specific Strategic Peacebuilding Framework,
- Monitoring and accountability role regarding PBF-funded projects.

Although, as noted above, the establishing resolutions of the PBC make provision for the involvement of CSOs in its work, initially the main focus in New York was on the



Port Loko. Fishermen, women and children hauling their nets on the shore.

participation of member states and international organisations/donors. It was not until early June 2007, that the PBC finally issued provisional guidelines for civil society participation in the PBC's formal and informal meetings, after much discussion among member states. Some governments pushed for active participation of civil society (and the private sector) in recognition of the important role played by NGOs and CSOs in peacebuilding efforts. However, not all member states were as supportive. As outlined in this report, research shows that civil society participation in the first two focus countries has also varied considerably.

Support to central state institutions must be complemented by support to democratic checks and balances, including healthy involvement of civil society in monitoring and accountability mechanisms.

Civil society in post-conflict settings

Civil society can play a strong role in post-conflict peacebuilding. However, some policy-makers involved in peace and security issues are reluctant to include civil society, viewing it as unimportant in efforts to consolidate peace, or even as a potentially dangerous and destabilising influence.

It is true that many conflict-affected countries are characterised by particularly politicised and fractured civil societies.¹⁵ In post-conflict societies, many local NGOs are either captured by political factions implicated in the conflict dynamics or are dependent on international donors, and consequently have a weak support-base in local communities. In such settings, donors place increasing emphasis on so-called 'state-building' – efforts to restore the state security structures, establish central institutions and the formal processes of democracy, such as elections.

Yet the picture is more complex than that – and this is where civil society can play an essential and constructive role. Peace processes require a political settlement, typically negotiated at the elite level, to be gradually extended outwards. Increasingly, experience demonstrates the importance of support to the 'demand side' of good governance and accountability. Support to central state institutions, such as a trained and financed civil service, army and police force must be complemented by support to democratic checks and balances, including healthy involvement of civil society in monitoring and accountability mechanisms. Arguably, a narrow approach to state-building is an imbalanced and ultimately ineffective one. In this context, various international actors maintain different comparative advantages and preferences that guide their engagement with civil society. This report explores how these issues play out in terms of the PBC's remit and added value in Sierra Leone and Burundi.

3. The Peacebuilding Commission in Sierra Leone

This chapter analyses the Peacebuilding Commission's experience in Sierra Leone. We provide a brief conflict analysis and chronology of PBC engagement in the country, followed by an assessment of whether the PBC is relevant after five years of peace, which raises important questions about the PBC's mandate and work in countries such as Sierra Leone. The report then examines the consequences of introducing PBF money before

¹⁵ Pouligny, Beatrice 'Civil society and Post-Conflict Peacebuilding: Ambiguities of International programs Aimed at Building 'New Societies', Security Dialogue, 36(4), December 2005

finalising the Strategic Peacebuilding Framework (known in Sierra Leone as either the Integrated Peacebuilding Strategy, or 'Compact').

In a subsequent section, the PBC and PBF's coordination with in-country donors, the wider international community and engagement with civil society are explored, highlighting the importance of broad representation, consultation and participation. The government's draft PBF proposals on youth empowerment and employment issues are used as a case study to illustrate a specific example of PBC/PBF intervention in Sierra Leone. Prior to outlining country-specific conclusions, a final section explores the question: what if the PBC had entered at an earlier stage in Sierra Leone?

Sierra Leone: conflict analysis

From 1991 to 2002, Sierra Leone experienced a civil war influenced by local, regional and international interests. Some analysts suggest that 'ancient hatreds' drove the fighting, while others emphasise the economic agendas of rebel leaders such as Foday Sankoh and Charles Taylor. In fact, the origins of the war were more complex, rooted in a long history of political violence and social exclusion. Furthermore, while progress towards peace has been made, the root causes of the conflict continue to haunt Sierra Leone in its post-conflict period.

Both in terms of its origins and factors that sustained the violence, the conflict reflected a complex relationship between 'greed' (economic factors) and 'grievance' (political, social and psychological factors). At the time, analysts claimed that economic factors were "largely responsible for [the war's] inception and protracted duration"¹⁶. Factions on all sides were estimated to have earned between US\$25-125 million through trading so-called 'conflict diamonds'.¹⁷ Yet political and social grievances were also critical in driving the conflict, emerging from a history of exploitation and oppression that characterised relations between urban elites and the rural population, as well as power imbalances within rural communities.

Lack of state authority and capacity was also a major factor in the war's protracted duration. This was particularly evident in the security services, already accused of corruption and human rights abuses prior to the conflict. Failure by state forces to provide security for communities led to the mobilisation of 'kamajor' civil defence forces in some areas. This deterioration of state authority culminated in a coup in 1997, plunging Freetown into renewed violence, and bringing diamond-rich areas under the control of Rebel United Front (RUF) and renegade state forces. Just as central state institutions were disintegrating prior to the conflict, so the fabric of governance and society in rural areas had become increasingly strained. When the RUF launched its rebellion in eastern border areas, the rural population's poverty and political disenfranchisement had already reached crisis point. Combined with successive governments' neglect and persecution, rural Sierra Leone provided a ripe recruitment ground for the insurgency.

The root causes of the conflict continue to haunt Sierra Leone in its post-conflict period.

¹⁶ Hirsch, John, 'Sierra Leone: Diamonds and the Struggle for Democracy,' December 2000

¹⁷ Renner, M, 'Breaking the Link Between Resources and Repression', in 'State of the World 2002' (Starke, L editor), Worldwatch Institute, pp. 149-173

The position of youth was a particularly critical factor in the conflict. Socially excluded youth comprised a majority of rebel and dissident state forces. RUF fighters consisted of mainly three categories of youth: long-term urban unemployed and criminal elements, alienated village youths, and young, uprooted migrants in border and diamond-mining areas. Significant numbers of young males had become increasingly frustrated by a lack of education and employment opportunities.

Despite five years of peace and the departure of the UN peacekeeping mission (UNAMSIL) in December 2005, many of the root causes of the conflict remain. Youth unemployment remains widespread and governance issues continue to frame prospects for sustainable development and peace. Despite the creation of an Anti-Corruption Commission, challenges of accountability and transparency remain. The authority of the traditional patrimonial and chieftaincy-based elite is still present, and marginalisation among the rural population remains a source of tension. Regional factors also continue to pose a security risk, in particular the potential threat of instability and population displacements from neighbouring countries.

Regardless of the challenges, Sierra Leone has made important progress towards recovery and rebuilding the fabric of national society. Despite being one of the poorest countries in the world, the World Bank estimated the country's 2006 annual growth rate at 7.3%. The Sierra Leone Truth and Reconciliation Commission issued a comprehensive report in 2004, analysing the causes and extent of the conflict, making more than 500 recommendations to promote national reconciliation and prevent future conflict. A National Recovery Strategy was developed in 2002 that outlined plans for the restoration of civil authority and decentralisation, as well as reconciliation and stimulation of the economy. The first local government elections in 32 years were held in 2004, and the second post-war Presidential and Parliamentary elections are due in August 2007. A Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, covering the period 2005-2007, was drafted and is being implemented following consultation with relevant stakeholders. The Sierra Leone Police and the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces maintain national security.

The Peacebuilding Commission in Sierra Leone: A Chronology of Significant Events

Date	Events
21 June 06	The UN Security Council formally requests PBC advice on Sierra Leone and Burundi.
23 June 06	PBC holds its first meeting in New York, chaired by the Secretary-General, to discuss Sierra Leone and Burundi.
June 06	Conference in Sierra Leone involving international partners provides preliminary analysis for the later identification of priority issues.
19 July 06	PBC holds a closed-door informal briefing on Sierra Leone with the government, UNIOSIL, World Bank and IMF.
19-20 July 06	Sierra Leone civil society organisation, West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP), organises a national civil society consultation meeting in Freetown on the PBC. WANEP reported that in addition to government and international actors, "30 participants were drawn from CSOs working in various thematic areas across the country". ¹⁸
11 Oct 06	PBC holds informal briefings on Sierra Leone and Burundi with NGOs in New York.
12 Oct 06	PBC holds its first country-specific meeting on Sierra Leone in New York. Mrs. Memunatu Pratt, Head of the Peace and Conflict Studies Programme at Fourah Bay College, University of Sierra Leone, and a WANEP Board member, attends as a representative of civil society.
12-13 Oct 06	The Centre for Conflict Resolution (CCR), University of Cape Town, invites Sierra Leonean civil society members to a consultative meeting in Johannesburg to discuss their perspectives on the PBC.
11 Dec 06	PBC holds informal briefings on Sierra Leone and Burundi with international NGOs in New York.
13 Dec 06	PBC holds its second country-specific meeting on Sierra Leone in New York. The PBC approves an initial contribution of US\$25 million from the Peacebuilding Fund to fill gaps in Sierra Leone's peacebuilding work (later increased to US\$35 million). Mrs Memunatu Pratt attends on behalf of civil society.
19-20 Dec 06	CCR organises a wider civil society consultation in Freetown for 60 participants.
10-11 Jan 07	UNIFEM and the Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs hold national consultations in Freetown on women's engagement with the PBC.
19 Jan 07	WANEP and the Mano River Women's Peace Network (MARWOPNET) organise a national consultative meeting for civil society engagement with the PBC in Freetown, reporting that "60 participants were targeted" and participants were selected from organisations that had attended the 19-20 July, 19-20 December and 10-11 January consultative meetings. ¹⁹ WANEP and MARWOPNET are selected by meeting participants as official civil society representatives on the PBF National Steering Committee.
14 Feb 07	The Sierra Leone national Priority Plan to guide the funding of PBF projects is articulated in a document dated 14 Feb 2007. The four priority areas for PBF funding are youth empowerment and employment; democracy and good governance; justice and security; and capacity building of public administration.
28 Feb 07	PBC holds a thematic discussion on justice sector reform in New York with participants from Sierra Leone.
19-25 Mar 07	A nine-member delegation of the PBC, led by the Permanent Representative of the Netherlands to the UN, visits Sierra Leone. A meeting with civil society is held on 22 March.
23 Apr 07	Officials from the Peacebuilding Support Office in New York travel to Sierra Leone for two weeks to support the government in drafting the Strategic Peacebuilding Framework (SBF), which in Sierra Leone's case becomes known as the "Compact". A draft outline of the Compact, dated 4 May, is later circulated.
9 May 07	PBC holds a meeting via video link with Sierra Leone to discuss the outline Compact.
11 May 07	PBF National Steering Committee approves two projects: Youth Enterprise Development for approximately US\$ 4 million and Improved Public Order Management Capacity for approximately US\$1 million.
21 May 07	PBC holds a thematic discussion on youth empowerment and employment via video-link.

