Obstacles to Peacebuilding: The Historical Record Revisited*

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Identification of a Major Obstacle to Peacebuilding

At midnight on December 31, 1991, the government of El Salvador and the FMLN (*Frente Farabundo Martí para la Liberación Nacional*) initialed a comprehensive accord to end their long war and carry out a number of far-reaching institutional reforms, the result of the UN's first mediation of an internal conflict. It provided for UN monitoring and promotion of the implementation of agreements by creating a multidisciplinary mission that would go far beyond the military responsibilities associated with traditional peacekeeping.

One month later, on January 31, 1992, with the UN seemingly coming into its own after decades of marginalization, the Security Council—meeting for the first time ever at the level of heads of state or government—asked Boutros Boutros-Ghali, who had just succeeded Pérez de Cuéllar as Secretary-General, to present to the membership his recommendations on how to strengthen the capacity of the UN for peacemaking, peacekeeping, and preventive diplomacy.

In his landmark *An Agenda for Peace*, Boutros-Ghali, inspired in the operation in El Salvador, added to the three areas a new one that he labeled 'post-conflict peace-building' (with the hyphen of the latter dropping over time). He defined it as the activities aimed at preventing the recurrence of conflict, as opposed to 'preventive diplomacy,' which is aimed at averting a conflict's outbreak (Boutros-Ghali 1992: 15-18). He saw it as a critically important new challenge for the UN in the aftermath of the Cold War—on a par with preventive diplomacy, peacemaking and peacekeeping (de Soto 2013: xvii-xviii).

Two years into the El Salvador operation, in an article entitled 'Obstacles to Peacebuilding,' published in *Foreign Policy,* we raised a number of questions regarding the capacity of the UN and its agencies to tackle them (de Soto & del Castillo 1994).[1]

Although Johan Galtung had coined the term 'peacebuilding' in 1976, Boutros-Ghali introduced it with his own twist as a major emerging UN challenge, placing it squarely in the framework of the UN's activity in the aftermath of conflict. In his view, the multidisciplinary nature of the support that the UN would need to sustain the peace in El Salvador—requiring all such activities to be subordinated to the overarching goal of ensuring non-recurrence—gave it a specificity that exceeded preventive diplomacy, peacemaking, or peacekeeping. Implicit in Boutros Ghali's initiative were two insights: the Salvadoran experience was likely to be followed by other interventions in internal conflict and such operations would result in deeper and more protracted involvement by the international community (de Soto 2013: xviii; Galtung 1976).[2]

Boutros Ghali's use of the term 'post-conflict peacebuilding' to describe what the UN was doing in El Salvador was apposite, given that the agreement, not only brought the

civil war to an end in an impeccably observed ceasefire, but included institutional and political reforms to ensure that there would be ways to tackle future disputes without resorting to war. The 'post-conflict' label would certainly not apply to later operations in Afghanistan, Iraq, and the DRC, among others, where weak central governments had little control over large parts of the country that remained insecure, fell back into conflict, or functioned like autonomous tribal or sectarian enclaves, often led by powerful warlords.

To cope with the unfolding challenges, Boutros-Ghali posited that the political and economic realities of the time required 'an integrated approach to human security.' His approach called for humanitarian, political, military, human rights, and socio-economic problems to be addressed jointly by the UN and its agencies in order to avoid potential clashes of competence and waste of resources. In his view, while an integrated approach to human security was desirable as a rule, it was imperative in the transition to peace as a means to avoid the recurrence of major crises or violence.

Although debates about the UN's capacity to handle 'peacekeeping' operations continued, our 1994 article argued that a major challenge for the organization lay with most of its multidisciplinary missions, that is, those which include both military and civilian responsibilities. These missions involve not only the UN but also a large number of programs and agencies within the UN system, in particular the Bretton Woods institutions.

El Salvador allowed us to identify a problem that would continue to haunt countries in such transition for the next quarter of a century: that the UN and the Bretton Woods institutions are often involved in separate but simultaneous political and economic processes which placed them on a collision course. While many analysts and practitioners interpreted our article as simply calling attention to the lack of coordination between these institutions, our message went far beyond: we saw that unless the political and economic objectives of a transition were effectively integrated—in a way that ensures priority for the goal of preventing recurrence of conflict—and allocation for both was made in the national budget, key peace-related programs might become unimplementable, and thus imperil efforts to end a conflict durably.

In El Salvador, the IMF was supporting a typical neo-liberal economic stabilization and structural reform program, dating from 1990 when the country was still at war—with strong ownership of the President and his economic team. In fact, on January 6, 1992, after concluding the 1991 Article IV consultations (the annual surveillance exercise conducted by the IMF on member states), the IMF Board of Directors approved a 14-month Stand-By Arrangement, the normal lending mechanism at the time for countries not affected by war.[3]

The Arrangement was concluded mere days after the initialing of the El Salvador peace agreement, reached in UN-led negotiations, with the support of the Security Council. These wide-ranging accords, which had significant economic consequences, were to become part of the Chapultepec Peace Agreement, signed in Mexico City on January 16,

1992. As de Soto—the UN peace mediator—acknowledges, although the UN had briefed the IMF and the Bank in mid-1991 on the broad elements of the agreements that were likely to emerge, the IMF-sponsored program did not incorporate the needs of the UN-negotiated peace agreement, calling instead for a midterm review of the program in September of that year.[4]

The Salvadoran authorities expected the peace accord to allow for a reduction in military outlays and thus make room for an increase in social expenditure (the so-called fiscal 'peace dividend'). There was a clear understanding between the government and the IMF that peace-related expenditure would have to be financed by additional public savings, reallocation of other public expenditure, or external resources (IMF, 1991; del Castillo 2001: 1976). This was not only an unrealistic scenario: it was oblivious of Lord Keynes' dictum that the high economic consequences of peace needed to be reflected in budgetary allocations (Keynes, 1920).

It soon became clear, as 1992 unfolded, that the lack of financing for critical peace-related programs—particularly the 'arms-for-land' program and the creation of the entirely new civilian police, the public security academy, and the human rights ombudsman—together with the domestic financing constraints imposed by IMF conditionality, would make the implementation of such programs difficult if not impossible. Not surprisingly, by September the country was at the brink of war a mere nine months after Chapultepec (Goulding 2002: 241-45).[5]

In his *Agenda*, Boutros-Ghali had argued that the Secretary-General should be able 'to mobilize the resources needed for … positive leverage and engage the collective efforts of the UN system for the peaceful resolution of a conflict.' In his *Supplement to An Agenda for Peace*, addressing the issue we had raised in our 1994 article, Boutros-Ghali went further, specifically positing that 'in putting together the peacebuilding elements in a comprehensive settlement plan, the UN should consult the IFIs [the international financial institutions] to ensure that the cost of implementing the plan is taken into account in the design of the economic plans of the governments concerned' (Boutros-Ghali 1995: 23-24). Unfortunately the progenitor of the 'integrated approach to human security' failed to take the small practical steps needed to put the approach into practice (del Castillo 2008: 127-28).

National Ownership, Economic Reconstruction, and Peacebuilding

In the subsequent twenty-five years the demands on the UN to support countries coming out of war have greatly increased. As Thomas Weiss has noted, picking up the pieces after the dust of conflict has settled 'has become *the* growth industry in the United Nations conflict business' (Weiss, 2013: vii).

In our 1994 article we posited that, as a general rule, it was the role of sovereign governments to harmonize policies and set priorities as they embarked on a multipronged transition to peace. We argued that 'an arbitrary model of nation building' should not be

imposed on reluctant, sometimes faraway countries. We envisaged transitions in which the sovereign government would be in the front seat designing and implementing policies in which it would have 'strong ownership,' with the UN system and the Bretton Woods institutions seated behind, close enough to facilitate, coordinate, and monitor the international community's technical and financial support.

This was largely the pattern of the early1990s in countries such as El Salvador and Mozambique. In El Salvador, in particular, the government, which negotiated the peace agreement and was involved in its implementation—the peacebuilding phase—was making all sovereign decisions, even if some were constrained by donors' conditionality and other financial restrictions. Decisions were constrained as well by the fact that the government was one of two parties in the recently ended conflict, and that the other—undefeated—was not yet part of the political system.

Not all wars ended by negotiation, however: in several cases starting in the mid-1990s the transition to peace occurred in a radical and unpredictable way through military intervention. After the human tragedies in Rwanda and Srebrenica, Boutros-Ghali's *Supplement* noted that a new breed of intra-state and ethnic conflicts presented the UN with operational challenges not encountered since the Congo operation in the early 1960s (Boutros-Ghali 1995: 5).

A key feature of these crises was the collapse of state institutions. The ensuing international intervention extended beyond military, humanitarian, human rights, and national reconciliation tasks to strengthen governance and reactivate collapsed economies. This was the case in Rwanda and Burundi and also, by the turn of the century, in Kosovo and East Timor. Given the non- or pre-state status of the latter two, the UN assumed a major role in statebuilding after the Security Council gave the organization a transitional mandate to carry out all executive and legislative functions until a final status on sovereignty was established.

