



# General Assembly

Distr.: General  
4 February 2021

Original: English

---

## Seventy-fifth session

Agenda item 116

### Report of the Secretary-General on the Peacebuilding Fund

## Peacebuilding Fund

### Report of the Secretary-General

#### *Summary*

In 2020, the Peacebuilding Fund approved investments worth \$173,728,998 in 41 contexts, just under the record-high approval of \$191,304,222 in 2019, despite challenges related to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. Support for cross-border or regional programming, which totalled \$28.7 million, a nearly fourfold increase over 2019, was also approved. Approval of \$36.6 million through the Fund's Gender and Youth Promotion Initiative fell short of the Fund's target of \$40 million, however, owing to concerns about the Fund's future financial strength. The Initiative's approval rate constituted only 11 per cent of total requests, a signal that demand for critical peacebuilding financing continues to outpace Fund resources, notwithstanding the generous contribution of \$180,255,867 from 24 Member States in 2020. A high-level replenishment conference was therefore held virtually in January 2021 to secure adequate and predictable funding for the benefit of all countries that needed support in building peace, in particular at this tumultuous time.



## I. Introduction

1. The present report, covering the period from 1 January to 31 December 2020, is the eleventh annual report of the Secretary-General on the Peacebuilding Fund submitted to the General Assembly pursuant to its resolution [A/63/282](#). It covers the first year of the Fund's 2020–2024 Strategy. The report will be complemented by a certified financial report issued by the Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office no later than 1 May 2021.<sup>1</sup>

## II. Global performance and lessons learned

2. The Fund's new five-year strategy was launched in January 2020 to advance United Nations reforms and forge more coherent cross-pillar United Nations responses to crisis situations. Geared towards mobilizing greater resources for peacebuilding, the strategy comprises an ambitious path to accelerating implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, out of the recognition that they are the most effective tool for prevention. Through the strategy, \$1.5 billion is sought to be raised for peacebuilding over five years. The priorities of the strategy were widely consulted on and agreed with partners, notably the Fund's top 12 donors, membership of the Peacebuilding Commission, resident coordinators, United Nations entities and civil society organizations.

3. Early in 2020, faced with the unprecedented challenges presented by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, many Fund-recipient countries were confronted with additional economic hardship, exacerbated inequality, tension and grievances generated by public health restrictions and low levels of confidence in State institutions. The Fund responded quickly in Mission and non-Mission settings by adjusting \$60 million in ongoing activities and approving \$20 million in new initiatives. The efforts have resulted in, for example, new efforts to reduce the prison population in Haiti; enhanced protection of female health workers, women leaders and human rights defenders in Colombia; and strengthened police capacity in Madagascar to improve community engagement. The Humanitarian-Development-Peacebuilding and Partnership Facility, supported by the Fund as a cornerstone of the United Nations-World Bank partnership, established a fast-track mechanism through which funds are rapidly allocated to Chad, Sierra Leone and Togo, among other places, for conflict-sensitive post-pandemic recovery planning.

4. Despite significant COVID-related challenges, the Fund kept pace with its commitments, approving \$173,728,998 in 2020 and welcoming first-time declarations of eligibility in Honduras and Mauritania and renewals in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Guatemala, Papua New Guinea and Somalia (see table 1). The five-year eligibility cycles begun in 2020 will be guided by new Fund country-level strategic frameworks, which will drive cohesion and establish benchmarks for achieving meaningful results for conflict-affected communities.

5. One of the central elements of the Fund's strategic approach is facilitating cross-border and regional peacebuilding initiatives. In 2020, the Fund approved \$28,776,784 towards such initiatives across 23 countries. Following the visit of the Secretary-General to the Pacific in 2019, for example, the Fund committed \$3.2 million to investigating the link between climate change and conflict and facilitating the identification of innovative countermeasures in the low-lying atoll nations of Kiribati, the Marshall Islands and Tuvalu. In West and Central Africa,

---

<sup>1</sup> Detailed information can be found at [www.un.org/peacebuilding](http://www.un.org/peacebuilding). Complete information on individual projects is available at <http://mptf.undp.org>.

existing cross-border projects have mitigated the impact of transhumance-related tensions by facilitating dialogue and establishing protocols for more transparent and clearer management of scarce natural resources. In the Lake Chad region, reforestation and improved livelihood initiatives have reduced conflict by 48 per cent in target areas, while the demarcation of more than 232 km along the borders of Chad with the Central African Republic and the Niger has removed a conflict trigger by reducing destruction to fields by livestock. The Fund's first cross-border project, between Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, through which a decrease in inter-ethnic tensions in the Fergana Valley had been sought, was completed. It contributed to a 50 per cent reduction in intercommunal conflict during its first three years through investment in local capacities for conflict management, improved livelihoods and small businesses for women and young people and tangible infrastructure. Flares along the undemarcated border in 2019 and 2020, however, highlighted the fragility of even promising local peacebuilding efforts against national-level stressors. That dynamic will be explored in 2021 through a thematic review of local peacebuilding, conducted in partnership with the PeaceNexus Foundation and the United Nations Volunteers programme (UNV).

6. In Mission transition settings, the Fund approved \$31,710,995 to support the smooth handover of six United Nations peacekeeping missions, as well as the mandates of special political missions to national institutions and United Nations country teams. In the Sudan, for example, projects approved in 2019 and 2020 facilitate the transition from the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur to national institutions while strengthening the joint work of the Country Team and the new United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in Sudan in support of the national Peace Commission.

7. The Fund continued to strengthen synergies with the Peacebuilding Commission through regular updates on its work by the Peacebuilding Support Office and the Chair of the Fund's Advisory Group. Fund-recipient countries, moreover, briefed the Commission on their peacebuilding priorities, progress and challenges. Such actions enabled the Commission to follow closely and welcome the agile positioning of the Fund to blunt the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on efforts to sustain peace.

