

South Africa and the United Nations

Strengthening opportunities for effective peacebuilding

Amanda Lucey, Gustavo de Carvalho and Sibongile Gida

Summary

South Africa can strengthen its peacebuilding engagements with the United Nations (UN) in a number of ways. In particular, South Africa has several opportunities to play a leading role in the structures of the UN peacebuilding architecture. The country has considerable experience in peacebuilding, ranging from its own peaceful transition to democracy to its engagements on the African continent. As such, South Africa can promote African views on peacebuilding at the UN. South Africa can also contribute to important debates, such as those surrounding the 2015 UN peacebuilding review. This paper draws on field research carried out by the Institute for Security Studies (ISS) in May 2014.

SOUTH AFRICA IS an emerging global actor in the peace and security field, supporting a variety of initiatives in countries affected by conflict and violence. Although better known for its peacekeeping and mediation efforts, in the last few decades South Africa has stepped up its post-conflict reconstruction and development (PCRD) and peacebuilding assistance on the African continent.

While South Africa has often engaged in these activities on a bilateral/trilateral basis, it has also become increasingly involved in shaping global and regional arrangements. Regionally, it is a strong supporter of the African Union's (AU) peace and security architecture. Globally, South Africa's growing influence

is suggested by its membership in arrangements such as Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa (BRICS) and India, Brazil, South Africa (IBSA), and as the only African country in the G-20. Importantly, South Africa has become a key African voice at the UN.

The UN has the primary responsibility of maintaining global peace and security, and has shifted many of its efforts towards developing longer-term peacebuilding strategies to address the root causes of conflicts. This includes plans to improve the efficacy of the UN peacebuilding architecture through a review process in 2015, which will be driven by member states, including South Africa.

This paper examines South Africa's peacebuilding engagements at the

UN as part of a larger project called 'Enhancing South Africa's post-conflict development and peacebuilding capacity in Africa'. In particular, this paper examines South Africa's current and previous engagements in the UN peacebuilding architecture and future opportunities for the country. It also aims to contribute to the development of the South African Development Partnership Agency (SADPA), which is expected to become fully operational later in 2014. SADPA is intended to coordinate South Africa's outgoing development assistance and will replace the African Renaissance Fund.

The field research was carried out between 25 May and 3 June 2014 in New York and Washington and

interviews were held with approximately 25 officials from the UN Secretariat, UN agencies, the South African and Brazilian Permanent Missions, the World Bank and think tanks who were identified as possible stakeholders through desktop research and previous engagements of the ISS. In particular, the field research gathered information on the strengths and weaknesses of South Africa's engagements. It also examined South Africa's role in the context of South-South cooperation, as an important starting point for the country's current engagements in peacebuilding.

This paper first outlines the UN peacebuilding architecture and the ways in which countries can engage with the UN in terms of peacebuilding. It then gives an overview of South Africa's peacebuilding interactions with the UN and details South Africa's foreign policy in this regard. The paper then examines the findings of the field research, including perceptions of South Africa's engagements to date, best practices as an emerging Southern actor involved in South-South cooperation, and its current and potential engagements with the UN peacebuilding architecture. These engagements are considered within the context of discussions surrounding the post-2015 Millennium Development

Goals (MDGs), and in particular goals relating to peace and security. Finally, it makes recommendations for South Africa's engagement in the UN system in the future.

Overview: the UN's engagement in peacebuilding

The UN's series of failures in terms of its responses to conflicts in the late 1990s and early 2000s caused some to question the global institution's ability to support countries in their transition from war to peace and to reduce their risk of lapsing or relapsing into violence. In 2005 the UN reacted to these criticisms by creating institutional structures aimed at strengthening its peacebuilding coherence, integration and impact to respond better to the challenges facing countries in the aftermath of conflict.¹ Its peacebuilding architecture consists of three organs: the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), the Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO) and the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF). Specifically, the UN peacebuilding architecture was set up as an intergovernmental body that would deal with peacebuilding issues; an office to support its activities; and a fund that could support countries experiencing post-conflict situations.²

THE UN'S PEACEBUILDING ARCHITECTURE CONSISTS OF THREE ORGANS:

