



STATEMENT BY

**THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED NATIONS
GENERAL ASSEMBLY
H.E. MR. JAN ELIASSON**

AT

**THE INTRODUCTION OF THE DRAFT
RESOLUTION ON THE PEACEBUILDING
COMMISSION (A/60/L.40) TO THE GENERAL
ASSEMBLY PLENARY**

**UNITED NATIONS HEADQUARTERS
NEW YORK
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Mr. Secretary-General, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

We are assembled this morning to consider the draft resolution on the Peacebuilding Commission (A/60/L.40) which was first presented to you in our informal meeting on 14 December.

Since then you will all have had the opportunity to study the draft resolution carefully, and to consult amongst yourselves. Many of you have approached me and my Office over the last few days about the text. I will make some comments on the text in a moment.

But first, I want to reflect on what we are all, I hope, on the verge of doing. I believe that this resolution will, if passed today, be truly historic. That word – ‘historic’ – is often over-used, but in this case I have no doubt that it is merited.

Why? Because this resolution would, for the first time in the history of the United Nations, create a mechanism which ensures that for countries emerging from conflict, post-conflict does not mean post-engagement of the international community. It would be our best chance to reverse the trend which, in recent years, has seen around half the countries emerging from conflict lapsing back into it again within five years. It would help bring an end to the pattern of conflicts erupting again, simply because support for the healing process was not there when it was needed.

As you know, I have often recalled the need to bring the realities into these halls over the last three and a half months. I am sure you all agree that, with the Peacebuilding Commission, we have a real chance to make a difference for the better in years to come for a great number of men, women and children in conflict-stricken countries.

So, who do we have to thank for getting us to the point of having this draft on the table? Firstly, those countries and individuals who came up with the idea and, of course, the Secretary-General who first elaborated and articulated the concept of a Peacebuilding Commission.

Secondly, our leaders, for giving us such clear direction in the 2005 World Summit Outcome Document. They decided to establish a Peacebuilding Commission, and stipulated that it should begin its work no later than 31 December 2005 – eleven days from now. The draft resolution rightly reaffirms this Outcome Document decision.

Thirdly, we should again thank the two co-chairs, Ambassador Løj of Denmark and Ambassador Mahiga of Tanzania, supported by their and my staff, for conducting our negotiations with such commitment and efficiency.

But fourthly, and perhaps most importantly, I want to thank all of you. You have devoted a great amount of energy and have shown deep dedication to this task during an intense period of work. You have worked closely with the co-chairs, giving them your comments and proposals, and engaging constructively in the negotiations. This draft resolution is, I hope, something which every single member of this General Assembly will recognize as a ground-breaking achievement.

Now, I will turn to my comments on the text.

My first observation is that none of you have got everything you wanted in this draft resolution. For some, adopting it would mean compromising on some points on which you had felt – and still feel – strongly. A number of you asked whether the language of the resolution could be changed to accommodate your concerns. To do

so would have meant opening up the document to a further round of lengthy and complicated negotiations, without necessarily leading to a better end result.

Many of you have commented on the roles of the different organs and other parts of the UN family in regard to the Peacebuilding Commission. This is an important question. The establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission is intended to create a new dynamic, bringing together the UN's broad experience spanning conflict prevention, mediation, peacekeeping, respect for human rights, the rule of law, humanitarian assistance, reconstruction and long-term development. Such varied activities, and the UN's global legitimacy, make the Organization uniquely positioned to take a leading role in peacebuilding. We need to make sure that the Commission can draw upon all the experience the UN system has to offer, so that it passes the necessary "field test".

The draft resolution sets out how the General Assembly, the Security Council and ECOSOC should work on peacebuilding. The Peacebuilding Commission will be an advisory subsidiary organ of the General Assembly and the Security Council, the first such body of its kind.

The General Assembly will have an overall responsibility to review the work of the Peacebuilding Commission through debating its Annual Report.

Most of the countries emerging from conflict are on the agenda of the Security Council. The Peacebuilding Commission will hence have an important role in giving advice to the Security Council for the early planning and commencement of peacebuilding activities.

And the Peacebuilding Commission must work with ECOSOC to ensure that the international community and donors do not lose interest in a country once it is no longer making the headlines.

ECOSOC will be a principal organ for policy dialogue and coordination on issues of economic and social development and will promote assistance as countries move from recovery towards long-term development. In this context I once again stress the importance of a reformed ECOSOC playing its rightful part in peacebuilding. In this regard, I hope to see the fruits of your labours in the informal consultations dealing with ECOSOC reform very shortly after we return in the New Year.

These three organs will all be able to put countries on the agenda of the Peacebuilding Commission in accordance with their respective mandates in the Charter.

Equally, I must stress that it will be possible for individual Member States on the verge of lapsing or relapsing into conflict to turn to the Peacebuilding Commission for advice. Our goal for the Peacebuilding Commission must be to decrease the number of countries falling back into conflict.

Another point on which a number of you have had concerns is the composition of the Organizational Committee, where difficult choices had to be made. On this matter, it is important to emphasize the extent to which much of the important substantive work of the Peacebuilding Commission will be done in its country-specific settings. We will have to make every effort to organize the work of the country-specific meetings in a manner conducive to effective action. The draft resolution leaves open how many members of the organizational committee will participate alongside others in these meetings.

With regard to the selection of the members in the Organizational Committee itself, the resolution sets out that every organ or group will select or elect its own members. The Security Council and ECOSOC will first choose the members they wish to be appointed.

Then, the top ten donors and top ten troop contributing countries will each select five members that have not already been chosen by the Security Council or ECOSOC. Finally, in order to have a balanced representation from all regional groups and thus to ensure legitimacy, the General Assembly will elect seven additional Members.

As the resolution sets out, members of the Organizational Committee shall serve for renewable terms of two years, as applicable. At two year intervals, the lists of donors and troop contributors will be updated. Existing members would need to remain on the updated lists for a renewal of their term in order to be considered. This will serve as an incentive for Member States to strive for maintained and increased contributions to the United Nations.

Lastly, some of you have asked about the nature of the participation of the international financial institutions, regional organizations and United Nations representatives in the Peacebuilding Commission. As you know, the resolution states that they will be included as members in the work of the country-specific meetings of the Commission. Given that the Peacebuilding Commission will be an intergovernmental body, these institutions, organizations and representatives will evidently participate in an observer capacity.

In closing, I want to reiterate my sincere hope that this text will meet with your approval. As I said last week, I believe your important contributions through the negotiation process have made this key issue of the Outcome Document ripe for decision. You have worked so hard for this.

A decision today with the broadest possible agreement would send a positive message that our intergovernmental work is producing results. We have an opportunity today to prove ourselves, to prove the relevance of the United Nations to the problems of the world.

Let us show our leaders, our peoples, our civil society, our media, and most of all let us show all those people who are seeking to cast off the dark shadow of conflict what the General Assembly of the United Nations can do in support and solidarity.