8. Maintaining the Fund's role as a leader in gender-responsive peacebuilding, 40 per cent of its investments supported gender equality and the advancement of women's rights. The Fund helped in many ways, responding to the sharp increase in gender inequalities resulting from the COVID-19 crisis, and exceeded its ambitious annual target of 30 per cent of the Seven-Point Action Plan on Gender-Responsive Peacebuilding. In addition to regular programming, this was achieved through the Fund's annual Gender and Youth Promotion Initiative, which included activities tied to the Call to Action for Human Rights by the Secretary-General in 2020. In total, the Fund approved \$36.6 million through the Initiative, including \$19.2 million to advance human rights, \$9.2 million of which specifically supports lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex human rights defenders and peacebuilders. To foster more equal partnerships between the United Nations and civil society organizations, the Fund also approved \$12 million in joint United Nations-civil society initiatives.

9. The Fund achieved the highest rate of evaluation coverage in its history, nearly doubling project evaluations by recipient agencies, from 19 in 2019 to 36 in 2020, despite COVID-related travel restrictions. Emphasizing a "do no harm" approach, the Fund issued early guidance on remote evaluations and began to experiment with innovative approaches. Even before the global spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Fund remotely supported an evaluability assessment in Liberia in early 2020. Lessons learned from that exercise subsequently informed remotely guided processes for a high-quality evaluability assessment and guidance to improve monitoring in

Madagascar. In the Niger, an innovative remote lessons learned exercise was implemented through the development of self-paced learning modules to advance accountability and build recipients' capacity for peacebuilding programming. The Fund launched five webinars to build the capacity of its partners for the better design, monitoring and evaluation of peacebuilding initiatives. To better capture learning across its portfolio, the Fund commissioned its first independent synthesis review, an analysis of 54 evaluative exercises conducted from 2017 to 2019. While calling for the continued strengthening of the capacity of agencies, funds and programmes for peacebuilding, the review confirmed the Fund's role as a unique funding instrument that has been central in helping the United Nations to achieve solid peacebuilding results in challenging contexts. See table 2 for data on the Fund's performance across thematic areas in 2020.

10. As the world tackles the COVID-19 crisis, demand from countries struggling to confront the economic, social and security fallout of the pandemic amid already fragile peace has grown substantially. This year's Gender and Youth Promotion Initiative, for example, resulted in 312 proposals from 22 countries, totalling \$331 million, for which only \$36.6 million was available. While income for 2020 grew to \$180.3 million, up from \$134.8 million, demand for Fund support continued to grow rapidly, with limited predictability for 2021 onwards. As a result, the Peacebuilding Support Office was obligated to revise downward available investments in 2020, which resulted in fewer resources for important transition settings, such as Guinea-Bissau, Haiti and the Sudan.

11. In December 2020, Member States reaffirmed their commitment to peacebuilding and sustaining peace by passing twin General Assembly and Security Council resolutions (resolutions 75/201 and 2558 (2020), respectively) on the 2020 review of the peacebuilding architecture of the United Nations. Recognized in the resolutions, among other things, is the important work of the Fund, in particular its role in driving the coherence of United Nations country-based efforts. It is hoped that, together with endorsements, concrete commitment by Member States will ensure that the Fund is sufficiently capitalized to meet higher demand, including that resulting from pandemic-related tensions.

12. To safeguard the Fund's future and deliver the resources that it needs for its 2020–2024 Strategy, a high-level replenishment conference was held virtually on 26 January 2021 to secure more adequate and predictable funding for the benefit of all countries that need support in building peace.

Table 1  
**Peacebuilding Fund decisions in 2020**

(United States dollars)

	2020 approvals		Total
	Immediate Response Facility	Peacebuilding Recovery Facility	
Benin <sup>a</sup>	1 400 000	–	1 400 000
Bolivia	3 000 000	–	3 000 000
Burkina Faso	4 139 200	7 000 000	11 139 200
Cameroon	3 023 024	621 926	3 644 950
Central African Republic	1 500 000	8 480 872	9 980 872
Chad	2 414 167	3 000 000	5 414 167
Colombia	2 600 000	2 000 000	4 600 000
Côte d'Ivoire	2 752 602	3 856 024	6 608 626

	2020 approvals		Total
	Immediate Response Facility	Peacebuilding Recovery Facility	
Democratic Republic of the Congo	3 548 811	10 391 977	13 940 788
Dominican Republic	1 000 000	–	1 000 000
El Salvador	3 934 530	4 000 000	7 934 530
Gabon <sup>a</sup>	1 562 809	–	1 562 809
Gambia	–	4 810 488	4 810 488
Global	3 796 000	–	3 796 000
Guatemala <sup>a</sup>	1 329 995	–	1 329 995
Guinea	1 427 915	3 562 511	4 990 426
Guinea-Bissau	2 341 000	–	2 341 000
Haiti	3 500 000	6 539 751	10 039 751
Honduras	3 931 521	2 999 999	6 931 521
Kiribati <sup>a</sup>	1 044 196	–	1 044 196
Lesotho	1 500 033	–	1 500 033
Liberia	1 784 615	–	1 784 615
Madagascar	3 050 000	2 040 172	5 090 172
Mali	3 767 900	5 325 000	9 092 900
Marshall Islands <sup>a</sup>	1 155 477	–	1 155 477
Mauritania	2 549 329	3 800 000	6 349 329
Myanmar	2 499 999	–	2 499 999
Niger	3 317 900	–	3 317 900
Papua New Guinea	–	5 000 000	5 000 000
Philippines	3 000 000	–	3 000 000
Rwanda	1 350 180	–	1 350 180
Sierra Leone	1 360 000	3 000 000	4 360 000
Solomon Islands	1 500 000	–	1 500 000
Somalia	–	662 330	662 330
South Sudan	–	4 500 000	4 500 000
Sri Lanka	2 999 999	–	2 999 999
Sudan	899 288	6 800 000	7 699 288
Togo	3 000 000	–	3 000 000
Tuvalu <sup>a</sup>	1 000 326	–	1 000 326
Ukraine	2 000 000	–	2 000 000
United Nations	357 131	–	357 131
<b>Total</b>	<b>85 337 947</b>	<b>88 391 051</b>	<b>173 728 998</b>

Source: Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office, January 2021.

