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### Programme budget for 2020

**Administrative and budgetary aspects of the financing of  
the United Nations peacekeeping operations**

## **Review of the implementation of the peace and security reform**

### **Report of the Secretary-General**

#### *Summary*

The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution [72/262 C](#), in which the Assembly requested me to undertake a comprehensive review of the implementation of the peace and security reform. The report provides an overview of the change management efforts that the Secretariat has put in place, the new structures – the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and the Department of Peace Operations – established on 1 January 2019 and some of the early results achieved, as seen in a series of case studies. The case studies each illustrate a different reform benefit initiative, part of a broader benefits management system established to monitor progress and ensure transparent delivery against the overarching objectives of all three tracks of my reform agenda. The report also covers challenges and corrective measures taken by the new departments to achieve the objectives of the peace and security reform, and ongoing efforts to promote a work culture that embraces innovation and the shift to a whole-of-pillar approach.

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\* [A/75/150](#).



## **I. Introduction**

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution [72/262 C](#), in which the Assembly requested me to undertake a comprehensive review of the implementation of the peace and security reform. Overcoming the fragmentation of the United Nations, including within its peace and security pillar, is critical to enabling the Organization to discharge its core responsibilities effectively in response to an evolving global context that is more challenging, fast-changing and unpredictable than at any time since the Organization was founded 75 years ago.

2. Worrying global trends have made the interlinkages between local and global efforts, and between the different mandate areas of the United Nations, even more necessary than they were before. Accordingly, the strategic frameworks that guide the work of the Organization reflect a holistic view of common challenges and require whole-of-system responses. At the centre is the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which is complemented and amplified by the sustaining peace framework and my vision for prevention. I am grateful for the approval by the General Assembly of my reform agenda, which included the repositioning of the United Nations development system, the shift in the Organization's management paradigm and the restructuring of its peace and security pillar, which together will allow the United Nations to deliver more effectively on its various mandates.

3. The overarching goals of the restructuring of the peace and security pillar are to prioritize prevention and sustaining peace, enhance the effectiveness and coherence of peacekeeping operations and special political missions, make the peace and security pillar more coherent, nimble and effective through a whole-of-pillar approach and align the pillar more closely with the development and human rights pillars. The report provides an overview of the implementation of the reform, including of the new structures – the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and the Department of Peace Operations – established on 1 January 2019. While many of the reforms are still being consolidated, the report presents some early evidence of its benefits and identifies measures taken to address challenges and achieve the objectives of the reform.

## **II. Implementing the reform: managing change and establishing the new structures**

### **A. Managing change**

4. Shortly after the General Assembly endorsed my reform proposal in July 2018, the entities concerned – the former Department of Political Affairs, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Peacebuilding Support Office – established a small transition team dedicated to managing the implementation of the reform on a full-time basis. The team worked closely with the development system and management reform transition teams to ensure coordination and coherence of the larger reform effort.

5. The peace and security transition team focused primarily on change management, communications and outreach to staff and operational continuity. It designed workstreams dedicated to key areas such as management of the integrated regional divisions, the link to operational support and management departments and culture change. Staffed by colleagues from across the pillar, the workstreams undertook intensive work throughout the fourth quarter of 2018 and the first quarter of 2019 to ensure that the two new departments were functional on 1 January 2019 and that existing processes and mechanisms were being adapted to the new structures.

Regular communications to ensure that staff throughout the two departments were informed of major updates and milestones were also a focus. In that vein, the principals of the three former entities held a number of town hall meetings to share developments and take questions.

6. In order to test new procedures reflecting the revised structures, a pilot regional division, the Americas Division, was established in December 2018 to inform the wider roll-out of the reform on 1 January 2019. The pilot division comprised staff from the Americas Division of the Department of Political Affairs and the Haiti Integrated Operational Team of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. The division was selected because it would support the first post-reform mission transition in Haiti. The result of the one-month pilot was enhanced coordination between the two departments in the final stage of preparations for the strategic assessment mission to Haiti conducted in mid-January 2019. The pilot phase also allowed for the early identification of adjustments necessary to establish new reporting lines and calibrate clearance procedures for official documents by the two new departments.

7. With the aim of harmonizing knowledge for staff who had previously served under separate departments and helping them to prepare for their evolving functions, the newly established Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and Department of Peace Operations held a series of leadership workshops for regional division management. The pillar jointly developed an induction programme for new staff in the two departments and for Department of Operational Support staff who work on field missions, replacing separate induction programmes that existed prior to the restructuring. Sessions on reform have also been integrated into Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and Department of Peace Operations induction courses for Headquarters and field colleagues.

8. So as to monitor progress and take corrective measures as needed, progress on the implementation of the reform was overseen by the Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and the Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations, with the support of the transition team, including through regular review meetings convened in April, July and December 2019. Participants included senior management in the peace and security pillar and stakeholders from other reform transition teams and departments.

9. With a view to setting common objectives and providing an overarching framework to guide staff in the peace and security pillar as a whole, the Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and the Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations developed a joint vision statement in November 2019, in which they defined the shared commitments and priorities of the pillar in the following terms: (a) politics (the promotion of political solutions to conflicts); (b) people (engaging societies beyond political elites and grounding action in knowledge of relevant socioeconomic, environmental and structural aspects); (c) impact (maximizing the impact of field presences); (d) partnership (working across the United Nations system, with Member States and with international, regional and local institutions and actors); (e) innovation (in approaches, partnerships and the integration of new technologies); and (f) learning (building a culture of mutual learning, creativity, growth and ownership). Both departments are actively embracing the vision and taking practical steps to implement it.

