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Report of the Secretary-General on the Peacebuilding Fund

The Peacebuilding Fund

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The Peacebuilding Fund approved \$157,111,033 for 31 countries in 2017, by far the highest amount on record. Fund support for joint analysis and timely, catalytic, risk-tolerant peacebuilding programming helped foster system-wide cohesion, a cornerstone of United Nations reforms initiated during my first year in office. In total, the Fund launched five new cross-border initiatives and invested its greatest amount to date to advance gender equality and the empowerment of women and youth. Reversing recent trends, Member State contributions to the Fund, totalling \$97 million in 2017, delivered the Fund its most optimistic financial picture in years and place it on course to meet its \$500 million approval target for the current three-year strategic plan. These contributions secure the Peacebuilding Support Office's current level of support and ensures that the Office will continue to be an essential partner to the whole of the United Nations development, peace and security system.



I. Introduction

1. The present annual report, covering the period from 1 January to 31 December 2017, is the eighth report submitted to the General Assembly pursuant to its resolution [63/282](#). It covers the first year of the Fund's strategic plan for 2017–2019. The present report will be complemented by a financial report issued by the Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office no later than 1 May 2018. Additional information can be found at www.unpbf.org, and complete information on individual projects can be found on the Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office Gateway (<http://mptf.undp.org>).

II. Global performance and lessons learned

2. The Peacebuilding Fund received the highest level of annual contributions since its capitalization in 2006 and approved \$157.1 million for crisis-affected countries, by far the highest amount since the Fund's inception (see table 1 below). These precedent-setting achievements place the Fund on sturdier financial footing and are a strong endorsement of the ability of the Peacebuilding Support Office to answer my call for a quantum leap in resources to meet ever-increasing demand.

3. The Fund received \$97 million in donor contributions in 2017. With these contributions, the Fund has secured approximately \$280 million toward its strategic plan for 2017–2019. Partnership with donors was enhanced by regular briefings to the Friends of the Peacebuilding Fund, an important forum of exchange on the strategic direction of the Fund, as well as donor participation in visits to three Fund-recipient countries — Côte d'Ivoire, Kyrgyzstan and Mali — to witness the effectiveness and relevance of, but also the challenges facing, Fund investments. With 34 contributors to the current programming cycle from six continents, the Peacebuilding Fund remains the most widely subscribed and diverse fund in the United Nations system, a sign of strong donor consensus around its importance.

4. Increased levels of resources will be necessary so that the Fund can continue to meet heightened demand for its support. Led by the Peacebuilding Support Office, the Fund's historically high approval rate contributed to our broader efforts at reform by helping to reduce fragmentation in the international system in order to deliver timely, risk-tolerant programming that supports populations before, during and after crises. Advancing its niche, the Fund approved 82 projects in 31 countries in 2017, including five new cross-border initiatives, the provision of support in four mission transition settings, \$18 million in investments to advance gender equality and women's empowerment and \$11.3 million to support the positive role of youth in sustaining peace.

5. Securing the Fund's ability to meet demand in new investment settings, I declared three countries newly eligible for programmatic funding in 2017, following requests from the respective Governments. In Chad, eligibility paves the way for partnership with the Government to prevent conflict and violent extremism by addressing long-standing challenges related to structural inequality and governance. In Colombia, eligibility has led to the approval of \$12 million to catalyse Government-led implementation of the 2016 peace agreement around high-risk, politically sensitive but necessary support. In Solomon Islands, eligibility enables the United Nations to better support Government-led national dialogue and reconciliation efforts in the wake of the 2017 departure of the regional assistance mission to that country.

6. Declarations of country eligibility have contributed to strengthened synergies between the Peacebuilding Support Office and the Peacebuilding Commission. At a Commission meeting in June, the Prime Minister of Solomon Islands detailed how

Fund support had helped him respond to peacebuilding challenges in advance of the withdrawal of the regional assistance mission. In November, the Senior Adviser for Post-Conflict, Human Rights and Security of Colombia briefed the Commission on implementation of the peace agreement in Colombia, stressing the importance of the Fund's risk tolerance. Also in November, the Commission heard from Government officials from Sri Lanka, including the governor of the central bank, who spoke about leveraging the Fund to advance the nexus among peace, economic growth and development. Finally, two briefings by the Gambia in 2017, in April and December, underscored the importance of a smooth political transition and national ownership of policy reform through broadly inclusive consultation. Collectively, these meetings offer a new model for country engagement with the Commission and enhance access by Member States to information on decision-making within the Peacebuilding Support Office and the programmatic effectiveness of the Fund. Adding to transparency, the Fund's administrative agent, the Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office, began reporting Fund transfers through the International Aid Transparency Initiative in 2017.

7. While meetings with the Commission encouraged Member State engagement, Fund policies regarding prioritization and implementation made an important contribution to system-wide coherence. More than 82 per cent of projects approved in 2017 were joint programmes, designed in partnership with United Nations country teams, special political missions or peacekeeping missions. The majority of these new projects, moreover, were the result of joint assessments. The Fund's co-financing of nine peace and development advisers, along with funding for human rights advisers in Sierra Leone and Sri Lanka, further drives coherence at the country level and guarantees that programme implementation remains politically relevant. Ensuring that risky interventions benefit from system-wide expertise, the Fund has worked through inter-agency arrangements, for example, by requiring the endorsement of the Global Focal Point for Police, Justice and Corrections before authorizing a new transfer to address violations of the human rights of incarcerated women and juveniles in Yemen.

8. The Fund increased its cross-border initiatives in 2017 by approving five new interventions in 12 countries. A \$2 million transfer, channelled through the Great Lakes region cross-border multi-partner trust fund, supports Burundian refugees in the United Republic of Tanzania and their sustainable return and reintegration into Burundi. The Fund also approved its first regional cross-border investments, providing \$3 million in Central America to El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras, and \$3 million to the Sahel, involving Burkina Faso, Mali and the Niger. Cross-border programming between Cameroon and Chad, and Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, will address the importance of the prevention of cross-border conflicts and violent extremism, including by engaging youth and women affected by the ongoing violence. By addressing conflict drivers that transcend State boundaries, the Fund embraces its unique ability to straddle borders in ways that promote cooperative relations.