Note: The table reflects funding decisions taken in 2020, not funds transferred.

<sup>a</sup> As a counterpart to a cross-border or regional project.

### III. Region-specific engagements of the Peacebuilding Fund

#### A. Central and Southern Africa

13. Fund priorities in Central and Southern Africa have been shaped by climate change, which has increased competition over water and arable land and exacerbated tensions between the region's herders and farmers. In the Lake Chad region, where Fund support for the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the World Food Programme (WFP) has helped to establish dialogue platforms for cooperative management of natural resources while supporting reforestation and improved access to sustainable livelihoods, conflict in 10 target areas has been reduced by 48 per cent. To restore trust among young people, community leaders and local authorities, the Fund supported the launch of a "charter of confidence" by 4,433 young people through cross-generational dialogue. Similar efforts in eastern Chad have enabled herders, farmers, displaced persons and host communities to prevent 127 violent conflicts by improving the joint management of resources through Fund-supported committees.

14. Along the Chad-Niger border, a project implemented by FAO and WFP has contributed to reducing transhumance-related conflicts by more than 50 per cent through a comprehensive approach to addressing disputes over the management of natural resources. Anchored in a Fund-supported social pact governing the joint management of pastoral water points by local communities and herders in the region, the Fund's approach has enabled economic opportunities for more than 3,600 vulnerable households, recovered 134 hectares of land that now support cultivation and grazing and fostered dialogue among more than 2,000 residents. The clear marking of more than 100 km of transhumance corridors, moreover, has removed a conflict trigger by reducing destruction to fields by livestock.

15. Through a similar Fund-supported effort along the border between the Central African Republic and Chad, seven social pacts at the local level involving 132 farmers and herders are strengthening the community-based management of agropastoral resources and transhumance. Based on the success along the Chad-Niger border, the demarcation of 150 km along three axes of transhumance is expected to reduce conflicts in the region.

16. In support of the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic between the Government and 14 armed groups, mixed security units, composed of more than 200 former combatants and members of the defence forces and the internal security forces, deployed to the north-west defence zone of Paoua. Their deployment followed the Fund-supported joint training of 620 participants from the defence forces and the internal security forces and former members of armed groups, including 29 women. Complementing security efforts, Fund support enabled the adoption of laws establishing legal aid and the Commission on Truth, Justice, Reparation and Reconciliation. Together with the passage of a four-year justice sector policy, the steps are expected to promote access to justice and transitional justice. As part of preparations for elections that were held in December 2020, 550 community volunteers led a national campaign to raise awareness of the importance of women's political participation, which reached more than 2 million people. Through the campaign, 3,185 women received birth certificates to enable their voter registration, while 390 women were trained on electoral normative frameworks, campaign strategies, financing and public speaking to boost their candidacies.

17. Support for peaceful elections in Burundi, including three civil society-led initiatives, collectively facilitated the participation of young women and men and fostered trust and collaboration among the youth wings of competing political parties.

A project implemented by the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) supported the candidature of 52,167 women in *colline*-level elections, up from 20,195 in the previous election, and helped to send more women to elected office in the National Assembly. Complementing the efforts, young women and men established networks to promote social cohesion and resolved 120 local conflicts through a \$2.5 million project implemented by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

18. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Fund investment through a \$3.5 million joint United Nations-civil society initiative advanced transitional justice in Kasai and Kasai Central Provinces, contributing to efforts to combat impunity, the establishment of provincial truth and reconciliation commissions and the establishment of local peace committees to facilitate intercommunal dialogue. In Tanganyika, for example, funding supported dialogue and trust-building between the Bantu and Twa communities and empowered women to play a more prominent role in their communities. In the eastern part of the country, the Fund continued to support stabilization efforts by channelling resources through the Stabilization Coherence Fund to finance social cohesion and community security initiatives. In South Kivu, young people and women have begun to participate in local decision-making and helped to facilitate joint calls by local leaders and community members for armed groups to respect commitments to demobilizing.

19. In Cameroon, the Fund contributed to violence reduction through four projects addressing various aspects of risk. A \$1.05 million effort by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), UNESCO and UN-Women helped to build capacity for electoral violence prevention, including by reducing hate speech and training security forces in civilian protection, and encouraged dialogue and the engagement of women and young people. Other aspects tackle root causes of tension by breaking down social barriers among groups. In the far north of Cameroon, conflict-affected communities are engaging State actors to improve governance, security and access to economic opportunity through a \$3 million project implemented by UNFPA, FAO and IOM. In the North-West Region, mediation by local young people, women and traditional leaders has reduced intercommunal violence.

20. Fund support in Nigeria is centred on building institutional capacity to promote peaceful relations between herders and farmers through an approach that advances women's rights. With Fund support, the Taraba State Peace and Conflict Management Bureau secured a budget within the State Ministry of Women's Affairs to implement the women and peace and security agenda, a historic first in the region. In Benue State, community and interfaith dialogues that are focused on human rights awareness have contributed to higher reporting rates and better police response to cases of sexual and gender-based violence.

21. In Rwanda, through direct support provided to that country's Demobilisation and Reintegration Commission, 555 former combatants from the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda and their families have obtained access to economic opportunities and social services through central and local government institutions. Other aspects of the Fund's \$1.5 million investment seek to induce other armed groups to join those who have already laid down their arms and begun reintegration processes.

22. Elsewhere in the region, the Fund backs the engagement of young women and men in political transitions and electoral processes to reduce political violence and foster confidence in nascent reforms. In Zimbabwe, over the past three years, the Fund has promoted efforts to increase confidence in the political transition through inclusive national dialogues, with a particular focus on the participation of young

women and men in reform processes. In Uganda, through a \$2.48 million project implemented by UNDP, UNFPA and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), young women and men have joined cultural leaders, security actors and political leaders in dialogue platforms, while messages about non-violence have reached more than 10,000 young people in advance of the elections in January 2021.

