

## Informal Discussion of the Report of the Advisory Group of Experts on the Review of the UN Peacebuilding Architecture

### Meeting Summary

On July 31, 2015, the Permanent Mission of Finland to the United Nations and New York University's Center on International Cooperation (CIC) co-hosted an informal discussion among a small number of experts on the report of the Advisory Group of Experts' review of the UN Peacebuilding Architecture. The experts unpacked the review by addressing 3 questions: (a) what are the strongest recommendations of the report; (b) which issues will be the most challenging in the intergovernmental process; and (c) what is the best strategy to move forward the recommendations.

*The consultation was held under the Chatham House Rule.*

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### Key Messages

*Among the key points made by participants were that:*

- There was a consensus that one of the strongest findings of the report was the **problem of fragmentation**.
- Achieving **cultural change** will likely prove challenging. Peacebuilding is not getting the attention it deserves, both in terms of incentives provided in various agencies as well as financing.
- **Financing** will continue to be a major issue in the second intergovernmental phase of the review process.
- There was a broad view that **building synergies, sequencing, and including all peace actors** in future discussions will be key.

### Summary of Issues Raised

The strongest recommendations have been on the table for quite some time but have not been implemented due to political reasons.

The most important messages are fragmentation, and that peacebuilding is considered a post-conflict activity, though the evidence says otherwise.

Prevention is one of the key recommendations of the report. While prevention may be one of the hardest to implement, one approach would be to broaden the idea of looking at state fragility as a bigger concept, potentially bringing international financial institutions and other actors into the framework. Recognizing fragility as a broader issue, as opposed to limiting it to a peace and security framework, could be less politically charged.

There is coherence between the report of the Advisory Group of Experts and other reviews such as the forthcoming study on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 and the report of High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations. However, these processes are separate; we need to better cross-pollinate.

At the organizational level, the report argues that there is a lack of coherence between the different arms of the UN, which has led to silo thinking. On a policy level, there is insufficient attention and funding paid to sustaining peace and building inclusive institutions that prevent further conflict.

Some of the key challenges going forward include translating the broad narrative into concrete action as well as relating peacekeeping and peacebuilding. In this regard, there is some sensitivity. Greater ownership from Member States will also be key.

Partnerships will be able to address some of these challenges. If we take a regional approach and work with sub-regional organizations, the PBA can achieve a great deal.

It is important for Member States to consider low-hanging fruit and actions that can show change on the ground.

With respect to financing, it is important to engage the World Bank in future discussions.

The issue of fragmentation will prove the hardest to solve. Yet bringing in the discussion of peacebuilding as a cross-cutting issue, not just as an independent idea, could start initiating that process. Problems associated with fragmentation all link to the major challenge of how to define what peacebuilding is.

Informal discussions can help propel the process forward. The most constructive discussions could be around 1325, inviting both peacekeeping experts and peacebuilding experts. On the formal side, the President of the General Assembly-elect will have to steer the process with formatting and sequencing.