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NEW YORK UNIVERSITY

CENTER ON INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

**A Field-Based Review of the Peacebuilding Commission in
Burundi**

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International Cooperation at New York University**

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. Burundi was placed on the Peacebuilding Commission's (PBC) agenda in June 2006¹, as the peacekeeping mission (ONUB) was drawing down and the Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Burundi (BINUB) was starting up.

2. The founding resolutions of the PBC give it three primary mandates:

a. to bring together all relevant actors to marshal resources and to advise on and propose integrated strategies for post-conflict peacebuilding and recovery;

b. to focus attention on the reconstruction and institution-building efforts necessary for recovery from conflict and to support the development of integrated strategies in order to lay the foundation for sustainable development; and

c. to provide recommendations and information to improve the coordination of all relevant actors within and outside the United Nations (UN), to develop best practices, to help ensure predictable financing for early recovery activities, and to extend the period of attention devoted by the international community to post-conflict recovery.

3. The Country-Specific Meetings (CSMs) of the PBC are, in addition, requested "to serve as a forum for dialogue and consultation with the country on the agenda of the PBC to develop an integrated peacebuilding strategy, [...] devise a monitoring and tracking mechanism and mobilize international support for the country on the agenda."²

4. In early 2009, the then Chairman of the CSM for Burundi, the Permanent Representative of Sweden, briefed the CSM in New York on the challenges the PBC faces in-country; some of the ideas discussed included:

a. activating a "local PBC Bujumbura Configuration" (hereafter "local Configuration") as the driver of the PBC agenda on the ground;

b. enhancing capacity and offering a clear mandate for the UN system to provide strategic leadership both in Bujumbura and New York in support of the peacebuilding priorities established under the Strategic Framework; and

c. recognizing the need for more active participation and shared responsibility of members of the PBC Burundi Configuration as the primary agents for peacebuilding in Burundi.³

5. The peace process in Burundi has continued to progress, most notably through the eventual successful inclusion of the former rebel group, the Palipehutu-FNL, in political dialogue. However, several underlying factors, such as issues surrounding land tenure, widespread unemployment, an increasingly assertive and populist government, and regional instability add to the challenges of peacebuilding, especially in the context of the impending 2010 general elections. With early reports of intimidation and politically motivated crimes⁴, there is a widespread fear that these elections, if not perceived as free and fair, may trigger further conflict.

6. Against this backdrop of persistent fragility and growing political tensions, the structure of the international intervention in Burundi is changing significantly. The expected drawdown of the South African facilitation, the eventual departure of BINUB, and the World Bank-led transition from Roundtable to Consultative Group status reflect the Government of Burundi's desire to operate as a "normal" government.

7. In this context, New York University's Center on International Cooperation was tasked by the Government of Sweden to undertake a country-specific and forward-looking analysis of the Burundi CSM. This report analyzes the role and impact of the CSM in Burundi, based on data collected through desk research coupled with interviews at the UN and permanent missions in New York, the World Bank and donor country missions, and with regional actors, elements of the government, opposition parties, and civil society in Bujumbura.

8. The majority of interviewees identified five key challenges facing international engagement in Burundi: (i) the lack of effective political dialogue among both domestic and international actors to address key points of ongoing fragility in the peace consolidation process; (ii) the continued risks posed by the elections; (iii) the overarching problem of stimulating economic recovery; (iv) the challenge of ensuring successful disarmament and SSR; and, (v) the problem of overall donor coordination.

9. This report first assesses the PBC's in-country performance against its different mandated functions and tools of engagement. It then briefly considers the potential for the PBC's engagement through the CSM given the challenges above and assesses implications for the concept of Country-Specific Configurations.

II. PBC'S ROLE AND IMPACT IN BURUNDI: AN ASSESSMENT TO DATE

10. Following the Peacebuilding Fund's (PBF) allocation of \$35 million in peacebuilding funds for a range of "quick impact" projects, the CSM focused on designing and implementing its tools of in-country engagement. The CSM endorsed the Strategic Framework for Peacebuilding in Burundi (SF) in June 2007 followed by the Monitoring and Tracking Mechanism (MTM) in November 2007. The Partners Coordination Group (PCG) was established in February 2008 for the purposes of improving coordination, harmonizing aid, and monitoring progress. Periodic biannual reviews, country-specific meetings and the Chair's visits to the country provide the means for monitoring the situation on the ground and advising accordingly.

11. These tools provide the basis for an assessment of performance against the tripartite overall mandate of the PBC. We first evaluate the CSM's integrated strategy, then assess its role in fostering coordination, and finally focus on its ability to capture international attention and mobilize resources.

A. SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS

12. Although we observed much criticism of the PBC – as the body of this report reflects – we also actively sought out critical viewpoints. These must be interpreted in the context of two particular caveats:

13. First, the CSMs are still a work in progress. The PBC is a relatively new inter-governmental body faced with a difficult task. The five challenges identified above are both typical of many post-conflict countries and issues that the World Bank, the United Nations, and a host of bilateral actors have struggled with over the last decade. It would be unreasonable to expect an inter-governmental body to have solved these complex challenges in two years.

