

U.N. Peace Building Commission

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INTRODUCTION: WHAT IS THE U.N. PEACE BUILDING COMMISSION?

The United Nations Peace Building Commission was created on December 20th, 2005 to help ensure lasting and sustained peace in nations after conflict has ended. Its mandate is as follows:

“In the enabling resolutions establishing the Peacebuilding Commission, resolution [**60/180**](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/60/180)  and resolution [**1645 (2005)**](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/1645%20(2005)) of 20 December 2005, the United Nations General Assembly and the Security Council mandated it:

* to bring together all relevant actors to marshal resources and to advise on and propose integrated strategies for post-conflict peacebuilding and recovery;
* to focus attention on the reconstruction and institution-building efforts necessary for recovery from conflict and to support the development of integrated strategies in order to lay the foundation for sustainable development;
* to provide recommendations and information to improve the coordination of all relevant actors within and outside the United Nations, to develop best practices, to help to ensure predictable financing for early recovery activities and to extend the period of attention given by the international community to postconflict recovery (1)”

The Commission currently conducts operations in six countries: Burundi, Sierra Leone, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia and the Central African Republic. In these missions, it attempts to not just stop conflict but to stop the things that lead to conflict; hence the term “peace building.” This includes reconciliation between groups engaged in hostilities and economic and infrastructure development that would reduce competition over resources. While the committee can make recommendations for funding from other organizations, it has a reliable source of funding for immediate peace building needs known as the United Nations Peacebuilding Fund (2) (3). This fund can provide money for countries that need immediate or urgent attention, such as an armed insurrection in a troubled area or a famine that might cause a fight over resources.

Your jobs as delegates include determining the best methods to solve some of the issues. Ideally, you will be able to balance advocating for your national interests with doing what you believe to be the right thing for the international community as a whole. Sometimes, these two goals don’t line up. That’s part of what makes Model United Nations so fascinating; sometimes, we have to advocate for positions that aren’t our own.

The committee itself will be focusing on Sierra Leone, though that does not mean that the other countries are out of play entirely. While you should focus your research on activities in Sierra Leone, at least some knowledge of past efforts of the committee for each mission would be wise. The topics that the committee is called to discuss at this meeting include drug trafficking, which is one of the Commission’s main stated goals for the region (4), and curbing the trading in blood diamonds, which creates persistent instability and economic hardship.

Best of luck, delegates!

Brendan O’Brien and Sana Sareshwala

Footnotes:

1. <http://www.un.org/en/peacebuilding/mandate.shtml>
2. <http://www.unpbf.org/>
3. <http://www.unpbf.org/who-we-are/>
4. <http://www.un.org/en/peacebuilding/pbso/faq.shtml#q31>
5. I recommend reading the entire FAQ at the above link; it is a good summary of the Commission’s purpose and methods.

TOPIC ONE: ENDING DRUG TRAFFICKING

Drug trafficking is the trade in illegal narcotics. The high price of these substances on the black market leads to intense competition in attempts to meet supply. In many situations, this in turn leads to groups that attempt to control that supply through violent means. Gangs and the violence they tend to spawn are major obstacles to the peace building process. Thus, it is in the interest of the Commission to create a permanent solution to this problem. While it is unrealistic to imagine that this activity will be eliminated instantly, a stable and concrete mechanism to combat it will go a long way towards upholding the rule of law and thus peace and prosperity. Illicit drug trafficking is particularly in Mexico and Colombia, through the means of cocaine. In just 2007 and 2008, 17 million people worldwide were involved in ingesting cocaine. The sales ranged from Colombia to western Europe. In Asia, 73.7 metric tons of heroine was being traded, ranging from the Middle East to South East Asia.

These two regions account for more than 80 per cent of the total value of the global cocaine market, which was estimated at $88 billion in 2008. The global increase in heroin seizures over the period 2006-2008 was driven mainly by continued burgeoning seizures in the Islamic Republic of Iran and Turkey. In 2008, those two countries accounted for more than half of global heroin seizures and registered, for the third consecutive year, the highest and second highest seizures worldwide, respectively.

TOPIC TWO: CURTAILING THE CONFLICT MINERAL TRADE

The Conflict Mineral, or “Blood Diamond” trade, a diamond that is sold to fund a warlord or gang member’s violent efforts. The sale of these diamonds undermines a country’s prospects of building a lasting peace, prolonging conflicts long after other resources have dried up. While several protocols are already in place to reduce the influx of these diamonds into the market, the fact remains that the trade in these diamonds continues. Tougher enforcement measures and alternative solutions to the problem are an important step forward in creating lasting peace. Sanctioning groups that engage in this trade at the group level is difficult, but could prevent some short-term activity.; national-level sanctions might be more effective but also harm people making legitimate profits. In the long term, however, countries require assistance in both stopping the actions of these warlords and creating legitimate diamond mining industries to supplant the influence warlords have over the diamond market.

On 1 December 2000, the United Nations General Assembly adopted, unanimously, a resolution on the role of diamonds in fuelling conflict, breaking the link between the illicit transaction of rough diamonds and armed conflict, as a contribution to prevention and settlement of conflicts. However these efforts were null since many of the actions Blood Diamond agencies execute are not governmentally controlled. Through the black market, many individuals hire children into working in these mines with a pay far below minimum wage. It is vital for the UNPBC to find ways to support those who are forced into the Blood Diamond industry as a way to earn money. This type of labor is hazardous and should be stopped.