



General Assembly

Distr.: General

Original: English

G
S
I
E

first session

ational peacebuilding efforts

310707



Contents

I. Introduction

1. The present report has been prepared pursuant to General Assembly resolution 60/180 and Security Council resolution 1645 (2005), which requested the Peacebuilding Commission to submit an annual report to the General Assembly for debate and review. The report shall also be submitted to the Security Council, pursuant to resolution 1646 (2005) for an annual debate. The report addresses the work of the Peacebuilding Commission since its inauguration in June 2006, identifies some major challenges of peacebuilding and offers conclusions and recommendations.

II. Overview

2. In response to a growing recognition that international peacebuilding efforts have lacked an overall strategic approach and coherence, world leaders at the 2005 World Summit agreed to establish the Peacebuilding Commission (see General Assembly resolution 60/1). Countries emerging from conflict face a unique set of challenges and unless they are identified and effectively addressed, these countries face a high risk of relapsing into violence. The Commission was therefore created to serve as a dedicated institutional mechanism to address these special needs and to assist these countries in laying the foundations for sustainable peace and development.

3. In its first year of operations, recognizing that peacebuilding must address the situation on the ground and make a difference to the countries and their populations, the Commission has focused its attention on two countries, Burundi and Sierra Leone, which were placed on the agenda of the Commission pursuant to paragraph 12 of the founding resolutions.¹ With their full support and through the Commission's country-specific configurations, the Commission has initiated processes of engagement with relevant United Nations and non-United Nations actors involved in peacebuilding in both countries. The Commission's work to date has been focused on maintaining international attention on both countries, and providing consultations in order to enhance the peace consolidation efforts led by their governments and with the help of other local stakeholders. This has also led to the decision to formulate integrated peacebuilding strategies (IPBS) as the basis for the Commission's sustained support for Sierra Leone and Burundi.

4. The Commission has so far employed a range of methods in the conduct of its work. These have included field missions, videoconferencing with key stakeholders in Sierra Leone and Burundi, thematic and country-specific configurations and special briefings from high-level United Nations officials and other experts. The Commission will also need to identify ways of improving coherence and synergies across its numerous activities and configurations in order to contribute to better peacebuilding policy and practice.

¹ The Governments of Burundi and Sierra Leone sent letters to the Presidents of the Security Council and the General Assembly requesting to be placed on

III. Work of the Commission

5. During the reporting period, under the leadership of the Chairperson of the Commission (Angola), Vice-Chairs (El Salvador and Norway) and Coordinators chairing the country-specific configurations (Netherlands and Norway), the Commission has begun to lay the foundation for its future work. It has met in various configurations, including the Organizational Committee, which held 10 formal meetings and six informal meetings; country-specific configurations, which held five formal meetings and eight informal meetings on Burundi, and five formal meetings and five informal meetings on Sierra Leone; and three thematic meetings and three informal procedural meetings of the working group on lessons learned. The Commission also held one informal meeting of a joint country-specific configuration and briefings by representatives and experts from the United Nations system and other international organizations.

A. Organizational Committee

6. The Organizational Committee addressed some key organizational, procedural and methodological issues in its first year of operations. Decisions of the Organizational Committee have defined the framework for the operations of the respective configurations of the Commission; its work has been managed through its provisional rules of procedure, with certain pending procedural issues referred to an ad hoc working group. It adopted the provisional rules of procedure of the

Committee which may be deemed by the Chairperson, in consultation with Member States, to be limited only to Member States (see PBC/1/OC/14).

9. The Ad Hoc Working Group on Pending Issues succeeded in finding a formula that would ensure active and productive participation of civil society, including non-governmental organizations which are most relevant to peacebuilding efforts in the countries under consideration, with particular attention to women's organizations and the private sector. The provisional guidelines were subsequently adopted on 6 June 2007 by the Organizational Committee on the understanding that they will be subject to review and evaluation after six months from the date of their adoption with a view to explore the possibility of their further development.