9. The Fund supported 15 United Nations agencies, funds and programmes throughout the development system in 2017. Although the Fund will remain a critical instrument for driving urgent, politically engaged action by the United Nations, it continues to seek new partnerships to complement and strengthen its portfolio. Advancing priorities established by my office, the Peacebuilding Support Office signed a memorandum of understanding with the African Union to operationalize the Joint United Nations-African Union Framework for Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security, co-signed by me and the Chair of the African Union Commission, Moussa Faki Mahamat, in April 2017. The memorandum will contribute to a more coordinated and strategic partnership in the areas of conflict prevention, political

dialogue, national reconciliation, democratic governance and human rights, and is already shaping Fund intervention in the Central African Republic.

10. With regard to furthering innovative partnerships, following the annual Business for Peace conference in Colombia, co-organized by the Peacebuilding Support Office, Colombia will become a test case for blended finance in 2018, leveraging Fund seed money to attract commercial financing for peacebuilding. In Liberia, concession companies supported the design and contributed financially to an innovative Fund-supported initiative to mitigate concession-related conflicts. Through its Gender and Youth Promotion Initiatives, the Fund continued directly supporting civil society organizations, approving over \$7.5 million for seven projects in 2017. Exploring additional avenues for these and other partnerships, including through the participation of the Office in joint assessment missions with the European Union and the World Bank, will be a central pillar for the Fund moving forward.

11. The Fund outpaced its record-setting 2016 transfer by allocating 36 per cent of 2017 approvals in support of gender equality and women's empowerment. While projects funded through the Gender and Youth Promotion Initiatives contributed to this achievement, those strong results were driven by 22 per cent of the Fund's regular programming in 2017, demonstrating that special promotion initiatives can positively transform behaviour and priorities at the country level.

12. Underpinning these numbers is the Fund's consistent emphasis on learning and capacity-building. A series of five webinars designed for promotion initiatives on gender-responsive peacebuilding and monitoring and evaluation reached more than 400 participants globally, while a weeklong training workshop conducted in partnership with the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) helped strengthen the gender analysis and programming skills of more than 20 United Nations Volunteers supporting 11 United Nations country teams. Investments in such learning activities, forged in partnership with UN-Women and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), are the bedrock of the Fund's success.

13. The Fund also contributed to United Nations efforts to design and implement peacebuilding programmes that prioritize the inclusion, participation and leadership of young people. The Fund approved \$11.3 million for eight projects through its Youth Promotion Initiative in 2017. The Fund also supported UNFPA and other partners in holding five regional consultations with young people to discuss peace and security priorities and identify recommendations to influence global policy discussions related to Security Council resolution [2250 \(2015\)](#).

14. The past year marked the start of the Fund's strategic plan for 2017–2019, which is aimed at investing \$500 million in 40 countries through 2019. Investments will remain focused on the Fund's four priority areas, as mandated in its terms of reference, and will be invested across the sustaining peace spectrum: in prevention, in prevention of escalation in the midst of violent conflict, and in post-conflict settings. In this way, the Fund could serve as a vehicle to drive the recommendations of the joint United Nations-World Bank study entitled *Pathways for Peace: Inclusive Approaches to Preventing Violent Conflict*, by investing in addressing root causes, recognizing the primacy of politics and the importance of inclusion. The strategic plan sets a more ambitious range of targets than in previous years and will serve as a stepping stone towards the objective set out in my report on peacebuilding and sustaining peace ([A/72/707-S/2018/43](#)) of \$500 million per year for the Peacebuilding Fund. I have called for contributions to be unearmarked and multi-year to ensure that support is both responsive and predictable.

Table 1
Peacebuilding Fund decisions in 2017

<i>2017 approvals</i>			
	<i>Immediate Response Facility</i>	<i>Peacebuilding and Recovery Facility</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>(United States dollars)</i>			
Countries on the agenda of the Peacebuilding Commission			
Burundi	7 570 308		7 570 308
Central African Republic	14 999 865		14 999 865
Guinea	7 940 514		7 940 514
Guinea-Bissau	7 301 064		7 301 064
Liberia	12 352 061		12 352 061
Sierra Leone	4 999 797		4 999 797
Subtotal	55 163 609		55 163 609
Countries not on the agenda of the Peacebuilding Commission			
Bosnia and Herzegovina	2 000 001		2 000 001
Burkina Faso	3 000 126		3 000 126
Cameroon ^a	1 499 962		1 499 962
Chad	1 499 607		1 499 607
Colombia		12 000 000	12 000 000
Côte d'Ivoire	5 000 000	500 000	5 500 000
El Salvador	3 000 000		3 000 000
Gambia	3 100 000		3 100 000
Guatemala	4 141 276		4 141 276
Haiti	3 000 000		3 000 000
Honduras ^a	1 275 311		1 275 311
Kyrgyzstan	3 592 416	8 000 000	11 592 416
Lebanon	2 999 628		2 999 628
Mali	11 745 329		11 745 329
Myanmar	3 865 408		3 865 408
Niger	4 000 000		4 000 000
Papua New Guinea	2 000 000		2 000 000
Philippines	3 000 000		3 000 000
Solomon Islands	2 999 266		2 999 266
Somalia	2 286 873		2 286 873
South Sudan	5 000 000		5 000 000
Sri Lanka	2 454 148		2 454 148
Tajikistan ^a	1 000 000		1 000 000
United Republic of Tanzania ^a	945 581		945 581
Yemen	5 000 000		5 000 000
Subtotal	78 404 932	20 500 000	98 904 932

<i>2017 approvals</i>			
	<i>Immediate Response Facility</i>	<i>Peacebuilding and Recovery Facility</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>(United States dollars)</i>			
Other			
United Nations	3 042 492		3 042 492
Subtotal	3 042 492		3 042 492
Total	136 611 033	20 500 000	157 111 033

Source: Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office, January 2018.

