

Security Council Open Debate on Peacebuilding in the Aftermath of Conflict
Wednesday, October 13, 2010

Statement by H.E. Mr. Ivan Barbalic, Permanent Representative of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the United Nations

At the outset, we would like to thank you, Sir, for convening this important meeting to discuss the topic of peacebuilding and the significance of female participation in this process. We are confident that our deliberations today will constructively contribute to this important item on the Security Council's agenda. We would also like to thank Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and the Chairperson of the Peacebuilding Commission, Ambassador Peter Wittig, for their detailed briefings.

Bosnia and Herzegovina believes that the process of peacebuilding must be supported by a variety of national and international actors at different levels, including political, technical, operational, national and regional. It is very important that, in the immediate aftermath of conflict, the roles and responsibilities of different actors within the United Nations system be clearly defined.

Peacebuilding, as a primarily national challenge and responsibility, is largely shaped and sequenced by national factors. In that respect, an early focus on national capacity development is a central theme of the United Nations system's engagement in peacebuilding. The development of national capacity and ownership are among the key priorities in this process.

We are aware of the fact that peacebuilding priorities may vary in response and can include inclusive political processes, the provision of basic services, restoring core Government functions, or providing basic security or economic revitalization measures. Those activities are aimed at making peace self-sustaining. If we are to be able to provide security and deliver services to the population in the immediate aftermath of conflict, priority must be given to the restoration of State authority and the capacity-building of national institutions. Only a viable State with a strong structure will contribute to peace and stability and reduce the risk of relapse into conflict.

Stronger partnerships with Member States, regional and subregional organizations, international financial institutions, civil society and other actors are preconditions for delivering greater impact and results on the ground. In order to implement certain peacebuilding tasks, it is crucial to strengthen connections and linkages within the United Nations family. Therefore, it is of utmost importance to provide early and predictable support in priority areas of peacebuilding.

In that regard, the role of the Peacebuilding Commission, with its integrated and coherent approach, should be emphasized. As a unique intergovernmental advisory body, its function of addressing the needs of countries emerging from conflict towards sustainable peace is of vital importance. The need to link security and development, recognized in the mechanism of the Peacebuilding Commission, should be linked to utilizing its potential to play the preventive role defined in its mandate.

Bosnia and Herzegovina is of the view that mainstreaming women's participation in peacebuilding, addressing their post-conflict needs, increasing their engagement in post-conflict planning and governance, and enhancing their capacity to contribute to economic recovery and overall social stability are key issues in post-conflict societies. We therefore consider that increasing women's confidence in the political process not only requires action in the immediate post-conflict period, but also influences the design of provisions on power-sharing or justice. It is of vital importance to enhance the funding that addresses the specific needs of women and girls, the economic empowerment of women and gender equality.

The gender perspective needs to be filtered through country-specific situations. It should also be an integral part of every aspect of peacebuilding on the ground. To that end, the role of women in peacebuilding needs to move from a niche concern to the mainstream. Enhancing women's capacity to engage in peacebuilding needs to include, inter alia, supporting peace processes through independent diplomatic initiatives, providing bilateral assistance to post-conflict countries and participating within United Nations intergovernmental bodies. We would like to underline the importance of enhancing the mobilization of resources for initiatives that address

women's specific peacebuilding needs, advance their equality and empower them. We urge Member States and other partners to render their support.

We welcome the fact that there is overwhelming support in the international community for vigorous action to ensure women's full participation in peacebuilding, and we urge Member States to make substantial long-term investments in women's security and productive potential. We also welcome the establishment of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and encourage its close work and cooperation with relevant United Nations agencies and other stakeholders in that direction.

Much has been achieved in the area of peacebuilding, but there is still much work ahead of us. Nevertheless, we cannot lose the momentum towards starting to revise procedures and design programmes, with careful deliberations on actions to be taken without delay. It is important to point out that long-term investment provides the potential for economic recovery, a more stable society and lasting peace.

Finally, we would like to reiterate our readiness to share our knowledge, experience and lessons learned on post-conflict peacebuilding in every situation where our first-hand experience may be seen as relevant, reliable and useful.