



Inter-Parliamentary Union  
For democracy. For everyone.

# 138<sup>th</sup> IPU ASSEMBLY AND RELATED MEETINGS

Geneva, 24 – 28.03.2018

Standing Committee on  
Peace and International Security

C-I/138/M  
9 January 2018

## Sustaining peace as a vehicle for achieving sustainable development

***Explanatory memorandum submitted by the co-Rapporteurs  
Ms. M. Vargas Barcena (Mexico) and Mr. A. Caroni (Switzerland)***

1. Sustaining peace is among the most notable results of a paradigm shift in the United Nations System, which is based on the premise that peace cannot be achieved or sustained if people do not enjoy the benefits of development and if the root causes of conflicts remain unaddressed. The reason why this represents a paradigm shift lies in the fact that the United Nations System has historically focused more on managing conflicts once they have erupted, and has less devoted itself to preventing them. At the same time, in the globalized and interconnected world, sustainable development is essential for creating more peaceful and inclusive societies. This premise is clearly reflected in the substantially identical resolutions on the *Review of the peacebuilding architecture of the United Nations*, adopted by the United Nations Security Council (resolution 2282 (2016)) and the General Assembly (resolution 70/262) on 27 April 2016. These resolutions, adopted without a vote, reflect an agreed understanding on sustaining peace, understood as both a goal and a process for building a common vision of a society, while ensuring that the needs of all segments of the population are taken into account. The purpose is to prevent the outbreak, escalation, continuation or recurrence of conflict, address root causes, assist parties in conflict to end hostilities, ensure national reconciliation and move towards recovery, reconstruction and development.<sup>1</sup> The resolutions also clearly state that peace and security, human rights and development are interlinked and mutually reinforcing.

2. Similarly, the resolution of September 2015 on the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development stresses the need to build peaceful, fair and inclusive societies that provide equal access to justice and are based on respect for human rights. Sustainable Development Goal 16, which specifically seeks to promote peaceful and inclusive societies, is at the core of sustaining peace. Likewise access to justice, effective accountability and inclusive institutions are at the core of sustainable development. The Agenda 2030 also stresses the need for greater efforts towards resolving or preventing conflict and supporting countries emerging from conflict, including by enabling women to participate in peacebuilding processes.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, it calls for eliminating obstacles to the full enjoyment of the right to self-determination of peoples living under colonial and foreign occupation in terms of both their economic and social development and environment, in conformity with international law.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> United Nations, Security Council Unanimously Adopts Resolution 2282 (2016) on Review of United Nations Peacebuilding Architecture, April 27, 2016. <http://www.un.org/press/en/2016/sc12340.doc.htm>; General Assembly Resolution 70/262, *Review of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture*. [http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/262](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/262)

<sup>2</sup> UN General Assembly resolution 70/1. *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*. Resolution adopted on 25 September 2015. [http://unctad.org/meetings/es/SessionalDocuments/ares70d1\\_es.pdf](http://unctad.org/meetings/es/SessionalDocuments/ares70d1_es.pdf) è [http://www.un.org/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1&referer=https://www.google.ch/&Lang=E](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1&referer=https://www.google.ch/&Lang=E)

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

3. It is important to note that 17 countries are currently experiencing long-standing conflicts and that an estimated two billion people live in countries that are marked by conflict and violence. Furthermore, 95 per cent of the refugees and internally displaced persons in developing countries have been affected by the same 10 conflicts since 1991.<sup>4</sup>

4. During the first post-conflict decade, around 50 percent of countries relapse into conflict. Against this background, the United Nations created the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) in 2005 with the mandate to focus attention on reconstruction and institution-building in order to aid the recovery of conflict-affected countries and lay the foundation for sustainable development. It is also charged with bringing together all relevant actors in order to marshal resources and providing recommendations to all relevant actors inside and outside the United Nations (including the Security Council). As an intergovernmental body, the PBC focuses on the need to implement a coordinated, consistent and integrated approach to peacebuilding and post-conflict reconciliation with a view to achieving lasting peace. The Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) launched in 2006 supports activities, actions, programmes and organizations that seek to build lasting peace in conflict-affected countries. The United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO) acts as a secretariat to the Peacebuilding Commission and manages the Peacebuilding Fund. These bodies are commonly referred to as the "peacebuilding architecture" of the United Nations.

