



QUNO
Quaker United Nations Office



A Network of People
Building Peace

Meeting the Challenge of Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace through Partnerships and Inclusivity

9 March 2018

MEETING NOTE

Background

Starting in 2017, the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC) and the Quaker United Nations Office (QUNO) undertook a dynamic research project to increase the practical understanding of what sustaining peace means; assess the progress and remaining challenges facing peacebuilding practice; and articulate recommendations for the way forward. This led to the publication of a joint report, **Building Sustainable Peace: How inclusivity, partnerships and a reinforced UN Peacebuilding Architecture will support delivery**. Its production was the result of desk research as well as interviews with over 35 diverse Member States and UN representatives at UN Headquarters. The report presents the main areas explored during the research, namely: 1) the normative, political and operational impact of sustaining peace thus far; 2) analysis on the work of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) to uphold its convening, advisory and bridging responsibilities within this changing UN environment; 3) UN and Member State understanding of and processes to build strategic and operational partnerships with civil society for sustaining peace; and 4) the importance and impact of inclusive approaches to sustaining peace. The report highlights progress made to date as well as new or ongoing challenges, and provides five key findings and 20 recommendations for UN and Member State actors to improve policy and practice.

9 March Meeting: “Meeting the Challenge of Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace through Partnerships and Inclusivity”

To share the report’s findings, QUNO and GPPAC organized an informal conversation amongst Member State and UN colleagues on 9 March to reflect on how inclusivity is and can be fostered, and how partnerships for building peace are practically developed and sustained. The event, hosted under the Chatham House rule, provided an opportunity for peer to peer learning amongst UN and Member State participants as they shared examples of inclusive programming and reflected on challenges that have or continue to occur when seeking to develop and implement inclusive, partnership-based peacebuilding policies. This meeting note provides an overview of the main themes and issues that were raised in the meeting, as well as next steps for GPPAC and QUNO as they continue to support UN and Member State efforts to foster inclusive, partnership-based policy and practice for building sustainable peace.

Three Emerging themes

Centrality of the Peacebuilding Architecture, and avenues for continued growth:

- A central strength of the PBC is its convening mandate and power, which enables it to bring together diverse stakeholders across the UN as well as those outside of the system, such as regional organizations, international financial institutions, and civil society. It is therefore well placed, in theory, to foster inclusivity through its practices.
- Leadership of the Country-specific-Configuration (CSC) Chairs and countries is essential with regards to fostering inclusive approaches whether during in country visits, policy formulation and implementation, or when linking country-based developments with the PBC in New York. More opportunity should be given to understanding what factors support positive leadership, and the benefits that inclusivity has had for CSC countries and those states before the PBC outside of a CSC setting in their efforts to build peace.
- The PBC is the only intergovernmental body within the UN system that has developed a comprehensive gender strategy. This provides a direct avenue for ensuring women's participation in peacebuilding, and that the work of the PBC is gender inclusive and responsive. That said, more work remains to be done with regards to the comprehensive implementation of this strategy. The appointment of and work by the PBC gender focal points is a positive step in that regard.
- The PBC can be more inclusive through further engagement with the UN human rights mechanisms and the broader human rights community. Such engagement would allow the PBC to diversify the knowledge base and perspectives that are shared in its meetings, thus allowing for more holistic discussions. This should be viewed as a natural avenue forward for the PBC as strengthening capacities for the protection of human rights directly contributes to fostering diversity and inclusivity.
- The Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) serves as a positive example of civil society partnership, particularly through its Gender and Youth Promotion Initiative (GYPI), which allows for direct funding of civil society and requires a 40% financial allocation for community-based organizations.

How to improve inclusivity more broadly:

- The international community needs to better understand the drivers for sustainable peace, and what factors foster inclusivity. There is greater attention being paid to these issues since the adoption of the dual resolutions, and the publication of the UN-World Bank study, Pathways for Peace.
- Clear communication and expectation management are essential components with regards to inclusive approaches.
- Inclusion means not marginalizing groups or segments of society with divergent political views, as well as those that are vulnerable or at risk. Overlooking such societal components could risk perpetuating grievances or creating new ones, and thus undermine the development of peace. However, as such situations often remain fragile and dynamic, the reality on the ground may make such efforts extremely difficult. It is in this regard that communication, coordination and engagement with various partners and coalitions may be beneficial.
- For peacebuilding to be sustainable, stakeholders working at the country level must be included, heard, and supported as they will be the actors that remain in the long-term.





Persistent systemic and contextual challenges continue to adversely affect inclusive peacebuilding:

- One must recognize that a diversity of civil society stakeholders work within countries, and external actors (e.g. Member States, UN, etc.) are sometimes under extreme resource and political constraints that may make it challenging to engage beyond the “usual suspects.” Where possible, more attention needs to be given to better understanding the working limitations of each actor. In addition, focus should be on long-term relationship building, including through working with existing networks and coalitions. Finally, more examples need to be identified, amplified and understood so that there can be greater learning from positive and challenging country scenarios.
- Civil society itself does not always foster inclusivity, with some actors serving more as “gatekeepers.” Thus, organizations themselves will benefit from learning more about how to practice inclusive programming and outreach.
- An ongoing challenge remains that of engaging with civil society stakeholders that reside and work outside of capitals or major metropolitan centers. While some UN and Member State actors are developing mapping and outreach tools to diversify partnerships, more work remains to be done by the global peacebuilding community.
- Situations of conflict or fragility are extremely dynamic, resulting in ever changing priorities and actions. During such times it can become extremely more difficult to approach the situation in an inclusive manner as a result of issues like capacity, prioritization and the changing roles of actors within a country experiencing conflict or fragility. Greater focus needs to be given on how to use existing partnerships and foster new ones during such situations, as well as to ensure that responsive policies and actions do not further undermine any previous or ongoing peace gains.

Conclusion

This rich discussion provided many ideas and issues to further explore with regards to the Peacebuilding Architecture’s role in supporting inclusive political and societal growth within the countries before the PBC or receiving support from the PBF. Additionally, the challenges expressed with regards to the broader issues of inclusivity and partnerships for peace are ever more critical to address given the nature and impact of conflict. The follow up on the UN-World Bank study, the implementation of the UN Secretary-General’s (UNSG) report on Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace and upcoming High-Level Event on the subject, and the forward movement on the UNSG’s reforms provide ample opportunity for concretely addressing the capacity needs of the UN and its membership to truly build sustainable peace. Addressing these challenges, like sustaining peace itself, will require inclusively driven strategic and operational partnerships. QUNO and GPPAC continue to stand ready to support the UN and Member States in their efforts, including through the ongoing work to move forward the recommendations in our report, Building Sustainable Peace.

About the organizations

■ Quaker United Nations Office (QUNO)

Since 1947, QUNO has worked with diplomats, UN officials, and civil society to support a UN that prioritizes peace and prevents war. Grounded in the Quaker belief that there is that of the divine in every person, we seek a UN that addresses key drivers of violence; that facilitates and supports change through peaceful means; and whose policies and practices reflect a diversity of voices.

■ The Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC)

GPPAC is a member-led network of civil society organizations around the world that are actively engaged in local or regional conflict prevention and peacebuilding work. GPPAC's work is guided by a belief in preventive rather than reactive strategies for dealing with conflict, and the conviction that locally developed analysis of root causes and inclusion of civil society actors in the formulation as well as implementation of all stages of work is essential to creating sustainable peace.

