Sustaining Peace in Burkina Faso: Responding to an Emerging Crisis

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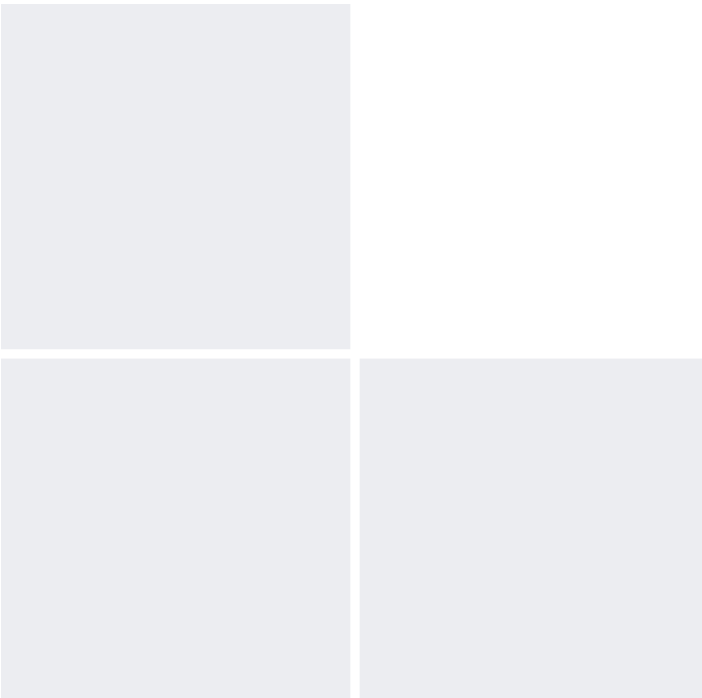
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ABBREVIATIONS

CCA	Common country analysis
CSO	Civil society organization
DPPA	Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
IDP	Internally displaced person
MAP	Matrice d'actions prioritaires
NWOW	New Way of Working
OHCHR	Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights
PBC	Peacebuilding Commission
PBF	Peacebuilding Fund
PIP	Priority Investment Programme
PNDES	Plan national de développement économique et social
PPBA	Prevention and Peacebuilding Assessment
PUS-BF	Programme d'urgence pour le Sahel au Burkina Faso
RC	Resident coordinator
RCO	Resident coordinator's office
SRSG	Special representative of the secretary-general
UNCT	UN country team
UNDP	UN Development Programme
UNISS	UN Integrated Strategy for the Sahel
UNOWAS	UN Office for West Africa and the Sahel

Executive Summary

In his January 2018 report on peacebuilding and sustaining peace, the UN secretary-general called for a shift not only in UN policies on peacebuilding but also in approaches to peacebuilding at the regional and country levels. In implementing this shift, he advocated for changes across four issue areas: operational and policy coherence; UN leadership at the country level; partnerships with local and regional actors; and international support for sustaining peace. This was followed one year later by the reform of the UN development system, which empowered UN resident coordinators to be the heads of the UN country teams and to support the implementation of sustaining peace.

In Burkina Faso, these changes come at a time of increasing instability, with unprecedented humanitarian and security crises and diminishing trust in the government. Recognizing the growing risks, the UN, the Burkinabe government, and their partners began recalibrating their efforts in the country in 2018 by developing new strategies and tools to address these multidimensional challenges. This ongoing recalibration, together with the changes resulting from the UN development system reforms, make this an opportune moment to assess the implementation of the secretary-general's recommendations on peacebuilding and sustaining peace in Burkina Faso.

Implementation can be assessed across the four shifts called for by the secretary-general. In terms of operational and policy coherence, the UN development system reform has given the resident coordinator's office more authority and capacity to lead the country team's efforts on sustaining peace and ensure that new strategy and planning documents align with government efforts. The rollout of five integrated hubs has also helped tailor these strategies to subnational contexts. However, greater interagency coordination is required beyond the leadership level, and the resident coordinator's office needs to be fully staffed for its efforts to be sustainable.

In terms of leadership, the resident coordinator's office shows the potential to collaborate closely with the government while holding it accountable for human rights violations and to adopt an expanded role in coordinating the humanitarian response. In terms of partnerships, the country team benefits from a strong relationship with the government that is focused on national and subnational development strategies while finding opportunities to support civil society. The UN Office for West Africa and the Sahel plays a particularly important role in coordinating efforts between regional organizations and the UN system. Finally, in terms of international support, the rapid increase in engagement by the Peacebuilding Commission and Peacebuilding Fund has provided the UN country team with much-needed political and financial support, although the coordination of financing and programming among the growing number of regional development initiatives remains a challenge.

Continued support for the resident coordinator's office in Burkina Faso is necessary to ensure that the UN's sustaining peace efforts in the country are part of a holistic approach to the crisis, together with local, national, and regional partners. This report recommends that the United Nations finalize the development system reform process in Burkina Faso by fully staffing the resident coordinator's office; continue promoting local ownership of the country's national strategies; better align the growing number of regional and subregional funding streams; and maintain engagement on Burkina Faso at UN headquarters, particularly through the Peacebuilding Commission.

Introduction

The UN launched a system-wide effort to support the implementation of the sustaining peace agenda in Burkina Faso in February 2017 to help the government navigate the country's 2014 political transition and address humanitarian and developmental challenges. However, a rapidly deteriorating security situation and imminent humanitarian crisis forced the UN to recalibrate this effort. In February 2019, the special representative of the secretary-general (SRSG) of the UN Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS), Mohamed Ibn Chambas, was dispatched to assess the implementation of the peacebuilding framework in the country. He recommended significant changes, including strengthening the resident coordinator's office (RCO), assessing the UN country team's (UNCT) capacity to respond to the growing humanitarian and security crises, and scaling up UN engagement on the priority areas identified by the national government.

This assessment led the UN to transform its approach to sustaining peace in Burkina Faso. It increased funding and staffing for the RCO, created decentralized field offices, escalated the humanitarian response, and supported the development of new planning frameworks. This allowed the UN to shift toward a more tailored and integrated approach that jointly addresses the humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding dimensions of the crisis and that includes steps to prevent escalation. Burkina Faso therefore serves as a case study for how the new generation of UN country teams can implement the sustaining peace agenda in an environment of mounting insecurity that requires taking on additional responsibilities related to human rights, the protection of civilians, and humanitarian assistance.

This policy paper examines the implementation of the secretary-general's recommendations on peacebuilding and sustaining peace in Burkina Faso. It focuses on the enactment of the four pillars identified in the secretary general's 2018 report:

operational and policy coherence, leadership at the UN country level, partnerships with local and regional actors, and international support for sustaining peace.[1] In doing so, it seeks to assess the extent to which the UN system contributes to sustaining peace in the long term while also effectively coordinating urgent short-term responses such as life-saving humanitarian assistance.

The paper is based on primary and secondary research. Between September 2019 and March 2020, forty-six interviews were conducted with UN staff, member-state representatives, academics, officials from the Burkinabe government, and representatives of civil society in New York, Geneva, Dakar, and Ouagadougou.

The research is part of a larger IPI project on the operationalization of the secretary-general's recommendations on peacebuilding and sustaining peace at the country level. Burkina Faso is the third case study, following case studies on Liberia and Papua New Guinea conducted with the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC), which were published in May 2019 and September 2019, respectively.[2] These papers will be complemented by a crosscutting issue brief drawing lessons from all three cases to be published later in 2020. The intention is to connect field research with discussions at UN headquarters on how the UN system can best create the conditions for positive peace and support other actors working toward this goal.

Challenges and Opportunities for Sustaining Peace in Burkina Faso

Burkina Faso is a landlocked country, with most of its population of twenty million concentrated in the center and south of the country and 71 percent living in rural areas. With the majority of Burkina Faso's population under the age of twenty-five and more than 40 percent living in poverty, the govern-

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1 UN General Assembly and UN Security Council, *Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace—Report of the Secretary General*, UN Doc. A/72/707–S/2018/43, January 18, 2018.