## **B. Establishing the new structures**

10. The restructuring of the peace and security pillar is anchored in the establishment of two new Secretariat departments on 1 January 2019. The Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs combines political and analytical capabilities

and expertise in areas such as electoral assistance, mediation and Security Council affairs with the peacebuilding responsibilities previously performed in separate entities in the Secretariat, while the Department of Peace Operations provides specialized capabilities in areas such as military affairs and the rule of law. Both departments support strategic, political and operational backstopping to peace operations within their respective purviews.

11. The two departments share a single political-operational structure with regional responsibilities, overseeing the day-to-day management of all political and operational peace and security activities and headed by three Assistant Secretaries-General: for Africa; for Europe, Central Asia and the Americas; and for the Middle East, Asia and the Pacific. The departments have access to their own and each other's specialized capacities and services, including the Peacebuilding Support Office, which was brought into the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and strengthened with additional posts, thereby contributing to the revitalization of the Office, as mandated in General Assembly resolution [70/262](#) and Security Council resolution [2282 \(2016\)](#) on the review of the peacebuilding architecture. I also created a Standing Principals' Group, a forum convened monthly with the Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, the Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations, the Under-Secretary-General for Counter-Terrorism and the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, to ensure coherence and unified decision-making on peace and security matters.

12. The Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and the Department of Peace Operations work closely with the development pillar, including through the Peacebuilding Support Office in its role as the "hinge" to the other United Nations pillars. Building on sustained work over the years to strengthen cooperation with resident coordinators, the reforms provide a clear and strengthened entry point for collaboration with the United Nations development system at large, including the newly established Development Coordination Office, and allow the peace and security pillar to intensify the provision of day-to-day advice and support to empowered resident coordinators and country teams in responding to specific country challenges, especially those with triple-hatted deputy special representatives, resident coordinators and humanitarian coordinators. Taking a comprehensive approach to prevention and drawing upon the capacities across the pillar are also emphasized in the new strategic plan of the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs. Operational support provided to date includes technical expertise in areas such as elections through the Electoral Assistance Division and mediation and dialogue initiatives through the Mediation Support Unit and the Standby Team of Senior Mediation Advisers, as well as through the Joint Programme on Building National Capacities for Conflict Prevention and the joint project on United Nations transitions.<sup>1</sup> The Office of Rule of Law and Security Institutions works together with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and draws upon a number of United Nations partners to deliver operational support as a system-wide service provider through the Global Focal Point for the Rule of Law. The regional divisions in the two departments co-chair, together with UNDP, the regional monthly review mechanism to facilitate cross-pillar discussions on prevention efforts. The Development Coordination Office is now fully integrated into the mechanism to ensure a seamless feedback loop with United Nations country teams, through the resident coordinators.

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<sup>1</sup> The project includes the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, the Department of Peace Operations, the Development Coordination Office and the United Nations Development Programme as project partners.

13. In terms of strategic planning and analysis, the pillar has prioritized participation in a number of common country analyses in 2019 and 2020, in order to produce joint, multidimensional risk analysis. In Timor-Leste, the regional division of the two departments deployed two staff members to the country to directly support the analysis exercise. Meanwhile, the departments are working with the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) to strengthen gender conflict analysis. Closer coordination can also be seen in settings in which peace operations are deployed. In Darfur, the United Nations country team is able to use the assessed programmatic funding from the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) to enhance joint efforts for the eventual transition from peacekeeping to peacebuilding, as mandated. It is achieved in particular through State liaison functions in the areas of rule of law, human rights, livelihoods for displaced populations and immediate service delivery for internally displaced persons. Thanks to the reform, coherence in United Nations mission transition contexts has also been enhanced. The examples of Haiti and the Sudan are discussed below, and compliance with the 2019 planning directive for the development of consistent and coherent United Nations transition processes will be monitored to ensure that more proactive joint transition planning is undertaken, resulting in the required strategic coherence.

14. Collaboration with the United Nations human rights pillar, including the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the Human Rights Council and its mechanisms, and the human rights components in peacekeeping and special political missions, has also intensified. On the basis of a joint policy, the two departments worked closely with OHCHR, which backstops 12 human rights components in special political missions and peacekeeping operations, to address a range of issues related to the implementation of human rights mandates by those missions. The OHCHR partnership with the Peacebuilding Support Office was strengthened through the adoption of a joint workplan. At the operational level, the two departments and OHCHR support field engagements that integrate a human rights-based approach, including with resources from the Peacebuilding Fund, such as in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Honduras, Liberia and Mali. My call to action for human rights is providing further impetus to reinforce collaborative efforts to strengthen human rights across the Organization, including in the peace and security pillar.

15. The peace and security pillar works hand in hand with the new management architecture at Headquarters to support the efforts of peace operations to improve the effectiveness of mandate delivery, which represent a significant portion of the financial and human resources of the Secretariat.

### **III. Monitoring progress: evidence of the benefits of the reform**

#### **A. Early evidence and reform initiatives**

16. Some 20 months after the launch of a complex and interdependent set of reforms, there is early evidence of their impact. A benefits management system was established to monitor progress and ensure transparent delivery against the overarching objectives of all three tracks of my reform agenda. The Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and the Department of Peace Operations identified nine specific reform benefit initiatives, which are listed in the annex to the present report. The present section is structured around those initiatives. Many of the examples below relate to more than one of the nine initiatives, underscoring the interconnected nature of the reform package. For each expected benefit, indicators – whether qualitative or quantitative – were defined that could determine whether the

situation had improved or worsened since the implementation of the reform and whether the change in the situation was primarily due to reform implementation or to external factors. While benefits management pertains to the reform and will specifically measure reform-related improvements, my goal is to transition benefits management into a continuous improvement effort by the end of 2020. In that way, ongoing reform activities can be completed and new improvements can be implemented on a continuous basis.