The 'war on terror' that followed the attacks of September 11, 2001, including the US-led military interventions in Afghanistan in October 2001 and Iraq in March 2003, introduced a new factor not present at the time of our 1994 article, in which national governments had little policy ownership and the UN would assume very different positions. The UN played a far-reaching role (transitional UN administrations) in Kosovo and East Timor, but only a marginal one in Iraq (the US-led Coalition Provisional Authority) and to some extent in Afghanistan where the UN initially opted for a 'light' operational approach (del Castillo 2008a: 12-15).

The period following military intervention to end war or to effect régime change, like the one which follows peace agreements, involve a multipronged path to return to peace, which includes often simultaneous security, political, social, and economic transitions. These four transitions are closely interrelated and should be mutually reinforcing. In particular, the economic transition—also referred to as 'economic reconstruction' or the 'economics of peace'—should be a strong pillar in peacebuilding efforts, but it has mostly been neglected. The 'economics of peace' is an intermediate phase between the

'economics of war' and 'the economics of development.' These phases are not necessarily sequential. In fact, they often overlap in various ways at different times and places. Irrespective of the shape it takes, the main objective of this phase must be to avoid relapsing into conflict (del Castillo 2015a).

Economic reconstruction will not succeed unless the government tackles and accommodates as soon as feasible potential 'spoilers' who benefit from the state of war and do not necessarily welcome the arrival of peace. Spoilers tend to have an economic stake in illicit activities including drug production and trafficking, smuggling, extortion, and the many other racketeering activities that thrive during wars, including aid manipulation (del Castillo 2014c; Ghani & Lockhart 2008: 23-24). As Weiss and Hoffman noted, unusual predatory economic opportunities abound during reconstruction, including the appropriation of aid for illegal purposes (Weiss & Hoffman 2005: 299–300).

One of the major factors that has obstructed peacebuilding and delayed countries from standing on their own feet as wars end is the wrongheaded practice of moving directly from the war economy to 'development as usual'—that is, optimal economic policies and practices—disregarding the effects of war on the economy. Although it is true that war-torn countries face the development challenges that other poor countries do—such as alleviating poverty and complying with the UN development goals—and will have to confront them in the transition from war, these are long-term propositions. In the short run, the primary challenge of economic reconstruction—fundamentally different from development as usual—is to contribute to national reconciliation and the consolidation of peace, so as to avert a relapse into war. Absent consolidation, which must be constructed brick by brick, peace will not last. Without peace, development will not be sustainable del Castillo 2008a: 19-20, 25-27).

Besides the conceptual tangle, there is considerable confusion as to the taxonomy of the term 'economic reconstruction.' The press and many analysts as well as some politicians in donor countries use various terms interchangeably. Thus they refer to 'economic reconstruction' as 'nation-building' (the construction of a national identity) or 'statebuilding' (the construction of a functioning state) or simply 'development.' The US State Department refers to it as 'post-conflict stabilization and reconstruction,' the UNDP as 'early recovery,' and the World Bank as 'post-conflict reconstruction.' The UN uses the term 'peacebuilding' to cover all reconstruction-related activities, including political, security, social, and economics.[6]

Aid is critical to war-torn countries during the reconstruction phase since their savings capacity is very low or non-existent and there is little to tax in terms of production or exports. In the new millennium, however, UN-led peace operations in Liberia and in Haiti, as well as US-led operations in Afghanistan in which donor countries channeled a large part of their economic aid outside the government budget of recipient countries and according to their own agendas, have led to weak government 'ownership' of programs and a fragmented and highly ineffective use of reconstruction aid. This phenomenon, well documented in the literature, has been a major obstacle to peacebuilding and has led

many countries into an aid trap (del Castillo 2014b; 2012 for evidence and references).[7]

Other aspects of aid have also impeded successful peacebuilding. Ghani and Lockhart, for example, argue that 'While alleviating some of the symptoms of suffering, the international aid system has failed to address the root causes and unwittingly contributes to the perpetuation of problems. With rare exceptions, rather than becoming a catalyst for a country's journey to stability and prosperity, the aid system has variously assumed the position of bystander, colluder, fashion setter, provider of substitute services, or dictator of policies' (Ghani & Lockhart 2008: 66, 77).[8]

Another major obstacle has been the lack of preparedness of the international community—particularly the UN and the US government—to support economic reconstruction and peacebuilding effectively (del Castillo 2008a: 130-36, 160-61; 2014b: 162-75). As reports of internal oversight bodies of the UN and the United States called attention to major weaknesses in culture, management oversight, waste, and even corruption, Secretary-General Annan acknowledged that 'A damaged culture, which is seen as limiting creativity, enterprise, innovation and indeed leadership itself, has meant that many managers have simply lost the capacity to manage' (cited in Ghani & Lockhart 2008: 91-95).

At the same time, as Mats Berdal and Hannah Davies noted, the growth of such diverse UN peace and statebuilding activities over the last decades has magnified the tensions built into the system; they cite the conclusion from the 2006 High Level Panel on System-Wide Coherence that the organization has become 'fragmented and weak … [with] a proliferation of agencies mandates and offices creating duplication and dulling the focus on outcomes with moribund entities never discontinued' (Berdal and Davies 2012: 116-117; Berdal 2014: 368).

US-led peace and statebuilding operations in Iraq and Afghanistan have highlighted the tensions within the United States government as well—not at all unlike the tensions identified with respect to the UN. As Stuart Bower, the former Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction, pointed out 'The Iraq experience exposed the truth that the United States is not well structured to carry out overseas contingency rebuilding operations.' He argues that the interagency integration essential to stabilization and reconstruction operations was lacking, and that 'scattered pieces of the current inchoate system needed to be pulled together under a single roof' (Bowen 2012: 3). Afghanistan, of course, was also affected by this lack of interagency integration (del Castillo 2014b: 172-74).

Unfortunately, after twenty-five years, and despite the large amount of resources—both military and financial—allocated to peacebuilding, the evidence, as we will now attempt to demonstrate, reveals that the obstacles to peacebuilding remain largely unsurmounted and the international community seems no better prepared to play an effective role in the reconstruction of war-torn countries than it was at the end of the Cold War.

Although the details are discussed elsewhere, it is important to call attention to the bleak

record. Of the 21 countries in which the UN had multidisciplinary operations since the end of the Cold War, 12 have clearly relapsed into conflict (57 per cent) during the first decade in the transition. Some of them have not relapsed thanks to costly peacekeeping operations or foreign troops in place to keep the peace.[9] The Failed States Index includes 11 of these countries among its 25 worst performers, many of which are still at war. The Peace Index includes six of these countries among its eight worst performers (del Castillo 2015a: Tables 1-2).

Even those that have avoided relapsing into conflict have been largely unable to regain their footing and thrive—despite the absence of war and the large foreign aid and technical assistance they have received. In the process, many have become highly aid dependent. Mozambique, for example, often hailed by the UN and the World Bank as a success story, remains one of the poorest and most destitute countries in the world, still ranking among the ten-worst performers in the *Human Development Index* after more than two decades of peace (ibid).

Peacebuilding: The Historical Record Revisited

Given the disappointing record of war-torn countries since the end of the Cold War, it is important to analyze how economic reconstruction has been implemented during this period and under what premises. Without understanding the strengths and weaknesses of past operations and drawing from them lessons for the future, it will be difficult to find ways to minimize future obstacles to peacebuilding.

Although security is a precondition for the success of the overall transition to peace, the reverse is also true: political, economic, and social progress affects security positively. This is what economists call 'reverse causality' and others refer to as 'virtuous' circle' or 'two sides of the same coin' (Rubin et al. 2003: 18; Weinbaum 2006: 139). Whatever the name of this two-way process, security will not take root without political reform, economic reconstruction, and national reconciliation (del Castillo 2014b: 148).

Given the scarcity and uncertainty with respect to aid flows for policymaking in most countries in a transition to peace, without effective economic reconstruction (economic transition), efforts at political transformation and national reconciliation (the political and social transitions)—peacebuilding and peace consolidation will not succeed. Doyle and Sambanis have found empirical evidence that 'peace operations supplemented by extensive programs to rebuild economies have a particularly prominent role in promoting long-term peace.' Thus, in addition to security and institutions to address future grievances peacefully, countries in the transition to peace need 'an economy capable of offering civilian employment to former soldiers and material progress to future citizens' (Doyle & Sambanis 2006: 5). Moreover, as Richard Caplan, rightly points out, given the fiscal constraints of the public sector, job creation must be largely achieved through the start-up of new enterprises (Caplan 2005: 151).