Note: Similarly to in the previous report, table 1 reflects funding decisions that were taken in 2017, not funds transferred.

^a As a counterpart to a cross-border project. Inclusion does not imply further access to or eligibility for funding from the Peacebuilding Fund.

III. Country-specific engagements of the Peacebuilding Fund

A. Countries on the agenda of the Peacebuilding Commission

Burundi: facing the challenges of displacement

15. In Burundi, hardened political positions, continued human rights violations, increasing refugee flows into neighbouring countries and further deterioration of the economic and humanitarian situation prompted an extension of the Fund's peacebuilding priority plan. The extension will enable the scaling up of two youth-oriented projects that have already demonstrated positive contributions to community security and social cohesion.

16. An additional project, awarded to the Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy, will support youth members of political parties in advocating their positions within and across party lines. Through a gender promotion initiative project, Search for Common Ground will support cross-generational networks of women leaders to lead peacebuilding initiatives at the local level. This project complements past Fund investments that created a network of women mediators.

17. The Fund is supporting two complementary projects that respond to the root causes of displacement and help prepare for the reintegration of returning refugees. A \$2 million investment will help catalyse the Great Lakes region cross-border multi-partner trust fund by supporting a refugee-focused cross-border initiative between Burundi and the United Republic of Tanzania. In addition, the Fund has approved a \$3 million project focusing on four communes in Burundi to increase protection, access to basic services and livelihoods for returnees and members of host communities.

Central African Republic: extending governance and security amid growing crisis

18. Growing ethnic and religious divisions, fuelled by political agendas, have aggravated long-standing governance deficits that have in turn delayed implementation of the national recovery and peacebuilding plan. Renewed insecurity, limited or absent State or judicial authorities in northern and eastern regions and weak national implementation capacity continue to be challenges and to generate human rights violations. Abuses by armed groups against civilian populations and

humanitarian actors continue to cause population displacement and lead to a deterioration of the humanitarian situation.

19. Against this background, the Fund delivered on a \$15 million pledge announced at the international donors conference for the Central African Republic held in Brussels in late 2016. New investments have been critical in stabilizing Bambari through the deployment of Internal Security Forces, combined with the implementation of cash-for-work projects, and activities related to rehabilitation, socioeconomic revitalization, reduction of community violence and support for local peace committees. The Fund also supported the restoration of State authority, with the development and adoption of a national strategy and road map. On security sector reform, the Fund supported the development of a communications plan to encourage trust among authorities, the population and the Internal Security Forces. The Fund also reoriented programmes to support the mediation process of the African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation, which allowed facilitators to engage with armed groups and civil society.

Guinea: strengthened civilian oversight of security sector key to Fund's exit

20. An external evaluation in 2017 of the Fund's \$48 million investment across 31 projects determined that the portfolio had met the most pressing peacebuilding challenges and had focused on those most vulnerable to conflict, such as women and youth. In particular, high-risk investments in security sector reform had contributed to improved performance of security forces, which had encouraged increased trust among the population that future investments should sustain.

21. These findings, together with an updated conflict analysis and recommendations of the Peacebuilding Commission, informed prioritization for new programming totaling \$7 million across three areas: (a) political party dialogue to curb political conflicts around elections; (b) strengthening of the penal chain to end impunity; and (c) prevention of radicalization and violent extremism through strengthened analysis and systemic interventions with a focus on the education sector.

22. Complementing new interventions in the justice sector, the Fund also approved funding to support development of the Fund's sectoral exit strategy through the creation of permanent national institutions for civilian oversight of security forces.

23. Finally, the civil society organization Agency for Cooperation and Research in Development was awarded a grant under the Youth Promotion Initiative to strengthen decentralized conflict resolution mechanisms and develop a national early warning rapid response system.

Guinea-Bissau: supporting pathways to stabilization

24. An institutional and political crisis in Guinea-Bissau persisted in 2017. Entrenched differences among key political actors impeded the implementation of agreements reached through regional mediation efforts led by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), with the support of the United Nations and international partners.

25. Amid this difficult context, a project implemented by Interpeace supported women-focused consultations and the strengthening of the role of women in conflict-resolution mechanisms. Complementing this effort, the Fund approved six projects, totaling \$7.3 million, to empower marginalized voices, including those of women and youth. In addition, it is hoped that investments in political dialogue, national reconciliation efforts of the organizing commission for the national conference on the theme "Paths to peace and development", and support for conflict-sensitive media will exert a stabilizing influence at the national level. Finally, new investments aimed

at strengthening alternative dispute resolution mechanisms and the interface between the formal and informal justice sector are expected to increase access to justice and respect for human rights and contribute to stabilization.

Liberia: transition from peacekeeping to peacebuilding amid changes in Government

26. Liberia witnessed its first peaceful transfer of power in more than 70 years, following October presidential elections. Contributing to the relative calm, a \$1.8 million project implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) supported a large-scale effort to involve youth in the 2017 elections and prevent elections-related gender-based violence.

27. Prior to the elections, as requested by the Security Council, the Government of Liberia drafted the Liberia Peacebuilding Plan, against which the Fund approved \$10 million in 2017. The new portfolio is aimed at ensuring a continued human rights presence within the United Nations country team in Liberia and establishes multi-stakeholder dialogue platforms to reduce concession-related conflicts.

28. The Fund's new investments are based on an inclusive, independent evaluation of the Fund's prior \$30 million contribution in Liberia. The evaluation concluded that, while Fund initiatives had addressed key peacebuilding priorities, the governance of the Fund portfolio on Liberia merited improvement.

29. In addition, the Fund approved two projects through the its Gender and Youth Promotion Initiatives: \$2 million to UN-Women, UNDP and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to address the justice and security needs of women and girls, and \$433,000 to the civil society organization Accountability Lab, to highlight the role of women in the peace process through training women film-makers and launching a film festival.