### **Prioritizing prevention and sustaining peace – the case of Burkina Faso**

17. Since taking up my duties as Secretary-General on 1 January 2017, I have made the prioritization of prevention – including the promotion of a surge in diplomacy for peace – one of my priorities. The reform of the peace and security pillar contributed to translating that vision into action, by helping to ensure that peace and security engagements are undertaken early and are informed by integrated, multidimensional analysis shared by the wider United Nations system. Burkina Faso, where reform was built upon earlier system-wide initiatives anchored in the sustaining peace framework, is a setting in which a more nimble and coherent United Nations presence driven by shared, integrated analysis has been seen.

18. A few weeks into the reform, my Special Representative for West Africa and the Sahel led an inter-agency review mission to assess the posture and capacity of the United Nations country team in Burkina Faso. Based on that assessment, and as endorsed by the Executive Committee in March 2019, the United Nations system began to expand its presence outside the capital. Five integrated offices were established in priority regions to bring support closer to the population in need. The Executive Committee also established an emergency task force, led by the Assistant Secretary-General for Africa, to oversee overall efforts in the country, assess existing resources against requirements and reprioritize them as needed.

19. In Burkina Faso, the reform unlocked a transformation of the traditional United Nations country team configuration, ensuring a more integrated approach that includes a strong preventive focus, based on shared, cross-pillar and multidimensional analysis. The reformed structures in the Department of Political and Peacekeeping Affairs and the Department of Peace Operations facilitated this in a number of ways. First, information and analysis were channelled through one consolidated chain of command in the front office of the Assistant Secretary-General for Africa. That meant that the enhanced monitoring and analysis conducted in the field, including by political and human rights staff deployed to the resident coordinator's office, could be acted upon more quickly. Second, the Assistant Secretary-General was able to draw on significant support from the pillar's specialized thematic capacities. The Mediation Support Unit offered expertise to support the country team, including sharing good practices from other countries in the region. The Electoral Assistance Division made recommendations on a division of labour among United Nations system entities and provided electoral advice to senior United Nations leadership; the Division remains engaged as preparations for the 2020 general elections continue. The Office of Rule of Law and Security Institutions deployed specialist capacity on police, justice, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, and security sector reform. As improvised explosive devices became a concern, the Mine Action Service was deployed to offer threat analysis and civilian risk education and support the development of a national threat mitigation capacity for such devices. Third, the dedicated capacity in the Peacebuilding Support Office facilitated increased collaboration with the World Bank, and the Peacebuilding Fund supported the country team in facilitating deployment in the most vulnerable areas. A prevention and peacebuilding assessment by the United Nations, the World Bank, the African Development Bank and the

European Union, conducted with support from the strengthened Peacebuilding Support Office, further feeds into the transformation of the United Nations footprint in the country, and the Peacebuilding Commission has been providing a forum to encourage timely follow-up to the assessment exercise. The security situation in Burkina Faso remains in flux, and peace will require years to be consolidated. Even at this early stage, however, the nimble and innovative United Nations support that the reform has unlocked has been welcomed by the national authorities, as well as the Security Council in its presidential statement on West Africa ([S/PRST/2019/7](#)).

### **Tailored, politically driven peacekeeping operations – the case of the Central African Republic**

20. Peacekeeping is most effective, and maximizes the impact of collective action, when used flexibly as a political tool. This underpins the Action for Peacekeeping agenda, and the restructuring of the peace and security pillar is aimed at further reinforcing such efforts. The United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) provides a good example of how the reform has built upon the agenda to facilitate political processes, including through strengthened partnerships with regional organizations. In line with the agenda, MINUSCA received a progressively stronger good offices and political mandate in 2018 and again in 2019, including to support the political process led by the African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation. The United Nations strategic partnerships with the African Union, the Economic Community of Central African States and bilateral partners, facilitated by the creation of a single interlocutor at Headquarters for the country and region through the creation of the political-operational structure, were instrumental in supporting discussions in Khartoum that led to the signing of the peace agreement. Such partnerships, including with the European Union, continue to play an essential role in supporting the peace process and implementing the agreement. The restructuring also enabled even closer collaboration with the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa – the regional special political mission that now reports to the same division at Headquarters as MINUSCA. The Regional Office has been helping MINUSCA to rally support in the subregion for the peace process, including by pushing for the revitalization of the joint bilateral commissions between the Central African Republic and its neighbours.

21. The reform also reinforced the support that the Central African Republic receives from the peacebuilding architecture. The Peacebuilding Commission, with the help of a strengthened Peacebuilding Support Office, provides a forum to sustain international attention on peace and recovery efforts. Following the signing of the peace agreement, the Peacebuilding Fund facilitated the quick disbursement of \$23.9 million for the United Nations country team and civil society partners to support critical areas in the peace agreement, bridging the gap until longer-term donor funding was secured and allowing the Mission to focus on its core mandated tasks.

22. The peace agreement provided a viable political path forward for the country and directly led to significant reductions in civilian fatalities, as well as in peacekeeping fatalities from hostile acts, and resulted in a notably more positive attitude towards MINUSCA and an overall decrease in human rights violations in the Central African Republic. However, that progress will not be sustainable without accountability for non-compliant armed groups and clear and timely peace dividends for the population. There must be significant, innovative and risk-informed investments in development, youth employment and infrastructure. The sustained support and engagement of the Government and the international community is also required.

