

WHITE PAPER:**Sustaining Peace and UN Peacekeeping**

This White Paper serves as an input to the next UN Peacekeeping Ministerial-Level Conference in April 2021 in Seoul, Republic of Korea, and to the preparatory meeting on Sustaining Peace and Peacekeeping, co-chaired by Bangladesh, Canada, and the UK, due to take in the months prior.¹ This paper does not represent the views of the Governments of Korea, Bangladesh, Canada, the UK, or any other participants in the meetings.

In the context of the secretary-general's Action for Peacekeeping initiative (A4P), the objective of the 2021 Ministerial is to strengthen UN peacekeeping, including by improving the performance and impact of UN operations; closing capability gaps through concrete pledges; facilitating new partnerships and strengthening existing ones; and promoting systemic changes that will improve operations.

1. Introduction: Sustaining Peace and the Seoul Conference

Over the last five years, UN officials, the Security Council, and the General Assembly have all endorsed the idea of “sustaining peace” and the contributions of UN peacekeeping operations to these efforts.² Sustaining peace is (1) a broad concept that places conflict prevention and peacebuilding at the core of the UN’s work by embracing a holistic approach to peace and sustainable development; and (2) emphasizes the importance of national and local actors in addressing the root causes of conflicts, with UN actors in a supporting role.

This concept is useful in that it emphasizes the linkages between the UN’s peace and security, development, and human rights pillars. It encourages engagement during all phases of the “conflict cycle,” before, during, and after violence takes place. It also emphasizes the importance of addressing multiple levels of conflict, including both local and national sources of contention.

For UN peace operations—and for the UN member states that support them, whether through personnel, financing, or political back-up—the idea of sustaining peace also poses an invigorating

¹ This White Paper was prepared by Daniel Forti with Richard Gowan. They would like to thank members of the UN Secretariat, Jake Sherman, and Adam Day for comments on earlier versions of this paper.

² See, for example, UN Security Council Resolution 2282 (April 27, 2016), UN Doc. S/RES/2282; UN General Assembly Resolution 70/262 (April 27, 2016), UN Doc. A/RES/70/262; and the UN General Assembly and UN Security Council, *Report of the Secretary General on Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace*, UN Doc. A/74/976–S/2020/773, July 30, 2020.

challenge.³ How can the UN better use its peace and security tools—which have evolved to handle complex but specific tasks like assisting mediation processes, extending state authority, and protecting civilians—to support inclusive, whole-of-society approaches to peace?

As the co-chairs of the April 2021 Peacekeeping Ministerial Conference in Seoul, South Korea, have identified sustaining peace as a priority, it is important to come up with concrete answers to this question. The conference, like previous summits, starting with those hosted by the US and its partners in New York in 2014 and 2015, is meant to be a *pledging* summit. It thus presents an opportunity for participants to offer specific capabilities or targeted funding to the UN.

The Preparatory Conference organized by Bangladesh, Canada, and the UK is an opportunity to scope out specific, concrete deliverables related to sustaining peace in advance of the Seoul Conference. Three clusters of pledges appear promising:

- **Offers of expertise and support** for (1) specialized substantive areas such as inclusive political processes, the provision of justice, local dispute resolution, governance, rule of law, SSR, and basic service delivery; and (2) strategic planning capabilities at the mission and headquarters levels.
- **Funding** for (1) projects run by peacekeeping operations specifically designed to support sustaining peace; and (2) parts of the UN system, like the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF), that back these efforts while supporting the implementation of peacekeeping mandates.
- **Financial and technical assistance** to UN missions, host states, and national stakeholders that partner with UN peacekeeping operations in support of peacebuilding and development priorities.

In addition, participants in the Seoul Conference should address the best ways to offer this support to **peacekeeping operations undergoing or planning for transitions**. A number of major operations, including those in Sudan (Darfur) and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), are at various stages of planning their drawdown and exit. The concept of sustaining peace is especially useful in such environments where the UN is undergoing a significant reconfiguration. As the secretary-general has noted, this concept may help peacekeepers “lay the foundations for sustaining peace beyond the lifetime of a peacekeeping operation”:

When sustaining peace through multidimensional peacekeeping operations, it is important to seek to strengthen national ownership and capacity and, in doing so, to ensure integrated analysis and planning, in particular for transitions. It is also important to seek greater coherence within the United Nations system.⁴

³ Given that this white paper was prepared in support of the 2021 Peacekeeping Ministerial Conference, it will focus on UN peacekeeping operations. However, it is worth noting that the broader set of peace operations (including special political missions) would benefit from this discussion.

⁴ UN Doc. A/47/976–S/2020/773, para 16.

The Seoul Conference presents an opportunity for member states to provide additional support to peacekeeping transitions, which are major strategic challenges for the UN. We recommend that the Preparatory Meeting on Sustaining Peace and Peacekeeping include a dedicated pledging element on sustaining peace in transition settings.

To help identify the sorts of pledges relating to sustaining peace and transitions that participants in the Seoul Conference can offer, this paper (1) analyzes the challenges peacekeeping operations face in these areas; (2) offers examples of good practices missions have used to address these challenges and policy innovations at UN headquarters aimed at addressing them more systematically; and (3) outlines pledges that member states may consider making in April 2021.

