

Mr. Pecsteen de Buytswerve (Belgium) (*spoke in French*):

Belgium thanks the presidency of Sweden for having provided us with this opportunity to together undertake strategic reflection on an issue that is of primordial importance and at the very heart of our Organization. I also warmly thank the Secretary- General for his committed words. We are very pleased that he has chosen to accord significant importance to this topic during his mandate. We support his efforts fully, as well as the integrated approach that he presented to us this morning.

Belgium fully subscribes to the statement of the European Union, as well as that of Finland, delivered on behalf of the Group of Friends of Mediation, to which we belong. I wish to make additional remarks, and will read out an abbreviated version of my statement.

Even in the absence of conflict, we should focus on peacebuilding by working on human rights, sustainable development and the rule of law. Conflicts do not happen by chance. In that regard, we consider it useful to continue to consider the establishment of an early-warning mechanism at the United Nations, like those in other international organizations. The prerogative of the Secretary-General to draw the attention of the Council to a situation posing a risk to peace and security is fundamental. Regular contacts between the Security Council and the Secretariat seem to be another way of proceeding. Existing practices, such as the forward- looking overview, need to be revitalized.

Investing in sustainable development, education, human rights and the rule of law is crucial. Particular attention to fragile and conflict-affected countries is all the more necessary in order to ensure their inclusive development through sustained peace. For example, Belgium has decided to allocate 50 per cent of its official development assistance to fragile and less- developed countries. Belgium implores other donors to do the same.

During a conflict, transitional measures can be taken to invest in future peace. It is important, for example, to launch an educational and reconciliation process for the victims of conflict in order to avoid the perpetuation of violence by a generation that has lost its standards. In that regard, the rehabilitation and reintegration of children affected by armed conflict through appropriate programmes is crucial to efforts to ensure lasting peace and security. Specific action in that area helps break the vicious cycle of violence and can serve as a tremendous instrument for conflict prevention.

The Security Council is regularly called upon to review the mandates of peace operations, modify them or decide to put an end to them. The transitional phases resulting from those developments can lead to periods of fragility for the State in question. Belgium therefore pleads for better articulation of the activities of peacekeeping operations with the rest of

the United Nations system, particularly during times of transition. Belgium also advocates that transition and exit strategies should be adequately articulated around political processes, which should include the processes of demobilization, disarmament, reintegration, security-sector reform, transitional justice and institution-building, as well as capacity-building.

The Security Council can contribute in several ways to the goal of peacebuilding. It begins with the inclusion in the text of its statements and resolutions of concepts emphasizing the inclusiveness of such a global approach. Whether it is women, children or minorities, a specific mention can make a difference. Moreover, its positions, whether to support a mediation process or a peace agreement, or to condemn the lack of progress, have an impact. The example of the Security Council's support for the Arusha Peace Accords is a positive illustration of that.

Finally, the use of mediation as an instrument for the prevention and resolution of conflicts must become more systematic. Belgium fully supports the Secretary-General's work on mediation and advocates increasing the capacity of regional organizations in that field. Belgium also calls for women to play an active role in the mediation and conflict-resolution processes in their countries. I would like to take this opportunity to point out that Belgium will organize, on 14 February in Brussels, a high-level international conference on the subject of mediation.