18 WANEP, Report of the GPPAC National Civil Society Consultation in Sierra Leone, 19-20 July 2006

19 WANEP and MARWOPNET, Report on National Consultative Meeting for Civil Society Engagement with the UN Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) in Sierra Leone, 19 January 2007



Port Loko. Kadiatu Bangura, at the Caritas Makeni training centre for single mothers and ex-combatants.

The short-term requirements (to both build the peace and to prevent a reversion to conflict) are vast and complicated, requiring long-term solutions to address the root causes of the conflict.

The Peacebuilding Commission's mandate and relevance to Sierra Leone

Sierra Leone was identified as one of the first two PBC focus countries in June 2006. Subsequently, the PBC held a closed-door informal briefing on Sierra Leone with the government, the United Nations Integrated Office in Sierra Leone (UNIOSIL), the World Bank and International Monetary Fund on 19 July 2006.

A key question has been raised in relation to the PBC's engagement in Sierra Leone at this stage in the country's recovery. Some commentators interviewed for this report questioned the relevance of the PBC's work because of the time elapsed since the end of fighting. In Sierra Leone, the 'post-conflict' period has lasted more than five years, with the formal end of conflict announced in January 2002.

The timing issue poses important policy questions and sets an interesting precedent for the PBC and PBF. Early articulations of the PBF's remit included addressing "immediate needs in countries emerging from conflict" and proposed to deliver the "greatest value added during the very early stages of a peacebuilding process, before donor conferences are organised and such funding mechanisms as country-specific multi-donor trust funds have been set up"²⁰. In contrast, Sierra Leone is defined by DFID staff as beyond 'post-conflict' and in the 'early development' phase – although the lines between the two phases are somewhat blurred.

In making the case for Sierra Leone as a focus country for the PBC, Vice President Solomon Berewa said the government needed "support to deal with the short-term requirements of the population until we reach the levels of self-sustaining growth".²¹ The short-term requirements (to both build the peace and to prevent a reversion to conflict), however, are vast and complicated, requiring sustainable long-term solutions to address the root causes of the conflict that include unemployment, poverty, inequality, marginalisation (especially of youth), corruption, poor governance and lack of access to land.

Discussions between the UN and the government of Sierra Leone in the context of the PBC's engagement resulted in the following priority themes being identified for PBF funding: youth empowerment and employment; democracy and good governance; justice and security; and capacity building of public administration. Formal recognition of these areas as priorities is not new in Sierra Leone, reflecting existing development priorities presented in the PRSP; there are already government ministries, donors, partnerships and strategies in place to address them. To achieve improvements in these areas will require long-term political commitment and resources from both foreign donors and the government of Sierra Leone. Defining critical peacebuilding interventions in a country like Sierra Leone is complex. At this stage, attention inevitably shifts to 'underlying causes' of the conflict and solutions involving long-term processes of political and economic change. Overlaps between peacebuilding and mainstream development strategies become inevitable. However, this raises a critical question about the PBC and PBF's added value, given their focus on peacebuilding.

The confusion generated by the blurring of development and peacebuilding strategies is well-illustrated by the debates surrounding the sustainability of programmes funded by the

²⁰ Report of the United Nations Secretary-General to the General Assembly on Arrangements for establishing the Peacebuilding Fund, A/60/984 of 22 August 2006, paragraph 2.3

²¹ Statement by His Excellency Mr. Solomon E. Berewa, Vice President of the Republic of Sierra Leone, to the Peacebuilding Commission at United Nations Headquarters, New York, 12 October 2006

PBF. UN and donor officials repeatedly underlined that the key to ensuring sustainability lay in funding the gaps in existing government priorities, alongside long-term government political commitment. In contrast, at least one senior government official seemed to believe that sustainability lay in on-going replenishments from the PBF until such time as the government was self-sustaining. Recognising that the PBF money is intended to act as a 'catalyst' for longer-term, sustainable initiatives, there remain genuine concerns within civil society over what will happen after the US\$35 million has run out, especially considering the government's own admission of a lack of resources for continuity. For example, a number of informants were concerned that sudden gaps in funding for youth employment schemes could increase existing frustrations and tensions among the youth population – expenditure of PBF funds must not simply postpone the problem.

A clear link between PBF funding and the long-term plan is missing. The PBC itself unfortunately does not give any clear answers to this beyond a general reference to its role in mobilising resources.

At a strategic level, the PBF will be most useful if it distinguishes between genuine short-term gaps critical to early stability (where 'fast cash' really is key) versus long-term structural problems, such as widespread youth unemployment, which require long-term development interventions. In a case like Sierra Leone, the latter are best addressed through well-established donor-government partnerships and mechanisms, around which the PBC could help with political support and mobilisation of resources²² (at the time of preparing this report, there were indications that the PBC might mobilise additional funding for the Sierra Leone energy sector through international financial institutions and bilateral donors. If these initiatives succeed, they could constitute an ideal-type intervention by the PBC).

Many local people perceived the PBF's work to be explicitly linked to the forthcoming presidential elections originally planned for July and now scheduled for August 2007. There was a common perception that 'quick impact' interventions were meant to win electoral support for the ruling Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP) – a perception magnified by the fact that the Vice President, a presidential contender, co-chairs the PBF Steering Committee. Although there appears to be no attempt by the government or the UN to use the PBF to influence the electoral process, a "presentational problem" (as one western donor described it) in the timing of the PBF process may have undermined its credibility. In recognition of such issues, the PBC did decide to delay the signing of the Compact until after the elections, although PBF allocations will still be disbursed before the elections.

The Peacebuilding Fund and Compact sequencing

The most important finding from our research in Sierra Leone is that sequencing of the Compact and PBF is critical. In Sierra Leone, the PBF was allocated prior to negotiation of the political commitment embodied in the Compact. This appears to have been a mistake (an issue that is recognised by government), particularly given the importance attached to addressing issues of governance and political will in the peacebuilding context.

Following the government's development of a Priority Plan to guide the disbursement of PBF funding towards what it felt were critical peacebuilding areas, work on the Compact

A clear link between PBF funding and the long-term peacebuilding plan is missing.

²² The Peacebuilding Commission concept does allow for the separation of the Commission's political attention from the Fund's resources if appropriate

began in earnest in early 2007. This gave rise to a dilemma. As one informant put it, the PBF was “a lot of money with no analysis” whilst the Compact was “a lot of analysis with no money”. By circulating the draft PBF Priority Plan first, it seemed that the PBF money was supplementary donor funding to support existing national priorities, many of which were already contained in the country’s PRSP. Indeed, the PRSP contained a central pillar relating to peace and security issues, including security sector reform.

The PBC itself has acknowledged that making Sierra Leone eligible for US\$35 million in PBF funding led to a disproportionate focus in Freetown on money rather than political dialogue.²³ According to one senior UN official in Freetown, discussing PBF funding allocations before the Compact detracted from an arguably more important political dialogue aimed at building commitment and consensus on tackling the challenges to peacebuilding. Much of the conversation around the PBC in Sierra Leone became about how to divide up this sudden new injection of donor money (equivalent to approximately 10% of the country’s annual official development assistance²⁴), rather than promoting political change or re-energising the commitment of the government and its partners around a common agenda. Both the UN (under heavy pressure from its member states to demonstrate the PBC’s impact) and the government (focused on impending elections) appeared keen for quick disbursement of PBF funds. Some civil society members also pressed for speedy disbursement, citing the urgent needs in Sierra Leone.

The PBF was “a lot of money with no analysis” whilst the Compact was “a lot of analysis with no money”.

Many UN and donor officials felt that although funding was important, political will by the government to tackle governance and peacebuilding issues was most critical in Sierra Leone. Many informants felt that the promise of funding – after the Compact – would have encouraged government commitment to implement difficult or politically sensitive reforms, such as the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s (TRC) recommendations. The TRC was a central reference, and point of consensus, for many stakeholders; indeed, UN officials, donors, civil society members, community representatives and members of the public all repeatedly questioned why many of the TRC’s recommendations had not been implemented.²⁵ As such, the TRC exemplifies precisely the kind of essentially political initiative with which the PBC might seek to engage. For this to happen, commitments should have been guaranteed by the Compact *before* the PBF funding was released.

Going a step further, many civil society informants felt that the PBC could facilitate a national dialogue between the government and citizens regarding the bottlenecks that have prevented effective implementation of previous strategies and interventions that were targeted at the root causes of Sierra Leone’s conflict. While there have been a number of stand-alone technical assessments of the challenges to implementing specific strategies or programmes, there has not been an inclusive national dialogue to achieve a consensus around how to overcome the most difficult political challenges.

The lack of an over-arching strategy that linked the funding to peacebuilding gave rise to the question of why donors did not just increase funding for the PRSP which, at the time of the last annual progress report had a funding gap of US\$122 million.²⁶ Yet more fundamentally, the sequencing of the PBF and Compact compromised the PBC’s ability to encourage progress on political issues like TRC implementation. This would have constituted a genuine added value in relation to the more programmatic strategies outlined in the PRSP and Peace Consolidation Strategy.²⁷

23 United Nations Report of the Peacebuilding Commission mission to Sierra Leone, A/61/901-S/2007/269 of 14 May 2007

24 OECD Development Database on Aid, Sierra Leone, statistics for 2005

25 For the complete TRC report and recommendations, refer to website www.trcsierraleone.org

26 Sierra Leone Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, Annual Progress Report for the period May 2005 – June 2006, Development Assistance Coordination Office, Office of the Vice President, Government of Sierra Leone. <http://www.daco-sl.org/doc.htm>

27 Developed by the Sierra Leone government and the United Nations, October–November 2005, to address post-conflict challenges

Coordination and coherence

One of the core objectives of the Peacebuilding Commission is to catalyse greater coordination and consensus among stakeholders around the key peacebuilding challenges in focus countries to avoid the “when everything is a priority, nothing is a priority” scenario that often happens in post-conflict work.