## **B. East Africa**

23. In Ethiopia, the Fund's first initiative, implemented by UNDP, IOM and UN-Women in partnership with the Ministry of Peace, promotes peaceful conflict management through intercommunity dialogue and inclusive mediation in Oromia and Somali Regional States. In collaboration with the Bureaus of Women, Children and Youth Affairs, women mediators, working through Fund-established Women Peace Forums, helped to defuse intercommunal border tensions between the two States and facilitated the peaceful resettlement of internally displaced persons, while five women peace ambassadors per district have been deployed as peace resources. Complementing the efforts, shared social infrastructure that had been destroyed by earlier violence was restored through Fund investments to encourage communal trust between the Oromo and Somali communities.

24. In Madagascar, the Fund's approach is centred on support for anti-corruption measures, including the launch of anti-corruption centres in Antananarivo and Mahajanga that combat corruption by enhancing capacity and coordination among institutions. In their first two years, those mechanisms have generated 648 corruption cases, compared with 165 cases generated in 10 years through the previous mechanism. Reporting by the Fund-supported investigative journal *Trandraka* triggered three independent investigations by the Bureau of Anti-Corruption, while a range of governmental institutions have received support to increase the efficacy of their anti-corruption efforts. Joining the initiatives, a youth radio programme covering more than half of Madagascar has provided young people with a platform to express their views on political, cultural and socioeconomic issues since its launch, in December 2019. In the Deep South of Madagascar, Fund engagement is anchored in the regional hub of Betroka, where security has improved through the rehabilitation of five gendarmerie stations, more open dialogue with communities and the development of local peace plans.

25. South Sudan concluded its National Dialogue in November 2020. The four-year process culminated in a final conference that combined face-to-face participation with social media engagement. Notably, leadership by women within the Dialogue rose, from zero to 33 per cent, with support from the Fund. Complementing national efforts, 80 county-level peace committees have resolved 271 disputes, leading to an overall decline in intercommunal conflict, while 18 local agreements have mitigated conflicts related to cattle. In Wau, Fund support has fostered better relations between 42 gangs of young people and local leaders, while, in Bentiu and Rubkona, eight police-community relations committees, in partnership with young people, have successfully resolved 13 of 29 registered disputes. Through gender-specific investments, 30 chiefs, mayors and ministerial representatives have committed to standardizing critical documentation for securing women's land tenure, while legal aid centres have registered 787 cases involving women's access to land and provided financial support to 650 petitioners. Addressing violence against women, Fund-supported initiatives implemented by UNFPA, UNICEF, UNDP and UN-Women have provided coordinated support services to more than 8,000 survivors of sexual and gender-based violence. Traditional leaders have begun to refer cases to statutory courts.



26. In the Sudan, the Fund supported activities that strengthened the rule of law, reduced local conflicts and encouraged durable solutions for displaced persons. New protection committees, established with Fund support in all five States of Darfur, have already registered more than 800 protection cases. In West Darfur, local communities reported greater acceptance of the involvement of nomadic populations in community life, an important step towards reducing negative perceptions of nomads, which have sparked past conflict. In Golo, the local population's confidence in the peace and reconciliation mechanism of the Sudan has begun to increase because paralegals and community police volunteers, who were trained in mediation and community dialogue by the Fund-supported Peace, Justice and Reconciliation Centre, have begun resolving most conflicts locally. Targeted local communities report an 86 per cent reduction in intercommunal violence since 14 community-based conflict resolution mechanisms were reactivated, with Fund support.

### **C. West Africa**

27. The Fund's approach in the Sahel region is designed to foster United Nations coherence through its alignment with the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel and the United Nations Support Plan for the Sahel (the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel), an initiative led by the recently appointed Special Coordinator for Development in the Sahel. Fund resources support the operationalization of the three priorities of the integrated strategy: promoting cross-border cooperation, preventing and resolving conflicts and strengthening the capacity of women and young people to promote peace and equitable development, critical elements to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

28. In Burkina Faso, the Fund supports confidence-building measures between various communities, the security forces and the defence forces to improve State-society relations and forge partnerships to curb radicalization and reduce transhumance-related conflict. Through the initiatives, 1,791 civilians received free health care at military health centres, while 15 communal security coordination committees facilitated citizen participation in the management of local security. The risk of recruitment by armed groups was reduced through an innovative educational and apprenticeship programme that reached more than 1,000 boys and girls enrolled in Qur'anic training centres in the Nord region. Fund-supported early warning systems, such as the National Observatory for the Prevention and Management of Conflicts, and a transhumance tracking tool are further reducing the risk of communal conflicts. Collectively, the efforts have contributed to enhanced social cohesion, with displaced persons and host communities reporting improved relationships in the Centre-Nord region.

29. In the Niger, the Fund's comprehensive approach to mitigating communal violence and the risk of radicalization has begun to bear fruit through an approach that builds skills and opportunities for young people. In the Tahoua, Tillabéri and Zinder regions, Fund financing enabled the building or reconstruction of 29 citizen centres, where 175 young people, acting as junior municipal counsellors, have held a series of intergenerational dialogues. A total of 238 former Boko Haram members have been reintegrated into 18 host communities. To counteract future radicalization, religious leaders in the three regions have developed faith-based peace consolidation messages, while 1,160 students were trained on peace and security issues at Islamic schools. The civic engagement of young people has been further supported through an electronic platform and the creation of 60 safe spaces in Tillabéri, through which young people have launched 30 peace action plans in local communes. Other aspects of Fund support are focused on addressing disputes over natural resource management and improving the role of women in mediation. Established with Fund support,

60 land commissions have revised local legislation and regulatory codes pertaining to access to and the use of rural land, while a network of trained women mediators have settled 85 disputes among herders and farmers in the Dosso and Maradi regions.

