

THE UN AND PEACEBUILDING PROCESS: PROSPECTS FOR DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

The article focuses on the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) activity as the UN intergovernmental advisory body that provides peace efforts in countries emerging from conflict, becoming one of the first evident achievements in the UN reforming process. One of the key points of the article is concentrated on the Peacebuilding Fund's efforts in stabilization, economic recovery and development of the countries after periods of crisis. Analysis of the PBC activity indicates several specific points. The first one is that we can admit attempts to underline a dominant role of the General Assembly in the prejudice of the Security Council authority. The second – striving to use the platform of the Commission for political debates on situation in post-conflict countries. Russia has been supported the idea of the Peacebuilding Commission foundation from the beginning, taking an active part in development of guidelines that define the PBC terms of reference, structure and relations with other UN bodies.

Keywords: Peacebuilding, the UN bodies, initiatives and Russia

Introduction:

Established in 2005, the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) was seen as a milestone event, which should open new perspectives for the residents of the countries that emerging from conflicts. This initiative became the first achievement of the UN reform process. [1, 2]

The Commission acts as an intergovernmental advisory body that oversees international peacebuilding efforts and build up recommendations on stabilization, economic recovery and development of the countries faced "hot" periods of crises.

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PBC builds its activity at the junction of the UN Security Council, Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), representatives of international financial institutions and donor community efforts. By the creation of the PBC, international community has shown willingness to make extra efforts in order to those countries, which had faced an acute phase of a conflict, would not be at risk of recurrence of a crisis, after the main stage of peacekeeping through the UN or regional organizations will be finished.

Russia from the beginning supported the idea of the Peacebuilding Commission foundation. Representatives from Russia took an active part in development of guidelines that define the PBC terms of reference, its structure, relationships with other UN bodies. It was particularly emphasized that the Commission's activity should be developed with an active involvement of the Security Council, whose agenda was settlement questions in a particular country for a long time.

Due to the three-component architecture of the PBC, which includes the Organizational Committee, Country-Specific Configurations and Working Group on Lessons Learned, the UN Peacebuilding activity provides satisfaction of post-conflict needs with a focus on six

main areas. At present, Burundi, Sierra Leone, Guinea-Bissau, Central African Republic, Guinea and Liberia are on the agenda of the Commission.

The PBC Organizational Committee brings together 31 member states. It has seven members selected by the Security Council, seven members elected by the Economic and Social Council, five of the top providers of assessed contributions to United Nations budgets and of voluntary contributions to the United Nations funds, programs and agencies, including a standing Peacebuilding fund, five top providers of military personnel and civilian police to United Nations missions, seven members elected by the General Assembly, taking into consideration representation in the Commission all of the regional groups and countries emerging from post-conflict reconstruction.

PBC was established as a special institutional mechanism to satisfy special needs and to assist countries in establishing the foundations of durable peace and sustainable development. That is especially topical for the countries emerging from a conflict. With full support of the first two countries, included in the PBC agenda - Burundi and Sierra Leone, and through the PBC Country-Specific Configurations (CSCs), PBC began the processes of interaction with relevant organizations of the UN family and other ones, which participate in peace-building in the abovementioned countries.

The Commission has used a variety of methods for its work. These methods included peacekeeping operations, videoconferencing with key stakeholders in Sierra Leone and Burundi, creation of thematic structures and country-specific configurations, as well as special briefings for the UN highlight officials and other experts.

During the period from February, 2010 till January, 2011, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, the chairpersons of the Burundi configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission, Mr. Peter Maurer and his successor Mr. Paul Seger, as well as Ms. Judy Cheng-Hopkins, Assistant Secretary-General and head of the Peacebuilding Support Office, visited Burundi.

It was recommended to the Government of Burundi to provide the Independent National Electoral Commission (CENI) with resources required to fulfill its mandate and save its independence during elections in 2010. The PBC should provide connection between national and international electoral observers from the start of the first electoral campaign in 2010 through to the announcement of the results.