One concern of donor field staff was that the PBC process might be inconsistent with existing aid relations and policy dialogue at the country level. There were fears that the PBF in particular had entered the Sierra Leone context as a ‘vertical’ source of funding for the government, disconnected from the benchmarks and procedures already negotiated in-country between government and donors relating to existing development strategies. This led to initial PBF funding proposals being effectively blocked by donors opposed to what they saw as a rushed process without adequate consultation. Consequently key donors, including the World Bank, European Community, DFID and USAID, were invited to join the PBF National Steering Committee, established to determine how PBF money would be spent. While this appeared to have resolved many of the concerns regarding coordination, the Steering Committee’s use of existing PRSP technical committees to analyse detailed PBF proposals generated further concern as donors and other stakeholders did not consistently participate in the various committees.

In terms of the PBC’s aim of building consensus around a political agenda, several informants suggested that Sierra Leone suffered from a surplus of strategies, commitments and benchmarks, and a deficit of implementation (“strategy fatigue” as one donor put it). Several in-country donor officials were unclear about how the PBC’s work would differ from the PRSP Peace and Security Pillar or the Peace Consolidation Strategy.

Some donors advocated that the PBC should converge with broader in-country aid policy processes. For example, the Compact could become part of the current DFID-sponsored government initiative to develop a comprehensive ‘aid policy framework’ to promote donor coordination and harmonisation. Other donors suggested that the political components of the PBC should be kept distinct from aid instruments concerned with ‘social and economic issues’, despite the intrinsically political character of administrative or economic change. Indeed, one informant argued that it would be counter-productive to link the existing policy dialogue between donors and the government, such as the Improved Governance and Accountability Pact (IGAP) process, to the more overtly political process of the PBC and short-term timeframe associated with the PBF.

Many of the substantive challenges to peacebuilding in Sierra Leone relate to poor governance. Much of the international community’s (and the PBC’s) influence over the government arises from the donor-recipient relationship. Yet a recent evaluation of aid policy in Sierra Leone found that despite the existence of established frameworks for donor-recipient dialogue related to the PRSP and IGAP, that dialogue had limited impact. Furthermore, a purely technical approach to governance, transparency and anti-corruption does not always bring about positive action on politically sensitive issues, such as implementation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s recommendations.

Much of the conversation around the PBC in Sierra Leone became about how to divide up this sudden new injection of donor money.

Civil society engagement

According to the UN, engaging civil society in the work of the Peacebuilding Commission is the responsibility of government, although in reality neither government nor the UN seems to have sufficient resources to consult broadly. Both national and international civil society members fairly consistently claimed to be poorly informed about the work of the PBC and PBF in Sierra Leone. This was most acute in the rural areas visited by the research team, where the PBC work was seen as “Freetown-centric”, owned by elite, mainstream peacebuilding umbrella organisations, and not by the grassroots communities most affected by conflict.

Both national and international civil society members fairly consistently claimed to be poorly informed about the work of the PBC and PBF in Sierra Leone.

Given the role that marginalisation played in Sierra Leone’s conflict, without the participation of people at the grassroots level, the peacebuilding process itself could fail, whilst worsening the sense of exclusion still felt by many. One informant suggested that the international community had an unfortunate tendency to interpret the weak capacity of civil society as a reason to marginalise all but the most well-organised civil society organisations, rather than focus on building the capacities of the most representative: “If one root cause of the conflict in Sierra Leone was marginalisation of communities in rural areas, then the PBC will only fail if it perpetuates that trend,” the informant said.

The selection of two organisations to represent civil society on the PBF National Steering Committee (the West Africa Network for Peace – WANEP, and the Mano River Women’s Network for Peace – MARWOPNET) proved controversial. Some civil society members interviewed considered the organisations to have been “hand-picked” by government and not really representative of grassroots people. They felt that the consultation process to confirm their selection was not as inclusive as desirable, and some were suspicious of the idea of Freetown-based organisations asking for funding on behalf of rural communities. The knowledge that US\$35 million was at stake in a country plagued by such widespread poverty only seemed to fan the flames of historical urban/rural tensions. However, WANEP and MARWOPNET had held a number of national consultations (see the chronology of significant events) but reported being constrained by lack of funding and human resources, and by the hurried timeline under which they were required to feed into the international process taking place in New York.

Civil society must have the opportunity to claim the tools it needs to contribute constructively to the dialogue. Participants must have access to information, and the time and resources to organise national consultations and regular two-way communications with grassroots partners. As the PBC/PBF was a new initiative operating under tight timeframes and high-level international expectations, its first experience of engaging civil society in Sierra Leone perhaps underestimated the time and both human and financial resources that would be needed for a meaningful process to take place. This is an important lesson learned for new PBC focus countries.

Civil society engagement is an area where the PBF (in the absence of other donors) could usefully play a role, by providing quick funding for early, regular and comprehensive civil society consultations. In addition to strengthening the capacity of peacebuilding umbrella organisations, the PBF could maximise the effect of this funding by helping to strengthen the capacity of existing structures for information-sharing, including traditional and faith-based structures such as the chiefdoms and the Inter-Religious Council (which was active in peace initiatives during the war).

Meanwhile, as a pre-requisite to being designated as formal ‘representatives’, civil society organisations should demonstrate that they have a strategy for broad-based grassroots consultations; an overall communications plan that will allow for continuous two-way feedback on all aspects of the PBC’s work; and a proposal for generating the resources needed to achieve these strategies. Both the UN and the government should be active partners and play an oversight role in ensuring this strategy exists and is resourced and implemented, as agreed. This investment would have positive impacts beyond engagement with the PBC to include other areas where effective civil society consultation is appropriate and beneficial (e.g. consultations on the draft constitution).

At the time of this report’s publication, there was no clearly articulated strategy for civil society to adopt a monitoring role in relation to the government’s commitment to the Compact and PBF priorities. It was unclear whether the PBF Steering Committee would continue to play any role after the allocation of the US\$35 million in PBF funding was complete. In addition, no baseline or benchmarks have been agreed against which to measure overall PBC/PBF success. At the 19 January civil society consultation meeting in Freetown, participants agreed to establish a 19-member committee known as CSPEC (Civil Society Peacebuilding Engagement Committee) to be responsible for monitoring and evaluation, although the precise modalities of CSPEC’s engagement remained unclear.

There are a number of other possibilities for civil society to play a role in monitoring the PBC’s work and the government’s political commitment to the Compact. For example, given adequate information and resources, local organisations that have already been involved in monitoring other political or reform processes could use their experience to improve accountability in the PBC context. For example, ENCISS²⁸ was recently involved in piloting a joint mission of the government’s cabinet office and civil society organisations to evaluate basic services programmes in rural areas. Deliberate efforts should be pursued to connect the peace-focused networks with wider civil society structures, capitalising on their respective strengths and recognising their weaknesses. A number of civil society members felt that in general there was a lack of trust between civil society and the government and that an investment in strengthening this relationship would have positive effects in other development and peacebuilding areas. For example, in addition to monitoring, engaging the two parties in joint PBF-funded projects could potentially build confidence and trust. One UN official said that unless there was more dialogue between the government and civil society to allay mutual suspicions, international support would ultimately have limited impact.

In terms of access to funding, many civil society organisations expressed concerns over their own lack of capacity to compete and to work as implementing partners. PBF funding applications (based on the UNDP application template) were considered too complex, and the extent to which technical support would be made available to potential applicants was not well known. Again, it was often perceived that Freetown organisations would be most likely to benefit. One civil society member suggested that the UN should take a more creative view as to what constitutes a viable application, for example by allowing grassroots organisations to use video proposals; the UN (or others) could then offer technical support to those organisations that demonstrated real vision and commitment, to bring their applications in line with donor requirements.



Ex child soldier (boy) weaving at Port Loko training centre.

No baseline or benchmarks have been agreed against which to measure overall PBC/PBF success.

28 Enhancing Interaction and Interface Between Civil Society and the State to Improve Poor People’s Lives (ENCISS), an organisation facilitating dialogue between civil society and government in Sierra Leone

Case study: Youth and the PBC in Sierra Leone

Youth empowerment and employment has been identified as a top government and PBC priority in Sierra Leone. The political disenfranchisement, social exclusion, and poverty that frame the lives of many Sierra Leonean youths are critical challenges in consolidating peace. Yet important questions are raised by the specific draft PBF proposals on youth enterprise and employment regarding their focus on peacebuilding and their capacity to engage the most conflict-relevant youths.

Challenges in reaching ‘the truly marginalised youth’

If the PBC and PBF interventions are to target youth issues most related to risks of renewed conflict, it is important to analyse current political, social and economic youth indicators – not purely historical data. From a peacebuilding perspective, three categories of youths arguably require particular attention: urban slum youths, poor and socially excluded youths in rural areas, and youths in the squatter settlements in eastern/border areas of Sierra Leone.

Little attention has been paid by government or donors to the situation of youths in areas like the squatter settlements in Freetown and in eastern and border regions of Sierra Leone. These youths are largely dependent on ties to various ‘big-men’, including ex-commanders, local strongmen and drugs barons. Relying on big-men for their livelihoods, such youths are forced to live, literally, from one day to the next.

However, youths in these settlements often *do* have organised clubs and networks. These networks serve multiple social and economic functions, for example protecting members from police harassment (e.g. by providing early warning on police patrols). Yet such groups remain informal and unrecognised by state or donor institutions, and ill-equipped to engage in processes such as consultations on the PBC or PBF programmes. In the absence of dedicated support, these groups remain largely disengaged from the political processes in the country.

Certainly, some of these youth networks constitute a security concern.²⁹ For example, there are allegations of powerful families hiring networks of ex-combatant youths to execute economic competitors in Kono and Kenema. However, these networks also constitute a positive opportunity. Through such networks, some of these youths have graduated to becoming car-washers, cassette-sellers, and second-hand clothes sellers. Yet national private-sector growth plans have placed inadequate emphasis on the informal sector, thereby reinforcing their marginality. Support to marginalised youths is required not only in the form of material or financial assistance, but also through action on regulatory and governance issues. For example, young taxi-drivers described being subject to repeated requests for pay-offs to corrupt policemen due to various real or constructed charges. Capacity building and political commitment to ensure effective union representation and negotiation with the relevant authorities, as well as independent monitoring and appeals mechanisms, could help address these problems.

The political disenfranchisement, social exclusion, and poverty that frame the lives of many Sierra Leonean youths are critical challenges in consolidating peace.

