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Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace

Report of the Secretary-General on the Peacebuilding Fund

The Peacebuilding Fund

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The Peacebuilding Fund approved \$183 million in 40 countries in 2018, exceeding the previous record of \$157,111,033 in 2017. This year-on-year growth is an outcome of my call for a “quantum leap” for the Peacebuilding Fund, to which donors have responded, contributing \$221.3 million in new contributions since 2017. Of the \$183 million approved in 2018, 40 per cent was dedicated to promoting gender equality and women’s empowerment, well exceeding the United Nations system-wide target of 15 per cent. Seven new cross-border or regional initiatives involving 14 countries worth \$23.3 million were approved in 2018, demonstrating the Fund’s niche in supporting transboundary peacebuilding initiatives.



I. Introduction

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

II. Global performance and lessons learned

2. In 2018, conflict forcibly displaced 1 out of every 110 people on the planet and set back the achievement of key development goals in crisis-affected countries by decades – sobering trends that highlight the need for conflict prevention and a robust response when opportunities for peace arise. In early 2018, as requested by the General Assembly and the Security Council in their twin resolutions on the review of the peacebuilding architecture (Assembly resolution [70/262](#) and Council resolution [2282 \(2016\)](#)), I presented my report on peacebuilding and sustaining peace ([A/72/707-S/2018/43](#)), reviewing the progress made in the implementation of the resolutions and making specific recommendations to address gaps. I called for a “quantum leap” of support to the Peacebuilding Fund in the context of the request by Member States for options to increase, restructure and better prioritize funding to United Nations peacebuilding activities. The Fund's demonstrated ability to invest in a timely, catalytic and risk-tolerant way enables United Nations teams and national partners to take advantage of political opportunities to sustain peace before, during and after violent conflict. The Fund's strategic plan for 2017–2019 leverages its niche with the objective of investing \$500 million in 40 countries. These investments continue to be directed to the Fund's four priority areas while adding three new priority windows to advance the Fund's comparative advantage: cross-border programming, mission transitions and youth and women's empowerment. The strategic plan is designed to implement the resolutions on the review of the peacebuilding architecture, including through integrating the recommendations of the joint United Nations-World Bank study on prevention, entitled *Pathways for Peace: Inclusive Approaches to Preventing Violent Conflict*, and the report on youth and peace and security entitled “The missing peace: independent progress study on youth and peace and security” ([A/72/761-S/2018/86](#)), while setting ambitious objectives in terms of innovation, monitoring and outreach.

3. The Fund is well on the way to reaching or surpassing the objectives outlined in the current strategic plan. In 2018, the Fund approved \$183 million in projects in 40 countries, up from \$157 million in 31 countries in 2017. This is a marked increase from the \$68 million annual average for the first 12 years since the Fund's inception. Responding to growing demand, I declared Burkina Faso, El Salvador and the Gambia eligible to receive Fund support, while new initiatives were approved in countries where the Fund had not been engaged previously but where political developments afforded new opportunities, including the Congo, Ethiopia, Lesotho, Nigeria, Togo, Tunisia and Zimbabwe. The Fund also supported three youth-centred initiatives in the Balkans. The Sahel has remained a critical priority for the Fund, with investments increasing from \$58 million in 2017 to \$65.7 million for the United Nations Support Plan for the Sahel. More than 20 per cent of 2018 investments were in countries with special political missions and 27 per cent were in peacekeeping settings.

4. A central aspect of the portfolio encourages innovative approaches to women's and youth empowerment through the Fund's special annual competitive call, which has increased from \$29 million in 2017 to \$37.1 million in 2018. Through this initiative, and in partnership with the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and United Nations Volunteers, the Fund supports innovative practices with regard to both youth and women, particularly through political inclusion, while engaging a record number of new partners, including from civil society. The call for 2018 was buoyed by the launch, in partnership with UNFPA and others, of the report on youth and peace and security (A/72/761-S/2018/86). The Peacebuilding Fund remains the most diverse pooled fund, with more than 40 recipient entities, and one of the only pooled funds to provide direct transfers to civil society organizations and Governments – a recognized indicator of effectiveness of pooled funding mechanisms. While the special call provides additional incentives to United Nations and non-United Nations partners to advance gender equality and women's empowerment, the Fund's regular programming is increasingly contributing to the Fund's exemplary performance on gender. In 2018, 40 per cent of all Fund investments supported gender-responsive peacebuilding, exceeding the target stipulated in my Seven-Point Action Plan on Gender-Responsive Peacebuilding of 15 per cent, for the fourth straight year, a first for any United Nations fund.

5. A more conflict-sensitive approach to programming was achieved by continuing to partner with the Department of Political Affairs (now the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) through the Joint Programme on Building National Capacities for Conflict Prevention and its network of Peace and Development Advisers. Similarly, the Fund has increased its support to rule of law and security sector reform by relying on the global focal point arrangement, which includes UNDP and the Department of Peace Operations, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), UN-Women and others, to support joint strategizing, planning, programming and evaluation in mission and non-mission settings.

6. Given the importance of facilitating the transition of United Nations configurations, and upon the recommendation of the Executive Committee, the Fund also increased its funding in 2018 for transition settings with investments in Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia, Somalia and the Sudan. Cross-border or regional programming has also increased, with six new programmes, including new regional initiatives in the Sahel, the Western Balkans and between Colombia and Ecuador. Regional approaches have also enabled the Fund to partner with regional organizations such as the African Union and the Economic Community of West African States.