The President of Burundi officially launched the drafting process of peacebuilding strategy on the 12th of November, 2010. Good governance indicators must definitely be included in the new framework. Moreover, the problem of indicators will apply to all sectors of the new Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy Framework. [3]

An important peculiarity of the PBC working methods is that provisional rules of procedure impose on the chairman of the Commission a task to provide conclusions and recommendations agreed by the member states on a consensus base in appropriate situations.

Taking into consideration existing strategies, frameworks in the countries, identified deficiencies and peacebuilding priorities, the Commission has also initiated discussions on integrated peacebuilding strategies development for every country.

The UN Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) has been operating since October 2006. It was established by the Secretary-General at the instance of the General Assembly. According to its terms of reference, the Fund's activity has the most important value in the very early stages of recovery efforts, when other funding mechanisms are not used. The Fund may support as the countries that are on the Commission's agenda, as other countries emerging post-conflict period. This is a separate mechanism of the Commission.

The PBF was created as an emergency peacebuilding fund for the purpose of addressing immediate needs in countries emerging from conflict. The Commission should play an important role in adoption of measures on the Fund's management, providing overall policy guidance on the use of the Fund's support in the countries it analyses.

As for September 2011, the Fund supports 193 projects in 22 countries. In accordance with its terms of reference, the countries which are not on agenda may be recipients. Russia attaches much significance to the PBF. The annual contribution to the Fund is two million US dollars.

The Fund has a multilevel management system in accordance with the UN General Assembly provides policy guidance through its resolutions to be agreed on the base of relevant reports of the Secretary-General. The Fund has an independent advisory group, which is determined by the Secretary-General.

The first countries received funding from the PBF were Burundi and Sierra Leone, then Cote d'Ivoire and the Central African Republic.

The PBC analysis indicates the following characteristic points. On the one hand, we can see attempts to underline a dominant role of the General Assembly in the prejudice of the Security Council authority, on the other hand, there was striving to use the platform of the Commission for political debates on situation in post-conflict countries, that is a new round of discussions, which had previously been in the UN Security Council.

One of dilemmas is in the way how the Fund's activity should dock with donor-funded programs of long-term development. The PBF acts - and this is expressed in its terms of reference – as a tool for peacebuilding financing at the very early stages when sufficient resources are not available. Experience has shown that the abovementioned peacebuilding process in Burundi and Sierra Leone took more time than it was expected. In the future, the UN country teams will need clear understanding of criteria for evaluating of peacebuilding needs. [5]

It would be better if coordination between the PBC and other structures as well as more careful preparation of Country-Specific Configurations meetings were enhanced. The PBC activity should be focused on development of agreed recommendations for the countries from agenda with a leading role of governments and in close coordination with the Security Council work on these dossiers. The process of the Commission establishment will be long enough to say that it is stably and effectively working. For this reason, it seems inappropriate to expand the PBC agenda by inclusion of new countries as well as to waste time and resources on abstract discussions.

Another conclusion from this research is that in respect of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) there is a problem of various forces influence. This is potentially a very dangerous trend, because if such an extension of the PBC responsibility will not be linked with finishing work on existing dossiers in portfolio, such a scheme is fraught with discredit this newly created body. Once there was a similar situation. The UN reputation was damaged in the second half of the 90's, because the UN was in charge of unbearable amount of peacekeeping tasks. The formula of the PBC effectiveness should include as a reasonable completion of the Commission's agenda as a timely finishing of previously made points.

The problem of highly qualified specialists for peacebuilding initiatives realization is also actual. As Alexander Pankin, the Representative of the Russian Federation to the UN, said at the UN Security Council meeting in March 2011: "One of important activities in international peacebuilding framework is formation of national reserve, consisted of highly qualified personnel of civilian experts in this field. The Russian Federation has submitted to the UN Secretariat lists of national experts in various fields. "

The current stage of international relations highlights the imperative of creating a special chapter in the UN Charter on international cooperation in the field of human rights. On March 15, 2006 the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution on the reform of the UN human rights activity. [4]

The key element of the resolution was the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC) establishment, which replaced the United Nations Commission on Human Rights (UNCHR). Compared with abolished Commission, the status of the Council was upgraded to

a subsidiary body of the UN General Assembly, the number of member states was reduced - up to 47, certain criteria for membership were introduced, although all UN members states have the right to apply for the entry into the Council.

