

Security Council Open Debate on Preventive Diplomacy Tools: Prospects and Challenges in Africa
Friday, 16th July 2010, Security Council Chamber (GA-TSC-01)

Statement by Ambassador Wittig, Permanent Representative of Germany to the United Nations

Germany aligns itself with the statement of the European Union. Nigeria is to be commended for having convened this important debate on conflict prevention with a special focus on Africa. Conflict prevention is one of the main challenges we face today, and the active engagement of the Security Council is crucial.

My Government welcomes the commitment of African nations to greater efforts to prevent conflicts from breaking out in the first place as well as to their resolution. The solving of the long-running dispute between Nigeria and Cameroon over the Bakassi peninsula and the Abyei Arbitration on border delimitation in Sudan are models in this regard. The African Union Border Programme aiming at conflict prevention through solving border issues is another success story, and Germany is pleased to be associated with it and actively supporting it.

Only last week, members of the Security Council and the African Union (AU) Peace and Security Council held their annual consultative meeting. Strengthening the partnership for prevention between the United Nations, the African Union and subregional organizations in Africa should remain high on the agenda.

My Government has been encouraged by the spirit of cooperation between the United Nations, the AU and the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development in preparing for the referendum in Sudan. As a troop and police contributor to both the United Nations Mission in the Sudan and the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq, Germany attaches high importance to an early resolution of the Darfur conflict and full implementation of the comprehensive peace agreement. Germany stands ready to continue to provide assistance in constitution-building in Sudan. The United Nations, in particular its Secretariat, has a wide range of preventive diplomacy tools at its disposal. Mediation, good offices, the use of special envoys, fact-finding missions and commissions of inquiry are instruments that have been used in the recent past. We have welcomed the creation of the Mediation Support Unit within the Department of Political Affairs and contributed to its activities through the relevant trust fund.

The creation of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) was an important step in enhancing the United Nations ability to better deal with practical conflict prevention. Too many times in the past, “after the conflict” meant “before the conflict”. Countries have emerged from and re-entered into conflict numerous times, often over a period of decades. The PBC now deals with various situations where there is a risk of lapsing and re-lapsing into conflict and has done valuable work since its creation in 2005.

During our chairmanship of the PBC, we pay special attention to the **role of women in peacebuilding** and to the cooperation with regional organizations such as the AU. Last week, the PBC and the AU Peace and Security Council met for the first time to discuss how they could further strengthen their cooperation. They agreed to support national efforts in conflict prevention.

Early engagement and cooperation between various actors are key to conflict prevention, but there is a wider dimension as well. As we all agreed in 2005, peace and security, human rights and sustainable development are interlinked and mutually reinforcing. We commend the African Union’s New Partnership for Africa’s Development for its promotion of sustainable growth and development based on the commitment to good governance, democracy, human rights and conflict resolution.

“Greater investment in prevention could save us considerable pain and expense.” This is what the Secretary-General stated during one of the Council’s latest meetings on the issue of conflict prevention (5735th meeting). It remains true. The Security Council, the international community as a whole and, of course, the individual Member States all have to shoulder their responsibility.