B. Country-specific meetings

10. According to its mandate, the Commission launched, between July and December 2006, its first phase of substantive consideration of Burundi and Sierra Leone, focusing on enabling country-specific configurations to establish their structure and ensure the participation of key stakeholders and actors. In January and February 2007, the Commission adopted six-month workplans for each of the countries, which outlined a series of formal and informal meetings at Headquarters as well as field missions to both Burundi and Sierra Leone in order to provide the necessary visibility and receive first-hand information and analysis from the ground (see annex IV).² In addition to other outcomes, the Commission's engagement promoted dialogue and interaction between the international community and the country and between the government and other stakeholders at the country level and resulted in a US\$ 10 million allocation of civil society and the

1. Burundi

12. In recent years, significant progress has been made in the consolidation of peace in Burundi with the establishment of an inclusive government, the adoption of a new constitution, the holding of free and fair elections and the signing of a Comprehensive Ceasefire Agreement between the Government and Palipehutu-FNL. South Africa's facilitation, the Regional Peace Initiative, chaired by Uganda, as well as the support from the African Union, the United Nations, and the international community have been instrumental in strengthening Burundi's peacemaking and peace consolidation efforts.

13. The Commission's formal country-specific meetings on Burundi on 13 October 2006 identified critical priorities for peace consolidation and reducing the country's risk of relapse into conflict, which were identified by the Government of Burundi in consultation with other stakeholders, including civil society, the private sector and international partners. As such, the Commission and the Government of Burundi agreed on four critical priority areas, as follows:

(a) *Promoting good governance.* The Government has identified the history of poor governance in the country as one of the root causes of the conflict. The Commission took note of Burundi's efforts to improve governance at various levels and underlined that democracy should be consolidated through dialogue with and inclusion of all actors in Burundian society. Support is needed for the emergence of transformational leadership in the country, building the capacity of various stakeholders for good governance and giving adequate consideration to gender, youth and regional dimensions of good governance. The Commission examined the critical need to renew efforts to remove obstacles to a constructive dialogue between the Government and Palipehutu-FNL.

(b) *Strengthening the rule of law.* Taking into account the problems related to impunity, the existence of weaknesses in the justice system and lack of understanding of the history and root causes of the conflict in Burundi, the Commission discussed how national efforts to strengthen the rule of law should be pursued and supported with a view to ensuring the fair administration of justice, combating impunity, and ensuring the independence of the judiciary. Modernizing correction services, creating an independent national human rights commission and ombudsman's office, promoting the Parliament's enactment and revision of national legislation to ensure its compliance with international human rights standards, and establishing transitional justice mechanisms recommended by the Secretary-General in his report to the Security Council on 11 March 2005 (S/2005/158) are crucial elements of this endeavour.

(c) *Reform of the security sector.* The Commission discussed the need to reform and develop the security sector according to the relevant provisions of the peace agreements and the principles of rule of law, human rights and good governance. It also noted that the disarming of the civilian population and the control and non-proliferation of small arms should be pursued, including in th

Government of Burundi and of the Commission to maintain their dialogue, as well as the support required from national and international partners to work towards consolidating peace. The Strategic Framework also reflects a commitment to devise a transparent and consultative process of assessing collective progress. On 20 June 2007, the Commission endorsed the development of the IPBS for Burundi, of which the Strategic Framework is an important step. A key next step is to develop the in-country tracking and monitoring mechanism based on the monitoring mechanism

environment for private sector development and foreign investment, although it was noted that short-term engagements are also

of recommendations were made (see annexes VI, VII, and VIII for Chair's summary notes from these meetings).

D. Relations with other intergovernmental bodies

27. In early 2007, the Security Council and the General Assembly held separate debates on the Commission. This first exchange of views between the Commission and the other intergovernmental bodies highlighted the need for periodic contacts to further enrich their respective consideration of country-specific situations.