14. Second, there are issues around roles and responsibilities that can only be clarified through action. Theory alone cannot and should not shape the role of CSMs vis-à-vis their countries of engagement. Rather, the balance will be struck as the relationships between Chairs and Executive Representatives of the Secretary General (ERSGs), between the CSM in New York, donor Headquarters (HQ) in capitals, and in-country actors, and between these bodies and the client country all adjust to accommodate a new actor with an important mandate.

15. This review focuses on these questions. It briefly highlights the already significant achievements of the CSM – particularly on DDR issues, around linking the membership to International Financial Institutions (IFIs) in crises, and on the participatory processes that the PBC has launched. It does not, however, focus on these because the core question asked by our analysis lies around the issue of roles and responsibilities. We therefore seek to shed some light on these questions in order to provide a platform upon which future CSM Chairs and actors may build.

B. SUPPORTING STRATEGY

16. At the request of the Burundi CSM, consultations to identify key peacebuilding priorities and assess political risks in order to develop an integrated strategy were launched in February 2007. The process, introduced after

the initial allocation of PBF funds and in parallel to the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP), was widely seen as out of sequence. The decision to allocate PBF funds prior to developing the CSM's instrument of engagement – the integrated strategy – prevented the SF from leveraging the PBF to deliver catalytic funding that could address identified gaps in the peacebuilding process. This had longer-term consequences for the PBC, which came to be seen as a vehicle for financial support in Burundi – an issue that the PBC has addressed successfully in later engagements.

17. Developing the integrated strategy put considerable strain on both the Government of Burundi and BINUB, especially as they were already engaged in work around the PBF Priority Plan and the PRSP. The process was so labor intensive that the ERSG made a plea to the PBC to accept the framework in its present form and delay further work on the monitoring mechanisms.⁵ When the monitoring and coordination mechanisms were developed five months later, that process remained a complex and bureaucratic exercise – with neither capacity supplied by HQ to support it nor guidance offered on developing these benchmarks and indicators.

18. The relationship between the Strategic Framework and the PRSP was also complex. Although there was much anecdotal dismissal of the PRSP as an inadequate document around the time of the development of the SF, a careful review suggests that the PRSP is at the very least adequate. The section “Strengthen Governance and Security” (“Axis 1”) included as a core element the negotiation of a permanent comprehensive ceasefire with the Palipehutu-FNL, which is quite unusual compared with other national frameworks⁶ and goes to the heart of the political settlement in Burundi. Similarly, there is broad discussion surrounding capacity and legitimacy of the state; truth, justice, and reconciliation; recognition of communities as the primary source of resilience for Burundi's citizens; and a need to refocus the state as an enabler of economic opportunity. Although the PRSP perhaps lacked detailed planning, the SF is equally vague, noting for example that the Government of Burundi should “continue to resolve internal governance crises in a peaceful manner,

in full respect of the constitution, the rule of law and human rights.” It also contains several overambitious benchmarks, such as the following: “By 2008, existence of a political environment conducive to the peaceful resolution of political conflict, through the institutionalization of a culture and practice of dialogue on major issues and national strategies.”⁷

19. The SF, as its process helped to develop a broad consensus on the challenges and priorities for peacebuilding and on the related political risk, had some potential to help bind the government, local stakeholders, and the international community together – as has been observed elsewhere.⁸

20. In its actual use, however, an independent SF, of the type used in Burundi, has little utility, and the process of its elaboration carries high transaction costs. The elaboration of a new Framework, linked to the PRSP, represents two missed opportunities – both to use a PBC-related process to align political, security, and development actors within Burundi, and to establish the PBC as a forum for strategic discussion.

21. Recently, in Sierra Leone, the ERSG has moved swiftly to eliminate the problem of competing SFs and PRSPs. Through the *Agenda for Change*, a single, integrated framework for peace consolidation has emerged. A similar path of alignment is currently being followed in Burundi.

22. This does not answer the underlying question: what is the correct instrument of engagement for a CSM with a PBC client country? Some value was present in the participatory process of development around the SF. Yet participation and outreach are supposed to be a part of the PRSP process and it should not be the role of the PBC to gap-fill for poorly implemented PRSP processes. We note that the notion of the PBC as an agent of mutual accountability was often discussed as an opportunity, but a missed one. **Serious reflection by member states, ideally driven by the needs and demands of current and prospective client countries, could help to design an appropriate instrument and its relationship to PRSPs and pre-existing processes.**

C. PROMOTING COORDINATION AND PARTNERSHIPS

23. Though Burundi enjoys a relatively successful integrated UN mission, at least by comparison with other cases, and a rather small and relatively cohesive traditional donor community, effective coordination continues to be a challenge. This persists despite the fact that part of the concept behind CSMs was to leverage the diversity of membership to support donor coordination. Indeed, a 2008 review of the PBC observed:

..getting all relevant actors engaged at the country level in the development of the frameworks, in discussions on PBF allocations, and in ongoing monitoring activities has contributed to increased coordination [with the PBC in Burundi] fostering the first ever process where bilaterals and multilaterals discuss their assistance in the same forum with the government..⁹

24. An evaluation of Burundi 18 months after the initial review suggests that, although those conclusions were true for the outreach process around the development of the SF, they have not translated into improved coordination on the ground.

