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Taking Stock, Looking Forward: A Strategic Review of the Peacebuilding Commission

*An Independent Analysis by the
NYU Center on International Cooperation (CIC)
and the International Peace Institute (IPI)¹*

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Executive Summary

Following the completion of its year as a member of the Peacebuilding Commission, and against the backdrop of Denmark's extensive role along with Tanzania in negotiating the establishment of the PBC, the Permanent Mission of Denmark to the UN commissioned the CIC/IPI Joint Program on Peacebuilding as Statebuilding to undertake a strategic review of the body's performance. The purpose of this document is to take stock and to look forward.

The PBC is a young body still finding its feet. We use as a framework for assessment the notion that three years is a credible timespan within which a new intergovernmental body should be fully functional. Thus, this report serves as a stocktaking, assessing progress to date by the PBC and making suggestions about how to continue to enhance its impact. To this end we interviewed senior officials of all PBC member countries, as well as UN and other stakeholders in New York, Burundi, and Sierra Leone.²

Rationale for the PBC: Four Problems

The Peacebuilding Commission was proposed by the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change and was endorsed by the Secretary-General's *In Larger Freedom* report. The High-level Panel found that the UN had a vital and irreplaceable role in peacebuilding, with unique legitimacy and comparative advantages that could not be replicated elsewhere. However, it expressed concern that:

1. Although UN Security Council (UNSC) mandated operations had been expanded into peacebuilding issues as broadly conceived, the UNSC did not have adequate relationships with the international financial institutions (IFIs) through which to effectively steer the relevant political-financial linkages necessary for effective post-conflict recovery.
2. There was inadequate coordination among UN agencies and departments, in part because of lack of coherence among donors, whose separate strategies drive and enable separate agency action.
3. There was a lack of timely and adequate financing for the critical issue of the start-up or restoration of government institutions in post-conflict contexts, especially for the rule of law.
4. There was a lack of medium-term political attention to countries emerging from conflict.

Following endorsement by member states in the 2005 World Summit Outcome Document, the PBC was established as an intergovernmental advisory body by corresponding resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council. These resolutions mandated the PBC to:

- a. Bring together all relevant actors to marshal resources and to advise on and propose integrated strategies for post-conflict peacebuilding and recovery;
- b. Focus attention on the reconstruction and institution-building efforts necessary for recovery from conflict and to support the development of integrated strategies in order to lay the foundation for sustainable development;
- c. 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.

How Has the PBC Performed?

We found positive signs and concrete examples to indicate that the PBC is beginning to find its niche and demonstrate its value-added, particularly on problems (1) and (4) identified above – creating linkages between political/security and financial/development actors, and maintaining long-term attention. In both Burundi and Sierra Leone, the existence of a body that connected the UN missions, a broad grouping of member states including key donors and troop contributors, the international financial institutions, and the national authorities, provided a tool through which to resolve critical challenges and help keep both countries on the path to sustainable peace. Performance on coordination issues has been more mixed, and on early financing, is as yet untested.

Predictably for a new intergovernmental body, the PBC got off to a slow start. In its first year, the Commission was beset by procedural obstacles, resulting in delays, frustration, and confusion in the field and at headquarters. For the first nine months, procedure trumped performance. At the end of its first year, members and outside observers alike were expressing skepticism that the PBC could fulfill its mandate effectively or efficiently. However, since late summer 2007, the PBC has had a demonstrably positive impact in Burundi and Sierra Leone on events on the ground, the critical criterion for measurement. Indeed, that performance has been sufficient to demonstrate the merit and potential contribution of the PBC.

An assessment of cautious optimism is widely shared among PBC members, alongside a recognition of the need to streamline still cumbersome procedures and resolve or surmount tensions about the relationship between the PBC and the principal UN organs. Members are also cognizant of a need to work to reverse early negative impressions formed in capitals and among UN departments and agencies during the procedure-heavy first phase of the PBC's life.

A more detailed review of PBC performance can be broken down against the problems it was proposed to solve, and its mandated tasks.

Strategy and the linkage between political and financial aspects

A central purpose behind the founding of the PBC was to develop better linkages between political and financial aspects of post-conflict recovery – or to build security-development links, to use terminology more familiar at the UN. In the PBC's first two cases, Burundi and Sierra Leone, the principal means by which it strove to fulfill this function was through the articulation of *integrated peacebuilding strategies*.

Early discussions about the merits of such an approach were drawn out, and the process for elaborating the strategies laborious – an issue addressed further below. The approach to developing a strategic framework was different in each case and the experience mixed. However, through the dialogue it fostered among the relevant stakeholders, the PBC has demonstrated its value as a platform for addressing the important linkages between the political/security and economic/financial aspects of peace consolidation.

Moreover, the process – and the simple fact of the relevant actors participating together in the process and in the body – created opportunities to resolve tensions between the financial and political aspects of peacebuilding in each country, or to build synergies between them. Two episodes had particular impact on members' attitudes, and highlight the unique advantages of the PBC in bringing the key actors together at headquarters.

The first of these was the PBC's response when the IMF signaled its intent to delay completion of its Sixth Review in Burundi. In-country actors including senior personnel of the UN mission saw this as potentially

destabilizing to the country and the peace process. The potential crisis was defused in substantial part through active work by the PBC – especially the Chair of the Burundi Country-Specific Meeting – to create political space for dialogue between the government and the IMF, signaling the strong imperative for the government to resolve key governance issues and for economic actors to consider the impact an economic crisis would have on the political and security situation. That work took place both at headquarters and in the field, and directly linked political decision-making at headquarters to field realities.

In Sierra Leone, similarly, the recent incorporation of energy as a priority in the strategic framework highlights an important principle: specifically, that economic risk can be as significant a threat to peace as security or political risks. In this case the PBC fostered negotiation among the relevant stakeholders to garner political support for the inclusion of energy – normally considered a medium-to-long-term development concern – in a framework for peace consolidation.

Both cases reinforce the essential point that political and financial aspects of recovery need to reinforce each other. Institutionally, this means that the UN and the IFIs must work together to drive coherent strategy for recovery, and the PBC is contributing to that objective.

- To consolidate the PBC's critical function in establishing these linkages, the modalities for interaction with the World Bank and the IMF need to be streamlined, partly in the field in the interaction with E/SRSGs, but also at the policy level. Informal dialogue between the PBC's Organizational Committee and the IFIs could help ensure that each body is adequately informed of the others' policies and functions. This would require a willingness on the part of the PBC to invite the IFIs to have sustained and substantive participation in the Organizational Committee.

Sustained attention

The PBC's contributions in Burundi and Sierra Leone can also be attributed to the attention brought to bear by the PBC at a point well after that which would normally receive sustained focus from the UNSC. As noted by the High-level Panel, political attention to countries emerging from conflict tends to wane after the withdrawal of international peacekeeping forces but before national institutions are fully consolidated, amplifying risks of conflict relapse.

While it is encouraging that the PBC has successfully maintained this kind of attention on Burundi and Sierra Leone for the past 18 months, it is critical that international attention not wane from these two countries as the PBC's work evolves. It is likely that the country-specific configurations need not meet as intensively as they did during the development of the strategic frameworks; but ensuring implementation of commitments made within those frameworks will require more than just episodic spot-checking. The Burundi and Sierra Leone Country-Specific Meetings will have to meet at regular intervals to monitor progress (see below), drive course correction, and sustain pressure on the international community and the government to live up to their commitments.

The recent adoption of the monitoring mechanism in Burundi provides an important path forward in that case. It should be noted, however, that this is not the first time that the UN has adopted strategic monitoring mechanisms – it did so, for example, in Afghanistan in the late 1990s. It is, however, the first time a monitoring mechanism has been adopted that has the buy-in of the government, opposition and local civil society groups, the in-country donors, and the full membership of the PBC – a far more powerful tool. Effective use of the monitoring mechanism by the PBC as well as by the Secretary-General and his representatives to sustain pressure on the government, the political parties, the donors, regional actors, and others will be essential to the longer-term impact of the PBC's work.

It is also worth emphasizing that the extent to which the window of opportunity offered by PBC attention can be leveraged to deliver peace dividends depends fundamentally on the will of national actors to take responsibility for peace consolidation in their country. No matter how much funding and strategic coordination is brought to bear by the international community, peacebuilding success hinges on national responsibility.

Coherence and UN coordination

The PBC's performance on coherence and UN coordination has been rather more mixed. The process of developing strategic frameworks has, over time, delivered some positive improvements on coherence – or the prospects for it – on the ground, but at substantial cost in time spent. That the process was cumbersome at headquarters is notable but less significant than the fact that it was cumbersome also for the national government and for the UN.

Part of the challenge lies in the multiple centers of deliberation and decision-making involved in the PBC's work. Key stakeholders that are active at the country level, in New York, and from their own capitals have not always engaged with a coherent voice.

- The PBC will need to streamline its work, a task that is likely to be made easier by the experience gained and instruments developed over the past 18 months and with additional advance preparation from a now fully staffed Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO).
- Critically, this must involve far fewer meetings of the country-specific mechanisms to allow for (a) more substantial preparation, and (b) more consistent, higher-level participation by PBC members.
- PBC members must recognize that their constructive engagement is crucial at all levels, which will demand greater coherence in each member's approach between field, capital, and New York representation.

In the cases of Burundi and Sierra Leone, the existence of an internationally agreed framework creates a powerful tool for coordination.

- It is now the job of the Secretary-General and his Special/Executive Representatives to drive coordination around the approved frameworks. The PBC should empower the PBSO to play that role vis-à-vis the UN system (see below).
- Financial contributors to Burundi and Sierra Leone will also have to ensure that their funding decisions reinforce the frameworks. The Secretary-General should use the PBSO's capacity for monitoring to track resource flows, and should not be shy to point out when donors are falling short of their commitments or undermining the agreed strategy – a task better done at headquarters than in the field, where E/SRSGs will have to tread more carefully in their relationships with key donors.