**Integrated approaches to mission transitions – the cases of Haiti and the Sudan**

23. The restructuring of the peace and security pillar has facilitated a more coherent, integrated and effective way of working, including in managing mission transition processes. In the past, United Nations missions moving from a peacekeeping configuration to a special political mission or vice versa required a handover from one Headquarters department to another. That resulted in inefficiencies and, at times, organizational competition that could undermine the outcome of the transition processes. The restructuring of the peace and security pillar has placed the backstopping of peacekeeping operations and special political missions within the same regional division, regardless of the type of peace operation in place, significantly reducing inefficiencies and making seamless support and coordination with partner departments not only easier but the norm. This enhances the prospects of more forward-looking, sustainable and ultimately successful transition processes. The joint project on United Nations transitions remains a key mechanism for bringing together the peace and security pillar and the development system. In May 2020, I initiated a comprehensive review of the Policy on Integrated Assessment and Planning to address integration challenges and fully reflect my vision for more integrated and predictable cross-pillar action. The peace and security pillar does not manage mission transitions alone; it works closely with the repositioned development system and OHCHR to ensure that long-term national goals are planned for throughout the mission transition process, using the 2030 Agenda as the overarching framework. It also works closely with the Department of Operational Support to help to manage these highly complex processes. The political leadership and cooperation of host Governments remains essential.

24. The new United Nations structures were at work in managing mission transitions in 2019 and 2020 in Haiti and the Sudan. In Haiti, the new special political mission, the United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti, started operations on 16 October 2019 in a difficult political context, picking up where the United Nations Mission for Justice Support in Haiti had left off, with a strong focus on integrated action with the United Nations country team to address the historical roots of instability and vulnerability. In the Sudan, my Special Adviser led the planning process, in line with the planning directive on the country. Throughout, the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and the Department of Peace Operations worked closely to prepare the new mission and the eventual drawdown and exit of UNAMID. The new mission, established on 4 June 2020 as the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan (UNITAMS), will complement the ongoing work of the agencies, funds and programmes of the United Nations on the ground to support the democratic transition in the Sudan, including the need for the political participation of women. In parallel, also on 4 June, the Security Council extended the mandate of UNAMID until 31 December 2020. UNITAMS and UNAMID will coordinate their action closely, in particular regarding peacebuilding, the rule of law, community violence reduction and the protection of civilians in Darfur, as well as support for the Juba-based peace process. The Peacebuilding Support Office has been engaged in both Haiti and the Sudan, including through the Peacebuilding Fund.

25. In Haiti and the Sudan, the regional divisions of the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and the Department of Peace Operations looked to much longer-term national goals, working closely with partner entities, such as the Development Coordination Office and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, and the country teams to conduct integrated analysis and planning for post-transition presences. The elaboration of the One United Nations vision for the presence in Haiti, and a similar visioning exercise for the Sudan, contributed to the identification of priority areas that the new missions would need to



tackle jointly with the respective host Governments. The close partnership with the Department of Operational Support helped to provide tailored expertise in both contexts.

### **Integrated regional strategies for prevention and sustaining peace – the case of the Horn of Africa**

26. Taking advantage of the creation of shared divisions with responsibilities over geographic regions regardless of the type of United Nations presence on the ground, I asked the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and the Department of Peace Operations to work with other departments – reinforcing the cross-pillar nature of the Organization’s work – to develop integrated regional strategies for priority areas. The two departments worked closely to prepare a framework for the development of regional strategies, drawing upon lessons learned from earlier experiences, as well as best practices. Several strategies have been completed or are in preparation, including the comprehensive regional prevention strategy for the Horn of Africa, which was co-led by the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and UNDP. The previous structures did not allow for one mechanism or platform for interaction in a structured, continuous and substantive way for all key United Nations players in a given region. The Horn of Africa strategy creates exactly that and, as a result, represents a break with past practice. Involving all three pillars of the Organization and closely aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals, the Eastern Africa Division of the two departments co-led the preparation of the strategy with UNDP, with field-based colleagues at both the regional and national levels included as key partners in the elaboration and implementation of the strategy. Regional partners, including the African Union and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), and their existing regional frameworks, helped to inform the strategy. Results at an early stage will be difficult to measure, but it has already been seen that the implementation of the strategy, under the leadership of my Special Envoy for the Horn of Africa, has helped to bring about more coherence and a better division of labour among the various actors and to reinvigorate the United Nations partnership with IGAD. In a sign of the growing partnership, the United Nations has supported IGAD in the development of its coronavirus disease (COVID-19) response strategy.

### **Closer alignment with the United Nations development system – the cases of the Plurinational State of Bolivia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo**

27. All of the tools that were available to resident coordinators in the past continue to be available to the repositioned development system and to the empowered resident coordinators. The difference following the reform is that, while staying within established mandates, internal barriers to collaboration within the peace and security pillar and with the development pillar have been significantly reduced, in particular through the adoption of a whole-of-pillar approach and the strengthening of the Peacebuilding Support Office.

28. The Plurinational State of Bolivia provides a good example. Shortly after the onset of the crisis and violence following the general elections in October 2019, I appointed a Personal Envoy to engage with all national actors. The United Nations joined the facilitation efforts of the Episcopal Conference of Bolivia, the European Union and Spain. That led to the parties reaching an agreement to de-escalate the crisis, annul the vote held in October 2019 and organize new elections for 2020. The parties also requested rapid United Nations assistance for national efforts to overcome the crisis. In response, my Personal Envoy, together with the Resident Coordinator and the country team, led the design of the United Nations system peace consolidation initiative for the Plurinational State of Bolivia. The initiative consists of three pillars –

electoral assistance; human rights and gender equality; and dialogue efforts through citizen consultations – and is aimed at ensuring that preventive efforts are sustained before, during and after the electoral process. Elections were deemed by national actors to be a key factor in resolving the political crisis. As such, the Electoral Assistance Division worked closely with my Personal Envoy and the country team to urgently establish the necessary strong electoral component and make it operational within a tight timeline to support preparations for credible, inclusive and participatory elections in 2020. The initiative represents a novel approach to conflict prevention that puts the empowered Resident Coordinator at the helm of the activities of the agencies, funds and programmes that are focused on the initiative’s three pillars and builds close links to the good offices of my Personal Envoy. The initiative has made significant progress since it was launched and shows how the reformed United Nations can coherently and nimbly support authorities in working towards the peaceful resolution of a crisis.