IV. Peacebuilding Fund

28. The Peacebuilding Fund was launched on 11 October 2006 by the Secretary-General at the request of the General Assembly. According to its terms of reference (A/60/984, annex), the Fund's greatest value is in the early stages of a recovery effort, when other financing mechanisms are not yet available. The Fund is available for allocation both to countries under consideration by the Commission and to other post-conflict countries, as a separate mechanism from the Commission. A comprehensive report on the Fund's first year of work will be issued by the

priority areas of justice and security and youth empowerment and employment, amounting to a total of US\$ 6,645,525.³

V. Conclusions

A. General remarks

32. During its first year of work, the Commission covered new ground in trying to **bring more coherence and impact to the international community's approach to peacebuilding**. This has not always been easy, and there has been an accompanying process of institutional learning. The main challenge now facing the Commission is to refine its approach for maximum impact on the ground so that the United Nations peacebuilding architecture becomes an effective instrument of international collaboration in support of countries emerging from conflict. The members of the Commission realize that the challenges of peacebuilding are immense and expectations are particularly high in the countries under consideration. The Commission will need to ensure that the peacebuilding processes in these countries remain on track through both qualitative and quantitative indicators to assess progress and provide, as necessary, early warning of risk factors. Such indicators will help the Commission evaluate the level of its involvement over a period of time and to rapidly address gaps that may arise in the implementation of the IPBS. The ultimate aim is to make peace self-sustainable.

33. The Organizational Committee reached an agreement on the **participation of institutional donors** in May 2007, with a view to ensuring the fullest participation of all relevant stakeholders in the work of the Commission. The Committee decided to issue standing invitations to the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, as well as to the European Community and the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) to participate in all meetings of the Commission, in accordance with paragraph 9 of its enabling resolutions, unless specified otherwise by the Chair of the Commission after due consultations with members of the Organizational Committee. These institutions have actively participated in meetings of the Commission at Headquarters and in the field, and their contributions have been helpful in better understanding the peacebuilding needs of the countries under consideration as well as the role these institutions play in overall post-conflict assistance efforts.

34. A direct impact of the Commission's consideration of the **two countries on its agenda, Burundi and Sierra Leone**, has been the aiding of the peace consolidation processes in those countries and the increased international attention given to them. As a result of that attention, relevant actors on the ground are paying more attention to the effects of their actions in terms of peacebuilding priorities, including taking into account the regional and subregional dimension, and those in themselves are positive contributions to the maintenance of peace and stability in the countries. The Commission's engagement with the Governments of Burundi and Sierra Leone has allowed for a focused effort by the international community, represented by the members of the Commission, to address the long-standing challenges of

³ These figures are current as of 25 June 2007.

peacebuilding in post-conflict countries, notably by bringing together all relevant stakeholders in a transparent manner in support of this common goal.

35. As a testament to its commitment to an **inclusive and nationally driven process** in the countries under consideration, the Commission, during its first year of operations, aimed at maximizing the involvement of the field — including the national authorities, United Nations country teams and civil society organizations. In doing so, the Commission was able to further strengthen the lead by national governments and ownership by national actors as a whole, in partnership with the broader international community. The Commission's field missions to Burundi and Sierra Leone were useful in providing crucial information from the ground, which was and will continue to be instrumental in the Commission's consideration of the two countries and additional countries that may be on its agenda.

36. During its first year of work, the Commission has set new precedents in practical interaction between a United Nations intergovernmental body and the field and in employing flexible practices in its day-to-day business at Headquarters. Some **key lessons learned** are:

(a) The emphasis that substance should be led from the ground, with the national Government in the lead, and an inclusive process from the start with the involvement of other key national and international stakeholders;

(b) The importance of ensuring participation from the field in the country-specific discussions at Headquarters to ensure an inclusive discussion involving the Government and key stakeholders, including through videoconferencing links;

(c) The importance of the Commission's missions to the field which in turn provide the benefit of on-the-ground experience and knowledge to the Commission's work;

(d) The regular use of informal country-specific meetings, which enables a flexible format, open participation, including civil society organizations, and an interactive discussion, with each meeting tailored to specific needs;

(e) The focus on practical outcomes and the unique composition of country-specific meetings, which enables more effective collaboration to take place between the Commission's members.