30. In the lead-up to the closure of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau, on 31 December 2020, Fund support advanced a multisectoral approach to strengthening key national institutions and facilitating the transition. Despite a political crisis that followed the second-round presidential election, in December 2019, constitutional reform efforts and inter-party dialogue through the Good Offices Group of the National People's Assembly gained traction. The Assembly revised the criminal procedure, penal and civil codes for gender sensitivity, and they will be sent to the parliament for debate and adoption. Balancing support for State institutions, civil society organizations launched a common agenda for peace and development and founded local committees to promote stability. At the community level, women's and youth organizations established intercommunal confidence-building measures through various Fund-supported small grants facilities, including, to end a long-lasting communal conflict over village boundaries, a compensation fund for families that had ceded their land.

31. In Guinea, Fund support in 2020 was aimed at reducing tension and violence related to the contested referendum and legislative and presidential elections. More than 100 community dialogues in Conakry and other tension-prone zones provided a platform through which women and youth leaders called for peace. To back the initiative, Fund financing provided more than 160 young people and 800 women with training on leadership, electoral processes and conflict resolution, while 500 vulnerable young people benefited from quick-impact livelihood opportunities to discourage their involvement in violence. To better understand the dynamics of electoral violence, local leaders, taxi drivers, security representatives and political party members engaged in more than 35 focus group discussions. The concerted effort by the Fund translated into lower levels of electoral violence, even in areas of high risk. Beyond electoral violence mitigation, the Fund helped to establish 19 local peace councils in conflict-prone communities, enabling young people to engage with local representatives and participate in local planning processes. In the volatile border region of Guinée Forestière, Fund support for the civil society organization the Agency for Cooperation and Research in Development facilitated the training of 199 local actors in early warning and conflict prevention measures to reduce tension related to land and changing traditional practices.

32. Fund investment in conflict prevention and mitigation within the framework of human rights and socioeconomic reconciliation efforts contributed to largely peaceful elections in Liberia in December 2020. With Fund support, 42 local dialogues across Liberia resulted in the participation of diverse stakeholders in developing county-level reconciliation road maps, engendering greater local ownership of reconciliation processes. Following a December 2020 national reconciliation conference, the President and national political leaders endorsed seven reconciliation plans and committed themselves to a follow-on national reconciliation conference to involve the Liberian diaspora in early 2021. To promote human rights, the Fund helped to establish and operationalize a transitional justice unit within the country's Independent National Commission on Human Rights and supported the submission of a shadow report on the universal periodic review by the Commission.

33. In Sierra Leone, through a joint UNDP-WFP project, Fund investment encouraged more inclusive land governance, in particular in concession zones. Two Fund-supported district-level multi-stakeholder dialogue platforms provided national and local authorities, communities, chiefs and private companies with forums through which to discuss land use by concession companies. The platforms are supported by grievance redress committees, which have become integral to dispute resolution

within local administrative structures. At the national level, Fund support has strengthened the coordination of the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative, as well as better coordination among central and local governments and communities with regard to extractive industries.

34. In the Gambia, the Fund-supported Truth, Reconciliation and Reparations Commission recorded 1,482 statements and held 17 public hearings at which 277 perpetrators, victims and members of the diaspora provided testimonies. A midyear survey revealed that most Gambians viewed the Commission as independent and approved of its victim-centred approach. Through the Commission's Reconciliation Unit, local reconciliation efforts supported communities affected by conflict under the previous regime. The Fund strengthened the participation of young people and women in decision-making and governance, including by providing support to 188 youth and women representatives of village and ward development committees to enable them to represent their constituents effectively.

35. Increasing tensions and political polarization marked the October 2020 presidential election in Côte d'Ivoire. To reduce the risk of violence, six inter-party consultation platforms, established with Fund support, brought together party members and local leaders to launch public awareness campaigns on the importance of peaceful elections. In addition, through Fund-backed communications platforms, 150 youth bloggers were trained, joining 300 young people who had mobilized to counter hate speech through traditional and social media. At the local level, peace committees helped to resolve 18 conflicts related to the exploitation of protected forests, launched 17 community infrastructure projects and delimited sacred community forests. In the Centre, North and West regions, 16 community infrastructure projects brought together more than 4,500 members of communities that had formerly been in conflict with one another.

36. In Mauritania, which had been declared eligible in 2020, Fund support centred on improving relations among host communities and Malian refugees where desertification has increased pressure on scarce natural resources and fuelled tension between the groups. Fund-supported projects implemented with host communities and refugee camp residents fostered the joint management of natural resources, improved agricultural livelihoods and childhood development and education and resulted in the co-design of local economic development plans. New investments will be focused on preventing violent extremism, as well as reducing intercommunity and intracommunity tensions and conflicts related to transhumance and natural resources.

37. In Togo, the Fund continued to invest in building the capacity of communities to resolve local tensions. Two local conflicts were resolved through local peace committees, while 36 women mediators helped to resolve local conflicts affecting more than 120 people. Through three Fund-backed regional meetings, security forces and community leaders produced a set of joint security recommendations, an important step towards confidence-building.

38. Through a \$1.5 million project in Mali implemented by UNICEF and FAO 200 children were released by armed groups, and their reintegration into their communities will be carried out with comprehensive psychosocial, medical and family reunification support. To prevent the future recruitment of young people, projects funded by the Fund trained 5,860 young people on child protection measures and the risks of recruitment. Public awareness-raising campaigns to promote social cohesion and raise awareness of climate-related conflict reached roughly 110,000 people. The campaigns supported the efforts of Fund-established conflict prevention mechanisms in Gao, Ménaka, Mopti, Ségou and Timbuktu, through which at-risk young people and women have helped to resolve 325 conflicts.

## D. Asia and the Pacific

39. In Papua New Guinea, the first official meeting between the government of Bougainville and the national Government, following the 2019 referendum on the political status of the Autonomous Region of Bougainville, was jointly facilitated by the Fund and the Political Liaison Officer of the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs. To extend the terms of the peace agreement, the Fund supported six missions to South Bougainville to encourage armed factions currently outside the peace process to come to the negotiating table. Recognizing the need to ensure that decision-making within the newly elected Bougainville House of Representatives was inclusive, Fund support for the Bougainville Youth Forum provided 29 youth leaders with a platform through which to share their development priorities and concerns with representatives. In Hela and Southern Highlands provinces, Fund support boosted the role of women in mediating local conflicts, resulting in their formal participation in 15 per cent of negotiations in targeted areas. To promote inclusive community planning, community peace and development plans in five Highlands villages facilitated community dialogue and joint decision-making. Following the early success of the regional initiative, the Fund approved a holistic programme to support the Highlands and catalyse a broader initiative through the United Nations Highlands Joint Programme for Peace and Development.

