

THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

--

REMARKS ON THE LAUNCH OF THE PEACEBUILDING FUND

New York, 11 October 2006

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Dear Friends,

Time and again, scholarly research and experience on the ground have told us that one of the major impediments to successful peacebuilding is the scarcity of resources – especially financial resources. That is why the General Assembly, in deciding to establish the Peacebuilding Commission and Support Office, also requested me to set up a Peacebuilding Fund. Following extensive consultations with Member States on the Fund's design, I am very pleased to be with you to launch this vital new mechanism today.

The new UN peacebuilding architecture reflects a renewed commitment by the international community to more sustained engagement in countries emerging from conflict. While members of the Commission will maintain constant, wide-ranging dialogue with a country under review, the Fund is intended to provide resources for critical and immediate challenges. Moreover, it will support not only countries that are being discussed by the Commission, but also those in similar circumstances whose cases the Commission has not yet taken up.

A key task will be to determine precisely which activities should receive the Fund's attention. In making those decisions, we will be guided by national authorities, together with the UN representative in the country. Although peacebuilding is a collective effort, involving the international community, it is the Government of the country concerned that carries the main responsibility for setting priorities and ensuring that a peace process can be sustained. National ownership is the core principle of peacebuilding, and the restoration of national capacity to build peace must therefore be at the heart of our international efforts.

Ultimately, the Peacebuilding Fund must help people to rebuild state institutions, and regain confidence in them after years and even decades of strife. The Fund can help countries emerging from conflict reach that crucial tipping point at which a majority of the people no longer expect conflict to be renewed, and instead believe that their societies are moving in the right direction, with enough strength to rebuff those who would threaten peace. When that point is crossed, the reality of peace begins to take root.

But let us also be clear about the Fund's own capacity. In many countries emerging from conflict, the funding needed to help secure lasting peace goes well beyond what the Peacebuilding Fund could realistically provide. In such cases, the Fund is meant to act as a catalyst, paving the way for sustained investment in peace and recovery. As such, it will "kick-start" critical peacebuilding interventions – such as the reintegration of demobilized soldiers – and then rely on multilateral and bilateral supporters to see that these efforts come to fruition. Such an approach can also strengthen the connective tissue between the UN system, donors -- and the international financial institutions, which have a very important role to play.

Finally, let me assure you that the United Nations Development Programme, which I have appointed as the Fund Manager, will adhere to the strictest standards of accountability and transparency in handling the funds entrusted to us by the international community. To date, donors have contributed and pledged roughly \$140 million. I am pleased that many non-traditional donors have indicated their intention to contribute. And I appeal to all of you to ensure that we reach our target of \$250 million.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The international community now has at its disposal a new and well-designed peacebuilding platform. Used well, it can help countries avoid a relapse into conflict, and enable them to regain – or find for the first time -- the path to peace. The Peacebuilding Fund that we launch today is poised to contribute by generating tangible peace dividends. Indeed, tomorrow and on Friday, the country-specific meetings on Burundi and Sierra Leone will formally declare those two countries to be eligible for the Fund's support, thereby setting in motion the disbursement process. I urge you to give not only the Fund, but also the Commission and Support Office, your full and generous support.

Thank you very much.

Kofi A. Annan