The failure of the UN to support the creation of inclusive, dynamic, and sustainable

economies in countries in which it has multidisciplinary operations has in turn been a major obstacle to the organization's efforts to reintegrate former combatants, returnees and the internally displaced. Indeed, reintegration has failed mostly because of the temporary and therefore unsustainable nature of many of the employment opportunities for disarming combatants, particularly through public infrastructure projects and jobs with foreign agencies (del Castillo 2014b: 149, 243,).

Despite clear evidence that the economic transition affects the other areas and vice-versa, the UN has failed to recognize the importance of economic reconstruction and sustainable reintegration as a critical socio-economic component of 'peacebuilding.' Likewise, by focusing on a misguided 'peace-through-military' strategy in Afghanistan and Iraq—with economic reconstruction on the side and only as an afterthought—the US government has also ignored these reverse causalities and it has basically proceeded as if peace could be established by military means alone. Experience attests to how inefficiencies and lack of progress with respect to the three other areas led in turn to the deterioration of security, with tragic human and financial consequences both to the countries and to foreign interveners in those countries (del Castillo 2014b: 156–58).

 A quarter of a century ago the general assumption was that, because countries emerging from war and starting the transition to peace were at low levels of development, they should resume as quickly as possible 'development as usual' policies with the support of UNDP and the World Bank. That is how these organizations assumed *de facto* leadership.

However, the evidence soon showed that this assumption was mistaken; economic reconstruction amid the complex multipronged transition to peace is fundamentally different from normal development that takes place in the absence of major conflict.[10] The knee-jerk temptation to break away from the qualitatively different approach that emphasizes potential threats to peace clearly represented a failure to grasp the quintessentially political nature of the transition underway.[11]

As a *CEPAL Review* article entitled 'Post-Conflict Peace-Building: A Challenge for the United Nations' of April 1995 posited,

> Policy choices are more restricted in countries coming out of conflict, which must reconcile the often-conflicting demands of peace and development. [Among the] reasons why we would argue that these situations are different and therefore deserve special treatment from the international community [is that] countries coming out of conflict faced the double burden of implementing peace-related programs in addition to normal development challenges (del Castillo, 1995: 37).

It also became abundantly clear at the time that 'economic stabilization and structural reform are crucial ingredients of peacebuilding efforts since the consolidation of peace cannot take place without economic stability' (ibid).

Because of this, 'economic reconstruction' in the post-Cold War context of intra-state conflicts and poor countries had to be defined more broadly than at the time of the

Marshall Plan. In addition to rehabilitation of basic services and infrastructure, economic reconstruction has to include the creation (or modernization) of a basic macro- and microeconomic institutional and policy framework necessary to create a viable economy. An economy is not viable unless it can provide sustainable work opportunities for the large majority of men and women—particularly to the large percentage of youth in the population of these countries including reintegrating combatants—without which peace will be imperiled (del Castillo 2008a: 29-30, 22-25).

Despite its importance, the issue of economic reconstruction in the post-Cold War context failed to spark a rigorous theoretical and practical debate among policymakers, practitioners, donors, academics, economists, and other stakeholders, as it did at the time of the Marshall Plan. Del Castillo warned in 1995 that 'The need for the UN to become more immersed in the multidisciplinary aspects of post-conflict peace building requires major rethinking and an analytical and operational redefinition of relationships and comparative advantages' (del Castillo 1995: 27).

Yet, as James Boyce pointed out in relation to El Salvador, despite the widely-recognized interdependence between peace and development, 'there was little systematic discussion of how economic policy should be reshaped in the special circumstances of a country emerging from civil war. … the government and the international financial institutions have pursued essentially the same macroeconomic stabilization and structural adjustment policies they would have followed had the country never been at war. … Indeed, many economists seem oblivious to the need to modify their policy prescriptions…' (Boyce 1996: 1-3).[12]

Perhaps due to the absence of such a discussion, key actors in the development field have failed to accept the kernel notion that if the central purpose of peacebuilding is to avert relapse of conflict, a major component must be economic reconstruction. The latter requires the adoption of inclusive policies so as to ensure a peace dividend for the large majority of the population. Having missed that point, many of the actors have failed to accept the corollary that this process requires impartial political leadership since the objective of peace—which is eminently political—should always prevail over the objective of development, which is eminently economic, because there cannot be sustained development without peace.[13] The passion with which some of us in the Secretary-General's office argued the point at the time was not echoed or matched by the leadership (del Castillo 2008a: 41-42).

Absent acceptance of this basic concept, economic reconstruction was approached—both by national governments and by the international community that supported them—as if it were development as usual (del Castillo 2008a: 25-26). It took only a few months for some of us at the UN working on El Salvador, Mozambique, Cambodia, and other countries to realize the serious mistake.

Since then, it has been clear that one of the most daunting challenges in carrying out post-conflict economic reconstruction is the design and implementation of an economic program for the economic reconstruction of the country within the constraints and

financial requirements of security, political reform, and national reconciliation efforts resulting from a political agreement for peace. While the IMF normally supports the former, the latter results from peace agreements, usually brokered by the United Nations—or from military intervention (often under different countries' leadership). We identified this challenge in our 1994 article, and it has not gone away.

The initialing of the accords ending the war in El Salvador on New Year's Eve had no effect on the approval by the IMF Board of Directors, scarcely six days later, of a program containing strict fiscal objectives for 1992. It placed the UN-mediated peace accord and the IMF-sponsored program on a collision course, and the government was soon faced with a choice between complying with the provisions of the former and meeting its commitments under the latter.

Understandably, the government did not want to undermine the macroeconomic gains made since 1990, but delays in the implementation of the peace accords, due at least in part to the government's failure to finance them, led the country back to the brink of war when the FMLN stopped demobilization in the face of the government's non-compliance. Thus on January 6, 1992 the IMF Board of Directors sacrificed the ability of the government to implement political agreements crucial to the consolidation of peace on the altar of budgetary discipline and macroeconomic policy. It should not have come as a surprise that barely nine months after its signature the implementation of the El Salvador peace accord almost ran aground (Goulding 2004: 241-245).

This was a glaring example of the extent to which such transitions are not simply a matter of resuming development-as-usual. Optimal or first-best economic policies are manifestly not the best recipe for dealing with such challenges. As the 1995 *CEPAL Review* article posited, war-torn countries

> … have to settle for less than optimal policies in their economic reform efforts so as to accommodate the additional financial burden of reconstruction and peace consolidation. The latter includes the reintegration of former combatants and other estranged groups into productive activities and the development of an adequate institutional framework to foster national reconciliation. …The imperative of peace consolidation competes with the conventional imperative of development, putting tremendous pressure on policy decisions, especially budgetary allocations (del Castillo, 1995: 29-30).

This was clearly not a prescription for bad economic policies. As James Boyce noted, 'The special features of the [post-conflict] transition do not imply that sound economic policies are unnecessary, nor that they should be sacrificed to political expediency. But in the aftermath of civil war the soundness of policies can be ascertained only in light of the political economy of the peace process' (Boyce 1996: 4).

There was a clear difference of opinion at the time between the UN and the World Bank. At the Secretary-General's office we argued that war-torn countries have needs of a different nature, which has important policy considerations. We also argued that, given

the primacy of the political objective in economic reconstruction (to ensure non-relapse), a different yardstick should be used to measure success than is the case under normal development conditions. Given that first-best economic policies were often neither possible nor desirable, it was not appropriate to measure success by purely economic or financial indicators (del Castillo 2008a: 43-45).[14]

In the specific case of El Salvador, we argued that, after 12 years of war, the main objective of the arms-for-land program was to give preference to former combatants and their supporters to ensure that they engaged in productive activities and would not be tempted to return to fighting. Elizabeth Wood referred to 'the transfer of private properties in the conflicted zones' as 'one of the most politically sensitive parts of the agreement (Wood 1996: 83).

In 1993, in a meeting at the Secretary-General's office where the intention was to get the World Bank involved with the arms-for-land program, the Bank's country team argued that there were 300,000 peasants without land, and that preferences should not be given to a few. It was typical of the Bank at the time to stick to the 'equity principle' of normal development—where you attend to all those in need equally—rather than to the 'ethics of reconstruction.' The latter justifies giving in the immediate transition to peace preferential treatment to those groups most affected by the crisis to ensure that they would give up arms, even if other groups in the country have comparable needs. To do otherwise is to act as a recruiting sergeant for spoilers.[15]

In 1995, Boutros-Ghali attempted to increase the links between the UN political and the economics departments. His first move was to ask the head of the economics department to convene and chair an inter-departmental task force for the purpose of drawing up an *Inventory of Post-Conflict Peacebuilding Activities* to identify actions and techniques relevant to post-conflict situations as well as the UN agencies that could provide support in the different areas. The 'Introduction' argued that,

> Post-conflict activities should be incorporated as soon as feasible into the development strategy of the country. However, during the immediate, fragile post-conflict phase, which is by nature transitory, such activities are quite distinct from normal development... (UN, 1996).