²⁹ Research on the risk of these networks becoming politicised around the elections suggests that long-term affiliations with parties are not emerging at present. However, certain networks

do have the potential to be mobilised through short-term payments. Indeed, hired political thuggery has a long history in Sierra Leone. The post-election period is a critical moment in this regard.

Current national strategies and PBC proposals

Government responsibility for youth issues is shared across a number of departments, including the Ministries for Education, Youth and Sports and Social Affairs. As in other departments, these ministries are constrained by a serious lack of capacity. The government's initial PBF proposals on youth have been broad and largely reflect 'early development' priorities, as outlined in the previous section. At the time of writing, the government's draft PBF proposals on youth enterprise and employment did make some references to assistance to the informal sector. However, these proposals were vague on targeting those specific youth issues most related to violence or risk of renewed conflict.

Undoubtedly, the high levels of unemployment and lack of education that characterise the youth population at large constitutes a crisis in-itself. Yet, in emphasising widespread unemployment and broad-based development, officials are perhaps too optimistic that 'trickle-down' policies can address the challenges faced by 'the truly marginalised youth'. The groups of youths that constitute specific peacebuilding priorities are also generally acknowledged to be the hardest for government or donor assistance to reach. Research indicates that formal youth networks most often engaged in peacebuilding work are frequently captured by elites. The PBF, which is designed to catalyse coordination and greater political focus around peacebuilding gaps in current programmes, could therefore play a critical role in youth issues if targeted carefully and strategically. The challenge now is to engineer processes that can reach and engage vulnerable youths in an empowering, rather than instrumental way. To quote one civil society activist: *"In a society in which short-term vision is so limiting, it is critical that the poorest youngsters are supported to articulate their rights and see themselves as protagonists in claiming them."*

"In a society in which short-term vision is so limiting, it is critical that the poorest youngsters are supported to articulate their rights and see themselves as protagonists in claiming them."

What if? Scenarios for earlier PBC engagement in Sierra Leone

As outlined above, several informants questioned why the PBC should intervene now, often suggesting that (had it existed) the PBC should have intervened much earlier in Sierra Leone's case.

Taking Sierra Leone as a case study, there are several scenarios where 'quick impact'/quick disbursement of PBF funding would have been very useful. For example, the PBF could have provided stop-gap funding that allowed 'peacebuilding' functions that were fulfilled by UNAMSIL (such as rule of law and security sector reform) to continue uninterrupted following the peacekeepers' withdrawal, until long-term donor programmes were in place. In the last Secretary-General's report of its mandate, UNAMSIL reported on its transition plan for handover to UNIOSIL saying that although some level of donor funding was in place, the armed forces still faced shortages of fuel, and that the deployment of police personnel to the provinces (especially critical for decentralisation and expansion of the rule of law) was hampered by a lack of accommodation.³⁰ Since the security reassurances represented by UNAMSIL's armed forces were withdrawing, properly equipped and functioning national security forces were essential to avoid creating a security vacuum in rural areas.

³⁰ Twenty-seventh report of the Secretary-General to the Security Council on the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone, S/2005/777, 12 December 2005, paragraphs 29 and 32

Another area where timely PBF funding would have been very useful in Sierra Leone was in supporting certain projects alongside peacekeeping operations, to fill gaps for essential stability activities that assessed contributions for peacekeeping are not allowed to cover, such as job creation for ex-combatants or short-falls in funding support for national elections. During its mandate, UNAMSIL worked closely with the World Bank, UNDP and the Sierra Leone government to disarm, demobilise and reintegrate over 75,000 armed combatants.³¹ However, at the end of its mandate, UNAMSIL reported that the “success in disarming and demobilising combatants was not equally matched with efforts to reintegrate and find them decent jobs. Most have now joined the large pool of the unemployed and unless the economy generates more jobs, the presence of former fighters roaming the streets will continue to be one of the government’s major challenges”.³² Timely PBF money could have bridged the gap between the more reliable, assessed-contributions system used by peacekeeping missions to disarm and demobilise, and the less-reliable voluntary funding associated with most reintegration and recovery activities.

Indeed, a 2003 UN Peacekeeping Best Practices study on Sierra Leone captured the critical importance of quick funding in Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) programmes:

*“The NCDDR [National Committee on DDR] was also faced with problems related to the absorption capacity of the reintegration programme due to a lack of consistent funding through the Multi-Donor Trust Fund and capacity of implementing partners, which delayed the reintegration programmes considerably and left many ex-combatants waiting to be admitted. The months immediately following demobilization were the most critical for ex-combatants. Having lost their source of livelihood, there was an immediate need to assist them in their transition into a normal life. Delays in providing economic reintegration opportunities through training and options for employment are detrimental to the peace process and disenchanted ex-combatants can present a potential threat to stability. Many remained in the areas where they were demobilized, staying with their former comrades and their commanders posing a significant security threat”.*³³

The study also found that “reintegration occurred in fits and starts as the resources became available” and that many ex-combatants turned to diamond mining, which was generally poorly paid and unregulated. In Kono, the estimated number of men involved in diamond mining increased three-fold following demobilisation.³⁴

31 United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone, End-of-Mandate Press Kit, Fact Sheet 1: Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration, December 2005

32 Ibid

33 “Lessons Learned from United Nations Peacekeeping Experiences in Sierra Leone,” UN DPKO Peacekeeping Best Practices Unit, September 2003, p. 27-28

34 Ibid, p. 28

Conclusions: the PBC's added value in Sierra Leone

The PBC has made an important contribution to Sierra Leone in terms of international attention and financial support. The indications that additional resources may be mobilised due to PBC engagement are highly encouraging given the country's chronic poverty and development needs.

However, the Peacebuilding Commission and Peacebuilding Fund have faced certain obstacles and missed certain opportunities to maximise their effectiveness. One key issue is the use of PBF funding for pre-determined development priorities. Another issue is that the immediate focus of in-country deliberations on the PBF money seemed to detract from the more important role of the Compact. Civil society also needs to play a vital role at all levels. The Sierra Leone experience suggests that, in a country in a late 'post-conflict' / 'early development' stage in which governance issues are critical, the political role and objectives of the PBC should be given primacy in order to ensure that the initiatives of both the PBC and PBF have genuine added value compared to the existing array of development interventions.

The Sierra Leone experience suggests that, in a country in a late 'post-conflict' / 'early development' stage, the political role of the PBC should be given primacy to ensure that the initiatives have genuine added value compared to the existing array of development interventions.



School canteen, Rutana

4. The Peacebuilding Commission in Burundi

The Peacebuilding Commission formally agreed to focus on Burundi in June 2006. The decision coincided with a difficult time in relations between the UN and the Burundi government. The Executive Representative of the Secretary General was asked to leave the country in July, leaving a gap in UN leadership until the new ERSG came into post in late November, and a need to rebuild trust both with the government and within the UN.

This took place against a background of high political tension in Burundi. After an alleged attempted *coup d'état* in August, political relations became extremely tense, with arrests, detentions and key political leaders fleeing to exile. Relations between government and civil society, and generally (but for different reasons) relations between government and the donor community all deteriorated. But at the start of 2007 and especially following the departure of the president of the ruling party in February 2007, the political process relaxed, and improved relations with donors and civil society emerged.

In addition to internal discontent, serious international pressure for improvement in Burundi's human rights and corruption record was also influential, especially in the run-up to a crucial donor's conference in May 2007. At the level of international politics, the most critical dynamics were driven at the regional level. This reflects the fact that the Burundian peace process has been led by regional actors to an unprecedented extent, both in the immediate region and in South Africa. Burundi's entry to the East African Community in July 2007 carried various political conditions with which the government must comply. Furthermore, Burundi now hosts the secretariat of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region. All of these processes have created strong incentives towards good governance.

Against this dramatic backdrop, it appears that being chosen for the PBC and the process that has followed had little impact on Burundian political trends, and that by itself it has been a 'sideshow'.

And yet our research indicates that the PBC has made a significant, albeit a relatively quiet, contribution to longer-term processes of peacebuilding in Burundi. In contrast to the high politics of regional diplomacy and changes in the government, the PBC has supported a modest, yet innovative discussion among various stakeholders at the national level on peacebuilding. This experience itself, along with one of the key PBF projects in Burundi – the *Cadre de Dialogue et de Concertation* (Project on Dialogue and Consultation, approved for funding on 13 June 2007), which brings together a wide cross-section of national partners – provides the opportunity to institute processes of political dialogue with longer-term, beneficial governance outcomes.

The PBC has made a significant, albeit a relatively quiet, contribution to longer-term processes of peacebuilding in Burundi.

Burundi : conflict analysis

Burundi has recently emerged from 13 years of brutal civil war. The conflict started in October 1993 when, after 100 days in office, Melchior Ndadaye, the first democratically elected Hutu president and leader of the FRODEBU party, was killed in a *coup d'état*. The coup itself floundered after an international outcry and an aid freeze. Yet the dynamics that the coup set in motion remained: a constitutional crisis that lasted for years, mass ethnic and political violence throughout the country, and deepened mutual distrust between both sides.

Immediately after the coup, massacres against ordinary Tutsi began throughout the country, organised by local FRODEBU leaders. There was a violent army response, causing people of both ethnicities to flee their homes. The political process was deadlocked and a rapid succession of governments with new presidents ensued. Hutu rebel groups emerged, split, and launched attacks from Tanzania and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Children were the preferred soldiers on all sides. Rape was commonplace. Fear and violence prevailed everywhere, as ethnic cleansing took place in the capital city, Bujumbura. Ordinary citizens were slaughtered by all sides and looting was a constant threat. Around 300,000 people were killed, more than 500,000 fled abroad, and a further 800,000 were displaced internally.

Under enormous international pressure, and with Tanzanian and then South African mediation, the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement was eventually signed on 28 August 2000. This agreement and its protocols marked the beginning of the transition from war to the development of new institutions. These were designed to support and maintain peace, integrate the army, adopt a new constitution, organise elections and kick-start development. However, the fighting continued for another three years, calming only after the Pretoria Protocol on Political, Defence and Security Power-sharing, signed in October 2003 by the largest rebel group, the National Council for the Defence of Democracy - Forces for the Defence of Democracy (CNDD/FDD), and the Burundian army. After that, one rebel group, the National Liberation Forces in Burundi (FNL), did not lay down arms. Although a ceasefire agreement was finally signed in September 2006, arduous negotiations are still on-going.