PBC

THE PEACEBUILDING COMMISSION

PBSO

THE PEACEBUILDING SUPPORT OFFICE

PBF

THE PEACEBUILDING FUND

The UN peacebuilding architecture

Peacebuilding Commission (PBC)	The PBC is an intergovernmental body that supports peace efforts in countries emerging from conflict by proposing integrated strategies for peacebuilding, through channelling resources and bringing together relevant stakeholders (including international financial institutions, national governments and troop-contributing countries). ³ The PBC has three central structures, namely the Organisational Committee, Country Specific Configurations and the Working Group on Lessons Learned. At first, only Sierra Leone and Burundi were on the PBC's agenda, but it was later expanded to include Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia and the Central African Republic (CAR).
Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO)	The PBSO is an office that provides technical support to the PBC. Beyond assisting the PBC and the specific country configurations, the PBSO also provides policy guidance and management to the PBF and technical policy assistance to the PBC, and is responsible for the administration and communications of the peacebuilding architecture. ⁴
Peacebuilding Fund (PBF)	The PBF is a mechanism that supports activities that address imminent threats to peace processes and strengthen national peacebuilding capacities. ⁵ Administered by the PBSO, the PBF not only focuses on the countries on the PBC agenda but also addresses issues related to both immediate responses and longer-term structured engagements.

Peacebuilding is a broad field and the UN peacebuilding architecture operates alongside a wide range of structures within the UN system. For instance, peacekeeping operations, managed by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), increasingly comprise early peacebuilding responses and longer-term assistance.⁶ The Department of Political Affairs (DPA) is also directly engaged with peacebuilding issues through the management of the UN's political missions, including those in countries on the PBC's agenda.⁷ The Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) engages in peacebuilding by playing

owned and relevant to conflict-affected states. This implies that these states should be involved in the process through which these goals are finalised, and that the goals should take a longer-term approach in addressing barriers to peace and development.¹⁰

Overview: South Africa's engagements in UN peacebuilding

South Africa's White Paper on foreign policy endorses multilateralism, viewing multilateral forums as key spaces for implementing the country's international engagements.¹¹ It has been an active

In line with this thinking, South Africa has approached its non-permanent membership of the UNSC as a strategic opportunity to advance the interests of Africa and the South.¹⁵ For instance, it has played a leading role in specific conflicts on the UNSC's agenda, such as providing a key facilitation and mediation role in Côte d'Ivoire, Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and Sudan. South Africa has been an active player in UN peacekeeping operations through the deployment of troops and by providing leadership to the UN-mandated missions. Significant examples of its assistance to UN peacekeeping missions are the UN Operation in Burundi and the UN Force Intervention Brigade (FIB) in the DRC.¹⁶

South Africa has also presented its views on the UN's peacebuilding architecture at the UNSC, describing it as a 'critical tool for the international community in the broad realm of conflict prevention and peace consolidation'.¹⁷ South Africa supports the peacebuilding architecture but has also identified areas in which it believes the architecture requires strengthening. It believes that the peacebuilding architecture has not reached its full potential, and has stated that the peacebuilding architecture should move forward by strengthening inclusivity and institution building, with sustained international support.¹⁸ In previous speeches at the UNSC, South Africa pointed out that human and institutional capacities were often lacking in countries in post-conflict situations.¹⁹

South Africa has shown interest in supporting the processes related to the country configurations of the PBC and in assisting the PBSO to advance its work and effectiveness. For instance, it asked to participate in all meetings of the PBC's country configurations for Burundi, the CAR, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia and Sierra Leone.²⁰ South Africa was also one of the co-facilitators of the Peacebuilding

South Africa has played the role of both a reformist and conserver at the UN, insisting on greater inclusiveness in the international system while observing traditional norms of sovereignty

an important role in the development of mechanisms that respond 'to the problems facing countries emerging from conflict and thus helping to prevent the deterioration of human security'.⁸ Programmatically, UN agencies such as the UN Development Programme (UNDP) and the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) also engage on issues related to peacebuilding, particularly through supporting national actors in processes aimed at preventing violence and managing conflicts.