2 Lesley Connolly and Laurie Mincieli, "Sustaining Peace in Liberia: New Reforms and Opportunities?" International Peace Institute, May 2019; and Lesley Connolly and Laurie Mincieli, "Sustaining Peace in Papua New Guinea: Prevention in Practice," International Peace Institute, September 2019.

ment's inability to provide essential services creates the risk that growing expectations for social and economic development will go unmet.[3] The country is also far from gender equality, as Burkinabe women face economic and social discrimination, particularly outside of urban areas, and account for only 10 percent of seats in the national legislature.[4] Located in the Sahel region, Burkina Faso is also highly susceptible to the impact of climate shocks and is already experiencing more variable temperature and rainfall. These risk factors, along with rural poverty and competition over scarce resources, contribute to insecurity and political unrest and threaten sources of resilience, including the country's history of religious pluralism and vibrant civil society.[5]

Burkina Faso experienced political upheaval throughout 2014 and 2015. Widespread popular protests led to the departure of President Blaise Compaoré in October 2014, following twenty-seven years in power. Subsequently, a transitional regime was established, and the country's first competitive presidential and legislative elections were held. Despite the transition to a new administration, the majority of political elites and civil servants in government are holdovers from the Compaoré administration.[6] With elections scheduled for November 2020 and the ongoing consolidation of democratic gains, the country faces the risk of power struggles between political elites and widespread urban unrest over unmet expectations.[7]

In addition to these issues, Burkina Faso has been grappling with a deteriorating security situation that began in 2014 and escalated rapidly after 2017. Since its start, violence has increased dramatically,

with 2019 witnessing 64 percent of all violent incidents reported since 2015. In 2019, Burkina Faso ranked first among countries in the Sahel for the number of attacks committed by violent extremists, which targeted civilians, government officials, security services, places of worship, and private sector production and trade.[8] These attacks have spread from the Sahel and Nord regions of the country to the Est, Centre-Est, Centre-Nord, and Boucle du Mouhoun regions, while small-scale attacks occur in population centers across the country, notably in the capital, Ouagadougou (see Figure 1). The government has opted for a heavily securitized response through which the military, alongside communal militias, have allegedly committed widespread human rights abuses.[9]

Violence committed by extremist groups overlaps with localized violence perpetrated by communal militias and driven by long-standing tensions over poor governance and resource sharing. This localized violence has been exacerbated by recent shifts, such as a reduced government presence since 2014, increased climate-related pressures, land seizures by the government, and manipulation of local conflicts by violent extremist actors.[10]

Ongoing insecurity has drastically amplified humanitarian needs, leading to a spiraling crisis. Between February 2019 and February 2020, the number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) increased from 87,000 to more than 765,000, and the number in need of humanitarian assistance increased to 1.5 million. Ninety-five health centers have closed, and 135 are operating at minimum capacity, affecting 1.2 million people.[11] IDPs fleeing the conflict in the Nord, Sahel, and Est regions are moving toward the center of the country, straining

3   Index Mundi, "Burkina Faso Demographic Profile," last updated December 7, 2019, available at www.indexmundi.com/burkina_faso/demographics_profile.html .

4   Sahel and West Africa Club, "Burkina Faso Still Has a Long Way to Go on Gender Equality," February 2, 2018, available at www.west-africa-brief.org/content/en/burkina-faso-still-has-long-way-go-gender-equality .

5   Executive Board of the UN Development Programme (UNDP), UN Population Fund, and UN Office for Project Services, Country Programme Document for Burkina Faso (2018-2020), UN Doc. DP/DCP/BFA/3, November 22, 2017; Burkina Faso has long enjoyed a perception as a bulwark between the Sahel and coastal West Africa due to its peaceful history, in part explaining why outside observers were shocked by the events of 2014 onwards. See Alexandre Lamarche, "Burkina Faso and the Sahel's New Frontline: Responding to the World's Fastest Growing Displacement Crisis," Refugees International, February 2020.

6   International Crisis Group, "Burkina Faso: Stopping the Spiral of Violence," February 2020, p. 3.

7   Burkina Faso experienced 442 protests and strikes from 2015 to 2019, compared with 244 from 2000 to 2013. Data from ACLED cited in International Crisis Group, "Burkina Faso: Stopping the Spiral of Violence."

8   Ibid.

9   Ibid.; Executive Committee of the Secretary-General, "Report of the Mission to Burkina Faso to Assess UN Engagement in the Country," February 2019.

10 International Crisis Group, "The Social Roots of Jihadist Violence in Burkina Faso's North," October 2017; International Crisis Group, "Getting a Grip on Central Sahel's Gold Rush," November 2019; William Assanvo, "Is Organised Crime Fueling Terror Groups in Liptako-Gourma?," Institute for Security Studies, December 10, 2019.

11 UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), "Burkina Faso: Humanitarian Snapshot as of 17 February 2020," February 25, 2020.

Figure 1. Conflict incidence in Burkina Faso (January 2016–February 2020)[12]
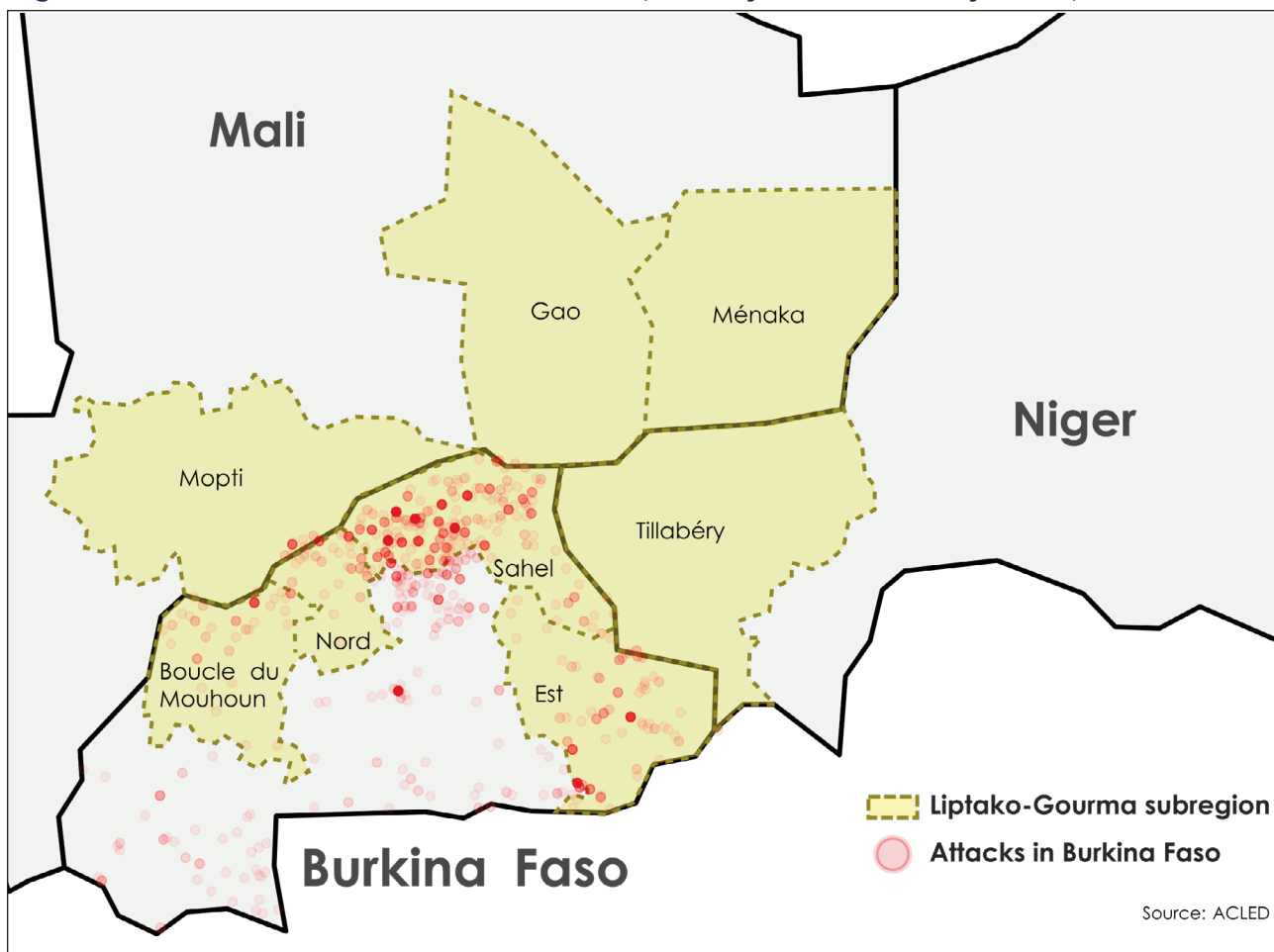
local communities and increasing intercommunal tensions.

In this context, international support to Burkina Faso has increased, expanding from development programming to a large-scale humanitarian response, technical assistance on governance and security sector reform, and direct bilateral military assistance. The resident coordinator (RC) faces unprecedented demands on her leadership and role in coordinating the nineteen UN offices and agencies in the country in order to adopt a coherent

approach to this multidimensional crisis.[13]

The UN launched system-wide support for the sustaining peace agenda in Burkina Faso in February 2017, with an initial focus on addressing drivers of instability by building resilience, fostering national ownership, and strengthening partnerships.[14] These efforts were anchored in the resident coordinator's office (RCO), which received increased staff and funding. At UN headquarters, the then Department of Political Affairs and UN Development Programme (UNDP)

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12 Data from ACLED, filtered by event types (battles, explosions/remote violence, and violence against civilians). In this figure, darker red dots correspond with a higher incidence of attacks.

13 These include the UN Department for Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the International Organization for Migration (IOM), OCHA, the Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights (OHCHR), the Joint UN Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the UN Population Fund (UNFPA), UN Habitat, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), UNICEF, the UN Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), the UN Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT), the UN Office for Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the UN Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS), UN Women, the World Food Programme (WFP), and the World Health Organization (WHO).