40. In the Solomon Islands, the Fund continued to promote conflict reduction through more inclusive decision-making processes. To address developmental and social challenges at the community and provincial levels, young people in 20 tension-prone zones established caucuses through which isolated rural communities began to work with local authorities and development partners to monitor the risks of violence. In North Malaita and in the Weathercoast region, the successful resolution by the caucuses of a land dispute opened a path to address long-standing ethnopolitical grievances between the two provinces. The Fund supported consultations on a proposed traditional governance and customs facilitation bill across five provinces. The consultations produced more than 50 recommendations regarding the final draft bill by participants whose views on traditional governance matters have historically been overlooked.

41. After four years of implementation and nearly \$18 million invested, the peacebuilding priority plan of Sri Lanka, approved in 2016, was ended in 2020. The plan was centred on four priorities: transitional justice, reconciliation, good governance and durable solutions for internally displaced persons. Among the plan's achievements was the establishment of key transitional justice mechanisms, including the Office of Missing Persons, the Office for Reparations and a public complaints management system within the National Police Commission, introduced in 2020. The mechanisms were aimed at boosting the population's confidence in governing institutions and addressing long-standing grievances. Beyond transitional justice, Fund investments in Sri Lanka have hinged on gender- and youth-responsive initiatives. A project implemented by UNFPA, UN-Women and UNV helped to establish a 30-member Youth Peace Panel in late 2019. The Panel offers young people a platform through which to collectively promote policy changes, such as a quota for youth representation in governance, the adoption of a policy to curb disinformation and hate speech on social media and the adoption of social cohesion modules in school curricula. In parallel, a pilot initiative of the organization Search for Common Ground that puts young women leaders from diverse backgrounds in contact with one another for shared learning and networking has offered some participants their first opportunity to break down social barriers and interact with members outside their ethnic, religious or linguistic communities.

42. In Myanmar, two Fund-supported initiatives implemented by civil society organizations have been working, through interfaith and local partnerships, to build trust across ethnic and religious groups. Through a project implemented by World Vision International, more than 50 faith and local leaders have become catalysts for interfaith social cohesion. Through the project, young community leaders are developing intercultural action plans and have reached an additional 60 young people in cross-group dialogue. Complementing the effort, Christian Aid Ireland has established a peace education programme in Buddhist and Islamic religious institutions that has reached more than 650 young people and created the first local language application in Myanmar to monitor and counter online inflammatory content and hate speech.

## **E. Europe and Central Asia**

43. In Kyrgyzstan, the second peacebuilding priority plan, which was focused on institutional capacities at the national and local levels to prevent violent extremism, improve the penitentiary system to reduce the risk of radicalization and increase local communities' resilience to radicalization, was ended in 2020. Through Fund support, a national probation service was established to rehabilitate convicts and offer alternatives to incarceration in order to reduce exposure to radical ideologies while in prison. In addition, a Fund-supported prison service call centre provided advisory services to more than 4,600 prisoners and their families. Working in partnership with the Ministry of Education and Science, primary and secondary schools, madrasas and vocational schools, the Fund enabled the adoption of a new ministerial policy to review new textbooks for religious, cultural and gender sensitivity to promote non-discrimination and reduce grievances. A total of 40 textbooks are being revised on the basis of the new policy. Fund-supported civil society initiatives have fostered positive relationships among young people, local authorities, communities and ethnic communities to promote social cohesion and reduce the risk of radicalization. Search for Common Ground, for example, reports a 9 per cent decrease in juvenile crimes in target communities and an overall improvement in young people's engagement with local authorities and sense of empowerment. Through an initiative implemented by Saferworld, in 2020, young people produced the first national youth-led report in Kyrgyzstan, which outlined young people's perceptions of the Government's progress towards Sustainable Development Goal 16.

44. The Fund approved its first investment in Uzbekistan in 2020. The project, implemented by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, UNDP and UNESCO, is aimed at ensuring that young people and their concerns are heard within current anti-corruption reform processes. The project was kicked off with a national conference that brought together 120 policymakers and university representatives to examine corruption within higher education. Since then, youth unions in Andizhan, Fergana and Namangan have established three legal aid centres with Fund support.

45. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, young people and local authorities established dialogue platforms in 27 municipalities and implemented measures to improve social cohesion and increase confidence between local communities and municipal authorities through the Fund-backed project "Dialogue for the Future". Implemented by UNICEF, UNDP and UNESCO, the project extended local authorities' outreach to traditionally marginalized populations, such as Roma young people and persons with disabilities. Through the initiative, an association of female police officers in the Republika Srpska improved the police understanding of the Roma community, while in East Sarajevo and Gorazde, microgrants helped to improve access to municipal services for hearing-impaired persons. The project supported a nationwide radio campaign on gender equality, which mobilized support for changes in laws governing leadership

within political parties and the boards of public companies that would increase women's representation.

46. More broadly within the Western Balkans, Fund investments centred on boosting the political engagement of young people across ethnic groups and political entities. Fund support enabled a partnership among UNICEF, UNDP, UNFPA and the Regional Youth Cooperation Office to boost a small grants programme. Through the initiative, civil society organizations produced an e-course on intercultural learning in Albanian, Macedonian and Serbian. Through a second initiative, a multi-country extension of "Dialogue for the Future", more than 6,100 young people from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia joined voices to communicate to local and national authorities their joint vision of a peaceful future.