Sierra Leone: support for election-related conflict prevention

30. In anticipation of the country's elections in March 2018, the first since the closure of the United Nations political mission, a Fund transfer of nearly \$3 million to UNDP and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in early 2017 was joined by contributions from the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (Department for International Development), Norway and Canada to support national institutions and civil society organizations in preventing and mitigating conflicts before, during and after elections. The project has worked in partnership with the "Support to the electoral cycle in Sierra Leone 2016-2018" initiative, implemented by UNDP and coordinated through the Election Support Group to ensure coherence of United Nations assistance. Through the project, the Political Parties Registration Commission has validated codes of conduct for political parties. The project also supported the judiciary in establishing eight electoral courts to fast-track adjudication of electoral disputes, and provided complementary strengthening of human rights monitoring capacity and alternative dispute resolution mechanisms. It also supported the National Commission for Democracy in developing positive messages for peaceful elections and the Office of the National Security in establishing a national situation room for early warning and response. Support was also provided for a command and control center to increase the capacity of the police.

31. Another Fund-supported project, which ended in December 2017, provided support to consolidate key human rights activities, in partnership with the Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone. Through this project, the Commission was supported in mainstreaming and monitoring international human rights standards with

respect to land issues, women and persons with disabilities, which undermine efforts to sustain peace.

32. Through the Gender Promotion Initiative, the Fund allocated \$2 million to UN-Women, UNDP and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) to round out its elections-related support by strengthening women's political leadership, as well as participation in and promotion of peaceful elections.

B. Other recipient countries

Bosnia and Herzegovina: regional efforts to complement youth-led community initiatives

33. Amid oscillating tensions stirred by nationalist claims and partisan reactions to transitional justice outcomes in 2017, the Fund approved a \$2 million project that extends the "Dialogue for the future" platform, led by the Tripartite Presidency and established through an earlier Fund investment. Implemented through UNDP, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and UNESCO, the new project places youth at the centre of intercommunal cooperation and dialogue at the local, entity and State levels, and offers the only mechanism for direct interaction with the Tripartite Presidency on reconciliation. Responding to a request by the Presidency to support regional dialogue, the project also includes participation by youth and others from neighbouring States and paves the way for a Balkans regional dialogue project in 2018.

Burkina Faso: strengthening national security countrywide

34. The Fund kicked off its engagement in Burkina Faso, one of two model countries for the sustaining peace agenda, with two projects to address reconciliation and security sector reform.

35. After initial delays, and with support from the Department of Political Affairs, the national reconciliation project got under way in November, with informal consultations led by the High Council for Reconciliation and National Unity. Consultations linked political representatives, civil society organizations, defence and security forces, victims' associations, traditional and religious leaders and members of the business community for initial discussion of reconciliation priorities.

36. Based on the Fund's positive experience in Guinea and elsewhere, the \$1 million security sector reform project in Burkina Faso deployed a high-level adviser to the Office of the President to provide advice. Based on this work, the Government conducted a national security forum in October, which culminated in a report that identified priorities and recommendations on national security policy.

Colombia: accompanying Government-led peace implementation

37. In 2017, the ceasefire and laying down of weapons by the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia-People's Army (FARC-EP) and its subsequent transformation into a political party were successfully completed, marking a historic milestone in the transition of Colombia from war to peace. At the request of President Juan Manuel Santos Calderón, I declared Colombia eligible to access the Peacebuilding Fund in June. In September, the Government of Colombia and the United Nations country team developed a peacebuilding priority plan focusing on three areas of support: political and socioeconomic reintegration of former FARC-EP members; stabilization and scaling up of peace dividends in targeted locations; and transitional justice and restoration of victims' rights. In line with the priority plan, the Fund approved

\$12 million for five projects, including: (a) assistance to establish the Truth Commission in accordance with the Peace Agreement; (b) support for the Centre for Political Thought and Dialogue, a new think tank providing guidance and support to former FARC-EP leadership and signatories of the Peace Agreement; (c) interventions guaranteeing the rights of children and adolescents enlisted by FARC-EP who are now under the protection of the State; (d) multisectoral support for populations in the three most affected territories of the armed conflict; and (e) reincorporation of ex-combatants through the development of a demining organization and livelihood training. In keeping with its support of national institutions, the Fund's transfers are channeled through the multi-donor trust fund of the United Nations for post-conflict in Colombia, to which the Fund was the first contributor. Since then, a total of more than \$70 million in contributions has been mobilized for the implementation of the peace agreement.

Côte d'Ivoire: transition from peacekeeping to peacebuilding

38. Improvements in national security indices and the departure of the United Nations peacekeeping mission in June signal that Côte d'Ivoire continued to consolidate political and security gains throughout the year. Challenges remain, however, as evidenced by mutinies and protests by former members of a rebel force and by a series of attacks against police stations.

39. In this context, Fund projects have supported a series of improvements in the country's security, including the rehabilitation of major infrastructure, the training of 1,168 security personnel, the establishment of five civil-military committees designed to increase communication and trust between the population and the security forces, and support for joint activities between security sector members and community members. The programme has also contributed to peaceful coexistence in the central and south-western regions of the country through intercommunity dialogues and the rehabilitation of infrastructure, benefiting over 3,000 people. With the Fund's support, the Government has a broadly validated community reparations plan, with payment of collective reparations expected to commence in 2018. Through sensitization on land laws and support for land certification initiatives, the Fund has contributed to the peaceful settlement of land disputes in 549 villages. Moreover, extending prior gains on birth registration, through Fund support, an additional 36,000 children have been registered, decreasing the risk of future identity-based conflict and human rights violations.

40. Looking ahead, the Fund allocated \$5.5 million in funding to catalyse the new peacebuilding support programme of the Government and the United Nations. This support is meant to ensure a smooth transition in the wake of the peacekeeping mission drawdown.

Democratic Republic of the Congo: anticipating elections amid increasing insecurity

41. Since the signing of a 31 December 2016 agreement meant to pave the way for elections, division among the signatories has led to a deterioration of security in the east of the country. This has arisen despite Security Council resolution [2348 \(2017\)](#), which mandated the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo to support implementation of the 2016 agreement, as well as promote the protection of civilians and human rights.