Notably, the establishment of the PBC and PBSO has not yet led to renewed efforts to ensure effective coordination within the UN against agreed strategy (see below).

Mobilizing resources and early financing for (re)building institutions

As the PBC engages in a dialogue on strategic priorities with the countries on its agenda, it is also essential to examine how those priorities are currently resourced and whether there are any shortfalls. The recently approved Monitoring and Tracking Mechanism for Burundi is a good start, and one that will require active follow-up. However, without a realistic mapping of current resource flows and activities, it will be very difficult for the PBC to ensure that existing and new resources are channeled effectively to support the

government's efforts to consolidate peace. To support its resource mobilization mandate, the PBC needs a clear picture of assistance from the outset to determine whether and how support should be modified and new resources channeled.

- There is a potential role for the PBSO – working with the national government in each country, the World Bank, UNDP, DPKO, OCHA, and others – to provide the PBC an overall map of resource flows to the countries on the PBC's agenda, highlighting gaps and overlaps.

The PBF. In interviews with PBC members, we encountered two sets of views in relation to resource mobilization and the role of the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) that are not just at odds with one another but also – as we see it – with the mandate of the PBC and the PBF. First, some members, mostly non-donors, believed that the PBF should operate more closely under the direction of the PBC. Second, others, mostly donors, viewed the PBF as the key resource mobilization function of the PBC. In contrast to these views, we see, first, the importance of the Secretary-General retaining flexibility in the use of the PBF to meet critical needs that typically go unfulfilled in post-conflict contexts – speed and flexibility are of the essence, and so far not characteristics of the PBC. The PBF is intended to fund very urgent, targeted, and discrete interventions, some of which would otherwise go unfunded because they arise in areas that do not attract traditional development assistance; this was well illustrated by the use of the PBF to fund time-critical activities in the lead-up to the Sierra Leone elections.

- The small, targeted and short-term PBF funds should be reserved for immediate, critical priorities.
- It should also be stressed that the PBC's resource mobilization mandate extends far beyond the PBF: it should harness existing international efforts and bring additional resources to bear over a sustained period of time with a specific focus on (re)building state institutions that will be able to sustain the hard-won gains of peace consolidation.

Related is the new focus by PBF donors on whether the Fund's expenditure is consistent with OECD/DAC criteria. While we understand donors' concerns in this regard, and take note of the PBSO's estimate that ca. 80% of PBF-funded activities would likely meet DAC criteria, we believe that donors should be cautious lest they hamstring the functioning of the PBF – which would obviate the point of its establishment. This of course is just one part of the wider problem of the mismatch between internationally available financing and actual post-conflict requirements.

Early financing. International resources need to be channeled into the business of building state institutions from the very earliest days of post-conflict engagement. It is impossible to assess the PBC's potential role in this area because the first countries on its agenda were well past the early phase of recovery. The PBF has been used to help on these issues in non-PBC cases, but the sums involved are minimal – essentially seed funding. As donors – notably the UK – begin to explore possible new modalities for early recovery financing, the issue of the connection to the PBF will be an important concern.

The PBC in context: relationship to other bodies

During the period in review, the question of the role of the Organizational Committee (OC) has been clouded by its use as a proxy in the ongoing battle over the balance of power between the Security Council and the General Assembly. This is an issue that has recently colored much UN debate, though, of late, temperatures have cooled somewhat. In this regard, it is worth noting that the establishment of the PBC does not and cannot alter the responsibilities of Charter bodies. It is the responsibility of those bodies to make effective use of PBC advice – not the other way around.

On the other hand, one of the striking facts of the PBC's deliberations, both in the OC and the Country-Specific Meetings (CSMs), is that divisions over its role have cut across traditional 'north-south' divides (an increasingly archaic depiction of political divisions at the UN). Of particular note is the extent to which several African members of the PBC have articulated a conception of the PBC's role and agenda that is similar to that of several OECD countries.

While the core business of the PBC is to support the achievement of results on the ground, many members do believe that the OC has an important role to play in resolving outstanding procedural issues, navigating the PBC's relationship with other UN organs, and addressing strategic issues that will arise across cases and will need to be resolved at a broad policy level.

- The PBC's Organizational Committee could usefully address strategic issues such as (a) improving the responsiveness of aid instruments to the special needs and capacities of post-conflict contexts, and (b) promoting coordinated support for peacebuilding in the countries on its agenda through PBC members' participation in other UN and multilateral bodies.
- To ensure that performance trumps procedure rather than the reverse, the PBC should retain flexibility in its relationship and communications with the Security Council, GA, and ECOSOC. The approach taken by the Burundi CSM of negotiating conclusions and recommendations following the Chair's mission in early September and sending the final document to all three organs was recognized by many members as a good model.

Looking Forward

Selection of new cases

A common understanding is evolving regarding the PBC's potential contribution in countries in different phases of their transition. The selection of the next cases for the PBC's agenda will heavily shape the body's ability to consolidate its impact, streamline its procedures, and highlight its unique contribution.

Going forward, the PBC should consider engaging in cases where the Security Council is beginning to contemplate a handover or draw-down. The PBC's early success in bringing security, political, and development considerations into a common framework would be a valuable asset in helping to plan for such transitions. By engaging in such cases, the PBC would leverage the expertise of troop contributors, regional actors, and other non-donors in the CSMs. It would also usefully clarify to countries considering seeking PBC support that placement on the PBC agenda does not necessarily mean removal from that of the Security Council – currently a point of some confusion internationally. Such cases need not necessarily involve full CSM processes of the type developed for Burundi and Sierra Leone; far more streamlined processes would not only suffice, they would likely have more impact.

- The Commission should be flexible in its approach to new cases, while retaining the possibility of evolution in its engagement as a country's needs change. In addition to 'full' CSMs, along the lines of the Burundi and Sierra Leone configurations, the PBC could consider 'exploratory' or 'advance planning' working groups or similar, lighter alternative formats.
- Adoption of a 'tiered' or 'differentiated' agenda would be helpful for enhancing PBC effectiveness and efficiency, as well as for ensuring that the PBC can broaden its scope to engage new countries seeking attention and support – which is important for both equity and political reasons.

A debate that will soon confront the PBC is whether (or when) to take on 'large' cases. So far, the three cases on the PBC's agenda are small both in size of the country and in international financial commitments. PBC members have been understandably concerned to first demonstrate value-added in smaller cases before taking

on larger challenges. However, critical needs are looming, and the PBC will soon have to confront a choice between keeping its case-load small but risking being seen as irrelevant in the face of peacebuilding reversals in larger, high-profile cases, or tackling those cases head on.

The role of the Secretary-General and the PBSO

During its first year of operation, there was a sense among PBC members of a lack of direction from the PBSO – a view we see as uncharitable, given that the PBSO was barely staffed during much of the year, having neither budgets nor promised secondments. With the approval of the interim budget, and with decisions of the SG’s Policy Committee establishing a central strategy role for the PBSO, the Office now has the requisite tools to perform its intended functions.

Even without adequate staffing, the PBSO did provide important and substantive backstopping to the chairs of the country-specific mechanisms, a function greatly appreciated by those chairs.

Interviews with other UN stakeholders make clear what PBSO will itself acknowledge, that it has not yet established a clear pattern of working with DPKO, UNDP, the World Bank, and other critical actors in helping to shape strategy, or in monitoring implementation. This is in part a function of other departments’ understandable confusion over the PBSO’s role, a confusion exacerbated by the fact of timing (i.e., the establishment of the PBSO just prior to a transition between Secretary-Generals). In this regard, the World Bank’s recognition of the Integrated Peacebuilding Strategy process as a framework *within which* it can develop its post-conflict needs assessment and plans is an important step forward that should be actively consolidated.

Lack of progress on coordination issues is also a function of limited engagement to date by the Secretary-General. The PBC and the PBSO are instruments that the SG can use to drive coherent strategy across the Organization. To date, however, there has been little involvement by the SG, a fact widely noted by members. In the period ahead, certainly, the SG can do more to ensure that the strategies emerging from the PBC, rooted as they are in intergovernmental decision, are taken fully into account by all parts of the UN system.

Although there are important constraints on the PBSO in the form of some members’ views that it should focus on providing secretariat support to the PBC itself, we nevertheless see scope for the PBSO to be used more energetically by the Secretary-General to help drive strategic coordination. This might most effectively be achieved through greater interaction between the PBSO and the Policy Committee on overall strategy, as well as through substantive engagement between the PBSO and expanded regional departments of DPA, if those are authorized by the membership.

- PBSO should leverage its unique position – inside the SG’s office, with available links to the Policy Committee, and attached to a member state body with broad composition – to develop its capacities to (a) encourage coherent strategy, and (b) monitor the implementation of PBC-agreed strategy and overall resource flows. This will require clearer understanding among the relevant parties that the PBSO’s functionality lies in its ability to bring together all parts of the system and a recognition from the PBSO that this involves building on existing capacities.

Other gaps: rapid civilian response

In undertaking the problem assessment that led to the proposals for the PBC, hindsight suggests that the High-level Panel underestimated a critical factor: the lack of ready deployable civilians in such critical functions as strategic planning, advisory support in the rule of law for early peacebuilding response. This is an area requiring new efforts. The creation of the Rule of Law and Police Institutions pillar at DPKO and the

establishment of a 'surge' capacity in UNDP/BCPR are both steps in the right direction, but further efforts will be required to ensure that the UN can rely on an early, predictable supply of high-quality and appropriate talent from north and south to fulfill vital civilian peacebuilding tasks in the earliest phases of engagement. The Government of Denmark has commissioned CIC to undertake a detailed background study on rapid deployment of civilians and to develop an action plan for addressing the problem. Other governments have highlighted the problem as well; most recently, the UK government called for a stand-by reserve of civilians.