2. Analysis: Challenges to Sustaining Peace and Successful Transitions

In recent years, UN member states have given more focus to how the concept of sustaining peace relates to the work of peacekeeping operations. While the Security Council routinely discusses issues that fall under the sustaining peace umbrella, the relevance of this concept has been particularly evident to its members in settings where peacekeeping missions are reconfiguring, drawing down, or exiting.⁵ The secretary-general's Action for Peacekeeping (A4P) initiative and the accompanying Declaration of Shared Commitments identify peacebuilding and sustaining peace as one of eight priority area for UN member states. The General Assembly's Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations (C-34) has since dedicated a specific chapter of its annual report to this question, identifying proposals and recommendations.⁶

But as the UN has tried to mainstream sustaining peace into the work of its peacekeeping operations, it has encountered recurring obstacles to translating the concept into reality. And while there has been more focus on how missions work with national stakeholders and align their efforts with those of UN country teams (UNCTs) and other international partners, drawdown and reconfiguration processes are complex efforts that inevitably stress the UN system.

A. Challenges to Sustaining Peace in Mission Settings

The UN's primary challenge in effectively sustaining peace in mission settings is the **numerous demands placed on peacekeeping operations**. In principle, missions' political, protection, and peacebuilding efforts are complementary and focused on reducing violence and promoting a more sustainable peace. But in practice, the physical protection of civilians and support to extending state authority often consume much of their daily attention and resources. Other

⁵ The Security Council has examined this through country-specific and thematic discussions. In recent years the council has mandated the closure of peacekeeping operations in Côte d'Ivoire, Haiti, and Liberia, as well as the special political mission in Guinea-Bissau. It has temporarily paused the drawdown and closure of the hybrid AU-UN mission in Darfur and has begun contemplating an exit strategy for the mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The Security Council hosted an open debate in July 2019 on "Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace: Strengthening Partnerships for Successful Nationally Owned Transitions."

⁶ UN General Assembly, *Report of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations*, UN Doc. A/74/19, March 20, 2020, paras. 68–83.

urgent challenges—whether outbreaks of violence, political crises, or events like elections—and unreliable national political counterparts can distract missions from pursuing more holistic approach.

Compounding this general challenge, **peacekeeping operations often lack expertise** on specific components of sustaining peace. They often have gaps in expertise on social and economic matters, justice, the strengthening of national and local governance institutions, and the delivery of basic services. Civil affairs officers often have good contacts with domestic political and civil society actors working in these areas, but missions are not always positioned to translate growing work on intercommunal conflicts into effective political engagement that influences local or national power dynamics.

Missions' difficulties focusing on sustaining peace are exacerbated by **challenges planning and coordinating** with UN agencies, funds, and programmes in the UNCT. In theory, missions and UNCTs should work together throughout a mission's life-cycle to align their plans and priorities, often under the guidance of a "triple-hatted" deputy special representative of the secretary-general (DSRSG)/resident coordinator/humanitarian coordinator. Missions and UNCTs increasingly focus on joint analysis and planning and integrated delivery to deliver on common sustaining peace goals.⁷ However, there are still tensions between them, as they have to overcome different mandates, substantive focuses, and resources when implementing joint efforts.⁸

Additionally, peacekeeping operations frequently **lack dedicated resources for addressing peacebuilding priorities head-on**. While UN missions funded through the peacekeeping budget generally have predictable funding streams, only a small percentage of this funding is earmarked annually for programmatic work on sustaining peace. In addition, there are strict requirements for missions to use this programmatic funding directly for mandate implementation, placing pressure on them to achieve immediate results at the detriment of investments in long-term processes.

While a lot of the UN development system's work could fall under the umbrella of sustaining peace, **UN agencies exclusively rely on voluntary funding**. As a result, UN agencies apart from the UN Development Programme (UNDP) struggle to find resources they can use directly to complement UN peacekeeping operations' work on sustaining peace, and they are often at the mercy of donors' national interests and priorities. And while the PBF is a valuable source of peacebuilding funding for UN agencies, it cannot meet all of their needs.

⁷ The UN development system reforms also encouraged more systematic joint planning by providing more support to resident coordinators and asking for planning processes to focus more on prevention and conflict dynamics. There are also many tools to encourage integrated planning and delivery, including integrated strategic frameworks (ISF), the integrated assessment and planning (IAP) process, common country assessments (CCA), and sustainable development cooperation frameworks.

⁸ The secretary-general's Planning Directive for UN Transitions, endorsed in February 2019, has sought to systematize joint planning and integration throughout all UN peace operations.