B. Challenges for the Commission

37. The Commission's future work will need to focus on encouraging the peacebuilding processes in these countries to remain on track and all relevant actors to address challenges and gaps in a timely and coherent manner, based on the IPBS. A common and cohesive approach by the Commission's membership and the larger international community derives from a clear understanding that the work of the Commission needs to build on, coordinate and strengthen ongoing initiatives and should focus on resolving obstacles to implementation, which should result in concrete "peace dividends" for the people in the countries under consideration. In accordance with its mandate, the Commission has made available the outcome of its recommendations, and its discussions will increasingly focus on prioritizing and targeting its recommendations. This would allow an overview of the work of the Commission and give the United Nations system and other bodies and actors the

opportunity to take action on the advice of the Commission, as foreseen in operative paragraph 14 of General Assembly resolution 60/180 and Security Council resolution 1645 (2005). A review of recommendations in follow-up meetings is essential.

38. While much progress has been made by the Commission with regard to the development of IPBS, the next stage will be to strengthen the relevance of the IPBS as a tool to generate enhanced — and long-term — support for peacebuilding activities in the countries under its consideration. The Commission needs to encourage the international engagement with Burundi and Sierra Leone to remain sustained, predictable and aligned to national priorities. In this regard, the Commission will further address and clarify the implementation of its mandate to “bring together all relevant actors to marshal resources” in support of post-conflict peacebuilding and recovery in the countries under its consideration (General Assembly resolution A/60/180, para. 2 (a)).

39. The Commission will also need to engage in further dialogue with all relevant stakeholders and donor countries, in particular bilateral and multilateral partners and the United Nations system, on their contributions to the IPBS and ensure that they take it into account. The Commission also needs to strengthen its capacities “to provide recommendations and information in order to improve the **coordination of all relevant actors** within and outside the United Nations”. As such, the Commission, with the support of the Secretariat, will also encourage greater coherence within the United Nations system, including agencies, departments, funds and programmes, so that concrete benefits are delivered to the populations in the countries on the Commission’s agenda. It will further engage the United Nations system on applying lessons from its integrated peacebuilding process to the United Nations peacebuilding efforts more generally.

C. Outstanding issues and recommendations

40. Although the Commission has not reached agreement on topics for future policy discussions, it has yet to consider issues such as how to ensure extended attention from the international community, the development of monitoring mechanisms and how to determine the appropriate time for ending the Commission’s engagement with a country. The Commission anticipates that there will be a number of additional debate-

efforts in the countries on the Commission's agenda with the identified priority areas.

2. Development of working methods

42. Under operative paragraph 4 of General Assembly resolution 60/180 and Security Council resolution 1645 (2005), the General Assembly and the Security

Annex III

Membership of the Organizational Committee and the country-specific meetings on Burundi and Sierra Leone

Membership of the Organizational Committee (23 June 2006-27 June 2007)

Angola (Chair of the Commission until 27 June 2007)	Indonesia
Brazil	Italy
Bangladesh	Jamaica
Belgium (until 31 December 2006 succeeded by Luxembourg)	Japan
Burundi	Luxembourg
South Africa	Netherlands (Chair of country-specific meeting on Sierra Leone)
Chile	Nigeria
China	Norway (Chair of country-specific meeting on Burundi)
Croatia (until 27 June 2007)	
Czech Republic	
Denmark (until 31 December 2006 succeeded by Panama)	
Egypt	
El Salvador (Vice-Chair)	
Fiji	
France	
Germany	
Ghana	
Guinea-Bissau	
India	

