

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

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

Mr. President,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

One of the most difficult and important tasks facing the United Nations is to ensure that nations emerging from devastating conflicts are not allowed to slide back into violence.

Building peace may sound straightforward, but we know from painful experience that it is not. Success requires patient, long-term commitments and the involvement of a wide range of actors, working together.

We face real difficulties every day as our field missions, funds, programmes and agencies, each in their own way, work to provide the kind of help that nations need to rebuild after war. We feel keenly and constantly the need to do better.

It was in that spirit that my report last year on peacebuilding in the immediate aftermath of conflict set out an agenda for action -- an agenda to help the United Nations deliver more rapid and effective support to national peacebuilding efforts, and to ensure that the impact of those activities would endure.

We are making progress -- in Burundi, Haiti, Nepal, Sierra Leone and elsewhere. But let us remember that for people who have suffered through conflict, progress can't come fast enough. The ultimate test is how well we deliver on the ground -- how well we give people signs of hope beyond mere words and promises.

One year since my report, I am pleased to report that we have made real gains in carrying forward the specific recommendations I put forward aimed at better organizing our peacebuilding efforts.

But we still have further to go. I see four areas that require our particular attention.

First, we need to get the right people in the right place at the right time.

We now deploy Special Representatives and other UN leaders more rapidly to crisis situations. All senior staff now have managerial "compacts" to define their goals, priorities and improve their accountability.

Yet demands on leaders in crisis situations are growing. They are now expected to implement broader Security Council mandates, provide strategic vision, ensure proper coordination and undertake joint planning.

We need to give them the properly trained and equipped support teams that will enable them to perform the full range of their responsibilities right from the very beginning.

Such demands underpin the review of international civilian capacities that is currently under way. The review is anchored in the need to ensure that international assistance in the aftermath of conflict is driven by national needs and priorities; that we make better use of the capacities of women and of the Global South; and that our responses become faster and more flexible.

I look forward to the recommendations of the Senior Advisory Group, led by Jean Marie Guehenno, early next year. Meanwhile, I encourage all Member States to be engaged and contribute to the outcome of the Review.

Second, we need predictable financing.

Whatever type of UN presence, we and our national partners need sufficient and timely funding, especially in the middle of a crisis response.

In fragile transition situations, the Peacebuilding Fund can quickly finance early action, which can, in turn, prompt other sources to provide longer-term funding. The Fund has streamlined its procedures, enabling it to respond more swiftly to urgent needs. I encourage Member States to contribute to its replenishment.

But the Fund is only one among many. Many other efforts are under way aimed at making all peacebuilding financing more flexible and tolerant of risk. I urge Member States to support these as well.

Third, we need more effective partnerships.

Greater cooperation and joint approaches within the United Nations are important, but they are not enough. We must build deeper strategic partnerships. With that in mind, we have begun strengthening cooperation and developing closer institutional links with the World Bank.

Partnerships work best when roles are clear. Greater clarity and deeper capacities are being established in core areas such as mine action, mediation and electoral assistance.

But we still need to review the institutional arrangements in areas such as security sector reform and rule of law. To this end, I am encouraging a frank examination of the comparative advantages of various UN actors and other partners, based on available capacities and presence. This is an important priority over the coming months and I rely on your support.

One of the most important partnerships is the one between the Security Council and the Peacebuilding Commission. Closer collaboration can help the Council to support peacebuilding more effectively from the very start, including by enabling peacekeeping operations to have an impact as “early peacebuilders” and by ensuring that integrated peacebuilding offices institutionalize these early achievements.

With respect to the recent review of our peacebuilding architecture, I look forward to the outcome of discussions by the Council and General Assembly.

Fourth, we need to put women at the heart of peacebuilding.

That is where women should be, not only because of their peacebuilding needs, but above all because of their capacities.

Yet we have not fully achieved this, nor have we fully implemented Security Council resolution 1325. While their voices are critical for ensuring that the foundations of peace are just and equitable, women are still not systematically included at all stages of the peace process.

My new report on women's participation in peacebuilding provides a comprehensive strategy to address these challenges. It identifies the hurdles women confront in seven key areas: mediation, post-conflict planning, financing, civilian capacity, post-conflict governance, rule of law and economic recovery. And it makes specific commitments for each, thereby providing a framework for the full implementation of resolution 1325.

But that will not happen without dedicated funding for women's needs. Conflicts leave states severely weakened and social structures decimated. In such situations, women are vital to ensuring that the basic survival needs of families and communities are met. I have therefore stipulated that all peacebuilding funds managed by the United Nations will henceforth allocate 15 per cent of their funds to projects that address women's specific needs, advance gender equality or empower women.

Advancing the cause of women, peace and security enhances the legitimacy of peace processes and governance structures. It must be an integral part of our peacebuilding efforts, not an afterthought.

Excellencies,

The work of rebuilding societies broken by conflict requires long-term commitment, a truly integrated approach, and significant amounts of human, financial and institutional resources.

There is no set sequence of peacemaking followed by peacekeeping followed by peacebuilding, but rather a need for us to be flexible and to bring our tools into play at the appropriate moments.

And it is essential for us to develop the peacebuilding architecture and promote greater coherence within the UN system.

Meeting these challenges will bring us closer to our overarching goal of building sustainable peace. I will continue to rely on your support and cooperation in that endeavour.

Thank you very much.