

Peacebuilding Commission's Gender Strategy

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1. Background, mandate and methodology

In line with its mandate to integrate a gender perspective in all of its work and consult with women's organizations¹, and to ensure a more structural integration of gender perspectives in all its work, the UN Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) decided in the forward agenda set out in its [Report on the eighth session](#) (paragraph 71), that, it would develop a strategy to systematically mainstream a gender perspective in all its work, including its country-specific engagement with consent of the host-country (here and after referred to as the "PBC Gender Strategy"). The objective is to strengthen the Commission's engagement on gender-related aspects of peacebuilding by ensuring an inclusive approach which takes into account women's perspectives, including their specific needs and promotes gender equality in order to make peacebuilding more effective.

The newly adopted resolutions on the Review of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture ([A/RES/70/262](#) and [S/RES/2282](#) (2016)) reaffirm the call for the PBC to integrate a gender perspective into all of its work and underscore

Gender-responsive peacebuilding

Gender-responsive peacebuilding pays attention to the specific ways conflicts affect people differently depending on their sex, age, ethnicity, etc. and addresses gender-specific implications and concerns, as well as particular recovery and protection needs, if any. It aims among other things at enhancing women's participation and leadership in all peacebuilding activities, "*noting the substantial link between women's full and meaningful involvement in efforts to prevent, resolve and rebuild from conflict and those efforts' effectiveness and long term sustainability.*" (PP 22 of [A/RES/70/262](#) and [S/RES/2282](#))

¹ As per the Peacebuilding Commission's founding resolutions [A/RES/60/180](#) and [S/RES/1672\(2005\)](#)

“the importance of women’s leadership and participation in conflict prevention, resolution and peacebuilding, and recognizes the continuing need to increase representation of women at all decision-making levels in national, regional and international institutions and mechanisms for the prevention and resolution of conflict, and the consideration of gender-related issues in all discussions pertinent to sustaining peace.”²

The normative framework for the protection and promotion of women’s rights in conflict affected countries and thus for the PBC Gender Strategy is set in inter alia Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) and its seven subsequent resolutions (1820, 1888, 1889, 1960, 2106, 2122, 2242), as well as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

The PBC has adopted a two-step process for the development of its Gender Strategy. The first phase was aimed at capturing existing knowledge, practices and lessons learned and to scale up successful experiences in countries on the PBC’s agenda. A desk review of all substantive PBC documentation, , as well as the PBF Peacebuilding Priority Plans (PPPs) was conducted by PBSO and UN Women with the purpose of analyzing language on women and gender and to assess the extent to which gender was mainstreamed at the global and country level. Moreover, informal expert-level interviews were conducted with the six country chairs and representatives of the countries on the agenda. The findings were documented in the “Light Review of PBC’s Engagement on Gender to Date.”

Gender mainstreaming

The process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women’s as well as men’s concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres, so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal of gender mainstreaming is to achieve gender equality. (Agreed Conclusion of ECOSOC Coordination Segment on Gender Mainstreaming, A/52/3, 1997)

The second phase includes the development of a full-fledged Strategy, informed by the country-based knowledge and analysis undertaken in phase 1 and based on the concept of sustaining peace. The PBC Gender Strategy defines a series of priority areas of strategic action for PBC’s gender-responsive engagement at the country, regional and global levels, as well as key messages that the PBC should systematically promote. Consultations on the draft Strategy were held at the global level as well as in country, with Member States of the PBC, civil society partners, UN missions and country teams.

² OP 21 of [A/RES/70/262](#) and [S/RES/2282](#)

2. “Sustaining peace” and gender



The resolutions on the Review of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture ([A/RES/70/262](#) and [S/RES/2282](#) (2016)) “reaffirm the important role of women in peacebuilding, noting the substantial link between women’s full and meaningful involvement in efforts to prevent, resolve and rebuild from conflict and those efforts’ effectiveness and long term sustainability.”³ The resolutions underscore “the importance of women’s leadership and participation in conflict prevention, resolution and peacebuilding, and recognize the continuing need to increase representation of women at all decision-making levels in national, regional and international institutions and mechanisms for the prevention and resolution of conflict, and the consideration of gender-related issues in all discussions pertinent to sustaining peace.”⁴ Furthermore, the resolutions recognize the importance of “strategic and operational partnerships between national Governments, the United Nations, and other key stakeholders, including (...) women’s groups.”⁵ Regarding financing for gender-responsive peacebuilding, the resolutions stress the importance of “enhancing the mobilization of resources for initiatives that address the particular needs of women in peacebuilding contexts, advance gender equality, and empower women.”⁶ Regarding the PBC, the resolutions reaffirm the call “to integrate a

