

ON THE REPORT OF THE PEACEBUILDING COMMISSION AND THE REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ON THE PEACEBUILDING FUND

United Nations Headquarters
New York, 10 October 2007

Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,

The 2005 UN World Summit Outcome called on the General Assembly and the Security Council to create new institutional mechanisms to strengthen the United Nations capacity to support countries emerging from conflict.

As a result the Peacebuilding Commission, the Peacebuilding Support Office and the Peacebuilding Fund were established. These innovative achievements represent the most significant outcomes, so far, from the Summit.

It therefore gives me a great pleasure to open the first joint debate to review the Annual Report of the Peacebuilding Commission, and the Report of the Secretary General on the Peacebuilding Fund.

Excellencies,

For the last two decades, the United Nations has been at the center of expanding peacebuilding activities, in all parts of the world, including in my own region, in South Eastern Europe.

The UN has a unique comparative advantage in addressing the huge challenges that countries emerging from conflict face. The demand for our peacebuilding operations and capacities is obviously set to growth.

The evidence shows that half of countries that emerge from conflict will lapse back into violence within five years. To break this vicious cycle it is critical that the international community provide sustained practical support and resources to assist national efforts.

There is a feedback between peace and stability on the one hand, and economic development, human rights and the rule of law on the other.

The Commission has a critical role to play to balance both sides of this equation and accelerate post-conflict peacebuilding and recovery. In addition to this substantive operational role, the Commission also coordinates international efforts, marshals donor resources and focuses the attention of global opinion on peacebuilding issues.

We all have a duty to ensure that the Peacebuilding Commission works well – that the decision to create it is translated into practical action for the well-being of millions of people trapped in post-conflict situations.

Excellencies,

I believe the Commission has now firmly established itself. It has made a good start, however this is just the beginning of a longer process.

Given the organizational complexity of the Commission, it is crucial that coordination is maintained in a balanced and proportionate manner with all United Nations organs, and other parts of the system. We need to ensure that duplication is avoided.

The success of the Commission will clearly depend on all of our cooperation to support its work; in particular, our full commitment to resolve the few remaining procedural hurdles so that it is fully effective. In this context, it is important to recognize that it has been operational for a little over a year.

However, even during this short time the Commission has brought a more coherent system-wide approach to Peacebuilding, and strengthened the impact that the international community has had. We should learn from this example in the context of other areas where we seek to improve the effectiveness of UN activities.

I am confident that the Assembly will seize this opportunity to review and assess the work undertaken thus far by the Peacebuilding Commission, and provide it with a strategic vision of the way forward.

The two reports before us include thought-provoking recommendations and conclusions the Assembly may wish to address.

In particular, the Assembly may wish to reflect on the progress achieved by the Commission and the Fund in the two countries under the consideration - thus demonstrating our continued commitment to the peoples of both countries.

In this regard, I look forward to the remarks that will be made by the Delegations of Burundi and Sierra Leone. Their views and experiences of working with the Commission on the ground will be invaluable.

Excellencies,

Looking ahead, the Commission should continue to refine its strategies in countries under consideration; develop its advocacy role among all stakeholders engaged in peacebuilding activities; and become more effective at marshalling resources.

The Commission will also need to identify ways of improving coherence and synergies across its numerous activities to contribute to better peacebuilding policy and practice.

The main challenge now facing the Commission is to maximize its impact on the ground. In order to be as effective as possible the United Nations peacebuilding architecture must be based on the principle of national ownership.

It is also critical that the Peacebuilding Fund's US\$250m funding target is met. I would like to take this opportunity to thank H.E. Haya Al Khalifa, the President of the 61st General Assembly, for her efforts, with the support for the former Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission, the Permanent Representative of Angola, Ambassador Gaspar Martins, to raise additional resources, and for the unique personal contribution she made to the Fund.

Going forward, I am sure that the membership will give its full support and cooperation to the new Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission, the Permanent Representative of Japan, Ambassador Takasu, in his efforts to strengthen the Commission and fill the remaining US\$20 million shortfall in the Peacebuilding Fund.

Excellencies,

I hope that our debate today will send a strong signal. That we will reach out to meet the needs and aspirations of all peoples who have suffered the horrors of war. For the people in countries emerging from conflict this organization represents the best and only hope of attaining a more dignified life.

Therefore, the only relevant standard against which we can judge the success of the new Peacebuilding architecture is by the practical results it achieves on the ground.

Thank you.