25. Burundi's primary aid coordination body is the PCG. Formally established in February 2008, it was designed to serve as a "single coordination, monitoring and dialogue structure with partners, covering both development and peace consolidation aspects, in accordance with the Government's wish, and as reflected in the PRSP and the Strategic Framework for Peacebuilding in Burundi."¹⁰

26. The plan for the PCG was to design a hierarchical structure, with the SF as the framework under which the PRSP operates. For political reasons – to create an acceptable balance between the two vice-presidents and their respective constituent groups – the PCG was split into two pillars, as seen in the diagram below. This resulted in duplication across some sectors (e.g., justice and rule of law, and agriculture and land reform). There were also delays in setting up sectoral groups, and performance and attendance remain uneven. Some meet regularly (e.g.,

SSR), while others (e.g., land reform) have only been active for the biannual review process. The oversight layers of the structure – the political and strategic forums – did not meet regularly, and when they did, they mostly rubber-stamped documents such as the UN Development Assistance Framework. The original terms of reference envisioned these bodies as the fora for constructive political dialogue and advancing progress on the combined SF and PRSP agenda.

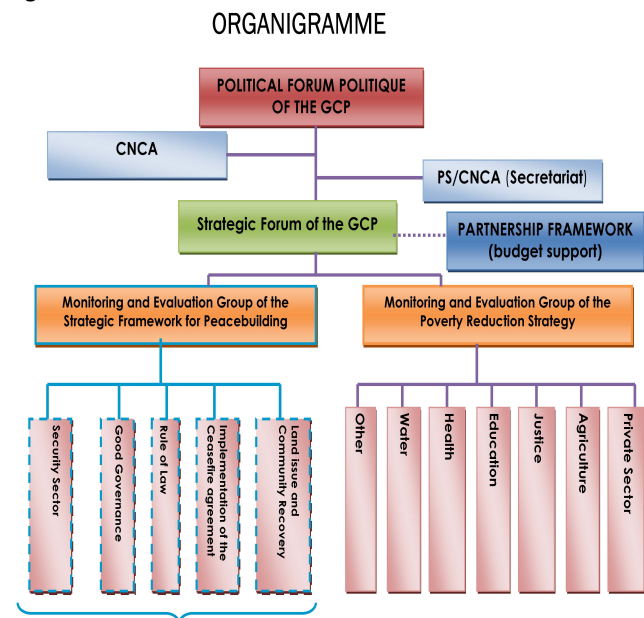


Fig 1: Diagram of the Partners Coordination Group Structure (from PCG Terms of Reference)

27. In June 2009, the Government of Burundi, supported by BINUB, decided to streamline the PCG. From the evidence we were able to gather, the PBC played no role in this decision. The reinvigorated PCG will harmonize the various indicators for the PRSP and SF performance, and some sectoral groups as well as the two Monitoring and Evaluation groups will merge. The new Terms of References (TORs) also better define the distinct role of the strategic and political levels; the Forum politique will be co-chaired by the ERSG and the Forum strategique by United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).¹¹ Once Burundi reaches Consultative Group status, the World Bank will replace UNDP as the co-chair for the Strategic Forum. As many commentators observed, the present government did not prioritize coordination, at least not until the effort to streamline the PCG, and donors continued to program individually.

28. We also observed that the Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO) does not appear to have adequate support and capacity to both play its internal role as facilitator to UN family coordination vis-à-vis the Secretariat and other UN agencies, and to support PBC efforts. Given these limitations, in the case of Burundi, the Chairmanship and DPKO/BINUB have tasked themselves with preparing agendas and background material for CSMs, elaborating the strategy and its periodic reviews.¹² While it remains important that PBSO not be asked or expected to provide in-country coordination functions – which are the purview of the government and the ERSG – a minimum ability to support the CSM is necessary. It should be noted that this capacity has recently been increased.

29. It is only fair to note that there are few, if any, examples of a single actor being able to coordinate the “international community,” and we question who can reasonably be expected to fulfill this function.

30. Indeed, despite the noteworthy convening efforts of the ERSG, coordination in terms of policy and aid has been challenging given the limits to his delegated authority and the differences in interests among the international community. In one notable example, a major international donor has downplayed a generally accepted and independently documented increase in election-related threats and violence. This attitude has provided, in the words of others, latitude for the government to act with impunity.

31. Despite these difficulties, there have been a few positive examples of the capacity of partners in the field to engage the government in a cohesive way in order to ensure that the peacebuilding process remains on track. Members of the international community, for instance, put pressure on the government to ensure that the new electoral commission was composed of truly independent members. In terms of the CSM, the May 2007 thematic meeting on land and recovery brought out concrete recommendations that in-country actors then used as a useful roadmap vis-à-vis the government.

32. The role of the CSM as a venue for exerting political influence on the overarching process of peace consolidation remains in question. The Government of Burundi has repeatedly stated its desire to have BINUB withdraw so that it might operate as a “normal” government, and there is uncertainty over how the voice of international actors could best support the emergence of a stable peace in Burundi. Some have suggested that if the PBC were able to speak with a collective voice in the Political Forum, this could help support commitment to the peace process. **A further question for serious consideration – perhaps in the upcoming PBC Review – is the proper role of CSMs in such fora, and how this role changes in the presence or absence of a mission (peacekeeping or peacebuilding) whose head is the designated representative of the collective international community.**

33. The recent discussion around the “local Configuration” of the CSM appears to highlight this political role as an opportunity for the PBC. The ERSG and others have welcomed this role, and some suggest that as a result of the PBC’s access to resources, it might have more political clout than the ERSG. We also note that, although there is some evidence of commitment to the PBC from a few member states, the CSMs remain largely chair-driven bodies. Many countries, including the P5, appear to view PBC membership as the end-point of their engagement, and there is evidence that the disconnect between the field, capitals, and the PBC continues to be significant. **We remain concerned that the creation of a successful and useful national-level Configuration requires a high level of commitment and communication between Bujumbura, capitals and New York, across the entire membership of the CSM, not just the Chair.**

PARTNERSHIPS

34. The PBC has not fully delivered on its mandated function of fostering closer partnership with IFIs, non-traditional and regional actors.

