

Security Council Open Debate on Post-Conflict Peacebuilding: Institution Building 21st January 2011, Security Council Chamber (GA-TSC-01)

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

I thank the Secretary-General, Deputy Prime Minister Guterres and Ambassador Wittig for their thoughtful briefings today.

The only way to truly end a war is to successfully build a peace. Old embers left to smolder can ignite into new flames. Old weaknesses left to languish can summon new risks. So we face an important challenge here today — to sharpen all the tools at our disposal in order to do an essential job better. We meet today at the initiative of our colleague from Bosnia and Herzegovina, who has rightly drawn the Council's attention to our topic today. This is fitting. Countries that have themselves endured and overcome the horrors of war are particularly suited to providing leadership — leadership that rests on hard-won wisdom.

In 1995, the Dayton Peace Accords ended a shattering conflict that claimed more than 100,000 lives and drove more than 2 million people from their homes. Through more than 15 years of dedicated effort, Bosnia and Herzegovina has built up national governmental institutions one by one and made them stronger and more effective — from the Ministry of Defence to the customs service, the tax agency and the central bank.

The United Nations, together with a wide range of other actors, has been involved in helping postconflict countries grapple with their most pressing needs now for more than 20 years, and virtually every conflict-wracked country currently on the agenda of the Council — from Haiti, to Liberia to the Sudan to Afghanistan — seeks effective international assistance to rebuild its institutions.

We have learned important lessons over the past two decades in this field, but we also have work to do in putting them into practice. We all agree that national ownership of the processes of rebuilding and renewal is indispensable, but we still struggle to assist fragile post-conflict Governments so they can set and implement their own priorities. We recognize that women need to play a more active role in peacebuilding, but we still lag in ensuring that women have an equitable stake in making post-conflict decisions and a full voice in running key institutions. We know that the sustainability of a peace process often hinges on strengthening key national institutions, but we still grapple with how best to mobilize effective and timely international assistance in such vital areas as the rule of law and security sectors.

Fortunately, we have collectively acknowledged the challenges and resolved to make headway on them in the year ahead. For example, we have turned to the Peacebuilding Commission to help the democratically elected Government of Liberia to extend State authority beyond Monrovia by establishing regional hubs that will help deliver fair and timely justice in rural communities and make trained police and magistrates more accessible to the population as a whole. We have established new mechanisms and pledged considerable financial assistance to help Haiti consolidated the impressive progress it has made since the terrible earthquake struck a little more than a year ago.

But as many of us said in the Council yesterday, Haiti will continue to face steep challenges unless the international commitment to recovery remains strong and sustained and unless all parties redouble their efforts to strengthen Haiti's critical governing institutions. The country's recovery depends on its ability to find a way to move ahead, even amid complex challenges, including the continuing turmoil surrounding the November 2010 election.

The effectiveness of international assistance to institution-building in Liberia, Haiti and other countries emerging from conflict depends on the United Nations and other multilateral and bilateral actors being able to quickly identify and deploy qualified civilian expertise. We therefore look forward in the coming weeks to the findings of the international review of civilian capacity. We appreciate the briefings to the membership by the Senior Advisory Group, and we hope that the review will emphasize the question of core national capacities in post-conflict States.

We look forward to reviewing specific proposals to make the United Nations own civilian capacities more timely, relevant and flexible and more open to deeper partnerships. Our approach to this review will be guided by our own recent national efforts, as laid out in my Government's first quadrennial diplomacy and development review.

We continue to value the Secretary-General's ongoing efforts to make United Nations field missions more

effective, particularly his work to ensure that the top leaders of missions are selected carefully and held accountable.

This meeting is a timely reminder of how essential the work of peacebuilding and institutionbuilding is. There are no easy solutions for societies recovering from conflict, but we must persist in working together to try to craft and implement the specific solutions that each post-conflict society needs. Nothing less than international peace and security hang in the balance.