

27 June 2007

**Statement of H.E. Ms. Sheikha Haya Rashed Al Khalifa,
President of the 61st Session of the General Assembly,
at the Final Meeting of the First Year of the Peacebuilding
Commission**

Mr. Chairperson,
Secretary-General,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Dag Hammarskjöld once said:

“The United Nations was created not to lead mankind to heaven, but to save mankind from hell.”

This profound statement reminds us of our important mission. Without peace and stability, achieving economic development and promoting human rights will be impossible over the long term. It is therefore critical, that our organization plays a leading role in supporting countries to build and strengthen institutional capacities, which promote coexistence and the peaceful and sustainable resolution of conflicts.

I am therefore delighted to address the Peacebuilding Commission one year after its inaugural meeting. Its establishment represents the most concrete outcome from the 2005 World Summit, and an important element of the United Nations’ overall reform process.

We all have a duty to ensure that the Peacebuilding Commission works effectively to bring hope to millions of people trapped in post-conflict situations.

Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,

The magnitude of the challenges that countries emerging from conflict face are huge. The Peacebuilding Commission is a dedicated institutional mechanism to address these special challenges.

National ownership must be the basis for its engagement with partner countries, as well as the valuable support the international community can provide.

The substantive and coordinating role of the Peacebuilding Commission is critical for promoting post-conflict recovery, in the social and economic fields as well as human rights and the rule of law.

Over the past year, the Commission has undertaken its sensitive tasks with seriousness and perseverance. It has firmly established itself as an important new intergovernmental body with a membership that reflects key UN bodies and stakeholders.

I know that developing a new intergovernmental body and setting new procedures has not been easy. It is therefore to the credit of its membership that the Peacebuilding Commission is completing its first year with tangible results that will benefit the people of Burundi and Sierra Leone.

I want to congratulate you on your achievements, in particular, for establishing strong partnerships on the ground to achieve lasting peace.

Looking ahead, I encourage you to consolidate the gains of this first year; and, to live up to the partnerships that now exist between the members of this body and the respective countries.

The Commission should continue to refine its strategies in countries under consideration; develop its advocacy role and marshal resources more effectively.

The Peacebuilding Commission also needs to continue to develop a dynamic and balanced relationship with all relevant UN organs, and other parts of the UN system. In this regard, I would like to encourage a closer relationship between the General Assembly and the Peacebuilding Commission as specified in resolution 60/180. The General Assembly must continue to provide overall policy guidance in support of the work of the Commission.

Furthermore, it is essential to ensure adequate funding for the Peacebuilding Fund so as to reach the 250 million dollar target.

I am encouraged that in response to my letter of 12 February 2007, inviting Member States to contribute to the Peacebuilding Fund, Austria, France, the Kingdom of Bahrain, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Morocco and the United Arab Emirates have made voluntary contributions totaling 3.1 million dollars.

I wish to renew my sincere thanks to these governments.

I would also like to take this opportunity to express my appreciation to all Member States who had already contributed, and encourage other Member States to consider making contributions to the Fund.

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

During its first year of work, the Peacebuilding Commission has covered new ground and brought more coherence and impact to the international community's approach to peacebuilding.

The Commission's future work should focus on ensuring that the peacebuilding processes remain on track in accordance with integrated peacebuilding strategies.

The success of the Commission will clearly depend on all our cooperation to support its work. In particular, our full commitment to eliminate the few remaining obstacles so that it is fully and effectively operational.

Once again, I congratulate you for your achievements during the first year and wish you an even more successful second year.

Thank you.