35. Though there is evidence of an ability to respond to crises, as exemplified by the World Bank funding for

DDR or the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the budgetary crisis¹³, the overall relationship with the IFIs does not appear to be more than simply information sharing. Some evidence is appearing that, particularly in the case of Guinea-Bissau, this situation is evolving for the better.

36. The World Bank, in the opinion of its counterparts, continues to view its role in the PBC as an observer, not as a full partner, and has little New York-level CSM interaction. Frankly, we would consider this attitude understandable. The push in the CSM to create an alternative framework to the PRSP and the lack of a clear value-add of the Configuration has made it hard to articulate a substantive case for serious World Bank engagement with the PBC. Mere rhetoric surrounding the PBC's diverse membership and potential impact is not enough. A clear vision, based on a win-win value proposition, for how CSMs and IFIs can work together, and how this operates in-country and in New York, is needed.

37. The signing of the 2008 Memorandum of Understanding between the World Bank and the UN holds potential for improving the quality of field interaction, though it will have little direct impact on the PBC. The recent offers by the World Bank to start seconding staff into UN operations may help, critically, to persuade the Bank of the value of this relationship.

38. Furthermore, engagement with regional actors and emerging powers remains nascent. The process of developing the SF was inclusive on a national level, but did not substantially engage sub-regional actors in the field.¹⁴ These actors remain largely excluded from PBC processes and the PCG, highlighting the fact that international coordination mechanisms on the ground are still dominated by Western donors and overly focused on programmatic discussions. While donors should not be coordinated through the PBC, a "Local Configuration" with its broad-based membership and legitimacy could help to align the many different national agendas of international actors in support of peace consolidation in Burundi.¹⁵

39. This is all the more important in Burundi, where regional actors have led the peace process since its inception.¹⁶ The 2000 Arusha Accords represented one of the first attempts to find "an African solution to an African issue." The South African Facilitation and the Regional Initiative have been instrumental in the peace process and the 2006 ceasefire agreement. Further regional integration, including Burundi's 2007 entry into the East African Community, has increased the government's ties and commitments to regional actors.¹⁷

40. Despite the efforts of the successive Chairs to participate through the Group of Special Envoys for the Great Lakes region¹⁸ and the PBC's role in the newly established Partnership for Peace in Burundi,¹⁹ there have been missed opportunities to engage more constructively with the peace process and with sub-regional actors at large. **Again, we see a question of overlap and coordination – is it the role of the PBC to join a group in which its member states are individual participants? Should this be managed through the ERSG in the presence of a mission – and, if so, by whom in the absence of a mission? Is there scope for engaging regional and sub-regional actors in the CSM Configuration – and how would this work in practice, given the CSM's New York location? More broadly (for CSMs in other countries), this raises questions about the relationship between the CSM, Groups of Friends, and both formal and informal donor coordination mechanisms.**

CIVIL SOCIETY

41. Through its processes of engagement around the SF, the PBC is said to have helped foster trust and more effective interaction between government and civil society in Burundi, thus making a "significant, albeit a relatively quiet contribution to longer-term processes of peacebuilding in Burundi," in the wording of one study.²⁰

42. While this may be a side-effect of the PBC's engagement, we again note the value of a participatory approach. Inclusive planning processes offer the possibility for the state and society to interact, conduct dialogue, and slowly construct a viable state-society contract – key to a resilient statebuilding process.²¹

43. As we observed and as others have noted, there has been a decline in participation in the Biannual Review by civil society representatives, including those outside of the capital. It is unclear whether civil society organizations have both the means and the capacity to effectively engage in the PBC process²² and whether they feel like full participants in the peacebuilding process, rather than just “beneficiaries.” **Again, the question remains: are CSMs the appropriate fora for mobilizing better engagement with civil society, or is this simply a position where the CSM can observe this potential occurrence in other processes – such as the PRSP – and perhaps, to facilitate this mobilization, provide catalytic funding and support through the PBF?**

D. SUSTAINING INTERNATIONAL ATTENTION AND MOBILIZING RESOURCES

SUSTAINING INTERNATIONAL ATTENTION

44. Keeping the international community’s attention on Burundi’s peacebuilding process, through CSMs in New York and/or the Chair’s field visits, has clearly been the greatest added value of the CSM.

45. During a December 2008 meeting in New York, the Chair helped mobilize high-level international attention around a funding and strategy gap in critical DDR processes, as the Multi-Country Demobilization and Reintegration Program (MDRP) was terminating and a new World Bank program was yet to commence. Respondents suggested that although the field could have mobilized the needed financial resources, the ability to focus political attention in the event of a “crisis too small for the Security Council yet big enough to potentially destabilize” is a useful function of the PBC.²³ **What is not clear, and is beyond the scope of this review, is the role of the ERSG vis-à-vis the PBC on such issues. Is it the role of the ERSG to alert the PBC to challenges that by mandate or for other reasons s/he cannot address? Is this a formal process through a briefing to the PBC, or an informal but essential function of the relationship between a CSM Chair and the ERSG? Is there an implication for the**

assets that the Chair must have in-country to facilitate such information flows?