European Community
Kenya
Nepal
Rwanda
Uganda
United Republic of Tanzania
African Development Bank
African Union
East African Economic Community
Executive Representative of the Secretary-General
Organisation internationale de la Francophonie
International Monetary Fund
Inter-Parliamentary Union
Economic Commission for Africa
World Bank
Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region

Additional members of the Sierra Leone country-specific configuration (in accordance with paragraph 7 of General Assembly resolution 60/180 and Security Council resolution 1645 (2005))

Sierra Leone
Guinea
Ireland
Liberia
Sweden
African Development Bank
African Union
Central Bank of West African States
Commonwealth
Economic Community of West African States
European Community
Executive Representative of the Secretary-General
International Monetary Fund
Mano River Union
Organization of the Islamic Conference

World Bank

Economic Commission for Africa

Special Representative of the Secretary-General for West Africa

**Participants in accordance with paragraph 9 of General Assembly resolution
60/180 and Security Council resolution 1645 (2005)**

Annex IV

Timeline of Peacebuilding Commission engagement with Burundi and Sierra Leone

A. Burundi

- 23 June 2006: Referral from the Security Council
- 19 July 2006: Informal country-specific meetings on both Sierra Leone and Burundi
- 13 October 2006: Formal country-specific meeting
- 12 December 2006: Formal country-specific meeting
- 8 February 2007: Informal country-specific meeting on the Peacebuilding Commission's six-month workplan for Burundi
- 27 February 2007: Informal country-specific thematic discussion on promoting good governance
- 10-14 April 2007: Peacebuilding Commission delegation field mission to Burundi
- 19 April 2007: Informal country-specific meeting: debriefing from the field mission
- 27 April 2007: Informal country-specific discussion on first outline of Strategic Framework for Peacebuilding in Burundi
- 9 May 2007: Informal country-specific thematic discussion on community recovery
- 29 May 2007: Informal country-specific thematic discussion on rule of law and security sector reform
- 6 June 2007: Informal country-specific meeting on process for review and finalization of Strategic Framework for Peacebuilding in Burundi
- 20 June 2007: Formal country-specific meeting

B. Sierra Leone

- 23 June 2006: Referral from the Security Council
- 19 July 2006: Informal country-specific meeting on both Sierra Leone and Burundi
- 12 October 2006: Formal country-specific meeting
- 13 December 2006: Formal country-specific meeting
- 8 February 2007: Informal country-specific meeting on the Peacebuilding Commission's six-month workplan for Sierra Leone
- 20 February 2007: Working Group on Lessons Learned meeting with a focus on the upcoming Sierra Leone elections

- 28 February 2007: Informal country-specific thematic discussion on justice sector reform and development
- 19-25 March 2007: Peacebuilding Commission delegation field mission to Sierra Leone
- 27 March 2007: Informal country-specific meeting: debriefing from the field mission
- 9 May 2007: Informal country-specific meeting: first discussion of the Sierra Leone Compact
- 21 May 2007: Informal country-specific thematic discussion on youth employment and empowerment
- 22 June 2007: Formal country-specific meeting to discuss the draft Sierra Leone Compact

Annex V

Activities of Peacebuilding Support Office in support of the Peacebuilding Commission and Peacebuilding Fund

1. The core functions of the Peacebuilding Support Office are to support the work of the Commission in all its substantive aspects, and to oversee the operation of the Peacebuilding Fund. In addition to these mandated responsibilities, the Office advises the Secretary-General in catalyzing the United Nations system as a whole to develop effective strategies for peacebuilding. This includes a role for the Office in convening all the relevant actors to launch strategic discussions on priorities and engagement related to peacebuilding within the United Nations, to ensure coherent and effective implementation of the work of the Commission and provision of effective support to the Commission, as well as to ensure appropriate lessons learning throughout the United Nations system on the basis of the Commission's work.

