

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

Statement by Ambassador Susan E. Rice, Permanent Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations

Thank you, Mr. President. Let me also thank the Secretary General and Ambassador Wittig for their leadership, as well as the chairs of the Peacebuilding Commission's country-specific configurations for all they do to advance the Commission's work, both in the field and in New York.

Mr. President, the United States continues to strongly support the Peacebuilding Commission's work, since promoting sustainable peace lies at the heart of the United Nation's mission.

Today, let me underscore four key points.

First, former Secretary-General Annan used to speak of the "missing middle" between peacekeeping and sustainable development. The Peacebuilding Commission was created five years ago as an important first step towards filling that gap. Supporting sustainable peace requires linking many actors together. Progress has sometimes been slower than we would have hoped, but the Commission today is delivering on the commitment it has made to the countries on its agenda. Indeed, the addition of Liberia to the PBC's agenda demonstrates growing faith in this important new institution. And the United States' decision to take on a leading role in the PBC's recent mission to Liberia is a signal of our commitment to Liberia's recovery, as well as to the PBC's ongoing development. Much of the PBC's success will be judged by its work in country-specific situations. And we are therefore pleased that more countries are choosing to come on its agenda. This is a testament to its potential for generating greater coherence among donors and spurring frank dialogue on the underlying causes of instability that so often mean tragic relapses into conflict.

The Peacebuilding Commission is gaining strength as an institution. It continues to play an important role by bringing additional attention and resources to countries emerging from conflict and proposing strategies to build sustainable peace in the wake of bitter conflict. But to truly serve as the leading actor on peacebuilding, the Commission must do more to link ambitions in New York with programs in the field. It must also coordinate better with international institutions running programs and assessing needs in post-conflict countries. The PBC should also encourage a range of actors—including UN funds and programs, traditional and non-traditional donors, the Bretton Woods institutions, and the peacebuilding community of civil society, NGOs, and academia—to support coherence in the field through more inclusive dialogue, greater innovation, stronger best practices, and better coordination, resource delivery, and building capacities.

Second, the success of the UN's efforts is highly dependent on the experience and capabilities of its field personnel. Sometimes the sacrifice of a battalion of soldiers can be wasted if not accompanied and succeeded by the timely advice and engagement of seasoned civilian peacebuilding experts. But often these key civilian personnel are hard to find or take too long to recruit and deploy. We therefore appreciate the Secretary General's decision to launch a high level review of international civilian peacebuilding capacities and look forward to its results early in 2011.

Third, if UN efforts to build peace are to be truly sustainable, they must incorporate women throughout the process. Where women's roles are ignored, peacebuilding is more likely to fail. Gender is not just a box to be checked. It's a key ingredient in the planning phase, throughout implementation, and in the evaluation of plans. The seven-part action plan laid out by the Secretary-General pushes this process forward and commits to the more systematic and substantive engagement of women in peacemaking and planning processes in the wake of armed conflict. We endorse that commitment strongly, and we recognize the need for adequate funding to support women's roles in peacebuilding. But we must also remember that an action plan means little unless and until it is implemented. The UN must commit itself, therefore, to monitor, evaluate, and adapt the proposed action plan lest we lose the very impact that we seek.

Finally, Mr. President, each organ of the United Nations, including every major fund and program, should embrace peacebuilding's cross-cutting nature. Efforts to build sustainable peace can start with the arrival of UN peacekeepers, aid workers, or diplomats, and they can continue through the longer-term development

efforts. But peacebuilding's success ultimately depends on leadership from the country emerging from conflict itself, and the UN must make it a top priority to build the capacities of local leaders and communities.

Mr. President, with the right mandate, leadership, and resources, the UN can and should play an indispensable role in helping post-conflict societies find their footing on the path to lasting peace and prosperity. So we must work together to develop the critical peacebuilding capacities needed to fulfill this Council's mandate to advance international peace and security—and to improve the prospects for lasting progress in countries emerging from conflict and chaos.

Mr. President, the United States is pleased to support the Presidential Statement as well, to be issued by the council today.

Thank you, Mr. President.