Given the importance of national and local leadership to sustaining peace, many peacekeeping operations also **struggle with domestic political partners** that (1) adopt predatory or divisive strategies toward their populations; (2) are unwilling to include subnational political and social actors; or (3) lack the expertise and resources to implement creative reconciliation and developmental strategies. While the UN is increasing support to civil society and community-led peacebuilding efforts, it sometimes struggles to identify credible and legitimate partners or nationally defined priorities.⁹

Finally, while missions focus on host states, they often also **lack experts on community-level aspects of sustaining peace** such as (1) anthropologists, sociologists, historians, and other academic advisers who have studied local approaches to conflict resolution and management; and (2) locally engaged advisers with past experience in community-level reconciliation and preestablished local networks in specific conflict settings. This can lead to UN missions failing to appreciate the nuances of low-level conflict or to adequately respond when they escalate. It is therefore important for UN officials and leaders to seek out information and analysis from civil society actors and local peacebuilding partners, which are often best-placed to address these issues and advise the UN on how to proceed.

B. Challenges to Sustaining Peace during Transitions

The UN's sustaining peace agenda emphasizes that shared peacebuilding and development priorities should inform the work of all UN presences from the onset. And while it might seem natural for peacekeeping operations to give sustaining peace extra weight while preparing for transitions, it is often difficult for them to do so.

In the short term, the leaders of a downsizing mission are often more concerned with a **security gap**: in areas where significant violence is an ongoing or recurring threat, the withdrawal of peacekeepers creates the risk of further bloodshed, especially if local security forces are weak or partial. This places an extra burden on the units that remain—often police—to contain and mitigate this threat. This threat is amplified in situations where UN peacekeeping operations undertake security drawdowns as the first phase of their reconfiguration.¹⁰

Exacerbating this security gap, a transitioning mission can suffer from **diminishing situational awareness**. As its network of military bases and civilian offices shrinks, a mission's headquarters inevitably receives less information from the field and has fewer resources for political and other analysis. Within a UNCT, the resident coordinator's office (RCO) is also meant to provide analysis and early warning, even though they often have far fewer specialized staff than peacekeeping operations.

⁹ UN Doc. A/74/976-S/2020/773.

¹⁰ For more information, see: Adam Day, "UN Transitions: Improving Security Council Practice in Mission Settings," United Nations University Center for Policy Research, January 2020, p. 17.

A lack of situational awareness can also **reduce a mission’s engagement with human rights and gender equality work**, as the number of UN staff tracking these issues declines. In contexts of persistent, low-level violence, or in areas where domestic security forces are weak or predatory, diminishing capacities can reduce the UN’s awareness of possible human rights violations and limit its deterrent effect. Inadequate focus on this tradeoff not only jeopardizes progress toward a more sustainable peace but also presents reputational risks for the UN.

These issues with security and situational awareness are sometimes linked with problems over **the transfer of mission assets**, especially during the current drawdown in Darfur. The UN is not always able to monitor how host states use the bases and other facilities it relinquishes. In the case of Sudan, there have been claims of government forces using ex-UN compounds in operations threatening civilians.¹¹ The transfer of assets to national authorities is not just a security and reputational concern; it is also important to ensure that former UN facilities do not present environmental hazards and—more positively—can be adapted for local community use. Missions can also transfer these assets to UNCTs more systematically and sustainably by providing the necessary financial and material support.

Disputes over mission assets can be symptoms of **larger disagreements with host states and local communities over the terms of a transition**. Host states may wish to speed up the departure of peacekeeping forces or disagree with the UN about how to address human rights, political, and other issues post-transition. Even where cooperation is reasonably good, the political and financial priorities of governments are likely to differ from those of the UN. Even within the UN, officials on the ground often disagree with the priorities set by the Security Council.

Local communities that have benefited from UN peacekeeping missions, whether economically or in terms of the protection provided, may view their departure with concern. This can lead to unmet expectations and political ramifications for the UN after a mission’s reconfiguration. In contexts already facing economic headwinds, **mission drawdowns are perceived to exacerbate financial stresses for governments and local communities alike**. One study determined that less than 10 percent of national staff who worked for peacekeeping missions found new jobs once the bases closed.¹²

This mixture of security, political, and economic concerns also **puts pressure on UNCTs**, which are often expected to integrate the political and peacebuilding tasks previously covered by a peacekeeping operation into their development work. In principle, the new UN sustainable development cooperation frameworks should improve how UNCTs align development and peacebuilding goals. RCOs are mandated to coordinate these efforts and focus on coherence, including through support from peace and development advisers (PDAs) deployed by the

¹¹ “UN Suspending Handover of Camps in Darfur, Peacekeeping Chief Tells Security Council,” UN News, June 14, 2019.

¹² OECD, “Mission Drawdowns: Financing a Sustainable Peace,” Development Policy Papers, No. 28, March 2020, p. 15.

Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DDPA) and UNDP's Joint Programme on Building National Capacities for Conflict Prevention. But while some agencies (notably UNDP) have considerable in-house expertise on these matters, others, like the Food and Agriculture Organization, UNICEF, and the World Food Programme (WFP), are at the early stages of building dedicated capacities on peace and conflict.¹³

UNCTs also need to plan for how to address economic disruptions resulting from a peacekeeping operation's departure, as well as potential shifts in donor priorities. In the meantime, peacekeepers' exit also creates considerable day-to-day practical concerns for **members of the UNCT, which often rely on peacekeeping operations for security, and sometimes logistical, support** that has to be replaced.¹⁴

Overall, a mission reconfiguration creates a wide range of practical headaches—for peacekeeping operations, UNCT, and national partners—that make it harder for all parties to focus on longer-term priorities for sustaining peace. It is crucial that the UN system and member states assess these risks and invest in sustaining peace in transition environments.