42. Against this background, the Fund's support continued to focus on stabilization activities in the east, through a contribution to the Stabilization Coherence Fund. In 2017, five new stabilization programmes were launched under the Fund in Ituri, North Kivu and South Kivu Provinces. Support provided to Kitchanga in North Kivu has

made early progress with the establishment or strengthening of 10 local peace structures, which will be key in rolling out further support. The Fund also facilitated the development of strategic compacts with provincial governments, which contain clear commitments from authorities to help ensure project success and increase their engagement with the stabilization programmes. Another important step forward with Fund support was the inclusive development of a comprehensive Government strategy to dissolve the Force de résistance patriotique de l'Ituri militia and resolve long-standing conflicts between local communities in the South Irumu territory of Ituri Province.

El Salvador: sustaining peace for the next generation

43. El Salvador celebrated the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Peace Accords in 2017. Despite important democratic achievements during that time, a continual cycle of violence threatens peaceful coexistence and the functioning of democratic institutions and protection of human rights.

44. Within this context, the Fund approved its first-ever project in El Salvador, a \$2.2 million investment in the joint United Nations programme for post-conflict generation. Implemented by UNDP, IOM and the Office of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), the project is aimed at protecting the rights of victims of violence, while strengthening internal and external oversight of key law enforcement and justice institutions. The Fund also provides support to the national dialogue process, aimed at proposing solutions to some of the most pressing problems faced by Salvadoran society.

The Gambia: supporting reforms and democratic transition

45. Supporting the tense but peaceful December 2016 political transition in the Gambia, the Fund approved \$3 million to advance priorities related to transitional justice and security sector reform.

46. Led by OHCHR and UNDP, with guidance from the Special Rapporteur on the promotion of truth, justice, reparation and guarantees of non-recurrence, Pablo de Greiff, a \$1.2 million investment in transitional justice provides expertise to the Government to conduct public consultations. These consultations will inform a national strategy to deliver justice and promote national healing and reconciliation. Although it is still early in the project cycle, a Fund-supported transitional justice adviser assisted the Government in finalizing a truth, reconciliation and reparations commission bill, which passed into law in December 2017.

47. Responding to a Government request for assistance on security sector reform, UNDP and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations are guiding the design of a reform strategy consistent with ECOWAS principles to rebuild the credibility and enhance governance and oversight of the country's security institutions. With Fund support, a senior adviser has helped conduct a joint European Union-ECOWAS-United Nations security sector assessment. This \$1.4 million investment will also support the establishment of the Office of National Security. Through an additional \$500,000, the Fund also supports a policy, planning and management unit in the office of the Vice-President.

Guatemala: prioritizing justice for Guatemalan women

48. The past year tested the capacity of justice institutions and the International Commission against Impunity in Guatemala to combat impunity and corruption after impressive gains, including the historic 2016 convictions in the *Sepur Zarco* sexual violence case, achieved in part through Fund support, provoked a backlash from powerful sectors and threatened political crisis.

49. Responding to these new challenges, Fund-supported efforts began in 2017 to consolidate and expand institutional strengthening within the justice system by providing technical support to enable strategic criminal prosecutions, particularly in high-impact and femicide cases. Complementing its support for justice institutions, comprehensive victim assistance services for vulnerable groups, including women, indigenous people and children, and greater sensitivity on indigenous, gender and human rights within the court system were launched through Fund support.

50. Finally, the Fund allocated \$2 million through its 2017 Gender Promotion Initiative to expand support to women survivors of conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence who seek justice and transformative reparations. The project will also bolster women's leadership and national networks to enable a stronger policy and agenda-setting role and promote structural change.

Kyrgyzstan: improved relations support prevention of violent extremism

51. Capitalizing on strides made through the Fund's earlier investments, the Fund approved \$11.6 million in new programming to prevent violent extremism. New investments largely respond to urgent needs in the Central Asian region to stem recruitment into violent extremism.

52. Based on a year-long participatory conflict analysis and prioritization process, the Fund approved \$8 million towards a peacebuilding priority plan in 2017. Outcomes of the plan are aimed at preventing violent extremism through improvements in the partnership between State actors and marginalized communities. The outcomes also address security challenges in prisons and detention, and support youth and women in leading local outreach efforts to curb extremism before it starts.

53. The new plan joins ongoing investments targeting violent extremism, including a \$1 million youth-focused project implemented by Search for Common Ground and a United Nations-led effort to support women religious leaders in addressing vulnerability to radicalization. In addition to these projects, two initiatives funded through the 2017 Gender and Youth Promotion Initiatives will support the integration of isolated informal settlements outside of Bishkek and youth-led cross-ethnic cooperation for improved partnership with the State.

54. Finally, the Fund extended its Kyrgyzstan-Tajikistan cross-border project, after an external review revealed that the initial investment had been effective at reducing tensions over scarce natural resources and promoting cross-communal cooperation. The new \$2 million effort will consolidate these gains and embed nascent complaints mechanisms within national institutions to encourage sustainability.

Lebanon: tapping youth to foster economic resilience and social cohesion

55. In Lebanon, the presence of approximately 1 million Syrian refugees has contributed to economic stress and put pressure on basic services, contributing to strained relations with host communities. In response, in 2017, the Fund approved a \$3 million project on employment and peacebuilding, aimed at building bridges among "youth at risk", implemented by UNDP and the International Labor Organization (ILO), in partnership with UNICEF. By engaging vulnerable Syrian and Lebanese youth to cooperatively improve local economic conditions, the project is aimed at promoting social stability and conflict resolution while encouraging youth employability.

Libya: paving the way for national reconciliation

56. The Fund-supported project entitled "Towards national reconciliation in Libya", designed to generate momentum for reconciliation in Libya, was launched in January

2017. The project supports development of a national reconciliation strategy, elaborated through multi-stakeholder dialogues on thematic and regional issues, including displacement, arbitrary detention, intra-municipal dialogue, women and youth. The initiative relies on consultation with all Libyan constituencies, including women, youth, tribal leaders and municipal authorities, to build support for reconciliation from the bottom up and to strengthen community participation in the process. By including a wide variety of actors at all levels of society, the project supports inclusive dialogue and directly contributes to the ongoing political process as part of the United Nations action plan for Libya, adopted in September 2017, which places reconciliation at its core.