The government has now been in power for one year. The elections were peaceful and were won by the CNDD/FDD, the strongest of the Hutu rebel movements, which has increasingly added Tutsi elements to its leadership. The international community has fully supported the process, providing diplomatic, security, humanitarian and development assistance: a textbook case of a successful and well-supported transition. The CNDD/FDD has stuck closely to the Arusha agreement.

The dynamics that the coup set in motion remained: a constitutional crisis that lasted for years, mass ethnic and political violence throughout the country, and deepened mutual distrust.

The Peacebuilding Commission in Burundi: A Chronology of Significant Events

Date	Events
21 June 06	The UN Security Council formally requests PBC advice on Sierra Leone and Burundi.
23 June 06	PBC holds its first meeting in New York, chaired by the Secretary-General, to discuss Sierra Leone and Burundi.
30 Aug 06	First broad consultation among local civil society organisations (CSOs), lead by the Forum for the Reinforcement of Civil Society (FORSC), in collaboration with Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC)
1 Sept 06	Second broad consultation among local CSOs.
02 Oct 06	Third broad consultation among local CSOs. Three main peacebuilding priorities are identified.
06 Oct 06	Burundi government submits its report to the PBC.
12-13 Oct 06	The chair of the PBC country-specific configuration incorporates the main priorities for Burundi that emerge from these consultations.
23-24 Nov 06	CSOs organise a national workshop, bringing together 83 participants from 68 civil society organisations. The discussion is focused around the three key priorities. A work plan with activities to be undertaken, both by government, UN and civil society, is produced.
11 Dec 06	PBC holds informal briefings on Sierra Leone and Burundi with NGOs in New York.
12-13 Dec 06	The Commission approves an initial US\$25 million from the peacebuilding Fund (this was later increased to US\$35 million).
11 Jan 07	Consultative meeting between the government of Burundi and international partners takes place. Participants are informed that the Joint Steering Committee is the new structure for implementation of programmes under the PBC in Burundi. Other actors will participate in the Steering Committee meetings as observers.
26 Jan 07	Civil society consultation meeting organised by FORSC and BIRATURABA. A representative to the Steering Committee is elected.
Feb 07	Draft concept note on the design of the Strategic Peacebuilding Framework for Burundi is issued.
Feb 07	An updated Priority Plan for peacebuilding in Burundi is finalised based on the available level of PBF funding, amounting to US\$35 million.
27 Feb 07	Informal thematic discussion on good governance is held in New York, to identify gaps and recommendations for the Strategic Peacebuilding Framework.
9-15 Apr 07	An 18-member delegation of the PBC visits Burundi. A meeting with civil society is held.
19 Apr 07	First draft of the Strategic Peacebuilding Framework is issued.
29 May 07	Informal meeting of the PBC country-specific configuration is held to discuss rule of law and security sector reform issues.

Faulty sequencing or 'getting down to business'?

As in Sierra Leone, it appears that the sequencing of allocating PBF funding upfront, followed by later discussions on the Strategic Peacebuilding Framework (SPBF), led to an overwhelming emphasis on the money and a neglect of the political process underpinning the SPBF concept. In Burundi, the PBC process developed rapidly with pressure on all sides for speedy development of projects and disbursement of funds. This pressure was especially driven from New York over the need for the PBC to prove itself to the international community – a process that complemented the Burundian government's desire to increase project income. It was only towards the middle of 2007 that the SPBF was finalised and agreed. It is clear that this sequencing led to a marked absence of analysis by which to assess and prioritise projects.

Whilst it may be true that countries emerging from conflict may be less willing to become a focus country of the PBC if the entire emphasis is on the political process, it is important to use the two components of the PBC in a complementary way, so that neither financial needs nor the political processes are compromised. Identification of projects for funding should be rooted in a political process where a strategic framework for peacebuilding has been developed and implemented. Had this sequencing been followed in Burundi, the Priority Plan (*Plan Prioritaire*) for the PBF would have had a clearer analysis with which to work.

All the stakeholders involved have urgent financial needs. After years of talking about peace in Burundi during the transition years, people want money to *do* things that produce a tangible difference in daily life. The PBF experience in Burundi underlines how setting peacebuilding priorities is clearly a challenge in a country where poverty and hunger are widespread, and everything is a priority. This raises the question of whether the PBC will deliver on its stated goal of mobilising additional resources from bilateral and multilateral donors, beyond the PBF funds, to address the wider and longer-term recovery and development needs.

Increasing openness, dialogue and trust: Burundi's National Steering Committee

Reflecting the overwhelming focus of attention on PBF funding, the National Steering Committee (*Comité de Pilotage*) has played the key role in the Peacebuilding Commission's work in Burundi.

During its initial phase, the committee's membership was limited to government and UN representatives. This reflected political sensitivities in the national context with a fragile, post-conflict government that was suspicious of the extent to which factions within civil society might be mobilised against it. The UN initially also saw the process as purely a matter between itself and the government. However, as the PBC process unfolded, the national context changed and both donors and civil society groups in Burundi and in New York were able to successfully lobby for places on the Committee as observers.

It is important to use the two components of the PBC in a complementary way, so that neither financial needs nor the political processes are compromised.

Representation of civil society members increased from two to eight, which includes three places for national NGOs, taking into consideration ethnic, gender and rural balance, three places for the private sector, of which one is specifically for a female representative, as well as two places for international NGOs, including ICRC. There are also seven donor observers on the Steering Committee, making a total of 38 members. The Committee aims to work by consensus.

Although the civil society members of the committee only have observer status, their participation has been influential – leading to modifications in some PBF projects. One example was the *'justice de proximité'* ('access to justice') project that consists primarily of the construction of local court houses. Civil society members raised a concern that the crucial issue was not court construction, but rather how the poor could get supported and represented when they entered the justice system. As a consequence, a new and additional 'access to justice' project is being developed. Furthermore, amendments have been made to the project to ensure facilities in the new local court houses for minors, and for women who need privacy for reporting and investigations into crimes such as rape and other forms of gender-based violence.

As explained below in the section on civil society engagement, the government of Burundi came to appreciate and welcome the participation of civil society representatives in the PBF discussions. This process informed the development of the *Cadre de Dialogue et de Concertation* project, as outlined below.

Civil society engagement

This section assesses the engagement of civil society in the PBC intervention in Burundi as a means of highlighting process issues in contrast to the youth case study in the Sierra Leone section, which explored potential PBC impacts/outcomes. The extent to which civil society engagement is recognised as a priority or concern of the PBC provides a revealing insight into the political and operational direction of the institution.

Process of civil society engagement in the PBC

Civil society engagement has fallen, broadly, into two phases: an initial phase during which its participation was largely sidelined against the backdrop of widespread political tension (described above) and the general clamour for speed; and a second phase in which its participation has been actively supported and appreciated, with considerable benefits to the process, as appreciated by actors on all sides. Throughout, most international actors in the PBC and the United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office have been highly supportive of efforts to ensure civil society representation. Yet, so far, less priority and support have been given to ensuring effective consultation with – or inclusion of – civil society in the process beyond the professionalised and capital-city based NGOs.

Civil society in Burundi has invested considerable time and energy in reaching consensus on priorities for the PBF, with high peace dividends. Early in the process, a series of meetings involving a broad cross-section of organisations culminated in defining the following priorities: promotion of good governance, reinforcement of the rule of law and the security sector, as well as what they called 'normalisation of community life'. These were presented in New York in late October 2006, and were subsequently included in the

The government of Burundi came to appreciate and welcome the participation of civil society in the PBF discussions.

final report. From this point onwards, it was evident that a major overlap between the nascent government programme and the civil society one was emerging. By all accounts, the supportive attitude of the civil society representative towards the government plan helped create the first relationship of trust between government and civil society in a PBC/PBF process – an important example of the value added by the Peacebuilding Commission in Burundi. Furthermore the convergence between the proposals of civil society and the final government policy indicates that civil society was successful in collaborating with, if not indeed influencing, government.

In January 2007, the process was given further impetus when the UN and government organised a major information-sharing meeting to inform all actors: UN, government and civil society. Endorsement and encouragement from senior UN representatives certainly contributed to opening the door to wide participation, resulting in a major step forward. As a consequence, many more civil society organisations participated at PBC meetings, and were informed as relevant papers were widely circulated.

The PBC process then began to focus its work, and participants split up into four expert working groups by theme – security, good governance, justice and land. These would subsequently meet frequently to discuss proposal development. Civil society – now well informed – could come to these meetings and, since February 2007, there has been a very open door.

Within civil society, the key priorities included the need to address community relations – dialogues involving repatriated refugees, internally displaced people, demobilised soldiers, freed political prisoners, widows and orphans of war; land conflict; disarmament; and access to justice – to ensure that ordinary people have access to the justice system, through legal aid, advice and representation. At a grassroots level, community-based organisations also identified three other issues: the need for an economic peace dividend – jobs, food, growth, etc; governance and the fight against corruption; and the need to focus on education for peace, reconciliation and citizenship.

Challenges and constraints in the process of civil society engagement

Despite the successes, the level of participation of civil society in PBF project development working groups and wider processes around the PBC has been uneven and generally decreasing because of two main factors: lack of clarity over outcomes in terms of funding for NGOs; and the burdensome nature of the process. These issues require some attention and proactive strategies from the PBC and other international actors involved. However, more fundamental concerns relate to the political character of civil society representation in PBC processes and the risk of a disconnect between urban/capital-city based NGOs, and civil society and wider community perspectives in rural areas.

Burdensome process with tight timelines resulting in high cost of engagement

Many of the PBF meetings are called at short notice and often civil society organisations get the papers only a few days before, making wider consultation difficult.



Education workshop, Gitega

Endorsement and encouragement from senior UN representatives certainly contributed to opening the door to wide participation, resulting in a major step forwards.

The development of each project document is extremely time and labour intensive, consisting of many meetings. The few organisations that participated on an on-going basis claimed that it involved hundreds of hours, endangering their other activities. As NGOs can only access PBF funding as sub-contractor to the government or UN, participation in PBF deliberations is a costly and risky investment. As a consequence, some felt that they were acting as “unpaid consultants” to develop other agencies’ projects. High costs of participation for civil society are also partly logistical: the UN offices are located far outside of Bujumbura, making the taxi ride costly (about US\$8 – not much for highly paid international staff, but expensive for a Burundian national on an NGO salary). Lengthy safety procedures simply to access the UN compound mean that NGO participants require an entire afternoon to participate in each PBF meeting.