29. Another example of closer alignment with the development system, as well as with humanitarian actors, is the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where the United Nations has played a key role in containing the outbreak of the Ebola virus disease in North Kivu Province and Ituri Province. Against a challenging context, which includes active armed groups and significant community resistance, the United Nations supported the national public health response by deploying the unique capabilities of its development, humanitarian and peacekeeping presence on the ground, including by using United Nations police to support national contact-tracing efforts. While the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo provided good offices, logistical support and security for the response effort, specialized agencies, funds and programmes worked closely with communities to gain their trust and set up a network of medical facilities. In order to help to ensure integration across pillars and convey common messages to local stakeholders, I appointed an Emergency Ebola Response Coordinator based in the east of the country. Regular meetings at the leadership level at Headquarters, including between the Department of Peace Operations, the Development Coordination Office, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the World Health Organization, helped to further align the efforts of the United Nations system. After nearly two years, the authorities of the Democratic Republic of the Congo have declared the outbreak over. The United Nations continues its cross-pillar approach to support an assistance programme for survivors.

### **Greater impact of the Peacebuilding Commission**

30. An important part of the restructuring of the peace and security pillar has been to bring the Peacebuilding Support Office into the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, to strengthen it with additional posts and to position it as a “hinge” between the Secretariat’s peace and security work and the human rights and development pillars, as well as humanitarian actors. The Office’s support for the Peacebuilding Commission reflects one of the important ways in which the “hinge” function is carried out.

31. Since the restructuring, the added value of such measures has been seen. The Peacebuilding Support Office’s direct link to the shared regional divisions driving the Secretariat’s political analysis has allowed members of the Peacebuilding Commission to receive deeper analysis, with a stronger focus on field perspectives. That assists the Commission in playing a stronger advisory role to the Security Council, and the Council has increasingly sought the advice of the Commission on peacebuilding issues related to countries under the consideration of both bodies. This has taken the shape of informal interactive dialogues convened in preparation for a Council visit to Burkina Faso and Mali in 2019, and Commission advice shared during

the Council's deliberations on the mandate renewals of MINUSCA, the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau and the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS).

32. The reform has enabled the Peacebuilding Commission to foster greater partnerships at the international, national and local levels and to support greater alignment with nationally identified priorities. In the Gambia, the Commission, in coordination with partners, tracked progress on the role of women and young people in decision-making, security sector reform, transitional justice, constitutional review, human rights, gender equality and good governance, in line with the country's national development plan.

### **Strengthened partnership with the World Bank**

33. The restructuring of the peace and security pillar included the creation of strengthened capacity for partnership with the World Bank, to better realize synergies between the two organizations on prevention and peacebuilding. A small team, based in the Peacebuilding Support Office, serves as the secretariat to the United Nations-World Bank Partnership Framework for Crisis-Affected Situations, enabling a cross-pillar approach with all United Nations system entities concerned and offering advisory support to field presences, in particular resident coordinators in around 40 contexts. In September 2019, the Office made a new Humanitarian-Development-Peacebuilding and Partnership Facility operational within the Peacebuilding Fund to support field teams' joint data, analysis and operational collaboration with the World Bank Group.

34. Early benefits of the new support include United Nations leadership of the joint prevention and peacebuilding assessment in Burkina Faso by the United Nations, the World Bank, the African Development Bank and the European Union, the first time that such an assessment has been undertaken in a prevention context. Elsewhere, joint visits by senior United Nations and World Bank personnel, such as the visit to Somalia in November 2019, helped to reinforce cooperation across the humanitarian-development-peace nexus.

35. Teams across the United Nations system contributed to consultations on the first World Bank fragility, conflict and violence strategy, launched in March 2020. As part of the strategy, which builds on earlier analysis by the United Nations and the World Bank on prevention, partnerships are recognized as critical to the Bank's effectiveness in fragile contexts. Supported by the Peacebuilding Support Office, regional divisions of the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and the Department of Peace Operations and in-country United Nations presences are contributing to a new generation of risk assessments by the Bank. In June 2020, the Department of Peace Operations and UNDP finalized plans to develop policy collaboration with the Bank in the area of security sector reform, supported by the Humanitarian-Development-Peacebuilding and Partnership Facility. By June 2020, the Facility had provided staffing, consultancy and/or operational support for United Nations presences partnering with the Bank in Burkina Faso, Cameroon, the Niger and Togo – with Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Sudan in the pipeline.

36. In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, strengthened partnership capacities helped the United Nations to align quickly with the World Bank on peacebuilding and prevention dimensions of the pandemic, enabling joint messaging and timely adaptation of assessment tools. A Humanitarian-Development-Peacebuilding and Partnership Facility "fast track", created in April 2020 to support United Nations teams undertaking conflict-sensitive assessments of the impact of the pandemic with the World Bank, quickly became oversubscribed. Member State support remains invaluable. As fragile countries seek to prioritize international resources for recovery

efforts linked to the pandemic, strategic partnerships with international financial institutions will be more vital than ever.