Madagascar: supporting anti-corruption and security sector reform

57. Madagascar experienced increasing political tensions throughout the year, largely in anticipation of presidential elections in 2018. The Government's proposal for a constitutional referendum ahead of the elections amid continuing uncertainty regarding the electoral time frame and candidate eligibility contributed to the rising tensions. The United Nations has worked with local stakeholders, the African Union and the Southern African Development Community to foster calm and lay the groundwork for the forging of an agreement among the main political actors to resolve differences through dialogue.

58. In this context, Fund investments have focused on security sector reform and support for democratic institutions, including fighting corruption, strengthening national human rights mechanisms and improving citizen confidence in State institutions. Key results include the adoption of a national security sector vision and the establishment of the executive secretariat to the High Council for National Defence, which paves the way for reform. In addition, several high-level anti-corruption cases have been launched by the Independent Anti-Corruption Bureau with Fund support. An independent human rights commission, which has begun receiving citizen complaints, was also established with Fund support, but its sustainability will depend on Government funding, which has not yet materialized. Fund support has also launched the first investigative journal in the country.

59. In late 2017, the Fund's Joint Steering Committee approved two stabilization projects for the Great South of Madagascar to help address long-standing grievances, bring State authority to this neglected region, help fight crime and strengthen social cohesion. These two projects, which commence in 2018, will be the first non-humanitarian support provided to this area.

Mali: responding rapidly to emergent threats

60. Even after more than two years since the signing of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali, insecurity continues to spread while ceasefire violations persist and institutional reforms stagnate. Violent extremist and terrorist groups have increased their operations in a bid to thwart the peace process. New armed groups have emerged and parallel processes risk jeopardizing the implementation of the peace agreement. Responding to these emergent crises, the Fund approved a new package of support, focusing on the Ségou and Mopti regions, to prevent further crisis.

61. In this challenging context, support from the Fund has encouraged youth as positive change agents. Specifically, 640 youth, including 226 young women, were trained on the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation and on Security Council resolution 2250 (2015), while support for the National Youth Council promoted better understanding of the Peace Agreement. An additional 2,600 young people, including 910 young women, were trained on conflict prevention to prevent expansion of the

crisis, while 36 local mediators have been recruited to promote social cohesion and reduce the risk of radicalization in 36 localities. The Fund supported a holistic approach on gender-based violence, with the adoption by the National Police of an action plan for the period 2018–2020, review by the National Assembly of a draft gender-based violence law expected in early 2018, and submission to local tribunals of 329 gender-based violence cases, including 157 cases of sexual violence.

Myanmar: modest progress amid deep crisis

62. The crisis in northern Rakhine State worsened throughout 2017, resulting in more than 600,000 refugees crossing into Bangladesh. In response, the Fund approved \$3.9 million in new funding for two initiatives through its Gender Promotion Initiative to strengthen the role of women in the peace process in Rakhine.

63. The joint ceasefire monitoring committee, a United Nations-facilitated support platform to channel international assistance to implement the nationwide ceasefire agreement, was also launched in 2017 with Fund support. Through the Platform, the Committee has established the offices necessary for effective monitoring, including a technical secretariat that backstops a tripartite committee comprising the Government, eight ethnic armed organizations and civilian representatives. Operating in a difficult and complex political and security environment, the joint ceasefire monitoring committee has overcome challenges in contested parts of the country where communities have seen few peace dividends and infrastructure is limited. Nevertheless, the monitoring mechanism has helped build trust between signatories to the ceasefire agreement and its utilization for dispute resolution at the operational level has reduced the potential for recurrence of conflict. Finally, Fund-supported initiatives to prevent the recruitment and use of children by armed groups led to the release of 49 children.

Niger: conflict prevention amid increasing tensions

64. The Niger experienced an uptick in tension in 2017, aggravated by the lack of inclusive political dialogue or consensus around the management of public affairs, and by unmet social demands, all of which were exacerbated by the fragile security situation. To address the ways in which competition over natural resources feeds tension, the Fund supported conflict prevention mechanisms relating to natural resources, including cross-border natural resources, in seven localities through cash-for-work projects, the development of water committees and local consensus-building mechanisms. In addition, through a project that reached 1,115 youth, 480 people were coached to lead social cohesion and conflict prevention initiatives in 17 dialogue spaces established through Fund. As many as 842 youth benefited from comprehensive socioeconomic support to deter them from joining violent extremist groups. Demonstrating the catalytic relevance of the Fund's approach, Denmark provided \$6.3 million to the High Authority for Peace Consolidation, in support of the peacebuilding priority plan. To bolster confidence in the Plan, the Fund supports innovative community-based monitoring to ensure that targeted communities have a voice in Fund governance.

65. Joining these efforts, the Fund approved a risky new project to support governmental efforts to reduce the influence of Boko Haram. The project is aimed at reintegrating and promoting social cohesion among ex-Boko Haram fighters, released prisoners and communities.

Papua New Guinea: outreach to communities and warring factions while preparing for a referendum

66. The Government of Papua New Guinea and the Autonomous Bougainville Government continued implementing the Bougainville Peace Agreement, including preparation for the Bougainville referendum by mid-June 2019. Implementation progressed slowly in 2017, however, partly owing to competing priorities such as the 2017 national elections and preparations for hosting the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Forum in 2018. Nevertheless, a joint supervisory body meeting between Papua New Guinea Prime Minister Peter O'Neill and Bougainville President John Momis on 14 and 15 December has given renewed momentum to the process.