7. Engagement on recovery and peacebuilding assessments with the European Union and the World Bank, and investments through the country-level Humanitarian-Development-Peace Initiative continued to shape the Peacebuilding Fund's engagement in Libya, Myanmar and Zimbabwe. The launch of the *Pathways for Peace* report encouraged new project proposals that focused on inclusion as a means of violence prevention. In parallel, the Fund and the State and Peacebuilding Fund of the World Bank supported coordinated investments in Mali and stronger coordination in the Niger, Tunisia and Zimbabwe.

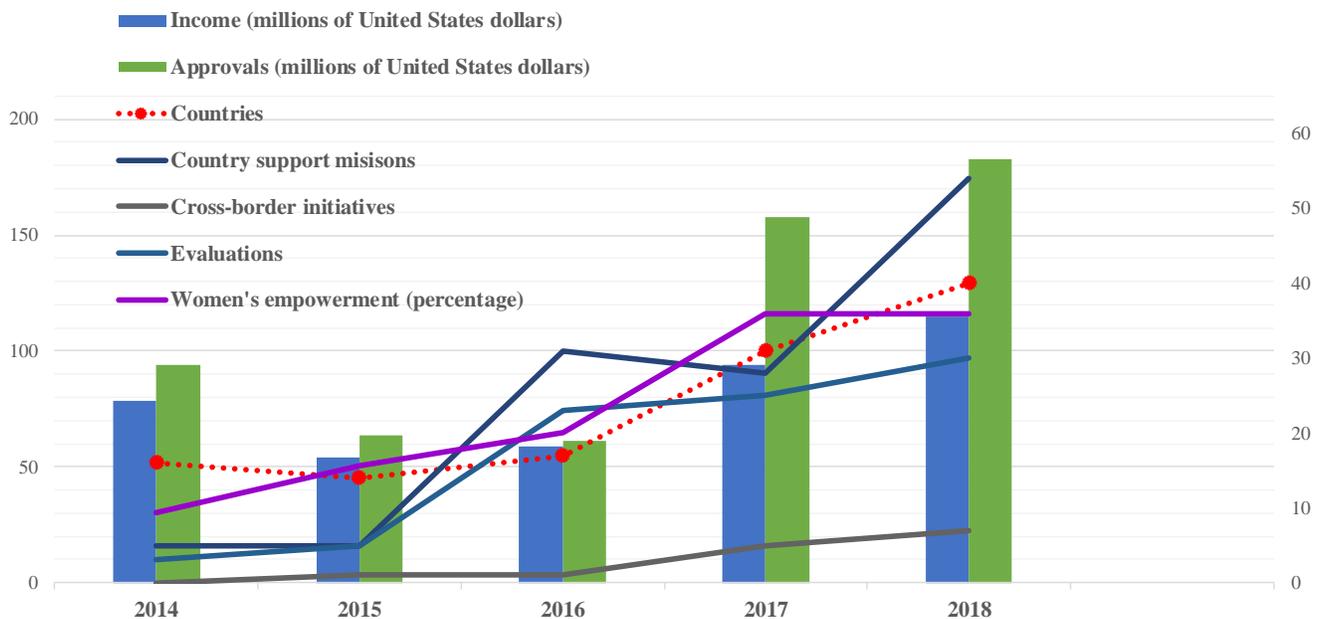
8. As the Fund grows, so does the robustness of its monitoring and evaluation framework. The Fund has continued to support final evaluations for all projects of United Nations agencies, funds and programmes while leading or financing portfolio-wide evaluations for Guatemala, Madagascar, the Niger and Papua New Guinea. The Fund also earned an A+ rating for the third consecutive year from the annual review

of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. This review recognized the Fund’s flexible approach to deliver politically informed, conflict-sensitive peacebuilding results in high-risk environments, and that its catalytic investments build on joint analysis and foster coherence. The review also highlighted continued efforts to strengthen the management of the Fund and its leading role in helping implement United Nations reform.

9. I am gratified to report that Member States have started to respond to my call for a quantum leap of support, with many increasing their annual contributions, including Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Ireland, the Netherlands, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom. Total contributions have continued to grow, with \$221.3 million in new contributions since 2017, for a total capitalization for the strategic plan period of \$398 million. The Fund now requires at least \$102 million to achieve the three-year target of \$500 million and keep pace with demand.

10. Included in this scale-up are two financing innovations in line with the recommendations of my 2018 report on peacebuilding and sustaining peace (A/72/707–S/2018/43). Denmark has contributed funding from its defence budget, in recognition of the Fund’s role in balancing security investments with peacebuilding. In response to my call to Member States to voluntarily commit unspent peacekeeping funds to the Peacebuilding Fund, Belgium reallocated balances from its annual assessed contribution to peacekeeping as voluntary funding. Although funding from these sources remains comparatively modest, they represent important precedents for other Member States to emulate. The figure below illustrates trends in the Fund.

Trends in the Peacebuilding Fund, 2014–2018



11. The link between the Peacebuilding Commission and the Fund was strengthened through an improved flow of information from the Fund to the Commission. This included providing updates on the work of the Fund at regional and country-specific meetings of the Commission, inviting the Chair of the Fund and members of the Fund’s Advisory Group to brief the Commission on the outcomes of the Group’s biannual meetings and inviting countries that are receiving financing from the Fund to brief the Commission on their peacebuilding priorities, progress and challenges. The recent experience with discussions on the Sahel was particularly positive, as an

increased investment by the Fund supported a greater and broader engagement of the Commission, notably during its annual session but also through regional discussions on the Great Lakes, the Sahel and West Africa in collaboration with the Special Envoys of the Secretary-General in those regions.