14 In addition to efforts to foster new partnerships between the government and international financial institutions as well as private sector investments in peacebuilding, there have been initiatives to incentivize partnerships with civil society organizations and networks, including women's and youth organizations. Since 2017, the Peacebuilding Support Office has focused on enhancing partnerships for sustaining peace through a more timely, inclusive, cohesive, and learning-driven PBF. UN Peacebuilding Commission, "Secretary-General Peacebuilding Fund (PBF): Strategic Plan 2017–2019," pp. 16–17.

increased their coordination and strategic planning, and the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) allocated $3 million to programs promoting security sector reform, national reconciliation and resilience, social cohesion, and the safety of cross-border communities.[15]

However, the rapidly deteriorating security situation and imminent humanitarian crisis forced a recalibration of these efforts, in part due to requests from the Burkinabe government. In February 2019, SRSG Chambas was dispatched to assess the implementation of the peacebuilding framework in the country. The resulting assessment recommended strengthening the RCO, assessing the UNCT's capacity to respond to the growing humanitarian and security crisis, and increasing the alignment of international efforts with priority areas identified by the national government: security and the rule of law, local governance, basic services, and resilience.[16] These recommendations were reinforced by a high-level meeting of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC)

devoted to Burkina Faso on May 16, 2019, and a Security Council visit to the Sahel region on March 24, 2019.[17]

As a result of these efforts, the UN presence in Burkina Faso underwent three concrete reforms throughout 2019 without any change in its mandate. First, to better achieve the 2030 Agenda's vision of "leaving no one behind," the UN created five integrated field offices across the country, and the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) allocated an addition $8 million to the country. Second, to address the humanitarian emergency, the UN issued a revised humanitarian response plan of $198 million and created a permanent presence for the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). Third, at the request of the Burkinabe government, the UN supported the UN, African Development Bank, and EU in conducting a joint Prevention and Peacebuilding Assessment (PPBA) through a multi-stakeholder process to inform future planning efforts (see Box 1).[18] These country-level changes were reinforced by the

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Box 1. The Prevention and Peacebuilding Assessment

In June 2019, the Burkinabe government requested support from its primary development partners, the UN, World Bank, EU, and African Development Bank, to conduct a Prevention and Peacebuilding Assessment (PPBA) looking at opportunities and risks in the six regions facing the greatest uptick in insecurity and humanitarian need. The PPBA framework is an innovative approach for the UN system, first piloted in Burkina Faso, as a prevention-focused model of the joint UN-World Bank Recovery and Peacebuilding Assessment Methodology (RPBA). The initial scoping mission in July 2019 used the expanded *Programme d'urgence pour le Sahel au Burkina Faso (*PUS-BF) as a framework for an aide-mémoire to guide future development plans. It identified four thematic areas for intervention (security and rule of law, social services, local governance, and resilience and social cohesion) and created a guide for partners to coordinate planning on peacebuilding and prevention.

The PPBA is an example of an effective partnership to support the identification of short-term, nationally owned priorities in the regions most affected by insecurity. The RCO has also been instrumental in facilitating collaboration between the Burkinabe government and financial partners to advance this time-sensitive and complex process. It is still too early, however, to observe whether international assistance will be allocated in line with the guidelines of the aide-mémoire and in support of the *Matrice d'actions prioritaires (*MAP).

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15   Executive Committee of the Secretary-General, "Report of the Mission to Burkina Faso to Assess UN Engagement in the Country," February 2019, p. 3.

16   Ibid., p. 2.

17   United Nations, "Briefing on Mission to Sahel Region, Security Council Members Stress Support for Mali Peace Agreement, Continued Democratic Reforms in Burkina Faso," UN Doc. SC/13750, March 27, 2019; UN Peacebuilding Commission, "Chair's Summary of the High-Level Meeting on Burkina Faso on 26 September 2019," available at www.un.org/peacebuilding/content/pbc-burkina-faso-chairs-summary-high-level-meeting-burkina-faso-26-september-2019 .

18   The Prevention and Peacebuilding Assessment (PPBA), rolled out as a prevention-focused methodology in Burkina Faso, has been adapted from the post-conflict recovery and peacebuilding assessment methodology used by the EU, UN, and World Bank to frame multilateral assessments in countries emerging from conflict. Absjorn Wee, "Recovery and Peacebuilding Assessments: A Tool to Prevent Conflict and Promote Peace," World Bank, January 2020.

creation of an Emergency Task Force for Burkina Faso at UN headquarters to coordinate support for the RCO.

The COVID-19 pandemic is posing yet another challenge to the UN's sustaining peace efforts in Burkina Faso. Sustaining peace initiatives, including the African Union's (AU) Silencing the Guns initiative and the secretary-general's call for a global cease-fire, are a necessary part of any overall strategy to stop transmission of the virus and avoid an even greater humanitarian catastrophe.[19] Moreover, the pandemic adds uncertainty to the already fragile political scene and worsening security and humanitarian situation.[20]

What is Sustaining Peace?

The resolutions on peacebuilding and sustaining peace passed by the UN Security Council and General Assembly in 2016 define sustaining peace as "a goal and a process to build a common vision of a society, ensuring that the needs of all segments of the population are taken into account, which encompasses activities aimed at preventing the outbreak, escalation, continuation and recurrence of conflict, addressing root causes, assisting parties to conflict to end hostilities, ensuring national reconciliation, and moving towards recovery, reconstruction and development."[21]

The UN secretary-general's January 2018 report on peacebuilding and sustaining peace calls for the UN system to revise its approach to peacebuilding at the regional and country levels, initiating a process of regular policy revision and implementation.[22] In April 2018, the Security Council and General Assembly passed another set of dual resolutions (2413 and 72/276, respectively). These resolutions endorsed the secretary-general's recommendations and requested an interim report on peacebuilding and sustaining peace in 2019, as well as a second report as part of the 2020 review of the UN's peacebuilding architecture.[23] More than a restatement or amendment of policy, the interim report recommends substantial shifts in the operationalization of sustaining peace in the form of:

1. Operational and policy coherence between all UN actors in headquarters and in the field, based on a common country and risk analysis, a unified vision of UN action in support of national efforts to sustain peace in each country, and a shared understanding of the role of each actor in implementing this vision, followed by joint planning and programming;

2. Effective leadership and capacities both in headquarters and in the field to institute this common approach and unified vision to sustain peace;

3. Stronger partnerships, including with local, national, and regional actors, building off their capacities; and

4. Adequate and sustained financing for peacebuilding activities.

In assessing the implementation of these shifts in Burkina Faso, this paper will consider the multidimensional and multi-sectoral aspects of operationalizing sustaining peace in line with these recommendations, as well as inputs from civil society and other stakeholders.

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19 The response to COVID-19 requires "a global response that is anchored on human rights, strong institutions, social cohesion, greater equity and justice." United Nations, "COVID-19 Crisis Must Not Reverse Hard-Won Security Gains, Deputy Secretary-General Tells Peacebuilding Commission, Warns Countries Need Faster, Greater Support," UN Doc. DSG/SM/1398, April 8, 2020.

20 As of April 30, 2020, Burkina Faso had about 650 confirmed cases and 43 deaths from the virus. Johns Hopkins University, "COVID-19 Dashboard by the Center for Systems Science and Engineering," available at www.arcgis.com/apps/opsdashboard/index.html#/bda7594740fd40299423467b48e9ecf6 .

21 UN Security Council Resolution 2282 (April 27, 2016), UN Doc. S/RES/2282; UN General Assembly Resolution 70/262 (April 27, 2016), UN Doc. A/RES/70/262, May 12, 2016, p. 2.

22 UN General Assembly and Security Council, *Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace—Report of the Secretary-General*, UN Doc. A/72/707–S/2018/43, January 18, 2018.

23 The interim report was released in May 2019. UN General Assembly and UN Security Council, *Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace—Report of the Secretary-General*, UN Doc. A/73/890–S/2019/448, May 30, 2019.

Operational and Policy Coherence: Sustaining Peace and the UN Country Team

The secretary-general's report on peacebuilding and sustaining peace calls on the UN system to organize itself in an integrated manner and ensure "operational and policy coherence to strengthen support to peacebuilding and sustaining peace."[24] The starting point is a coherent and integrated context analysis developed by the different members of the UNCT in cooperation with international, national, and local actors. This analysis should form a clearly articulated, overarching vision for how to sustain peace in the country. All actors should use it as the basis for their programming, and it should guide future planning strategies developed by the UN system and national government. In this way, it can align different actors' work on the basis of their comparative advantages, promote integrated programming, and support national ownership.[25]

In Burkina Faso, the reform of the UN development system and country presence, beginning in 2017, promoted operational and policy coherence through the adoption of innovative approaches,[26] integrated analysis and strategic planning, increased staffing and resource mobilization for the RCO, and the creation of five decentralized field offices. While these processes are mostly ongoing, they have provided much-needed support to the UNCT and the national government.

Analysis and Strategic Planning: The Common Country Analysis and Cooperation Framework

To promote policy coherence across the UNCT, the RCO has been working toward joint analysis and strategic planning. The UN sustainable development cooperation framework serves as the core planning document for tracking the UNCT's implementation of the sustaining peace agenda and supporting programming by partners that aligns with the agenda.[27] This framework exists alongside the New Way of Working (NWOW), a strategy for increasing collaboration between humanitarian and development actors.