67. Continuing its long-standing priority, the Fund fostered an enabling environment for a peaceful referendum by supporting discussions and joint decisions by the national and Bougainville Governments, awareness-raising on the Peace Agreement and the referendum, and improvement of trauma services and social cohesion in targeted Bougainville communities. The signing of the charter of the Bougainville Referendum Commission in August with Fund support was a particularly important step forward. With Fund support, communities throughout Bougainville gained opportunities to engage Members of Parliament and constituency referendum committees on governance and peacebuilding issues, leading to greater awareness and public confidence, with nearly 65 per cent of the population surveyed expressing satisfaction that their views had been shared with parliamentary representatives. Fund support has also encouraged outreach to warring factions that are non-signatories to the Peace Agreement, with an important unification ceremony in May, followed by a key women's unification meeting in August, with more than 350 women from across the island expressing their support for peace.

Philippines: taking a two-pronged approach to preventing violent extremism

68. The violent siege of Marawi in Mindanao by elements linked to Islamic State from May to October 2017 underscored the destabilizing effect of lags in public confidence in the peace process, especially among youth. With the aim of addressing the roots of the unrest and the need to engage both the political leadership and the grass roots, in October 2017, the Fund approved a project to establish a platform for intra-Moro dialogue to achieve consensus regarding the constitution of an autonomous entity in Mindanao. Through dialogue and educational alternatives, the project will strengthen the role of women, youth and faith-based leadership in preventing violent extremism.

Solomon Islands: supporting transition from the regional assistance mission

69. In June 2017, the regional assistance mission to Solomon Islands ended after 14 years, marking an important milestone in the country's peacebuilding trajectory. The removal of the Prime Minister following a no-confidence vote in November 2017, however, underscored the fragility of current political and security arrangements.

70. In recognition of the need to bolster nascent peace efforts, following a request by Government, I declared Solomon Islands eligible for additional Fund support in October 2017. This support will join the current Fund portfolio, which supports inclusive dialogue and promotes the role of women and youth. Through a \$2.5 million project implemented by UNDP and UN-Women, more than 500 tribal and community leaders, youth and women from various provinces participated with the Government in dialogues on the country's future. These culminated in a national dialogue, which established priority areas for Government and stakeholder action. Other progress included finalization of the national reparations strategy, launch of the national action plan on women, peace and security and the national youth policy, and the training of

300 youth as peace advocates. These resources will be consolidated through a new transfer of \$3 million, to be implemented in 2018.

Somalia: consolidating peace, development and federal State formation

71. Despite still fragile peace- and State-building processes, the Federal Government of Somalia passed significant milestones in 2017, including the conclusion of the national electoral process in February, which saw women elected to 24 per cent of the seats in the Federal Parliament, a significant achievement made with Fund support.

72. Since 2015, the Fund has taken risks to support the Government's efforts to expand its presence, legitimacy and capacity in territories newly recovered from Al-Shabaab. Early Fund investments, which helped establish 14 interim district councils through the deployment of district administrators, have given way to a more comprehensive approach to local security and development. As a result, in January 2017, seven United Nations organizations launched an \$8 million effort in nine districts in Jubbaland, South-West and HirShabelle States. This investment has enabled local authorities to assess and respond to community needs by developing urban plans, establishing legal frameworks, extending justice and police services, and offering vocational training and job creation tied to infrastructure rehabilitation. Complementing these investments, the Midnimo project and the cross-border project, led by UNHCR, are assisting local authorities in providing durable solutions for the peaceful integration or reintegration of internally displaced persons and returnees from Kenya. The impact of peacebuilding and State-building efforts is monitored through an innovative big data pilot project, which is aimed at gauging public perceptions. Looking forward, a \$2 million project implemented through UNFPA and the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) through the 2017 Youth Promotion Initiative will be aimed at enhancing the engagement of Somali youth within peacebuilding and local governance processes.

South Sudan: tentative steps to sustain peace amid crisis

73. Amid continuing conflict between government and opposition forces and worsening humanitarian conditions resulting from famine, the Fund began once again supporting peacebuilding efforts in South Sudan through two projects approved in 2017.

74. The first, a \$3 million effort by UNDP, is aimed at strengthening capacities for reconciliation and dialogue, including consultations at the local level that will feed a national dialogue process initiated by the President. Capitalizing on past experience, the project's inception will include a mapping of peacebuilding initiatives at the local level in order to identify scalable best practices, with an emphasis on women-led initiatives. Additional support will contribute to the development of a strategic plan which will articulate key peacebuilding priorities for future United Nations engagement.

75. The Fund's second project, a \$2 million project implemented by UNDP and IOM and approved through the 2017 Youth Promotion Initiative, will seek durable solutions for youth from the Bentiu Protection of Civilians site by promoting their integration into local communities. The initiative marks the first opportunity that youth from the camp have had to build confidence for sustainable return.

Sri Lanka: incremental progress on transitional justice and reconciliation

76. Implementation of the Sri Lankan peacebuilding priority plan began in May, with the finalization of five projects relating to transitional justice, reconciliation, durable solutions for displaced populations and encouragement of the role of youth and women in peacebuilding. The plan serves as the Government's instrument for

donor coordination and assists the Government in realizing its commitments under Human Rights Council resolution 30/1 on promoting reconciliation, accountability and human rights in Sri Lanka.

77. Key among the commitments called for by the Human Rights Council is the undertaking by the Government of a national consultation on transitional justice. Since 2016, the Government, guided by OHCHR and UNDP through Fund support, has established a national consultation task force, which led dialogues with citizens on difficult subjects related to transitional justice. The task force presented its final report to the Government in January 2017. The report outlines a series of recommendations on policy commitments and political reform, determined by the High Commissioner for Human Rights to largely meet international standards in his annual progress review. Rounding out Fund support for transitional justice, following a high-level visit by Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs Jeffrey Feltman in July, the Government launched the Office of Missing Persons, a national institution on truth-seeking, which will be operationalized with Fund support once commissioners are appointed. Fund support, moreover, will assist the Government with communication and outreach among communities on accountability and reconciliation.