³ PP 22 of [A/RES/70/262](#) and [S/RES/2282](#)

⁴ OP 21 of [A/RES/70/262](#) and [S/RES/2282](#)

⁵ OP 18 of [A/RES/70/262](#) and [S/RES/2282](#)

⁶ OP 27 of [A/RES/70/262](#) and [S/RES/2282](#)

*gender perspective into all of its work*⁷ and specifically encourage the PBC to “*serve as a platform to convene all relevant actors, (...) including women’s groups, (...) to provide recommendations and information to improve their coordination*”⁸ and “*to consider options for regular exchanges and joint initiatives with key stakeholders to promote sustainable peace.*”⁹

Likewise, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development advocates for an inclusive process and equal participation of all, and states that it “*realizes (that) gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls will make a crucial contribution to progress across all the Sustainable Development Goals and targets*”¹⁰, and states that “*the systematic mainstreaming of a gender perspective in the implementation of the Agenda is crucial.*”¹¹

⁷ OP 6 of [A/RES/70/262](#) and [S/RES/2282](#)

⁸ OP 4d of [A/RES/70/262](#) and [S/RES/2282](#)

⁹ OP 18 of [A/RES/70/262](#) and [S/RES/2282](#)

¹⁰ OP 20 of [A/RES/70/1](#)

¹¹ Ibid.

3. Guiding principles for promoting women's participation in peacebuilding

Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) and subsequent resolutions are based on a recognition of *“the need for the full, equal and effective participation of women at all stages of peace processes”*¹² and *“the important role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in peacebuilding”, (...)* as well as *the need to increase their role in decision-making with regard to conflict prevention and resolution*¹³. Security Council resolution 1889 (2009) on women's participation in peacebuilding highlights the importance of women's empowerment and gender equality to peacebuilding. The resolution emphasizes that *“women's empowerment (...) can contribute to effective peacebuilding”* and stresses the *“need to focus... on [women's] empowerment in peacebuilding.”*¹⁴

In order to ensure the successful implementation of the PBC's Gender Strategy and its credibility, and to contribute to the overarching goal of promoting gender equality and women's empowerment, the PBC's work on gender-responsive peacebuilding is to be guided by the following principles:

- **Diversity**

Women are not a homogenous group, but represent a wide range of roles, such as actors, victims, and also perpetrators. Moreover, people have a variety of identities, inter alia age, urban or rural habitants, socio-economic backgrounds, disability, legal status, etc. This diversity needs to be taken into account when conducting gender-responsive programmes.

- **National ownership, inclusivity and participation**

National ownership and leadership is crucial, as it is *“the primary responsibility of national Governments and authorities (to) identify, drive and direct priorities, strategies and activities for sustaining peace (...) and in this regard (...) inclusivity is key to advancing national peacebuilding processes and objectives in order to ensure that the needs of all segments of society are taken into account.”*¹⁵ Efforts should aim at promoting women's equal participation in all activities to sustain peace at all levels. Furthermore, resolution 2242 (2015) *“reiterates the important engagement by men and boys as partners in promoting women's participation in (...) peacebuilding”*.¹⁶ A/RES/70/262 and S/RES/2282 (2016) *“reaffirms the important role youth can play in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and as a key aspect of the sustainability, inclusiveness and success of (...) peacebuilding efforts”*.¹⁷

- **Coherence**

In order to promote coherence and prevent fragmentation, while avoiding duplication of efforts, the PBC Gender Strategy takes into account and draws from existing decisions of the

¹² PP 6 of [S/RES/1889](#)

¹³ PP 5 of [S/RES/1325](#)

¹⁴ PP 11 of [S/RES/1889](#)

¹⁵ PP 9 of [A/RES/70/262](#) and [S/RES/2282](#)