One tool for developing a shared analysis within the UNCT is the common country analysis (CCA). The CCA provides an impartial overview of risks and fragilities to inform strategic planning across the UN system, reflected in the sustainable development cooperation framework, alongside existing government and independent assessments.[28] The UNCT conducted the most recent CCA for Burkina Faso in 2017 in collaboration with the government's Ministry of Economy, Finance, and Development. It was also informed by consultations with development partners, civil society, and academia. It focused on peacebuilding, humanitarian needs, and development, with a secondary focus on the rule of law, security sector reform, and human rights. The 2017 CCA helped the UNCT tailor its approach to subnational contexts by identifying regions where humanitarian need, development challenges, and the absence of government services overlapped.[29]

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24 Ibid., p. 2.

25 Ibid., para. 25.

26 These included, for instance, the roll-out of an inclusive consultative process for the identification of collective outcomes, including the effective leveraging of partnerships. In Burkina Faso, this process resulted in the signing of a Partnership framework for sustainable development (2018–2020). Interview with UN official, Ouagadougou, November 2019.

27 In the UN development system reform, UN sustainable development cooperation frameworks, previously known as UN developmental assistance frameworks, capture the importance of collaboration between national governments and the UNCT on achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. See UN General Assembly and UN Security Council, *Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace—Report of the Secretary-General*, UN Doc. A/73/890–S/2019/448, May 30, 2019, para. 24; UN General Assembly Resolution 72/279 (June 1, 2018), UN Doc. A/RES/72/279; and UN Sustainable Development Group, "United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework," June 3, 2019.

28 The UN cooperation framework serves as the core planning document for tracking the UNCT's implementation of the sustaining peace agenda and supporting aligned programming by partners.

29 Joint Steering Committee to advance Humanitarian and Development Cooperation, "Burkina Faso: Joint Steering Committee Progress Review," May 5, 2019, available at www.un.org/jsc/sites/www.un.org.jsc/files/general/jsc_progress_review_burkina_faso_3.pdf .

However, the CCA made limited use of tools such as perception surveys that could have helped better assess the economic and social marginalization driving insecurity in the Nord and Sahel regions.[30]

The current sustainable development cooperation framework (2018–2020) was developed in 2017 on the basis of the 2017 CCA, as well as internal assessments of the mandates and operational capacities of UN agencies, funds, and programs, the 2016 national development strategy (*Plan national de développement économique et social*, or PNDES), UN global frameworks (mainly the 2030 Agenda, and the NWOW), and consultations with the government and civil society. It allows the RC to track the implementation of the sustaining peace agenda across four thematic pillars: reinforcing the efficacy of institutions, ensuring equal access to justice, and promoting the rule of law; reinforcing the population's resilience and creating sustainable agricultural conditions with the goal of ending hunger and malnutrition; contributing to the eradication of multidimensional poverty; and managing climate risks and preparedness for shocks.[31] Progress toward implementation of the framework is overseen by a joint steering committee co-led by the RC and Burkinabe government officials, with monitoring and evaluation efforts divided among the four thematic pillars. The drafting phase for the next cooperation framework was extended into 2021 to better align with the timeline for renewing the new PNDES.

The 2018–2021 cooperation framework is a living document. Reflecting the rapid and unpredictable evolution of the security and humanitarian crisis since 2017, it has been updated to align with new national development strategies and UN frameworks, including the government's 2019 expansion of its *Programme d'urgence pour le Sahel*

au Burkina Faso (PUS-BF) and adjustments to UNDP's *Programme d'appui aux économies locales*. As a result, the thematic focuses on food security and human security have been expanded with more rigorous benchmarks. Despite this flexibility, the increased intensity and geographic spread of insecurity continue to outpace the UNCT's ability to gather information, shift its strategy and programming accordingly, and distribute resources.[32]

Alongside the cooperation framework, the NWOW also contributes to policy coherence through the development of collective outcomes for humanitarian and development actors.[33] These collective outcomes, adopted in Burkina Faso in 2018, were informed by the same internal assessments the UNCT used to design the 2018–2020 cooperation framework and are imbedded in that framework's second and fourth pillars.[34] However, due to a lack of sensitization on the NWOW among non-UN actors, there is a perception within the national government and civil society that it is only a UN policy, and to many it remains an abstract concept.[35]

A Strengthened RCO and Coordination Mechanism at UN Headquarters

Under the recent reforms to the UN development system, RCOs are empowered to coordinate the UNCT's work on the priorities identified in cooperation frameworks.[36] They are also provided with additional expertise in development and strategic planning, development economics and finance, data management and reporting, partnerships, advocacy, and communications. In Burkina Faso, informed by the findings of SRSG Chambas's

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30 Interview with independent expert, New York, March 2020.

31 Interviews with UN officials, Ouagadougou, November 2019.

32 Interview with UN official, Ouagadougou, November 2019.

33 The NWOW is a byproduct of the Commitment to Action signed by the secretary-general and eight UN principals at the World Humanitarian Summit. It aims to transcend the humanitarian-development divide by "working over multiple years, based on the comparative advantage of a diverse range of actors, including those outside the UN system, towards collective outcomes." UN OCHA, "The New Way of Working," April 10, 2017, available at www.unocha.org/story/new-way-working .

34 Joint Steering Committee to Advance Humanitarian and Development Collaboration," "Burkina Faso," May 2018, available at www.un.org/jsc/content/burkina-faso .

35 Interview with civil society representative, Ouagadougou, November 2019; Interview with independent expert, New York, March 2020.

36 UN General Assembly and Economic and Social Council, *Repositioning the UN Development System to Deliver on the 2030 Agenda: Ensuring a Better Future for All*, UN Doc. A/72/124–E/2018/3, July 11, 2017; UN General Assembly and Economic and Social Council, *Repositioning the United Nations Development System to Deliver on the 2030 Agenda: Our Promise for Dignity, Prosperity and Peace on a Healthy Planet*, UN Doc. A/72/684–E/2018/7, December 21, 2017.

mission, the RCO has also received additional capacity on political analysis to deepen its understanding of conflict drivers and trends. To this end, the UN deployed a peace and development adviser, senior political and human rights advisers, and an adviser on the humanitarian-development-peace nexus and established country offices for OCHA and the World Bank.

The development system reforms also aimed to connect decision making at UN headquarters with the RCO. In 2018, the Development Operations Coordination Office was transformed into the Development Coordination Office (DCO), which coordinates the RC system and serves as the secretariat for the UN Sustainable Development Group.[37] This rapid reform created some friction, as the RCO initially lacked a consistent contact point.[38] To further align decision making at headquarters with the UNCT, the UN created an Emergency Task Force for Burkina Faso in 2019, another recommendation from SRSG Chambas's report. The task force, led by the assistant secretary-general for Africa, Bintou Keita, and composed of UN Secretariat entities and agencies, funds, and programs, is responsible for steering the relevant parts of the UN system at headquarters toward a unified vision for UN action in Burkina Faso, including how to reinforce the UNCT through the mobilization and deployment of expertise.

Decentralizing the UN Presence to Address Vulnerability and Exclusion

In addition to its efforts to align international and national efforts, the UNCT created five integrated field offices around Burkina Faso in 2019 to better connect sustaining peace efforts to local contexts. The approach emerged from the recommendations of SRSG Chambas's report, which called for integrated UN field presences in the Sahel, Nord,

Est, Centre-Nord, and Hauts-Bassins regions. Each hub has a programmatic focus tailored to its region. This decentralized approach aligns with the government's 2019 expanded PUS-BF. Three of the five hubs are in the regions with the greatest insecurity and humanitarian needs: Ouahigouya in the Nord region, Kaya in the Centre-Nord region, and Dori in the Sahel region. There is also a hub in Fada-N'gourma in the Est region, which has experienced less insecurity but has similar risk factors as the Nord and Sahel regions. The final hub is in Bobo-Dioulasso in the Hauts-Bassins region, which has proven more economically and socially resilient to insecurity than the rest of the country and requires a greater focus on preventive measures (see Figure 2).

The decentralized UN presence allows the RCO to tailor its country-wide approach to specific contexts, accounting for the diverse needs across the country and anticipating the risk of insecurity spreading east and south. Moreover, the integrated nature of these offices, with UN entities sharing logistics and aligning their programmatic interventions, can encourage the operationalization of the NWOW and the humanitarian-development-peace nexus through the development of collective outcomes within the UNCT. While the roll-out of this initiative is ongoing, the regional offices have faced staffing shortages, especially in human rights monitoring and safety and security, which are likely to continue in the near future as the UN Development Coordination Office and agencies, funds, and programs adjust surge capacity cycles to the specific demands of the country.[39] Furthermore, as of the end of 2019, programming in these hubs focused on humanitarian efforts, and most of the hubs were led by humanitarian agencies, which have an institutional advantage in rapidly assessing and responding to needs.[40] In terms of sustaining peace, there are opportunities for further engagement by UN headquarters in support of activities beyond humanitarian and development efforts,

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37 Assistant Secretary-General Robert Piper of Australia was appointed by the secretary-general in December 2018 and was made responsible for managing and overseeing the new RC system the following month.