12. The continued growth and impact of the Fund is intrinsically linked to the implementation of my reform agenda. From the demand side, the capacity of Resident Coordinators to identify peacebuilding opportunities and guide their development into projects based on strong conflict analysis and theories of change will be critical. Developing these proposals requires cross-pillar coordination and joint support from Headquarters, particularly with regard to joint analysis and partnerships, as the new Development Coordination Office will support reinvigorated resident coordinator offices worldwide. From the supply side, the Fund's viability in the medium to long term requires not only Member State contributions, whether voluntary or assessed, but also innovative funding sources that can guarantee steady income, as proposed in my report on peacebuilding and sustaining peace.

13. With the merger of the Peacebuilding Support Office into the new Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs on 1 January 2019, the enhanced capacity for political analysis will ensure the Fund remains well-grounded and is better able to seize peacebuilding opportunities while strengthening the system's support to regional strategies. Such approaches take best advantage of the contributions by Member States to support conflict-affected populations worldwide.

Table 1
Peacebuilding Fund decisions in 2018

Country	2018 approvals		Total
	Immediate Response Facility	Peacebuilding Recovery Facility	
	<i>(United States dollars)</i>		
Albania ^a	2 187 080		2 187 080
Bosnia and Herzegovina	1 933 293		1 933 293
Burkina Faso	2 350 000	8 000 601	10 350 601
Burundi	1 417 587	7 658 377	9 075 964
Cameroon	1 498 000		1 498 000
Central African Republic	4 248 911		4 248 911
Chad	4 500 000	5 979 906	10 479 906
Colombia	3 757 367	6 000 000	9 757 367
Congo	2 880 047		2 880 047
Democratic Republic of the Congo	4 146 343	5 000 000	9 146 343
Côte d'Ivoire	4 985 842	4 400 036	9 385 878
Ecuador ^a	3 000 000		3 000 000
El Salvador		3 941 837	3 941 837
Ethiopia	2 840 341		2 840 341
Gambia	3 000 000	4 000 000	7 000 000
Guinea	4 642 819		4 642 819
Guinea-Bissau	1 427 714		1 427 714
Honduras	1 724 689		1 724 689
Kosovo ^b	2 772 780		2 772 780
Kyrgyzstan	2 986 551		2 986 551

Country	2018 approvals		Total
	Immediate Response Facility	Peacebuilding Recovery Facility	
<i>(United States dollars)</i>			
Lesotho	2 000 000		2 000 000
Liberia		5 000 001	5 000 001
Madagascar	1 496 884		1 496 884
Mali	6 162 039	2 933 387	9 095 426
Mauritania	3 000 000		3 000 000
Montenegro ^a	946 335		946 335
Niger	7 636 912	7 700 000	15 336 912
Nigeria	3 000 000		3 000 000
Papua New Guinea	1 500 000	4 000 000	5 500 000
Serbia ^a	1 304 364		1 304 364
Sierra Leone	1 500 000		1 500 000
Solomon Islands		1 798 483	1 798 483
Somalia	1 500 000	12 439 273	13 939 273
South Sudan	1 500 000		1 500 000
Sri Lanka	1 500 000		1 500 000
Sudan	3 000 000		3 000 000
Togo	2 701 111		2 701 111
Tunisia	2 998 889		2 998 889
Yemen	3 000 000		3 000 000
Zimbabwe	3 143 861		3 143 861
Total	104 189 760	79 851 902	183 041 662

Source: Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office, January 2019.

Note: The table reflects decisions regarding funding approved in 2018, not funds transferred.

Please refer to the Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office Gateway for details on funds transferred and expenditures reported.

^a As a counterpart to a cross-border or regional project.

^b References to Kosovo are to be understood in the context of Security Council resolution [1244 \(1999\)](#).

III. Country-specific engagements of the Peacebuilding Fund

A. Latin America and the Caribbean

14. In 2018, I declared El Salvador eligible to receive Peacebuilding Fund support on issues related to the protection of migrants. The Fund then approved a \$3.9 million project implemented by the World Food Programme, UNDP and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to facilitate the reintegration of returning migrants through improved and expanded innovative care and reintegration mechanisms. This initiative joins the “peace for the post-conflict generation” project, through which Fund resources help security agencies strengthen their internal controls’ compliance with international human rights standards to bolster democratic institutions and mitigate risks.

15. In Honduras, the Fund approved its first national project in that country, a \$1.7 million initiative implemented by UNDP, in collaboration with the Department of Political Affairs (now the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs) and OHCHR, to facilitate a dialogue and agree on key peacebuilding priorities following requests from the Government of Honduras, other political actors and civil society groups. Through the United Nations-facilitated dialogue, the parties reached consensus at the working level on 169 points that addressed the core issues behind the protests, including electoral and constitutional reforms and human rights provisions, many of which the National Congress is expected to approve in 2019.

16. In Guatemala, the projects approved by the Fund in previous years continued to strengthen the capacities of criminal prosecution and victim assistance, and helped develop models for the investigation of femicide, an approach validated by the new attorney general. With the support of the Fund, the judicial branch committed to prioritizing indigenous women's access to justice and has established coordination mechanisms with indigenous women leaders and authorities. The cross-border project among Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras also continued facilitating increased judicial coordination between governments and support to victims of violence.

17. In Colombia, the Fund continued supporting peace implementation and leveraging additional contributions to the United Nations Post-Conflict Multi-Partner Trust Fund for Colombia since the signing of the historic agreement between the Government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia-People's Army (FARC-EP) in 2016. With Fund support, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) assisted in the release of 124 children and youth formerly associated with FARC-EP and has supported the political participation of former combatants in key democratic processes central to the peace agreement. Complementing their political reintegration, former combatants have also established Humanicemos DH, a demining organization, which has contributed to their economic reintegration as well as reconciliation with communities affected by landmines. The Fund also approved a new initiative to scale up the socioeconomic reintegration of more than 2,500 FARC-EP ex-combatants and their families, in partnership with the Government of Colombia, representatives from FARC-EP, the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia and the United Nations country team, and a new project to incentivize private sector investments in conflict-affected communities.