¹⁶ PP 12 of [S/RES/2242](#)

¹⁷ PP 23 [A/RES/70/262](#) and [S/RES/2282](#)

Member-States, such as S/RES/1325 and subsequent resolutions, as well as A/RES/70/262 and S/RES/2282, S/RES/2250, the Report of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations (A/70/19) and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

4. Strategic actions for integrating gender perspectives into the work of the PBC

Three categories of strategic actions to mainstream gender in the PBC's work and to strengthen the PBC's commitment to gender responsive peacebuilding can be identified:



5.1 Thematic and Strategic Areas

*Strategic Action 1: Strengthen the substantive, cross-cutting integration of gender perspectives in all PBC country-specific **thematic and strategic engagement**.*

- The PBC shall **include a gender analysis and gender specific priority areas in all its relevant documents and their updates and all different country-specific, regional and thematic engagements of the PBC, if so accepted by the host-countries**. When issuing statements, the PBC should systematically consider the specific gender dimension of events on the ground. Such analysis should take into account national gender policies as well as consultations with and work done by specialized platforms and institutions such as national women networks, groups of women members of parliaments, if any etc.
- The **cross-cutting dimension** of sustaining peace, including its gender perspective, stretches across all three pillars of the UN and needs to be integrated in the PBC's engagement as per mandate, in order to adapt an integrated and coherent approach to sustainable peace.

Strategic Action 2: Identify thematic priority areas of gender-responsive peacebuilding for region and country-specific engagement with all relevant actors.

- Priority areas will be based on the analyzed needs, gaps and opportunities of each country taking into account their cross-cutting dimension and should be defined through consultations with key stakeholders, including national authorities, bearing primary responsibility for that, civil society and women's organizations. The country-specific priority areas for PBC's gender-responsive peacebuilding engagement shall be updated on a periodic basis.

- Specific areas for gender-responsive peacebuilding engagements may as per mandate include:
 - a. Peacebuilding and mediation processes and prevention**
 Advocate for inclusion of women in early monitoring and warning mechanisms (grassroots, familial, community level) to prevent the eruption and escalation of violence and conflict, advocate for their participation in peace processes at all levels (community-level mediation, political dialogue and negotiation processes, dispute resolution, conflict mitigation mechanisms), engage all stakeholders in constructive dialogue and peace advocacy.
 - b. Good governance and leadership**
 Encourage adoption and implementation of reforms and strategies in order to equalize women's participation and representation in elected bodies and appointed positions, support gender-responsive governance reform processes at national and local level, gender-sensitive reforms of the electoral and legislative system, public service delivery, political parties and the media, and local recovery and development planning.
 - c. Rule of Law**
 Support the creation, adoption and enforcement of legal frameworks that outlaw domestic violence and sexual and gender-based violence at large, end impunity regarding such violence, improve women's access to courts, support the provision of alternatives to customary court system and transitional justice measures and the inclusion of women in the planning of such processes as well as their participation in decision-making bodies, advocate for women's equal rights to personal identification and social security, to inheritance and to own property, where relevant.
 - d. Integration of gender equality within SSR and DDR**
 Encourage the inclusion of women in planning and implementation processes of SSR and DDR initiatives, training and awareness raising activities targeting both male and female personnel on how to address sexual violence, gender-based violence and other crimes. Promote equal access to DDR programmes for female and male participants, including female combatants, female supporters and female dependents. Promote recruitment campaigns that increase the representation of women in the security sector, encourage provision of space for women's feedback and oversight of implementation of SSR and DDR by all relevant actors.
 - e. Economic empowerment**
 Support initiatives aiming at equal reintegration of women and their economic empowerment during and after conflict through fair livelihood options (such as vocational training), equal access to resources and fair entitlement systems, and the design and delivery of public services, etc. The PBC should advocate for equal participation of women in economic recovery schemes, in line with the PBC Declaration on women's economic empowerment for peacebuilding.
 - f. Women's recovery processes and protection strategies**
 Encourage the inclusion of and consultation with women in the design and implementation process of programmes for recovery and strategies for protection from sexual violence in conflict through psycho-social rehabilitation and

reintegration into society (transitional justice approaches, restoration of civic trust, and reparation programmes for survivors of sexual violence, etc.).

g. Access to basic social infrastructure

Promote women's equal access to basic social services such as health care including sexual and reproductive health, basic education, nutrition, drinking water and sanitation, and shelter.