Human rights treaty bodies, an integral part of the UN human rights architecture, are expert committees, specifically created in accordance with basic international human rights treaties, in order to monitor states' compliance with their international obligations to promote and protect human rights.

Nowadays the following committees are in system of the UN human rights treaty bodies: Human Rights Committee (CCPR), Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR), Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD), Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), Committee against Torture (CAT), Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture (SPT), Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC), Committee on Migrant Workers (CMW), Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), Committee on Enforced Disappearance (CED).

Until now the only untapped format of interaction was an intergovernmental discussion a wide range problems of human rights treaty bodies with the involvement of all UN member states.

On February 23, 2012 at the initiative of the Russian Federation, the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution on "Implementation in the General Assembly an intergovernmental process aimed at strengthening and improving the functioning of human rights treaty bodies." Co-authors of the resolution were Algeria, Bangladesh, Belarus, Bolivia, Venezuela, Vietnam, Zimbabwe, India, Indonesia, Iran, China, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Cuba, Nicaragua, Pakistan, Syria, Sudan, Tajikistan, Thailand and Tunisia. The resolution was voted in 86 states and 66 countries abstained, none voted "against." The resolution was numbered A/RES/66/254.

The resolution provides launch of open intergovernmental process for strengthening and increasing functioning of human rights treaty bodies system in the framework of the UN General Assembly. It is emphasized that this process will be carried out via conducting of open, transparent and inclusive negotiations involving all member states, observer states, intergovernmental organizations and specialized agencies of the UN system.

The Russian Federation believes that adoption of this resolution and launch of the intergovernmental process within the UN GA will strengthen human rights treaty bodies system and will increase the effectiveness of an international regime of human rights promotion and protection in general. [6]

The Universal Periodic Review mechanism in separate countries (UPR) was created as a part of further reform of the UN human rights dimension. It has all possibilities to become one of the most significant elements in international human rights architecture.

Reviews should be unbiased and have an ultimate aim to promote full abidance by human rights, rather than promoting interests of a particular group of states, or even marginalization or conviction of certain countries. During the Universal Periodic Review it's necessary to consider the level of state's development, its social structure, religious and cultural traditions, governance system and other features.

Intergovernmental cooperation for human rights protection and promotion has been getting more and more important. In this case states should have major responsibility, and international institutions and mechanisms should play a supplementary role, helping to achieve the abovementioned goals through equal and mutually respectful dialogue considering national, religious, cultural and historical peculiarities of states, their level of development and socio-economic situation.

There is no doubt that human rights situation in a particular country may be legal concern for international community, but that does not mean that human rights issues can be used as a

reason for interference in internal affairs of a state. Such actions are considered to be flouting the universal principles and norms of international law, including the UN Charter.

The initial stage of the UN Human Rights Council has demonstrated that human rights are extremely tense and politicized area of international relations. The polarization of interests of different state groups made an extensive and constructive discussion of issues difficult, and led to politically motivated initiatives. The contradictions and differences between developed and developing countries on major human rights issues of our time not only have gone, but even became more apparent. A clear example of this situation is confrontation, which invariably accompanies the majority of discussions on "controversial" country subjects (Palestine, Sudan, Iran, Uzbekistan, Cuba, Belarus, etc.).

In general, debates on the UNHRC are evidence of existing watershed in conceptual understanding of human rights doctrine and tasks of the Council. The West is focused on individual rights and necessity of strict monitoring of their compliance, while developing countries support collective rights with the leading role of states.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, coordination of generally acceptable approaches in the format of the UN is a very laborious process, providing thorough consideration of member states interests. Post-confrontational period has opened a new chapter in the UN development and it would be wrong to miss the opportunity to enhance international cooperation. As a result, today a number of achievements have been done on the reform way: the UN Human Rights Council and Peacebuilding Commission have strengthened their positions in the UN system and have achieved some success in human rights and peacebuilding, the UN global peacebuilding strategy in 2012 has been approved, mandates observation is carried out, decisions on revitalizing the UN GA are made. Work on the UN administrative reform is under way.

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