### **Greater impact of the Peacebuilding Fund**

37. The impact of the reform on the Peacebuilding Fund has been positive, and the Fund is itself contributing to accelerating the objectives of the reform in several ways. First, bringing the Fund into the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs has ensured that country and project strategies are better informed by the analysis of the regional divisions of that Department and the Department of Peace Operations. This has allowed the Fund to better link the political analysis of the Secretariat with the proposed programmatic responses of agencies, funds and programmes, as was the case in Papua New Guinea in the run-up to the referendum in Bougainville and in the Gambia following the political transition there. Second, the peace and security pillar has positioned the Fund as one of its central instruments for strengthening the leadership and capacity of the repositioned resident coordinator system. The Fund's processes ensure that resident coordinators are in the lead in helping to guide prioritization, alignment with national strategies and integrated approaches with country teams.

38. The Peacebuilding Fund also plays a role in accelerating progress on the objectives of the reform. For example, fostering integrated, cross-pillar work is one of the Fund's guiding principles. Its three priority windows have been designed to emphasize system-wide efforts through increased investments in supporting coherent mission transitions, increasing regional approaches and working across borders on joint priorities, and maintaining a strong emphasis on gender equality and the engagement of women and young people in peacebuilding. In 2019, 30 per cent of all new investments were dedicated to supporting transitions, 4 per cent to cross-border initiatives and 21 per cent to the promotion of women and young people; the objective of the Fund is to increase these to 35 per cent, 20 per cent and 25 per cent, respectively, over the period from 2020 to 2024.

### **Mainstreaming a whole-of-pillar approach – the cases of Mali and Papua New Guinea**

39. I am pleased that, in the relatively short time since 1 January 2019, the whole-of-pillar approach – the overarching vision guiding the restructuring of the peace and security architecture – has been embraced by the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and the Department of Peace Operations and that they are already delivering together in a number of locations. Many of these are contexts that involve building on years of United Nations engagement and impressive efforts at strategic coherence despite previous internal bureaucratic hurdles.

40. One of the places in which a whole-of-pillar approach has been visible is Mali, where the combined effects of the reform and the Action for Peacekeeping initiative can be seen. On the one hand, the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) has benefited from the tools of the peace and security pillar, in particular in the areas of the rule of law and security sector reform. The restructuring at Headquarters has facilitated intensified cooperation with the Peacebuilding Fund and allowed the Mission to capitalize on enhanced exchanges of information and analysis, with the merged West Africa Division at Headquarters now positioned to closely collaborate with all relevant actors in the field, including UNOWAS and resident coordinators in the region. Following a "whole-of-United Nations" approach, the Mission and the United Nations country team are implementing an integrated strategic framework in Mali, leveraging respective comparative advantages and networks: the country team is taking on some tasks previously implemented by the Mission, such as the prevention of radicalization of

inmates. On the other hand, in line with the Action for Peacekeeping initiative, the Security Council gave MINUSMA a mandate focused on two strategic priorities – support for the implementation of the peace agreement and the stabilization and restoration of State authority in the centre of the country – and has strengthened its operational agility and footprint in pursuit of those goals. Together, the restructuring of the peace and security pillar and the Action for Peacekeeping initiative are helping MINUSMA to attain tangible results in the field, including creating space for political solutions, such as through the holding of a nationwide inclusive dialogue on the future of the country in December 2019.

41. The whole-of-pillar approach is also visible in non-mission settings, such as Papua New Guinea. Working with the population of the Autonomous Region of Bougainville and national and subnational governments, the United Nations supported the peaceful delivery of the non-binding referendum on the political future of Bougainville held in late 2019 and continues to support consultation processes in the post-referendum period at the request of the parties. The empowered Resident Coordinator has played an important role in bringing together different aspects of support from across the United Nations system into a coherent strategy of political engagement. The Electoral Assistance Division delivered critical support to the Bougainville Referendum Commission, and on several occasions the Mediation Support Unit deployed a member of the Standby Team of Senior Mediation Advisers to help to facilitate the work of the ministerial-level post-referendum planning task force. The Mine Action Service in the Department of Peace Operations provided technical advice and capacity-building on the handling of firearms, ammunition and explosives to help to make the Autonomous Region of Bougainville ready for the referendum. The integration of the Peacebuilding Support Office into the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs bolstered the creation of joint analysis to inform the support of the Peacebuilding Fund. The Fund used the joint analysis to help to create an enabling environment for political dialogue, working through the United Nations country team and in close coordination with the Department of Political and Peacekeeping Affairs Liaison Officer in Buka. In October 2019, the Peacebuilding Commission held meetings on Papua New Guinea, with ministerial representation from the Government of Papua New Guinea and the government of the Autonomous Region of Bougainville, focusing international attention on the referendum and critical post-referendum priorities. Member States held up the coherent, cross-pillar approach of the United Nations in Papua New Guinea as a potential model of how United Nations reform was benefiting peacebuilding and sustaining peace regionally and globally. Demonstrating the value of such engagement, Papua New Guinea requested a further meeting of the Peacebuilding Commission in May 2020, at which the Deputy Secretary-General briefed members on her visit to the country and on the prospects for peacebuilding in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

## **B. Pandemic response**

42. Through the response to the COVID-19 pandemic, further benefits of the reform became apparent. Despite implementation challenges, the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and the Department of Peace Operations worked to amplify my call for a global ceasefire to facilitate the response to the pandemic, including through the work of peacekeeping operations and special political missions. By using digital tools and platforms to engage with parties to conflict and other stakeholders, such as in Libya and the Sudan, and to keep working with women as part of mediation and peace agreement implementation, such as in Colombia and Yemen, the pillar continues to work with a common purpose to open space for diplomatic engagement.

