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The UN Peacebuilding Commission: from underdog to key player for global peace

Briefing for MPs on UN processes N. 10

Wednesday, 20 November 2024, 09:00 – 10:00 (New York) - In English and French

Established in 2005, the [Peacebuilding Commission](#) (PBC) sits at the heart of the peace-development nexus, advising UN bodies and helping conflict-affected countries in efforts to foster sustainable peace. Since the 2015 and 2020 reviews of UN peacebuilding architecture, the PBC has expanded its scope to better address the role of women and youth in peace and security, transitional justice, the rule of law, electoral processes, climate change, and socioeconomic development.

At the same time, security threats from climate change to geostrategic competition to emerging technologies have made global conflicts more complex, leading to [over 100 million forcibly displaced people](#). And while global military spending reached a [record high of \\$2.24 trillion in 2022](#), [spending on conflict prevention is minimal](#). On top of geopolitical divisions within the Security Council, these challenges have added pressure to revitalize the UN peacebuilding architecture. The PBC may be well positioned to sidestep impasses and bring together regional and global actors for the purpose of conflict prevention and sustainable peace, but there are still concerns about the [PBC's own weaknesses](#).

With the 2025 review of the UN's peacebuilding architecture on the horizon, a number of reform proposals are likely to be considered, including:

- Expansion of the PBC's mandate to address a broader range of conflict-related risks;
- Greater investigative and enforcement powers;
- Formal engagement with regional and local stakeholders, to create a Sustaining Peace Network;
- More regular consultation with UN bodies;
- Increased funding and formalized links to International Financial Institutions and regional development banks;
- "[Light footprint civilian missions](#)" in peacekeeping transitions to address root causes of conflict;
- National prevention strategies proposed by Member States and reviewed by the PBC.

Leading Questions

- How can the PBC contribute to conflict prevention as the foundation of a more peaceful world?
- How should the PBC's impact at country level be assessed and communicated?
- Is there a risk of overlap and redundancy with other UN bodies or international organizations if the PBC's mandate is expanded?
- Will investigative powers or light footprint civilian missions tread on national sovereignty?

Presenters

- **H.E. Mr. Sérgio França Danese**, Permanent Representative of Brazil to the United Nations, Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission (tbc)
- **Ms. Elizabeth Spehar**, Assistant Secretary-General for Peacebuilding Support, UN Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs
- **Ms. Sigrid Gruener**, Programme Director and Deputy Executive Director, Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation

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