B. Asia and the Pacific

18. In the Philippines, President Duterte signed the Bangsamoro Organic Law in July 2018, a key milestone in resolving the longstanding conflict in the region. Through assistance from UNDP and UN-Women to the Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process, the Fund contributed to this historic achievement and ensured that the final wording of the law, subsequently put to a plebiscite in 2019, recognized the special needs of women, included provisions for transitional justice and complied with the Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro. Fund-supported community dialogues connected to the plebiscite will ensure women's participation. In addition, the Fund's investment through UNDP, UNICEF and UN-Women helps prevent violent extremism in Mindanao through dialogue and the provision of psychosocial and educational services, in close cooperation with Islamic schools and leaders. Of the 1,869 children and youth disengaged from the military wing of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front through Fund assistance, none have rejoined radical Islamic armed groups.

19. In Papua New Guinea, Fund-supported initiatives by UNDP, UN-Women and UNFPA facilitated cooperation and joint decision making between the national and regional governments. Specifically, Fund resources facilitated key meetings between

the two governments to finalize referendum language and jointly review autonomy arrangements for Bougainville. Recognizing that the success of the referendum will also depend on the population's understanding, the Fund is financing a public awareness campaign, which includes support to the Bureau of Public Affairs, Media and Communication of the Autonomous Bougainville Government, the National Coordination Office for Bougainville Affairs, journalists and women's groups. Through Fund-supported mediation, two formerly estranged women's groups have reconciled and are engaging in joint peace advocacy throughout the country. Beyond referendum preparations, the Fund approved a new initiative in 2018 to support IOM, UN-Women and UNFPA in accompanying women-led efforts to mediate tribal conflicts in the country's restive highlands region, while earlier Fund investments have enabled the two governments to encourage armed groups that have not signed the Bougainville Peace Agreement to lay down their weapons. As a result, one of three factions signed onto the weapons disposal process, an encouraging sign of a more comprehensive and lasting peace.

20. To help prepare for the general elections in Solomon Islands, UNDP and UN-Women implemented dialogue initiatives to ensure that priorities initially raised through national and provincial summits held in 2017 continue to shape public discourse on future policies and include the views of women and youth. Fund support has played a strategic role in cementing the Government's commitment to address youth concerns by finalizing and launching the first Solomon Islands youth status report,¹ a national youth policy for the period 2017–2030² and a strategic framework for youth development and empowerment.³ Through the establishment of three provincial women's caucuses, mock parliaments and youth innovation centres, the Fund's investments ensure that the Government's commitments extend to marginalized women and youth. Three provinces have already adopted women's policies and temporary special measures that provide seats for women in provincial government. In addition, financing from the Peacebuilding Fund facilitated land summits in Guadalcanal and Malaita, which provided recommendations to national and provincial governments to resolve challenges related to climate change and land ownership and use, which have been a long-standing cause of conflict in Solomon Islands.

21. In Myanmar, the Fund provided \$2 million to support an initiative with UNFPA and UNICEF which fostered youth engagement on the importance of peace through documentary filmmaking and social media outreach. This enabled youth to claim space within the national peace architecture.

22. In Sri Lanka, the Office on Missing Persons was established with Fund assistance in 2017 and began consultations with potential claimants in 2018. In October 2018, amid rising political tensions, Parliament passed an act paving the way for the establishment of the Office for Reparations, and technical support was provided for the eventual establishment of a truth and reconciliation commission. A project implemented by the National Peace Council, one of the first local organizations directly funded by the Peacebuilding Fund, complements the Fund's transitional justice portfolio by training and deploying youth to raise awareness and offset the dissemination of false information about the three new institutions. A project supported by the Fund and implemented by UNFPA, UN-Women and United

¹ Available at www.undp.org/content/dam/fiji/docs/UNDP-SOI-Youth-Status-Report-2018.pdf.

² Available at www.mwycfa.gov.sb/resources-2/strategic-plans-policies/youth-development-empowerment/6-solomon-islands-national-youth-policy-2017-2030/file.html.

³ Available at www.mwycfa.gov.sb/resources-2/strategic-plans-policies/youth-development-empowerment/7-strategic-framework-for-youth-development-and-empowerment-in-solomon-islands/file.html.

Nations Volunteers, meanwhile, helped to reduce intercommunal tension connected to the 2018 local elections.

C. Central and Southern Africa

23. The Fund's portfolio increasingly supports a more holistic approach to the region through cross-border programming, in recognition of the transboundary nature of conflict and instability.

24. In Chad, the Fund's portfolio supports the Government through joint strategies by nine United Nations agencies to address these challenges with a combination of regional and domestic initiatives that bolster local governance, resilience to climate change and the participation of women and youth in decision-making processes. Two innovative cross-border projects will address recurrent conflicts between pastoralist and farming populations on the country's borders with the Central African Republic and the Niger, while a cross-border project with Cameroon has developed an innovative early warning mechanism to prevent conflict and violent extremism.

25. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the stabilization projects supported by the Fund made progress in 2018. In southern Ituri, dialogue platforms have provided space for security sector actors and communities to jointly develop local security plans that reflect communal priorities. Early reports indicate that this initiative has increased the accountability of security actors, fostered social cohesion and reduced violence as communities have begun turning to local mechanisms to peacefully resolve disputes. The process also reinvigorated negotiations between the Government and the armed group Force de résistance patriotique de l'Ituri, which had been a security threat in the area. In Kitchanga, a series of round tables between communities and local authorities, funded with resources provided by the Fund, produced a joint vision for peace and stability, identifying local priorities and ensuring community ownership. The Fund has helped increase access to land and the deployment of State security actors into areas of greatest need. Some 1,420 households have pursued agricultural livelihoods in areas of concession, while 38 land conflicts have been peacefully resolved. Local communities also noted a reduction in crime and armed group activity as a result of the employment and positive engagement of vulnerable youth who were identified either as ex-combatants or at risk of mobilization into armed groups. In all, the Peacebuilding Fund's \$12 million investment between 2009 and 2015 in support of the Government's International Security and Stabilization Support Strategy in the east, through the multi-donor Stabilization Coherence Fund, has helped catalyse at least \$31 million from other partners.

26. In May 2018, the Fund approved its first project in the Congo: a \$2.8 million effort by UNHCR, UNFPA and UNDP designed to support a late-2017 ceasefire agreement between the Government and Ninja militia rebels. The Fund's quick response, coordinated with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Central Africa and Head of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa, François Louncény Fall, and the United Nations country team, came before the Government finalized its demobilization, disarmament and reintegration programme in August 2018, secured the commitment of an additional \$4 million in Government resources and ensured that the programme met international standards and that ceasefire conditions would be honoured. The first post-ceasefire dialogue conference in the Pool region in September, financed by the Fund, reduced tensions and led to the acceleration of the Government's disarmament programme, resulting in a significant reduction of security incidents in the region through the end of 2018. To consolidate these early gains, the Fund supported the establishment of 15 local committees in the Pool region to continue promoting an inclusive community-based

approach to resolving conflict while improving social cohesion through sensitization, dialogue and targeted socioeconomic support to ex-combatants and community members alike. These dialogue platforms aim to serve as a model for the greater national dialogue process.

27. During the year, the Fund supported a cross-border project with the Great Lakes Regional Strategic Framework between Burundi and the United Republic of Tanzania, implemented by UNDP, IOM and UNHCR, to bolster livelihoods and strengthen border security. In conjunction with protection roles played by United Nations entities, the project helped improve relations among returnees, refugees and host communities in border areas while reducing pressure on humanitarian institutions. Furthermore, the Fund's investments in youth empowerment in Burundi have helped establish 65 peace clubs, which have promoted positive exchanges among more than 1,400 youth. In addition, after training 400 peace agents on community engagement, peaceful conflict resolution techniques and non-violent communication, nine youth committees have been established, through which 1,200 youth have supported the rehabilitation of infrastructure in Bujumbura and Mwaro.

28. The Fund's portfolio in the Central African Republic contributed to a reduction of security incidents in Bangui, Bangassou and several western prefectures while paving the way for a more gender-sensitive electoral process through revisions to the electoral code, despite continuing clashes between armed groups in key locations. Through timely Fund support and a visit by the Chair of the Central African Republic configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission, the Panel of Facilitators of the African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic – the main framework of the political process – launched field visits and opened dialogues with armed groups. Following the visits, 14 armed groups committed to negotiations to identify a process for the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants, and the Panel submitted their recommendations to the Government. A Fund-sponsored community violence reduction programme contributed to improved security conditions within communities, boosting confidence in the peace process and creating conditions for the launch of the national disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme in late 2018. To promote confidence in the peace process amid negotiations, the Fund financed the training of 500 new police officers and gendarmes, while Fund support was critical for the restoration of State authority in Bambari through the training and deployment of 498 police officers and gendarmes, and initial steps for the return of nearly 300 government officials and agents, in partnership with UNDP and the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic.

D. East Africa

29. In late 2018, the Fund approved its first project in Ethiopia, providing \$2.8 million to UNDP, IOM and UN-Women to assist the Government and ensure that its reform efforts are underpinned by an inclusive, evidence-based strategy to pursue additional reforms and launch a national reconciliation process. Complementing central Government support, the project will strengthen the capacities of regional governments to protect civilians and resolve conflicts related to large-scale displacement in the Gedeo-West Guji zone and the Oromia-Somali border region.

30. Following the design of a peacebuilding plan for South Sudan and a mapping of local-level peacebuilding initiatives with an emphasis on women-led initiatives, a new Fund initiative will assist women in accessing land through the capacity-building of traditional authorities, leaders and communities and the improvement of land management and administrative systems at the state and country level. This initiative

joins capacity efforts for dialogue to support the National Dialogue process initiated by the President.

31. To help facilitate the transition of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) and prevent Darfur from relapsing into conflict, the Fund launched a joint initiative by UNDP and UNICEF in 2018 to strengthen rule of law institutions, support youth participation in peacebuilding activities and promote durable solutions for internally displaced persons and returnees in Golo in Jebel Marra, Darfur's most conflict-affected area. This initiative and the planned strategic assessment mission for UNAMID should help shape a future scaled-up engagement of the Fund based on a request for eligibility by the Government.

32. In coordination with the efforts of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, the Fund's portfolio for Madagascar, which has supported good governance and anti-corruption initiatives, security sector reform and stabilization support to hot spots in the restive southern region since 2016, has begun evidencing nascent, yet important, progress. Recent initiatives supported by UNDP, such as the launch of the country's first anti-corruption hub in the capital, established through Fund support, and the adoption of new transparency and accountability measures within public services, seek to continue this positive trend.