This was because the 'political' objective should prevail during this phase, an issue that we had addressed in our 1994 article and raised at the *International Colloquium on Post-Conflict Reconstruction Strategies* in Stadtschlaining, Austria, in June 1995. At the time, the UNDP and some of the other UN agencies disputed the specificity of economic reconstruction in the fragile transition phase and continued to argue for a 'continuum from humanitarian relief to development'—an operational concept that UNDP itself later acknowledged was not useful.[16]

Because of the 'political' nature of peacebuilding activities, including economic reconstruction, we emphasized the leading role that the UN—through its political department—had to play vis-à-vis the agencies of the UN system and the Bretton Woods

institutions, both strategically and operationally on the ground. Dame Margaret Anstee, the Chairperson of the Colloquium and former Under-Secretary General and head of the UN operation in Angola, came to share our position fully, as reflected in her letter of July 15, 1995, to the Secretary-General to report on the Colloquium, as well as in the *Synopsis and Conclusions of the Colloquium* (UN 1995a, 1995b). In his reply to Anstee of August 10, 1995, the Secretary-General particularly noted 'the finding of the Colloquium that the mission involved in post-conflict peacebuilding, while using a variety of tools, is essentially *political*, and is thus fundamentally different in nature from normal relief or development activities' (cited in del Castillo 2008a: 30-33).

In his letter, the Secretary-General also noted 'the suggestion that appropriate systems and procedures need to be set up at Headquarters to ensure that these responsibilities are discharged on my behalf,' as well as the proposal that 'a specific Department should act as a focal point, and marshal all the necessary staff and other elements needed on an *ad hoc* basis whenever circumstances demanded,' and that this might be the political department. Despite what seemed like a commitment on the part of the Secretary-General this focal unit was never created (ibid).

It took well over a decade for the World Bank to accept the basic premise that post-conflict reconstruction is not development as usual. As Professor Paul Collier from Oxford University, and a former director of the World Bank development research group, wrote in 2008,

> Indeed, until recently, the organizations dedicated to economic development did not systematically distinguish post-conflict settings as requiring a distinctive approach. Yet policy in the post-conflict phase needs to be distinctive, both that of the government and that of the donor agencies. It should not be simply development as usual (Collier 2008: 103).

In a major speech the same year, the then President of the World Bank, Robert Zoellick, also reckoned that 'too often, the development community has treated states affected by fragility and conflict simply as harder cases of development.' Expressing concern about the poor record of war-torn countries, he finally acknowledged, 'development projects may need to be suboptimal economically—good enough rather than first-best' (Zoellick, 2008). We couldn't have put it better ourselves.

Changing the status quo has never been easy, and these institutions have proved difficult to change. Unfortunately, what was finally recognized conceptually has not yet translated into operational changes. Moreover, the *World Bank Development Report 2011: Conflict, Security, and Development* did not even mention this issue. Interestingly, although Zoellick refers to his 'Securing Development' speech in the *Prologue*, there is no mention of it, either in the 384-page report or in the bibliography.[17] Is this indicative of what the Bank's staff continues to think of the need for second-best economic policies to sustain the peace during reconstruction? At the very least, it seems to confirm that there does not exist, at the World Bank, the equivalent of Papal infallibility. Indeed, there are little signs that the organization has changed its development as usual practices in any

significant way.

Following the experience of El Salvador that created serious strains between the UN and the IMF, the latter prepared, at the request of the Secretary-General, a minimalist monetary and fiscal framework for policymaking that would be simple enough so as not to put unnecessary pressure on the scarce technical, administrative, and managerial capacity of war-torn countries. These papers, however, have not been used and in fact few people at the UN seem to know of their existence (IMF 1995a, 1995b; del Castillo 2008a: 280–89).

Moreover, in his speech 'The G-7 in 1996: What is at stake,' the Managing Director, Michel Camdessus, recognized that 'the volume of our technical assistance resources is insufficient and our methods especially, are ill-suited' to post-conflict countries where 'it is necessary to effect rapidly a sort of blood transfusion between the government of yesterday and that of tomorrow… This kind of assistance … must be reinvented' (Camdessus 1996). Despite this realization, it was only in 2005 that Fund staff accepted that tax policy in post-conflict situations may require adopting policies that are not 'first best' from an efficiency point of view and executive directors agreed, with the right caveat that policies which are not optimal should be phased out as soon as feasible (del Castillo 2008a: 280–81 for details).

To be fair, the Bretton Woods institutions have somewhat improved the terms of their lending to war-torn and other fragile societies (del Castillo 2010a: 88–90; del Castillo 2008b: 1281–1292), as they have improved the way they work with the UN in those countries. But the policy of these institutions remains to use their advice and lending conditionality[18] to create a perfect macroeconomic framework based on inflexible monetary and fiscal policies and unrealistic fiscal and external targets—a framework that has clearly deprived these countries of the simplicity and flexibility that is so essential to them.[19] They have also used it to establish the microeconomic foundations in these countries based on pure laissez-faire policies that often hurt the large majority of the rural population (del Castillo 2008a: 177–179; 2015a).[20]

Despite more financing and better terms for war-torn countries, these institutions continued to ignore the fact that, because economic policymaking is constrained by political considerations and the need for reconciliation, 'pursuing policies that are optimal from an economic viewpoint—particularly in terms of financing—can have tragic consequences for the political, security and social transitions' (del Castillo, 2008a: 4). As Susan Woodward notes, the Bretton Woods institutions recognize the need for flexibility and adaptability but recur to the danger of 'moral hazard' whenever they are requested or pressured to deviate from their script. As she stresses, 'their policies are not designed for the particular needs and conditions of countries emerging from war' (Woodward 2013: 141-42)

IMF-sponsored economic stabilization programs in war-torn countries do require extra flexibility and pragmatism to accommodate the financial implications of peace-related programs, particularly of programs such as counter-narcotics, arms-for-land, security, and

other such programs that are not readily funded by donors.

However, more flexible targets or better financing alone will not necessarily lead to a more effective outcome, as the experience of El Salvador well attests. Although many academics continue to argue along the lines of our 1994 article that it was the austerity imposed by the IMF-program that was the major obstacle to peacebuilding, the experience of El Salvador provides conclusive evidence that relaxing IMF conditionality—as indeed happened in 1993-94 when the country reached program targets with a margin—will not by itself improve matters (del Castillo 2001: 1969). As detailed in reports of the Secretary-General, the development as usual approach, together with various implementation problems continued to be obstacles to peacebuilding. Administrative, operational, technical, legal, and logistical deficiencies, as well as the lack of appropriate technical expertise of the UN on the ground—made UN support in overcoming these problems inadequate.

Without the necessary support, most war-torn countries lack the ability to design conflict-sensitive economic fiscal and growth policies that can reactivate the economy in an inclusive and sustainable way—*sine qua non* for successful peacebuilding. With it, they could enable the large majority of the population to benefit from a peace dividend in terms of better lives and livelihoods. Many of these countries have grown fast (albeit from low levels) through optimal economic policies that benefit mostly foreign investors and domestic elites, but the productive capacity and creativity of the large majority—excluded from a level-playing field—has been neglected (del Castillo, 2014b: 162-65; 2015a). As Addison has rightly noted, inclusive growth does not inevitably follow from peace. If little is done to help the majority to recover, a narrow elite may reap most of the benefits (Addison 2003: 3).

After a decade of UN multidisciplinary operations, Susan Woodward warned about the lack of any systematic analysis of the contribution of economic factors to peacebuilding (Woodward 2002, p. 183). Despite her seminal work in calling attention to this deficiency, academics and practitioners alike continue to largely neglect the economic aspects of peacebuilding. Such neglect is glaring in comparison to other aspects of the transition such as political and security reform, human rights, the rule of law, governance, and social issues.[21]

Because of the need to create conflict-sensitive and impartial economic policies (that is, policies that do not discriminate against any group) during the economic reconstruction phase to ensure that conflict will not recur, the operational capacity of the UN in economic and financial matters is crucial. Without it, a productive collaboration with the Bretton Woods institutions will not be effective (del Castillo, 2008: 62-66).

Peacebuilding: From Conceptualization to Operationalization

Boutros-Ghali's quasi-epiphanic conceptualization of the need to integrate political, security, social, and economic issues in the post-conflict context notwithstanding, he did

not make it fully operational at the UN Secretariat. At the same time, since 1995, the UNDP, the World Bank and other institutions, including bilateral agencies, created or expanded specialized departments to deal with post-conflict economic reconstruction.