Conclusion

The PBC is a work in progress, but one that so far has proved the potential for its contribution. Continued focus on its performance by all stakeholders will be necessary if it is to (a) consolidate its positive impact on cases undertaken to date, and (b) extend its reach to new cases. In selecting new cases, the PBC should be cognizant of its potential to solidify its role as the central international meeting ground of political/security and financial/development actors. More broadly, three things will be critical in the coming 18 months to consolidate the PBC's turn-around and enhance its impact: the election of strong, dedicated chairs; commitment by PBC members to fulfill commitments made in Burundi and Sierra Leone, and soon in Guinea-Bissau; and commitment from the SG (with the PBSO) to drive coordinated implementation of the strategies adopted by the PBC.

Introduction and Purpose of the Strategic Review

1. Following the completion of its year as a member of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), and against the backdrop of Denmark's extensive role along with Tanzania in negotiating the establishment of the PBC, the Permanent Mission of Denmark to the UN commissioned the CIC/IPI Joint Program on Peacebuilding as Statebuilding to undertake a strategic review of the body's performance. The purpose of this document is to take stock and to look forward to assess the prospects for solidifying the PBC's emerging role and enhancing its impact.
2. Originally proposed by the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change in December 2004, the PBC became a high-profile success of the 2005 UN reform process. Although there was and continues to be a general consensus on the need for a body to bridge the gap between the security-intensive phase immediately following a conflict and long-term development, negotiations over its creation were contentious. In order to achieve a compromise, the mandate given to the PBC in its founding resolution was vague as to how its objectives would be achieved.³ Consequently, even as it engages with the countries on its agenda, the membership continues to grapple with the appropriate role and comparative advantage of the Commission.
3. This Review is drafted in full consciousness that 18 months after its establishment, the PBC is a young body still finding its feet. In establishing a framework for assessment, it is worth recalling a comment made in the course of negotiations over the PBC by Ambassador Carlos Pascual, then head of the US State Department Office for Stabilization and Reconstruction, who reminded his colleagues that no new institution starts to perform overnight. Pascual argued that the time to judge the success of the PBC would be three years after its establishment, once sufficient time had elapsed for it to find its footing and establish its routines.
4. If three years is a realistic framework for assessment, this report serves as a stocktaking, an effort to determine whether the PBC is on the right track; it also makes recommendations on approaches to further consolidate the PBC's performance. To this end, we interviewed relevant stakeholders at UN Headquarters in New York, including representatives of all members of the PBC's Organizational Committee, and the majority of members of its country-specific mechanisms. Team members also traveled to Burundi and Sierra Leone to interview members of the UN in-country presence, the government, the diplomatic community, and representatives of local civil society. Through this process, we mapped the diverse perspectives on the establishment and functioning of the PBC. We used these and additional outside perspectives to assess the progress to date of the PBC against the intent and purpose as proposed by the High-level Panel and against the core tasks stipulated in its founding resolution.
5. Overall, we found positive signs and concrete examples that indicate that the PBC is beginning to find its niche and demonstrate its value-added. After a rocky first 9 months, during which procedure trumped performance, since late summer 2007 the PBC has had a positive impact in Burundi and Sierra Leone on events on the ground, the critical criterion for measurement. Indeed, that performance has been sufficient to demonstrate the merit and potential contribution of the PBC as mandated and composed. PBC members, in particular the chairs of the respective bodies, as well as the PBSO, deserve credit for this progress.
6. On the other hand, the PBC's processes have been cumbersome and inefficient, and the body has yet to demonstrate that it can influence resource flows to the countries on its agenda. The PBC's membership remains divided over its rightful role, and broader tensions in the UN (in particular over the balance of power between the Security Council and the General Assembly) continue to color the PBC's proceedings, especially in the Organizational Committee.

7. Although it may not be possible to measure the PBC's impact for some time to come, it is clear that there are institutional issues that can and should be addressed now to ensure that the PBC is providing the best possible support to national and international actors in their efforts to consolidate peace in the countries on its agenda.

Rationale for the PBC: Four Problems

8. The Peacebuilding Commission was proposed by the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change against a backdrop of widespread recognition of a gap in the international architecture for post-conflict response. Similar ideas had been proposed by the Mozambican and Portuguese leaders in a joint op-ed, by leading troop contributors in a joint letter to the UN Security Council, and by research organizations.⁴

9. The basic idea of the PBC responded to a two-part analysis. The first part of the analysis was that the UN had a vital and irreplaceable role in peacebuilding. In many other spheres of activity, new entities outside the UN system have in effect replaced UN functionality, but in this area the UN was seen by the High-level Panel as having a unique legitimacy and particular advantages that could not be replicated elsewhere.

10. One the other hand, the High-level Panel identified four problems with the UN's arrangements for peacebuilding:

- I. Although UN Security Council (UNSC) mandated operations had been expanded into peacebuilding issues broadly conceived, the UNSC did not have adequate relationships with the international financial institutions (IFIs) through which to effectively steer the relevant political-financial linkages necessary for effective post-conflict recovery.
- II. There was inadequate coordination among UN agencies and departments, in part as a function of lack of coherence among donors, whose separate strategies drive and enable separate agency action.
- III. There was a lack of timely and adequate financing for the critical issue of the start-up or restoration of government institutions in post-conflict contexts, especially for the rule of law.
- IV. There was a lack of medium-term political attention to countries emerging from conflict.

11. In addition to these strategic shortcomings, the High-level Panel identified a key institutional gap: there was no place in the United Nations system explicitly designed to assist countries in their transition from war to peace. It called for the creation of the Peacebuilding Commission as a “single intergovernmental organ dedicated to peacebuilding, empowered to monitor and pay close attention to countries at risk, ensure concerted action by donors, agencies, programmes and financial institutions, and mobilize financial resources for sustainable peace.”⁵

12. The High-level Panel thus sought to strengthen the UN's performance in peacebuilding by proposing an architecture with four core functions: to link political and security action with financial and economic action in post-conflict recovery; to help drive coherence among donors and thereby to establish the basis for coordination among UN and outside agencies; to help ensure early and predictable financing for critical institution-building or statebuilding functions; and to sustain attention over the medium term to countries recovering from conflict, even after the security-intensive phase of peacekeeping and post-conflict operations was completed.

13. Following endorsements of the High-level Panel's proposal by the Secretary-General in his report *In Larger Freedom* and by member states in the 2005 World Summit Outcome Document, the PBC was established as an intergovernmental advisory body by corresponding resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council.⁶ These resolutions mandated the PBC to:

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

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

14. The intergovernmental nature of the PBC is worth emphasizing. From the perspective of the High-level Panel, the primary rationale for the new peacebuilding architecture was not simply to improve UN peacebuilding efforts but to address the strategic deficit in the international community as a whole. The PBC was created as a high-profile intergovernmental body because its function was a clearly political one: to agree on a shared strategy based on a joint understanding of conflict drivers and peacebuilding priorities; to use the strategy as a platform for marshalling additional resources; and to provide a forum for holding to account all relevant actors – including the government of the country in question, donors, regional and international organizations, and international financial institutions – for their stated programmatic and financial commitments.

How Has the PBC Performed?

15. Predictably for a new intergovernmental body, the PBC got off to a slow start. In its first year, the Commission was beset by procedural obstacles, resulting in delays, frustration, and confusion in the field and at headquarters. At the end of its first year, members and outside observers alike were expressing skepticism that the PBC could fulfill its mandate effectively or efficiently.

16. In the last 9 to 10 months, however, there has been a clear upturn in the outlook of PBC members and actors in the field, who now espouse a mood of cautious optimism, particularly on problems (I) and (IV) identified above – creating linkages between political/security and financial/development actors, and maintaining sustained attention. In both Burundi and Sierra Leone, the existence of a body that linked the UN missions (and thus the UN Security Council) with key donors and the international financial institutions, as well as the national authorities, was a tool through which to resolve critical challenges and help keep both countries on the path to sustainable peace. Performance on coordination issues has been more mixed, and on early financing, is as yet untested.

17. The PBC's performance can be broken down against the problems it was proposed to solve, and its mandated tasks.

Strategy and the linkage between political and financial aspects

18. The PBC was intended to bridge the gap between the Security Council's 'security' lens and the 'development' lens of the international financial institutions, the UN development system, and the donors. Building peace in post-conflict societies requires that security, political, and economic risks be addressed simultaneously, and that support be mutually reinforcing. Unfortunately, the current international approach to peacebuilding tends to be compartmentalized, with inadequate links between decisions made by major financial actors such as the IMF, the World Bank, and the UN development system, and political support offered by the United Nations.

19. An early and central innovation of the PBC/PBSO to this effect was to initiate *Integrated Peacebuilding Strategies*, based on the idea that the PBC could bring a myriad of actors together under a common strategy developed through a dialogue on peacebuilding priorities with the recipient government. The underlying notion was that these 'strategies' could serve as a platform for joint decision-making and, ultimately, more coherent international support in post-conflict settings. Experience to date has shown that while a 'strategy document' may not always be necessary – indeed, the term *strategy* has not always been helpful – the elements of *strategic planning*, including prioritization, assessing linkages and gaps, assigning responsibilities, ensuring sufficient resources, and monitoring implementation, are beginning to be usefully applied through PBC engagement. Recently, the PBC has begun to demonstrate its unique value by bringing the difficult political, security, and economic trade-offs into focus and fostering a productive, if sometimes difficult, dialogue on how the international community can best support national governments in their efforts to consolidate peace.

20. The development of "The Strategic Framework for Peace Consolidation" in Burundi and "The Peacebuilding Cooperation Framework" in Sierra Leone was not an easy process in either country. It is widely recognized by actors at headquarters and in the field that the process got off on the wrong foot due to an over-emphasis on the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF). This was particularly striking at the country level, where the focus on developing PBF projects fostered an operational approach that treated the question of peacebuilding on a short-term, project-by-project basis at the expense of analyzing the overarching strategic priorities and political risks to peace. When it was later explained to actors on the ground that they would need to begin discussing strategic priorities in order to develop an "Integrated Peacebuilding Strategy," there

was a widespread feeling that the process was out of sequence. This initial over-emphasis on the PBF also fostered the mistaken assumption that the PBF is the direct financing mechanism for the PBC, an issue we will address in greater detail below. **In future cases, the initial work of identifying priorities and assessing political risks should be done first to provide both the scope for PBF allocations and for the overall strategic engagement of the PBC.** We note that this lesson is reflected in current efforts by the Guinea-Bissau Country-Specific Meeting (CSM) to emphasize strategic prioritization from the outset, and by the PBSO to ensure that PBF allocations are consistent with the strategic direction of the PBC dialogue by considering an innovative approach to PBF disbursements in Guinea-Bissau.