THE BIENNIAL REVIEW PROCESS

46. It is clear that the CSMs and the PBSO are seen as “distant relatives.” Actors in the field indicated that they found field visits hasty and out of touch, and the biannual reviews a labor-intensive process that yielded little results.

47. The Biannual Reviews of the Strategic Framework are supposed to measure progress and, through concrete recommendations, help to ensure that all parties live up to their commitments. The first Biannual Review, in the summer of 2008, generated considerable interest and high-level participation from the government, civil society, and bilateral actors. This enthusiasm was short-lived, however, and at the second review, attendance from international partners and local stakeholders dropped. While the timing – conducted over the Christmas period and coinciding with the writing of the Secretary General’s report – was partly to blame, we saw a sense of frustration in Burundi with a cumbersome review process that had no impact, nor scope for impact. By the time of their publication, some reviews were obsolete. There were few efforts to follow up on the recommendations, and there was little impact in terms of donors or funding. Watching from a video link in Bujumbura, donors said they were astonished by the “flatness” of the debate during the CSM in New York. As one diplomat suggested, “There is this feeling that we are working to serve New York ... to get people in New York to talk about something they know little about.”

48. There has been some degree of re-engagement from international partners during the third review process, partly owing to positive developments on the ground. Yet member states continue to provide late or irrelevant inputs into the reviews, further delaying and encumbering an overly complicated editorial process. The underlying problem, of course, remains the relevancy, or lack thereof, of the Strategic Framework. Without an instrument of engagement that is linked to impactful processes – either the PRSP in terms of funding, or the

Security Council mandate as the expression of collective political will – the logic of an additional review process will remain questionable.

49. Overall, the PBC has viewed its monitoring and advisory role in a somewhat restrictive way. It has reacted to events as they unfold rather than being proactive and bringing attention, resources, and advice to looming issues. For example, while the election process is an appropriate near-term priority, it is also receiving a potentially disproportional portion of international attention. Human rights abuses, on the other hand, have neither been addressed by the PBC, nor by any other body. **Given the TORs of the PBC, and the existence of BINUB, which has an election-specific mandate, should the PBC focus on elections, or on medium-term issues that are currently being sidelined by the focus on elections? How should the PBC interact with host-countries on questions of rights violations?**

MOBILIZING RESOURCES

50. The PBC is also mandated to marshal resources. In this respect, the CSM has struggled to broaden the donor base, with limited engagement of new donors such as Switzerland, India, and China.²⁴ South-South cooperation is minimal, and donors continue to channel their funds bilaterally, according to their own priorities.²⁵ While the contributions made at the 2007 donor conference exceeded the initial appeal, arguably as a result of the PBC focus, only 30% of these pledges were disbursed in 2008.²⁶ There are also consistent gaps between the needs outlined in the PRSP and the Priority Action Plan of the government and the funds available.²⁷

51. As noted earlier, the process around the PBF has been problematic, with the initial \$35 million allocation focused on quick-impact projects – demonstrating the value of the PBF rather than fulfilling a strategic need. Analysis suggests that these projects, developed in the absence of guidance or direction, were driven by BINUB using the PBF as a source of seed-funding to strengthen its relationship with the government.

52. **The steps taken to map resource flows and develop an electronic aid management system were overdue, and speak to the potential role of CSMs in extending accountability to donors for their performance against pledges – which is one part of the PBC’s prospective role. On the other side, for the PBC as a “donor,” once an appropriate instrument of engagement for CSMs is devised, the PBSO will need a plan to use the PBF to provide strategic value, for both the PBC and the host country. We note that the process around the Security Council Debate and the Report of the Secretary-General on Peacebuilding in the Aftermath of Conflict have identified critically underfunded areas in post-conflict countries, such as agriculture and urban planning.**

3. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

53. Our analysis of the impact of the CSM in Burundi raised several fundamental questions for the PBC. These can be grouped as follows:

- a. **Questions around the instrument of engagement:** What is the primary instrument for the PBC to engage with a client country? How does this instrument relate to other international community instruments, notably PRSPs and Security Council mandates?
- b. **Questions around the role of the CSM:** How does the CSM relate to a mission and to the role of the ERSG as the representative of the international community? What balance – short term or long term – is prescribed by this relationship in terms of issues for the CSM? How could the ERSG “use” the PBC when s/he needs international support, when appropriate? How does the CSM interact with other international fora, both regional and international, including donor groupings? Should the CSM interact with civil society? What is the relationship of CSMs to IFIs both in-country and in New York?

- c. **Questions around the relationship of the PBC to the PBF:** Is the PBF a source of catalytic funding? Should its use be linked to the instrument of engagement or be independent?

54. We believe that addressing the question of the instrument of engagement will generate answers to all of these questions. It is not, however, plausible for an analysis of one single CSM to offer a solution to all CSMs. Further work is necessary on this topic; CIC is considering a further briefing paper on this topic as a contribution to the PBC Review process.

