



2005 Parliamentary Hearing at the United Nations ECOSOC Chamber



31 October – 1 November 2005

Backgrounder on the Peace-building Commission (Prepared by the UN Department of Political Affairs)

1. At the **2005 World Summit**, Member States agreed to establish a Peace-building Commission by the end of the year¹. The Peace-building Commission will be an **intergovernmental advisory body** aimed at addressing the challenge of helping countries with the transition from war to lasting peace².
2. The **main purpose** of the Peace-building Commission is to **bring together all relevant actors to marshal resources and to advise on and propose integrated strategies for post-conflict peace-building and recovery**. The Commission will focus attention on the reconstruction and institution-building efforts necessary for recovery from conflict and support the development of integrated strategies in order to lay the foundation for sustainable development. In addition, it should provide recommendations and information to improve the coordination of all relevant actors within and outside the United Nations, develop best practices, help to ensure predictable financing for early recovery activities and extend the period of attention by the international community to post-conflict recovery³.
3. The **idea** for the establishment of a Peace-building Commission came from 2004 ***High Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change***'s recommendations. The High Level Panel recommended that the Security Council, acting under article 29 of the Charter of the United Nations, and after consultation with the ECOSOC, establish a Peace-building Commission⁴. The Panel argued that the United Nations needed to significantly strengthen its work in the area of post-conflict peace-building, including and especially through stronger coordination between the Security Council, the International Financial Institutions, donor governments and other major actors. This recommendation was adopted by the Secretary General, in his report ***In Larger Freedom: Towards Development, Security and Human Rights for All***.

¹ Paragraphs 97 to 105 of 2005 *World Summit Outcome Document* are the foundation for the discussion over the Peace-building Commission.

² Paragraph 97 of the *Outcome Document*.

³ Paragraph 98 of the *Outcome Document*.

⁴ Paragraph 263 of the *High Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change*'s report.

4. In an addendum to his report, the Secretary General highlighted the **seven functions of the proposed Peace-building Commission**:
 - Provide necessary information to the Security Council and focus attention on development and institution-building efforts necessary for recovery in the immediate aftermath of war.
 - Help to ensure predictable financing for early recovery activities, in part by providing an overview of assessed, voluntary and standing funding mechanisms.
 - Periodically review progress towards medium-term recovery goals.
 - Ensure sustained financing recovery and development activities and extend the period of political attention to post-conflict recovery.
 - Prevention.
 - Develop best practice on cross-cutting peace-building issues
 - Improve the coordination of the United Nations funds, programmes and agencies.
5. Though negotiations in the General Assembly on the Commission are still underway, the Summit itself agreed that the Commission will have a **standing Organizational Committee**. It also agreed that the Commission will also hold **country-specific meetings**⁵. The **Organizational Committee** would be responsible for developing the procedures and organizational matters of the Commission. It would comprise:
 - (a) members of the Security Council, including permanent members
 - (b) members of the Economic and Social Council
 - (c) top providers of assessed contributions to the United Nations budgets and voluntary contributions to the United Nations funds, programmes and agencies
 - (d) top providers of military personnel and civilian police to United Nations missions.
6. These **country-specific meetings** would include, upon invitation of the Organizational Committee:
 - (a) the country under consideration
 - (b) countries in the region engaged in the post-conflict process and other countries that are involved in relief efforts and/or political dialogue, as well as relevant regional and sub regional organizations
 - (c) the major financial, troop and civilian police contributors involved in the recovery effort

⁵ Paragraphs 100 and 101 of the *Outcome Document*.

- (d) the senior United Nations representative in the field and other relevant United Nations representatives
- (e) such regional and international financial institutions as may be relevant.
7. The Secretary General's addendum laid out some additional ideas about the Commission's work. It said that the Peace-building Commission should be **advisory in nature**. It should provide ideas and inputs to the work of the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council and interface directly with the Secretariat on peace-building matters. The Peace-building Commission should make the outcome of its discussion and recommendations publicly available as United Nations documents to all relevant bodies and actors, including the international financial institutions. The Commission should submit an annual report to the General Assembly.
8. To work effectively and efficiently, the Peace-building Commission would be supported by a small but high-quality **Peace-building Support Office**. The Peace-building Support Office will be established within the Secretariat and from within existing resources⁶. It will be staffed by qualified professionals from a range of backgrounds and disciplines. The primary functions of the Peace-building Support Office will be threefold.
- To prepare the substantive inputs for meetings of the Peace-building Commission, including by gathering and analysis information from members of the Peace-building Commission about their respective peace-building activities and financial commitments.
 - To provide high-quality inputs to the planning process for peace-building operations, working with lead departments, United Nations field presences and others.
 - To conduct best practices analysis and develop policy guidance, as appropriate.
9. The Summit also agreed to establish a **multi-year standing Peace-building Fund** for post-conflict peace-building, funded by voluntary contributions and taking due account of existing instruments. The objectives of the Fund will include ensuring the immediate release of resources needed to launch peace-building activities and making available appropriate financing for recovery.
10. In October, General Assembly President Eliasson outlined the **remaining issues** to be resolved, namely the **establishment of the Commission, the involvement of the host country, reporting lines, agenda setting, and membership of the Organizational Committee**. Since then, meetings with representatives from the field and negotiations among member States have been held to try to reach an agreement on these issues.

⁶ Paragraph 104 of the *Outcome Document*

11. President Eliasson has stated his hope that agreements on the Commission will be reached by early November. The present negotiations are being led by the Permanent Representatives of **Denmark** and **Tanzania**.