33. In Somalia, several Fund investments have supported durable solutions for returning refugees and displaced populations by encouraging their social, political and economic reintegration. With support from the Fund's cross-border initiative, more than 3,000 Somali refugees have returned after decades of displacement in Kenya, while a Fund-financed project led by IOM and the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) provides durable solutions for displaced and host communities in Baidoa and Kismaayo. The project's participatory, community-based approach has garnered interest from other donors and Somali authorities, who have requested to extend it to additional federal member states. The project has been implemented alongside the Peacebuilding Fund's successful pilot programme to channel funds through government financial systems, thereby helping to strengthen national systems and paving the way for more budget support from actors such as the European Union. To solidify these nascent gains, the Fund approved seven new projects in 2018 worth \$14 million that will advance reconciliation, land reform and related conflict resolution and durable solutions for displaced and host communities as well as support the implementation of the national stabilization strategy. In partnership with the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia, IOM was awarded \$1.5 million through the 2018 Gender Promotion Initiative to pilot a gender-sensitive approach that addresses the gap in rehabilitation support to female disengaged combatants. Through a comprehensive approach, the project also aims to strengthen the capacity of women's organizations and community-based groups.

E. Europe and Central Asia

34. The Fund scaled up support throughout the Western Balkans in 2018, where initiatives will partner with Balkan youth from diverse backgrounds to foster intercultural understanding and better relations. These initiatives respond to my January 2018 message to the General Assembly in which I identified the Western Balkans among global areas of concern. Specifically, Fund resources helped the Regional Youth Cooperation Office, an organization established by six Western Balkans countries, expand its support of the region's youth through schools and youth groups and strengthen monitoring and oversight of a grants scheme through a project implemented by UNDP, UNICEF, and UNFPA in Albania. At the same time, I have sought a \$4.1 million expansion of the existing "Dialogue for the Future" project in Bosnia and Herzegovina to include other Member States in the region. Initially

launched in 2014 in partnership with the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the project established local dialogue platforms in 28 municipalities, while enabling youth to lead and monitor them. Youth will also engage decision makers through national and regional dialogue platforms to take forward youth recommendations on policy change and reconciliation initiatives. The project has already produced an agreement between the mayors of Sarajevo and East Sarajevo to jointly revitalize the city's Olympic museum, offering a powerful symbol of cooperation. A new \$2.7 million project in Kosovo⁴ in late 2018 also works with diverse groups of youth to bridge existing sociopolitical divides, and rounds out new additions to the Fund's Balkan portfolio.

35. In Central Asia, in continued collaboration with the United Nations Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia, the Fund's portfolio, which is anchored in Kyrgyzstan, focused on the prevention of violent extremism while encouraging trust among different ethnic and religious groups and the State. Through a \$2 million project helping to extend access to basic services to populations living in informal settlements outside of the capital, youth-led participatory needs assessments in 11 settlements resulted in improved access to public transportation and electrification and the installation of street lights. These improvements contributed to a growing sense of security among the population and confidence in local governing authorities, while at the same time placing youth at the centre of these positive changes. Confidence in State authorities also increased through a \$1 million initiative implemented by UNICEF, UNDP, UNFPA and UNODC, through which 215 police officers and Ministry of Interior staff were trained on community-friendly and gender-sensitive approaches to preventing violent extremism. Through this project, 15 civil cases have been initiated on behalf of women and girls from marginalized communities, an indication of their nascent trust in the legal system to claim rights. In parallel, a \$1 million initiative through Search for Common Ground to address triggers of religious radicalism among youth was extended by another \$1 million in 2018, on the basis of strong evidence that it contributed to reducing violence among youth, which had been driving social exclusion and tension. Finally, the Fund's first cross-border project between Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan in 2015 helped reduce violent conflicts along the restive border from 34 incidents in 2015 to 20 in 2018. Through results such as these, the Government of Tajikistan has recognized the Fund's cross-border investment as the only initiative along the undemarcated border aimed at conflict prevention and risk mitigation. This experience provided critical lessons for the Fund's other cross-border investments in Africa and Central America.

F. Middle East

36. In Lebanon, the Fund supported UNDP and the International Labour Organization, in partnership with UNICEF, in three locations, with the hosting of Syrian refugees who had pre-existing economic and social fragility. The project helped provide employment opportunities for at-risk youth through skills-building and entrepreneurship support while also sensitizing older generations to the positive contribution youth can make. It also operationalized recommendations from research commissioned by the United Nations and the World Bank on the peacebuilding impact of employment programmes.

37. In Yemen, a \$3 million Fund investment was approved in late 2018 to address violations of the rights of women and youth detained in central prisons, care centres and police stations. In addition to addressing the immediate needs of detained women

⁴ References to Kosovo are to be understood in the context of Security Council resolution [1244 \(1999\)](#).

and youth, the project undertook psychosocial needs assessments to determine how best to support detainees upon their release and promoted approaches to divert children from the prison system. This approach enhanced coordination between the Yemeni justice and social welfare sectors, including through the development of standard operating procedures and referral pathways to strengthen the national child protection system. Additional projects supported through the Gender and Youth Promotion Initiative in 2018 will empower women and youth as positive agents of change, and include a \$1.5 million expansion of an existing project implemented by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and IOM to promote the role of women mediators in addressing local-level disputes over water scarcity, and another \$1.5 million investment through UN-Women and UNFPA to ensure that the voices of youth are included in ongoing local dialogues and high-level peace negotiations.

G. North Africa

38. Since 2016, the Fund has supported UNDP and the United Nations Support Mission in Libya to advance reconciliation through a consultative and inclusive process. Now entering its final phase, the project has enabled the meaningful and effective participation of youth, women and groups from across Libyan society to contribute their views on issues central to reconciliation, including land and property, internally displaced persons, arbitrary detention and missing persons. Moreover, in support of the political process and the United Nations Action Plan for Libya, the project contributed to facilitating dialogue among communities and tribes and assisted civil society actors in the implementation of reconciliation-related projects, including through grants and training sessions that promote civic engagement as well as awareness and outreach regarding local dialogues. On the basis of the project's results, donors contributed an additional \$2.6 million to sustain support for local reconciliation efforts, enhance the role of local mediators through the establishment of a national network and support government institutions to institutionalize reconciliation practices.

