

2024 in Preview: How to Leverage the Summit of the Future and Peacebuilding Architecture Review to Strengthen the Implementation of Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace?

In Person Roundtable | 1 February 2024

Summary Note

Discussions ahead of the Summit of the Future (SoTF) in September 2024 have the potential to result in political commitments by Member States in the Pact for the Future regarding the role of the Peacebuilding Commission (hereafter, the Commission) and the broader UN system that can be followed up with practical action during the 2025 Review of the Peacebuilding Architecture (2025 PBAR). Negotiations on the Pact for the Future, including its Chapter 2 on international peace and security, can galvanize political support for the implementation of concrete and practical recommendations on strengthening the UN Peacebuilding Architecture and its prevention action and, as such, make the 2025 PBAR more impactful.

This roundtable brought together Member States, UN partners and civil society peacebuilding experts to explore opportunities to connect the SoTF and 2025 PBAR, to share expectations on the outcomes of both the SoTF and 2025 PBAR processes, and to propose concrete ways of approaching the Pact for the Future and the 2025 PBAR as connected processes to address existing gaps, with the goal of creating a multilateral system more capable of responding to today's challenges.

The discussion was held as part of a roundtable series organised by the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation (the Foundation), the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC), and NYU's Center on International Cooperation (CIC) about strategies and pathways towards the operationalization of the UN's Sustaining Peace agenda.

Key overarching themes that emerged from the discussion:

- *Need for complementarity between the Pact for the Future and other processes*

A major theme in the discussion was the role of the Pact for the Future in relation to other ongoing and planned intergovernmental processes, particularly the 2025 PBAR. Participants emphasized that the Pact should not represent an end in itself, but a waypoint in a series of processes leading up to and following after the SoTF. Member States must identify how best to connect and utilize the various processes and ensure that different tracks, including negotiations on the Pact and preparations for the 2025 PBAR, are conducted in a complementary manner. For this, Member States will need to decide what should be included in the Pact and what should be left to the 2025 PBAR and other processes, with the Pact representing a chance for Member States to sow seeds or to create an "authorizing environment" that the 2025 PBAR can build upon.

The Pact should serve as a strategic policy document that provides broad ideas on priorities to be taken up in detail during the 2025 PBAR and to signal the expected level of ambition. If the 2025 PBAR is focused on the peacebuilding architecture itself, other peacebuilding agenda items could be tackled in the ECOSOC or in other bodies.

Participants noted that the 2025 PBAR may provide an opportunity to put into place new and bolder ideas, building on the procedural nature of the 2020 Peacebuilding Architecture Review, which focused on strengthening coherence. The inclusion of key ideas in the Pact would contribute to giving a strong mandate and create a positive authorizing environment for the 2025 PBAR, including

expectations on themes like the Peace-Development-Humanitarian nexus or on the PBC's working methods.

Participants also emphasized the importance of seeing the Summit of the Future as a moment that is not only about the Pact, and to use the space in creative ways to launch, advance and promote bold and concrete ideas that could benefit from the Summit's momentum. This can create opportunities for Member States to delve into recommendations and to prepare for the 2025 PBAR.

- *Need to ensure that the Pact and the Peacebuilding Architecture Review link to the SDGs*

Participants called for the Pact to support progress toward the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and noted that the Pact could help look beyond 2030 to envision a way forward after the SDGs. They called for better linking the SDGs and peacebuilding priorities through the Pact and in the 2025 PBAR to fuel a renewed push toward SDG achievement.

- *Need for increased coordination and coherence in addressing multisectoral problems*

Participants noted that peace and security issues are multisectoral and complex, yet the international community and intergovernmental actors maintain a siloed approach to challenges. The Pact should be used to think about new approaches to address this persistent issue that would go beyond "admiring the problem". They noted that the Commission is well placed to link the different pillars of the UN and to draw attention to the ways that human rights and peacebuilding, among other areas, are mutually reinforcing. The Commission can reinforce coordinated approaches to peacebuilding tasks to increase their ability to strengthen the fabric of society and bolster conflict prevention.

- *Importance of proposing innovative and concrete language*

As previously noted by the process co-facilitators, the zero draft of the Pact contains language that represents the least common denominator, and the incorporation of more innovative or forward-looking initiatives will require Member States to develop a broader consensus and present their ideas so that the co-facilitators can take them on. Participants drew attention to the need to identify gaps in agreed language in order to go further in identifying and addressing issues of concern.

Participants also called for the Pact to include concrete language that moves beyond identifying problems to proposing solutions, for example the idea of a Peacebuilding Week, like International Peacekeepers Day or Women, Peace and Security Week. Some participants drew attention to the specific actions requested from the SG contained in Chapter 4 on Youth and Future Generations, noting that it could serve as a model for more nuanced language in the peace and security chapter.