38 Interview with independent expert, New York, March 2020.

39 However, some form of coordination takes place to ensure observance to the OHCHR International Human Rights and Humanitarian Law Compliance Framework: in the absence of a monitoring team in Burkina, there is regular coordination and information sharing about allegations of human rights violations that may be attributed to Burkinabe units associated with the G5 Sahel regional force.

40 While the RCO has deployed humanitarian-development-peace nexus coordinators to Kaya and Dori, the leadership at each integrated field office has been distributed based on comparative advantages and operational strengths: Kaya office is led by UNHCR, Ouahigouya office is led by WFP; Fada-N'gourma office is led by UNICEF; Bobo-Dioulasso office is led by UNDP.

Figure 2. Decentralized UN presence and areas targeted by the expanded PUS-BF
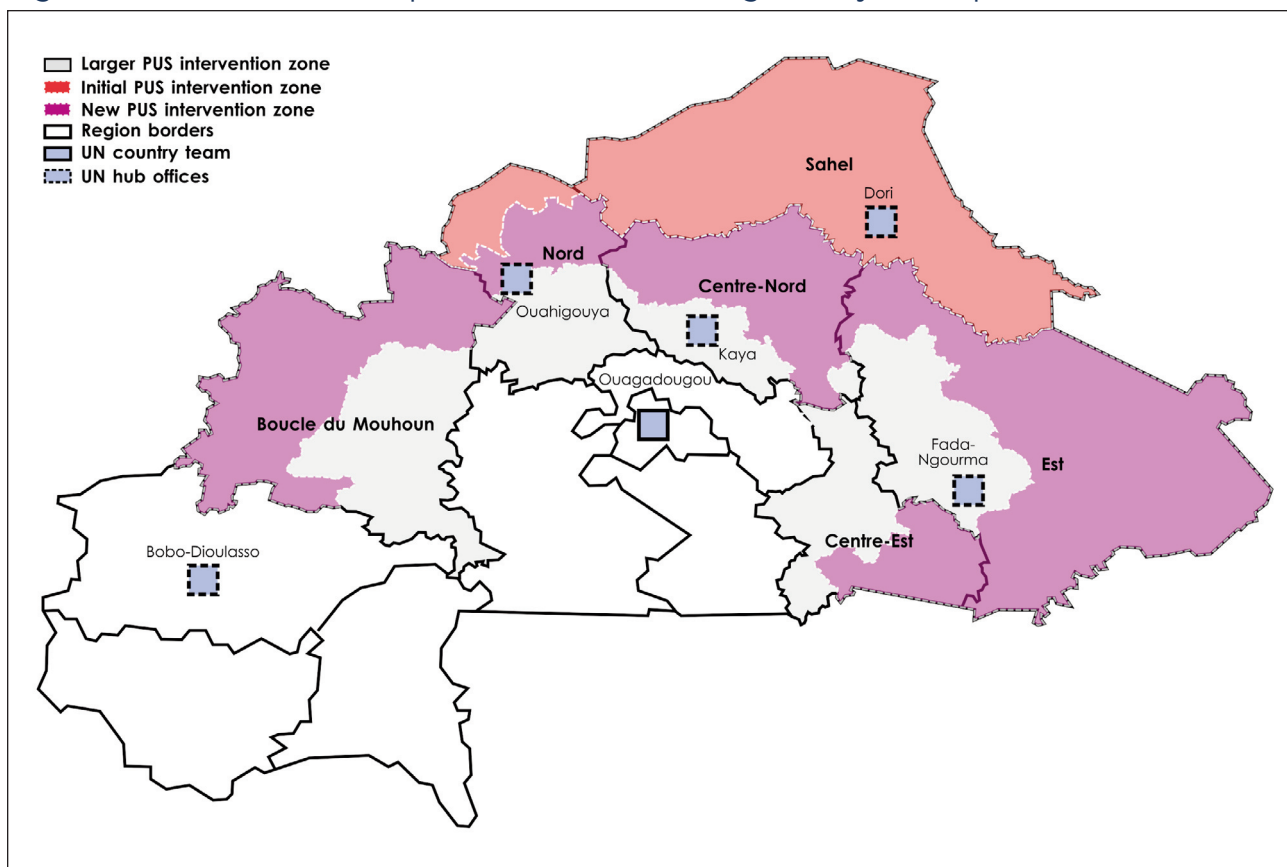
such as human rights monitoring, to support the implementation of the triple nexus.[41]

Leadership

Independent, impartial, and empowered RCs are responsible for leading integrated UNCT activities in-country. Designated by the secretary-general, RCs are meant to be the personification of the transformative leadership needed to tackle multidimensional challenges.[42] This vision of leadership has been adopted in the Management and Accountability Framework of the UN development and resident coordinator system.[43] Changes in five strategic functions are meant to empower the RC: (1) strategic planning; (2) development economics; (3) partnerships and development finance; (4) data

management and reporting; and (5) communications and advocacy. In addition, the RC is responsible for maintaining external partnerships to ensure the delivery of humanitarian and development efforts. At the same time, RCs needs to remain independent so they can hold these partners accountable on sensitive political issues such as breaches of international human rights law.

The leadership of RCs has been particularly instrumental for the implementation of the sustaining peace agenda in conflict-prone non-mission settings like Burkina Faso. The current RC in Burkina Faso, Metsi Makhetha, who was appointed in 2016, was tasked with navigating the UN's multiple reform processes along with the emerging crisis in the country.[44] Makhetha inherited a strong relationship between the UNCT and the govern-

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41 Interview with independent expert, New York, March 2020.

42 UN System Chief Executives Board for Coordination, "CEB Common Principles to Guide the UN System's Support to the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development," April 2019, principle 10.

43 UN Development Coordination Office, "Management and Accountability Framework of the UN Development and Resident Coordinator System," March 2019.

44 This is an area where the leadership by the RC is critical to foster a positive mindset on the ongoing reforms initiatives in order to avoid reform fatigue. UN General Assembly, Shifting the Management Paradigm in the United Nations: Ensuring a Better Future for All, UN Doc. A/72/492 (September 27, 2017), p. 6 .

ment, solidified by the UN system's visible support during the 2015 political transition and history of steady support to development initiatives.[45] She has also maintained her existing relationships within the UN and with regional organizations, the private sector, and civil society, including a close working relationship with Assistant Secretary-General Keita, developed during the response to the 2014–2016 West Africa Ebola epidemic. Through informal meetings and joint efforts, the RC has developed "excellent" relationships with government ministries overseeing the development of national development strategies.[46] Additionally, she enjoys strong support and recognition from donors, serving as part of the "troika" that coordinates among development partners and chairing the meetings of the donor community coordination architecture.[47] This allows her to clearly establish the UNCT's position in core thematic areas to better align programming with external funding.[48]

However, the full potential of the RC is limited by staffing vacancies in the RCO, which are in part a result of the restructuring required to rapidly respond to the unfolding crisis.[49] As of March 2020, these vacancies were both programmatic (partnerships and development finance) and operational (strategic communications and public outreach and advocacy).[50] The ability of the UNCT to expand programming in line with national development strategies throughout 2019 despite these staffing challenges is in part a reflection of the leadership of the current RC.[51]

A second challenge facing the RC is maintaining strong ties with the government while addressing serious concerns over the human rights abuses carried out by the security services and pro-government militias. The RC has sought to maintain this balance by coordinating with high-level UN personnel. For example, Assistant Secretary-General Keita has delivered strong messaging on sensitive political issues and engaged with the public in support of the RC during visits to the country.[52] The Emergency Task Force also helps ensure coordinated support to the UNCT's field-driven priorities in support of government efforts and is therefore a potential gateway for aligning support from headquarters with the RC's efforts to address human rights issues.[53] The RC's engagement on human rights has been further bolstered by the deployment of human rights personnel to the RCO in 2019, which has improved information gathering on human rights abuses.

In humanitarian settings, RCs also perform the role of humanitarian coordinator, making the RC instrumental to implementing the NWOW by enhancing synergies and avoiding duplication between humanitarian and development actors. Toward the end of 2019, the rapid deterioration of the humanitarian situation in Burkina Faso increasingly called for this role. Agencies, funds, and programs issued emergency declarations throughout the year, and the emergency directors of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee sent a mission to the country in October. That same month, RC Makhetha was designated the humanitarian coordinator for Burkina Faso, followed by the activation of the humanitarian cluster coordination system in November.[54] This role is critical for the UNCT to coherently mobilize humanitarian resources to meet surging demands, as reflected in the 2020 humanitarian response plan, which calls for $312 million in aid.[55]

45 Inter-Agency Working Group on Sustaining Peace in Burkina Faso, "Sustaining Peace in Burkina Faso," December 2016, p. 6.

46 Interview with independent expert, New York, March 2020.

47 The troika serves as a framework for political dialogue between the government and international technical and financial partners involved in the implementation of the PUS-BF.