21. In Burundi, consultations on what became the Strategic Framework eventually included a wide array of actors in the field and at headquarters. That the PBC was able to foster a broadly inclusive dialogue is seen as one of its primary achievements in that country. The process served to build confidence between the government, the UN, donors, and civil society (including the main opposition parties), and appears to have encouraged new habits of participation and consultation. Formally, these process outcomes are ‘side effects’ of PBC engagement, but substantively they are of critical value, potentially fostering an inclusive political process that our research suggests is central to reducing the risk of conflict.⁷

22. According to most national and international actors, the value-added of the Burundi Framework is twofold: (1) it presents a broad consensus on the challenges and priorities for peacebuilding, making it the most credible framework available to guide the engagement and interventions of all actors, and (2) it addresses the political risks and priorities that were absent from other existing strategies and links them to the economic challenges, making the Framework an ‘umbrella’ document.

23. The credibility of the Framework and the inclusion of the political dimension were emphasized in interviews by donors, government, and civil society representatives as being critical to the monitoring process. The Framework is seen as a powerful platform for engagement and accountability because it represents the closest thing to a consensus vision on the priorities for peace consolidation in Burundi. There is evidence that the ERSG has already leveraged the Framework in negotiations with the ruling and opposition parties to help resolve political bottlenecks in Burundi.

24. One specific development in Burundi highlighted the unique advantages of the PBC as a dynamic body that brings together key financial and political actors. This occurred when the IMF signaled its intent to delay completion of its Sixth Review. A potential crisis was turned around in part through active work by the PBC – especially the Chair of the Burundi CSM – to defuse tension and create political space for dialogue between the government and the IMF, signaling the strong imperative for the government to resolve key governance issues and for economic actors to consider the impact an economic crisis would have on the political and security situation. Importantly, that work took place both at headquarters and in-country, and directly linked political decision-making at headquarters to field realities.

25. This was a small, albeit important, first step, which demonstrated the need for the UN and the IFIs to work together to drive coherent strategy for recovery, and the potential role for the PBC in contributing to that objective. To consolidate the PBC’s role in this regard, **modalities for interaction with the World Bank and the IMF need to be further streamlined, partly in the field through interaction with E/SRSGs. Informal policy dialogue between the PBC’s Organizational Committee (OC) and the IFIs could help ensure that each body is adequately informed of the others’ policies and functions. This would require willingness on the part of the PBC to invite the IFIs to have sustained and substantive participation in the OC.**

26. Despite these positive signs, there are serious challenges ahead in Burundi. The monitoring mechanism, the *Groupe de Coordination des Partenaires* (GCP), is a very heavy structure and has been slow to get off the ground. Ultimately, it is not clear whether it will function effectively, due to a lack of bureaucratic capacity and, potentially, a lack of political will. That said, it is much too early to pass judgment on the GCP. The

Burundian government and its international partners should be given credit for jointly designing a mechanism that will allow for the strategic and technical follow-up of the commitments made in the Framework, a mechanism that is also linked to a parallel system for monitoring implementation of the PRSP, all of which is presided over jointly by the First and Second Vice-Presidents and the ERSG. This is a first for Burundi and it will take time and patience to make it work. The Secretary-General should ensure that the UN mission is adequately and appropriately staffed to support the government's effort.

27. Circumstances were different for Sierra Leone from the outset. After years of intense international engagement, there were already a number of strategies and coordination mechanisms in play. In addition, the donor community was frustrated by persistent and what many saw as irresolvable governance concerns, while the ruling party was distracted by the upcoming elections, which were scheduled within one year of the start of the PBC's engagement. The confluence of these factors fostered a political climate that was less conducive to strategic prioritization and dialogue. The approach of the Sierra Leone CSM was to focus on building on existing strategies by identifying the medium-term risks to peace and treating what became the Peacebuilding Cooperation Framework as a compact between the international community and the Government of Sierra Leone, seeking to identify and articulate the commitments of each.

28. Overall, most international actors in Sierra Leone agree that this was the right approach given the prevailing 'strategy fatigue.' However, they remain skeptical as to whether the articulation of commitments will actually serve as a platform for mutual accountability. The new government, inaugurated in November 2007, has expressed a commitment to work with the PBC. The Minister of Foreign Affairs was expected to present the approved Peacebuilding Cooperation Framework at a cabinet meeting in order to secure a government-wide mandate for its implementation. This may be a good sign, but it is too early to tell whether there is sufficient national will to meet these commitments and engage constructively.

29. In Sierra Leone, the one area where there has been some traction, and where the linkage between political and financial aspects comes into focus, is energy. While the issue came up in country-level discussions prior to the elections, it was emphasized as one of the top priorities of the new government immediately upon taking office. It was then emphasized strongly when the Chairman of the Sierra Leone CSM visited the country in October 2007, on the basis of which he recommended that the CSM have a thematic discussion on the issue. Following that discussion, the Framework was reviewed and the membership agreed to incorporate energy as a fifth priority. The incorporation of energy highlights an important principle: that an economic risk can pose as significant a threat to peace as security or political risks and that all these risks are deeply intertwined. In this case the PBC fostered negotiation among the relevant stakeholders to garner political support for the inclusion of energy – normally considered a medium-to-long-term development concern – in a framework for peace consolidation. This is another key example where an integrated approach between the PBC and the IFIs is essential.

30. The Sierra Leone energy issue also provided an opportunity for the PBC to show its dynamism in supporting the new government in its first demonstration of strong and focused leadership. Moreover, discussions on energy in the PBC, among other factors, are believed to have generated peer pressure among donors to contribute additional funds or fulfill existing commitments to support the government's promise to restore energy to Freetown by the end of December 2007.

31. There are lingering concerns among national and international actors in the field that the government's strong focus on energy will eclipse the other priorities identified in the Framework. It is understandable that a new government with low capacity and few resources at its disposal would take time to find its footing and articulate its policies across line ministries. However, there is a widespread sense among actors on the ground that the government's window of opportunity is closing. **The PBC has a role to play in ensuring that the government and all its partners take the necessary steps to fulfill their commitments in all the priority areas identified in the Framework.**

32. While there is value in an inclusive process – and such a process certainly has paid dividends in Burundi – in Sierra Leone it was appropriate to lessen the emphasis on process and to focus instead on building on existing frameworks and articulating commitments. Ultimately, each country is unique, and the PBC should guard against the tendency to seek to replicate its first experiences elsewhere. For example, where delicate peace negotiations are ongoing, it may be counter-productive to launch a parallel process that seeks to bring all actors together. In such situations, the PBC’s role may initially be limited to increasing international attention, fostering a more coherent and streamlined international approach, and/or ensuring that resources are directed to critical institution-building needs. A ‘strategy’ may not be necessary in the first instance, but the PBC has demonstrated the value of providing a platform for the political/security and economic/financial actors to come together. **As the PBC takes on new cases with different post-conflict trajectories, it must ensure that it responds to the context on the ground rather than imposing processes or expectations from New York.**

Sustained attention

33. The increased international attention brought to bear on Burundi and Sierra Leone via the PBC is widely felt, especially at the country level. Many actors interviewed expressed the view that the PBC has managed to open or expand a window of opportunity in both countries. In Sierra Leone, in particular, the attention on the country during the electoral period and the PBF funds provided to fill urgent needs for the conduct of the elections are widely perceived as critical factors in facilitating a peaceful electoral process. After 18 months of engagement this is an encouraging sign, but it is important that international attention on Burundi and Sierra Leone not wane. While the country-specific configurations need not meet as intensively now that the frameworks have been developed, they will have to meet at regular intervals to drive course correction as well as to sustain pressure on the government and the international community to live up to their commitments.

34. The recent adoption of the monitoring mechanism in Burundi provides an important path forward in that case. It should be noted, however, that this is not the first time that the UN has adopted strategic monitoring mechanisms – it did so, for example, in Afghanistan in the late 1990s. It is, however, the first time a monitoring mechanism has been adopted that has the buy-in of the government, opposition and local civil society groups, the in-country donors, and the full membership of the PBC – a far more powerful tool. Effective use of the monitoring mechanism by the PBC as well as by the Secretary-General and his representatives to sustain pressure on the government, the political parties, the donors, regional actors, and others will be essential to the longer-term impact of the PBC’s work.

35. Consolidating peace is a slow process that requires change at all levels of the state and society. Post-conflict governments often find themselves in extremely delicate situations, balancing fragile coalitions with very little capacity at their disposal. If the international community is serious about national ownership and sustained attention, it must recognize that the work of the PBC requires patience. Demanding to see concrete results in very short periods is at best unrealistic and at worst counter-productive. At the same time, the extent to which the window of opportunity offered by PBC engagement can be leveraged to deliver peace dividends depends fundamentally on the will of national actors to take responsibility for peace consolidation in their country. As one African ambassador noted in his comments at a PBC retreat in late January 2008, “national ownership means national responsibility.” **No matter how much funding and strategic coordination is brought to bear by the international community, peacebuilding success hinges on national responsibility.**

36. At present, there are concerns among national and international actors that the political situation in Burundi is extremely fragile and that the prospect of elections in 2010 is threatening to distract political actors from their core business of governing. The PBC must maintain its support, monitor progress, and ensure its members live up to their commitments. Of course, the Burundian government must likewise live up to its commitments as articulated in the Strategic Framework.

