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The Peacebuilding Fund approved \$183 million in 40 countries in 2018, exceeding the previous record of \$157,111,033 in 2017. This year-on

equality and women's empowerment, well exceeding the United Nations system-wide target of 15 per cent. Seven new cross-border or regional initiatives involving 14 countries worth \$23.3 million were approved in 2018, demonstrating the Fund's niche in supporting transboundary peacebuilding initiatives.



of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. This review recognized the Fund's flexible approach to deliver politically informed, conflict-sensitive peacebuilding results in high-risk environments, and that its catalytic investments build on joint analysis and foster coherence. The review also highlighted continued efforts to strengthen the management of the Fund and its leading role in helping implement United Nations reform.

9. I am gratified to report that Member States have started to respond to my call for a quantum leap of support, with many increasing their annual contributions, including Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Ireland, the Netherlands, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom. Total contributions have continued to grow, with \$221.3 million in new contributions since 2017, for a total capitalization for the strategic plan period of \$398 million. The Fund now requires at least \$102 million to achieve the three-year target of \$500 million and keep pace with demand.

10. Included in this scale-up are two financing innovations in line with the recommendations of my 2018 report on peacebuilding and sustaining peace (A/72/707-S/2018/43). Denmark has contributed funding from its defence budget, in recognition of the Fund's role in balancing security investments with peacebuilding. In response to my call to Member States to voluntarily commit unspent peacekeeping funds to the Peacebuilding Fund, Belgium reallocated balances from its annual assessed contribution to peacekeeping as voluntary funding. Although funding from these sources remains comparatively modest, they represent important precedents for other Member States to emulate. The figure below illustrates trends in the Fund.

11. The link between the Peacebuilding Commission and the Fund was strengthened through an improved flow of information and funding to the Peacebuilding Fund.

increased investment by the Fund supported a greater and broader engagement of the Commission, notably during its annual session but also through regional discussions on the Great Lakes, the Sahel and West Africa in collaboration with the Special Envoys of the Secretary-General in those regions.

Nations Volunteers, meanwhile, helped to reduce intercommunal tension connected to the 2018 local elections.

23. The Fund's portfolio increasingly supports a more holistic approach to the region through cross-border programming, in recognition of the transboundary nature of conflict and instability.

24. In Chad, the Fund's portfolio supports the Government through joint strategies by nine United Nations agencies to address these challenges with a combination of regional and domestic initiatives that bolster local governance, resilience to climate change and the participation of women and youth in decision-making processes. Two innovative cross-border projects will address recurrent conflicts between pastoralist and farming populations on the country's borders with the Central African Republic and the Niger, while a cross-border project with Cameroon has developed an innovative early warning mechanism to prevent conflict and violent extremism.

25. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the stabilization projects supported by the Fund made progress in 2018. In southern Ituri, dialogue platforms have provided space for security sector actors and communities to jointly develop local security plans that reflect communal priorities. Early reports indicate that this initiative has increased the accountability of security actors, fostered social cohesion and reduced violence as communities have begun turning to local mechanisms to peacefully resolve disputes. The process also reinvigorated negotiations between the Government and the armed group Force de résistance patriotique de l'Ituri, which had been a security threat in the area. In Kitchanga, a series of round tables between communities and local authorities, funded with resources provided by the Fund, produced a joint vision for peace and stability, identifying local priorities and ensuring community ownership. The Fund has helped increase access to land and the deployment of State security actors into areas of greatest need. Some 1,420 households have pursued agricultural livelihoods in areas of concession, while 38 land conflicts have been peacefully resolved. Local communities also noted a reduction in crime and armed group activity as a result of the employment and positive engagement of vulnerable youth who were identified either as ex-combatants or at risk of mobilization into armed groups. In all, the Peacebuilding Fund's \$12 million investment between 2009 and 2015 in support of the Government's International Security and Stabilization Support Strategy in the east, through the multi-donor Stabilization Coherence Fund, has helped catalyse at least \$31 million from other partners.

26. In May 2018, the Fund approved its first project in the Congo: a \$2.8 million effort by UNHCR, UNFPA and UNDP designed to support a late-2017 ceasefire agreement between the Government and Ninja militia rebels. The Fund's quick response, coordinated with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Central Africa and Head of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa, François Louncény Fall, and the United Nations country team, came before the Government finalized its demobilization, disarmament and reintegration programme in August 2018, secured the commitment of an additional \$4 million in Government resources and ensured that the programme met international standard. o# o io

launched in 2014 in partnership with the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the project established local dialogue platforms in 28 municipalities, while enabling youth to lead and monitor them. Youth will also engage decision makers through national and regional dialogue platforms to take forward youth recommendations on policy change and reconciliation initiatives. The project has already produced an agreement between the mayors of Sarajevo and East Sarajevo to jointly revitalize the city's Olympic museum, offering a powerful symbol of cooperation. A new \$2.7

Table 2

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with the previous year's expenditure of \$2,829,167.11, despite demonstrably higher delivery rates in an increasing number of crisis-affected countries. To offset management challenges presented by the Fund's quantum leap, the Fund recruited additional staffing through funds from a dedicated project to support design, monitoring and evaluation at the country level, while continuing to count on secondments from UN-Women, UNDP, UNFPA and support from the Peacebuilding Commission and policy branches. While this solution fills a critical gap and ensures that country-based colleagues have the guidance they need, it is unsustainable in the long run.

53. To adequately implement the Fund's mandate to take forward my vision on prevention and sustaining peace within a time of constrained resources, the Peacebuilding Fund rigorously applied cost containment measures, including by ensuring that all staff travelled in economy class. It continued to rely on staff secondments from United Nations agencies and to leverage strategic partnerships for country programme support. The Fund enhanced its communications capacity to