48 Interviews with UN officials, Ouagadougou, November 2019.

49 Interviews with UN officials, Ouagadougou, November 2019.

50 Interview with independent expert, New York, March 2020.

51 Interview with UN officials, Ouagadougou, November 2019; Interview with independent expert, New York, March 2020.

52 Interview with independent expert, New York, March 2020.

53 Interview with representative of RCO, Ouagadougou, December 2019.

54 The UN's humanitarian coordination in Burkina Faso is in support of the government's National Emergency Relief and Rehabilitation Council.

55 UN OCHA, "Plan de réponse humanitaire Burkina Faso," January 2020.

Role of National, Local, and Regional Partners

According to the secretary-general's peacebuilding and sustaining peace report, "An ecosystem of partners… is critical to sustaining peace."[56] Given the UN's strong relationship with the national government, a vibrant civil society, and UN and intergovernmental peacebuilding initiatives across the Sahel at the regional level, Burkina Faso presents an opportunity for the UN system to align its sustaining peace efforts with a variety of partners.

Working with the Government

To respond to the emerging crisis, the Burkinabe government has recalibrated its development strategy. The initial national development strategy, the PNDES (2016–2020), focused on three pillars: reforming institutions and modernizing the administration; developing human capital; and stimulating sectors with potential for growing the economy and generating employment.[57] It was developed in consultation with civil society actors and informed by past development strategies, internal assessments, and sustainable development frameworks used by the UN system, the AU, and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).[58] The PNDES has also informed the UNCT's efforts, and the 2018–2021 cooperation framework aligns with its thematic priorities. To further synchronize the two frameworks, the development of the next cooperation framework was delayed to align with the planning of the 2021–2025 PNDES. While important for setting development priorities at the national level, the PNDES is less useful for informing peacebuilding-sensitive and geographically tailored interventions.

The government adopted the PUS-BF in July 2017 to complement the PNDES through targeted development and peacebuilding interventions in the Nord and Sahel regions. With worsening

security and the declaration of states of emergency in additional provinces, the PUS-BF was expanded in 2019 to include the Centre-Nord, Est, Centre-Est, and Boucle du Mouhoun regions and is now referred to as the "expanded PUS-BF." Following the undertaking of a Prevention and Peacebuilding Assessment (PPBA; see Box 1), a novel tool for the UN system, the government also updated the list of priorities for the expanded PUS-BF, the *Matrice d'actions prioritaires* (MAP).[59] The thematic areas of the expanded PUS-BF are strengthening security and the rule of law, optimizing the provision of humanitarian and social services, strengthening the state's presence at the local level, and building the foundations for social cohesion and resilience of the population and territories. Under the PUS-BF, areas deemed "unstable" (marked by high levels of violence and displacement) are prioritized when it comes to the provision of security to enable the implementation of other activities. Zones that are "under pressure" (those hosting displaced populations) receive greater attention in terms of humanitarian support and improvement in the quality of governance to meet the surging demand for service delivery.

The expanded PUS-BF is overseen by the office of the prime minister through a technical platform with relevant civil servants that monitors implementation and leads intra-governmental and external collaboration. At the strategic level, the UNCT uses the expanded PUS-BF to inform the development of its cooperation framework. The expanded PUS-BF also complements and informs the UN's decentralized hub strategy, with field offices aligning their activities with those identified in the MAP.

While the government has been able to mobilize more resources for the PNDES and expanded PUS-BF over the past year with support from external partners, it still lacks adequate funding, especially for activities in zones "under pressure." Insecurity and poor coordination between the government

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56 UN General Assembly and Security Council, *Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace—Report of the Secretary-General*, UN Doc. A/72/707–S/2018/43, January 18, 2018.

57 Government of Burkina Faso, "National Plan for Economic and Social Development (PNDES) 2016–2020," October 2016.

58 These include the 2011–2015 National Strategy for Growth and Sustainable Development, Prospective National Study Burkina 2025, National Land Management and Sustainable Development Plan, 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, African Union Agenda 2063, and Community Strategic Framework of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). Ibid.

59 Government of Burkina Faso, "Programme d'urgence pour le Sahel au Burkina Faso: Matrice d'actions prioritaires du PUS-BF 2020–2021," February 2020.

and local officials and civil society organizations also limit effective implementation.[60] Moreover, the government's continuously increasing expenditures on security services may come at the expense of funding for development.[61]

Partnerships with Civil Society Organizations

Burkinabe civil society organizations (CSOs) play an important role in providing public services and carrying out peacebuilding activities, especially in areas with a limited government presence.[62] Burkinabe CSOs work in areas including human rights advocacy, rural conflict prevention and management, intercommunal and interfaith dialogue, youth empowerment, and women's access to education and political office. They remain active despite growing insecurity, which has limited their ability to safely carry out activities in the Sahel and Nord regions.

Partnerships with CSOs allow the UNCT to work in remote areas, engage in community-level processes, and access informal and cross-border mechanisms that are outside state control. Moreover, many CSOs are deeply engaged with Burkinabe youth, providing the UNCT access to a key demographic. Agencies' partnerships with CSOs help them achieve their mandates in areas such as strengthening governance institutions and supporting community security and social cohesion.[63] In most cases, these partnerships involve agencies providing funding for CSOs to implement programs and gather information. In limited cases, agencies work alongside CSOs to implement programs, creating the opportunity for the transfer of skills.

RCO-led partnership efforts are perceived favorably by local CSOs. However, these efforts stem more from the dynamic personalities and work ethic of RCO staff rather than from formalized procedures and frameworks for partnerships, limiting their sustainability. Another challenge is that strategies at UN headquarters prioritize operating through formal government structures and thus are less relevant in remote areas with a limited state presence.[64] Furthermore, there is widespread confusion among CSOs over the overlapping mandates held by different agencies, especially in relation to the humanitarian-development nexus, which can make it harder for them to access funding. However, there is an expectation within the UNCT that the integrated hub system will allow for additional partnerships with CSOs on thematic areas.[65]

Regional Initiatives: AU, ECOWAS, and UNOWAS

Regional and subregional organizations are key partners for peacebuilding. The secretary-general's report on sustaining peace advocates for increased UN engagement with these organizations at headquarters and in the field on information sharing, coordination, analysis, planning, and programming.[66] Because of Burkina Faso's location in the Sahel, it is covered by several intergovernmental and UN regional organizations engaged in peacebuilding efforts. The AU and ECOWAS provide political and programmatic support to the government of Burkina Faso, while UNOWAS coordinates regional and country-level peacebuilding initiatives.

The AU and ECOWAS have mostly engaged in Burkina Faso through their support to the political process, using good offices to deter spoilers and enable a peaceful democratic transition throughout 2014 and 2015.[67] This history of political engagement has earned them the goodwill of the

60 International Crisis Group, "Burkina Faso: Stopping the Spiral of Violence," p. 25.

61 UN Peacebuilding Commission, "Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace in Burkina Faso," March 5, 2020.

62 "The RC plays a pivotal role in ensuring coordinated and coherent engagement with CSOs to facilitate dialogue, help protect civic space and foster social cohesion, as well as to ensure proper participation in discussions that feed back into the decision-making of the UNCT at the operational and political levels." Interview with UN official, Ouagadougou, December 2019.

63 Agencies such as the FAO, IOM, OCHA, OHCHR, UNDP, UNFPA, UNHCR, and WFP all have partnerships with CSOs in Burkina Faso.

64 Interview with representatives of civil society organizations, Ouagadougou, November 2019.

65 Interview with UN official, Ouagadougou, November 2019.

66 UN General Assembly and Security Council, *Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace—Report of the Secretary-General*, UN Doc. A/72/707–S/2018/43, January 18, 2018.

67 Institute for Security Studies, "Burkina Faso a Test for the AU's Impact on Crises," November 2, 2015.

Burkinabe public, and both organizations continue to provide good offices and to deliver technical support to the electoral commission for the upcoming elections.[68] They also carry out more limited work on conflict prevention and peacebuilding. ECOWAS maintains an Early Warning and Response Network (ECOWARN), which coordinates information sharing between West African states and the UN, especially between UNOWAS and UNDP.[69] The AU supports developmental peacebuilding through its 2014 Strategy for the Sahel, which is based on the AU Post Conflict Reconstruction and Development Policy, with a focus on cross-border programming.

