



General Assembly
PBC/14

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Peacebuilding Commission

Organizational Committee

8th Meeting (AM)

Guidelines for civil society participation in peacebuilding commission

Approved by organizational committee

Recognizing the important contribution of civil society, including non-governmental organizations and the private sector, to all stages of peacebuilding efforts, the Organizational Committee of the United Nations Peacebuilding Commission this morning approved the provisional guidelines by which such organizations would participate in the Commission's work.

Adopting the general principles for civil society participation (document PBC/1/OC/12), which contained the modalities for participation in the Commission's formal and informal meetings, the newly created body reaffirmed the importance of women and women's organizations in the prevention and resolution of conflicts, as well as peacebuilding, and stressed the importance of their equal participation and full involvement in all relevant peacebuilding efforts.

According to the document, the Chairperson of the Organizational Committee or the Coordinator for the respective country-specific configuration, consulting with the Committee,

would invite representatives of civil society organizations that were actively engaged in peacebuilding activities to make oral statements and provide information, as might be needed, that would contribute to the Commission's work on specific matters within the scope of their activities pertaining to integrated strategies for post-conflict peacebuilding.

Prior to extending invitations, the Chairperson or the Coordinator would circulate to Committee members the names of the civil society organizations and representatives whose participation had been proposed, together with available background information, on the basis of the elements set out in annex to the document, which include, among other things, an overview of the organization, a summary of its current relevant programmes, and its sources of funding.

As for civil society participation in the Peacebuilding Commission's informal meetings, the Committee decided, among other things, that the Chairperson would encourage relevant actors to interact and provide input to technical-level informal discussions concerning specific sectoral areas or thematic topics that might be organized outside the formal country-specific configuration.

Ismael Abraão Gaspar Martins (Angola), Chairman of the Committee, said that the Commission was taking an important step towards ensuring broad-based participation by all relevant actors in "our collective endeavour to advise on integrated peacebuilding strategies for Burundi and Sierra Leone". Recovering from devastating civil wars, both Sierra Leone and Burundi are the Commission's first two focus countries and have become the beneficiaries of the first ever grants to be distributed by the year-old body, aimed at generating confidence and encouraging economic recovery.

Prior to approval of the document, the representatives of Guinea-Bissau, Egypt, Chile, and France, expressed concerns about discrepancies in the text, particularly differences in the various language versions they felt did not adequately reflect the text approved during expert-level consultations. Chairman Gaspar Martins, who was joined by Assistant Secretary-General Carolyn McAskie, Chief of the Peacebuilding Support Office, said the Committee would go back to the Chair of the Ad Hoc Working Group and check the language very carefully and issue a corrected document as soon as possible.

In other business, the Organizational Committee also held a discussion on the Chair's proposed timeline for the finalization of the Commission's first annual report, a first revised draft of which had been prepared by the Support Office based on comments and observations made and submitted by Member States. Aiming to wrap up discussions on the important document so it could be adopted at the conclusion of the Commission's session on 27 June, he proposed that Member States submit their comments on the first draft (circulated last Friday), by the end of the day today. A second revised draft would be circulated by the end of the day

Friday, 8 June, and would be the basis of informal meetings of the Committee set for Wednesday, 13 June, from 3 to 6 p.m., and, if necessary, Thursday, 14 June, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. The Chairman hoped that, following those discussions, the final draft of the report could be circulated by Friday, 15 June.

During the discussion the representatives of Egypt, Guinea-Bissau, Jamaica and France raised various concerns, including the brief amount of time the members would have to consider the important text, which the representative of the Russian Federation said “in many ways will set the stage for the Commission’s future work”.

Expressing concerns about the compressed schedule for reviewing the draft report, as well as conflicts with other meetings at Headquarters and the possibility that several of the Committee’s meetings over the final weeks of the session might not have interpretation, Egypt’s representative proposed, among other things, informal meetings at the expert level on Tuesday morning to consider the text. The representative of Jamaica was among those supporting that proposal. Chairman Martins told the Committee that he would consult with Secretariat officials about meeting space and report back to Committee members by midday tomorrow.

In a related matter, the Committee decided to extend the Commission’s first session -- set to end on 27 June, one year to the day after its inaugural meeting -- by four days to allow time to complete consideration of its annual report. It also decided that, at that final meeting, it would open the first meeting of its second session to elect its next Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson.

The Peacebuilding Commission will meet again at a time to be announced.

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