

Strengthening Synergies between the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) and ECOSOC: Towards a Pathway for Integrated Support for Sustainable Peace and Development

This discussion was held as part of Operationalising Sustaining Peace Roundtable Series

14 May 2026

Summary Note

The 2025 Peacebuilding Architecture Review (2025 PBAR) reaffirmed the importance of stronger coherence across the UN system and highlighted the role of the Peacebuilding Commission (the Commission) as a platform connecting peacebuilding, development, and humanitarian action. The review underscored the need for deeper engagement between the Commission and the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) to strengthen field-level impact and support countries in addressing the structural drivers of conflict and instability (S/RES/2805-A/RES/80/11, OP3).

Against the backdrop of the UN80 reform process, resource constraints, and increasing recognition of the interdependence between peace and development, the roundtable brought together representatives of Member States, the United Nations, academia, and civil society to reflect on how the Commission and ECOSOC can work more effectively together.

Key takeaways from the discussion include:

Participants emphasised that a significant proportion of the world's poorest and most vulnerable populations live in fragile and conflict-affected contexts. As a result, development efforts that do not address conflict risks may struggle to achieve sustainable outcomes. Participants noted that a stronger partnership would enable the Commission to support ECOSOC in adopting more prevention-oriented approaches to development challenges.

The relationship between the Commission and ECOSOC remains underutilised despite a strong policy for closer cooperation:

The engagement between the two bodies has often been limited, episodic, and driven by specific initiatives rather than embedded in regular working methods. While annual meetings and occasional joint engagements have allowed for the interaction between the two bodies, a systematic partnership capable of shaping policy and practice across the UN system is yet to emerge..

For this, the engagement between the Commission and ECOSOC should extend beyond a single dedicated annual event and become more regular, long-term, strategic, and action-oriented. In the past, some specific engagements have generated tangible outcomes. In particular, the 2017-2019 multi-year dialogue between the Commission and ECOSOC on the Sahel helped build momentum for the eventual adoption of an ECOSOC resolution on support to the region (E/RES/2020/2). This experience was cited as evidence that sustained engagement, informal consultations, and consistent follow-through can translate discussions into concrete intergovernmental outcomes.

The Commission can strengthen cooperation through existing activities. During country visits, for example, the Commission could pay closer attention to the topics discussed by ECOSOC and provide independent assessments and lessons learned back to New York. More regular interaction at the leadership level was also suggested, including monthly meetings between the Chair of the Commission and the President of ECOSOC, building on existing practices through which the ECOSOC President engages regularly with the President of the General Assembly.

Notably, many good practice examples stem from informal efforts of informal coordinators and Commission's Member States elected by ECOSOC. While formal meetings remain important, informal exchanges can help identify common priorities, generate political support, and facilitate coordination across institutional boundaries. Because the successes depend on the individual initiative of Member States, handover processes from one informal coordinator to another could be considered more intentionally.

At the same time, there is a need for further analysis of where the most effective entry points for peacebuilding exist within ECOSOC's work. Identifying specific processes and mechanisms—including the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review (QCPR), Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs), the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF), and other ECOSOC subsidiary bodies and segments—could help clarify where the Commission's expertise and function can most effectively support ECOSOC's mandate. For example, HLPF brings ministers to NY, creating valuable opportunities to discuss linkages between peacebuilding and development. Further, Member States could take more leadership to report on conflict prevention efforts in their VNRs and highlight good practice examples of including peace outcomes in development plans.

The comparative advantages of the Commission and ECOSOC could be leveraged more strategically:

The Commission's strengths lie in its convening role, which allows it to bring together a diverse range of stakeholders, and its focus on sustaining peace and addressing the underlying drivers of conflict. ECOSOC, in turn, provides policy guidance, oversight of development-related activities, and access to a broad range of development actors and processes across the UN system. Through those tools, the ECOSOC can play a role in the effort to address the underlying drivers of violence. The Commission has demonstrated its ability to mobilize political attention to situations that require sustained international engagement, while ECOSOC offers a platform for long-term engagement. Experiences from contexts such as Haiti, South Sudan, and the Sahel were cited as demonstrating the value of sustained engagement by ECOSOC, with regular support from the Commission..