37. In Sierra Leone, the new government is coming to the end of its honeymoon period. While the peaceful transfer of power breathed new life into the prospects for peace consolidation, there are serious challenges ahead. The PBC must continue to support Sierra Leone by mobilizing resources and keeping all actors to their commitments, but the responsibility for capitalizing on this window of opportunity lies with the government of Sierra Leone.

Coherence and UN coordination

38. The unique composition of the PBC, including P5, top financial and troop contributors, and representatives of the GA and ECOSOC, combined with the participation of IFIs, regional actors, UN entities and civil society in the Country-Specific Meetings (CSMs), is a key asset and should help to build a more inclusive and coherent peacebuilding process. While getting all actors to discuss and agree on a peacebuilding framework in each country is a significant achievement, it has been a challenge for many of the relevant stakeholders to engage effectively. The process has proved to be very cumbersome for the national government, for the UN on the ground, and for PBC members in New York. Much of the challenge lies in the multiple centers of deliberation and decision-making involved in the PBC's work and in the irregular or incomplete flow of information.

39. There is evidence from Burundi that getting all relevant actors engaged at the country level in the development of the frameworks, in discussions on PBF allocations, and in ongoing monitoring activities has contributed to increased coordination. Several international actors in Burundi noted that the PBC has fostered the first ever process where bilaterals and multilaterals discuss their assistance in the same forum with the government. As a result, there have already been several cases where duplication was avoided through discussion and information exchange, contributing to increased coordination at the sectoral level. In Sierra Leone there are many coordination mechanisms that capture different combinations of actors. While some interviewees at the country level felt that there is value in the PBC providing a forum for ongoing dialogue between the government, bilaterals, multilaterals (including the IFIs), regional actors, and civil society – a combination that is not represented elsewhere – other interviewees felt that it does not add much in terms of coordination.

40. Despite these positive signs, the process has been extremely cumbersome, confusing, and frustrating in both countries. Donors who participate actively in the field, in New York, and via their capitals have not always engaged with a single, coherent voice, taking contradictory positions in different venues. PBC members who are not represented in the field may miss opportunities to add their views. Regional actors and organizations are often hampered by a lack of capacity or personnel to engage effectively in New York and in-country. Civil society has faced serious challenges of capacity and access to mobilize effectively beyond the capital and to provide strategic input in a timely manner.⁸ The government, the UN and PBC members have often been over-burdened by this multi-layered process.

41. In New York, members are often inundated with several meetings a week between the CSMs, the Organizational Committee (OC), and the Working Group on Lessons Learned (WGLL). Several members have argued that they simply cannot maintain high-level representation at PBC proceedings with such an intense meeting schedule. **Going forward, the PBC will need to streamline its work, a task that is likely to be facilitated by the experience gained and instruments developed over the past 18 months and with additional advance preparation from a now fully staffed Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO).**

42. With more advance preparation and analysis gathered and transmitted by the PBSO, future CSMs should be able to reduce start-up time and accomplish more in fewer, more-focused meetings. In order to do so, the PBSO must leverage its position in the Secretary-General's Office at the earliest possible stage to draw on resources from across the UN system and outside it in order to develop a relatively robust understanding of

national priorities, existing aid strategies of major donors and multilateral organizations, and critical risks for peace across security, political, and economic dimensions. To this end, PBC members, other major donors, financial institutions, and UN agencies should provide the PBSO with a clear picture of their assistance strategies once a case is referred to the PBC. We note the resource mapping exercise for Guinea-Bissau, prepared by the PBSO, as a promising example of this type of preparation.

43. The use of videoconferencing technology has been beneficial in building a link between the field and headquarters and in raising international attention on the countries on the PBC's agenda. However, there is a persistent feeling among national actors that the videoconferences serve the information needs of PBC members in New York rather than bolster their work at the country level. They have articulated a concern that PBC members' representatives change frequently and are not fully briefed when they attend videoconferences. As a result, meetings tend to go over issues that have already been settled at the country level rather than move the process forward. **In order to ensure that meetings are as productive as possible and to enable a two-way dialogue, the CSM Chair, the PBSO, and the UN presence in-country should work together to prepare a clear and focused agenda and to provide adequate preparatory materials well in advance of the meeting. Fewer meetings would serve to ensure that the meetings that are held are more decision-oriented, and have the additional advantage of helping to enable more senior level participation by members.**

44. In Sierra Leone, in particular, several actors mentioned that there is very little preparation for videoconferences at the country level. As a result, the PBC meetings do not always advance a real policy dialogue. **PBC actors in the field should engage in regular, more-focused meetings during which they tackle one or two issues and then report back or make recommendations to the CSM in New York.** Videoconferences could then take place less frequently but would be more productive and focused. There is a real opportunity for a new ERSG to guide such a process in Sierra Leone.

45. The fact that the PBC has no dedicated interface at the country level to liaise with all relevant actors on a day-to-day basis is seen as one of the key factors preventing a more efficient flow of information in Burundi and Sierra Leone. The BINUB and UNIOSIL staffs that have been tasked to liaise with the PBSO and country-level actors have been doing a tremendous job to support the PBC process, but they too have full-time jobs. **The PBSO in cooperation with the UN presence on the ground should engage at least one dedicated officer at the country level to handle the day-to-day work of building relationships, managing consultations and supporting the monitoring process.** It is promising to see this lesson reflected in the hiring of an officer to support the PBC process at the country level by PBSO and UNOGBIS.

46. PBC members also have a critical role to play in ensuring that the Commission works as efficiently as possible. Those members who are represented at the country level should support the work of the OC and CSM Chairs to ensure that information is made available in a timely manner. **CSM Chairs may wish to consider working more closely with PBC representatives in the field to ensure a more efficient flow of information to the entire Commission.** In order to enable a more fruitful interaction between headquarters and the field, **permanent missions to the UN may wish to consider developing in-house expertise on peacebuilding, especially for countries that, by virtue of their Security Council membership or role as major troop or financial contributors, are likely to maintain their membership over time.** Fostering peacebuilding expertise within member state missions will contribute to the PBC's role of gathering and transmitting lessons learned to better support the countries on its agenda.

47. One of the persistent criticisms of PBC deliberations is that the major donors have at times been inconsistent in the policies promoted by New York and field representatives or that their political and development representatives in the field send contradictory messages regarding the PBC. The Commission was created to bring strategic coherence to the activities of the many actors engaged in supporting post-conflict transitions. Not only is the process of agreeing on a common approach hampered by individual actors' internal incoherence, but the original vision for the PBC cannot be achieved if individual stakeholders

are inconsistent in the policies and priorities they promote in different venues. **PBC members must recognize that their constructive engagement is crucial at all levels, which will demand greater coherence in each member's approach between field, capital, and New York representation.**

48. It is also worth recording the concern of several PBC members that participation by the P5, with the notable exception of the UK, has tended to be intermittent and at a comparatively low level. **P5 members, having negotiated permanent seats on the PBC, have a particular responsibility to ensure effective linkage between the PBC and the Security Council, or to adequately represent UNSC views within the PBC in order to ensure coherence.**

Mobilizing resources and early financing for (re)building institutions

49. Pledges at the Burundi roundtable in May 2007 are encouraging. But much remains to be done to marshal international resources. Indeed, most members we interviewed agreed that the PBC's resource mobilization role has been under-exploited. In Sierra Leone, especially, where peacebuilding is further along and many strategies and coordination mechanisms already exist, the resource mobilization function of the PBC is thought to be its core value-added.

50. We note the efforts underway in both CSMs to operationalize the PBC's resource mobilization mandate. Specifically, we note the recent appointment by the Norwegian and Dutch governments, as joint Chairs of the Burundi Roundtable, of a Special Envoy for the follow-up of commitments made last May, and efforts underway by the Sierra Leone CSM to increase advocacy in key capitals as well as linking the PBC's engagement to the Consultative Group mechanism.

51. It is worth emphasizing that the PBC is mandated to harness existing international efforts and bring additional resources to bear over a sustained period of time. As the High-level Panel argued, one of the critical shortcomings of peacebuilding is that the international architecture is simply not well-organized to provide an adequate response. With resources disproportionately directed towards peacekeeping and emergency humanitarian needs, insufficient attention is paid to medium-to-long-term tasks such as building sustainable institutions. At the same time, financing instruments for long-term development are too slow and cumbersome to respond to needs in fragile post-conflict environments. As the Annual Progress Report on the implementation of Sierra Leone's PRSP concludes, "current aid modalities ... are not flexible enough to respond appropriately to the current post-conflict state of the economy."⁹

52. International assistance to countries emerging from conflict often starts to flow too late, but also peaks too early, when state capacity to manage and administer resources is still too low, and declines just at the point where absorptive capacity increases.¹⁰ Aid flows are unpredictable and suffer from short planning horizons, making it difficult for recipient countries to plan and budget effectively and impairing their ability to implement much-needed reforms. **International resources need to be channeled into the business of building state institutions (national and local) from the very earliest days of post-conflict engagement in order to build absorptive capacity and maintain a stable political process as international engagement declines.** This includes new and existing multi- and bilateral resources from a variety of donors. The starkest example is in the field of rule of law, where the amount of money that flows through development windows for police and judicial systems is merely a fraction of that which is available through defense ministries for the retraining of armies.

53. It is impossible to assess the PBC's potential role in this area because the first countries on its agenda were well past the early phase of recovery. The PBF has been used to help on these issues in non-PBC cases, but the sums involved are minimal – essentially seed funding. As donors – notably the UK – begin to explore possible new modalities for early recovery financing, the issue of the connection to the PBF will be an important concern.

