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The co-authors of this input paper are with the Peace, Conflict and Development Research Group at the NUPI. The research that informed this input paper was undertaken by the NUPI Center for UN and Global Governance and supported by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

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**Publisher:** Norwegian Institute of International Affairs

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**ISSN:** 999-999X

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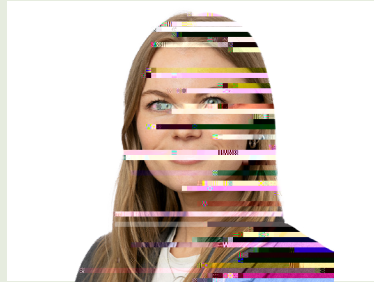


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# Executive Summary

The United Nations Peacebuilding Architecture – consisting of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) and the Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO) - was established in 2005. In 2025, 20 years after the PBA was established, the Architecture will undergo a review. As part of the preparations for the review the UN Secretary-General has appointed five Independent Eminent Persons who will submit their assessment on the work and impact of the Peacebuilding Architecture to the Secretary-General and Member States late in 2024.

This Input Paper, by researchers from the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI) serves as an input to the work of the Independent Eminent Persons, the report of the Secretary-General and the Member State review process. It is informed by NUPI's research on peacebuilding and related areas, including the research undertaken in support of the previous 5-, 10- and 15-year reviews of the Peacebuilding Architecture. The research on which this paper is based

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their analysis and evaluations, the Commission will encourage greater integration, synergy and coherence across the UN system and broader peacebuilding and development community, as well as between local, national and international stakeholders. We recommend that the Commission improve the quality and content of its meeting summaries and collect and edit these in the form of annual reports on countries, regions and thematic areas. These would serve as a source of synthesized information, analysis and evaluation on system-wide peacebuilding progress that does not exist elsewhere in the UN system. They would also generate knowledge outputs that are associated with, and thus help to strengthen the relevance of the PBC. In this way the PBC will generate information and analysis by convening the space where the UN system and other experts provide verbal and written inputs, which are in turn synthesized and summarised by the PBC secretariat and with the help and oversight of a PBC Chair, the relevant Vice-chair and penholder, where relevant.

Stimulate learning and adaptation: To be more relevant and impactful the Peacebuilding Architecture needs to be evidenced-based. It should be guided by the latest research and knowledge available about specific contexts, and peacebuilding practices in general. The Peacebuilding Commission can become a catalyst for system-wide learning. This could be achieved by regularly convening briefings that aim to take stock of the evidenced-based knowledge that is available in the UN system and the wider peacebuilding and development ecosystem, including local and indigenous knowledge as well as academic knowledge. The Peacebuilding Commission can enhance its focus on knowledge generation, learning and adaptation. This could be done by emphasizing the fulfilment of its mandate to develop and share good practices in peacebuilding, including through assigning a special responsibility on knowledge, learning and adaptation to one of the Vice-Chairs. In addition, the Peacebuilding Commission could convene an annual peacebuilding research and knowledge conference with the global peacebuilding research community and other knowledge holders to take stock of the latest research on peacebuilding and other forms of peacebuilding knowledge.

In order to more systematically advise the Peacebuilding Architecture, including on arranging the annual peacebuilding research and knowledge conference, the PBSO, with direction from the Peacebuilding Commission, can establish a global research advisory panel that can provide advice to

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# Introduction

The twenty-year review of the United Nations (UN) Peacebuilding Architecture (PBA) is taking place in a particular geopolitical context that creates both challenges and opportunities for the review process. As highlighted in the Secretary-General's New Agenda for Peace, one of the implications of the prevailing geopolitical landscape is that Member States have to review the Peacebuilding Architecture in a context where the international peace and security challenges are more complex, multidimensional and uncertain than what was the case during its establishment in 2005. As the negotiations leading up to the Pact of Future has shown, one effect has been that Member States are more polarised and fragmented than ever. This may mean that the political space for innovative and far-reaching reforms of the Peacebuilding Architecture in 2025 may be limited.

As the same time, many Member States see the Peacebuilding Commission as a Member State body that occupy a unique space in the broader UN peace and security architecture. Because it is seen as more representative and democratic than the Security Council, many UN Member States value the Commission as a space where states can seek to build consensus and engage in dialogue on key issues on the UN's peacebuilding agenda. In this context, the Pact for the Future, envisage a strengthened Peacebuilding Commission as an important building block for a stronger and more effective multilateral system. There is thus widespread support among UN Member States for strengthening the role of the Peacebuilding Commission. The critical question is how this can be achieved.

