

Security Council Open Debate on the Maintenance of International Peace and Security: War, its lessons, and the search for a permanent peace, 29th January 2014, Security Council Chamber

Statement by Mr. Langeland, Permanent Mission of Norway to the United Nations

We are marking the 100th anniversary of the outbreak of the First World War. Clearly, preventive policies prior to that horrific war failed. There was no form for global governance, such as a Security Council or regional organizations, to contain events as they spiralled out of control. As Members of the United Nations, we all have a responsibility to contribute to preventing and resolving conflicts. For many years, peace and conflict resolution has been a Norwegian foreign policy priority. Each conflict has its own dynamic, and there is no magic formula for preventing and/or resolving them. Yet, based on experience, there are certain common lessons to be derived.

Conflicts do not come out of the blue. In most cases, there are clear signs when a country is spiralling downwards in a dangerous pattern. Serious or massive violations of human rights are often such precursors. It is not early warning that we lack but early action. For this reason, Norway has supported the Rights Up Front plan of action of the Secretary-General. Norway has also consistently advocated that the Security Council should make more use of the provisions laid out in Chapter VI of the Charter of the United Nations, pertaining to the pacific settlement of disputes.

Parties must be ready to talk. Attempting to resolve conflicts will be futile if the parties cling to the logic of war. Dialogue is crucial to fostering confidence or gaining insight into the other party's positions and thinking. Parties must be accompanied in changing their perception. It is hard, but doable. Somalia has been plagued by more than 20 years of devastating war, but may now have set the course for a better future. Today the challenge is to change the mindset in the Syrian conflict. We are pleased that the second Geneva Conference on Syria was convened, but prospects for ending the civil war in Syria soon remain bleak. Syria is a test case today for the Organization.

Another important element is understanding the context. A fundamental challenge for a peace mediator is to motivate the warring parties to meet at the negotiating table. Extensive knowledge of the root causes to conflict is an absolute requirement. Women must be involved in all phases and levels of negotiating processes. Norway appreciates the fact that the Secretariat has developed guidelines for effective mediation, as well as its emphasis on impartiality.

We have the tool box. In addition to mediation, there is a wide range of other tools in the United Nations toolbox for the prevention of conflicts that can be used more frequently, such as the good offices of the Secretary-General, special envoys, commissions. When a ceasefire or a peace agreement has been signed, the real job begins. Too often we have seen how a fragile peace could not be sustained. This may be due to lack of real commitment on the part of the parties to honouring their pledges, or to the country in concern falling off the international radar screen. In 2005, we established the Peacebuilding Commission to overcome these challenges, yet room for improvement remains in the peacebuilding architecture. The 2015 review will be important in this regard. Furthermore, we are convinced that peace, security and stability are essential to long-term sustainable development and should be included in the post 2015-agenda.

Peace cannot last unless it is just. A durable peace requires all stakeholders to be engaged, which is essential for ensuring broad-based ownership. National reconciliation is a fundamental requirement. In seeking to achieve truth, justice and reconciliation, there can be no impunity for war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide. This underlines the vital importance of such mechanisms as international tribunals, the International Criminal Court, commissions of inquiry and truth and reconciliation commissions.

We should always seek to further enhance the ability of the international community, and in particular the United Nations, to prevent and resolve armed conflicts. We must be ready to learn

from history. Research, documentation of results and systemization of the experiences gained are crucial. As we work together to understand the trends of today in order to enable our institutions to adapt appropriately, we must keep in mind that the international order is not fixed once and for all. It is in the making. If the United Nations is to be an Organization for the twenty-first century, capable of ensuring lasting international peace, security and development,