

Peacebuilding Commission Annual Session

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On 2 November, the Peacebuilding Commission convened its annual session under the theme "Prevention, Protection and Peacebuilding in the Midst of the COVID-19 Pandemic". The session was chaired by the PBC Chair, H.E. Mr. Bob Afoa. He offered an opportunity to emphasize the centrality of peacebuilding in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic and to share practices and experiences with key partners on ensuring sustained support to nationally and locally owned peacebuilding strategies and initiatives in conflict-affected countries; make concrete suggestions for how the Peacebuilding Commission can be better utilized in promoting more coherent and sustainable approaches to peacebuilding financing and in ensuring conflict-sensitive recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic; consider options for ensuring predictable and sustained financing of United Nations peacebuilding activities, including those proposed by the Secretary-General, as well as suggestions by Member States and civil society, which could be implemented on a bilateral, or multilateral basis; identify good practices from the catalytic and flexible approach of the PBF, its complementarity with other funding mechanisms, and its synergies with the PBC.

In his opening remarks, the Chair stressed that despite knowing that prevention works and is cost effective, little progress has been made in financing peacebuilding. He noted that financing currently remains heavily dependent on a small group of traditional donors to provide voluntary and extra-budgetary support. While the annual session would explore options for predictable and sustained financing, the Chair also announced that the PBC will co-chair a replenishment conference for the Peacebuilding Fund in January 2021 to discuss meeting targets and receive pledges.

In his recorded remarks, the Secretary-General emphasized that adequate, predictable and sustained financing was more important than ever in view of the COVID-19 pandemic and called for concrete action. He recalled that the Peacebuilding Fund was quick to respond to the pandemic in mission and non-mission settings and, given that the demands for the fund far exceed the resources, the PBF target for 2020 was scaled back by \$30 billion. He informed that, without the voluntary contributions of Member States, the PBF would have been unable to meet its target. He called on Member States to make voluntary contributions to the PBF. He also informed that, without the voluntary contributions of Member States, the PBF would have been unable to meet its target. He called on Member States to make voluntary contributions to the PBF. He also informed that, without the voluntary contributions of Member States, the PBF would have been unable to meet its target. He called on Member States to make voluntary contributions to the PBF.

Ms. Anne Anderson, Chair of the PBF Advisory Group emphasized that financing for peacebuilding is insufficient, unsustainable and dependent on a small donor base. She stated that the PBF Advisory Group is fully committed to maximizing value for money; however, a critical mass of resources is required to respond to the needs, particularly in view of the COVID pandemic. She noted that the PBF funds are stagnant and far below the target for 2021. Noting the catalytic nature of the PBF, she explained how the PBF complements and categorizes other sources of financing by leveraging funds, noting that between 2017 and 2019 the PBF mobilized eight additional dollars for every dollar spent. She also stressed that the PBF helps to develop processes and frameworks and establish proof of concept which subsequently encourages investment and scale up by other partners. In this regard, she provided examples of PBF pilot projects which spurred additional investment by partners such as the EU and African Union. She informed that 40 percent of PBF investments are in the subregion and internationally. She also noted that across the UN family, and reiterated the effectiveness of investing in prevention. Ms. Anderson closed by encouraging Member States to match the positive rhetoric around peacebuilding with serious commitments at the PBF replenishment conference in January.

Ms. Anderson also presented a report on the challenges of operating in the agribusiness sector, namely the cattle and meat industry, amid the pandemic and during political conflict and insecurity in Mali. She briefed that the goal of Lanham Industries is to promote Malian meat in the subregion and internationally, and that they are in the process of obtaining the ISO 22000 certificate for food safety management, thanks to support from the IFC. She stressed that the pandemic and the embargo due to the report have caused an unprecedented economic crisis, slowing down exports and causing Lanham Industries to cancel several purchase orders with countries in the subregion. She informed of difficulties in obtaining financing because Lanham Industries is a woman-owned business, noting the Malian banking network. In this regard, she stressed the importance of obtaining sustainable and consistent financing to allow for the continued development and organization of the sector to increase income and decrease the risk of insecurity.

Member States welcomed the briefings and made the following observations:

- They recognized the need for adequate, predictable and sustainable resources for peacebuilding particularly

coherent UN action in support of national peacebuilding priorities, with sharper focus on results and strong partnerships with IFIs, civil society and the private sector.

- They underscored that predictable resources are necessary to empower women and youth peacebuilders and mediators and enable women entrepreneurs to be agents of change in conflict-affected settings.
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- Member States expressed strong support for both additional voluntary funding FRQWULEXWLRQV WR SHDFHEXLOGGLQJ -base, and to LQJ E \ reviving the discussion on assessed funding for peacebuilding.
- A number of them expressed support for the use of programmatic funding to support mandated peacebuilding activities in peacekeeping settings, especially to ensure their