Increasingly, peacebuilding issues are connected to the development debate, which is relevant in the context of the replacement of the MDGs in 2015. The current configuration of the MDGs generally neglects the effects of fragility, which suggests that they speak more to the symptoms rather than the drivers and causes of conflict.⁹ There are discussions on whether the post-2015 goals should focus more on peacebuilding aspects, which will have to be more broadly

member of the UN since rejoining it in 1994, most notably serving two terms (2007–2008 and 2011–2012) as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council (UNSC).

South Africa has played the role of both a reformist and conserver at the UN, insisting on greater inclusiveness in the international system while observing traditional norms of sovereignty and accepting a Western-led world order that supports international rules.¹²

South Africa's White Paper states that it supports the reform of the UN system as part of its goal of pursuing greater equity in decision-making and advancing balanced approaches that ensure the increased efficiency and effectiveness of UN responses.¹³ In particular, South Africa has been a strong proponent of the Ezulwini Consensus (2005), a declaration of the common African position on UNSC reform that calls for greater African representation.¹⁴

Review conducted in 2010, along with Mexico and Ireland, which made recommendations on improvements to the UN peacebuilding architecture as part of an assessment of its first five years.²¹ South Africa was more recently appointed to serve on the PBC's organisational committee after being elected by the UN General Assembly in 2013 for a renewable two-year term.²²

South Africa believes there is a link between security and development,²³ and has therefore engaged with other relevant

to develop and define methods for cooperation and decision-making, noting that a clear division of labour between the two institutions was crucial. He added that there was a need to discuss capacity building and sustainable resource allocations.²⁹

In relation to the post-2015 agenda, South Africa has the potential to play a pivotal role in peacebuilding. It is clearly interested in furthering this cause, as signified by its active engagement in multilateral processes and its previous

South Africa has been an active player in championing greater cooperation between the UN and regional organisations, particularly the African Union

UN organs. It served on ECOSOC between 2004 and 2006 and is currently serving another term (2013–2015).²⁴ It was elected to the council of the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the board of the UNDP, the UN Population Fund and other bodies.²⁵ All of these engagements show its efforts to strengthen the quality of the work of the UN peacebuilding architecture, and indicates its emphasis on development.

South Africa also has a strong orientation towards Africa and has been an active player in championing greater cooperation between the UN and regional organisations, particularly the African Union (AU).²⁶ While serving on the UNSC it initiated discussions on how to revitalise the debate on the UN's relationship with regional powers (as stated in Chapter VIII of the UN Charter), particularly on the principles of collaboration.²⁷ South Africa was a key actor in pushing for more consistent interaction between the UNSC and the AU's Peace and Security Council (PSC).²⁸ For instance, South Africa's President Jacob Zuma has emphasised the need

engagements in peacebuilding processes across Africa.³⁰ The focus of South Africa's engagement on the post-2015 agenda thus far has been the African Common Position established by the AU, which emphasises the continent's responsibilities towards achieving lasting peace as a foundation for development.³¹ Zuma has been one of the key proponents of this viewpoint post-2015, re-iterating in his speech to the UN General Assembly in September 2013 that 'a development agenda beyond 2015 should allow individual regions and states the space to address the development needs peculiar to their circumstances and priorities'.³² South Africa has, however, not explicitly stated a position beyond this.

Perceptions of South Africa's opportunities to support UN peacebuilding

South Africa was widely perceived by interviewees as an important actor that could assist countries with developing strategies in post-conflict environments. The fieldwork in New York showed that there were high expectations



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for what the country could deliver in terms of peacebuilding. This section delineates some of the key perceptions that were encountered during the fieldwork on South Africa's current and potential engagements in relation to UN peacebuilding.

South Africa is often seen as a partner that can play a useful role in peacekeeping and peacebuilding. The South African Permanent Mission to the UN is viewed as being efficient, competent and professional although often lacking decisiveness, with decisions constantly referred back to Pretoria. Diplomats were described as experienced and having a good understanding of African issues, despite lacking knowledge of some UN languages.