A. IDEAS FOR BURUNDI

55. The above offers some general thoughts for CSMs overall. The question we confront is: what constructive suggestions can this review offer for the new Chair of the Burundi Configuration?

56. Our review observed the potential utility of the CSM as a forum for extending accountability to donors and to the government. It also noted the challenges around the development of the current instrument of engagement, the Strategic Framework that competes with the PRSP or the Security Council Mandate.

57. We note that recently, the new ERSG in Sierra Leone has received considerable support from the government for working with national authorities to abandon the independent Strategic Framework and replace it with a document linked to and derived from the PRSP. There is evidence that a similar merger will also be reached in Burundi.

58. We believe that this is a useful starting point for the CSM. While this is perhaps beyond our remit, we would suggest that the Chair invite the ERSG, a few select partners from Burundi (representing government, civil society and in-country partners) and a select grouping of CSM members, to a workshop devoted to improving the CSM's tool of engagement. We hope that this paper might be a useful starting point.

59. We suggest this discussion could be structured around the following ideas:

a. **A capacity-constrained footprint:** Although the instrument will be context- driven, it must articulate clear and limited roles for the CSM that respect its own capacity constraints, as well as those of the PBSO, and recognize the burden of international processes on host governments.

b. **A framework of mutual accountability:** The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness provides a useful starting point for using the breadth of PBC membership as a means to deliver on more effective and more mutual accountability.

c. **A recognition of the political nature of development:** Part of the ethos for the creation of the PBC lay in the importance of better integrating security, development, and political strategies and actors. For this instrument to be successful it must build on PRSPs and the like, but must also be able to articulate what they cannot do – the explicitly political constraints around progress towards peace.

d. **Strong links to the mission:** In the design of the instrument, explicit articulation of the expectations, roles and responsibilities of the mission vis-à-vis the PBC and vice-versa will be critical. In particular, outlining how the ERSG can and should work with the PBC is crucial – and, again, must respect the costs imposed on the ERSG of such plans and the importance of their primary role in-country.

60. With these – and other principles easily developed through consultations, outreach and reflection – the Chair could develop an instrument of engagement that encompasses the lessons learnt in the last two years of experience and ideally draws on some of the innovations present in other countries as well.

61. While it may seem odd to suggest a complex process to improve on a process that has been itself described as too complex, we see a real opportunity

for carefully managed, practically-oriented reflection. Essential to success is a clear look at what has worked and what has not worked. This needs to be combined with a willingness to recognize when successes have been opportunistic, and that even if certain outcomes may have been positive, the processes that led to these outcomes may be neither replicable nor ideal.

B. THE “LOCAL CONFIGURATION”

62. The last Chairmanship of the PBC called for activating a “local Configuration” of the CSM as the driver of the PBC agenda on the ground, and the recent Biannual Review welcomed its establishment.

63. The inherent political nature of peacebuilding requires sustained investment and attention to the political process.²⁸ However, we note that forthcoming institutional and political changes will likely leave a growing political gap on the ground as (i) South Africa’s mediation role diminishes,²⁹ (ii) Burundi transitions from a Roundtable country to Consultative Group status, and (iii) BINUB’s mandate eventually comes to an end.³⁰

64. As these transitions occur, an argument exists that a more assertive political role for the PBC would ensure continuity and focused attention on Burundi’s critical peacebuilding needs, as laid out in the SF. To this end, a “local Configuration” of the CSM, at the Political Forum level of the PCG, has now been established. It would operate in a context where it could be an important ally to the UN in general, whose resources remain limited, and in particular to the ERSG, whose ability to be politically assertive is constrained by his administrative role and the UN’s historical relationship with the government (characterized by the Government of Burundi asking his two predecessors to leave).

65. There are, however, many caveats suggesting that an effective “local Configuration” of the PBC may not be achievable:

- a. PBC member states engagement and internal coherence. Ultimately, the success of a “local

Configuration” would depend on the willingness and capacity of its members to make it work. In clear terms, this would require member states’ willingness to act cohesively, and to coordinate from the field, through capitals, to New York, and vice-versa. They would also have to see the PBC as a forum that could and should speak authoritatively on key political issues. We have seen little evidence of such cooperation in Burundi or elsewhere, and the overarching problem of member-state cohesiveness is perhaps the biggest challenge facing development assistance today.

- b. A successful peacebuilding strategy requires funding. For success, a “local Configuration” would need to mobilize resources against a clear strategy, through pooled funding mechanisms, greater use of South-South cooperation, and involvement of non-state actors. We note that the PRSP already exists as the primary mechanism for mobilizing funds, and we do not see a realistic likelihood of the SF, or any CSM-driven framework, replacing the PRSP in the near future.

- c. Strategy requires capacity. To develop, implement, and monitor against a strategy, the CSM would need significant in-country support. This would require a large commitment on behalf of the Chair, and a new conception of PBSO staffing, as well as real commitment from the IFIs and other donor partners. In a recessionary climate, we simply do not see this as fiscally, let alone politically, realistic.

66. If these criteria were met, a “local Configuration” of the PBC could serve as an effective forum for mutual accountability and genuine partnership. In the absence of these, however, it would just be another mechanism for reporting or, as expressed by one interviewee, “an empty shell.”

