

Security Council Open Debate on Post-Conflict Peacebuilding: Institution Building
21st January 2011, Security Council Chamber (GA-TSC-01)

Statement by Mr. Baso Sangqu, Permanent Representative of South Africa to the United Nations

We thank your delegation, Mr. President, for organizing today's important debate. We also thank Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his briefing to the Council. We also wish to thank Mr. Guterres, Deputy Prime Minister of Timor-Leste, for sharing his country's experiences on institution-building. We also pay tribute to our colleague Peter Wittig for his outstanding leadership as Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission in the past year, as well as thank him for his statement today.

My delegation associates itself with the statement to be delivered later by the representative of Bangladesh on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

It is certainly true that conflict frustrates not only the emotional and physical aspects of people's lives, but also the economic and social infrastructure of countries, which is the subject of today's debate. By way of further underscoring and addressing the challenges before us, my delegation will focus on four broad issues.

The first issue is the importance of national ownership and local capacities. As has already been mentioned by those who spoke before me today, national ownership of peacebuilding efforts is at the core of creating sustainable institutions in the immediate aftermath of conflict. Although people in post-conflict situations may not be able to articulate their short-, medium- and even long-term priorities, we believe that they can and should be given the opportunity to at least identify them. The international community has the obligation to build upon and advise countries based on priorities that they themselves have identified. Careful identification of those priorities is in most cases a critical determinant for the success or failure of peacebuilding efforts. National actors can be very accurate in identifying the root causes of the conflict.

National capacities at the human and institutional level are important in sustaining peacebuilding efforts. Consequently, the timing of developing these capacities becomes critical in the medium to long term when the attention of the international community on a particular country has waned. In particular, capacity and institution-building are a foundation for efforts to avert dependency and achieve sustainable peace.

South Africa emphasizes the importance of building local capacities and the provision of training, especially targeting women, in order to enhance existing capacities at the national level, as they are usually willing to participate in the rebuilding of their homes, communities and countries. In this context, South Africa has played a significant part in postconflict capacity- and institution-building in Africa through multilateral, bilateral and trilateral mechanisms, in such countries as Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Sierra Leone, among others. On behalf of the African Union (AU), South Africa continues to lead the committee on postconflict reconstruction and development in the Sudan, whose role is expected to become even more critical in the post-referendum phase, especially in Southern Sudan.

Secondly, with regard to the question of coherence, coordination and partnership, South Africa strongly supports the call for greater coherence, coordination and interaction among various United Nations organs and agencies. The United Nations must deliver as one. Other actors, such as the international financial institutions, regional and subregional organizations and donors, also need to work in a coherent and coordinated manner in support of national authorities to address national institution- and capacity-building priorities in post-conflict countries. These priorities include the creation and revival of institutions for the reform of the security sector, strengthening the rule of law, ensuring demobilization, demilitarization and reintegration, and economic recovery.

South Africa is encouraged by the progress made by the Peacebuilding Commission in strengthening its partnerships with regional organizations, in particular the efforts to institutionalize its relationship with the African Union. One of the principles underpinning the AU's post-conflict reconstruction and development programme is capacity-building for sustainability. Since regional and subregional organizations are in close proximity to post-conflict situations, it seems natural and logical to us that the United Nations should work in partnership with these organizations if it is to maximize the impact of its peacebuilding interventions.

While acknowledging the improvement in the relationship between the Security Council and the Peacebuilding Commission, we believe that more has to be done. Perhaps we could consider flexibility in our working methods, in order to allow the Commission to effectively play its role in advising the Council on institution-building in post-conflict situations. The growing number of peacekeeping operations, integrated peacebuilding and special political missions with considerable peacebuilding tasks provides an opportunity for the Security Council to make optimal use of the Commission's advice. Specifically, in consultation with the Commission, we encourage the Council to

incorporate peacebuilding tasks related to institution-building into all of its peacekeeping mandates. Peacekeeping and peacebuilding should be mutually reinforcing in the pursuit of lasting peace for countries in conflict.

Concerning the question of mobilizing resources, as our French colleague has already mentioned, institution- and capacity-building in post-conflict countries require a substantial injection of resources. In this regard, we believe that timely, sustainable and predictable financing remains a crucial ingredient in realizing peacebuilding objectives. We therefore emphasize the need for the United Nations to consider utilizing sustainable mechanisms, including assessed contributions, as a means of kick-starting peacebuilding activities in countries emerging from conflict, especially for early institution-building efforts.

In conclusion, South Africa welcomes the adoption of the draft presidential statement before us on post-conflict peace- and institution-building. South Africa appreciates United Nations efforts, through its multifarious organs and agencies, towards making the world a better place to live. We also look forward to the report on the review of international civilian capacities early this year.