2. The Commission has set an active work programme, including regular meetings of its Organizational Committee, country-specific configuration meetings, working group on lessons learned and Chairs. The Peacebuilding Support Office has supported this programme, including through developing initial drafts of the Commission's calendar and workplan; liaising with the field offices and headquarters departments; preparing the substantive aspects of meetings, including documentation for the Commission's consideration; and participating in interdepartmental discussions within the Secretariat on peacebuilding. In addition, the Office, with support of the United Nations teams in the field, provided support to the Commission's field missions. The Office is also working with outside entities, donors and institutions on substantive peacebuilding-related events in order to ensure that the Commission receives appropriate advice and support from entities outside the United Nations system.

Annex VI

Chair's summary of Working Group on Lessons Learned meeting on Sierra Leone (20 February 2007)

1. In order to enrich the discussions of the Peacebuilding Commission's country-specific meetings on Sierra Leone, the Working Group on Lessons Learned convened its first informal discussion on lessons relevant to risk reduction and confidence-building in the context of post-conflict elections. The meeting was chaired by the Ambassador of El Salvador H.E. Carmen Maria Gallardo Hernandez and included expert panellists from the United Nations in Sierra Leone, Member States and civil society. (See attached programme.)

2. Sierra Leone's second post-conflict Presidential and Parliamentary Elections are scheduled for 28 July 2007. The meeting explored general risks posed by elections in post-conflict contexts and in Sierra Leone in particular as well as strategies to address such risks. Panellists noted the importance of identifying and addressing risks to Sierra Leone's democratic transition and supporting the Government's efforts in this regard. The experiences from countries that have conducted several rounds of post-conflict elections (Mozambique, El Salvador, Croatia, and Nicaragua) and the lessons extracted from those elections were also discussed.

3. The Ambassador of Sierra Leone to the United Nations and representatives from the United Nations in Sierra Leone stressed that preparation for the July 2007 elections are on schedule and proceeding without major difficulties. The National Elections Commission (NEC), although a new body is viewed as independent and credible by all parties, and has enjoyed support from the international community. The panellists highlighted a number of positive political developments in Sierra Leone such as the openness of the political space, media freedom, and freedoms of speech and association. However, they also noted that one of the biggest challenges in the context of the upcoming elections is that these political developments have not been matched by progress in the economic and social spheres. In the words of one of the speakers: "the openness of the political space has not delivered economic benefits for the people". Participants also noted that whereas the 2002 Sierra Leone elections were largely about "voting for peace" the 2007 elections are a referendum on the Government's capacity to deliver peace dividends.

4. Other challenges mentioned were possible disputes over election results, perceptions of possible abuse of incumbency power, the perceptions of undue

A/62/137
S/2007/458

Annex VIII

Chair's summary of Working Group on Lessons Learned meeting on regional approaches to peacebuilding (8 June 2007)

