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INAUGURAL MEETING OF THE PEACEBUILDING COMMISSION

STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL, H.E. DR.  
PER STIG MØLLER, MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF DENMARK

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Let me thank the Secretary-General for convening the first meeting of the Peacebuilding Commission. I congratulate Angola on her selection as chair, and El Salvador and Norway on their selection as vice chairs.

Let me also congratulate Carolyn McAskie on her new job as head of the Peacebuilding Support Office. The Commission depends on the active assistance of the Support Office. I wish you every success.

This week marks important achievements in the reform of the United Nations. Two of the major goals for institutional reform, set out by the World Summit in September last year have been met. On Monday, the Human Rights Council initiated its inaugural session in Geneva, and today, the Peacebuilding Commission begins its work.

It has been a long process, but we have reason to be satisfied with the outcome. Good things take time to build, and unity among the member States is important to ensure a solid foundation for the Peacebuilding Commission. The tasks, and the expectations as a result, are immense. It is humbling to be faced with such a challenge, but at the same time we must remain ambitious in our approach.

Creating a new body whose main purpose is to bring together all relevant actors, and to focus attention on reconstruction and institution-building efforts is an institutional innovation that will strengthen the United Nations and benefit its members.

During the negotiations, we strove to find a formula for this new body, which duly reflected the crosscutting nature of the mandate entrusted to it. A unique model was chosen for the Peacebuilding Commission with the General Assembly and the Security Council acting concurrently to implement the decision by the World Summit to establish the Commission.

The Security Council has, over time, mandated a large number of peacekeeping operations and peacebuilding missions throughout the world in order fulfil its responsibility to maintain international peace and security. The Council is constantly reminded that building peace is a complex, multifaceted endeavour with multiple instruments and actors involved.

The Security Council is seized with many of the post-conflict situations that would be relevant for the agenda of the Peacebuilding Commission. In such situations the main purpose of the Commission will be to provide advice to the Security Council, in particular when there is a UN mandated peacekeeping mission on the ground or underway, as stated in the resolution. The

Security Council will take advantage of the advice coming from the Peacebuilding Commission in its own deliberations and when reviewing the mandates of the relevant missions.

In order to fulfil its intended role, and for its advice to have an impact, the Peacebuilding Commission should focus its work on country specific situations. The aim should not be to create an additional layer of coordination at head quarters level, but rather to support and reinforce the local coordination process going on at the country level.

Recommendations emanating from the country specific discussions should not only flow to the Security Council or other bodies in the United Nations. With all the relevant actors around the same table, there is a standing invitation to all to take action on the common advice and, if necessary, adjust their activities in the country concerned accordingly.

The primary responsibility for building a nation lies with the national or transitional authorities of the individual country. Without the strong cooperation of the country on the agenda, the efforts of the Peacebuilding Commission risk failure. I am pleased that Burundi and Sierra Leone have already expressed their desire to be on the agenda of the Commission. The Security Council has already communicated its request for advice on the situation in the two countries.

Peacebuilding is not a new term or a new task. For as long as we have had conflict, we have had to build peace. Mechanisms are already in place in countries, within international organisations, including the United Nations, and among donors and other contributors. We should build on the existing mechanisms, and, in order to improve our common efforts, take advantage of this unique, new body for coordination and support for the development of integrated strategies among all the relevant actors. We can and we must do better. Too many countries relapse into conflict. Our common responsibility is to use all available means to prevent this happening

The Peacebuilding Commission will bring together the maximum resources and experiences available to assist a given country. It is a major achievement that we have agreed to include the international financial institutions and other institutional donors. Their contributions will be of significant value and I encourage them to engage actively. We have prepared the ground for producing concrete results, and our measure of success should be improvements in the field.

In conclusion, with this new body working effectively, we will prove the relevance of the United Nations in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and we will remind each other of our responsibility, as members of the United Nations, to bring peace and prosperity to all parts of the world.

Thank you.