Most often, however, these institutions focused on the larger issue of 'fragile states'—including both conflict-affected and other poor and vulnerable states. The latter unquestionably share many of the features of the former but they lack the high risk of conflict recurrence that is unique to the latter. It is precisely such risk that distinguishes the two and makes return on investment in war-torn countries much higher. Likewise, such risk imposes constraints for policymaking in conflict situations different from those faced by other fragile states. It is precisely the inability to deal with such risk that has been at the heart of the international community's critical failure to make peacebuilding more effective.[22]

 Kofi Annan, who took over as secretary-general in 1997, did little better than his predecessor to improve the operational capacity of the UN Secretariat to deal with war-torn countries. This was not for lack of expert opinions and commissioned reports. For example, nothing was done to follow up on the decision to make the political department the leader in peacebuilding (del Castillo 2008: 45-47; Jenkins 2014: 53). The report on *Renewing the United Nations: A Programme for Reform*, noted however that 'the SG has designated the Department of Political Affairs as the United Nations focal point for post-conflict peacebuilding—that is, the mechanism for ensuring that the UN efforts in countries that are emerging from crisis are fully integrated and faithfully reflect the mission objectives specified by the Security Council and the Secretary General.' This department 'will carry out its functions in its capacity as convenor of the Executive Committee for Peace and Security' (UN, 1997). Despite the clear message in this report, no operational steps were taken to ensure its ability to discharge this function and an integrated approach under clear leadership remained elusive.[23]

Indeed, some of the reports during Annan's tenure had unintended consequences. For example, by proposing that UNDP and the World Bank lead peacebuilding operations, the 2000 *Report of the Panel on UN Peacekeeping*—known as the Brahimi Report (UN 2000)—directly contradicted the notion of post-conflict peacebuilding as enshrined in *An Agenda for Peace*, advocating instead a return to the failed development-as-usual approach to economic reconstruction and peacebuilding that had proven so ineffective in consolidating peace (del Castillo, 2008a: 56-58).

Two elements of the Brahimi report were striking. The first one was a clear indication of the continuing lack of communication between diplomats and other political officials at the UN and economic officials at the IMF. By allocating responsibility for the formulation of peacebuilding strategies—including both preventive and post-conflict to the Executive Committee on Peace and Security, chaired by the head of the political department, in which neither the UN economics department nor the IMF participated (although the World Bank was invited to join), the report essentially ignored critical economic reconstruction issues. Did members of the panel consider that economic issues were not relevant to peacebuilding activities? How could financial requirements of peace-

related programs be incorporated into the IMF-sponsored economic program if peacebuilders at the UN and economic stabilization and reform gurus at the IMF did not even talk to each other at a technical level?[24] The otherwise positive decision of allocating responsibility to a committee chaired by the head of the political department was undone by this gaping omission—which appeared to indicate that the nature of the problem was not grasped by the organization that had conceptualized it and proclaimed it to the world.

The other striking feature is that the report concluded that, operationally—that is, at the level of the implementation of post-conflict strategies—the UNDP has 'untapped potential,' and that, in cooperation with other UN agencies, funds, and programs including the World Bank, it is best placed to 'lead peacebuilding activities.' Thus, as Necla Tschirgi (2004, p. 5) recognized, peacebuilding found temporary and tenuous shelter under the roof of the development agencies. This was particularly surprising since a UNDP evaluation of its work in conflicts and disaster situations had recognized that 'the normally close association of UNDP with governments [that] seemed to leave it particularly ill-equipped to deal with new emergency situations' (UNDP 1994: 6; 2000: 13). As mentioned earlier, key non-state actors do not generally perceive UNDP as an impartial player, given its institutional partnership with governments.[25]

A matter of much debate is whether the so-called 'Peacebuilding Architecture' adopted by identical resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council in December 2005, pursuant to the 60th anniversary World Summit Outcome, improved UN assistance to war-torn countries and reduced the risk that conflict will recur.[26] These resolutions created the Peacebuilding Commission (the 'Commission'), an intergovernmental advisory body (to the Council and the Assembly) composed of 31 member states elected on a rotating basis from various constituencies and making decisions by consensus— itself a recipe for paralysis and lowest common denominator decisions. Reporting to the Council and the Assembly, the Commission's three main purposes are to advise countries on integrated strategies for peacebuilding and recovery; to marshal resources and ensure predictable and sustainable financing; and to improve coordination and coherence, as well to develop best practices and maintain support for these countries (del Castillo 2008a: 58-62; Jenkins 2013: 48-49; Otobo 2015: 183).

The resolutions also created the Peacebuilding Support Office (the 'Support Office') to act as secretariat to the Commission; to coordinate peacebuilding efforts, including communication and information within the UN and with outside actors; and to act as repository of best practices. This office was also given some analytical responsibilities for which it was not given adequate resources.

The resolutions further created the Peacebuilding Fund (the 'Fund'), the most uncontroversial of the three institutions, to provide quick impact and catalytic funding to fill critical gaps in countries at high risk of conflict relapse. The initial target for the fund was $250 million, but decisions on lending were made at the Support Office, thus depriving the Commission of the power of the purse.

It is not possible to delve here into the details of the origin and design, the shifting ideas and compromises along the way, the expectations of the new architecture, the evolving mandate and modes of operation, and the resources—all of which have been analyzed at great length elsewhere by insiders (Jenkins 2013; Otobo 2015; Cheng-Hopkins, 2015). Suffice it to say here that, as a former head of the Support Office noted, the 'gaping hole' metaphor—which Kofi Annan used as a justification for his proposal of the new architecture—did not accurately depict the existing situation (Cheng-Hopkins, 2015). Annan's concerns behind the proposal for the new architecture about the 'devastating failures' in Rwanda, Angola, and Srebrenica in the early 1990s (at the time he was in charge of peacekeeping operations), and about the bleak record that 'roughly half of all countries that emerge from war lapsed back into violence within five years' (UN 2005: 31) were indeed real.

If anything, there existed, and remains, an archipelago of unconnected units in the UN system dealing with a variety of peacebuilding issues in a fragmented and inefficient way, without the integration of strategy and purpose that Boutros-Ghali, at the outset, had argued is key in matters of human security. As Rob Jenkins rightly pointed out, 'the *new* architecture did not supplant the *old* peacebuilding structures,' including operational units in the political and peacekeeping departments, or within the many humanitarian and development agencies involved in peacebuilding operating on the basis that conflict affects development. Instead, 'the three new bodies were inserted on top of, adjacent to, and overlapping with preexisting organization units engaged in peacebuilding work…' (Jenkins 2013: 12).

This was particularly true since the political department—mandated by the Security Council—had set up peacebuilding missions in the field (East Timor and Sierra Leone in 2005) where the Secretary-General's representative had an explicit peacebuilding mandate and other coordinating functions similar to heads of peacekeeping operations (del Castillo 2008a: 60-61; Cheng-Hopkins 2015: 9). Thus the changes failed to overcome the potential clashes of competence, waste of resources, and bureaucratic hurdles that Boutros-Ghali argued were imperative to consolidate peace (which, for the record, he didn't attempt to overcome himself).

Jenkins also noted that the new architecture represented an effort on the part of the UN to 'rethink its doctrines and organizational structures' to promote peace and build states effectively (Jenkins 2013: 4). Given the dismal record, this was long overdue. However, by ignoring previous analytical and operational work at the UN since the early 1990s, new efforts were often wasted trying to reinvent the wheel. As discussed earlier, issues such as the need for 'redefinition of relationships and comparative advantages,' the fundamentally 'political' nature of peacebuilding, and the importance of 'strong national ownership' of policies had been on the table for at least a decade. As they emerged in the new context, a sense of déjà vu and lack of progress was inevitable.

The Commission and Support Office lack an operational mandate. While many praise the intergovernmental nature of the Commission as its most important feature,[27] others argue that the worst that could have happened to operational peacebuilding efforts on the

ground is to be directed from New York, particularly when directives result from intergovernmental political bargaining, or from a Support Office lacking appropriate analytical capabilities (Howard 2008, cited by Jenkins 2013: 39).

The purpose of this article is not to provide a comprehensive review of the flaws of the peacebuilding architecture that have come to light over its first decade of existence. Instead, we shall focus on points of disagreement with other reviews or differences of emphasis, as well as on specific issues that we find lacking from the discussion.

There seems to be a broad consensus among academics and practitioners, in the review processes at the UN so far, as well as in recipient countries, that the Commission and Support Office have not made a significant difference, let alone improved matters in any important way. Berdal, for example, notes that the 2005 new peacebuilding architecture, specifically intended to coordinate the actions of peacebuilding actors, 'has not managed to overcome the structural and political obstacles to effective coordination and delivery' (Berdal 2014: 368). Most other reviews have been also far from flattering and mention, among others, the 'negligible relevance', 'meager net value-added,' and 'mixed' impact of the new institutions. They also mention the 'zombie' nature of organizations that exist but do not have a life and have become symbols of 'UN inaction' (Jenkins 2013: 75-77, 108-09 for a review).

