

Peacebuilding Commission
Working Group on Lessons Learned

“Economic Revitalization in Peacebuilding and the Development of Service Based Infrastructure”, 22 November 2010

Chairperson’s Summary

I. Introduction

1. The Peacebuilding Commission’s (PBC) Working Group on Lessons Learned (WGLL) held a meeting on the topic of “Economic Revitalization in Peacebuilding and the Development of Service Based Infrastructure” on 22 November 2010 in New York. The meeting was chaired by Ambassador Gyan Chandra Acharya, Chairperson of the WGLL and Permanent Representative of Nepal to the United Nations. The panel was composed of five speakers:

- x Dr Bartholomew Armah, Senior Policy Adviser for UNDP – BCPR, co-author of “Poverty Reduction Strategies in Action Perspectives and Lessons from Ghana” who presented the development of infrastructure to create employment in a post-conflict setting.
- x Mr Fernando Pereira, President of the Administrative Council of Roads Fund of Mozambique who presented lessons learned from the development of the road sector in Mozambique.
- x Mrs Consolata Ndayishimiye, President of the Burundi Association of Women entrepreneur (AFAB) and President of the Federal Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Burundi who elaborated on economic revitalisation in Burundi.
- x Professor Graciana del Castillo, Senior Research Scholar at Columbia University, and author of "Rebuilding War-Torn States" presented some recommendations for the United Nations system when facing post-conflict countries.
- x Dr Nadia F. Piffaretti, Senior Country Economist for Zimbabwe and Senior Economist in the Fragile and Conflict-Affected Situations Group of the World Bank who presented lessons learned from the World Bank.

II. Lessons Learned from presentations and discussions:

2. In his opening remarks, the Chair of WGLL highlighted the importance of economic revitalization in the aftermath of conflict, noting that it was a priority in the Secretary General’s Report on Peacebuilding in the Immediate Aftermath of Conflict. Whilst acknowledging that economic revitalization is a broad topic, the Chair explained

that the focus of the meeting would be on the development of services infrastructure as a sector rich in employment opportunities also as a necessity for the population; the restoration of which will enhance people's confidence in the ability of the state to provide the basic facilities in a post-conflict context. For economic revitalization to be conducive to peace, however, it requires policies and laws. But these will much depend on the country's needs. Finally, the Chair outlined various

Second, resources must be put in getting correct engineering solutions to avoid inadequate designs. Support should be provided to small contractors to ensure they have access to financial capital and equipment. Finally, the decentralization in the management of roads should have taken place in rural areas, so as to ensure that qualified technicians and engineers were in rural areas where decisions needed to be taken rather than concentrated in the capital. Decentralization might have enabled further collaboration and commitment of the local population.

7. The case of Burundi, one of the five poorest countries in the world, and of which economy mainly relies on international aid, exemplifies some of the measures that can be taken by the government to overcome challenges in supporting economic recovery. Some of the government's led initiatives included the creation of an anti-corruption bureau, an investment promoting agency, the poverty reduction strategy paper, support to the agricultural sector and to micro-finance projects, privatisation of public institutions, a dialogue and consultation framework for the public-private sectors, a fair on the integration of Burundi in the East African Community (which involved the opening of customs, a common market and possibly a free trade union in the future). The country's integration into the regional framework will increase cooperation on security issues, ethnic cohabitation, negotiations on the international scene but also infrastructure such as transnational railways, regional telecommunication connections and energy sharing (such as the drainage of oil from Uganda). Regional integration will also stimulate improvements in knowledge exchange in sectors such as science, technology, education, health, gender, employment creation and community development.

8. The Burundian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CFCIB) underwent a restructuring which now includes a chamber of provinces and a chamber for women

challenges requires further improvement. Particularly, as there has been a visible lack of institutional memory which has led the organization to ignore some of the lessons of the past and in a lot of cases has led to wasteful inefficiencies. Problems have been identified and researched. There is not more need for research, there is a need for action. Advice can be given to governments but national ownership is essential and it is the government itself that should decide on its priorities, after having built a broad consensus, at the national and local levels. Policymaking in the immediate aftermath of conflict does not have the luxury of a medium or long-term horizon. It often requires emergency policies, even if these are distasteful in the longer term. Ignoring this has often led to misplaced priorities and put th

must be compensated. Additionally, support should strengthen country systems; risk calculus should be aligned with the country's perspective and the support must be timely, sustained and pooled. Knowledge should be shared on what works and what does not. Finally, "evidence-based" policies need to be applied and tools for learning on the ground need to be used such as: monitoring capabilities - micro-data through modern technologies - impact evaluation programs.

14. In response to concerns that the UN system might not be drawing sufficiently on the existing body of peacebuilding work from around the world; PBSO clarified that the WGLL is a platform open to policy makers, practitioners and people from the academia from around the world. The WGLL is the vehicle through which the PBC has sought to draw on the knowledge and experience of these groups of people. Every effort is made to learn from lessons from African and non-African contexts. As an example of the latter, the WGLL had a presentation on the issue of DDR in Colombia and presentations by representatives from such intergovernmental bodies as the Organization of American States. The WGLL can also learn from the UN experience in El Salvador and Guatemala, where the OAS was not involved.

15. Member states agreed on the importance of tackling economic revitalization in the aftermath of conflict. Questions were raised on a number of issues: namely whether there is a model that could be used in terms of analysis and impact for countries emerging from conflict. But interest also related to the type of training that would be useful for former combatants and on mechanisms to ensure former combatants become a positive force in economy, hence ensuring a change of spirit. Moreover, member states questioned the nature of the appropriate synergy between countries in post-conflict situations and the international community that best ensure national ownership. The issue of tools available for UNDP and post-conflict countries to harness the private sector was also highlighted. Additionally it was suggested that rather than prioritizing issues at stake, they should be dealt with simultaneously to restore confidence. Finally the WGLL offers a number of interesting lessons learned and best practices but focus should also be given to the implementation of these lessons at the level of country specific configurations and on dissemination at the PBC.

16. Panellists then responded to the questions and agreed that there was no 'one-size fits all' model but that effort should be made to see which model best fits specific country configurations. The ability to know and evaluate impact improves the quality of projects (focus s18.82)

17. Thereafter, the Chair of the WGLL outlined the next steps to be undertaken by the WGLL. First a written summary will be drafted and shared with members of the WGLL configuration. There will be a session with country specific configurations dedicated to explaining the outcome of the session possible follow-up. The Chair of the WGLL concluded the discussion by recognizing that economic revitalization was a political process within which both leadership and capacity building are vital. A certain level of prioritization is important. Finally, he emphasised the need for a multi-stakeholder approach including the state and the Diaspora.