This input paper therefore focuses on providing a set of practical recommendations for how the impact of the UN Peacebuilding Commission can be improved, and how the synergies of the Peacebuilding Architecture can be enhanced.

The main challenge that has consistently been identified over the years, including in the 2010, 2015 and 2020 reviews of the Peacebuilding Architecture are the perceived lack of impact and relevance of the Peacebuilding Commission. For example, a widespread perception among members of the Security Council is that the advice provided by the Peacebuilding Commission does not add much value to the deliberations of the Council, as the advice and knowledge shared by the Peacebuilding Commission rarely introduces new information, analysis or insights.

In our assessment, the Peacebuilding Commission's attention to countries and regions are too ad hoc and fleeting to generate meaningful information and analysis, and this is one of the main areas we single out for improvement. There are many other areas such as peacebuilding financing, and enhancing relations with regional organisations like the African Union, that the review process should consider. However, we have opted to focus in on the information and analysis generated by the PBC, as this is closely linked to its perceived relevance and impact. Furthermore, improving the quality and analysis of the information generated by the Peacebuilding Commission cannot happen without also addressing a number of related aspects. We therefore offer recommendations in several related areas, including (1) maintaining strategic focus on addressing the underlying drivers and causes of conflict, (2) enhancing the quality of information and analysis generated by the Peacebuilding Architecture, (3) strengthening synergy and coherence across the UN system and within the global peacebuilding and development ecosystem, and (4) stimulating UN system learning and adaptation.

We believe that most of the recommendations that follow can be achieved with no or little additional financial resources, by making better use of the existing capacities within the UN system and wider

# Improving the impact and relevance of the Peacebuilding Commission

## 1. Strategic Focus

In the 1990s, several countries, including Liberia and Sierra Leone, relapsed into violent conflict after the withdrawal of relatively small and short-lived UN peacekeeping operations. This contributed to the thinking that emerged in the negotiations that led to the Millennium Declaration in 2000 that a part of the UN system needs to remain engaged with countries in transition when they are no longer on the UN Security Council agenda. To meet this need, the Peacebuilding Commission was established in 2005.

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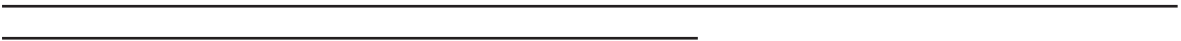
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peacebuilding actions to be based on evidence, lessons identified and results. The Peacebuilding Commission can stimulate learning and adaptation through the way it convenes meetings on countries, regions and thematic areas and the way in which it captures and shares information and analysis.

Through these pathways the Peacebuilding Commission can provide strategic direction to the UN system and global peacebuilding and development ecosystem. This can be achieved by improving the working methods of the PBC and by enhancing greater synergies a. Abe achieved b

There are many roles and tasks that the Chair, the Vice-Chairs and other members of the Peacebuilding Commission need to perform. Some of these can be undertaken by voluntary groups



peacebuilding and development community.

In our assessment, this is because the Peacebuilding Commission currently engage with countries and regions in an ad hoc manner, and too superficially. The Peacebuilding Commission needs to

of annual reports on a given country, region or thematic area. These would then serve as a source of synthesized information, analysis and evaluation on system-wide peacebuilding progress that does not exist elsewhere in the UN system. Vice-Chairs can ask for volunteers among the membership of the Commission to take responsibility as penholders for overseeing the production of meeting summaries and annual reports. The summaries can be prepared by the PBC secretariat and with the support of experts elsewhere in the UN system. UN staff working in the geographical desks on specific countries and advisors on peace and security can help to ensure quality and add further analysis, and the penholders can oversee the process before summaries are presented for approval via the Vice-Chairs.

We also recommend that the Vice-Chair that is responsible for following a particular country, region or thematic area, generates strategic direction for the UN system and other peacebuilding and development actors. This can be in the form of recommended actions captured in chair summaries or in other formats, aimed at strengthening the effectiveness of the overall peacebuilding effort in a given context.

The information and analysis generated by such meetings, and captured and shared through reports and recommendations, can form the basis for Peacebuilding Commission advice to the UN Security Council and other UN bodies.

### 3. Enhance learning and adaptation

Another important element in the overall initiative to improve the relevance and impact of the Peacebuilding Commission is to make learning and adaptation a central aim and feature of the work of the Architecture. In order to be relevant and impactful, the Peacebuilding Architecture needs to be evidence-based, as well as be guided by the latest research and knowledge available about specific contexts, and peacebuilding practices.