The 2010 intergovernmental review of the peacebuilding architecture acknowledged the unfulfilled expectations of the Commission, the lack of impact on the ground, and the weak relationship with the Security Council, as well as the scarce weight that the Support Office had within the Secretariat. The review concluded that the UN was still not rising to the peacebuilding challenges (UN, 2010). In its response to the review, the political department produced a 10-page memorandum—circulated to the Senior Peacebuilding Group, chaired by the Support Office—arguing that the 2005 architecture had fragmented rather than consolidated UN efforts to create stability and build peace, an evaluation that we share. The department's view was that the Commission should not be focusing on developing peacebuilding strategies but on marshaling resources for what had already been agreed (Jenkins 2013: 67-68; 140-42).

Although the 2015 intergovernmental review will only be completed by end of this year, an advisory group of experts, chaired by a former vice-president of the Commission, recently released a report entitled *The Challenge of Sustaining Peace* (the '2015 Report'), which will feed into the 2015 review process. The report acknowledges that at the UN, peacebuilding is 'an afterthought,' that the organization continues to work in 'silos' (and thus the Commission and Support Office have added to, rather than consolidate, those other silos already existing in 2005), and that the different bodies dealing with peacebuilding still fail to work together. The report calls for a 'comprehensive approach to sustaining peace' not unlike Boutros-Ghali's call for an 'integrated approach to human security,' but likewise fails to propose a feasible strategy to make such an approach operational and viable.

The report calls for 'inclusive national ownership,' 'realistic timelines for UN

operations,' and posits that 'peacebuilding must be understood as an inherently political process.' The group thus added to the sense of déjà vu we mentioned earlier, and detracted from its own conclusion that—ten years after the new architecture was established—waned hopes for improved peacebuilding call for a 'fresh look' at the whole approach to peacebuilding. Yet, without rigorously analyzing whether the UN record mentioned by Kofi Annan in 2005 has changed in any significant and positive way, and without making any cost-effectiveness analysis of the use of resources to date, the report calls for more resources for peacebuilding (Advisory Group 2015: 7-9, 11-13, 18, 21). One could be forgiven for wondering whether this might lead to throwing more good money after bad.

A few months earlier, the Future United Nations Development System (FUNDS) project put together a group of experts and practitioners to analyze whether the system is equipped for twenty-first century peacebuilding. The report entitled *Peacebuilding Challenges for the UN Development System* states that 'radical changes are needed if the UN and its development system are not to become even further marginalized.' The report also notes that despite its decade of existence, the Commission has failed 'to establish itself as a relevant and impactful institution.' In fact, almost 40 percent of respondents to a FUNDS survey found that the Commission had proved to be 'inefficient or very inefficient' (Browne & Weiss 2015: 1, 17).

Moreover, some of the successes of which Commission members and Support Office staff often congratulate themselves, are a clear duplication of functions with those of the special or executive representatives of the Secretary-General on the ground, who head either peacekeeping or political operations. Some of these include supporting governments in establishing 'peacebuilding strategies', 'marshaling resources', and 'coordinating with other stakeholders,' including the Bretton Woods institutions. If those representatives cannot do their work, including in providing support to governments on peacebuilding activities and on finding resources through their participation in donors' meetings, among others, better-qualified ones should be appointed. To install another layer above or parallel to them not only complicates and confuses matters; it also leads to more inefficiency and waste. More worrisome, it imposes an unnecessary burden on weak and overstretched national governments by creating additional and often-conflicting demands for their time, expertise, and other scarce resources.

As the FUNDS project recommends, a re-examination is long overdue of the UN field presence in conflict-prone states, including the nature and composition of a more unified country presence, its leadership, the selection and training of suitable staff, the provision of resources, and the clear and unified delegation of authority from headquarters in New York and Geneva. This is essential to better prioritize activities based on comparative advantages. Indeed, the report strongly calls for fixing what does not work rather than calling for new layers (Browne & Weiss 2015: 2, 17).

Conspicuously absent from any review so far has been any measure with regard to the cost-effectiveness of the peacebuilding architecture. When money is thrown at a problem, something always sticks, even if the effect is marginal. This was the policy of the US

military in the reconstruction of insecure areas in Iraq and Afghanistan, which has proved so expensive and ineffective (del Castillo, 2012b: 18). It has also been the policy of the UN. Kofi Annan recommended new bodies (without eliminating obsolete or ineffective ones), and various groups of experts and reports (without considering alternative uses for the funding).[28]

While some of the recommendations of the 2015 Report are well taken—i.e. the need to increase the UN capacity on the ground—others have clearly not been subject to any cost-effectiveness criteria. Would increasing the capacity of the Support Office that the report recommends be more cost-effective than increasing operational capacity at the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (the 'peacekeeping department') and the political department? We would not think so.

Criticisms of the lack of country diversity in the Commission's agenda (all 6 countries are from Africa) and the fact that no new country was selected in the past four years (Otobo 2015: 202-03) should not be disparaged. More importantly, however, the Commission failed to attract countries (on the Security Council agenda or not) at an early stage of the transition to peace or at a later stage in countries about to exit from the Council. This is a stage in which countries need support to sustain the progress they have achieved, as the experience of El Salvador well attests. Political support was not sustained after the UN peacekeeping operation left the country, with tragic consequences for the sustainability of some of the peace-related projects (del Castillo 2008: 127-136).

The two first countries included in the agenda in 2006 had made the transition years before (Burundi in 1998 and in Sierra Leone in 2002) and had large UN operations to deal with peacebuilding issues in place. Although the details are discussed elsewhere, suffice it to say here that these two experiences were an early harbinger of the lack of legitimacy of the Commission and the Support Office and the difficulties they would encounter in coordinating peacebuilding activities. It also presaged the lackadaisical use of resources and waste that result from inadequate institutional arrangements (del Castillo 2008a; 59-62).

The inclusion of Liberia in 2010—hailed by the former head of the Support Office as one of the main achievements of her early mandate (Cheng-Hopkins 2015)—was an even more flagrant mistake, given that Liberia and Afghanistan were the two largest recipients of foreign aid (including debt relief) in the world. In fact, these two countries received annually on average over 50 percent of their respective GDP in economic aid during their first decade in the transition to peace. At the same time, the peacekeeping operation in place in Liberia was unusually large, costing the UN annually the equivalent of two-thirds of the country's GDP in 2009-11 (del Castillo 2015a; 2012:10). Rather than using scant Fund resources for the so-called 'aid orphans' and those in the immediate transition, the selection of Liberia was a clear aberration. The conclusion of the 2015 Report that 'despite a decade of focus, financing for sustaining peace remains scarce, inconsistent and unpredictable,' seems to ignore the situation of Liberia (Advisory Group 2015: 9).

By coming so late into the process in most of the countries in the agenda, the

Commission's mandate to create 'integrated peacebuilding strategies' added yet another layer to the many strategies already in place (for example, at the time of its inclusion, Sierra Leone had three strategies in place including one on poverty reduction) (Jenkins 2013: 78-89 for details). In this regard, the work of the new peacebuilding infrastructure added to the bureaucracy, inefficiency, mismanagement, and waste with which the UN system operates in war-torn countries. It also strains weak national bureaucracies with increased and often competing demands on their time and resources.

The 2015 Report rightly—but not surprisingly since some have called attention to it much earlier—acknowledges that the UN pays insufficient attention to building 'inclusive' development processes that can sustain peace. This has been particularly true in the case of Liberia where a continuation of 'growth without development' policies of the past have left 75-80 percent of the population living at subsistence levels and excluded from any peace dividend in terms of better livelihoods or services (del Castillo 2012).

In November 2010 the government of Liberia and the Commission's country team adopted a 'statement of mutual commitments' (originally labeled 'strategic framework' in other countries) where the agreed priorities were to strengthen the rule of law; support security sector reform; and promote national reconciliation. While the peacekeeping in place since 2003 (and still there) had been assisting with regard to the first two priorities, it was quite clear that the major obstacle to peacebuilding and national reconciliation were the misguided economic policies and the misplaced priorities of the government of Liberia.

Although this is analyzed in detail and well referenced elsewhere, it should be pointed out here that national reconciliation efforts are not likely to succeed and conflict is likely to return as peacekeepers eventually leave, if the population at large continues to live in appalling conditions from subsistence agriculture and petty trading, and lacks basic services and infrastructure (ibid). The Commission remained silent about the lack of inclusive policies and the pathetic state of social services including health—major obstacles to peacebuilding—that could become, as indeed they did, a breeding ground for disease and conflict. Economic reform in Liberia was clearly poorly designed to support peacebuilding. As Tony Addison has pointed out, 'well-designed economic reforms raise the chances that recovery will be broad-based, instead of narrow, in its benefits' but 'badly designed policy change can be an impediment to the implementation of the peace process' (Addison 2003: 9-10).

A former deputy head of the Support Office, notes that 'Ebola illustrates how an entirely unexpected event can intrude into and set back peacebuilding efforts…' (Otobo 2015: 6). It is hard to see how the spread of disease under existing health conditions in the three countries under the Commission's watch is 'entirely unexpected.' Instead of advocating improvement in basic conditions in countries that had been under its watch, the Commission put its efforts into the fight against Ebola after it hit three of the six countries in its agenda by marshaling financing for it.