54. Another major obstacle is that ongoing development assistance programs are difficult to adapt in response to changing realities on the ground. While some donors may be willing in principle to be responsive in their aid strategies to critical peacebuilding priorities identified through the PBC process, funding cycles, bureaucratic rules, and disbursement instruments do not always allow for quick response to changes in the field. Many donors have recognized this deficiency, as evidenced by ongoing efforts to improve aid effectiveness in fragile contexts, but there remains much work to be done. **There is a potential role for the Organizational Committee to examine these persistent shortcomings in the international aid architecture to countries in transition.**

55. **The PBC should serve the dual function of harnessing existing efforts and bringing additional resources to bear in the service of a strategic vision for peace consolidation. In order to do so, it needs a clear picture of assistance from the outset to determine whether and how support should be modified and new resources channeled.** Mapping resource flows in post-conflict situations is notoriously difficult. In many post-conflict countries, there is no single actor or entity that has a clear picture of how much assistance is pledged, committed, or eventually disbursed, or whether disbursements follow an agreed schedule. Ideally, the national government should be the locus for aid mapping and tracking. However, in post-conflict countries the institutional infrastructure and human capacity needed to fulfill this task is often underdeveloped or absent. Supporting the government to build this capacity is an important objective and should be undertaken in parallel with other priorities.

56. We note ongoing efforts to build this capacity in Burundi's National Aid Coordination Committee (CNCA) and Sierra Leone's Development Assistance Coordination Office (DACO). Importantly, both of these entities are linked to the relevant monitoring mechanisms in each country and have the potential to hold the countries' international partners accountable for their commitments. In Burundi, however, the CNCA is not fully operational. An immediate mapping of existing resource flows should have been conducted to develop a baseline understanding of whether the priorities identified in the Strategic Framework are adequately resourced and to track resources flows to these priorities over time.

57. **In future cases, there is a potential role for the PBSO and the UN presence on the ground – working with the World Bank, UNDP, DPKO, OCHA, and others – to provide the PBC an initial map of resource flows to the countries on the its agenda, highlighting gaps and overlaps.** This initial mapping can serve as a platform for monitoring individual as well as collective commitments. On this front, the mapping of resource flows to Guinea-Bissau recently prepared by the PBSO is a good start and should be continued.

58. In interviews with PBC members at headquarters, we encountered two sets of views in relation to resource mobilization and the role of the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) that are not just at odds with one another but also – as we see it – with the mandate of the PBC and PBF. First, some members, mostly non-donors, believed that the PBF should operate more closely under the direction of the PBC. Second, others, mostly donors, viewed the PBF as the key resource mobilization function of the PBC. In contrast to these views, we see, first, the importance of the Secretary-General retaining flexibility in the use of the PBF to meet critical needs that typically go unfulfilled in post-conflict contexts. The PBF is intended to fund very urgent, targeted, and discrete interventions, some of which would otherwise go unfunded because they arise in areas that do not attract traditional development assistance; this was well illustrated by the use of the PBF to fund time-critical activities in the lead-up to the Sierra Leone elections. Second, we believe that the PBC has a far wider resource mobilization responsibility than can be met through the PBF. **The PBC's resource mobilization mandate extends far beyond the PBF and should aim to harness existing resources and marshal new resources in the service of a more strategic and coherent approach to peace consolidation. The relatively small, targeted, and short-term PBF funds should be reserved for very immediate, critical, or catalytic priorities.**

59. Related is the new focus by PBF donors on whether the Fund's expenditure is consistent with OECD/DAC criteria. While we understand donors' concerns in this regard, and take note of the PBSO's estimate that ca. 80% of PBF-funded activities would likely meet DAC criteria, we believe that donors should be cautious in pushing this issue, lest their efforts result in hamstringing the functioning of the PBF – which would obviate the point of its establishment.

60. Mobilizing new resources from donors who have not traditionally engaged in the countries on the PBC's agenda is at the core of the PBC's mandate, but poses additional obstacles. Countries that do not have a diplomatic presence in the countries in question need an entry point if they wish to contribute. In Burundi, pooled funding mechanisms at the sector level are providing this opportunity to non-present donors. In the education sector, for example, the UK, France, Belgium, and Luxembourg, which does not have diplomatic representation in the country, have set up a common fund. Such funding mechanisms have proven in other cases to enhance coherence and alignment with national priorities, to reduce transaction costs for the national government, and to build local financial management capacity.¹¹ Indeed, the original objective for establishing a common fund to support education in Burundi was to improve donor coherence, but such mechanisms can also provide the necessary transparency and accountability to non-present donors who wish to contribute. The Peacebuilding Cooperation Framework for Sierra Leone also refers to the potential for leveraging multi-donor funding mechanisms to help the PBC operationalize its resource mobilization mandate. **Options for pooled funding should be explored, and, where opportunities exist, the PBC should encourage interested contributors to make use of them.**

61. Mobilizing international resources should not be confined to financing. The PBC could help foster increased south-south cooperation through the transfer of technical assistance, equipment and technology. Several PBC members have stated that they wish to provide support in the form of non-financial resources and are likely to have a more nuanced understanding of the challenges faced by post-conflict governments. There is some preliminary evidence to suggest that some non-traditional donors in Burundi and Sierra Leone are exploring expanded cooperation based on discussions on priorities in PBC meetings. The PBC can and should help foster this type of engagement.

PBC in context: relations with other bodies

62. While the core business of the PBC is to support the achievement of results on the ground, the Organizational Committee (OC) has an important role to play in resolving outstanding procedural issues, navigating the PBC's relationship with other UN organs, supporting the integration of external players such as the IFIs into PBC processes, and addressing strategic issues that will arise across cases and will need to be resolved at a broad policy level.

63. During the period in review, the work of the OC has been clouded by its use as a proxy in the ongoing battle over the balance of power between the Security Council and the General Assembly, an issue that currently colors much UN debate. Several members credited the Japanese Chair of the PBC with ensuring that this issue did not overwhelm the broader work of the Commission during their tenure. In this regard, **it is worth noting that the establishment of the PBC does not and cannot alter the responsibilities of Charter bodies. It is the responsibility of those bodies to make effective use of PBC advice – not the other way around.**

64. **Strategic issues that could be usefully addressed by the OC include (a) improving the responsiveness of aid instruments to the special needs and capacities of post-conflict contexts, as discussed above, and (b) promoting coordinated support for peacebuilding in the countries on its agenda through PBC members' participation in other UN and multilateral bodies including the governing boards of the funds, agencies and programs, governing boards of the IFIs, the G8, and regional organizations such as EU, ECOWAS, and AU.**

65. Among the issues that some PBC members expressed interest in seeing the OC discuss are policy positions of the international financial institutions as they pertain to post-conflict contexts. While we see merit in this, it would certainly have to be informed by a more up-to-date understanding of IFI policy than characterizes general discussion at the UN, and should be premised on greater participation of the IFIs in the work of the PBC, including the OC.

66. In addition to chairing the OC, the PBC Chair has an important role to play in reaching out to other actors. Ongoing efforts by the current Chair to reach out to the World Bank and IMF, as well as to foster communication with the President of the Security Council, the President of the General Assembly, and the ECOSOC Chairman, have been very productive. All actors benefit from these multiple lines of formal and informal communication between the PBC and the UN's principal organs.

67. To ensure that performance trumps procedure rather than the reverse, the PBC should retain flexibility in its relationship and communications with the Security Council, the GA, and ECOSOC. The approach taken by the Burundi CSM of negotiating conclusions and recommendations following the Chair's mission in early September and sending the final document to all three organs was recognized by many members as a good model.

Looking Forward

Selection of cases

68. Early progress is encouraging, but it is critical that international attention not wane from Burundi and Sierra Leone and that Guinea-Bissau continues to get the attention and support it requires. At the same time, it is clear that the PBC is ready to take on new cases. A common understanding is evolving regarding the PBC's potential contribution in countries in different phases of their transition. The selection of the next cases for the PBC's agenda will heavily shape the body's ability to consolidate its impact, streamline its procedures, and highlight its unique contribution.

69. **Going forward, the PBC should consider engaging in cases where the Security Council is beginning to contemplate a handover or draw-down.** The PBC's early success in bringing security, political, and development considerations into a common framework would be a valuable asset in helping to plan for such transitions. In particular, the PBC could work with the Security Council to ensure adequate attention to and coherence in the institution-building aspects of reconstruction, an important consideration in deciding the pace and manner of a peacekeeping draw-down. Likewise, there is a potential for the PBC to add value early on in the planning process, by ensuring that institution-building concerns are adequately reflected in early action. Given the imperative for strong UN leadership from the field (discussed below), interaction between the PBC and the Security Council could be valuable in ensuring an extensive and integrated UN presence in a particular case – as may be relevant in Guinea-Bissau.

70. By engaging in such cases, the PBC would leverage the expertise of troop contributors, regional actors, and other non-donors in the Country-Specific Meetings (CSMs). It would also usefully clarify to countries considering seeking PBC support that placement on the PBC agenda does not necessarily mean removal from that of the Security Council – currently a point of some confusion internationally.

71. **The Commission should be flexible in its approach to new cases, while retaining the possibility of evolution in its engagement as a country's needs change. In addition to 'full' CSMs, along the lines of the Burundi and Sierra Leone configurations, the PBC could consider 'exploratory' or 'advance planning' working groups for cases with a more focused mandate, or necessitating a lighter touch. Adoption of a 'tiered' or 'differentiated' agenda will be critical for enhancing PBC effectiveness and efficiency.**

72. The capacities of the PBSO will be critical in providing support across these varying types of cases. The PBSO should play a complementary role to the PBC vis à vis the UN system, for example by serving as a second set of eyes during Integrated Mission Planning Processes to ensure that medium-term peacebuilding considerations are taken into account. The PBSO's ability to pull together existing resources across the Secretariat and agencies, funds, and programs will be critical to these efforts if the PBC is to be provided with timely analysis of new and potential cases.

73. A debate that will soon confront the PBC is whether (or when) to take on 'large' cases. So far, the three cases on the PBC's agenda are small both in size of the country and in international financial commitments. PBC members have been understandably concerned to first demonstrate value-added in smaller cases before taking on larger challenges. However, critical needs are looming, and the PBC will soon have to confront a choice between keeping its case-load small but risking being seen as irrelevant in the face of peacebuilding reversals in larger, high-profile cases, or tackling these cases head on.