A focus on research, knowledge and learning will help the UN system and international peacebuilding and development ecosystem to continuously evolve and adapt, as new knowledge about the conflicts and transitions they are engaging with becomes available.

The Peacebuilding Commission can become a catalyst for system-wide learning by regularly convening briefings that aim to take stock of the data and knowledge that is available in the UN system, and in the wider peacebuilding and development ecosystem, including local and indigenous knowledge, and in academia. The Peacebuilding Commission should capture and publish the key information and insight shared at these briefings through meeting summaries, and where relevant, annual reports. This work can be closely coordinated with, compliment and benefit from the work of PBSO's Impact Hub.

The Peacebuilding Commission can achieve this focus on knowledge generation, learning and adaptation by strengthening its efforts to develop and share good practices in peacebuilding by assigning knowledge, learning and adaptation to one of the new Vice-Chair functions. The purpose would be for the Vice-Chair to lead efforts to systematically take stock of lessons identified, best practices, new research findings and other forms of relevant knowledge that exist or have been recently generated. The Vice-Chair can on a voluntary basis ask other PBC members to act as liaisons with academia and other knowledge holders, such as indigenous peoples.

The learning and adaptation work should be closely coordinated with the broader effort to enhance the quality of the information and analysis generated by the Peacebuilding Commission. For example, where the Commission may convene a meeting on a specific country, with a view to take stock of

the peacebuilding progress achieved, that effort can be complimented by a related briefing on the available research evidence related to relevant drivers, causes, trends, dynamics and progress achieved.

In addition to ongoing country, regional and thematic meetings, we recommend that the

Architecture. Without changing the structure and relationship between the PBC, PBSO and PBF, the synergy and complementarity of the Peacebuilding Architecture can be improved by:

- Enhancing coordination within DPPA to leverage knowledge sharing among the geographic operational desks that manage the UN's Special Political Missions, Peacekeeping Operations, regional offices and other entities, as well as the PBSO. This can extend to liaising with as well as gathering and integrating inputs from the DPPA-UNDP Peace and Development Advisors deployed to support Resident Coordinators. Such an engagement with other parts of DPPA will improve the quality of the information, analysis and expertise that is available to the Peacebuilding Commission on specific countries and regions and that is captured in the proposed annual reports.
- PBSO can also enhance peacebuilding coordination within the UN Secretariat among DPPA, DPO, OROLSI, UNCCT, UN Women, UN Youth Office, etc. by expanding the scope of the entities in the peacebuilding contact group, to leverage knowledge sharing that can enhance the information and analysis that is available for the Peacebuilding Commission on specific countries, regions and thematic areas.
- Beyond the annual session with the PBF, briefings by relevant PBF staff can further enhance the quality of the information and analysis available to the Peacebuilding Commission on specific country, regional and thematic areas. PBF staff also have in-country knowledge and networks that can help the Peacebuilding Commission to invite relevant local and national briefers from the countries on its agenda.

In these ways the PBSO can function in a less compartmentalised way, so as to leverage support from the PBSO, UN Secretariat and whole-of-UN system for the overall functioning of the Peacebuilding Commission.

## 5. Leveraging Thematic Focus Areas to Enhance the Peacebuilding Architecture's Impact

In this section we discuss how the Peacebuilding Architecture can enhance its impact in three thematic contexts, namely (1) Women, Peace and Security (WPS); (2) Youth Peace and Security (YPS) and (3) the nexus between climate change, environmental degradation and peacebuilding. The Peacebuilding Commission, in particular, can serve as a forum where UN Member States, the UN system and the wider peacebuilding and development community can engage in an ongoing reflection on how these thematic focus areas can enhance a whole-of-society approach to peacebuilding.

Engaging with some of these thematic areas can also be used to enhance effectiveness and leverage and mobilise political and financial attention and support for peacebuilding efforts in specific countries and regions. The sections also shed light on the numerous synergies between different thematic areas in the Peacebuilding Architecture. Advice, deliberations and programming that address WPS, YPS and Indigenous peoples have for instance served as a strategic and programmatic entry point for improving how integrating and understanding of the effects of climate change and environmental degradation can enhance the effectiveness of peacebuilding.