3. Analysis: Good Practices and Policy Innovations

The UN has made some progress toward addressing these challenges and the dilemmas involved in sustaining peace in these contexts, both at the country level and more systematically. These include (1) deploying specialized staff and teams; (2) targeting funding toward peacekeeping operations' activities related to sustaining peace and expanding the PBF as a source of additional support for such initiatives; and (3) providing analytical and policy support to missions and UNCTs.

A. Specialized Capacities

Missions are increasingly turning to specialized staff and teams to achieve priorities within their sustaining peace portfolios. While some missions have these capabilities at the onset of their deployment, **others need to reorient their priorities over time**, often following the conclusion of a political process or peace agreement. While there may be a need for additional specialists, the UN Secretariat often faces challenges and heavy scrutiny from member states when bringing in short-term specialists from outside the UN system, even on issues where it lacks in-house capacity.

Experts on disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR), justice and correctional services, and mine action are frequently seconded to missions. In the context of DDR programs,

¹³ UN Doc. A/74/976-S/2020/773, para. 30.

¹⁴ For example, UN humanitarian agencies working in Darfur have frequently relied on UNAMID flights and military convoys to reach and sustain internally displaced persons. One recent study also determined that the UN Mission in South Sudan helped humanitarian actors reach over 100,000 civilians who would have otherwise been inaccessible to international support. See: Adam Day et al., "Assessing the Effectiveness of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS)," Effectiveness of Peace Operations Network, Report 2/2019, pp. 75–76.

emphasis on community violence reduction (CVR) strategies helps **link sustaining peace with security programming**. CVR focuses on preventing or deescalating violence by supporting communities in integrating armed elements or people vulnerable to recruitment. This approach has helped prevent and deter local clashes in the Central African Republic (CAR) and Mali.¹⁵ In transition contexts like Côte d’Ivoire, Haiti, and Liberia, experts from the Justice and Corrections Standing Capacity have helped national authorities prepare for mission transitions while supporting UNCTs. The UN Global Service Centre in Brindisi, Italy, has established collocation platforms for its police, security sector reform (SSR) and DDR standing capacities.

Increased deployment of individual police officers (IPOs) and specialized police teams (SPTs) can simultaneously serve as **stopgaps in transition settings and strengthen nascent expertise in host states**. Police components mandated to play mentorship and monitoring roles can also build relationships with local security structures that are less receptive to troop contingents, as demonstrated in Darfur. UN police have also deployed units to focus on forensic investigations, counterterrorism and serious organized crime, sexual and gender-based violence, and community-oriented policing.

In one example, forensics experts deployed to the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) helped Malian police investigate attacks against civilians in the country’s central region.¹⁶ Other recent examples include the deployment of an SPT on serious organized crime to the UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the DRC (MONUSCO) and the deployment of an SPT on sexual and gender-based violence to the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in CAR (MINUSCA) to provide strategic and operational support to national authorities.

Mobile presences are also useful to compensate for diminishing mission footprints. For example, mobile teams in the UN Mission for Justice Support in Haiti (MINUJUSTH)—which combined military, civilian, and police staff—sought to extend the mission’s presence with a minimal footprint. These teams provided early-warning information, implemented quick-impact projects, and helped interface between government institutions and communities outside of the capital. The African Union–UN Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) currently has a three-person, mobile, civilian human rights team in North Darfur—collocated with UN agencies—to monitor human rights conditions in areas from which the mission has withdrawn.¹⁷ It is important to note that mobile presences are best used as stopgap measures; while they can provide

¹⁵ UN Office of Rule of Law and Security Institutions, “Preventive Role of DDR/CVR: Thematic Paper for the 2020 Peacebuilding Architecture Review,” available at https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/sites/www.un.org.peacebuilding/files/pb_review_thematic_paper_orolsi_ddrs_-_preventative_role_of_ddr_and_cvr-final.pdf

¹⁶ Charles Hunt, “Protection through Policing: The Protective Role of UN Police in Peace Operations,” International Peace Institute, February 2020, p. 7

¹⁷ UNAMID, “State Liaison Functions: Building a Strong and Resilient Human Rights System in Darfur—Human Rights Fact Sheet,” June 2020, pp. 2–4, available at <https://unamid.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/unamid-factsheet-hr-wa-2-7-2020-.pdf>.

flexibility, they are often not able to provide adequate expertise or to meet the expectations of the populations they serve.