39. In December 2018, the Fund approved its first project in neighbouring Tunisia. The Fund's investment will promote the decentralization process following local elections in mid-2018, the country's first in seven years, and advance the Government's priorities to build trust and promote the inclusion of marginalized young men and women in border communities. The initiative is designed to empower youth as positive agents of change, while a second aspect of the initiative aims to debunk negative stereotypes through media strategies. Implemented by UNDP, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and UN-Women, in collaboration with the World Bank, the Fund's project is the first to operationalize at the country level the recommendations from the United Nations-World Bank report, entitled *Pathways for Peace: Inclusive Approaches to Preventing Violent Conflict*.

H. West Africa

40. In September 2018, I declared the Gambia and Burkina Faso eligible to receive support from the Peacebuilding Fund. In the Gambia, eligibility opened the way for a \$7 million package of support to advance Government priorities related to transitional justice, land conflicts, mitigating tensions regarding the large-scale return of migrants and increasing women and youth's social cohesion and political participation. This investment with OHCHR and UNDP followed on an existing initiative, which enabled nationwide consultations on truth and reconciliation as well as on a comprehensive national strategy for transitional justice in the Gambia, and

launched a truth, reconciliation and reparations commission with a composition that reflects the ethnic, religious and gender diversity of the country.

41. In Burkina Faso, support from the Peacebuilding Fund approved in 2018 provided \$8 million for the Emergency Programme for the Sahel for the period 2017–2020 to tackle drivers of conflicts. This investment joined existing Fund-supported initiatives through which a high-level advisory team to the Presidency on security sector reform, established through Fund support, helped foster consensus between the Government and the military on the national policy on security and defence and strengthened the national defence council. The Fund also promoted the legitimacy of the High Council on Reconciliation and National Unity through outreach activities in 10 of the country's 13 regions and ensuring the payment of reparations to 156 female victims.

42. In Côte d'Ivoire, the Fund's portfolio supported post-Mission transition priorities, as outlined in the joint United Nations-Côte d'Ivoire programme to support the consolidation of peace, with an additional \$9.3 million in 2018, which made the Fund the largest contributor to the programme and subsequently catalysed other donors and the Government to fund approximately 90 per cent of the programme. Through Fund support, more than 50 intercommunal dialogues have helped more than 100,000 actors peacefully resolve local conflicts and establish joint local development plans. Youth-centred initiatives are at the heart of community-level work and capitalize on the UNICEF U-Report mechanism to gather youth opinions. The reach of the U-Report mechanism has grown from 160,000 to nearly 483,000 youth members throughout 2018, ensuring that consultations are more inclusive. In addition, 23 civil-military committees have been established, which have played a critical role in defusing tensions, preventing conflict and building trust between the population and security forces in places as diverse as Bouaké, Taï, Korhogo and Abidjan, while six regional human rights commissions have also been equipped and trained. Nearly 7,000 members of the security forces have been sensitized on sexual and gender-based violence and 20 gender desks have been established in police stations. Looking to the future, Fund support has contributed to the draft plan of community reparations for 2018–2020, an important step in implementing the recommendations from the national Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

43. The Fund is one of the few actors working to improve the penal chain in Guinea. Through Fund support, judicial processes have been accelerated considerably, allowing for the liberation of 996 people, including 97 women and 17 minors who had been detained well beyond the legal limit. Complementing interventions to encourage the population's trust in the judicial system, Fund support enabled the establishment of permanent dialogue frameworks between the judicial police, the prosecutors and civil society actors.

44. In Guinea-Bissau, the Fund has been central to the promotion of women's inclusion in politics and governance. In coordination with the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau and thanks to the engagement of the Chair of the Guinea-Bissau configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission, the Fund continued its support in 2018. Notably, the Fund provided resources to mediate 31.8 per cent of disputes in 2018, versus only 7.4 per cent in previous years. Stories detailing these successful mediations were broadcasted 444 times throughout the country, which opened more public space to women. The Fund also enabled the country's first professional journalism course and the establishment of Rádio Mulher de Bafatá (Bafatá Women's Radio), designed to defuse tensions in the most disputed electoral regions. In May, the inclusive National Forum of Women and Girls for Peace brought together 800 activists, while the Fund also helped establish a women's council composed of 25 elected representatives. To consolidate these gains and ensure

the future of women's political voices, a new parity law for women's political participation was adopted in 2018 with Fund support.

45. In October 2018, the Fund approved its first project in Togo: a \$2.7 million investment to prevent the escalation of tensions following electoral violence in 2017 and unresolved issues from previous truth and reconciliation processes. Implemented by UNDP and UNICEF, the project targets communities through confidence-building measures with security actors, reducing children's involvement in violent protests, providing support to regional human rights centres and building the conflict-resolution capacities of community members.

46. In Liberia, a new \$5 million package of Peacebuilding Fund support, which helped launch a new Liberia Multi-Partner Trust Fund, will help smooth the transition from peacekeeping in line with the Fund's stated priorities in its current strategic plan. The new investment joins an already established portfolio of \$14.3 million, which marked important results, particularly at the local level among women's organizations. An investment of \$450,000, through the Liberian civil society organization Educare Liberia, has empowered women in 23 localities to mitigate local conflicts with companies that have concession agreements. At the national level, the Gender and Security Sector National Taskforce identified gender gaps across legal and policy frameworks of the security sector with Fund assistance.