Areas for potential focus in the Pact and 2025 Peacebuilding Architecture Review:

While still early in the process of reviewing the zero draft of the Pact for the Future, the discussion touched on some areas with potential for new or innovative language.

- *Prevention in relation to peacebuilding*

Participants recognized the importance of prevention alongside peacebuilding, but questions remain about what prevention is and how prevention should be done. The idea of national ownership of prevention needs to be further unpacked in the context of national strategies for prevention, especially since some Member States resist the idea of preventive diplomacy. Similarly, Member States should clarify how to include prevention elements in the peacebuilding architecture, as discussions in the Commission have sometimes struggled with how to establish links between peacebuilding and prevention.

Questions were also raised about the prevention toolbox mentioned by the Secretary-General in the New Agenda for Peace policy brief, including who has access to the toolbox as a whole and who coordinates the various elements. It was highlighted that currently there are no focal points for Member States to get coordinated support from the UN System on prevention. For example, if a Member State wants to develop a national prevention strategy, where should they go in the system to receive advice and support in the process? Participants suggested that a potential 2028 update to the Pathways for Peace report could help rethink these issues.

One participant argued that, rather than talking about prevention alone, the international community should speak about prevention and peacebuilding together to help allay some of the concerns of Member States. As such, Member States should look to national strategies for prevention and peacebuilding to reflect a holistic approach.

- *Enhancing financing for peacebuilding*

Participants noted that the zero draft language was submitted before the decision was made to award \$50 million of assessed contributions annually to the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) and would likely need to be updated. Attendees agreed that this decision was a symbolic victory reflecting the shared responsibility to finance peacebuilding. However, the focus of the Pact could be expanded beyond the reference to the PBF and reiterate all commitments on financing made in the 2022 General Assembly resolution on financing for peacebuilding (A/RES/76/305).

Participants recognized that overall funding for peacebuilding has been shrinking, and more work remained to be done to adequately finance peacebuilding in effective and innovative ways. Moreover, the mandate of the Peacebuilding Fund is limited. In that regard, the Pact's zero draft also explicitly addresses the reform of international financial institutions (IFIs) and its linkages to peacebuilding. To build on these references, Member States should use the Summit momentum to influence the financing lens of the 2025 PBAR.

- *Enhancing the work of the Peacebuilding Commission*

Participants recognized the current zero draft language on the Peacebuilding Commission in Chapter 5 on Transforming Global Governance as a good start, representing a consensus to strengthen the PBC, its mandate and its role in peacebuilding. Participants called for a move toward a more inclusive peacebuilding architecture, especially in the areas of women, peace and security and youth, peace and security. They noted that the Pact could better highlight the representational role of the peacebuilding architecture. Participants also called for the convening power of the PBC to be strengthened, including its ability to act as an advisory body to the Security Council, regional organizations and other bodies, and to share conflict prevention and peacebuilding priorities and lessons learned.

- *Need to focus on impact*

Several participants noted the importance of focusing the 2025 Peacebuilding Architecture Review on enhancing impact, as mandated in the outcome of the 2020 Review. However, there is no clear definition or shared understanding of impact. To some, it could mean enhanced advisory capacity to the Security Council while others look for improvements to the lives of people in contexts such as Liberia and Guinea Bissau. More concrete language on how to shape the PBC and peacebuilding architecture to enhance impact would be welcome.

Based on the key takeaways from the discussion, the following suggestions for better linking the language of the Pact with the 2025 PBAR include:

- *Member States should approach the Pact as a waypoint in a series of processes leading up to and following the SotF.* For this, Member States will need to decide which steps should be taken in the Pact and what should be left to the 2025 PBAR and other processes. In this, the Pact could serve as a strategic policy document that provides broad ideas on priorities to be taken up in detail during the 2025 PBAR.
- *Member States could consider the space provided by the Summit of the Future to launch, advance and promote other bold and concrete ideas* that could benefit from the Summit's momentum, including recommendations on enhancing the Commission and preparing for the 2025 PBAR.
- *Member States should advocate for the language of the Pact to connect broader approaches across sectors and pillars, including through strengthening the Peacebuilding Commission.* The existing consensus regarding the intention to enhance the work of the Commission and expectations about how to strengthen it should be clearly outlined in the Pact, with the 2025 PBAR understood to be the process in which this will be taken forward in practice.
- *Member States should consider innovative ideas that would allow the Pact to create an 'authorizing environment' (e.g., the idea of establishing a Peacebuilding Week, in addition to using specific requests to the SG/UN/each other throughout the Pact, as a good practice).*
- *Member States should advocate that the Pact mandates a "comprehensive" 2025 PBAR with a focus on impact.* More concrete language on how to shape the PBC and peacebuilding architecture to enhance impact would be welcome.