Role of the Secretary-General and the PBSO

74. During its first year of operation, there was a sense among PBC members of a lack of direction from the PBSO – a view we see as somewhat uncharitable, given that the PBSO was barely staffed during much of the year. With the approval of the interim budget, and with decisions by the SG’s Policy Committee that established a central strategy role for the PBSO, the Office now has the requisite tools to perform its intended functions. Even without adequate staffing, the PBSO did provide important and substantive backstopping to the chairs of the country-specific mechanisms, a function greatly appreciated by those chairs.

75. Interviews with broader UN stakeholders make clear what the PBSO will itself acknowledge, that it has not yet established a clear pattern of working with DPKO, UNDP, the World Bank, and other critical actors in shaping, setting, or monitoring strategy – Policy Committee decisions notwithstanding. This is in part a function of other departments’ confusion over the PBSO’s role, exacerbated by lack of consultation in the area of lessons learned and best practices.

76. The relationship between the PBSO and other departments was also set on the wrong path by misunderstandings about the nature of proposed secondments. Decisions of the Policy Committee on the establishment of the PBSO included agreements that DPA, DPKO, OCHA, and UNDP, inter alia, would second staff to the PBSO to ensure the PBSO fostered a truly integrated perspective in its interactions with the PBC. Early requests from the head of PBSO for such secondments were not met, weakening PBSO out of the gate. On the other hand, the initial agreement pertaining to secondments included the point that secondments from departments/agencies should be in exchange for actual posts from the PBSO budget – repeated experience with secondments suggests that unless the seconding agency receives a post in return, they are unlikely to propose highly qualified personnel for the secondment positions. **This issue should be revisited: it remains in the interest of the Organization for PBSO to emerge as a truly interdepartmental, interagency pool of the best available talent, to advise the Secretary-General and the PBC on overall peacebuilding strategy.**

77. The sense of a lack of direction is also a function of sporadic engagement by the Secretary-General. The PBC and the PBSO are instruments that the Secretary-General can use to drive coherent strategy across the Organization – Secretariat and agencies. To date, however, there has been little involvement by the Secretary-General, a fact widely noted by members. Certainly, the SG could do more to ensure that the strategies emerging from the PBC, rooted as they are in intergovernmental decisions, were taken fully into account by all parts of the UN system.

78. Although there are important constraints on the PBSO in the form of some members’ views that it should focus on providing secretariat support to the PBC itself, we nevertheless see scope for the PBSO to be used more energetically by the Secretary-General to help drive strategic coordination. This might most effectively be achieved through greater interaction between the PBSO and the Policy Committee on overall strategy, as well as through substantive engagement between the PBSO and expanded regional departments of DPA, if those are authorized by the membership.

79. Moreover, as we discuss further below, effective leadership of and staff capacity within the UN mission in a PBC country is crucial to drive coherent strategy and guide the Commission’s engagement. The SG must give due attention to appointing a senior representative to the post of ERSG at this critical time in Sierra Leone. As the international community seeks to support a fragile but committed new government while the UN is transitioning to a reduced structure and mandate within the year, leadership will be essential to ensure that critical issues are not neglected. In addition, the structure, mandate, and capacity of the follow-on UN mission in Sierra Leone must account for the capacity required to support both PBC engagement and the efforts of the government as it seeks to fulfill its commitments in the Peacebuilding Cooperation Framework.

80. In the area of lessons learned and best practice, the vast majority of PBC members are concerned that the support from the PBSO to the Working Group on Lessons Learned does not effectively inform their day-to-day work on the countries on their agenda. While the issues raised in such meetings may be relevant to one or all of the CSMs, members have said that the material presented is often too general, with no analysis of how to translate the broad ‘lessons’ presented into useful recommendations for the countries on their agenda. Such meetings are viewed by many members as interesting but not directly useful, and at times a distraction from the core work of the PBC. This view contributes to increasing frustration over an already heavy meeting schedule, feeding perceptions of the PBC as nothing but a talk shop. On the other hand, some of the meetings – for example, a session on the fiscal requirements of statebuilding – have been seen as helping build broader understanding of peacebuilding within the membership. **Closer cooperation between PBSO and the Best Practices Section of DPKO, the policy section of UNDP/BCPR, DPA’s Mediation Support Unit, and other relevant providers of lessons learned and best practice advice is needed to identify a clear niche and value-added. The PBSO could also work more closely with regional sections of DPKO, DPA, and UNDP to ensure that general lessons learned are made directly relevant to the PBC’s work on specific countries.**

81. **The PBSO should leverage its unique position – inside the Secretary-General’s office, and attached to a member state body with broad composition – to develop its capacities to (a) encourage the development of coherent strategy, (b) monitor the implementation of agreed strategy and resource flows, and (c) evaluate progress towards mid-term goals. This will require (a) clearer understanding among the relevant parties that the PBSO’s functionality lies in its ability to bring all parts of the system together in the development of coherent strategy, and (b) recognition from the PBSO that this means drawing more closely and more effectively on existing, albeit partial, strategy processes. In this regard, the World Bank LICUS Unit’s recognition of the Integrated Peacebuilding Strategy process as a framework *within which* it can develop its post-conflict needs assessment and plans is an important step forward that should be actively consolidated.**

Role of the E/SRSG and UN presence on the ground

82. At the core of the High-level Panel’s analysis was the need to drive coordination at headquarters and in the field among the multiplicity of actors in post-conflict contexts. The Panel noted that in the field robust coordination mechanisms involving governments, bilateral donors, the international financial institutions, and the United Nations coordinator (Special Representative of the Secretary-General or Resident Coordinator) had proved their value for ensuring effective peacebuilding. Thus, they recommended that “special representatives should have the authority and guidance to work with relevant parties to establish [coordination] mechanisms, as well as the resources to perform coordination functions effectively, including ensuring that the sequencing of United Nations assessments and activities is consistent with Government priorities.”¹² To date, such mandates are provided to E/SRSGs only episodically.

83. The work of the PBC’s CSMs should support the E/SRSG to establish or reinforce the necessary coordination mechanisms working alongside the government and bringing in all UN entities represented on the ground as well as other international actors. The process to date, as described above, has placed a large burden on actors in the field, particularly the government, ESRGs, and BINUB and UNIOSIL staff, rather than empowered them to drive a more strategic and coordinated approach. **This relationship must be reversed so that the PBC in New York serves field-level efforts to achieve sustainable peacebuilding results rather than create an extra burden.**

84. At the same time, experience in Burundi and Sierra Leone has shown that the leadership role of the E/SRSG and the UN presence on the ground where it has been effectively applied has been crucial for PBC engagement. The absence of an ESRG in Sierra Leone since Victor Angelo’s departure has been acutely felt. **As a non-operational intergovernmental body, the PBC can rally actors around a common strategy**

and bring international attention and resources, but the UN presence on the ground has to guide the day-to-day work of ongoing dialogue, consultations, and coordination. If the UN presence does not have the leadership or capacity to fulfill this function, the PBC's impact will be limited.

The Peacebuilding Fund (PBF)

85. As we note above, the process in the field got off to a difficult start because of overemphasis on the PBF. Part of the problem stemmed from the fact that the distinction between these two components of the UN's new peacebuilding architecture and the unique features of each were not well-explained at the country level. This confusion has been largely rectified among the main actors, but the misunderstanding persists especially among civil society actors and government officials who are not involved in the core work of the Commission.

86. Some of the delays in developing and approving PBF projects are rooted in a misunderstanding of the scope and objectives of the Fund, which took time to clarify. Recognizing that the PBC and PBF were new endeavors, the initial confusion is understandable. Indeed, the PBSO, BINUB, and UNIOSIL have made significant efforts to clarify the purpose and objectives of each aspect of the peacebuilding architecture. **Building on this experience for future cases, it is essential that the structure and objectives of the peacebuilding architecture are well-explained from the outset.** It seems that this lesson has been internalized by the PBSO and the Chair of the Guinea-Bissau CSM, who have made a strong effort to convey the role and remit of each element of the peacebuilding architecture to national actors and to consider innovative approaches to calibrating the focus between the PBC and the PBF.

87. It is worth noting that several interviewees in Burundi felt that the process of developing, discussing, and approving the PBF projects has been beneficial for coordination and confidence-building. The PBF Steering Committee was the first instance where all actors came together and it later served as the primary venue for developing the Strategic Framework, although many more consultations were held to broaden the level of inclusion. Discussion of each project seems to have fostered increased information exchange, coordination, and complementarity as the opportunity was used to highlight projects that are already underway, thereby avoiding duplication in a given sector. In addition, the experience of developing projects and engaging stakeholders in consultations appears to have contributed to building the capacity of national actors.

88. In contrast, the PBF process in Sierra Leone has not been as well managed. Despite notable successes, especially in relation to the elections, lack of transparency about the rules and procedures for managing the Fund has generated frustrations and misperceptions. The role of UNDP as fund manager and its associated financial and procurement procedures were not clearly explained to government partners. Compounding this problem, the respective roles of and relationship between UNIOSIL and UNDP for managing the PBF are unclear, resulting in a lack of oversight and clear accountability for supporting the development of project proposals, resolving obstacles, and addressing delays. These factors related to the PBF have been detrimental to many stakeholders' general perceptions of the PBC. Although most actors now understand that the two elements of the peacebuilding architecture are distinct, they are viewed through the same lens at the country level.