Limited capacity within civil society

Civil society organisations are generally project-dependent and with little spare capacity to engage in protracted policy discussions that have uncertain project outcomes. Although apparently stronger than in Sierra Leone, civil society networks and umbrella structures, which could enable wider consultation, are also weak. Support to strengthening coalitions and inter-network co-operation, for example between peacebuilding-focused NGOs and wider civil society, is required.

Several informants suggested that many of the PBC’s priorities appeared far removed from the interests and competencies of most civil society organisations, for example the construction of barracks for soldiers. Certainly, civil society participation is not a prerequisite for all security sector initiatives. However, an emphasis on ‘hardware’ or central state institutions can lead to a neglect of issues of accountability, transparency and civilian oversight to which civil society could make a positive contribution. All sectors of the security services are subject to various forms of civilian oversight, typically, in the first instance, that of government and parliament. Several informants suggested that the PBC Lessons Learned working group should identify best practices for proactively promoting civil society engagement, for example through community-based policing and access-to-justice programmes in Burundi.

Concerns regarding exclusivity of civil society

This research noted a number of issues of exclusivity that the Peacebuilding Commission should address if it is to increase its added value in peacebuilding in Burundi.

Firstly, the overwhelming majority of the largest and most professional civil society organisations are led by Tutsi, and their predominance reflects the old status quo rather than the new political context. This was initially mirrored in the PBC/PBF process when all the non-governmental Burundian representatives on the Steering Committee were Tutsi. This reflects the fact that Tutsis are now out of government and have therefore been key actors in setting up and developing civil society movements. On the other hand, there is a sense that this brings the new political representatives together with the old school, and facilitates an understanding that is not always available in the course of daily work. It gives those whose political representatives have been replaced an opportunity to constructively engage. To its credit, the Steering Committee has now included two more civil society members, both of whom are Hutu, and bring a greater representation from rural areas.

Civil society organisations are generally project-dependent, with little spare capacity.

Secondly, discussion and participation in PBC processes are primarily Bujumbura-based. Few civil society organisations have a significant presence outside the capital, with the exception of some of the human rights organisations and a handful of other NGOs. Notable among these is Ligue ITEKA, the country's largest and oldest human rights NGO; CENAP and THARS, both of which work on conflict dynamics; and the organisation MIPAREC, which is based in Burundi's second largest city, Gitega. This imbalance could result in urban political centres being unable to understand or address rural concerns.

The Burundi experience suggests that being mindful about balance and inclusion of all groups is important for both the PBC and the PBF. If the PBC can address these issues through its in-country processes, thereby establishing precedents and processes that can be built on, this would constitute a real added value. However, this also raises a question: to what extent can the PBC develop and insist on criteria or procedures for participation around politically sensitive and conflict-related inter-group politics?

Positive lessons learned and benefits of civil society engagement

Proactive strategies to build civil society's capacity to engage

The Norwegian government, through an international NGO, has recently funded a post for a coordinator to work with a leading Burundian woman's association (*Dushirehamwe*) on PBC/PBF processes, with a specifically women's rights focus. In countries where the PBC/PBF operates, the funding of a few such positions early on in the process could make a big difference. The UN PBSO, under the authority of the UN Secretary-General and PBC, should consider setting up a mechanism whereby the in-country Steering Committee would be able to allocate a small amount of PBF funds for this purpose at an early stage.

Increased trust and more effective interaction between government and civil society

For those NGOs that have the time and the interest to engage, the process is seen as having been highly positive. As one participant pointed out, government, UN and civil society sitting together in countless meetings working on a joint project had almost never happened before. This appreciation seems shared by the government. People observed that, in recent months, the suspicion and hesitance of the government to have NGOs involved have dissipated. Senior government representatives are now the first to request more NGO participation. The entire process has clearly been, for both sides, a great learning opportunity. The UN deserves credit for having been a key facilitator in this process. However, it must also be stressed that the broader political context, as outlined above, also explain this increased openness. In this regard, a prime question for the PBC is how to ensure this approach is sustained in the future.

The discussion about the Strategic Peacebuilding Framework has also had good-quality civil society involvement – 40 NGOs and CSOs have come to discussions with well thought-out contributions. Initially the government was reluctant to include CSOs in these discussions. In one meeting, CSOs asked why they were not explicitly mentioned in the framework, and it was agreed to add a paragraph that clearly laid out their role. As a result, CSOs were invited to review the new draft with the additional paragraph, and key understandings were reached with the government and the UN.

The Burundi experience suggests that being mindful about balance and inclusion of all groups is important for both the PBC and the PBF.

One of the key added values of the PBF and wider PBC process in Burundi is likely to be the creation of the *Cadre de Dialogue et de Concertation* project.

Civil society involvement in PBF programme implementation

Some civil society organisations were written into the initial Priority Plan by the government, for example the Burundi Leadership Training Programme (BLTP) for political party dialogues, as well as the Inter-Parliamentary Union for the political aspects of the *Cadre de Dialogue et de Concertation* project; the latter project also contained references to involvement by unspecified “NGOs and media”. Later, OLUCOME, a Burundian anti-corruption watchdog, was written into an anti-corruption project.

Development of the *Cadre de Dialogue et de Concertation*

One of the key added values of the PBF and wider PBC process in Burundi is likely to be the creation of the *Cadre de Dialogue et de Concertation* project, which civil society played a critical role in framing. Informed by the process of civil society engagement around the PBC/PBF, the project has the potential to institutionalise mechanisms and processes of government-civil society dialogue and interaction. Some donors have criticised it for its lack of diverse methods of ensuring participation and dialogue, as well as an over-emphasis on developing the framework. However, if successful, the project could deepen collaboration and understanding between government and civil society, as well as with donors and the UN. If this framework eventually becomes the operational norm, it will be a major contribution by the PBC in Burundi to developing a politics of collaboration and consensus building.

PBF projects: how strong a peacebuilding focus?

As in Sierra Leone, the PBF was initially viewed as a funding source for general development needs, rather than specific peacebuilding priorities. The initial list of projects was presented by the government to the PBSO in December 2006, and approved at that time, before the SPBF had been drafted. The list did have a sense of strategy from the beginning, but it was largely the strategy found in the PRSP. This can be illustrated by the inclusion of proposals for “general budget support” and the *Comité National de Coordination de l’Aide* (CNCA – an aid coordination secretariat).



Ex-combatant, Shombo

However, over time, the list of projects changed and the above-mentioned proposals were dropped – largely because of donor objections. While certain projects fell off the list, others have been significantly improved and their link to peace consolidation made clearer. This has been a lengthy process, but one with growing opportunities for civil society involvement.

A number of projects have now been approved, including projects on anti-corruption, decentralisation, an independent human rights commission, disarmament of the civilian population and land tenure.

One general criticism is that the PBF project list is too broad. Several commentators suggested that the PBF should focus on a few priority areas in which it could make a real difference. Narrowing the focus would also address what one donor described as the “little islands” nature of PBF projects, and possibly allow for greater impact within specific sectors. However, the challenge is also to create coherence between the PBF projects.

The broad scope reflects both conceptual difficulties and institutional politics. The concept of peacebuilding itself is contested and definitions are unclear and divergent.

This is the case at every level – from the Peacebuilding Commission itself to civil society, from senior employees within government ministries to UN agencies. As such, this is another argument in favour of agreeing the Strategic Peacebuilding Framework in advance of PBF funding, in order to develop a consensus on specific and well-understood priorities. Prioritisation requires tough choices based on good information and clear criteria. This is hard in any political system, but especially in new and fragile post-conflict societies where everything is a priority and expectations are high.

The Burundi experience highlights the quandary regarding the PBF's remit for financing 'urgent' needs and providing a 'quick disbursing funding mechanism' to do so. Yet the pressure for quick PBF disbursement in Burundi appeared to arise from other factors. In the words of one commentator: "Quality should be the driver for the PBF projects, not artificial deadlines set by committees thousands of miles away." One donor described the PBF as being "far too quick to accept projects without focusing on results, or monitoring of peacebuilding impacts". Other commentators suggested that the PBF is likely have serious implementation and monitoring problems unless the UN dedicates more human resources to ensuring follow-up and assessing the peacebuilding impact of the projects. With a US\$35 million allocation and a one-year implementation timeframe, there are also serious absorption-capacity issues for a post-conflict country such as Burundi.

Lack of donor coordination

As in Sierra Leone, the initial stages of the PBC's work in Burundi were marked by a distinct lack of understanding among various diplomatic and donor officials at country level about the PBC's intentions and remit. Its relationship to their on-going work was unclear, and a level of tension with donors emerged as they initially felt that it was a burden to add to existing work. Nevertheless, some of the main funders of the PBF had active and concerned representatives in Burundi who contributed to a better understanding of the international concept and advanced some of the local activities – including in areas such as broadening participation, project formulation and active involvement in the PBF Steering Committee, which now includes seven of the country's major donors.

From our research, however, there is no real evidence that donor coordination has improved over the year that the PBC has been focusing on Burundi. There is good coordination in a number of specific sectors such as health and education, but overall coordination remains patchy, despite pre-existing agreements such as the Paris Declaration. Partly this is due to weaknesses in the Burundian government's aid coordination secretariat, the *Comité National de Coordination d'Aide*. As part of efforts to address this, the government set up a new Development Partners Coordinating Group in June 2007. The government views the PBF as another cluster, similar to sectoral areas such as health or justice.

"Quality should be the driver for the PBF projects, not artificial deadlines set by committees thousands of miles away."

Governance and security first? Human security perspectives

The PBF projects list reflects the reality that conflict in Burundi has primarily emanated from elites, rather than 'from the bottom-up'. For example, the *Cadre de Dialogue et de Concertation* project will promote dialogue between groups such as parliamentarians, political party leaders and media. These are all actors who have historically used their positions of power to spread violence throughout Burundi. Some of the PBF army and police projects are similarly based on an understanding that these institutions have, in the past, often promoted and created violence rather than defending people against it.

