

Security Council Open Debate on Post-Conflict Peacebuilding
12 July 2012, Security Council Chamber

Statement by Ambassador Susan E. Rice, Representative of the United States

Thank you, Foreign Minister Holguin, for chairing this important debate. I would also like to thank the Secretary-General, Ambassador Gasana, Ambassador Abdul Momen, and Dr. Von Amsberg for their important leadership on this issue.

Madam President, we have learned time and again that the end of conflict does not mean that peace has necessarily arrived. Sustained peace must be built on a durable foundation of national commitment, broad international support, and experience informed by the lessons of the past. The Peacebuilding Commission has an important role to play and can continue to enhance its contribution by focusing its efforts, strengthening coordination with internal and external stakeholders, and highlighting best practices.

First, peacebuilding cannot succeed without national ownership. This is indispensable. Governments, civil society, and citizens must be engaged regularly to ensure that the international community responds to their needs. We encourage the PBC to engage affected communities in shaping peacebuilding priorities and to incorporate the perspectives of youth and women in particular, which will be crucial to post-conflict recovery. The Liberia configuration's recent meeting with a local peace committee is one example of grassroots engagement that should be repeated.

Peacebuilding strategies need to be integral to national plans and not an added burden to post-conflict governments already struggling to manage delicate transitions. The PBC can help reinforce existing national strategies and ensure a focused effort from all actors. The PBC has done this effectively in Sierra Leone by adopting the government's Agenda for Change as the basis for its engagement in the country. As a result, the PBC promotes a single vision for Sierra Leone's future.

Second, the international community still struggles with coordinating an increasingly crowded field of peacebuilding actors. We urge the PBC to forge and expand partnerships with international financial institutions, including the African Development Bank and World Bank, major donors, and key regional actors. Deeper relationships between the PBC and regional organizations such as ECOWAS would also benefit many countries on the PBC's agenda, particularly in dealing with issues that benefit from regional solutions, including combating transnational illicit networks.

Third, mobilizing resources for peacebuilding remains an enormous challenge, but one in which the PBC can have a significant impact. We commend the country-specific configuration chairs for publicly advocating sustained commitment to peacebuilding and increasing alignment of PBC priorities with projects supported by the Peacebuilding Fund. The PBC can also leverage its diverse composition and convening power to mobilize new sources of investment and support, including from the private sector, and work to ensure timely and successful donor conferences and related processes.

Fourth, today's discussion of the PBC's effectiveness cannot be separated from the UN's broader peacebuilding work, including efforts to develop and deploy more effectively capable civilian specialists in the aftermath of conflict. We welcome the Secretary-General's commitment to implement reforms since his report on this subject. These include the development of an online mechanism to access the marketplace of civilian expertise and the designation of a new Global Focal Point for Rule of Law to bring greater coherence to the UN's work and mobilize the combined expertise of UNDP and DPKO on this critical cross-cutting issue. Indeed, successful peacebuilding requires the UN to pool its own system-wide expertise. On other multi-faceted issues such as youth employment and improving public sector capacity-building, progress still needs to be made in bringing all partners together around common strategies and effective divisions of labor. The UN can also play a unique role facilitating triangular partnerships that support the sharing of expertise in post-conflict transitions, like the initiative by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development to deploy Kenyan, Ugandan and Ethiopian experts to South Sudan with the support of Norway and UNDP. UN agencies can encourage wider use of these and other innovative arrangements when designing peacebuilding activities.

Finally, and fortunately, we have an increasingly long list of experiences to inform our support for countries emerging from conflict. The PBC has worked with six countries on a diverse range of peacebuilding needs and the UN has supported numerous other peacebuilding efforts in places such as South Sudan and Timor-Leste. While there is no "one size fits all" peacebuilding solution, the United States encourages the PBC, through its Working Group on Lessons

Learned, to systematically review peacebuilding precedents and disseminate global best practices from countries on and off the PBC agenda.

Madam President, this Council's mandate to advance peace and security demands that we work not just to end conflict but to prevent its recurrence. By aligning with national priorities, strengthening international partnerships, and learning from what we have already accomplished, the Peacebuilding Commission has great potential to help countries emerging from war stay on the path to peace. The United States looks forward to the Security Council's continuing engagement with the PBC to facilitate and enhance this critical work.

Thank you, Madam President.