ENDNOTES

The authors would like to thank Jenna Slotin, Dr. A. Sarjoh Bah, Richard Gowan and Megan Gleason for their comments and inputs to this paper.

¹Endorsed in 2005, the PBC represented a commitment on the part of member states to bridge the gap between conflict and development. Along with the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) and the Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO), it comprises the UN's peacebuilding architecture. The PBC's work is largely driven through country-specific meetings (CSMs) or configurations, a meeting format devoted to each country on the agenda of the PBC.

²PBSO, *Reference Material for the Peacebuilding Commission*, 28 January 2009, p. 10.

³PBC, *Report of the Chair's Visit to Bujumbura 15-17 January 2009*, p. 4.

⁴Because these incidents often occur at the local level, they do not always get the adequate attention they deserve, notably from the international community. But in a small country such as Burundi, such incidents can quickly create a climate of fear and, as one leader of the opposition conveyed to us, "having a major donor government downplaying the meaning of these politically motivated crimes is not helping us – it provides extra room for the government to act in impunity." For a detailed account of these crimes, we refer to the latest Human Rights Watch publication, *La Quête du Pouvoir: Violences et répressions politiques au Burundi*, May 2009.

⁵PBC, First Session – Burundi configuration, *Summary record of the 5th meeting*, 20 June 2007 (PBC/1/BDI/SR.5).

⁶The intellectual foundation for this stems from a review of planning frameworks and PRSPs in 13 countries conducted by Rahul Chandran and Jenna Slotin for the forthcoming paper *A Review of Strategic Planning Frameworks in Post-Conflict Countries* (OECD/DAC, 2009).

⁷Stave, Erik Stave, *Monitoring Peace Consolidation, UN Practitioners Guide to Benchmarking*, draft report, November 2009.

⁸CIC/IFI, *Taking Stock, Looking Forward: A Strategic Review of the Peacebuilding Commission*, an independent study commissioned by the Permanent Mission of Denmark to the UN, April 2008, p. 14.

⁹CIC/IFI, *Taking Stock, Looking Forward: A Strategic Review of the Peacebuilding Commission*, an independent study commissioned by the Permanent Mission of Denmark to the UN, April 2008, p. 17.

¹⁰PBC, *Chairman's Summary Informal Meeting on Monitoring and Tracking Mechanism of the Strategic Framework for Peacebuilding in Burundi*, "Terms of References of the Partners' Coordination Group (GCP)," October 2007.

¹¹Secrétariat Permanent du Comité National de Coordination des Aides, *Rapport du Forum Politique du 22 Juin 2009*.

¹²Some thematic meetings in New York also relied on field-level research and preparation, a task that fell to the UN staff in Burundi.

¹³When the IMF declared its intention to delay completion of its Sixth Review, the then chair of the Burundi Configuration, Norway, worked actively to promote constructive dialogue between the Government and the IMF, highlighting both the need for governance improvements and the political and security risks associated with an economic crisis.

¹⁴It was related, for instance, that the initial interest displayed by regional Anglophone countries vanished, as the language barrier (in the absence of translated documents) prevented them from engaging in a constructive manner.

¹⁵Burundi's access to Eastern Kivu makes it attractive to many regional actors, while France's attitude towards the Burundi government is motivated by wider regional concerns (Rwanda).

¹⁶Furthermore, Stephen Jackson, in his study on ONUB, identifies "an informal but mutually understood division of labor amongst regional and international actors [where] an overt relationship with the armed groups [including the CNDD, who subsequently won the 2005 election] became the preserve of South Africa and Tanzania while, in implementing Arusha, the UN was tasked predominantly with a focus on the traditional 'Arusha parties.'" Stephen Jackson, "ONUB – Political and Strategic Lessons Learned," *Independent external study for DPKO*, July 2006.

¹⁷ActionAid, CAFOD, and Care International, *Consolidating the Peace? Views from Sierra Leone and Burundi on the United Nations Peacebuilding Commission*, 2007, p. 22.

¹⁸The Group of Special Envoys includes representatives of the African Union, the US, and the EU. Its purpose is to mobilize international support for the completion of the peace process.

¹⁹The Partnership for Peace in Burundi, proposed by the South African Facilitation in May 2009, will monitor the implementation of the remaining critical elements of the peace process (namely DDR) until the end of 2009. As stated in the May 2009 *Report of the Chair's Visit to Burundi*, it will not focus on long-term peacebuilding issues that will be addressed through the PBC.

²⁰ActionAid, CAFOD, and Care International, *Consolidating the Peace? Views from Sierra Leone and Burundi on the United Nations Peacebuilding Commission*, 2007, p. 22.

²¹On the importance of political process and state-society interaction, please refer to OECD/DAC, *From Fragility to Resilience: Concepts and Dilemmas of State Building in Fragile Situations*, Discussion Paper, 2008.

²²ActionAid, CAFOD, and Care International, *Consolidating the Peace? Views from Sierra Leone and Burundi on the United Nations Peacebuilding Commission*, 2007. The report provides the example of Norway, which has financed a coordinator post to support a women's organization engagement with the PBC. It recommends that a small amount of PBF funds be allocated to build this capacity within local civil society organizations.

²³This function also played out during the March 2009 crisis in Sierra Leone.

²⁴PBC, *Second Biannual Review of the Implementation of the Strategic Framework for Peacebuilding in Burundi*, July 2009 (PBC/3/BDI/3).

