

Security Council Open Debate on Post-Conflict Peacebuilding: Institution Building
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Statement by Mr. Feodor Starčević, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Serbia to the United Nations

The Republic of Serbia welcomes the format of this open debate in the Security Council on institution-building within the post-conflict peacebuilding process. Charged with responsibility for safeguarding international peace and security, the Council can only benefit from such debate. The delegation of Bosnia and Herzegovina should be congratulated for its initiative. The statements by the Secretary-General; Mr. José Luís Guterres, Deputy Prime Minister of Timor-Leste; and Ambassador Peter Wittig, current Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission, have given us three important perspectives germane to the issue under discussion, while the statements by members and non-members of the Council alike demonstrate vivid interest in this question.

These are complex problems that call for specific answers — from the elimination of the humanitarian consequences of a conflict to assistance in organizing the election process and the building of new institutions, or the rebuilding of old ones. Yet the need for institution-building is a global problem that affects countries in almost all parts of the world that have experienced a conflict. It therefore calls for global action.

The Republic of Serbia believes that post-conflict institution-building is among the most important efforts in securing peace, stability and sustainable development. For those efforts to be successful, it is necessary that all actors in the international community render a contribution, including the United Nations, regional organizations and Member States that participated in the conflict directly or indirectly or are located in the immediate vicinity, as well as non-governmental organizations.

The United Nations system should be at the forefront of all activities, primarily through its organs — the Security Council and the Secretary-General, the Peacebuilding Commission, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the United Nations Development Programme and the specialized agencies of the United Nations.

Bearing in mind that the Republic of Serbia is part of a region that experienced a very difficult period starting two decades ago, we are well aware of the needs and caveats of a peacebuilding process. We approach it with understanding and responsibly.

We firmly believe that there is a need for all countries of a region that has been engulfed by conflict to engage actively. We have made every effort to make our full contribution to post-conflict peacebuilding through a policy of promoting good-neighbourly relations — one of our most important foreign-policy priorities — through a policy of reconciliation in the region and through building free and democratic institutions.

The Republic of Serbia is a signatory party and a guarantor of the implementation of the Dayton-Paris Peace Agreement. It gives its unwavering support to the territorial integrity of Bosnia and Herzegovina and is supportive of all decisions based on the agreement of the three constitutive peoples of that State.

Last year, the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia adopted a resolution condemning the crime at Srebrenica. Serbia cooperates actively with the international presences in Kosovo headed by the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo deployed in the province pursuant to resolution 1244 (1999) and supports activities aimed at improving the living conditions for all inhabitants of Kosovo. We showed our readiness to quickly start a dialogue with Pristina in accordance with resolution 64/298. President Boris Tadić has met the leaders of the other countries of the region on a number of occasions. My country has thus clearly shown its resolve to contribute to peace and stability in the Western Balkan region.

The Republic of Serbia is also of the opinion that full reconciliation in the region will be greatly helped if justice is fully served through national and international institutions with regard to all individuals who committed crimes during the conflict.

Serbia considers institution-building in the postconflict period to be a process that, because of its complexity, calls for the synergy of internal stakeholders and international actors, a thorough assessment of the causes of conflict and a global approach combined with specific solutions. The role of the United Nations system in this area will always remain vital. We also support the proposal to strengthen the consultative role of the United Nations Peacebuilding Commission.

The Republic of Serbia has been active, and will continue to be so, in support of United Nations activities on building institutions in conflict-affected areas. We shall also continue our support through our participation in

United Nations peacekeeping missions. My country fully concurs with the view that the purpose of institution-building is to progressively reduce dependence on the international community and promote self-reliance. We also agree that there must be at least a basic level of consensus and political will among the leading national stakeholders for institutional development to succeed.

Accordingly, an honest analysis of the events leading to the conflict and of the deeds and mistakes that caused it is necessary to avoid similar pitfalls in the future. New institutions and their procedures must be designed so as to maximize the chances for avoiding a repetition of past mistakes. Those who do not remember history are condemned to repeat it, as Santayana said. Countries that have gone through conflicts need enlightened leaders and enlightened institutions, and people must stand up for them if they care about their future and the future of their children.

Work on promoting sustainable peace, stability and development is the best prevention against the resurgence of conflict. The cost of conflict is so high that it is incumbent upon us to make every possible effort to succeed in our endeavours to build peace.