South Africa lacked a systematic approach for enabling the staffing of their nationals in the UN

A critical way of influencing the agenda in the UN system is the positioning of a country's nationals in senior positions; countries with the ability to influence international organisations are often more successful in placing their nationals in these positions.³³ While there are well-regarded, high-level South African staff at the UN (for example, three Under-Secretary Generals at the time of writing), it was often noted in interviews that South Africa lacked a systematic approach for enabling the staffing of South Africans in the UN system, particularly at a junior level. This was compared with other BRICS countries that have taken a more hard-nosed approach.

Other countries, such as Turkey, have attempted to develop rosters and pools of experts that can assist the UN and post-conflict countries. While South Africa is often perceived to have a wide range of potential experts due to its strong institutions and relevant transition

experiences, the country has not attempted to develop a more systematic roster of experts that can assist the UN in identifying mechanisms that contribute to post-conflict situations. This became clear in the development of the recently concluded UN Civilian Capacities Initiative, which was aimed at better identifying expertise that could support institution building in countries emerging from crisis. This process identified countries from the Global South, including South Africa, as key potential providers of expertise to post-conflict countries while still facing challenges in identifying and sourcing that expertise.³⁴

South Africa's engagements with the UN on peacebuilding matters were seen as less visible than its work conducted at

the UNSC, particularly its engagements on mediation and peacekeeping efforts. However, in all spheres South Africa played an active role in African issues and was often seen as providing a constructive role and having a good track record. However, some of its decisions on non-African issues were slightly more 'concerning', with interviewees often referring to the South African positions on Libya and Myanmar.³⁵

South Africa's first term on the UNSC was seen as being somewhat conflicted and its position harder to distinguish from the rest of the African continent as a whole, but stakeholders felt that South Africa had managed to apply previous lessons learnt. South Africa's engagement with the FIB in the DRC was seen as decisive and a good example of its using diplomatic muscle despite the general perception of South African reluctance to take a leading position on matters, in contrast with

Nigeria and Egypt. However, South Africa is expected to play a more political role in peacekeeping and to act in a manner more coherent with other big African powers.

South Africa's engagements in peacebuilding are less widely known in New York and were seen by interviewees as inconsistent. There was a call for South Africa to undertake more in this regard, in particular by playing more of a continental role as a leader and consensus builder. Given South Africa's history, its military and economic power in comparison with other developing African countries and its current democratic disposition and rule of law, expectations are high. It was noted that South Africa's own peacebuilding experiences should be harnessed, in particular reconciliation, mediation and institution building, as well as security sector reform. South Africa was described as politically, socially, culturally and economically sophisticated and therefore a desirable partner in peacebuilding. The role of South African business was also cited as a factor that should be considered in its development work.

At the same time, stakeholders stated that South Africa was sometimes too engaged with its own internal experiences and missed certain opportunities. These included the country's potential to provide technical assistance and use its political leverage as an African player. It was also suggested that South Africa bring more regional concerns to the UN. The stakeholders interviewed noted that South Africa had always shown the potential to contribute to peace and security, particularly through its at-times controversial roles in Lesotho, Madagascar and Burundi, but that future interventions needed to be extended to incorporate peacebuilding aspects. There were some specific settings in which interviewees thought South Africa

should play a more active role, such as engaging on UN youth programming in Burundi. However, they acknowledged that South Africa's limited engagement with peacebuilding could be due to apprehensions over peacebuilding in the UN system.

The development of SADPA was welcomed as a means of advancing South Africa's peacebuilding activities, but stakeholders emphasised that it should be used to develop international relationships and build regional consensus. Although South Africa does not want to be seen as a donor, it often

the UN, either by ensuring that they are adequately represented at UN meetings or by supporting their views on the relevance and implementation of UN programming.

ISS research shows that the AU and the UN still have a limited understanding of one another's peacebuilding efforts and the potential linkages. A multitude of peacebuilding actors have advocated for an increased complementarity between the AU's PCRD processes and the PBC. Interviewees believed that increased coordination among the UN, the AU and Regional Economic Communities

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misses out on a seat at the table where decisions are made. It was suggested that SADPA proactively engage with new potential partners. It would do well to develop a basic training centre that builds a pool of peacebuilding experts.