Yet some civil society representatives and informants in rural areas perceive that PBF projects are overly focused on government institutions to the detriment of a wider human security agenda. Particular criticism was reserved for the PBF emphasis on funding the construction and equipment of public buildings, such as courts, ministries based in the capital, and houses for army and police personnel. Several informants suggested that people on the ground, especially in rural areas, do not see the benefits of such programmes. For example, while everyone may agree that improvements in '*justice de proximité*' are important, many informants disputed the strategy of achieving this through the construction of 40 extra courthouses. Rather than buildings, many thought that Burundi needed support for traditional justice mechanisms or for citizen's access to justice. Others agreed with the government proposal, arguing that a physical home for justice is a prerequisite for the system to work effectively. On a broader note, the court construction example highlights how the general consensus on an issue such as justice can rapidly fall apart when details are discussed.

The *Cadre de Dialogue et de Concertation* project, which was approved by the Steering Committee on 13 June 2007, highlights both the positive outcomes of PBF assistance, as well as the gaps. Civil society and community representatives are largely very positive about the project, which aims to support a more inclusive and open political dialogue at the national level. Several informants suggested that the project was similar to the proposals from civil society, and ordinary people in the villages on the 'normalisation of community life'. However, critically, the PBF-funded *Cadre de Dialogue et de Concertation* project does not focus on intra-community dialogue. Furthermore, the PBC needs to ensure that projects such as this are firmly linked to political processes taking place in the country. A key example would be the national consultation on the future implementation of the Burundi Truth and Reconciliation Commission. In our discussions with both civil society and ordinary Burundians, repeated demands were made for opportunities for ordinary people to talk across the borders that separate them. While this may not have been the root cause of war, it remains a major and lasting legacy of the fighting. These divisions at the community level create much local anguish and conflict, and people understandably seek solutions to this situation. Furthermore, elites who seek to promote violence in the periphery can find a fertile terrain in these local conflicts. This situation has massive social and political implications, and yet it has been lost in the PBC process thus far.

Some civil society representatives and informants in rural areas perceive that PBF projects are overly focused on government institutions to the detriment of a wider human security agenda.

Potential gaps? Rural perspectives and 'self-demobilised' youths

In theory, the PBC is supposed to add value by providing support – political and/or financial – for addressing gaps in current peacebuilding processes in Burundi. Two key potential gaps have emerged from our research relating to the perspectives of impoverished rural population and the situation of 'self-demobilised' youth ex-combatants.

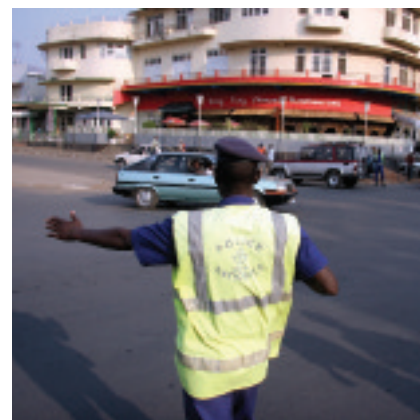
The main issues for rural people are often the same as those for people in urban areas, but often with a different emphasis. These include the deep and chronic poverty which frames their daily lives; reintegration of people displaced during the war, including repatriated refugees, internally displaced people, demobilised soldiers and widows and orphans. The latter issues have received less emphasis in the PBF proposals to date, although there is now a new US\$2 million project for the reintegration of IDPs in Bujumbura and two rural areas which is linked to the land tenure project. Projects are also currently being developed that focus on youth and on women.

Another gap in current PBF proposals is the situation of the 'self-demobilized' young people who spent years as child soldiers and who left their troops because they were wounded, tired of fighting or afraid for their lives because of internal purges.³⁵ Research suggests that many are young men who live unemployed in the city: "Their sense of having needlessly suffered, of being neglected by everyone, defines their lives, and their anger and frustration is palpable. They are prime recruitment terrain for any spoiler who wants to threaten the peace."³⁶ Providing these people with a sense of future, a stake in the system, a recognition of their existence, could constitute a critically important peacebuilding intervention.

In view of these gaps, Burundi might be viewed as a test case for whether the PBC succeeds in mobilising additional funds, beyond the PBF, to address wider peacebuilding needs. Certainly if the May 2007 donors conference is anything to go by – with Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon addressing the conference and pledges for funding the poverty reduction action plan exceeding the outstanding shortfall in the appeal – then the presence of the PBC in Burundi may have played a positive role in attracting increased international aid.

Conclusion: the PBC's added value in Burundi

So far, much of the PBC process in Burundi has focused on PBF funding, with dialogue, strategic analysis and political commitment to tackle key peacebuilding issues coming second. To a certain extent this is understandable, given the urgent financial needs of all the players involved. In the words of one commentator: "There has been so much talking about peace in Burundi during the transition years. People want money to do things, to produce a visible difference in daily life." Yet important political processes are currently taking place in the country, such as the debate about the establishment of transitional justice mechanisms, in which it is important that the PBC is involved.



Community policeman

Important political processes are currently taking place in the country, such as the debate about the establishment of transitional justice mechanisms, in which it is important that the PBC is involved.

35 Uvin, Peter 'Ex-combatants in Burundi: Why they joined, why they left and how they fared'; Washington DC, World Bank Working Paper, (forthcoming 2007)

36 Ibid

The PBC focus on Burundi has the potential to provide an international spotlight on the positive peacebuilding processes that are happening.

In general, the PBC/PBF process has shown itself to be a useful one. During Burundi's post-conflict transition, the international community had a clear and shared vision of progress, which successfully culminated in the holding of elections and the creation of new government institutions. But there were limitations to this: Burundian civil society was largely excluded from the process, as was the political opposition (now the current government). Furthermore, once the transition ended, international consensus on how to proceed beyond that fell apart.

The PBC focus on Burundi has the potential to provide an international spotlight on the positive peacebuilding processes that are happening. On the back of this can come, not just more donor funding based on greater confidence, but the potential of attracting foreign direct investment.

The PBC as a platform provides an opportunity for all players – the newly elected government, the international community and local civil society – to sit together and discuss a vision of the future. This has contributed to working through the classic post-conflict conundrum, alluded to above, in which everything (and therefore nothing) is a priority. In this sense, the fact that there is money associated with this is positive, in that it makes the discussion less theoretical and creates more of an incentive to pursue it. Among donors and civil society members, there is a sense that the current discussion, time-consuming as it may be, has become one of the great benefits of the PBC process. The *Cadre de Dialogue et de Concertation* project will do more of this in the future; if it achieves its aims, it will lead to deeper and more lasting peace.

5. Conclusions and recommendations

Robust international commitment and additional resources for shoring up delicate peace in post-conflict countries is extremely welcome. The UN Peacebuilding Commission, in its first two focus countries – Sierra Leone and Burundi, has made great strides in overcoming the initial reservations of various stakeholders and the inevitable 'teething problems' in establishing its work. Yet the PBC, and PBF, have also experienced a number of challenges in delivering on their mandate and objectives. The following recommendations and lessons learned should inform PBC and PBF policies and operations – both in Sierra Leone and Burundi, and in future focus countries.

Recommendations

For the Peacebuilding Commission and Peacebuilding Fund at the macro level

- 1. *Appropriate sequencing of the Strategic Peacebuilding Framework (SPBF) and the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) is key:*** For late post-conflict / early development countries, the SPBF should be the primary entry point for PBC engagement, with potential PBF or additional resources as incentives. In such contexts, PBF funding should be conditional on negotiation of a strong framework first. The SPBF should contain specific commitments and benchmarks for tackling the critical gaps or difficult peacebuilding issues.
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2. **Identify criteria for 'PBF only' scenarios:** The injection of PBF funding, without prior negotiation of a SPBF, should be strictly limited to situations where it can make a significant difference compared to other sources of funding. This is most likely to be during stabilisation and early post-conflict phases. Engagement in such contexts to promote 'quick impact' stabilisation would require a radically different *modus operandi* to that used in Sierra Leone and Burundi. Criteria should be developed to ensure that such use of PBF adds value and does no harm.
3. **Focus on the critical gaps and political challenges in peacebuilding:** Both the SPBF and the PBF should focus on tackling the most critical gaps or sticking points in peacebuilding processes. As the first two focus countries demonstrated, post-conflict contexts are often awash with strategies with a significant emphasis on peace and security issues, albeit from a largely programmatic perspective. The SPBF's greatest potential for added value lies in promoting political consensus and commitment to addressing difficult issues. The framework should embody a partnership – a 'compact' – between the international community and the national government, promoting mutual accountability. In both Sierra Leone and Burundi, the PBF was initially viewed as simply another aid channel to provide additional funding for the governments' general development priorities. This complicated the process of focusing on peacebuilding-specific priorities.
4. **Greater attention to accountability, monitoring and follow-up:** Accountability, for example through monitoring and impact assessment, is critically important for implementation of both PBF programmes and the SPBF. Yet this has received inadequate attention in PBC deliberations and policy to date, reflecting a wider lack of consensus in this area among peacebuilding stakeholders. Mechanisms and processes should be developed to assess genuine PBC contributions to peace, rather than project outputs, in a joined-up way across programme and political levels. The timeframes of both PBF and SPBF engagement should be reviewed, as sustainable peace cannot be achieved, nor can impact be evaluated, within a one- to two-year timeframe.

For the PBC in-country

5. **Go beyond the capital and central institutions:** PBC engagement and consultation with rural populations in the focus countries was largely sporadic or *ad hoc*. If the PBC is to have an impact beyond central government institutions and programmes in urban areas, then it should develop deliberate strategies to reach out to the rural areas.
 6. **Promote new collaborations between civil society and government:** The PBC should create opportunities and incentives for civil society and government to work together, for example, by institutionalising regular policy dialogue or promoting joint government-CSO implementation of PBF projects. The PBC can generate professional and personal relations between stakeholders who are often separated.
 7. **Focus on the social and political 'software' of governance and peacebuilding:** Assistance for 'hardware' aspects of peace and security-related reforms, such as court construction, should be complemented by support for political and social 'software',
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such as promoting civilian oversight and political accountability. Such ‘soft’ interventions can be relatively light in terms of financial expense, yet challenging in terms of encouraging commitment and implementation by fragile post-conflict governments. As such, engagement in future focus countries should learn from the PBF-funded *Cadre de Concertation* programme in Burundi, and draft PBF proposals on a peace-mediators network in Sierra Leone.

