

United Nations Peacebuilding Fund

On October 11, 2006, the United Nations launched the U.N. Peacebuilding Fund. The Fund will be used to provide financial assistance to countries emerging from conflict and will help facilitate some of the work of the U.N. Peacebuilding Commission. The United Nations General Assembly authorized the creation of the U.N. Peacebuilding Commission in December 2005.

Why “Peacebuilding”?

The peace and security challenges facing our interconnected world demand solutions that embrace a broader perspective that includes conflict prevention, responses during conflict, and post-conflict peacebuilding. Post-conflict states especially face unique challenges to consolidating peace. As U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan stated in his 1998 report on *The Cases of Conflict and the Promotion of Durable Peace and Sustainable Development in Africa*, “Experience has shown that the consolidation of peace in the aftermath of conflict requires more than purely diplomatic and military action, and that an integrated peace building effort is needed to address the various factors which have caused or are threatening a conflict.” In response to these needs, the international community acknowledged the need for a peacebuilding mechanism at the United Nations and thus created the [U.N. Peacebuilding Commission](#) at the U.N. World Summit in 2005.

The U.N. Peacebuilding Commission was created to identify states on the verge of collapse, provide assistance to prevent such collapses, and sustain efforts of the international community in post-conflict peacebuilding, especially after global attention wanes from the crises. It also provides a forum in which major stakeholders can share information about comprehensive post-conflict recovery efforts that take into account political, security, development and economic spheres.

What is the Peacebuilding Fund?

Though separate from the U.N. Peacebuilding Commission, the U.N. Peacebuilding Fund is the locus for donations and funding to support the work of both the U.N. Peacebuilding Commission and peacebuilding activities in states under consideration by the Commission. The U.N. Secretary General has the authority to designate other post-conflict countries as recipients of funds from the U.N. Peacebuilding Fund. Carolyn McAskie, Assistant Secretary General for Peacebuilding Support, stated at the launch of the U.N. Peacebuilding Fund that the Fund is crucial to the architecture of broader peacebuilding endeavors throughout the world.

Why Is a Peacebuilding Fund Important?

One of the greatest threats facing our world today is the existence of fragile states and inequality of resources among their populations. Instability and ignored grievances within fragile states create factors ripe for conflict, while states often emerge from conflict as fragile states. The U.N. Peacebuilding Fund would allow consistent support for peacebuilding initiatives so that states are less likely to slip back into a cycle of conflict. Due to its comprehensive nature, peacebuilding initiatives require concerted commitment in both word and funding from member states of the

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United Nations. Elections for a government emerging from conflict cannot take place without election committees, a voting apparatus, education campaigns, and election monitors – all of which require funding that post-conflict nations lack. In conflict situations, warring parties often destroy critical infrastructure like roads, hospitals, schools, and water sanitation systems; countries emerging from conflict find themselves lacking in resources, creating a situation where economic investment becomes crucial to reducing the risk of conflict recurrence. The Peacebuilding Fund could provide both the money and the expertise of the United Nations to rebuild infrastructure in a coordinated way through the U.N. Peacebuilding Commission, with its work funded by the Fund.

How will the Fund Be Used?

McAskie describes the Peacebuilding Fund as a “lively tool” that can be used in all sectors of government, in a post-conflict economy, and in civil societies emerging from conflict. Financial resources from the Fund can go towards helping a post-conflict government fund elections, truth and reconciliation commissions, strengthen its justice system, facilitate a process of refugee return, or strengthen the education system and policies.

The U.N. Peacebuilding Fund has a preliminary target pledge amount of \$250 million, with initial pledges in October 2006 already amounting to \$144 million. The Fund will be administered under the authority of the U.N. Secretary General through the Peacebuilding Support Office, which McAskie runs. Working with the U.N. Development Programme (UNDP) for financial management, the Fund will utilize UNDP field officers already on the ground in countries around the world to distribute funds. Norway is the first chair of the U.N. Peacebuilding Commission and the largest donor to the Fund so far. Burundi and Sierra Leone are the first post-conflict countries currently address by the U.N. Peacebuilding Commission, and the Commission is currently beginning the process of coordinating peacebuilding work in Burundi and Sierra Leone.

How Can the U.S. Benefit from the Fund?

Working with the international community to help support countries in post-conflict situations is one of the most promising ways to prevent conflict. The United States already contributes to U.N. peacekeeping missions in the immediate aftermath of conflict, as well as contributes to post-conflict reconstruction of war-torn societies through Department of Defense Directive 3000.05 and the State Department’s Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization. But countries in post-conflict situations face a multitude of challenges to peace and prosperity that no one nation can solve on its own. Pledging funds to the U.N. Peacebuilding Fund provides more benefits than costs to the U.S. by bringing together donations and commitments of the international community into one Fund for peacebuilding purposes. Donor coordination and coherence is essential to streamlining the efforts of the international community to meet the needs on the ground in a systematic way.

About Citizens for Global Solutions

Citizens for Global Solutions envisions a future in which nations work together to abolish war, protect our rights and freedoms, and solve the problems facing humanity that no nation can solve alone. This vision requires effective democratic global institutions that will apply the rule of law while respecting the diversity and autonomy of national and local communities. We work to build political will for our vision in the United States by educating Americans about our global interdependence, communicating global concerns to public officials, and developing proposals to create, reform, and strengthen international institutions such as the United Nations.

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