The African agenda and peacebuilding: implications for South Africa

As mentioned above, South Africa is seen as, and expected to be, a leader that can drive African issues. Moreover, stakeholders interviewed often argued that South Africa could play a greater brokering role between African states and the UN. Previous research has shown that 'small states'³⁶ face a number of challenges at the UN, including asymmetric access to information, capacity constraints and structural barriers to full participation.³⁷ Thus, small states need to be assisted with information sharing, capacity building and accessing the support of the UN system.³⁸ Stakeholders proposed that South Africa could support those African states suffering capacity challenges at

(RECs) could ensure greater legitimacy for all parties in peacebuilding activities. However, a number of challenges remain. It was noted that the RECs have limited capacity to implement peacebuilding initiatives (with the Economic Community of West African States being the strongest) and show a lack of political will. Some stakeholders suggested that direct implementation must take place at a country level. Furthermore, there is still a long way to go despite recent efforts to improve the UN–AU relationship. To date the UN has not fully and systematically engaged with the AU's PCRD unit and its particular initiatives – for instance the African Solidarity Initiative – beyond attending some meetings and events.

Stakeholders noted that the partnership between the UN and the AU in the past was mostly financial but is now moving towards a more strategic level. They viewed the AU as having a political role in advocating for peacebuilding policies. The Maseru Declaration on a Framework for Peaceful Development in



THE MASERU DECLARATION ON A FRAMEWORK FOR PEACEFUL DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA (2013), BROUGHT TOGETHER THE SOUTH AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY (SADC), THE AU AND THE UNDP TO STRENGTHEN LINKAGES BETWEEN INSTITUTIONS

Africa (2013), which brought together the South African Development Community (SADC), the AU and the UNDP is one example of the attempts to strengthen linkages.³⁹ The declaration examines modalities for strengthening peaceful and resilient development in countries in the SADC region and strengthening national capacities for peace.⁴⁰ These types of modalities show how the UNDP could

grouping to implement shared demand-driven projects ranging from capacity building to knowledge sharing. It also demonstrates one way of working in partnership with the UN. The fund is small and consists of a contribution of only US\$1 million per country per year, but it is already widely recognised and has had a significant impact, as well as having won a number of awards.⁴²

An example provided by stakeholders of the potential of the IBSA fund on peacebuilding aspects relates to its work towards enhanced food and nutrition security of inmates in South Sudan. It was mentioned that South Africa was instrumental in pushing for this project, which aimed to train inmates on agricultural techniques and develop the infrastructure of two prison farms. The project falls under the agricultural policy adopted by the National Prisons Services of South Sudan in 2012 and addresses the two most serious challenges faced by inmates in South Sudan: overcrowding and malnutrition.

Stakeholders in New York view the IBSA Fund as a unique 'laboratory of practice' that diverges from agendas driven by the OECD

play a knowledge facilitation role. As such, South Africa could play a vital role in strengthening the relationship between the AU and the UN.

Opportunities in South–South peacebuilding cooperation

While South Africa is expected to do more for peacebuilding, it is already recognised as an important emerging Southern actor, and one whose previous peacebuilding engagements can provide lessons learned, both for itself and for new actors involved in South–South cooperation. South Africa has already carried out peacebuilding activities in other African states, often on a bilateral or trilateral basis, but these engagements have not been systematically documented or coordinated by the South African government.⁴¹ Bilateral and trilateral engagements are often considered easier to implement and more flexible, but South Africa has gone further than this and initiated novel multilateral arrangements to carry out PCRDR and peacebuilding activities.

One such example falls under the remit of the IBSA Facility Fund for Alleviation of Poverty and Hunger (IBSA Fund). The IBSA Fund is an attempt by the IBSA

Stakeholders in New York view the IBSA Fund as a unique 'laboratory of practice' that diverges from agendas driven by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). Its structure, although distinct from the UN peacebuilding architecture, was described in interviews as more realistic and sometimes more immune to the global development agenda. IBSA has undertaken projects that traditional Northern donors would not necessarily back and for which countries have struggled to find support. It also takes more risks than traditional donors. The IBSA Fund, therefore, operates in niche areas, complementing the work of other donors. The UNDP in this instance facilitates and provides technical guidance to the project by utilising its wide network and experience, and monitors capacity. Stakeholders noted that the IBSA Fund was particularly effective because of its set-up. It came about as a result of a declaration by the countries involved and has a clear focus on development (which also means that issues of peace and security are only addressed through this lens). The relationship between countries is said to be more balanced and horizontal than other North–South arrangements.⁴³

