

Concept Note

2025 Peacebuilding Commission Ministerial-level Meeting

25 September 2025, 10am – 1pm, Trusteeship Council Chamber

UN Headquarters, New York

Promoting Social Cohesion and Inclusive Governance to Foster Community Resilience and Sustainable Peace

Background

The Secretary-General's most recent report on Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace underlined that divisions within societies—whether rooted in political, ethnic, religious, or regional fault lines—are among the most persistent drivers of fragility and conflict. Where communities lack trust in institutions and in one another, grievances can escalate into violence, while in post-conflict contexts, a lack of reconciliation risks relapse into conflict.

Fostering social cohesion—the bonds of trust, inclusion, and solidarity between citizens, communities, and institutions—is therefore a cornerstone of prevention and peacebuilding. Social cohesion strengthens resilience to shocks, reduces vulnerability to manipulation by extremist actors, and supports inclusive governance. Conversely, weak social cohesion deepens marginalization, fuels polarization and conflicts within societies, and provides fertile ground for extremist recruitment.

The Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), through its convening role, has long worked to help Member States build bridges between different sectors and communities. It provides an inclusive platform where governments, civil society, and international partners can share experiences and identify ways to weave social cohesion into national prevention and peacebuilding strategies.

The Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) can also be a critical instrument to support initiatives that build trust among divided groups - be it through community reconciliation, youth empowerment, or inclusive governance. Financing such initiatives where national and local actors, in partnership with UN entities, can address root causes of conflict is central to preventing the outbreak or recurrence of violent conflict. Across Africa, the Middle East, and other regions, the PBF has supported youth empowerment programs, strengthened community resilience and reconciliation efforts, including transitional justice, and has supported inclusive governance—essential components of fostering sustainable peace.

Strengthening social cohesion and inclusive governance lies at the heart of Iraq's efforts to build resilience and achieve lasting peace. Since the defeat of ISIL/Da'esh, the country has advanced in stabilization and reconciliation, while also confronting the legacies of conflict and the compounded effects of climate vulnerability. Iraq's experience shows that social cohesion is a necessity, offering lessons for other contexts facing similar challenges.

Similarly, the Sahel region is grappling with the intersection of several destabilizing factors. Climate-driven livelihood disruptions—especially among pastoralist and farming communities—have heightened communal tensions and enabled violent extremist groups to exploit local grievances. The lack of socio-economic opportunities, especially for young people, further exacerbates these risks and gives rise to tensions within societies.

Objectives and Guiding Questions

This high-level meeting will give Ministers the opportunity to exchange strategies and experiences on fostering social cohesion as a core element of prevention and peacebuilding, including by effectively addressing strategic threats and drivers of conflict.

Key questions for discussion:

- What national policies and community-level initiatives have proven most effective in strengthening social cohesion as a means to prevent violent conflict or relapse?
- How can inclusive governance be designed to address grievances, reduce marginalization, and reinforce trust between communities and institutions?
- What role can the PBC and PBF play in supporting countries like Iraq, where building cohesion is essential for sustainable peace?
- How can social cohesion efforts be linked with broader strategies to address climate risks, violent extremism, and transnational challenges?

Format

The Ministerial-level meeting will take place on Thursday, 25 September, from 10:00 am -1:00 pm

All members of the United Nations are invited to participate and to speak for up to three minutes. Delegations that are unable to deliver their statements due to time constraints will have their statements circulated. Interpretation will be available in all UN official languages.

A list of speakers will be prepared in advance and will be arranged giving priority to PBC members and with due consideration to protocol and order of registration. To facilitate the participation of Ministers, the list of speakers will be shared with Member States in advance of the meeting.

Delegations are kindly invited to request to be inscribed in the list of speakers through the following [link](#), which will be open for registration from 5 PM on Thursday, 11 September, to 5 PM on Wednesday, 17 September.

Due to the limited capacity of the conference room, tickets to the event will be distributed on the following basis:

- 1+2 for delegations from PBC Members and from countries considered by the PBC
- 1+1 other Member States