B. Targeted Funds

Member states can use various financial channels to provide much-needed funding for sustaining peace activities undertaken by UN missions, as well as to support national actors during periods when the UN is reconfiguring its presence. Programmatic funds drawn from assessed peacekeeping budgets is increasingly used to finance sustaining peace efforts. These funds, which will total \$211 million in the 2020–2021 budget, help missions and their partners in the UNCT invest in projects that directly support mandate implementation.¹⁸

Assessed peacekeeping funds can support joint programming between peacekeeping missions and UNCTs. These efforts are intended to improve the sustainability of UN engagements by aligning substantive approaches, building capacity within the UN, strengthening national ownership, and minimizing duplication. Although using assessed peacekeeping funds for this purpose is contentious within the UN General Assembly’s Fifth Committee, some missions have done so effectively. For example, cooperation between the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) and UNDP on the rule of law helped initiate community-oriented policing structures, strengthen national capacities to address impunity for sexual and gender-based violence, and develop national policies on gender-responsive SSR.¹⁹

In Darfur, the UN has done joint programming through state liaison functions (SLFs), which are collocation mechanisms between UNAMID and various UN agencies funded through the mission’s budget and the PBF.²⁰ Since their inception in 2019, the SLFs have established rural courts and trained judicial officials, provided human rights trainings to police, and capacitated women protection networks, among other initiatives.²¹ They have also helped expand the UNCT’s operational footprint in Darfur. **SLF projects are developed in cooperation with Sudanese authorities and are based on a common conflict analysis between the peacekeeping mission and the UNCT**, making them a potential model for future joint programming efforts.²²

Other funding mechanisms can also provide short- and long-term financial stability in transition contexts. **Multi-donor trust funds managed by the UN** are useful for pooling financial support for urgent peacebuilding priorities. For example, the Peace and Security Trust Fund in Mali, the

¹⁸ UN General Assembly, *Overview of the Financing of the United Nations Peacekeeping Operations: Budget Performance for the Period from 1 July 2018 to 30 June 2019 and Budget for the Period from 1 July 2020 to 30 June 2021*, UN Doc. A/74/736, March 6, 2020, Annex VIII.

¹⁹ UN and International Security Sector Advisory Team, “Lessons Identified from United Nations Mission in Liberia Support to Rule of Law in Liberia,” March 2018, p. 44, available at <https://issat.dcaf.ch/download/129155/2643356>.

²⁰ Approximately \$40 million was funded by UNAMID’s budget, with another \$20 million provided through the PBF.

²¹ For more detailed information, see the UNAMID State Liaison Function Data Mapping Portal, available at <https://unamid.unmissions.org/unamid-transition-peacekeeping-peacebuilding>.

²² Daniel Forti, “Navigating Crisis and Opportunity: The Peacekeeping Transition in Darfur,” International Peace Institute, December 2019, pp. 12–14.

DRC Stabilization Coherence Fund, and the Darfur Peace and Stability Fund all work with UN and non-UN partners in mission settings.

The PBF has grown into a valuable financial channel for mobilizing short-term investments that complement peacekeeping operations. **Thirty-nine percent of the PBF's investments in 2019 were in settings with peacekeeping missions**—a total of approximately \$75 million—demonstrating the fund's growing importance in complementing peacekeeping mandates.²³ For example, the PBF's portfolio in CAR is oriented toward supporting more inclusive outreach on the peace agreement, directly complementing one of MINUSCA's strategic priorities.

The PBF is also playing an **important role in contexts undergoing UN transitions**; it dedicated 30 percent of its 2019 portfolio to these settings, totalling approximately \$57.8 million.²⁴ For example, during the ongoing drawdown of the UN Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS), the PBF is focusing its investments in the country on building the UNCT's capacity to support legislative reforms. In Sudan, the PBF is aligning its new portfolio with the substantive priorities informing UNAMID's drawdown, including the rule of law and human rights, where the mission has reduced its expertise. This growing focus on transition settings underpins the secretary-general call for member states to voluntarily commit resources to missions undergoing transitions in his 2018 and 2020 reports on peacebuilding and sustaining peace.²⁵

Bilateral funding agreements between member states and the UN have also supported the capacity of UNCTs in targeted areas following the departure of missions. Funding from Norway for the RCO in Liberia helped it retain some of UNMIL's political affairs posts and create a dedicated unit providing analytical capabilities and maintaining the UN's engagements with civil society networks.²⁶ Though this was a short-term fix, it enabled the RCO to sustain a baseline level of analytical capacity while adjusting to its new responsibilities following the mission's departure.

Member states can also **pledge funding during international fundraising conferences convened in partnership with host governments** during mission transitions, as exemplified by the June 2020 Sudan Partnership Conference. In addition, member states can request the Peacebuilding Commission to play a convening and accompanying role during transition periods. These can signal political support, align national and donor priorities, and provide entry points for stronger engagement from international financial institutions in support of national priorities.

C. Analytical and Policy Support

²³ UN General Assembly, *Report of the Secretary-General on the Peacebuilding Fund*, UN Doc. A/74/688, February 10, 2020, para. 6

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ UN General Assembly and UN Security Council, *Report of the Secretary-General on Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace*, UN Doc. A/72/707-S/2018/43, January 18, 2018, para. 49(d); UN Doc. A/74/976-S/2020/773, para. 46.

²⁶ Daniel Forti and Lesley Connolly, "The Mission Is Gone but the UN Is Staying: Liberia's Peacekeeping transition," International Peace Institute, December 2018, p. 29.

The UN's growing emphasis on joint analytical exercises by UNCTs and missions is an important departure point: these can help the UN articulate a shared understanding of a country context, as well as the opportunities and risks related to a country's development goals. These exercises can also ensure that UN goals and engagements are coherent, especially as UN presences reconfigure over time.