Looking wider than the IBSA Fund, the general discussion on South–South cooperation is one in which South Africa can play a leading role and that presents numerous possibilities for future engagements that diverge from the activities and standpoints of traditional donors. Some stakeholders noted that the perspectives of Northern countries still dominated the South–South cooperation debate, with the voice of the global South less noticeable. South Africa can therefore play a role in giving a stronger voice to the South and pushing for more integrated and structural Southern engagements. There is a need to develop minimum standards for South–South cooperation; methodologies that allow a synchronisation of experiences and greater transparency.

South Africa can also use the South–South cooperation debate as leverage in the UN peacebuilding debate. However, it first needs to become more organised in identifying and marketing its own capacity and developing its own framework for South–South cooperation. Stakeholders emphasised that South Africa should talk to major global development partners to avoid repeating mistakes and ensure sustainability and continuity. While South Africa wishes to distance itself from traditional

donors, there are still lessons to learn from organisations such as the United Kingdom’s (UK) Stabilisation Unit, which has a synergy between peace, security and development. In addition, South Africa can learn from other emerging actors. The Brazilian Cooperation Agency, for example, has on occasion made use of the UNDP due to its presence on the ground, which enabled better monitoring and management of activities. The Turkish Development Agency has a roster of experts and

equitable forum. The UN peacebuilding architecture has often been criticised for not being relevant, catalytic and effective enough,⁴⁵ and for failing to live up to expectations.⁴⁶

As previously mentioned, in 2010 (five years after its creation), the UN peacebuilding architecture underwent its first comprehensive review. This process was led by South Africa, Ireland and Mexico, and mostly focused on capitalising on the wealth of experience and diverse capacities of member states.

South Africa has been calling for national ownership of processes, partly due to its experiences with the IBSA Fund

could provide guidance on developing similar rosters.

Research in the United States (US) has shown that the question of ownership is an important issue for countries engaged in peacebuilding and South–South cooperation, but what this entails needs to be elaborated by the countries involved. South Africa has been calling for national ownership of processes, partly due to its experiences with the IBSA Fund, which it claims has been led by countries determining their own priorities. South Africa would do well to safeguard the principle of ownership throughout these debates. It will also need to consider where it stands on the post-2015 debate, particularly regarding peace and security, and how to engage IBSA on such issues.

Opportunities in the UN peacebuilding architecture

While an in-depth reform of the UNSC is unlikely in the short term,⁴⁴ it is important that South Africa uses the opportunity provided by certain processes, such as the review of the UN peacebuilding architecture, to ensure a more

While the review provided important insights on the operationalisation of the PBC, it was often mentioned in interviews that it received limited follow-up on its recommendations.

In 2015, the UN peacebuilding architecture is expected to undergo a second review, and informal conversations between member states have already started to define its scope. The outcomes will be transmitted to the UN General Assembly. The review, as part of a process of developing new ways of engaging with peacebuilding settings, is expected to provide an important platform for member states to strengthen the capacity of UN bodies to engage in post-conflict settings, and thus provide greater clarity in the UNSC on the PBC’s strengths and limitations. It also gives countries, including South Africa, an opportunity to present their views on how to strengthen the UN’s support to peacebuilding processes.