Strategic Action 3: Engage men, including youth in gender-responsive peacebuilding.

- The PBC should systematically encourage the role of men, including youth, in advancing gender equality and promoting equal participation of women. Men, including youth, need to be engaged in initiatives, including through trainings, etc.

5.2 Follow-up, implementation and results

Strategic Action 4: The whole PBC should play an active role in the implementation.

- The Chair should ensure a focus on results and the implementation of follow-up.
- The Chair should encourage members of the PBC to systematically promote key messages on gender-responsive peacebuilding at the global and country-level through statements, and media interventions.
- The PBC will hold a yearly substantive meeting on a set topic on gender responsive peacebuilding.
- A PBC Member State can be nominated on a yearly basis as PBC gender focal point to bring forward the implementation of the Gender Strategy as well as to foster greater engagement by the PBC.
- The Gender Focal Point can convene an expert-level meeting as necessary, advisably at least twice a year, with the view to bring together relevant actors, share knowledge and make suggestions for consideration of the PBC OC members to strategically integrate key issues in the work of the PBC as well as suggest for consideration of the PBC members a yearly topic for the substantive session of the PBC on gender-responsive peacebuilding meeting.
- Strategic PBC engagement on gender in peacebuilding will be discussed between the PBC and the country concerned. Priorities, strategies and activities will be defined by the Government taking into account inputs from other relevant stakeholders.
- The PBC Annual Report will include a section on the implementation of the PBC Gender Strategy.
- Member States are advised to use the "PBC Gender Strategy Checklist" as reference for their own engagement.¹⁸

¹⁸ "PBC Gender Strategy Checklist" in Annex

Strategic Action 5: Include gender-responsive peacebuilding in the Terms of Reference (ToRs) of all PBC field missions, in coordination with the host government and reporting back findings to the PBC members.

- Regular consultations shall take place at country level with key national stakeholders, including:
 - The national governments and authorities, including relevant ministries and national institutions, such as the ministry of social affairs, the ministry for gender (if any), ministry of interior and/or defense (for National Action Plans 1325), etc.;
 - Diverse groups of civil society, not limited to the capital city;
 - In-country gender experts.
- Other relevant actors as necessary should be identified in a case-specific manner prior to each visit. Furthermore, such consultations with relevant stakeholders need thorough preparation to ensure that the recommendations are suited for the PBC's engagement.
- The findings of such consultations should systematically be reported to the PBC and should be, when appropriate, reflected in the engagement of the overall and country-specific priority areas of PBC's gender-responsive peacebuilding engagement of the PBC, as well as lead to possible thematic follow-up discussions.

Strategic Action 6: Strengthen the systematic coordination and sharing of information and approaches on gender-responsive peacebuilding

- Thematic, country and region-specific briefings and discussions to the PBC on gender-responsive peacebuilding should be as necessary organized at headquarters and country-level, advisably regularly.
- These discussions need to include the cross-cutting dimension of gender-responsive peacebuilding.
- Relevant UN actors involved in peacebuilding activities should participate in the discussions to enhance coherence of approaches.
- Regional national, sub regional and regional governmental actors, such as representatives of national authorities, the AU, ECOWAS, ECCAS, etc. should be invited to share experiences and strengthen the partnership in regard to gender-responsive approaches.
- Regional and cross-regional women's organizations and networks, relevant think tanks and research institutes should be invited to contribute to thematic discussions.
- Recognized practitioners specialized in gender and peacebuilding should be invited to these meetings to share experiences as well to inform the policy discussions.
- Information sharing should take place within the PBC, as well as among the PBC and relevant UN actors in the different countries.

5.3 Resources and technical expertise

Strategic Action 7: Advocate actively for dedicated technical expertise on gender-responsive peacebuilding as well as dedicated funding within the UN, and national and international partners.

