

Security Council Open Meeting on the Maintenance of International Peace and Security
Thursday, 23 September 2010

Statement by Secretary General H.E. Mr. Ban Ki-Moon, Secretary General to the United Nations

I commend the Government of Turkey for having convened this Security Council summit and for its focus on preventing and ending conflict and building peace.

Since the end of the cold war, violent conflict has declined. Success in peacemaking and peacekeeping has played an important role in this development. Yet, we still live in a troubled world, with new threats and flashpoints. Often, when violence breaks out, the world turns to the United Nations. We are at the centre of crisis management in hotspots throughout the world.

We — this Council and we in the Secretariat — have come a long way in responding to these diverse challenges. We have reinvigorated preventive diplomacy and upgraded the United Nations mediation capacity. We are more nimble in responding to brewing trouble from Guinea to Kyrgyzstan. We continue to make our peacekeeping operations more efficient and effective, including through the New Horizon process. That initiative — which includes the global field support strategy — is designed to help us better adjust to complex situations involving difficult terrain and volatile political contexts, and to better address the resource and technological implications of this work.

We have more instances in which peacemaking and peacekeeping are being carried out simultaneously, as in Cyprus. We continue to enhance our pool of envoys, deepen our cooperation with regional partners, help Member States build up their capacities, and support our field missions and regional offices. We have deployed 122,000 civilian and uniformed personnel in 15 peacekeeping missions, and a further 4,000 personnel in 14 political field missions. They continue to deliver on wide-ranging mandates.

We have strengthened peacebuilding in order to ensure the sustainability of such efforts. Allocations from the Peacebuilding Fund are increasingly targeted and timely. We are working to protect civilians in armed conflict, both as part of peacekeeping mandates and in our humanitarian assistance. Last month's shocking mass rapes in Eastern Congo remind us of the difficulty of this challenge. I have asked my Special Representative on this matter, Ms. Margot Wallström, to help us develop more vigorous mechanisms in tackling these atrocities. We have also taken steps to improve the security of the many thousands of our own staff who risk their lives every day to improve the lives of others.

These incremental yet significant changes are making our engagement in troubled areas more and more effective. But we must do more. Let me focus on four critical areas.

First, we should move beyond the idea of a clearcut sequence of peacemaking, peacekeeping and peacebuilding. These tools should be deployed in integrated fashion, not kept in separate silos. Conflict seldom follows a tidy path. We must continue to evolve towards a faster and more flexible architecture of response that allows us to customize our assistance to the real and immediate needs on the ground. With respect to peacekeeping, we will continue to work in close partnership with the Security Council and others to advance the New Horizon initiative.

Secondly, there is no quick fix for broken societies. It demands patience, resources and a longterm commitment. The United Nations core business must be helping people to solve their conflicts, not just serving as a band-aid to keep troubles in check.

Thirdly, we need to further develop the peacebuilding architecture, empower the Peacebuilding Commission and Fund, and promote greater coherence among the many pieces of the United Nations system that make up the peacebuilding picture.

Fourthly, we must expand our work on prevention, in particular to improve our ability to read the warning signs and trigger early action. The world needs the Security Council to uphold its responsibility for maintaining international peace and security fully, fairly and without delay. We must do more, and be equipped to do more, to fulfil this cardinal mission.

In closing, allow me to note that just yesterday we gathered to recommit ourselves to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Let us recognize the close links between that summit and this, and between the MDGs and the work of this Council. Building peace and advancing development are mutually reinforcing. On all these fronts, the Security Council's leadership will be crucial. Its unity is essential. I pledge my full support as we move forward together.