²⁵There are efforts under way to pool funds into a UNDP managed basket fund to support the electoral process with contributions from France, Germany, Netherlands, UK, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Canada, China, South Africa, Belgium, the EC, and Japan.

²⁶UN, *Minutes from the Security Council Meeting on the Situation in Burundi*, August 26th, 2008 (S/PV/5966).

²⁷PBC, *Third Biannual Review of the Implementation of the Strategic Framework for Peacebuilding in Burundi*, July 2009. (PBC/3/BDI/L.1), p. 25.

²⁸See, for instance, Elizabeth Cousens and Chetan Kumar with Karin Wermester, *Peacebuilding as Politics*, 2001.

²⁹With the last former rebel group now in the political realm, South Africa has clearly expressed its intention to gradually withdraw from the peace process. The Partnership for Peace in Burundi, intended to keep South Africa engaged in monitoring and supporting the peace process, is a momentary mechanism, due to expire at the end of 2009. While South Africa will remain involved in Burundi, notably through the establishment of a cooperation office, it is probable that its political role will take a backseat.

³⁰While BINUB will likely remain highly engaged up until the 2010 elections, a gradual drawdown or a transition to a lighter political mission (in the aftermath) is highly plausible and, seemingly, the preferred option of the current government. The transition from Roundtable to Consultative Group status, which is already in motion ahead of the general elections, will refocus the relationship between the international community and the government from a primary BINUB role to the World Bank, which will increasingly become the primary interface with the national administration.

Annex A: List of Interviewees

In New York

United Nations & World Bank

Vincent Kayijuka	PBSO, Peacebuilding Officer
Mia Seppo	UNDP, Crisis and Recovery Adviser, Policy and Strategy Division, Africa
Hannah Taylor	DPKO, Burundi Desk Officer
Joost van der Zwan	DPKO, Associate Political Affairs Officer, Great Lakes Team
Tania Meyer	WB Office of the Special Representative to the UN, Counselor

Permanent Missions to the United Nations

Mohammad Khastagir	Bangladesh, First Secretary
Filip Vanden Bulck	Belgium, First Secretary
Dan Schreiber	Belgium, Advisor
Patrick Travers	Canada, Advisor
Bénédicte de Montlaur	France, First Secretary
Cesare Onestini	European Commission Delegation, Counselor
Frank Jarasch	Germany, Counselor
Motoyuki Ishize	Japan, Counselor
Michiko Miyamoto	Japan, Advisor
Guadalupe Sanchez	Mexico, Counselor
Bartjan Wegter	Netherlands, First Secretary
Marenne Jansen	Netherlands, Assistant Attaché
Lene Strand	Norway, First Secretary
Carl Skau	Sweden, First Secretary
Johann Aeschlimann	Switzerland, Counselor
Peter Maurer	Switzerland, Ambassador
Nick Harvey	United Kingdom, First Secretary
Douglas J. Meurs	USA, Advisor

Think Tanks & Academics

Susanna P. Campbell	Fletcher School, Ph.D. Candidate
Jenna Slotin	IPI, Senior Program Officer

In Burundi

United Nations & World Bank

Hanitriaina Andriaveloson	BINUB, Strategic Planning Associate
Germaine Bationo	UNHCR, Deputy Representative
Afke Bootsman	UNDP, Peace and Development Specialist
Francis James	BINUB, Chief Just Unit

Bernard Jolly	BINUB, Chief of Peace and Governance Section
Boubakar Kane	BINUB, Senior Political Affairs Officer
Bintou Keita	BINUB, Deputy ERSG
Youssef Mahmoud	BINUB, ERSG
Claudia Mojica	BINUB, Senior Political Officer
Fadela Novak	UNHCR, Protection Officer
Mercy Tembon	World Bank, Resident Representative

International Community

Gilles Landsberg	Belgian Embassy, First Secretary
Luc Risch	Belgian Cooperation, First Secretary
Mr. Lee	Chinese Embassy, Chargé d'Affaires
Alain Darthenucq	European Union, Chief of Delegation
Yves Manville	French Embassy, First Counselor
Thomas Petereit	German Embassy, First Secretary
Liberata Mulamula	ICGLR, Region Executive Secretary
Roger Nsibula	ICGLR, Program Officer
Jeannette Seppen	Netherlands Embassy, Chargée d'Affaires
Sheidu Momoh	Nigeria Embassy, Chargé d'Affaires
Mdu Lembede	South African Embassy, Ambassador
Marc George	Swiss Embassy, Political Advisor
Francis Mndolwa	Embassy of the United Republic of Tanzania, Ambassador
Sue Hogwood	UK Department for International Development, Head of Office

Government of Burundi

Antoine Baza	Advisor to the First Vice-President
Pamphile Muderega	National Aid Coordination Committee, Permanent Secretary
Adolphe Nahayo	Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Director of Department of International Organization

Political Parties

Alois Rubuka	UPRONA, President
Agathon Rwaso	Forces Nationales de Libération (FNL), President

NGOs

Jean-Marie Gasana	Institute for Security Studies Senior Analyst, African Security Analysis Program
Neela Ghoshal	Human Rights Watch, Researcher-Africa Division
Pacifique Nininahazwe	Forum pour le Renforcement de la Société Civile, Legal Representative

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