South Africa bases its approach on inclusivity, institution building and sustained international support. It has also highlighted the importance of local ownership and political leadership as a

2010

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2015

THE UN PEACEBUILDING ARCHITECTURE IS EXPECTED TO UNDERGO A SECOND REVIEW.

means of ensuring effective peacebuilding approaches. While these topics are important and have already been widely presented, including in the previous review, as cross-cutting issues that have to be addressed in peacebuilding actions, their practical needs and implications are not yet fully understood. Targeted technical support is becoming increasingly important in the discussions, and is seen as a way to ensure parties' continued engagement. For instance, in the creation of the civilian capacities process, it was a key component of the discussions. Southern countries such as South Africa could bring different approaches and perspectives to the review, thereby strengthening capacity. Peacebuilding faces challenges that are context specific. South Africa, which underwent a difficult transition, is better able to understand the complex nature

defining how regional and sub-regional perspectives can be integrated into the work of the peacebuilding architecture and more broadly that of the UN. This provides a critical opportunity for South Africa to develop a more sophisticated articulation of African viewpoints on the challenges that face the peacebuilding architecture and the way forward. In this context, countries such as South Africa can be brokers of processes and become enablers that create a more supportive space for countries undergoing peacebuilding processes to voice their own views.

During the interviews it was implied that South Africa supports changing the role of the country configurations of the peacebuilding architecture. The country configurations are perceived by many to be driven by the needs and

priorities are aligned to South African perspectives of peacebuilding. South Africa could use the opportunity to highlight different views on particular best practices that would allow a greater alignment of stronger African voices on priorities in peacebuilding issues.

Finally, as was seen earlier, South Africa places emphasis on the variety of the actors in the field that are dealing with peacebuilding efforts beyond the peacebuilding architecture. Therefore it is important that South Africa supports not only a top-down technical process but also one that is embedded within coordinated actions between national and international actors, with a coherent and sustained engagement between all of them. That would ensure the greater effectiveness of peacebuilding actions in a process that is meaningful to the countries undergoing transitions.

South Africa can support the peacebuilding architecture by presenting alternative views on how to deal with competing agendas

of peacebuilding and the importance of having processes that are locally owned and driven. It can also assist in identifying some of the challenges and opportunities for more effective peacebuilding from its own best practices. The next review can allow actors to further enhance its understanding of the challenges to and opportunities for ensuring that peacebuilding processes are locally owned.

South Africa can support the peacebuilding architecture by presenting alternative views on how to deal with competing agendas and the fragmented nature of peacebuilding. At the time of writing, countries have not yet fully defined their positions in relation to the review. South Africa was appointed in 2014 as the head of a newly created African caucus, which aims at

priorities identified by traditional donors and developed countries. In the past 10 years the UN peacebuilding architecture has had successes in countries such as Sierra Leone, but it still struggles to provide strong support to countries like the CAR and South Sudan, where the international community has faced challenges in adapting to and dealing with the risky and unpredictable nature of peacebuilding.⁴⁷

The 2010 review showed the need for a stronger synergy between the PBC and the PBF,⁴⁸ but this is still difficult to achieve. South Africa will be unable to influence the PBF until it starts to provide funding for it. Stakeholders interviewed affirmed that interaction seldom occurs. Increasing its engagements with the PBF would give South Africa a stronger voice and more influence in ensuring its

Conclusion and recommendations

As shown, South Africa is an important contributor to the UN peace and security architecture. It possesses abundant experience gained during its own transition that allows it to contribute to peacebuilding at the UN. As an emerging Southern power, and one that has already played a vocal role in promoting an African standpoint at the UN and strengthening UN–AU relations, South Africa is poised to provide further assistance. As this paper has shown, there are a number of ways in which South Africa can strengthen its engagement with the UN peacebuilding architecture.

If South Africa wishes to increase its influence at the UN, it should consider staffing personnel in a way that ensures its strategic priorities are met. South Africa is not alone in seeking influence at the UN level and is in a prime position to assist smaller African states to adequately represent their concerns

and priorities by acting as a broker and/or facilitator.

More specifically, South Africa is already carrying out peacebuilding activities, and these experiences, as well as its own transition, give it the legitimacy to present best practices and lessons learned that can be of relevance to the UN peacebuilding debate. The IBSA Fund is a novel arrangement that, while small, has made a substantial impact through its activities. These experiences should be harnessed to promote South–South cooperation arrangements in future UN peacebuilding engagements.