8. **Recognise and tackle the obstacles to civil society engagement:** Many civil society organisations in post-conflict societies lack the capacity – human and financial – to easily engage in processes such as the PBC and PBF. These capacity gaps should be closed through PBF assistance. Civil society partners should be given information in good time for meetings, and offered financial support from the PBF to facilitate engagement and information-sharing. Designated civil society ‘representatives’ to the PBC/PBF should demonstrate that they have a strategy for broad-based grassroots consultations, allowing for two-way feedback during all stages of PBC/PBF work. Both the UN and the government should be active partners in ensuring this strategy exists, is resourced and implemented.
9. **Ensure donor coordination and coherence:** The PBC’s added value is closely linked to its effective coordination and coherence with other political, aid and donor-funded initiatives in the focus countries. Other stakeholders, such as the donor and diplomatic community, also have a responsibility to engage with the PBC in a strategic and cooperative way.
10. **Develop the ‘catalytic’ role of the PBF when funding more mainstream recovery and development programmes:** PBF funding for wider development programmes should be strictly limited to catalysing their contribution to peacebuilding. For example, in Sierra Leone, PBF youth funding should emphasise connecting socially excluded youths to mainstream youth development and empowerment programmes.
11. **Develop an early communications strategy:** In both Sierra Leone and Burundi there was a widespread lack of clarity over the PBC’s purpose, remit and relationship to other aid and political initiatives. The PBC should place emphasis on developing a proactive communications strategy before intervening in future focus countries. Greater attention also needs to be given to the specific contexts of post-conflict countries, such as their technological constraints and safety/security concerns regarding access to meetings at particular locations and times of day.

For the PBC Lessons Learned working group

12. **Resource mobilisation:** Potential resource mobilisation is one of the PBC’s main added values. As such, the PBC Lessons Learned working group should identify and analyse trends in resulting donor pledging and aid flows to inform the PBC’s work in this area.
13. **The PBF should not fund chronic or predictable peacebuilding gaps:** The PBF should not have to indefinitely fund chronic and predictable needs in post-conflict situations, such as gaps in early recovery or the reintegration of demobilised

ex-combatants. Instead, the PBC Lessons Learned working group should facilitate policy reforms at the international level. (The PBF could address such gaps in the interim, but it should not become a substitute for longer-term solutions.)

For the Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO)

14. Provide guidelines for organisation of the National Steering Committees: The PBSO should provide guidelines for composition of the PBF Steering Committee, taking into consideration issues such as representation, gender, exclusion, size and manageability.

Sierra Leone country-specific recommendations

15. Integrate the political and funding processes: The PBC should facilitate national and international dialogue not only around the gaps in peacebuilding work, but also the bottlenecks to implementing previous post-conflict recovery strategies in Sierra Leone. PBF funding could encourage political commitment to ensure the government implemented sensitive reforms, such as those contained in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission report. This commitment should be guaranteed *before* PBF funding is released.

16. Devise joint government and civil society PBF-funded projects: The PBF should support joint implementation of projects in recognition that it would be an important way to build mutual confidence and trust between the government and civil society.

17. The PBF should fund civil society consultations: The PBF should provide funding for civil society consultations at all levels and strengthen the capacity of existing structures for information-sharing in the country, including traditional and faith-based structures such as the chiefdoms and the Inter-Religious Council. The PBC should recognise the less formal – but in some instances more representative – networks in addition to the professionalised NGOs and umbrella structures, and set aside resources to engage them.

18. Ensure the sustainability of PBF-funded projects: Sustainability plans and political commitment should be part of the funding agreements from the start, to maximise the added value of short-term injections of money. PBF projects on youth employment and job creation especially need to include sustainability plans in order to ensure that short-term schemes do not unduly raise expectations or worsen frustrations.

19. Make PBF application procedures more flexible: A number of civil society members felt the PBF funding application procedures were too complicated. The UN should take a more creative view in Sierra Leone as to what constitutes a viable application for PBF funding, for example by allowing grassroots organisations to apply by video recording and offering technical support to applicants demonstrating vision and commitment.

20. Improve targeting in youth projects: Youth interventions should better target the most vulnerable and socially excluded youths. This should encompass both assistance programmes and governance or regulatory reforms in areas that impact on their lives



Burundian refugee family, returning back from Tanzania

and livelihoods. Engagement with the PBC should be broader than the elite, well-organised youth associations. For example, PBF programmes should locate the social networks grouping youths employed in the informal sector, and involve them in developing regulations to counter the impact of corruption and exploitation on their work.

Burundi country-specific recommendations

- 21. *Normalisation of community life is key to peacebuilding in Burundi:*** The PBC must ensure that it promotes intra-community dialogue at the rural level as part of the implementation of the *Cadre de Dialogue et de Concertation* project. These funds, aimed at rebuilding trust, must reach the village level and complement elite-level dialogue.
 - 22. *Involve the Cadre de Dialogue et de Concertation in monitoring and accountability:*** The framework for the *Cadre* could offer an appropriate mechanism for enabling civil society and wider community involvement in monitoring and accountability of the PBF programmes and the Strategic Peacebuilding Framework.
 - 23. *Ensure the Cadre de Dialogue et de Concertation links into longer-term processes:*** The *Cadre* provides an excellent opportunity for follow-up beyond the life of the PBF and SPBF processes, and should be integrated into longer-term governance and development programmes.
 - 24. *Link the Cadre de Dialogue et de Concertation and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission process:*** *The Cadre de Dialogue et de Concertation* has found widespread support in Burundi. It needs to be carefully and creatively linked to the delicate processes for discussions about the national consultation process for the establishment of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.
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List of acronyms

BINUB	United Nations Integrated Office in Burundi
BLTP	Burundi Leadership Training Programme
CCR	Centre for Conflict Resolution, University of Cape Town
CNCA	National Committee for Aid Coordination in Burundi
CNDD/FDD	National Council for the Defence of Democracy/Forces for the Defence of Democracy
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CSPEC	Civil Society Peacebuilding Engagement Committee
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration
DFID	Department for International Development, United Kingdom
DPKO	Department of Peacekeeping Operations
ECOSOC	United Nations Economic and Social Council
ENCISS	Enhancing Interaction and Interface between Civil Society and the State to Improve Poor People's Lives
ERSG	Executive Representative of the Secretary-General
FNL	National Liberation Forces in Burundi
FORSC	Forum for the Reinforcement of Civil Society
FRODEBU	Front for Democracy in Burundi
GPPAC	Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IGAP	Improved Governance and Accountability Pact
MARWOPNET	Mano River Women's Peace Network
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
PBC	Peacebuilding Commission
PBF	Peacebuilding Fund
PBSO	Peacebuilding Support Office
PCS	Peace Consolidation Strategy
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
RUF	Rebel United Front
SPBF	Strategic Peacebuilding Framework
TRC	Truth and Reconciliation Commission
UN	United Nations
UNAMSIL	United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
UNIOSIL	United Nations Integrated Office in Sierra Leone
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WANEP	West Africa Network for Peacebuilding

Annex 1: Structure of the Peacebuilding Commission

The PBC structure consists of an Organisational Committee, country-specific working groups for the current focus countries, a Lessons Learned working group and a secretariat, the Peacebuilding Support Office.

Organisational Committee

The Organisational Committee has 31 members and acts as the main forum for establishing the agenda of the Commission. Apart from the permanent members of the Security Council, the rest of the Committee members each serve for two-year renewable terms.³⁷

Country-specific configurations

The PBC holds regular meetings in its country-specific configurations to look at issues particular to the individual focus countries. The country-specific meetings may include members of the Organisational Committee, as well as representatives from the country under consideration, countries in the region engaged in the post-conflict process, other countries involved in relief efforts and/or political dialogue, relevant regional and sub-regional organisations, major financial, troop and civilian police contributors, the senior United Nations representative in the country, other relevant UN representatives and relevant regional and international financial institutions.³⁸ Civil society organisations have also been invited to make presentations to these configurations on an informal basis.

Lessons Learned Working Group

This group seeks to add value to the work of the PBC by drawing on the experiences of other post-conflict countries, as well as learning from and shaping new policies based on the experiences of the focus countries.³⁹

Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO)

The small Peacebuilding Support Office in New York, headed by an Assistant Secretary-General, includes 16 staff with expertise in peacebuilding, post-conflict reconstruction and gender.

³⁷ Angola was elected the first chair of the Organisational Committee. The 31 Committee members include seven Security Council members (permanent five plus two additional), seven from ECOSOC elected from regional groups, five from the top ten financial contributors to the UN, five top providers of uniformed personnel to UN missions and seven members of the

General Assembly, including countries with post-conflict experience or countries elected to redress geographical imbalances in the Committee's membership.

³⁸ Norway and the Netherlands chair the Burundi and Sierra Leone country-specific configurations, respectively

³⁹ EL Salvador chairs

Annex 2: Possible areas for further research

- Exploring different models for the PBC Strategic Peacebuilding Framework, for example drawing on the experience of the Afghanistan Compact and the UN Strategic Framework model.
 - Developing criteria to ensure potential deployment of quick-impact funding in stabilisation and early post-conflict phases adds value and does no harm.
 - Identifying best practices in PBF funding for ‘catalytic’ interventions to mainstream peacebuilding in wider development programmes.
 - Researching and developing effective monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to assess PBC outcomes in a joined-up way across PBF programmes and SPBF commitments and benchmarks.
 - Designing and institutionalising proactive PBC and PBF strategies to promote inclusion and reach ‘the truly marginalised’.
 - Exploring constraints and opportunities posed by the UN and government-centred character of the PBC process for promoting decentralised programmes and joint NGO programmes with line ministries and local authorities.
 - Researching obstacles and incentives to realising the PBC’s political added value in terms of connecting in-country policy dialogue to international deliberations involving donors and G-77 nations.
 - Identifying best practices in promoting peacebuilding ‘software’ and civil society engagement in PBC and wider post-conflict governance reforms.
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This report is a study of the United Nations Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) and its pilot interventions in Sierra Leone and Burundi. The analysis is based on research by ActionAid, CAFOD and CARE International UK, informed by extensive consultations with local communities and civil society in both countries, as well as interviews with government officials, experts and international donors and policy-makers.

The report shows that the PBC's impact has been largely positive and well received, but that important challenges remain.

Through this initiative, the sponsoring agencies hope to contribute to making the Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Fund as effective as possible in improving the lives of the people on the ground most affected by conflict.



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