5. In 2015, this peacebuilding architecture was reviewed by a seven-member advisory group of experts designated by the United Nations Secretary-General. This group of experts concluded that peacebuilding had failed to be prioritized, remained underresourced in the United Nations and was generally undertaken only after the guns fall silent. They highlighted the vision set out in the Charter of the United Nations of "saving succeeding generations from the scourge of war" and captured this core task of the United Nations with the notion of sustaining peace. As a principle that flows through all the Organization's engagements, the comprehensive approach of sustaining peace covers a whole range of activities spanning from conflict prevention, through to peacemaking, peacekeeping, and on to post-conflict recovery and reconstruction. This requires the horizontal – rather than vertical – participation of all stakeholders, including United Nations agencies. It also requires securing first-hand information on the causes of conflict and eliminating possible threats to peace, in order to devise integrated policies for that purpose. Since conflict-affected countries lagged considerably behind other countries in attaining the Millennium Development Goals, the experts group called for particular efforts to ensure their sustainable development.

6. The United Nations General Assembly and Security Council followed the recommendations of the review and embraced the concept of sustaining peace by adopting the substantially identical "twin resolutions" on sustaining peace in April 2016. This decision and the adoption of the 2030 Agenda a few months before amounted to a paradigm shift in the multilateral system in terms of the nexus between peace and development, which consists of effectively linking both agendas to conflict prevention. Another focus of the resolutions is the participation of women, young people and civil society organizations. Their long-term participation in political, social and economic recovery should be supported. Likewise, it is important to provide access to financing and to guarantee that such access is consistent and predictable.

7. The resolutions reaffirm the importance of national ownership and inclusivity in peacebuilding – principles which are also highlighted in the 2030 Agenda. Since the primary responsibility for identifying and directing strategies and activities for sustaining peace lies at the national level, the co-Rapporteurs have submitted a draft resolution which seeks to specify the role of national parliaments in the implementation of the concept of sustaining peace as a contribution to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

---

<sup>4</sup> United Nations, statement by Peter Thomson, President of the UN General Assembly, at Opening of High Level Dialogue on *Building Sustainable Peace for All: Synergies between the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Sustaining Peace*, 24 January 2017. <http://www.un.org/pga/71/2017/01/24/opening-of-high-level-dialogue-on-building-sustainable-peace-for-all-synergies-between-the-2030-agenda-for-sustainable-development-and-sustaining-peace/>

8. In their resolution, the co-Rapporteurs call upon parliaments to adopt measures to implement both the concept of sustaining peace and the SDGs on a national level. These measures should include the adoption of enabling legislation, including key budget laws; the use of all generic parliamentary functions (such as law-making and oversight) to enable and monitor an efficient implementation; the prevention of violence in the context of elections and the involvement of parliaments in efforts of national reconciliation in conflict-affected countries.

9. The draft resolution underscores that parliaments are powerful agents of change. They are responsible for ratifying international agreements, translating the SDGs into enforceable national laws, monitoring implementation of such laws and ensuring government accountability.<sup>5</sup> They are thus crucial to ensuring sustainable peace and development. Being legislative bodies and overseers of governmental action, they are uniquely placed to ensure the fulfilment of international commitments. They can guarantee inclusiveness in decision-making and work with civil society to oversee political processes.<sup>6</sup>

---

<sup>5</sup> UNDP, *SDGs and Parliaments*, September 2015, <http://www.undp.org/content/dam/brussels/docs/Fast%20Facts%20-%20SDGs%20and%20Parliaments.pdf>.

<sup>6</sup> IPU, statement by Alessandro Motter, *Building Sustainable Peace for All: Synergies between the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Sustaining Peace*, 24 January 2017: <http://www.ipu.org/Un-e/sp-un-240117.pdf>.