- The PBC should advocate with UN, Member States, donors and international financial institutions for subsequent allocations to gender-responsive peacebuilding needs.
- The PBC should advocate for the availability of gender experts in relevant UN entities and national partner organizations, since technical expertise on gender at the national level and within the UN Country Team is directly linked to stronger programmes on gender-responsive peacebuilding.
- The synergies between the work of the PBC and the PBF need to be strengthened. The PBC should advocate early on for a strengthened national ownership and sense of responsibility of the country for gender sensitive peacebuilding initiatives financed by PBF to ensure the sustainability of efforts and results.
- The PBC shall advocate that peacebuilding priority planning be gender responsive, by encouraging that gender analysis is completed and gender-responsive priorities are integrated into recovery planning processes as necessary, and linked to funding commitments in respective donor conferences. This is advised to be undertaken both in UN specific planning processes, but equally in interagency processes and partnership.

Annex:

PBC Gender Strategy Checklist

Purpose:

This advised checklist aims to outline the scope of engagement of the PBC Membership for the successful implementation of the PBC Gender Strategy and the concrete and strategic inclusion of a gender dimension into all work of the PBC, while observing the principle of national ownership and *“reaffirming the primary responsibility of national Governments and authorities in identifying, driving and directing priorities, strategies and activities for sustaining peace, and in this regard, emphasizing that inclusivity is key to advancing national peacebuilding processes and objectives in order to ensure that the needs of all segments of society are taken into account.”*¹⁹

General objectives:

- ✓ Ensure the **consideration** of a focus on **gender dimensions of peacebuilding** in **all PBC meetings**
- ✓ **Promote** the question of women’s equal participation and gender equality in discussions with **high-level national stakeholders** and all **other partners**
- ✓ Identify and update **overall priorities for women’s equal participation and gender equality** as necessary, advisably at least on an annual basis (based on needs, gaps and opportunities)
- ✓ Ensure inclusion of **gender analysis** and **gender specific priority areas** in **all substantive PBC documents** and their **updates**
- ✓ **Consult** with all key regional national and local stakeholders, including national governments, **civil society organizations and women’s and men’s groups** to facilitate their participation in priority setting and solicit their feedback on peacebuilding priorities and plans
- ✓ **Avail** of the expertise and experience of **national gender institutions** and **UN Country Team** on a regular basis, especially those engaged in gender-responsive peacebuilding
- ✓ Promote **coherence** within UN system by holding regular consultations with relevant UN entities and following up on the PBC advice.
- ✓ **Involve relevant** regional and UN **actors**, recognized think tanks, research institutes and practitioners in **PBC meetings** to share experiences on gender equality.
- ✓ Include as necessary considerations about the gender dimension of impacts of events on ground in **PBC statements**.

¹⁹ PP 9 of [A/RES/70/262](#) and [S/RES/2282](#)

- ✓ **Advocate** where relevant for **gender experts** to be available as well as for the development of gender-responsive peacebuilding **programmes**
- ✓ Convene **biannual expert-level meeting**, facilitated by a **Gender Focal Point** in order to:
 - **bring together** relevant actors and share knowledge
 - Identify and update **overall and “Country-specific priority areas of PBC’s gender-responsive peacebuilding engagement”** as necessary, advisably at least on an annual basis (based on needs, gaps and opportunities)
 - elaborate steps to strategically integrate key issues in the work of the PBC and track the progress of its implementation
 - suggest for consideration of the PBC members a **yearly sub-theme** on gender-responsive peacebuilding for the **substantive PBC meeting** as discussed by experts

Annual objectives:

- ✓ Hold **annual substantive PBC meeting** on a set sub-theme on a gender-responsive peacebuilding agreed by its members
- ✓ Include a section on the **implementation** of the PBC Gender Strategy in the **PBC Annual Report**, which **takes stock** and **assesses** the PBC’s **performance** in regard to **gender responsive peacebuilding**

PBC Field Mission objectives:

- ✓ Include a component on **gender-responsive peacebuilding in mission ToRs**
- ✓ Identify **relevant actors, including from the government**, for engagement in **case-specific** manner and update prior to visit
- ✓ **Consultations** with national gender institutions and civil society including women’s and men’s groups should be **reported back** to the PBC and as necessary serve to **adapt strategic engagement** and **priority areas**
- ✓ **PBC activities** taken to follow up the issues that came up during the visits need to be communicated back to all the country level partners, primarily the governmental ones.