43. The reform ensured that the two departments reacted more quickly, as one team, to the pandemic, in particular to field-based needs. A priority of the pillar was to support, quickly and in a unified way, the response of peacekeeping operations and special political missions. To that end, the pillar, together with the Department of Operational Support, formed a COVID-19 field support group, co-chaired by the Director of Coordination and Shared Services. The group is a joint field and Headquarters coordination forum working to find tangible solutions to challenges in addressing the pandemic. Four objectives guide the group's work: supporting national authorities, where possible, in their response to the COVID-19 pandemic; protecting United Nations personnel and their capacity to continue critical operations; helping to contain and mitigate the spread of the virus, ensuring that United Nations personnel are not a contagion vector; and helping to protect vulnerable communities and continue to deliver on mandates.

44. The pillar also focused on supporting national actors in the design and implementation of national and local responses that are gender- and conflict-sensitive and strengthen social cohesion. The pillar helped to prepare several of the policy frameworks related to the COVID-19 pandemic that have been released, including on its socioeconomic effects and its impact on human rights, on women, and on Africa. The Peacebuilding Support Office assisted the Peacebuilding Commission in discussing the implications of the pandemic in a number of contexts, helping to rally support for national response plans. The Peacebuilding Fund is working with resident coordinators, country teams and national partners to rapidly reallocate funds to where they are needed. The Office of Rule of Law and Security Institutions developed an operational toolbox for places of detention and guidance on prison decongestion measures to prevent COVID-19 from entering prisons and to mitigate its impact in the event of an outbreak, as well as guidance on the use of community violence reduction projects to produce much-needed personal protective equipment and build isolation centres and on a human rights-based approach to police operations in the context of COVID-19.

## **IV. Managing reform benefits, addressing challenges and changing work culture**

### **A. Managing and capturing benefits**

45. Under the leadership of the Executive Office of the Secretary-General, the Secretariat has been working to improve the ways of demonstrating the benefits of the reform to Member States and the broader public. I first announced a reform benefits management system in an informal briefing to Member States in November 2018. Since then, the Secretariat, with guidance from my Special Adviser on Reform, has developed the first Secretariat-wide approach to managing and overseeing change in an accountable and transparent way. A tracker is publicly available online (see [reform.un.org](https://reform.un.org)) and includes a dashboard that displays indicators and targets. The peace and security pillar will regularly update the data against the indicators in the benefits tracker and continue to monitor progress against the objectives of the reform, with a view towards continuous improvement. The data are complemented by case studies such as those set out in section III above. It is my hope that the combined qualitative and quantitative reporting serves as a powerful case on the robustness with which the Secretariat is managing the reform.

## B. Challenges and corrective measures

46. In the case of the restructuring of the peace and security pillar, a major challenge that emerged has been the overloading of key offices in the new structure. These include the Executive Office and the Office of the Assistant-Secretary-General for Africa, the responsibilities and workloads of which have increased significantly, a pattern set to continue in many instances. Similarly, increased demand for United Nations policing is foreseen, as outlined in my report on the assessment of the Police Division ([A/74/223](#)).

47. The shared Executive Office of the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and the Department of Peace Operations underwent several simultaneous changes on 1 January 2019. First, the team had to manage the merger of the former Executive Office of the Department of Political Affairs with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations portion of the former Executive Office of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and Department of Field Support, which entailed significant disruption as different cultures, duties and teams were brought together. Second, a major and ongoing exercise of administrative process realignment and re-engineering was required to standardize the different processes and practices that existed in the former entities of the Department of Political Affairs, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Peacebuilding Support Office. This was urgently needed to avoid process inefficiencies and fragmentation and to ease the increase in workload. The Executive Office simplified processes where possible, decreasing the number of steps and handover points and transferring the processes to paperless systems. Throughout 2019, nine administrative processes were re-engineered, including core processes such as the administration of official travel and the recruitment of civilian staff and active duty seconded officers. There are at least five projects in the pipeline for 2020.

48. The Office of Internal Oversight Services, in a recent evaluation (IED/20/001), also found inconsistent operating procedures and duplicative processes between the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and the Department of Peace Operations. I have requested the two departments to review the role of the Office of the Director for Coordination and Shared Services, which includes the Executive Office, vis-à-vis the roles of the front offices of the two departments in order to determine what further measures may be required to align working methods between the two departments to continue building the foundation for a whole-of-pillar approach.

49. The front office of the Assistant Secretary-General for Africa gained more responsibilities as a result of the reform compared with both its predecessor office supporting the former Assistant Secretary-General for Operations in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the office of the former Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs with responsibility for Africa and Security Council affairs in the Department of Political Affairs. The new front office provides advice and support to the Assistant Secretary-General on 11 special political missions and seven peacekeeping operations, including the five largest, as well as all 54 Member States in Africa. The number of staff overseen by the Assistant Secretary-General, with support from her front office, increased from approximately 90 in the Office of Operations to approximately 150 in the Office for Africa. Over time, the increased volume of work that the front office has to handle on an ongoing basis risks deprioritizing some issues related to long-term conflict prevention and sustaining peace in Africa in favour of others, as the Assistant Secretary-General and her team understandably focus their attention on the most urgent requirements and crisis management. As a result, the pillar took corrective action, complementing the existing staffing structure through voluntary contributions mobilized by the Department of

Political and Peacebuilding Affairs; two Junior Professional Officers were also added to the team. Finally, the office put in place management arrangements allowing greater delegation to directors on matters related to their divisions and geographical areas of responsibility, while preserving coherent reporting lines.