To support the UN's country-level efforts on sustaining peace in coordination with regional organizations, UNOWAS also provides good offices and implements programming. UNOWAS's importance to sustaining peace efforts was underscored by SRSG Chambas's review, and the SRSG continues to coordinate engagement between UN headquarters and Ouagadougou, providing briefings to the UN Security Council and the PBC on government and UNCT responses to the emerging crisis. UNOWAS also carries out programming on security sector reform, transitional justice, and rule of law capacity building.[70] While the SRSG's engagement on Burkina Faso is important, his vast geographic and thematic mandate limits more concentrated engagement. Further collaboration between the UNCT and UNOWAS at the desk level is also limited by the speed of the 2019 reform process, with staff in UNOWAS still navigating new organizational structures and hierarchies.[71]

Beyond direct support to the Burkinabe government and the UNCT, UNOWAS's mandate allows it to align UN and intergovernmental efforts in the region through the 2013 UN Integrated Strategy for the Sahel (UNISS) and 2018 Support Plan for the Sahel. UNOWAS chairs the UNISS steering committee, oversees the working groups for UNISS's thematic pillars, and monitors and reports on the support plan.[72]

UNISS is a framework for aligning cross-border interventions across the Sahel region. It has three thematic pillars, informed by the Sustainable Development Goals and the AU Agenda 2063: enhancing inclusive and effective governance throughout the region; strengthening the capacity of national and regional security mechanisms to address cross-border threats; and integrating development and humanitarian interventions to build resilience. The Support Plan for the Sahel was developed in 2018 to improve coordination between the G5 Sahel, the AU, ECOWAS, the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), the EU, the Sahel Alliance, and the UN system on meeting the needs of the Sahelian states. The support plan has helped operationalize UNISS through increased oversight and the implementation of structures to track progress at headquarters and in the field, supporting multiple cross-border initiatives.[73]

UNISS and the Support Plan for the Sahel provide opportunities to bolster country-level implementation of the UN development system reform through regional strategies. If fully realized, this framework can support the UNCT by helping strategically align the growing number of regional initiatives. It can also strengthen support to cross-border peacebuilding efforts such as the recent program to build social resilience in the Liptako-Gourma region.[74]

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68 International Crisis Group, "Eight Priorities for the African Union in 2020," February 2020, pp. 7–8.

69 UN Security Council, *Report of the Secretary-General on the Situation in the Sahel Region*, UN Doc. S/2013/354, June 14, 2013.

70 UN Security Council, *Letter Dated 15 November 2019 from the Secretary-General Addressed to the President of the Security Council*, UN Doc. S/2019/890, November 19, 2019.

71 Interview with independent expert, New York, March 2020.

72 UN Security Council 8435th Meeting, *United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel: An Integrated Response to Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace in the Sahel*, UN Doc. S/PV.8435, December 20, 2018.

73 Ibid.; UN Security Council, *Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel—Report of the Secretary-General*, UN Doc. S/2018/1006, November 12, 2018; *Statement by the President of the Security Council*, UN Doc. S/PRST/2018/16, August 10, 2018; *Report of the Secretary-General on the Activities of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel*, UN Doc. S/2019/1005, December 30, 2019.

74 UN Security Council, *Activities of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel—Report of the Secretary-General*, UN Doc. S/2019/1005, December 30, 2019.

International Support: Coherent Frameworks for International Cooperation

The secretary-general's report on peacebuilding and sustaining peace highlights the need for sustained political engagement and financing from UN headquarters. The growing engagement of both the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) and the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) on Burkina Faso since 2017 reflects their potential to provide financial and political support, respectively. Additional funding for peacebuilding could come from regional initiatives, although funding gaps remain, and there is insufficient coordination among donors.

Added Value of the UN Peacebuilding Fund

The PBF is the primary financial instrument for providing rapid support to sustaining peace efforts. It can provide funding to all stakeholders, including the UNCT, national governments, regional organizations, and CSOs. PBF funding is designed to catalyze additional funding from other sources.[75] The PBF's engagement in Burkina Faso was limited in the period from 2015 to 2017, with a focus on supporting the efforts of UNOWAS and the Department of Political Affairs on security sector reform, national reconciliation, and preventing violent extremism.[76] Burkina Faso became eligible for PBF funding in August 2018, expanding the PBF's financial portfolio in line with national priorities. Since 2017, the PBF has allocated $19.3 million for projects in Burkina Faso, of which $11.7 million has been funded.[77] This portfolio includes eleven projects, ten of which are ongoing, which focus on four themes:

security sector reform; reconciliation; preventing and countering violent extremism and promoting social cohesion; and empowering women and youth.[78]

The PBF's funding in Burkina Faso highlights its comparative advantage over other funding sources. The PBC reports that this funding directly catalyzed an additional $11.4 million in contributions.[79] Moreover, it has largely been aligned with the government and UNCT's recalibrated strategy. PBF projects are designed in consultation with UN actors at the headquarters, regional, and country levels, including the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, UNOWAS, UNDP, the Office of Rule of Law and Security Institutions, and the RCO.[80] Projects developed since 2018 have also been aligned with the new priorities identified in the expanded PUS-BF, with a greater focus on local peacebuilding and seven of the projects targeting the Sahel and Nord regions.[81] Finally, the PBF has looked beyond the UNCT in Burkina Faso, supporting three cross-border efforts in the Liptako-Gourma region and directly partnering with a civil society organization.[82] One challenge facing the PBF, however, is the rapid reform and expansion of the UNCT in 2019, with some agencies forced to operate using surge capacity without the built-in structures to rapidly absorb external funding.[83]

Coordinating International Support through the Peacebuilding Commission

The PBC has the potential to promote sustaining peace efforts in Burkina Faso at UN headquarters by sharing information and mobilizing resources, acting as a "bridge" between the Security Council, ECOSOC, regional actors, and development

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75 United Nations, "The Challenge of Sustaining Peace: Report of the Advisory Group of Experts for the 2015 Review of the United Nations Peacebuilding Architecture," June 2015, p. 44.

76 UN Peacebuilding Commission, "The PBF in Burkina Faso," April 24, 2018.

77 Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office, "Burkina Faso," available at http://mptf.undp.org/factsheet/country/BFA .

78 Participating organizations include UNDP, UNHCR, UNFPA, IOM, FAO, and civil society organizations.

79 UN Peacebuilding Commission, "Chair's Summary of the Ambassadorial-Level Meeting on 16 May 2019"; "The Secretary-General's Peacebuilding Fund: Burkina Faso," March 2020.

80 UN Peacebuilding Commission, "The PBF in Burkina Faso," April 24, 2018.

81 Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office, "Burkina Faso," available at http://mptf.undp.org/factsheet/country/BFA .

82 Charles T. Call, "Addressing Two Problems with Peacebuilding," UN Centre for Policy Research, June 17, 2015; UN Peacebuilding Commission, "Secretary-General Peacebuilding Fund (PBF): Strategic Plan 2017–2019."

83 Interview with UN officials, Ouagadougou, November 2019.

partners.[84] While there is no country-specific configuration for Burkina Faso, increased organizational flexibility within the PBC and strong engagement by the Burkinabe government, the UN Secretariat, and some intergovernmental bodies, have left the PBC with an expanded role in coordinating international support.[85]

The PBC's engagement on Burkina Faso was originally limited to mobilizing support for UNOWAS's implementation of UNISS in the Sahel region as a whole.[86] However, as the security situation deteriorated, and following increased requests for engagement from the Burkinabe government, an informal focus on Burkina Faso emerged in the PBC throughout 2019. Following an initial visit by the chair of the PBC and SRSG Chambas in October 2018, the PBC held three meetings on Burkina Faso, in May and September 2019 and March 2020. These meetings included high-level representation from the Burkinabe government (including the president and ministers overseeing the PNDES, PUS-BF, UNOWAS, the Peacebuilding Support Office, the RCO (including the RC), and civil society.

In these meetings, the PBC recognized the Prevention and Peacebuilding Assessment (PPBA), its resulting aide-mémoire, and the MAP as the guiding frameworks for increased engagement in the Nord and Centre regions.[87] Outcome documents from these meetings included pledges from member states to increase support to national development strategies, including the next PNDES (2021–2025).[88] At the March 2020 meeting of the PBC, the Burkinabe government presented its list of priorities in the MAP, recently updated with the support of the African Development Bank, EU, World Bank, and UN, all of which were present.[89]

These frequent, high-level meetings on Burkina Faso in 2019 and 2020 despite the lack of a country-specific configuration show the potential of the PBC as a convening platform. However, further mechanisms may be needed to hold member states accountable for following through on their pledged financial support.

International Support to the Broader Sahel Region

Beyond international support to Burkina Faso, the rising profile of the Sahel has encouraged increased engagement from development partners at the regional level through donor conferences and intergovernmental mechanisms for coordinating funding. The two most prominent are the Sahel Alliance and the G5 Sahel's Priority Investment Programme (PIP).

The Sahel Alliance is the primary non-UN mechanism for coordinating among development partners in the region, with a focus on addressing the root causes of insecurity and fragility. Launched in 2017 by the governments of France and Germany, the EU, the African Development Bank, and UNDP, it aims to pool resources and operations to fund and deliver projects more quickly.[90] The Sahel Alliance uses the priorities assessed by states' development frameworks to guide its interventions, with a focus on education and youth employment, agriculture and food security, energy and climate change, local infrastructure and decentralization, governance, and domestic security. It is expected to provide $9.9 billion in funding to more than 600 projects between 2019 and 2023.[91] The Sahel Alliance works closely with the G5 Sahel's secretariat and is a key donor for its Priority Investment Programme.

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84 United Nations, "The Challenge of Sustaining Peace: Report of the Advisory Group of Experts for the 2015 Review of the United Nations Peacebuilding Architecture," June 2015, p. 8.