## **F. Latin America and the Caribbean**

47. In the northern triangle of Central America, the Fund had promoted a comprehensive approach to stemming forced displacement and irregular migration. In 2020, employment training and guidance provided to 275 young people lowered their risk of irregular migration, while a network of civil society organizations throughout Guatemala provided 89,709 migrants and asylum seekers already in transit with legal and humanitarian assistance. The Fund helped to establish an inter-institutional mechanism to improve the detection, investigation and criminal prosecution of human trafficking rings, while a tri-national project in El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras implemented by IOM, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and UNDP enabled more coordinated approaches among Governments to reduce violence associated with forced displacement and irregular migration.

48. To ease the transition of migrants returning to El Salvador, the Fund's support, distributed through IOM, UNDP and WFP, provided immediate assistance, psychosocial support and labour skill certification to more than 700 returnees. Work with the National Police and the border authorities was aimed at ensuring that their actions, infrastructure and policies complied with human rights standards and gender sensitivity. To address high levels of violence that drive forced displacement and irregular migration, the Fund helped to establish the capital's first safe and inclusive bus stop, designed with input from female public transportation users, and will replicate the model elsewhere in 2021. Related training and public awareness-raising campaigns will combat cultural acceptance of violence against women.

49. In Honduras, the Fund's portfolio advanced political dialogue in the wake of contested elections in 2017. Approved in 2018, the \$1.7 million National Dialogue project produced consensus on 166 technical issues, which informed electoral reforms adopted in 2019. The project was revised in 2020 to strengthen the national capacity for conflict prevention, with a focus on the electoral bodies established through the 2019 reforms. The project enabled the National Human Rights Commission of Honduras and the Ministry of Human Rights to improve the gender sensitivity and human rights sensitivity of their data collection. Through the project, the Office of the Secretary of State for Human Rights established dialogue-oriented working groups among governmental and civil society actors, which generated protocols for the protection of human rights, including the rights of women.

50. Through an independent evaluation of the Guatemala portfolio from 2017 to 2020, it was determined that Fund investments helped to curb impunity and fragility within the justice system, as well as land expropriation and the expulsion of indigenous communities from their ancestral lands. A central aspect of the Fund's support in Guatemala has been strengthening the rights of women – in particular indigenous women – and their access to truth, justice and reparations. Following the

landmark Sepur Zarco case, the Fund helped Sepur Zarco grandmothers to claim their rights to land and, in partnership with the Human Rights Ombudsman, launch a community-based early warning system to detect sexual violence, improve food security and generate income. Building on earlier success in pushing emblematic cases through the justice system, eight new cases of rights violations during the internal armed conflict were brought before the courts, and witnesses were provided with legal and psychosocial support. Institutional support provided to the Prosecutor's Office and the judiciary, moreover, produced 72 first-instance sentences related to violence against women that have all complied with international norms and standards. Beyond access to justice, young Guatemalans have begun to confront legacies of the past through Fund-supported initiatives such as "The Memory Generation", through which nearly 1,000 young women and men have contributed to a study that will detail the attitudes of young people towards historical memory and a culture of peace.

51. In Bolivia, in the lead-up to the elections held in October 2020, the Fund approved its first project in that country, a \$3 million initiative by UNDP, OHCHR and UN-Women to promote dialogue and human rights. The effort was led by the Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General for Bolivia, who worked closely with the Episcopal Conference of Bolivia and the European Union. Through the initiative, 200 dialogues to address political polarization were organized in cooperation with the Supreme Electoral Tribunal and its nine departmental tribunals before the elections, while the monitoring of human rights before and during the elections by civil society organizations across the country was supported.

52. In Colombia, that country's Truth Commission, established with Fund support, began to draft its final report in 2020 on the basis of testimonies from more than 2,400 victims, including 300 indigenous people who detailed violence against their communities. In the final report, the root and proximate causes of conflict will be identified to produce a more just and complete record of the past. Through initiatives implemented by local women's organizations, four reports on sexual violence and forced disappearance were presented to transitional justice offices. In addition, commitments regarding gender that were made within the Final Agreement to End the Armed Conflict and Build a Stable and Lasting Peace will be monitored by 529 women who were trained through a Fund-supported project of UN-Women and OHCHR. Recognizing the link between equitable development and peace, victims, former combatants and farmers have improved their economic and social conditions through a project that has leveraged \$7 from the private sector for every dollar invested by the Fund and provided credits to 3,000 farmers and entrepreneurs in the south. With technical assistance from the United Nations Environment Programme, a new credit line in 2021 will encourage more than 2,800 small farmers in conflict-affected municipalities to implement climate change mitigation measures.

53. Bolstering resilience to the risks of violence, 450 women in the border region between Colombia and Ecuador have contributed to the development of community-based strategies for the prevention of gender-based violence and the promotion of positive masculinity. As a result of the initiative, the Nariño local government in Colombia incorporated gender- and child-sensitive indicators in its development plan for 2021–2023, while other municipalities and indigenous communities have committed themselves to promoting a culture of peace, child protection measures and the prevention of gender-based violence in their development plans.

54. The Fund's support for Haiti was centred on youth-focused approaches to social cohesion, access to justice and arms reduction. In the municipality of Jérémie, three youth networks have become key partners with municipal authorities and national and international agencies to counter gender-based violence and promote positive masculinity, citizen participation and conflict management. Young people's

perceptions of the police have improved since Fund-supported neighbourhood committees have facilitated more effective policing. To promote arms control, the Fund helped to establish a coordination space along the Dominican Republic-Haiti border through which governmental actors from both sides exchange information and strengthen their cooperation for better control of firearms and ammunition in border areas. The Fund supported the revision of a law of the Government of Haiti on enhanced management of firearms and ammunition, a first step in developing a national policy on arms control.

## G. Middle East and North Africa

55. Responding to the call for a global ceasefire to facilitate the humanitarian response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Fund supported the establishment of a young people's alliance by young women and men in Yemen, as well as the strengthening of their role in track 1 peace negotiations. Together with a national survey of young people and the extremely popular social media campaign "Enough War", the Fund's approach was centred on ensuring that young people's voices and visions were to be included in any eventual peace settlement.