1. Burundi and Sierra Leone, the two countries under consideration by the Peacebuilding Commission, have highlighted the need to underpin peacebuilding in their subregions as part of their integrated peacebuilding strategies. Recognizing the importance of regional approaches to peacebuilding, the third meeting of the Working Group on Lessons Learned focused on selected experiences from Africa and Central America in addressing the regional dimensions of conflict and regional strategies for peacebuilding. In specific, the meeting focused on several subregional initiatives in the Great Lakes region and West Africa as well as the Contadora-Esquipulas peace process and the International Conference on Refugees in Central America. The meeting was chaired by the Permanent Representative of El Salvador H.E. Carmen María Gallardo Hernández and brought together expert panellists, including a distinguished former Minister of Foreign Affairs from El Salvador, member states and civil society representatives.
2. The two speakers who focused on Africa confirmed the regional dimensions of African conflicts but drew attention to the specificities of each subregion. For example, West Africa is a more compact and integrated region with various subregional institutions. While conflicts in neighbouring countries have consequences across West Africa, there are also various subregional mechanisms for conflict management and peacebuilding. Meanwhile, the Great Lakes is a region that now encompasses eleven countries with various degrees of cohesion beyond the three core states — Burundi, Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Until recently, the region did not have a common definition or coherent subregional institutions.
3. In West Africa, the most serious problems with regional repercussions have included the rise of civilian militia groups, weak governance, dire socio-economic conditions, youth unemployment, proliferation of small arms and predation of natural resources to finance conflict. However, West Africa also has strong regional assets including intergovernmental institutions such as ECOWAS, ECOMOG and the Mano River Union, the United Nations Office for West Africa (UNOWA) as well as various civil society networks such as the Mano River Women's Network.
4. The conflicts in the Great Lakes were greatly fuelled by the steady flow of refugees and armed groups, the illegal exploitation and export of natural resources and the failure of the state throughout the region. In the absence of a regional approach to deal with these problems, conflicts in various countries became intricately interconnected. It was only after the Rwandan catastrophe that regional approaches gained proper attention. The appointment of the United Nations Secretary-General's Special Representative for the Great Lakes in 1999 gradually led to an extended international process which was supported by the United Nations and the African Union. That process in turn culminated in the conclusion of the Pact on Security, Stability and Development in the Great Lakes Region in December 2006, although the Pact has yet to be ratified by member states. Meanwhile, the Secretariat of the International Conference has now been established in Burundi.

5. In Central America, the conflicts that reverberated throughout the region in the 1980s had various internal and external dimensions. The absence of democracy and socio-economic inequality within individual States was compounded by cold war politics and extensive intervention of external actors in the affairs of the region. The Contadora peace process (which was actively supported by Colombia, Mexico, Panama and Venezuela) was initiated in the early 1980s to prevent the internationalization of the military conflicts in Central America while generating a regional solution to several interlocking conflicts. Although the Contadora process itself was not successful, it prepared the way for the Esquipulas process that followed. The combined Contadora-Esquipulas process had several mutually reinforcing elements: affirmation of multilateralism, searching for a political solution, advancing democracy, socio-economic reform, demobilization and demilitarization and the principle of the non-interference in the region's affairs by outsiders. The Central American peace process proved to be lengthy but ultimately successful.

6. During the conflicts in Central America, two million out of a total population of eight million were uprooted by civil wars. Given the regional scope of the problem, one of the most important peacebuilding initiatives was the International Conference on Central American Refugees held in May 1989, known by its Spanish acronym CIREFCA. This initiative sought a durable solution for the problems of refugees, returnees and displaced people within the framework of social and economic development in the region. Initially starting as an international conference, CIREFCA evolved as part of the ongoing peace process in the region. Coordinated by UNHCR and UNDP, and supported by the resources of the international community, CIREFCA enabled the Governments of the region to link emergency assistance to ongoing development plans. Innovative ideas promoted by CIREFCA (such as Quick Impact Projects or QIPs) have subsequently been adopted in other contexts. While CIREFCA was unable to transform the region's deep-rooted socio-economic inequalities, it was an important model for regional peacebuilding in addressing the problems of war-affected populations within a larger framework.

7. The four presentations on Africa and Central America were followed by comments from the floor. Speakers affirmed the value of regional approaches to peacebuilding and welcomed the opportunity to learn from cross-regional experiences. They also raised additional issues which further enrich the discussion. The concrete observations and recommendations that are particularly relevant for the work of the Commission are as follows:

(a) Traditionally, there has been greater appreciation of the importance of regional approaches in conflict resolution and peacemaking rather than peacebuilding;

(b) While peacebuilding efforts at the country level are indispensable, they should be complemented with regional approach. Peacebuilding should not be exclusively state-centric but should address the transnational dimensions of conflict and opportunities for peacebuilding;

(c) Regional approaches to peacebuilding go beyond establishing regional institutions. In fact, they should capitalize on existing institutional mechanisms to address problems that cannot be resolved at the country level;

