



# AUSTRALIA



AUSTRALIAN MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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## **UNITED NATIONS HIGH-LEVEL REPLENISHMENT CONFERENCE FOR THE PEACEBUILDING FUND**

26 January 2021

### **Statement by H.E. The Hon. Mitch Fifield, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Australia to the United Nations**

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Thank you Secretary-General and Co-Chairs – Canada, Germany, Sierra Leone and Sudan – for convening this important conference. Thank you also to Canadian Permanent Representative, Bob Rae, for facilitating today.

Australia is proud to have been a supporter of the Peacebuilding Fund since its establishment in 2006. We are a top ten donor and are currently in a three year, 10 million Australian dollar agreement. We recognise the importance of predictable funding and are pleased to provide multi-year funding agreements to support the PBF's long term planning.

Australia values the PBF's unique capability to provide timely, catalytic and risk-tolerant funds and we congratulate the PBF on the launch of its 2020-2024 Strategy. We particularly appreciate the PBF's work in the Indo-Pacific and we encourage continued attention to peacebuilding needs in this region.

We also commend the PBF's leadership in pursuing inclusive approaches to peacebuilding, consistently exceeding the UN's gender focus goals. The meaningful participation of women is fundamental to ensuring peacebuilding activities are effective and sustainable. The gendered impact of COVID-19 makes this even more necessary. We support the PBF's Gender and Youth Promotion Initiative for harnessing the peacebuilding contribution of youth and its positive potential.

We appreciate the PBF's responsive and flexible approach in pivoting its activities to reduce COVID-19 impacts. The PBF will need to remain alert to the longer term impacts of the pandemic, which have the potential to undermine peacebuilding and development gains, while escalating conflict risks.

Notwithstanding the PBF's admirable efforts, we recognise that needs will go unmet, especially in the context of transitions, while the PBF lacks adequate, predictable and sustainable resources. Australia shares the concerns expressed today in relation to the chronic underfunding of the PBF and underinvestment in peacebuilding. The 2020 Secretary-General's Report on Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace showed that the share of ODA committed to peacebuilding in conflict-affected countries is in decline. Meanwhile, the case for investing in conflict prevention, rather than mounting crisis responses, has never been clearer.

In closing, as a long-standing champion of sustaining peace, Australia welcomes the adoption of new twin resolutions on peacebuilding and sustaining peace, following the 2020 Peacebuilding Architecture Review. It is appropriate that a key outcome from the Review process will be a high-level meeting of the General Assembly at the 76th session on peacebuilding financing. We look forward to joining with other Member States to explore innovative solutions and ensuring that the Sustaining Peace agenda can reach its full, transformative potential.

Thank you.