56. In Libya, a youth-focused project in Sirte, implemented by UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF and WFP, was launched in January 2020 amid ongoing conflict in the city. The project backs local counterparts to rehabilitate a youth centre and deliver support services to help young women and men to strengthen their resilience and peacebuilding capacities.

57. In Lebanon, through the project "Dealing with the Past: Memory for the Future", community tensions exacerbated by a worsening socioeconomic crisis, the devastation of the August 2020 explosions in the Port of Beirut and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic were mitigated. In the wake of the crises, the project has supported calls for public debate on establishing a new social contract. Demonstrating the Fund's ability to respond rapidly to emergent needs, the project quickly extended psychosocial support to women and children affected by the explosion, as well as to the families of persons who had been missing or disappeared owing to the war.

Table 2  
Global performance of the Peacebuilding Fund, 2019–2020

<i>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>
<b>Priority area 1<sup>a</sup></b>			
2020	31	68	19
2019	35	89	26
<b>Priority area 2<sup>b</sup></b>			
2020	160	76	23
2019	120	80	32
<b>Priority area 3<sup>c</sup></b>			
2020	13	92	13
2019	11	91	36



<i>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>
<b>Priority area 4<sup>d</sup></b>			
2020	17	71	20
2019	20	95	15
<b>Overall 2020</b>	<b>221</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Overall 2019</b>	<b>186</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>29</b>

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

<sup>a</sup> Security sector reform; rule of law; disarmament; demobilization and reintegration; and political dialogue.

<sup>b</sup> Reconciliation, democratic governance and conflict prevention/management.

<sup>c</sup> Employment and equitable access to social services.

<sup>d</sup> State capacities, extension of State authority and governance of peacebuilding resources.

## IV. Oversight and management of the Peacebuilding Fund

### A. Advisory Group

58. The two-year term of the fifth Advisory Group ended in early 2020. In the Group's final report, Member States were urged to work towards more sustainable resource mobilization for the Fund, and recommendations were made to help the Fund to strengthen its oversight in the light of scaled-up investments achieved during the strategic plan for 2017–2019.

59. Members of the sixth Advisory Group took up their mandate in March 2020 and, owing to travel restrictions related to COVID-19, held their first two meetings virtually, a first for the Group. At the Group's inaugural meeting, members agreed to focus on three strategic priorities during their term: supporting the achievement of more predictable and adequate funding for the Peacebuilding Fund; driving greater coherence within the United Nations; and generating more robust evidence of the Fund's impact. Following the initial online meeting, the Group established three working groups, which have already begun to meet virtually, to advance the priorities. I am grateful for the valuable advice of the Group and its advocacy of the Fund, notably its support in organizing the high-level replenishment conference.

### B. Budget and personnel

60. In 2020, Fund expenditure to support its Secretariat function was \$1,907,868.96, down from \$2,175,434 in 2019, with the operational budget continuing to depend on overhead from donor contributions. To offset the staffing constraints presented by financial unpredictability, the Fund expanded its programme support roster from 9 consultants to 20 who provide targeted support for the design, monitoring and evaluation of Fund investments. The Fund continued to benefit from staff arrangements with UNV, the Junior Professional Officers Programme and secondees from UNDP, UN-Women and OHCHR. While those measures help to fill critical gaps, they are unsustainable in the long run.

61. Responding to the constraints of the United Nations with regard to resources, the Fund continued to rigorously apply cost containment measures, including mandating that all staff members travel in economy class, although, since February

2020, travel has been reduced significantly owing to COVID-19. The Fund enhanced its communications and outreach capacity to support resource mobilization, including with regard to preparation for the high-level replenishment conference held in January 2021.

### **C. Enhanced monitoring and evaluation**

62. The Fund's centralized evaluation function oversaw evaluability assessments in Burkina Faso, Liberia and Madagascar, a lessons learned exercise in the Niger and an independent final evaluation in Guatemala. In addition, it supported a high-level strategic review of its engagement in Kyrgyzstan and provided monitoring support to the Gambia and Madagascar to better capture evidence of the Fund's contribution to peacebuilding change.

63. The Fund capitalized on its broader evaluation coverage to produce knowledge products to support better results for conflict-affected communities. On the basis of evidence gathered from 22 projects in 11 countries, the Fund published a thematic review of transitional justice in June 2020, while guidance on how to formulate peacebuilding theories of change was issued in English and French in September 2020. To better capture learning across its portfolio, the Fund commissioned its first independent synthesis review, in which evidence of Fund performance from 2017 to 2019 was examined. Synthesis reviews will be conducted annually to consolidate results across the portfolio and advance transparency and accountability with regard to Fund decision-making.

64. Many of the Fund's design, monitoring and evaluation improvements stem from additional staffing capacity through the UNV first posting to the United Nations Secretariat, in 2019. At the country level, UNV boosts the monitoring and evaluation capacity through deployments in five Fund-eligible countries. Thanks in part to a scaling up of the successful partnership, the Fund will begin 2021 with expanded design, monitoring and evaluation capacity dedicated to generating evidence of its impact.

### **V. Conclusion**

65. The COVID-19 pandemic has deepened socioeconomic vulnerabilities considerably and exacerbated the inequalities and risks of violent conflict and tensions, increasing demand for the Fund's support. The crisis has revealed the need to shore up the resilience of not only national institutions and local communities but also the Fund's operations. The Fund's rapid response to the emerging social and security issues caused by the pandemic, as well as to the unintended consequences of the response and related restrictions, and its ability to maintain programming support, learning and accountability illustrate its inherent adaptability as a trusted resource to drive equitable, inclusive peace processes and further sustainable development, even in the midst of crises.

66. If the Fund is to continue its critical function, it will need sufficient, predictable funding to meet escalating demand, in line with the principles of good donorship outlined in the Member State-led good peacebuilding donorship process. Member States will have an opportunity, at a high-level meeting on financing for peacebuilding, to be held during the General Assembly at its seventy-sixth session, to reaffirm their confidence in the Fund and translate their stated commitments into meaningful support to ensure that the United Nations and its partners can contribute effectively to recovering better and sustaining peace.