Yemen: peacebuilding support in the midst of crisis

78. The Fund relaunched its engagement in Yemen in 2017 through two new projects, despite further deterioration in the country context, including warnings of an impending famine and a cholera epidemic amid continued fighting and political crisis. Fully embracing the sustaining peace agenda, both projects are aimed at addressing critical peacebuilding and recovery needs within the context of the ongoing humanitarian crisis. Specifically, a \$2 million investment, implemented by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and IOM, will provide women-led mediation support to resolve local conflicts over scarce water resources. Additionally, a \$3 million effort by UNDP, UNICEF and UN-Women is aimed at ameliorating the devastating effect of the conflict on incarcerated women and youth, who even before the outbreak of violence struggled with grave rights violations. This pilot project will test a comprehensive package of support for detainees in four Yemeni prisons and will develop release plans for sustainable reintegration after their sentences are served.

Table 2
Global performance of the Peacebuilding Fund, 2016–2017

<i>Peacebuilding Fund priority areas</i>	<i>Project count</i>	<i>On track to deliver outputs (percentage)</i>	<i>On track with evidence of significant contribution to peacebuilding outcomes (percentage)</i>
Priority area 1^a			
2017	25	88	16
2016	35	90.0	30.3
Priority area 2^b			
2017	45	87	36
2016	41	92.6	46.3
Priority area 3^c			
2017	4	100	50
2016	6	83.3	16.7

<i>Peacebuilding Fund priority areas</i>	<i>Project count</i>	<i>On track to deliver outputs (percentage)</i>	<i>On track with evidence of significant contribution to peacebuilding outcomes (percentage)</i>
Priority area 4^d			
2017	6	94	35
2016	22	85.0	10.0
Overall 2017	91	89	31

Source: Peacebuilding Support Office project assessments, periodic reports and independent country evaluations.

^a Security sector reform; rule of law; disarmament, demobilization and reintegration; and political dialogue.

^b Reconciliation, democratic governance and conflict prevention/management.

^c Employment and equitable access to social services.

^d State capacities, extension of State authority and governance of peacebuilding resources.

IV. Peacebuilding Fund oversight and management

A. Advisory Group

79. The term of the fourth Advisory Group came to an end in December 2017. During its tenure, the Group accompanied the Fund through financial crisis and subsequent strategic repositioning, helping the Fund to sharpen its niche to navigate and respond to recent United Nations reforms and commitments to peacebuilding and sustaining peace as a system-wide responsibility.

80. At its mid-year meeting in June, the Group presented me with its proposal to replenish the Fund and revitalize the capacity of the Peacebuilding Support Office. In its two meetings, the Group advised on the implications of the twin General Assembly and Security Council resolutions on the review of the peacebuilding architecture on Fund activities, and on measures to adapt the Fund's new strategic plan to the current global context. Group members also participated in donor visits to Côte d'Ivoire and Mali, and advised the Fund on its outreach and Member State engagement strategy.

B. Budget and personnel

81. The 2017 cost plan of \$3,079,332 was approximately 15 per cent higher in nominal terms than in 2016, though distribution by budget item remained unchanged, with core staff and other temporary personnel costs accounting for 69 per cent of the total, followed by operating and other direct costs at 13 per cent and mission travel of staff and the Advisory Group at 18 per cent. \$1.7 million of the 2017 budget was financed from the interest and investment income of the Fund, which offset lower than expected overhead income derived from 3 per cent of prior-year donor contributions.

82. To adequately implement the Fund's mandate to take forward my vision on prevention and sustaining peace within a time of constrained resources, the Fund rigorously applied cost containment measures. It continued to rely on staff secondments from United Nations agencies and to leverage strategic partnerships for country programme support. The Fund enhanced its communications capacity to improve outreach and support resource mobilization.

C. Enhanced monitoring and evaluation

83. In 2017, the Fund continued to collect and analyse performance data to encourage evidence-informed decisions on ongoing programming and future investments. Perception surveys were launched in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Gambia, Kyrgyzstan, the Niger, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Sri Lanka to enable a measurement of impact. Community-based monitoring mechanisms, which increase the transparency and accountability of the Fund and government partners with regard to citizens, also continued in select countries. For example, in Papua New Guinea, semi-annual community discussions took place on priority issues with representatives of village-level governments and the Bougainville Women's Federation. In Sri Lanka, a new initiative resulted from a competitive process among interested youth groups, and resulted in an innovative web-based mapping solution to monitor the contribution of peacebuilding activities countrywide.

84. Evaluations were commissioned for 25 projects or programmes in 2017. Of note, the Fund's investments in strengthening its monitoring and evaluation framework contributed to increased availability of reliable data for evidence-based evaluations. For example, baseline and endline surveys and information from multi-stakeholder monitoring missions ultimately strengthened evaluation of the Fund's portfolio in Kyrgyzstan. The Liberia evaluation, covering two peacebuilding plans spanning 2011–2016, helped to inform the Fund's future support as the United Nations Mission in Liberia withdraws. Additionally, an evaluability assessment in Côte d'Ivoire reviewed programme design and the robustness of monitoring frameworks, with targeted recommendations to increase the likelihood of achievement of results and data availability for a final evaluation.

85. Finally, the Fund supported capacity-building at the country level through 28 technical missions to assist strategy, design or implementation of programming in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Burundi, Cameroon, Chad, Colombia, Côte d'Ivoire, El Salvador, the Gambia, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Kyrgyzstan, Liberia, Mali, Somalia, South Sudan and Sri Lanka. These missions were complemented by support provided to the Central African Republic, Côte d'Ivoire and Mali by the PeaceNexus Foundation, a Fund partner. Additionally, a joint mission by the Fund and UN-Women focused on gender-responsive peacebuilding for United Nations Volunteers working on Gender Promotion Initiative projects.

V. Conclusion

86. While historically high donor contributions to the Fund in 2017 were a clear sign of confidence in the contribution of the United Nations to peacebuilding, the Fund's record-setting approval rate demonstrates that global demand for risk-tolerant, politically sensitive initiatives still outpaces available resources. In order to realize the promise of sustaining peace and the critical system-wide reform efforts currently under way, gains made in 2017 will need to be sustained and expanded.