Beyond joint analysis, surge capacities from existing UN structures can provide targeted expertise and ease the burden of administration-heavy tasks. In particular, **transition advisers have helped improve day-to-day coordination between missions and UNCTs and facilitate planning processes in line with the secretary-general's Transition Planning Directive**. For example, the Joint UN Transitions Project of the Development Coordination Office (DCO), DPPA, Department of Peace Operations (DPO), and UNDP has deployed advisers to the DRC, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, and Sudan.²⁷

A stronger focus on gender-sensitive analysis and programming, combined with more gender expertise available to peacekeeping missions, is essential for missions to engage on the sustaining peace agenda. More systematic cooperation between DPO and UN Women has improved planning processes and led to a joint methodology on gender-responsive conflict analysis that has been incorporated into the Transition Planning Directive. The **continued engagement of gender advisers** can help mainstream the WPS agenda throughout missions' work, build capacity through trainings, and promote gender-sensitive implementation of mission mandates.

The DDPA-UNDP Joint Programme and the PDAs can play important roles after mission transitions, both through substantive support and coordination. For example, PDAs deployed to Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire are **providing analytical support to RCOs on early warning and conflict prevention and are facilitating coordination** between the UN and nationally based development partners. The deployment of regionally mandated PDAs may also help strengthen cross-border interventions and improve analysis sharing between peacekeeping missions and UNCTs, especially in areas like the Horn of Africa and West Africa where cross-border issues exacerbate local conflict drivers.

The **Humanitarian-Development-Peacebuilding and Partnership (HDPP) Facility**, managed by the Peacebuilding Support Office, supports a stronger UN partnership with the World Bank in crisis-affected situations. The HDPP Facility provides grants for joint projects on data generation and multidimensional risk analysis, as well as the alignment of strategies and operational frameworks at the country level. This support often takes the form of additional planning and partnership capacities, such as in CAR, where the HDPP Facility supported the implementation of the National Recovery and Peacebuilding Plan.

²⁷ As of September 2020, there are only advisers in the DRC and Guinea-Bissau.

4. Potential Member-State Contributions

Learning from the challenges and good practices noted above, participants in the 2021 UN Peacekeeping Ministerial Conference in Seoul can make concrete pledges to support efforts to (1) sustain peace in mission settings and (2) facilitate transitions. One cluster of five possible contributions is relevant to new and ongoing missions, and another cluster of seven possible contributions focuses on transitions. Member states can work with DPO and other parts of the UN system to refine these options.

A. Options for Support to New and Ongoing Missions

1. **Planners and experts on sustaining peace:** To address the obstacles to focusing on sustaining peace in new and ongoing UN peacekeeping operations, member states can offer missions (1) civilian planners with expertise on issues such as reconciliation, peacebuilding, social services, and economic concerns; and (2) military or police planners familiar with supporting initiatives in these areas.

To prepare for the Seoul Conference member states could (1) commit to exploring possible contributions of specialized civilian capacities to UN peacekeeping missions based on clearly identified mission priorities;²⁸ (2) support efforts to develop better guidance on mainstreaming sustaining peace into mission start-ups and ongoing missions, including through PBF funding (e.g., identifying early opportunities for partnerships between missions, UN agencies, and international financial institutions or developing new training and simulation modules for mission leaders); (3) commit extrabudgetary funding for DPO's Integrated and Assessment Planning Unit to increase its capacity to engage in integrated analysis and planning processes; and (4) commit more funding for DSRSG/RC/HC offices to increase their capacity to support joint analysis, planning, and implementation.

2. **Civilian experts on mission-identified sustaining peace priorities:** To support existing UN efforts to deal with localized conflicts and local reconciliation efforts, member states could consider funding short-term projects identified by missions and UNCTs. This support could allow missions and UNCTs to hire national experts and support local civil society organizations that work on culturally specific aspects of sustaining peace such as reconciliation or traditional dispute-resolution mechanisms.²⁹

To prepare for the Seoul Conference member states could request current SRSs, force commanders, and police commissioners to make “blue sky” requests for national specialists

²⁸ One potential model for this support suggested to the authors is MONUSCO's Strategic Stabilization Unit, where mission staff worked alongside non-UN civilian experts on the deliverables of the International Security and Stabilization Support Strategy.

²⁹ This kind of support can also be modeled on DOS's Partnership for Technology initiative with UN member states. As an example, the German government has helped facilitate the deployment of specialized ICT personnel to address urgent requirements defined by the UN Mission in Colombia. More information can be found at <https://operationalsupport.un.org/en/partnership-initiatives>.

with country-specific or niche expertise. These experts, deployed for short periods of time, could boost the efforts of teams in the field to engage with communities and support formal and informal mechanisms to resolve local-level disputes over natural resources, land, and other issues. They could also help UNCTs design long-term fundable projects that align with the peacebuilding objectives of mission mandates.

- 3. Individual police officers (IPOs) and specialized police teams (SPTs):** As noted above, the deployment of police specialists in areas such as community-oriented policing can contribute to sustaining peace in both ongoing missions and transition settings. However, such specialized police are often in short supply and high demand in their own countries.