85 UN Security Council, *Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel—Report of the Secretary-General*, UN Doc. S/PV.8526, May 16, 2019, pp. 11, 19; UN Peacebuilding Commission, "The Secretary-General's Peacebuilding Fund in Burkina Faso," March 2020.

86 UN Security Council, *Statement by the President of the Security Council*, UN Doc. S/PRST/2017/2, January 20, 2017; *Statement by the President of the Security Council*, UN Doc. S/PRST/2018/3, January 30, 2018.

87 UN Peacebuilding Commission, "The Secretary-General's Peacebuilding Fund in Burkina Faso," March 2020.

88 UN Peacebuilding Commission, "Chair's Summary of the Ambassadorial-Level Meeting on 16 May 2019" "PBC Burkina Faso: Peacebuilding Commission Press Statement," September 26, 2019.

89 UN Peacebuilding Commission, "Press Statement on Partnership for Prevention and Peacebuilding in Burkina Faso," March 6, 2020.

90 The Sahel Alliance is composed of France, Germany, the EU, the African Development Bank, UNDP, the World Bank, Italy, Finland, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Spain, and the UK, with additional donor states serving as observers. UN Security Council 8435th Meeting, *United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel: An Integrated Response to Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace in the Sahel*, UN Doc. S/PV.8435, December 20, 2018.

91 Of the initial €4 billion earmarked for projects in 2018, €1 billion was disbursed. Ibid.

The G5 Sahel was established in 2014 with a mandate to coordinate sustainable development and security efforts among Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger. Its Priority Investment Programme (PIP) distributes funds for targeted investments in development. The current PIP (2019–2021) contains four pillars (defense and security; governance, resilience and human development; and infrastructure), which guide the implementation of forty projects worth €1.9 billion.[92] Despite significant funding gaps, the PIP has made modest contributions to infrastructure development. Little progress has been made on the other three pillars due to the increasingly challenging security environment.[93] This security environment has also led to the increasing securitization of the G5 Sahel, seen most prominently in the establishment of the G5 Sahel Joint Force in 2017.

Conclusions

In 2020, the secretary-general will release his report on progress on the implementation of the recommendations on peacebuilding and sustaining peace, as required by the 2018 joint resolutions. This report will build off the 2019 interim report and help inform member states' formal review of the peacebuilding architecture. The review will offer a timely reflection on efforts to create a more prevention-oriented UN that works across silos.

In Burkina Faso, the implementation of the sustaining peace agenda has already undergone two iterations, first with enhanced support to the RCO in 2017 and then with the recalibration of efforts following the development system reform in 2019. This provides lessons for how the UN's sustaining peace efforts can respond to growing needs without a change in mandate. Continued support for the RC and her office in Burkina Faso is necessary to ensure that these efforts are part of a holistic approach to the crisis, together with local, national, and regional partners. Effective support for sustaining peace could underpin Burkina Faso's status as a buffer between spreading insecurity in

the Sahel and the relative peace in the coastal West African states of Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, and Togo.[94] Burkina Faso could be a model for the implementation of the sustaining peace agenda in conflict-prone non-mission settings.

Finalizing the Development System Reform Process

The RC has proven to be effective in leading the UNCT and managing partnerships due to her leadership and ability to coordinate effectively with the national government and engage with the growing number of regional partners. However, further support for the RCO from headquarters is required to ensure adequate financial and human resources to complete the implementation of the 2019 reforms. This support should primarily focus on transitioning away from short-term surge support by fully staffing the RCO and field offices.

New operational and reporting procedures stemming from the reforms have been well received by the UNCT's leadership, but these have yet to trickle down to the desk level of the UNCT or be fully absorbed by partners. Further messaging is required to acclimatize staff from the UNCT, Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, and national partners on the New Way of Working and the outcomes of the reform process, including new hierarchies and information-sharing channels, to avoid the risk of reform fatigue both internally and externally.

Another challenge for the RC is maintaining a close relationship with the government while promoting accountability for human rights violations, which will become increasingly important in advance of the upcoming elections. The RC should be further supported in this political balancing act through regular country visits by high-level officials from the Secretariat.

Promoting Local Ownership of National Strategies

Close collaboration between the RC, the Burkinabe

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92 UN Security Council, *Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel—Report of the Secretary-General*, UN Doc. S/2018/1006, November 12, 2018.

93 Rina Bassit, "The 'G5 Sahel' Joint Force: A Marriage of Security and Development," Ifriqiya 4, no. 13 (2019), pp. 3–4.

94 International Crisis Group, "The Risk of Jihadist Contagion in West Africa," December 2019.

government, and external partners on the development of strategy and planning documents, including the sustainable development cooperation framework, PNDES, expanded PUS-BF, and PPBA, remains crucial for aligning engagement and informing responses. Such collaboration must be sustained during the drafting of the new cooperation framework and PNDES, which should be consultative. These frameworks should also be based on more nuanced conflict assessments, using tools such as perception surveys, to reflect the complex drivers of insecurity. Understanding these drivers is necessary to ensure an adequate development-based response to address structural drivers of conflict, given the growing pressure for the government to prioritize security interventions.

The UN should also continue to tailor interventions to local contexts within Burkina Faso using the full potential of the hub system. This requires partnering with local governments and civil society organizations, which lack the support needed to overcome the country's growing challenges and have trouble navigating the complicated network of development partners, initiatives, and funding streams. The roll-out of integrated field offices is a critical way to better connect the UNCT's efforts to the local level and operationalize the New Way of Working from the bottom-up. The Peacebuilding Fund's direct support to civil society organizations in Burkina Faso could also provide lessons for more effective and complementary collaboration between civil society and the UN.

Aligning Regional and Subregional Funding Streams

The growing number of regional initiatives by development partners, subregional organizations, and the UN system provides an opportunity for collaboration to overcome funding and programmatic gaps. Absent increased alignment, duplication of efforts will limit results and create donor fatigue. The 2018 Support Plan for the Sahel, which aims to revitalize efforts to implement UNISS, is critical to such collaboration, and UNOWAS must maintain standardized reporting on and monitoring of its implementation, which is an ongoing effort.

In addition, the growing number of cross-border funding initiatives by the Peacebuilding Fund shows the added benefit of such efforts to national development strategies. Ensuring that these efforts are fully informed by national development strategies requires continued engagement between UNOWAS and the RC system. Further collaboration among RCs from the countries of the region could strengthen such interventions in border areas like the Liptako-Gourma region.

Maintaining Political Engagement at UN Headquarters

The Peacebuilding Commission can serve as a bridge between New York and Ouagadougou, as well as a platform for dialogue within UN headquarters, to ramp up political engagement on Burkina Faso. By convening high-level stakeholders and allowing them to share information, the meetings held in 2019 and 2020 have provided important visibility for Burkina Faso. This attention at headquarters has paralleled growing collaboration at the country level between the government, the UNCT, and development partners in developing new peacebuilding strategies.

The PBC should continue to engage with the Burkinabe government, the RCO, and other stakeholders, particularly around the development of the 2021 PNDES, the 2020 elections, and the country's insecurity and humanitarian needs. Continuing with its current approach, it should invite representatives from the RCO, relevant government ministries, UNOWAS, and, critically, civil society to develop an informed understanding of the situation on the ground. While the PBC's meetings are effective at generating consensus around the need for greater funding for the expanded PUS-BF and related strategies, follow-through remains limited. The PBC should develop a standardized approach to monitoring the implementation of the sustaining peace agenda and follow through on funding commitments to promote accountability.
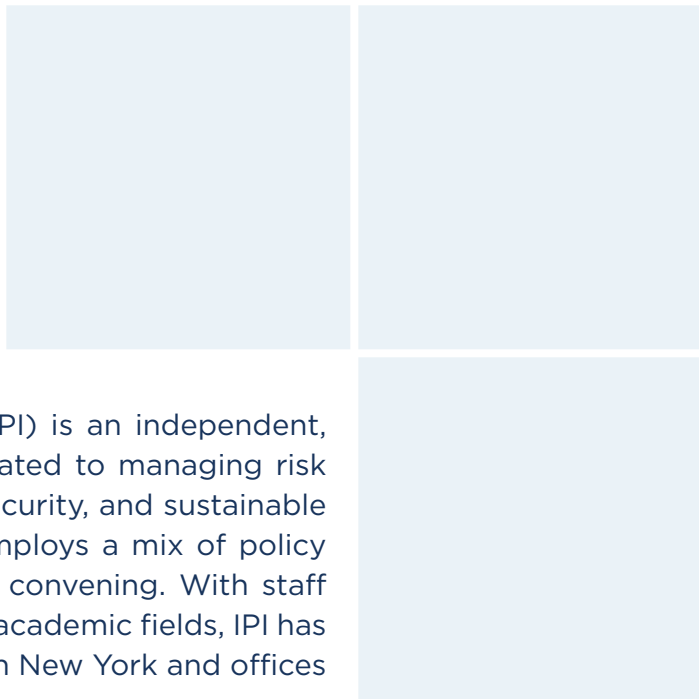
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