Surprisingly, it was Karin Landgren, the special representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) and head of the peacekeeping office who bluntly told the Commission on May 5, 2015 that the main sources of potential instability were 'structural factors including Liberia's economic model (based on the export of unprocessed resources).' In her view, the 'growth without development' model, which has not changed for over a hundred years, provides limited benefits to citizens and has limitations for the development of human capacity. This, together with 'social exclusion, including as a result of patronage networks' which are dominant in the economic and political life of the country, 'leave potential for popular resentment and vulnerability to future shocks' (UN 2015: 2).

This is but one indication that the Commission and Support Office have disregarded problems related to the inadequacy of economic policies in countries on their agenda. In fact, the SRSG herself felt that many members of the Commission were rolling their eyes as she brought up the issue of the inappropriateness of the economic model and how, in her view, this was a major potential source of instability as the UN peacekeeping operation withdrew after 12 years in Liberia.[29]

It is worth pointing out that even the World Bank had warned against the Liberia model as early as 2011, when it acknowledged that 'growth without development' policies, driven by enclave growth in iron ore and cash crops, had led in the past to civil war rather than to middle income status as many thought it would. It was the Bank's view that the continuation of such policies led to a lack of 'inclusive growth,' which in their view is one of the main determinants of increased social conflict in the country. In fact, the report lists the 'latent risk of disruption of peace, political and economic stability' as one of the concerns in Liberia going forward (World Bank 2011). Perhaps oblivious to such an ominous warning, the Commission failed to advise the Security Council on issues that clearly affected peacebuilding efforts in the country and on which the Council could have used the clout at its disposal to influence government policies.

Last but not least, there also seems to be a wide consensus that the Commission has not been able to integrate its work with that of other actors or improve its leverage within the system in any significant way. Except in very isolated episodes, the Security Council has not requested its advice. The Support Office has failed to fulfill its mandate to improve communication and understanding among stakeholders. In fact, it has made little effort to articulate the pros and cons of different strategies or programs, or to develop best policy options, practices, and sequences for different situations, most probably as a result of its lack of analytical capacity.

Moving Forward

The purposes of the UN are enumerated in Article 1 of the Charter. The very first—arguably the *raison d'être* of the Organization and the collective security system that it embodies—is the maintenance of international peace and security. The Charter identifies the Security Council as the primary organ responsible for that mission. The concept 'maintenance of international peace and security' in itself indicates an ongoing

responsibility. It is hard to imagine an area of activity more central to the Council's responsibility than ensuring that a conflict—once the guns have fallen silent—does not recur.

Yet by and large the Council has been all too ready to put an end to field missions devoted to peacebuilding and shift responsibility to development bodies, usually UNDP. In fact, individual Council members, both permanent and elected, have voiced this view. Notwithstanding *An Agenda for Peace* and its *Supplement* and the praise showered upon them by the Council, the notion that they contained—that there is actually a phase between conflict and the normalcy required for a return to development as usual in which the danger of relapse remains present—has not been metabolized. To compound the problem, the UN Secretariat (over the objections of some Secretariat members) has been all too willing to accommodate the Council by recommending what it anticipates are likely to be the Council's wishes—disregarding its own thinking (and a key Brahimi tenet) and undermining the conceptual framework that underlies post-conflict peacebuilding.

Whether the reason is concern of finance ministries about the additional financial burden involved (greater in the case of permanent members of the Council),[30] or because immediate crises tend to eclipse less burning issues, the Council's distaste for this aspect of its responsibilities has been nakedly evident. The issue has been on its plate repeatedly since the early 1990s. If it felt overburdened, could it not have created a subsidiary organ to assist it in discharging its crucial responsibility in this field as the primary organ responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security? Because of its failure to do so it must take a large share of the blame for the failings described in this article.

The failure of the Council to shoulder its responsibility has resulted in the void being filled by the decision of heads of state and government gathered for the World Summit in 2005 under which the Council accepts to shoulder an institutional role in the matter—in tandem with the General Assembly—via the creation of the Peacebuilding Commission. The Commission's creation was, in effect, a cop-out by the Security Council. That the Council and the Assembly share responsibility for peacebuilding is an architectural 'non-starter.' It is hardly necessary to enumerate the reasons for keeping the Council's and the Assembly's roles separate given the differences of nature and size that distinguish them.

The problem here cannot be solved by moving or creating boxes, or otherwise tinkering with the architecture; to solve it requires an understanding of the nature of the problem. The conceptual penny needs to drop in the minds of those responsible. Assuming that occurs, a better arrangement than the existing one, moving forward, would be for the Security Council to create one or more subsidiary organs as necessary to deal with peacebuilding issues in the countries in which there are UN multidisciplinary operations. Neglecting the Commission is one matter; ignoring the views of one of its own subsidiary bodies is more difficult.

Given the difficulty of going back on a UN decision in general and particularly on one taken at the summit level, the chances of revisiting the actions taken pursuant to the

World Summit Outcome and undoing them are slim at best. If that is the case, the Commission, with a much reduced membership after eliminating members of the Council and contributing troops, could retain the role of advocacy and marshaling of resources for countries at high risk of conflict, particularly 'aid orphans' which need sustained support but are either not on the Council's agenda or about to cease to be on it. With such a revised mandate, the Commission would not overlap (save for a few months) or interfere with other bodies, particularly those with operational mandates, and could become a more useful player in improving the dismal UN record in peacebuilding. A revised mandate along these lines would be in line with the FUNDS project, which recommends that, while the Council continues to focus on 'high-profile' conflicts—understood as those representing the highest risk to global and regional peace and security—the Commission should focus on 'lower-profile' ones (which also tend to be aid orphans).

To improve the operational capacity of the UN Secretariat to deal with peacebuilding, the Support Office should be integrated with relevant operational units in the political and peacekeeping departments. Once it acquires an operational capacity it could be renamed the 'Peacebuilding Office,' and it would be much more than a servicing body for the Commission. This would improve coherence, decrease overlapping and waste of resources, and have a larger and more focused impact on the ground. The question of where to place the 'Peacebuilding Office' is rendered difficult by the current structure under which the political and peacekeeping departments are separate—an ancient anomaly. However, there is much merit in the idea, recommended in both the 1997 *Renewing the United Nations* and the 2000 Brahimi reports, as well as by two previous Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali and Kofi Annan, that it should be placed under the political department.

The 'Peacebuilding Office' should be strengthened by hiring specific technical expertise from outside the organization critical to peacebuilding—a precondition for effective engagement with the IMF—which the UN presently lacks. Indeed, the most important element still absent a decade after the peacebuilding architecture was put in place is the capacity at the UN to negotiate at a technical level with the national authorities and the IMF on how to incorporate the financing needs of peacebuilding into the economic program of the country—the issue we raised in relation to El Salvador a quarter of a century ago. This is essential to change the prevailing 'development as usual' approach to peacebuilding without which efforts at avoiding a relapse into conflict will not succeed.

As discussed earlier, most war-torn countries have lacked support (which has limited their ability) to design conflict-sensitive fiscal and growth policies that can reactivate the economy in an inclusive and sustainable way, *sine qua non* for successful peacebuilding. Until a broad majority of the population benefits from a peace dividend in terms of better lives and livelihoods, or at least can see the prospect of such benefits, the risk of relapse will remain alive. The inability to deal with such risk has been a critical failure of the international community to make peacebuilding more effective.

While there has been some improvement in coordination with the IMF, it is hard to be sanguine about the future. UN operations mandated by the Security Council are headed

by a special representative of the secretary-general (SRSG), but the pattern in recent years has been to appoint as his deputy someone from UNDP and to delegate to that person contact with the IMF. A drawback has been that UNDP by its nature works hand-in-glove with the government and is therefore not always suited to the work of peace missions which requires impartiality between the government and its adversaries. Another is the UNDP's previously discussed penchant for pursuing the failed development-as-usual path.

If the pattern of appointing such a person to be deputy SRSGs persists, a way must be found to equip the SRSG with the economic expertise necessary so that he can take an active role in discussions with the minister of finance and the IMF, whenever its head-of-mission visits the country, to ensure that peace-related needs are included in the economic program through appropriate budgetary allocations. The UNDP (as head also of the UN development country team) and the World Bank top representatives on the ground should join in to ensure that the development institutions understand and support the top priorities and the budgetary allocations necessary to improve peacebuilding.

This last recommendation is in agreement with the recommendation of the 2015 Report to improve the UN capacity on the ground, including that of the political department for preventive action. However, the importance of improving the capacity in the economic and financial areas is critical to success in peacebuilding. More of the same will not do. In fact, doing more of the same and expecting different results is naïve (or an indicator of madness, according to a popular definition).