To prepare for the Seoul Conference member states could coordinate with the UN police adviser in New York to (1) define specific needs for IPOs and SPTs in current missions and mission transition settings; (2) where possible, pledge individuals and units to meet these needs; and (3) provide funding for the deployment of SPTs or the development of training packages that the UN could use to help national police forces develop and sustain this expertise where it is not possible to deploy specialists.

- 4. Standing capacities for the rule of law:** UN standing capacities such as the Global Focal Point for the Rule of Law can rapidly deploy experts in a flexible and cost-effective way. These experts can support missions in implementing their rule of law mandates, including during mission start-ups and surges. Standing capacities can also improve coordination between missions and UNCTs and help streamline their requests for resources.

To prepare for the Seoul Conference member states could provide UN standing capacities more civilian and uniformed personnel with rule of law expertise, including on police, justice, corrections, SSR, and DDR. Member states could also increase their financial contributions to projects coordinated through and overseen by the Global Focal Point initiative. In addition, DPO and the Department of Operational Support's (DOS) 2021 proposals for extrabudgetary funding offer a range of actionable projects to advance peacekeeping operations' support to the rule of law and sustaining peace.³⁰

- 5. Programmatic funding for sustaining peace in mission and transition settings:** While programmatic funding is an increasingly useful tool for missions and UNCTs, it is a small piece of the annual peacekeeping budget. The secretary-general has recommended increasing programmatic funding for peacekeeping operations during drawdown periods to sustain work on peacebuilding priorities.³¹ While member states insist that such funding be used to

³⁰ "UN DPO and DOS Project Proposals Seeking Extra-Budgetary Funds for 2021," on file with authors.

³¹ Specifically, "The secretary-general has indicated that ensuring that missions have sufficient programmatic funding to support mandated peacebuilding activities will be a priority in his peacekeeping budget requests for 2021/22 to facilitate a transition towards a greater emphasis on peacebuilding efforts, increasing when a multidimensional peacekeeping mission approaches drawdown, and that the Peacebuilding Support Office can play a valuable role by supporting missions in operationalizing programmes with a view to transitioning mission responsibilities and modalities towards post-mandate capacities." UN Doc. A/74/976-S/2020/773, para. 46

implement peacekeeping mandates, the prevalence of these initiatives offers a body of lessons and best practices that can be replicated elsewhere.

To prepare for the Seoul Conference member states could assess options for making programmatic funding available to missions, including through increased financing for PBF projects in transition settings. Member states could endorse the secretary-general's request by voluntarily committing a percentage of the final full-year budget of a closing peacekeeping mission to peacebuilding activities for two years following the end of its mandate.³² Member states could also request DPO, in collaboration with the Department of Management, Strategy, Policy and Compliance (DMPSC) and other parts of the UN system, to streamline oversight of these initiatives by updating administrative policies and to develop guidance documents that highlight good practices and innovations in the use of programmatic funding.³³

B. Options for Support to Transitions

- 6. Deploying specialist teams to fill gaps during transitions:** As the UN has learned in places such as Darfur and Haiti, missions may need to prepare for transitions with flexible, mobile deployments of civilian or uniformed personnel to keep up community contacts and situational awareness as they reduce their overall footprint. The personnel on these teams need to have the skills and context-specific knowledge to operate with reduced security back-up and in environments where local partners may be concerned about the UN's exit. Member states could address these needs by preparing staff such as military observers and IPOs to support specific drawdowns, ensuring they have language skills and training for these tasks and are mobile and secure.

To prepare for the Seoul Conference member states should (1) request DPO to prepare a brief lessons-learned study on small, flexible deployments of civilian, military, and police personnel during transitions; (2) request the Joint UN Transitions Project to conduct a survey on where additional transition planning capacity or expertise are needed; (3) make advance pledges of personnel for these teams when appropriate, such as in the DRC; (4) pledge to provide the UN with protection teams or equipment such as armored vehicles required for light teams to operate securely during drawdown periods; and (5) provide more sustainable funding for the Joint UN Transitions Project and for the deployment of transition specialists who can support planning processes, help identify residual peacebuilding priorities, and improve operational collaboration between missions and UNCTs.

- 7. Ensuring assets are transferred transparently and sustainably:** Following concerns about the misuse of UN bases in Darfur, member states should consider ways to ensure that UN compounds and assets can be transferred to host states transparently and accountably. This could include (1) providing static surveillance or unmanned aerial vehicles to monitor the use

³² UN Doc. A/74/976-S/2020/773, para. 46.

³³ For more details see: UN Doc. A/72/707-S/2018/43, para. 49; and UN Doc. A/74/976-S/2020/773.

of bases for a period of time agreed with the host state; or (2) agreeing that member-state diplomats can undertake spot checks on the use of assets on behalf of the UN. Member states could also pledge to facilitate the transfer of UN bases to local communities by (1) increasing funds for environmental experts to assist in clean-up tasks; or (2) funding locally led projects to renovate UN bases. Member states can also work to improve administrative guidance and financial support for the sustainable transfer of mission assets to UNCTs.