The June 2025 joint ECOSOC–PBC meeting on Haiti was highlighted as a useful example of how these complementary strengths can be brought together in practice. The meeting drew on ECOSOC’s development expertise and analytical work, while benefiting from the Commission’s capacity to convene diverse stakeholders, including international financial institutions (IFIs), UN field presences and civil society, and sustain political attention to the context. Such collaboration can contribute to more integrated responses to complex crises by bringing together peacebuilding, development, and financing perspectives.

Country-level impact should be the primary measure of successful PBC–ECOSOC cooperation:

Institutional exchanges in New York could contribute to more effective support for countries facing fragility and conflict. Participants noted examples of potential action, including joint analysis and priority-setting based on shared evidence and assessment; support for governance restoration and public service delivery; violence reduction initiatives; transitional justice efforts; and strengthened engagement with Resident Coordinators, UN Country Teams, IFIs, and national stakeholders. Strengthening coordination among these actors and promoting more integrated programming across UN entities were identified as important steps toward ensuring that the comparative advantages of both the Commission and ECOSOC translate into tangible results at the country level.

A stronger focus on outcomes for the Commission-ECOSOC partnership is needed:

Future engagement between the Commission and ECOSOC should be guided by clear objectives and measurable results. Cooperation should not be pursued for its own sake but should demonstrate how it contributes to more coherent support, reduces duplication, strengthens prevention efforts, and improves outcomes for countries facing conflict and fragility. The focus suggested by the participants was oriented in a small number of countries interested in support from both entities and pursuing this support long-term.

The UN system needs stronger internal coordination to overcome institutional silos and deliver more coherent support to countries:

Greater interaction between peacebuilding and development actors was viewed as essential to ensuring that the UN system can respond to complex challenges in a more integrated, prevention-oriented, and efficient manner. Several participants noted that multiple parts of the system are engaged in peacebuilding, prevention, training, analysis, research, and data collection, often with limited awareness of or consideration for one another’s activities. Addressing overlap requires greater collaboration across Secretariat entities, subsidiary bodies, Regional Commissions, and field presences. In this context, the ongoing UN80 discussions on strengthening the regional dimension of the UN system is a potential opportunity to deepen the impact of the cooperation between the Commission and ECOSOC. Stronger cooperation between UN entities could improve how the Secretariats support Member States of the Commission and ECOSOC.

Against the backdrop of resource constraints and the broader UN80 reform agenda, improved internal coordination is a strategic necessity. Strengthening institutional learning, reducing duplication, and making better use of existing expertise and capacities were identified as important

steps toward maximising the impact of limited resources and ensuring more coherent support for countries affected by fragility and conflict.

Key recommendations emerging from the discussion include:

- Further mapping and analysis of where the most effective entry points for peacebuilding exist within ECOSOC's work would be highly valuable. Identifying specific processes and mechanisms could help clarify where the Commission's expertise and convening role can most effectively support ECOSOC's mandate.
- The Chair of the Commission and President of ECOSOC should meet regularly, building on existing practices through which the ECOSOC President engages regularly with the President of the General Assembly.
- The Commission and ECOSOC should focus on long-term engagement on a narrow scope of contexts and thematic issues relevant to both bodies. Informal PBC-ECOSOC coordinators have an important role to play in identifying the focus and ensuring sustained engagement, including through informal modalities.
- The Commission's Member States should consider more dedicated engagement in HLPF, VNRs, QCPR, financing for development discussions, and with ECOSOC subsidiary bodies, including Regional Commissions. Increased coordination between peace and development experts within missions could strategically support such an engagement.
- HLPF space could be strategically leveraged to support the linkages between peacebuilding and development if Member States more proactively report on peace outcomes as part of VNRs and share the ways in which they integrate peace-related indicators in their development plans.
- The PBC-ECOSOC engagement should enable and enhance interactions with Resident Coordinators, UN Country Teams, Peace and Development Advisors, and regional actors to strengthen field-level impact by engaging them in joint meetings.
- Secretariat departments of the PBC (PBPSO) working on peacebuilding and of the ECOSOC (DESA) working on development and humanitarian action, should coordinate more closely and more regularly (i.e., quarterly look-ahead).
- Member States could include conflict-sensitive and peacebuilding considerations within national development planning and reporting processes, including VNRs.
- During country visits, the Commission could pay closer attention to how ECOSOC discussions resonate on the ground and provide an independent perspective back in New York.
- Greater engagement with Regional Commissions and regional platforms could help bridge peacebuilding and development efforts, strengthen prevention-oriented approaches, and connect global policy discussions with regional and national implementation.