89. The experience in Sierra Leone shows that no matter how separate the PBC and the PBF are institutionally, the manner in which the PBF is handled will impact perceptions of the PBC process and the relationship between national and international actors. While our study did not focus on the PBF, it is worth emphasizing that positive or negative experiences with the PBF are likely to taint the perceptions and attitudes of country-level actors towards the PBC. Going forward, **it is worth bearing in mind that the PBF has an equal potential to leverage goodwill as to create tensions and misunderstandings.**

Other gaps: rapid civilian response

In undertaking the problem assessment that led to the proposals for the PBC, hindsight suggests that the High-level Panel underestimated a critical factor: the lack of ready deployable civilians in such critical functions as strategic planning, advisory support in the rule of law for early peacebuilding response. This is an area requiring new efforts. The creation of the Rule of Law and Police Institutions pillar at DPKO and the establishment of a 'surge' capacity in UNDP/BCPR are both steps in the right direction, but further efforts are required to ensure that the UN can rely on an early, predictable supply of high-quality and appropriate talent from north and south to fulfill vital civilian peacebuilding tasks in the earliest phases of engagement. The Government of Denmark has commissioned CIC to undertake a detailed background study on rapid deployment of civilians and develop an action plan for addressing the problem. Other governments have highlighted the problem as well; most recently, the UK government called for a stand-by reserve of civilians.

Conclusion

If three years is the right timeframe to assess a new intergovernmental organ, we can say at the halfway mark that the PBC is getting there but still has a long way to go. The real challenge lies ahead. Over the next 18 months, the PBC will have to demonstrate that it can hold all actors to their commitments. In particular, it will have to exert its leverage to ensure that national actors take responsibility for implementing the necessary reforms and that international actors mobilize additional resources and direct them in a coherent and predictable manner. Continued focus on its performance by all stakeholders will be necessary if it is to (a) consolidate its positive impact on cases undertaken to date, and (b) extend its reach to new cases. In selecting new cases, the PBC should be cognizant of its potential to solidify its role as the central international meeting ground of political/security and financial/development actors.

The strategic function of the PBC

90. We end by highlighting the *strategic* function of the PBC. This is a function of the body's two unique advantages.

91. First, it is the only body in the UN system that explicitly links the political, security, and economic functions of the Organization – it is thus uniquely placed to have an overview of the Organization's role in these interlocking areas. Indeed, if the PBC were to expand the degree and improve the nature of its interaction with the IFIs, it would constitute the best situated body in the international system to assess overarching strategy for peace consolidation.

92. Second, the PBC constitutes a 'right-sized' body of members, crossing north-south divides. The vast majority of these members are substantial contributors to the UN and through their actions in the body have demonstrated their interest not just in the success of the institution but in the fulfillment of its broader purposes. Though a small minority of countries in the body continues to demonstrate a willingness to subordinate performance to procedure, and do have opportunities to frustrate progress, this is a diminishing irritant within the PBC. Continued strong engagement by committed members will keep this aspect of the PBC to the sidelines. By contrast, the body has an opportunity, uniquely within the current architecture, to help overcome the north-south, political/development divides that have come to shape much UN debate and action since the Iraq war exacerbated international divides in the world body, and UNSC reform efforts failed to bridge them. Though this is again a 'side effect' of the PBC, it is a potentially vital one.

Recommendations

In the coming 18 months, the PBC/PBSO should pursue a four-part strategy to consolidate progress made and enhance overall impact:

(1) Consolidate progress and streamline procedures in the areas of political/financial linkage, strategy, and sustaining attention

a. Monitoring of commitments

- In order to support the objective of mutual accountability, the Secretary-General should use the PBSO's capacity to monitor resource flows and point out when donors are falling short of their commitments.
- The PBC must continue to monitor the recipient governments' progress from New York, but results cannot be achieved overnight and the PBC must balance its desire to see results with the often slow pace of progress on the ground.

b. Streamline procedures

- The PBC will need to streamline its work, a task that is likely to be made easier by the experience gained and instruments developed over the past 18 months and with additional advance preparation from a now fully staffed PBSO.
- Critically, this must involve far fewer meetings of the country-specific mechanisms to allow for (a) more substantial preparation, and (b) more-consistent, higher-level participation by PBC members.
- To ensure that deliberations in New York are driven by field realities, PBC members in-country should interact regularly under the leadership of the E/SRSG in order to report back and make recommendations to the CSM in New York. CSM Chairs may also consider working more closely with PBC members in the field to ensure a more efficient flow of information to the entire Commission.

c. Selection of new cases

- The PBC should consider engaging in places where the Security Council is beginning to contemplate a handover or draw-down.
- The Commission should be flexible in its approach to new cases, while retaining the possibility of evolution in its engagement as a country's needs change. In addition to 'full' CSMs, along the lines of the Burundi and Sierra Leone configurations, the PBC could consider 'exploratory' or 'advance planning' working groups for cases or similar, lighter alternative formats.
- Adoption of a 'tiered' or 'differentiated' agenda would be helpful for enhancing PBC effectiveness and efficiency, as well as for ensuring that the PBC can broaden its scope to engage new countries seeking attention and support – which is important for both equity and political reasons.

d. Modalities for IFI interaction

- These modalities will have to be solidified and streamlined, partly in the field in the interaction with E/SRSGs, but also at the policy level. Informal dialogue between the PBC's Organizational Committee and the IFIs could help ensure that each body is adequately informed of others' policies and functions. This would require willingness on the part of the PBC to invite the IFIs to have sustained and substantive participation in the Organizational Committee.

(2) Focus efforts on mobilization of resources (financial and other)

- It should be stressed that the PBC's resource mobilization mandate extends far beyond the PBF: it should harness existing international efforts and bring additional resources to bear over a sustained period of time with a specific focus on (re)building state institutions that will be able to sustain the hard-won gains of peace.
- To ensure that all potential contributions can be harnessed, options for pooled funding and south-south cooperation should be explored and, where opportunities exist, the PBC should encourage all interested actors to make use of them.

(3) Coordination

- PBC members must recognize that their constructive engagement is crucial at all levels, which will demand greater coherence in each member's approach between field, capital, and New York representation.
- It is now the job of the Secretary-General and his Special/Executive Representatives to drive coordination around the approved frameworks in Burundi and Sierra Leone. The PBC should empower the PBSO to play that role vis-à-vis the UN system.
- Financial contributors to Burundi and Sierra Leone will also have to ensure that their funding decisions reinforce the frameworks. The Secretary-General should use the PBSO's capacity for monitoring to track resource flows, and should not be shy about pointing out when donors are falling short of their commitments or undermining the agreed strategy – a task better done at headquarters than in the field, where E/SRSGs will have to tread more carefully in their relationships with key donors.

(4) Communication

- In consultations during the preparation of this report, especially in capitals, we repeatedly found that perceptions of the PBC remained fixed from roughly one year ago, when members and outsiders alike were frustrated by the prominence of procedural fights; when the PBSO was still understaffed; and when real outcomes in the field had not yet transpired. Members will have to undertake efforts in their own capitals, and with their civil society organizations, to bring attention to new developments and the now more widely shared sense of cautious optimism about the PBC. Japan's efforts to hold a PBC Greentree Retreat and a Tokyo outreach session are to be noted in this regard.
- It is also the case that many SRSGs with whom CIC/IPI are in communication also share the views noted above about PBC/PBSO, and serious efforts will have to be undertaken by the SG's Office to ensure adequate briefing/information is available to E/SRSGs deployed in countries that may become candidates for PBC membership.

Endnotes

¹ The principal authors of this report were Jenna Slotin and Bruce Jones, with additional input from Vanessa Wyeth and Rahul Chandran. Additional support to the joint CIC/IPI statebuilding programs that made this research possible was provided by the Carnegie Corporation of New York.

² Due to the timeframe within which this Review was initiated and completed, we did not conduct an in-depth analysis of the PBC's new role in Guinea-Bissau. Relevant developments regarding Guinea-Bissau are noted in the body of the text.

³ UN Doc. A/Res/60/180, December 30, 2005; UN Doc. S/Res/1645, December 20, 2005.

⁴ Notably, the NYU Center on International Cooperation in 2000 proposed the establishment of a Strategic Recovery Facility – a body with a similar mandate to that initially established for the PBC, but designed to exist outside of the UN system. See Shepard Forman, Stewart Patrick, and Dirk Salmons, “Recovering from Conflict: Strategy for an International Response,” *Paying for Essentials, A Policy Paper Series*, NYU Center on International Cooperation, New York, 2000.

⁵ Report of the High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change, *A More Secure World: Our Shared Responsibility*, New York, United Nations, 2004, para. 225.

⁶ UN Doc. A/Res/60/180, December 30, 2005; UN Doc. S/Res/1645, December 20, 2005.

⁷ For further elucidation of this argument, see *From Fragility to Resilience*, a CIC/IPI Paper for the OECD-DAC Fragile States Group, Paris, March 2008.

⁸ While civil society access and engagement were not the focus of our study, some general concerns were raised in our interviews at headquarters and in the field. The inclusion of one or two civil society representatives is perceived by many as tokenistic; it is unrealistic to expect one or two individuals to accurately reflect the views of a tremendously diverse constituency. Moreover, the overall engagement with civil society tends to be Bujumbura/Freetown-focused, resulting in a two-way deficit: people in remote areas are not at all aware of the PBC and the development of a peacebuilding strategy, and the PBC does not get an accurate picture of people's needs and concerns outside the capital. These shortcomings will not be easily resolved. While the PBC managed to adopt Guidelines for Civil Society Engagement in June 2007, they are considered by some to be too restrictive. Nevertheless, the widespread commitment of PBC members to promoting civil society engagement in the Commission's proceedings in New York and in the field holds some promise. For a more detailed analysis of civil society engagement see *Consolidating Peace? Views from Sierra Leone and Burundi on the United Nations Peacebuilding Commission*, a study by ActionAid, CAFOD, and CARE International, 2007.

⁹ Republic of Sierra Leone, *Annual Progress Report Sierra Leone Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper*, May 2005 – June 2006.

¹⁰ Paul Collier et al. *Breaking the Conflict Trap: Civil War and Development Policy* (Washington, DC: World Bank and Oxford University Press, 2003).

¹¹ Scanteam / Norway, *Review of Post-Crisis Multi-Donor Trust Funds* (2007).

¹² Report of the High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change, *A More Secure World: Our Shared Responsibility*, New York, United Nations, 2004, para. 226.