To prepare for the Seoul Conference member states should (1) request DPO to share options for monitoring transferred assets in the future, with particular reference to the use of technology; (2) liaise with DOS and other actors like the UN Environment Programme and UN Habitat on the repurposing of UN properties for local use during current and future transitions; and (3) evaluate existing UN financial rules and regulations and consider revisions that would permit the more systematic and financially sustainable transfer of assets between missions and UNCTs.³⁴

8. **Enhancing the political analysis and situational awareness of UNCTs:** To address the gap between the political analysis and situational awareness capacities of peacekeeping missions and UNCTs, member states should look for opportunities to strengthen the capacities of UNCTs, including by supporting or funding the transfer of capacities from departing missions to RCOs. The secretary-general's reforms to the resident coordinator system, giving resident coordinators responsibility for providing analysis to UNCTs, offer a basis for member states to make such pledges.

In the context of the Seoul Conference member states may wish to pledge additional funds for (1) the work of PDAs in transition settings, in consultation with DPPA, UNDP, and DCO; and (2) the UN–World Bank HDPP Facility that supports joint risk analysis, assessments, and planning in peacebuilding contexts.

9. **Substituting the logistical support departing peacekeeping operations provide to UN agencies and humanitarian actors:** UN agencies often face logistical headaches during transitions as outgoing UN peacekeeping operations can no longer provide assistance, including flights and local security. Member states could fill these gaps by (1) providing aircraft and other necessary logistical assets to assist UN agencies, funds, and programs working alongside or in support of UN peacekeeping operations; (2) making funds available to WFP's UN Humanitarian Air Service and other UN entities able to cover or increase these transport needs; and (3) financing private security or joint public-private security arrangements for UNCTs in high-risk security environments.

To prepare for the Seoul Conference member states can encourage UNCTs to proactively and systematically identify transition-related security and logistical gaps, as per the guidance in the 2019 Transitions Directive. Member states can also encourage UNCTs to liaise with DPO,

³⁴ UN Executive Committee Decision on UN Transitions, July 2020.

DOS, the Department of Safety and Security, and other UN entities to identify solutions to fill these gaps, in cooperation with host governments and international partners.

10. **Coordinating financial support in transition settings:** Host states have to navigate changing financial landscapes during drawdowns, particularly as missions reduce their investments in security and peacebuilding projects. While transitions often signal some level of national stability, host states often face tangible economic constraints and massive development needs. While international partners do not necessarily reduce their funding to these countries, they are slow to realign their contributions to what is needed immediately after a mission exits.

To prepare for the Seoul Conference member states could work with host governments to use international fora, including the Peacebuilding Commission, to jointly articulate and mobilize support for national peacebuilding and development priorities. Member states, along with DPO, could encourage mission leaders to strengthen their coordination of development partners on the ground with the goal of better aligning bilateral aid, in particular through DSRSG/RCs/HCs and UNCTs. Member states could also encourage UN leaders at headquarters and in-country, as well as the leaders of international financial institutions, to strengthen their working relationships, deliver consistent messaging, and identify complementary areas of support in transition settings. Member states could also increase multi-year financial contributions to existing pooled funding mechanisms, in line with the secretary-general's appeal for "good peacebuilding donorship."³⁵

11. **Reinforcing a rights-based approach to transitions:** Member states can use political leverage and financial investments to (1) ensure that the UN and national actors sustain their focus on human rights and gender equality; and (2) offer mobile capacities to missions and country teams to act as capabilities multipliers.

To prepare for the Seoul Conference member states should ask DPO and UNCTs to analyze protection and human rights issues early in transition planning processes to identify potential risks following reductions in the UN's footprint. Through the PBF or other funding mechanisms, member states could direct their support to UNCTs' analytical and monitoring capacities, national human rights institutions, or UN entities like the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and UN Women. Member states can also second advisory capacities and mobile support to UN agencies to make up for diminishing mission expertise on human rights. Member states could also encourage OHCHR and host states to sign agreements that identify areas of future cooperation, as they did in Sudan in September 2019.³⁶

³⁵ UN Doc. A/74/976-S/2020/773, para. 47.

³⁶ OHCHR, "Bachelet Signs 'Milestone Agreement' to Open UN Human Rights Office in Sudan," September 25, 2019, available at <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=25055&LangID=E>.

- 12. Directly supporting host states:** In addition to supporting UNCTs, member states can also support host states in transition settings by (1) seconding staff to work in relevant ministries, government agencies, and local authorities involved in work that contributes to sustaining peace; or (2) financing similar secondments by UN agencies. It is important that such support is based on clear analysis of the relevant authorities' commitment to and capacity to support inclusive, conflict-sensitive initiatives.

To prepare for the Seoul Conference member states should (1) confer with representatives of countries such as Haiti and Liberia where there have recently been UN drawdowns to better understand their bureaucratic needs relating to transitions; and (2) work with UN peacekeeping operations, UNCTs, and, most importantly, host states to identify gaps in national capacities that will need to be addressed as missions draw down. This can serve as the basis for commitments of technical assistance and advisers in Seoul.