50. Measures to improve coordination in the policy structures of the peace and security pillar and to avoid overlap and duplication are being pursued. The pillar is working to build upon existing synergies among different thematic and policy capacities and further increase collaboration in key areas, such as training, guidance and institutional learning. In order to enhance coherence and set joint priorities, the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and the Department of Peace Operations established a steering committee on guidance development and learning, which has requested several products, including a joint study to assess cooperation between special political missions and peacekeeping operations. The two departments have also developed joint policies on guidance development and knowledge management to ensure coherent pillar-wide standards and processes. The respective policy divisions have advanced a number of joint initiatives, including on engagement with non-State armed groups and support for regional divisions on regional strategies. They coordinated the preparation of a joint action plan for the two departments on hate speech, in response to the United Nations Strategy and Plan of Action on Hate Speech. The two departments also work closely on joint political advocacy on women and peace and security, in particular on the political participation and protection of women and institutional capacity-building on gendered conflict and political analysis, which are key building blocks for a more comprehensive understanding of the root causes, triggers and drivers of conflict and peace. More work will be done to examine ways to ensure greater consistency in the approach and optimize the utilization of resources for policy and thematic capacities across the architecture. The need to ensure that the entire pillar has access to dedicated integrated assessment and planning capacity has also been identified; it is important for facilitating both seamless transitions and strengthened cooperation with the development system and other stakeholders.

### **C. Mainstreaming a new way of working: changing the work culture**

51. From the beginning, I identified culture change as an essential ingredient of the reform. The peace and security pillar does not only concern a new architecture and structures, but also a new way of working. The Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and the Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations act as change sponsors for reform, supporting managers in adopting new ways of working and acting on staff feedback on what is needed to operate effectively following the reform. Some aspects have been tackled. A common information technology platform has been established, allowing for better information flow, collaboration and data analysis across the pillar without sacrificing information security, and positioning the pillar to quickly adopt remote working conditions during the COVID-19 crisis. The Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs recently added modest capacity to promote the increased use of innovation in the peace and security pillar, serving its own regional desk and that of the Department of Peace Operations on issues related to conflict prevention, mediation and peacebuilding, and coordinating closely with other relevant counterparts in the Department of Peace Operations. These efforts are beginning to show progress. As noted in a recent evaluation by the Office of Internal Oversight Services of the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, integration in the regional divisions is still in progress but, where it has occurred, divisions have been able to produce higher-quality analysis in terms of breadth, coherence and depth.



52. Several initiatives have been launched to drive culture change in the pillar since 1 January 2019. The staff training and engagement programme targets staff in non-managerial positions and is focused on new ways of working and career mentorship. Key activities include a partnership with the United Nations System Staff College focused on foundational change management skills to empower staff to drive change from below. The Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and Department of Peace Operations action plan on gender parity has been an important part of the effort, focusing on building an enabling environment conducive to gender equality. The two departments are members of the core group of the #NewWork initiative led by the Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance at Headquarters. The initiative is aimed at promoting a more fulfilling and productive workplace through activities focused on innovation and new ways of working. Some positive results have begun to emerge, as seen in the Secretariat-wide staff engagement survey and the gender parity survey of the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and Department of Peace Operations, both conducted in 2019.

53. Culture change is not an area in which one-off measures can have an impact. The Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and the Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations have committed themselves to holding regular meetings with their staff to discuss management issues and challenges in the new structures and to continuously promote a change in culture and approach to the work of the United Nations. In addition to holding town hall meetings, both Under-Secretaries-General have undertaken “listening tours” to engage with staff at various levels, with an emphasis on junior staff. In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, the pillar has partnered with the United Nations System Staff College to reflect on best practices from the remote working environment and solicit ideas to help to shape the vision for a post-pandemic workplace.

## **V. Conclusion**

54. The most immediately visible elements of the peace and security reform are structural. Two departments were established on 1 January 2019, linked by a single political-operational structure with regional responsibilities. The Peacebuilding Support Office was strengthened and brought into the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs to act as a hinge between the peace and security pillar and the other United Nations pillars. I have used the Standing Principals’ Group to look at key peace and security issues in more depth and ensure coherence with the Office for Disarmament Affairs and the Office of Counter-Terrorism.

55. More important than the structural changes is the impact that they are having in the places where the peace and security pillar is engaged. The present report contains details of some of the evidence of the increased effectiveness of the peace and security pillar following the reform, including through early results on the ground. While the reform has already yielded some early benefits, it has only just started. Changes in practices, culture and processes will take time and will constitute an ongoing learning effort. To ensure a regular review of how better results can be achieved, I will introduce a mechanism for continuous improvement in the coming months that will help in steadily adapting to global needs and challenges. By examining how to do better, I am confident that it will be possible to rise to the evolving challenges on the ground and improve delivery on mandates in the future.

## **VI. Actions to be taken by the General Assembly**

56. **The General Assembly is requested to take note of the present report.**

## **Annex**

### **Peace and security reform benefits framework for 2019–2020**

#### **Objective 1: integrated, politically driven approach to mission and non-mission settings**

- 1.1: Prioritizing prevention and sustaining peace
- 1.2: Tailored, politically driven peacekeeping operations
- 1.3: Integrated approaches to mission transitions
- 1.4: Integrated regional strategies for prevention and sustaining peace

#### **Objective 2: closer alignment with development actors**

- 2.1: Closer alignment with the United Nations development system
- 2.2: Greater impact of the Peacebuilding Commission
- 2.3: Strengthened partnership with the World Bank
- 2.4: Greater impact of the Peacebuilding Fund

#### **Objective 3: organizational coherence, nimbleness and effectiveness**

Mainstreaming a whole-of-pillar approach into the work of the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and the Department of Peace Operations

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