### 5.1 Women, Peace and Security (WPS)

UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (WPS) was adopted by the UNSC in 2000. The resolution, and subsequent resolutions together referred to as the WPS agenda, requests UN Member States and the international community to include women in all aspects of peace and security (including conflict prevention, conflict resolution and peacebuilding), and on all levels. When the PBA was established in 2005, it started off with a formal acknowledgement of the WPS agenda and its importance to peacekeeping. In the case of the Peacebuilding Commission, according to



its founding resolutions, it should integrate a gender perspective in all of its work and consult with women's organizations. However, in the years that followed, operationalization and implementation of the agenda in the work of the Peacebuilding Commission was inconsistent and often struggled to put commitments into action.

Despite these challenges, WPS as an issue area can be considered as well established in the working methods of the Peacebuilding Commission. Since 2016, the Commission has made efforts to better deliver on its mandate and integrate gender issues into its work. This includes the adoption of a gender strategy in 2016, with guiding principles for promoting women's participation in peacebuilding, and strategic actions for integrating gender in the work of the Peacebuilding Commission. This was followed up by a review of the Gender Strategy in 2020, and the adoption of an action plan in 2021, to monitor progress on implementing the gender strategy. The 2021 action plan contained specific indicators and action areas to this end. The Peacebuilding Commission also holds annual meetings on WPS. Additionally, the PBF's Gender and Youth Promotion initiative seeks to advance the implementation of the WPS agenda through funding initiatives focused on gender equality and women's empowerment.

According to its Gender Strategy, the Peacebuilding Commission shall include a gender analysis and gender specific priority areas in all of its relevant documents and their updates and all different country-specific, regional and thematic engagements of the Peacebuilding Commission, if so accepted by the host-countries. The 2020 review found that while there was noticeable progress on overall support to the PBC Gender Strategy, this was most visible in broad statements of support, rather than in concrete gender analysis. The review also found that consultations with women's organizations featured regularly in Peacebuilding Commission outcome documents. However, this information was not systematically reported on or incorporated into future Peacebuilding Commission meetings. The review also noted that the Peacebuilding Commission tended to refer

the agenda and integrated into the discussion on the PBC. Assigning responsibility for implementing and reporting on the Gender Strategy and Action Plan to one of the Vice-Chairs could therefore be one way of ensuring more continuity. Finally, the written update from 2021 has not been followed by similar updates in the years since then, and more systematic monitoring and reporting would enable the commission to better track progress as well as challenges, and initiate action where needed.

The number of women peacebuilders who are invited to brief the Commission has continued to increase, but, as mentioned, the follow-up on the recommendations made by women peacebuilders is not happening in a systematic way. The PBA should therefore also look into creating mechanisms for tracking how the recommendations made by women peacebuilders are followed up but also how they are used in the PBC's own work, and how they are shared with the wider UN system. Ideally, the recommendations and input from women peacebuilders and others who brief the PBC should end up in PBC outputs such as the (written) advice the PBC provides to the UN Security Council, General Assembly, ECOSOC and the Human Rights Council, meeting summaries and annual reports on a given country, region or thematic area. A key recommendation going forward is therefore to increase efforts to 1) make sure that the knowledge and advice from women peacebuilders is integrated into Commission outputs and actions, and 2) monitor where this advice ends up. This could be done by strengthening the monitoring capacity of the PBSO, or by supporting civil society and/or academia to take on a more active monitoring role in this regard.

## **5.2 Youth, Peace and Security (YPS)**

Since the adoption of UNSC Resolution 2250 on Youth, Peace and Security (YPS) in 2015, the





# Conclusion

The main challenge that has consistently been identified over the years, including in previous reviews of the Peacebuilding Architecture, is the perceived lack of impact and relevance of the Peacebuilding Commission. This input paper therefore focuses on providing a set of practical recommendations for how the impact of the Peacebuilding Commission can be improved, and how the synergies of the Peacebuilding Architecture can be enhanced.

Four areas were highlighted, namely: (1) maintaining strategic focus on addressing the underlying drivers and causes of conflict, (2) enhancing the quality of information and analysis generated by the Peacebuilding Architecture, (3) strengthening synergy and coherence across the UN system and within the global peacebuilding and development ecosystem, and (4) stimulating UN system learning and adaptation.

When undertaken together, a renewed commitment to the strategic focus of the Commission, as well as the changes recommended in this input paper to the working methods of the Peacebuilding Commission and the other parts of the Architecture, should help to enhance the quality of the information and analysis generated by the Commission. This should in turn improve the impact and relevance of the Peacebuilding Architecture.





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