

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

Statement by H.E Mr. Cravinho, Permanent Representative of Portugal to the United Nations

Post-conflict peacebuilding is at the core of our efforts to improve United Nations efficiency and capacity. We now have to take stock of the work that has been done since the establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), five years ago, and to identify — as clearly as possible — what we want to achieve in the near future.

At the outset, I would like to welcome the progress report of the Secretary-General on peacebuilding in the immediate aftermath of conflict (S/2010/386), as well as the report of the Secretary-General on women's participation in peacebuilding (S/2010/466). The substantive contribution of the co-facilitators of the 2010 review of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture (S/2010/393, annex) deserves to be commended. In line with what the European Union delegation will state, Portugal fully endorses the co-facilitators' report.

We are now at a crossroads, and I want to assure the Council of Portugal's commitment to contribute towards a more effective and coherent international response to post-conflict peacebuilding. We share the perception that there is a risk of fragmentation of the PBC process, on account of its complexity and on account of the multiplicity of actors and institutions involved. We must avoid artificial divisions and ensure integration between different levels of engagement.

To that end, allow me to stress some elements that in our opinion deserve careful and urgent attention. First, the relationship between the Security Council and the PBC needs to be improved. To date, even if some progress has been achieved, the interaction is still limited, and we should take advantage of the potential that now exists to create a new dynamic that will allow for better performance — in particular in the early stages, when the setting up of peacekeeping mandates takes place.

Secondly, we also believe that transparency and inclusiveness should be increased, in order to build up a firm involvement from the Member States, the United Nations as a whole and other stakeholders and partners. In particular, allow me to underline the importance of regional and subregional bodies in that regard.

Thirdly, it is now broadly understood that peacebuilding must not follow peacekeeping operations, but rather that it should be simultaneously present from the start and as soon as the situation on the ground permits — that is, when the phase of open conflict is over. We agree with the notion that the PBC should also have a preventive role and should stand ready to respond to any possible deterioration of the situation on the ground.

Fourthly, concerning the chairmanship of the country-specific configurations, we share the view that there is still room for improvement, namely by the nomination of vice-chairs as well as the establishment of liaison committees in the field.

Portugal welcomes the recent creation of the Liberia country-specific configuration, of which we are a member. This is a great opportunity to ensure that peacebuilding and peacekeeping efforts are complementary and mutually supportive, as it is the first time that a country-specific configuration has been created during the effective lifetime of a peacekeeping mission. Coming after the co-facilitators' report on the 2010 review of the PBC, it will provide an excellent opportunity to start to implement some of the recommendations in that report.

I also wish to make a reference to the importance of women's contribution to this process, which was clearly underlined in the Secretary-General's report on women's participation in peacebuilding. The instrumental role that women play in economic recovery, social cohesion and political legitimacy — thus expanding the scope of national ownership and national capacity — makes it imperative to fully integrate the gender perspective into our goals. To relegate consideration of gender issues to later phases of peacebuilding would be to ignore the centrality of those issues in everything from institutional design to funding allocations to programme execution. Portugal is fully committed to a gender-responsive approach to each of the five peacebuilding priorities that have been outlined in the 2009 report of the Secretary-General on peacebuilding in the immediate aftermath of conflict (S/2009/304).

Finally, it is always important to underline the inherent connection between peace and development, and, in this context, we consider that it is of paramount importance to make more coherent and integrated peacebuilding efforts, including by fostering stronger partnerships with the World Bank and other international financial institutions. Portugal is strongly committed to an active contribution to United Nations endeavours and to helping pave the way for a revitalized peacebuilding process that will promote peace and security in all parts of the world.

We are honoured to have been elected to serve on the Security Council for the period 2011-2012, and we wish to assure the Council that we shall accord the highest importance to this issue.