Moreover, the 2015 UN peacebuilding review provides an opportunity for South Africa to lead discussions on its efficacy. The country heads the African caucus and can therefore ensure that African positions on the peacebuilding architecture are given serious consideration. In particular, beyond just pushing for topics that have been widely presented as being important, such as ownership and leadership, South Africa can help African countries to bring more substance and nuance to that debate. It is also critical to consider the peace and security aspects of the post-2015 development agenda if a coherent and coordinated response to peacebuilding is to be guaranteed. However, positions must be further refined. A few general questions should thus be considered:

- How can the PBA be structured more effectively?
- What does ownership really mean in practice?
- How can it be ensured that these processes are context specific?
- What can be done to ensure the relevance of the architecture?

As South Africa moves to establish SADPA, it must proactively seek out international partnerships that

complement and enhance its work.

The country is in a prime position to play a leading role in peacebuilding issues at a global and regional level and now has several opportunities to intensify and consolidate its influence.

Recommendations

South Africa's efforts are welcomed and needed, but much more can be done:

- Develop clearer strategies to increase the staffing of South African nationals at all levels of the UN that are in line with South Africa's priorities
- Examine ways of strengthening linkages between the AU and the UN and play a brokering role that supports the positions of smaller African states within the UN system
- Increase the linkages between experiences in the South-South cooperation debate and the peacebuilding field, through presenting lessons learned from bilateral/trilateral engagements as well as activities carried out through IBSA
- Ensure ownership remains a principal element of peacebuilding debates through fostering a debate that ensures that the 2015 review of the UN peacebuilding architecture is more aligned to the needs of recipient countries
- Refine the country's position on the post-2015 agenda roles in peace and security issues, beyond the African Common Position, through increased internal dialogue
- Allow SADPA to develop strong relationships with the mechanisms within the UN system

Notes

- 1 Although the UN peacebuilding architecture was not originally set up to serve as a new set of operational bodies, it has faced frequent criticism for doing so. See, for example, R Jenkins, *Peacebuilding: from concept to commission*, New York: Routledge, 2013; V Wyeth, *Peacebuilding at the UN over the last 10 years*, International Peace Institute (IPI), 2011, <http://www.frient.de/en/publications-service/news-details/article/peacebuilding-at-the-un-over-the-last-10-years.html>.
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About the authors

Amanda Lucey is a senior researcher in the Conflict Management and Peace Building Division of the ISS. She works on the 'Enhancing South African Post-Conflict Development and Peacebuilding Capacity in Africa' project. Amanda worked with MONUSCO as a political affairs officer in the DRC, and has previously worked with the UNDP in South Sudan as a rule of law officer. She holds an MPhil in Justice and Transformation (specialising in conflict resolution) from the University of Cape Town.

Sibongile Gida is a junior researcher in the Conflict Management and Peacebuilding Division of the ISS. Prior to working at the ISS she worked at the African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD) in the Knowledge Production Department. Sibongile holds a BPolSci in International Studies from the University of Pretoria and a B(Hons) in International Politics from the University of South Africa.

Gustavo de Carvalho is a senior researcher in the Conflict Management and Peacebuilding Division of the ISS. Gustavo has extensive experience in capacity development, policy support and research initiatives in the peacebuilding field in Africa. From 2009 to 2014 he worked at ACCORD as an analyst in its Training for Peace (TfP) Programme, and later as coordinator of its Peacebuilding Unit. Gustavo holds a BA in International Relations from the University of Brasilia, and an MSc in African studies from the University of Oxford.

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ISS Pretoria

Block C, Brooklyn Court,
361 Veale Street
New Muckleneuk,
Pretoria, South Africa
Tel: +27 12 346 9500
Fax: +27 12 460 0998
pretoria@issafrica.org

ISS Addis Ababa

5th Floor, Get House
Building, Africa Avenue,
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Tel: +251 11 515 6320
Fax: +251 11 515 6449
addisababa@issafrica.org

ISS Dakar

4th Floor, Immeuble Atryum
Route de Ouakam,
Dakar, Senegal
Tel: +221 33 860 3304/42
Fax: +221 33 860 3343
dakar@issafrica.org

ISS Nairobi

Braeside Gardens,
off Muthangari Road
Lavington, Nairobi, Kenya
Tel: +254 20 266 7208
Fax: +254 20 266 7198
nairobi@issafrica.org

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