47. The Fund's portfolio in the Niger is unique in its support, through UNDP and IOM, of efforts to build trust between the country's defence and security forces and communities in border areas in the Liptako-Gourma area by establishing 100 local peace and security committees and creating 17 dialogue spaces for youth, 38 per cent of whom are girls, to advocate for social cohesion. As a result, illegal activities have dropped by 25 per cent in targeted communities since the start of the project. To address conflicts between farmers and pastoralists in Tahoua, the Fund installed 228 solar panels to provide electricity to increase the water supply, which benefited both communities while promoting climate change adaptation. By providing sustainable employment, Fund resources for UNICEF ensured that 781 boys and girls did not undertake illicit migration or join armed groups. Further strengthening the role of youth in their communities, the Fund established 21 youth associations to engage in community-based conflict mediation, which have successfully advocated with two communes to dedicate 19 per cent of their own resources to support youth activities. To consolidate these gains and respond to continuing cross-border threats, the Fund approved an additional \$13.7 million for the Niger in 2018 for both national and cross-border projects with Mali and Chad.

48. Building momentum for the implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali and the new Pact for Peace in Mali, the Fund approved \$7.4 million in 2018 to advance the economic and social empowerment of youth in Mopti in partnership with the World Bank, and to reduce conflicts between farmers and pastoralists through inclusive management of natural resources in Timbuktu and Mopti.

49. Addressing transboundary conflict drivers across the Sahel, the Fund's cross-border projects, totalling \$10.5 million, have helped build trust among border communities and security actors through interventions that capitalize on the positive role youth can play in conflict prevention and local decision-making. Through these initiatives, 2,400 people were mobilized in support of joint "green" activities between the security and defence forces and the population in both Burkina Faso and the Niger to foster mutual confidence. In the Niger, nine transhumance corridors were identified bordering Mali and Burkina Faso, which will be managed with project funds in 2019.

Table 2
Global performance of the Peacebuilding Fund, 2017–2018

<i>Peacebuilding Fund priority areas</i>	<i>Project count</i>	<i>On track to deliver outputs (percentage)</i>	<i>On track with evidence of significant contribution to peacebuilding outcomes (percentage)</i>
Priority area 1^a			
2018	33	82	24
2017	25	88	16
Priority area 2^b			
2018	86	84	27
2017	45	87	36
Priority area 3^c			
2018	10	80	20
2017	4	100	50
Priority area 4^d			
2018	16	89	6
2017	6	94	35
Overall 2018	147	84	19
Overall 2017	91	89	31

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

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

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

^c Employment and equitable access to social services.

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

IV. Peacebuilding Fund oversight and management

A. Advisory Group

50. The fifth Advisory Group began its term in June 2018. At its first meeting, I briefed the Group on my vision of a quantum leap for the Fund. Consequently, the Group has prioritized supporting the realization of a significant scale-up of the Fund during the Group's two-year tenure. This will include advising on the next strategic plan for the period 2020–2022 and ensuring that the Fund adjusts its oversight capabilities and systems in accordance with planned growth.

51. Members of the Group participated in donor visits to Papua New Guinea and Colombia to observe Fund effectiveness, and in a mission to Brussels in November to enhance strategic engagement with the European Union. In addition, the Chair of the Advisory Group briefed the Peacebuilding Commission in April and December on the status and trajectory of the Fund.

B. Budget and personnel

52. The Fund's 2018 operational budget once more revealed the constraints of the Fund's expenditure and income plan, which continued to be affected by donor contributions. The expenditure for 2018 of \$2,988,720.19 was roughly comparable

with the previous year's expenditure of \$2,829,167.11, despite demonstrably higher delivery rates in an increasing number of crisis-affected countries. To offset management challenges presented by the Fund's quantum leap, the Fund recruited additional staffing through funds from a dedicated project to support design, monitoring and evaluation at the country level, while continuing to count on secondments from UN-Women, UNDP, UNFPA and support from the Peacebuilding Commission and policy branches. While this solution fills a critical gap and ensures that country-based colleagues have the guidance they need, it is unsustainable in the long run.

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

C. Enhanced monitoring and evaluation

54. In 2018, evaluations were commissioned for 23 individual projects and 2 country portfolios to inform future decision-making. It should be noted that the Fund's investments in strengthening its monitoring and evaluation framework contributed to the increased availability of reliable data for evidence-based evaluations, including baseline and endline surveys and information from multi-stakeholder monitoring missions.

55. The portfolio evaluation in Papua New Guinea found that the two governments, civil society and other key actors recognized the Fund as being uniquely able to facilitate addressing the challenges to implementing the Bougainville Peace Agreement. Several other evaluations found that, while the Fund releases funding quickly, efficiency could be improved during implementation by addressing delays in administrative procedures caused by the multitude of agencies involved, and by coordinating reporting on higher-level outcomes. In addition, evaluability assessments in Guatemala, Kyrgyzstan, Madagascar and Sri Lanka reviewed programme design and the robustness of monitoring frameworks, and provided targeted recommendations to increase the likelihood of achievement of results and data availability for final evaluations. Given the different peacebuilding contexts in which the United Nations and civil society organizations operate, evaluation exercises were adapted to increase their relevance and utility. For example, to account for different implementation rates of projects in Madagascar as a result of political changes, the review adopted a hybrid approach that combined an evaluability assessment and a midterm evaluation.

V. Conclusion

56. As the Peacebuilding Fund embarks on the consideration of its new strategic plan in 2019 amid ongoing reforms, its challenge will be to maintain its flexible and catalytic nature in support of national strategies while meeting the greater demand that has come with demonstrated success. Continued financial and political support from Member States will be critical to the Fund's ability to navigate these changes and continue to deliver timely and well-targeted support to ensure that crisis-affected populations benefit from the dividends of peace.