Likewise, given the broad criticism of the Commission for its failure to do what was expected of it, we are perplexed by the recommendation in the 2015 Report that it should be asked to do even more. To expect the Commission and the Support Office, which have failed to coordinate even within the Secretariat and with actors on the ground, to coordinate the Council, the Assembly, and the Economic and Social Council is disingenuous at best. The same can be said for the recommendation that the Commission and the Support Office, which have not been able to advise the Council on post-conflict matters, should advise it on pre-conflict risks as well. Even putting aside other considerations, the assumption that the Commission would be provided with the resources to advise on the large number of countries in which pre-conflict risks exist is unrealistic.

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Endnotes:

[1] At the time, the authors were both at the Office of the Secretary-General, de Soto as assistant secretary-general and senior political advisor to the Secretary-General and del Castillo as senior officer in charge of

[2] The term international community is used to include all stakeholders involved in supporting countries in the war-to-peace transition as donors or providers of technical assistance, including the UN and its agencies, member states, other bilateral and multilateral donors, and NGOs. For a review of different definitions and how the peacebuilding concept evolved over time, see Cousens (2001: 5-10); Jeong (2005); and Jenkins (2013: 18-43). For a description of how the concept was adopted by different stakeholders to fit into their mandate see Barnett *et al.* (2007). For an analysis on differences between peacebuilding and statebuilding or nationbuilding, see Paris & Sisk (2009: 1-20).

[3] Because lending was at market rates of interest, El Salvador could only use it as 'precautionary' (would not borrow from it) and as guarantee to creditors (including the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank) that the country was on the right economic track and would be able to repay loans (del Castillo 2001: 1968, footnote 13).

[4] As Woods points out, planning for the National Reconstruction Plan had only started in mid-1991and continued through the following year. She notes that 'at the time of the signing of the accords, there existed no overall assessment of the cost of implementing the agreement, but only initial estimates for reconstruction based on a preliminary version of the PRN [Plan].' In her view, had there been estimates of the financial implications of the PRN, 'such process probably would have impeded the reaching of an agreement by the end of 1991' (Woods 1996: 86).

[5] Woods rightly notes how this impasse had threatened the peace process as the FMLN suspended its demobilization process and political tensions increased. Incorrectly, she points out that the UN sent a team of 'agrarian specialists' to evaluate the situation and subsequently offered the two parties a take-it-or-leave it settlement. For the right version of events, see Goulding, *op cit.*

[6] See Bennett *et al.* (2007) for a discussion of the terminology used by different UN agencies and other stakeholders. See also Jenkins (2000: 31-36).

[7] The problems with aid are beyond the scope of this paper but they are extensively discussed in the

literature, including by oversight bodies of major donors and evaluation offices of the World Bank and UNDP. For Afghanistan and Iraq, see for example, the reports of the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan and for Iraq (Quarterly Reports to the United States Congress). For El Salvador, see for example, reports by evaluation offices of UNDP and the World Bank, and for East Timor, see evaluation of the World Bank. The evaluations of the UNDP and the World Bank have been very critical of their organizations' performance in these countries.

[8] More critically, the authors also note that aid, in fact, creates a cocoon for aid workers, without becoming a catalyst for institution building or employment within the host countries that it purports to help.

[9] Doyle and Sambanis coded 'peacebuilding success' only after peacekeepers and military forces (which are keeping the peace) have left for at least two years (Doyle & Sambanis 2006: 91). For case studies on these operations, see, for example, Forman & Patrick 2000; Keating & Knight 2004; Doyle & Sambanis 2006; Durch 2006; Berdal & Economides 2007; del Castillo 2008b; and Caplan 2012.

[10] This is the first one of the six basic premises that del Castillo (2008: 40-47) posits are critical to effective post-conflict economic reconstruction.

[11] As del Castillo (2008a: 45-47) argued, the UN, 'as the global organization responsible for the maintenance of peace and security—with the Security Council at its center—is ideally placed to support economic reconstruction because of its political nature and the need for impartiality.' She reckons, however, that the UN has never had the operational, technical, and human capacity needed for such a task nor taken steps to fill that need.

[12] Addison (2003: 275) attributes the policy of including market liberalization in war-torn countries during reconstruction to the practice of the Bretton Woods institutions of using the United States as the paradigm of a market economy, rather than the more mixed economies of Japan and Western Europe. Post-war needs for state intervention to mobilize and direct resources to reconstruction led to a greater role for the state in the market economies of Japan and Western Europe.

[13] This is the second of the six basic premises that del Castillo (2008: 40-47) posits are critical to effective post-conflict economic reconstruction.

[14] This is the fourth of the six basic premises that del Castillo (2008: 40-47) posits are critical to effective post-conflict economic reconstruction.

[15] World Bank policy changed in fundamental ways after James Wolfensohn took over in 1995.

[16] Indeed, UNDP finally accepted in 2000 that 'the notion of a continuum—calling for a sequenced transition from emergency to development—has been laid to rest.' UNDP then recognized that, as the Development Assistance Committee of the OECD (DAC) argued since 1997, 'emergency relief, rehabilitation work, and development assistance all co-exist in times of conflict and crisis, and they interact in innumerable ways' (UNDP 2000: 38; OECD/DAC 1998: 48).

[17] The speech seems to be listed without its name and with the wrong year in the bibliography and referred to it only in footnote 27 in relation to the linkages between political, security and economic dynamics.

[18] Interestingly, some analysts who decried 'economic conditionality' as too harsh, have advocated empowering the Bretton Woods institutions further with 'political conditionality.' Boyce (1995: 83-89; 2002: 7-14), for example, criticized these institutions for not conditioning their assistance specifically in support of the peace agreements through either formal performance criteria and/or informal policy dialogue. For a discussion on these issues and the various arguments, see del Castillo (2008a: 86-88).

[19] This is the sixth basic premise for effective reconstruction (del Castillo 2008a: 47).

[20] To be fair to the Bretton Woods institutions, in some cases it was the economic authorities of the sovereign countries that pushed for an orthodox macroeconomic framework. This was clearly the case of Afghanistan where the finance minister was a former World Bank official (and now president) (del Castillo 2008a: 177-79, 188-89; 2014b: 181–184).

[21] Some noteworthy exceptions include mostly studies on specific issues, including fiscal matters, political economy, the effect of neoliberalism, foreign direct investment and trade, the analysis of currency, sectoral, and infrastructure problems, and other macro- and micro-economic issues (e.g., Addison 2003; Clément 2004; Looney 2004; Junne & Verkoren 2005; Taylor 2006; Doyle & Sambanis; Boyce & O'Donnell 2007; Collier 2008; Coyne 2008; del Castillo 2008a; 2010b; 2014a; Addison & Brück 2009; Gutiérrez & Schönwälder 2010; Barakat 2010; Savage 2013; Langer & Brown 2015).[21] As in earlier work in this area (e.g., Boyce 1996, 2002; Hanlon 1996; del Castillo 2001), most of the new studies continued to discuss 'economic reconstruction' as synonymous with 'development.'

[22] For a detailed discussion of differences in effective policymaking in crises countries and in those

undergoing normal development, see del Castillo (2008a: 30-38).

[23] Upon taking over in 1997, Kofi Annan had created a Senior Management Group and four Executive Committees in the areas of peace and security, economic and social affairs, development cooperation, and humanitarian affairs. The Secretary-General created these committees as high-level bodies for interagency and interdepartmental coordination.

[24] Of 200 people interviewed by the group preparing the report, members of the World Bank staff were included, but no one from the IMF was. The report mentioned the 'hybrid of political and development activities targeted at the sources of conflict,' and argued that the Executive Committee on Peace and Security, chaired by the head of the political department, was the ideal forum for the formulation of peacebuilding strategies at the UN. This clearly ignored the need for national policy ownership.

[25] This is precisely why development organizations should not lead economic reconstruction, the fifth premise for effective economic reconstruction (del Castillo 2008a: 45-47.

[26] The process leading to the resolutions started in May 2004 with the SG's appointment of a high-level panel on international threats (UN 2004), was followed by the SG's report *A More Secure World* (UN 2005), continued in the September 2005 World Summit of heads of state and government from which it emerged the Outcome Document endorsing the creation of the commission and culminated with the passage of the SC and GA resolutions in December 2005.

[27] Many of the functions that the Commission has with regard to advocacy, financing, and other were performed in the past by 'Groups of Friends.' For an analysis of such groups, see Whitfield (2007).

[28] Among the bodies that were not eliminated upon the creation of the new architecture was the ECOSOC Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Countries Emerging from Conflict (Otobo (2014: 141-142).

[29] Comments at 'Liberia in Transition–A Special Representatives of the Secretary-General event featuring Karin Landgren of UNMIL,' IPI (July 7, 2015).

[30] The Council's activities are financed through 'assessed contributions' in which permanent members pay a larger share than under the regular budget.