



**Statement by MR. Nirupam Sen , Permanent Representative on POST-
CONFLICT PEACE-BUILDING at the SECURITY COUNCIL on
May 26, 2005**

Mr. President,

We congratulate you on your exemplary handling of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of May. I also thank you for having scheduled this open debate on Post-Conflict Peace-Building.

We welcome this opportunity to participate in this debate to discuss the current policy and institutional and financial challenges in post-conflict peace-building without duplicating the General Assembly's deliberations on the possible modalities of a Peace-building Commission. However, any consideration of the issue, in the context of the role of the United Nations in post-conflict peace-building today, cannot realistically be divorced from the proposal of the Secretary-General.

India's approach towards post-conflict peace-building would be determined by its role as a major troop contributor to United Nations peace-keeping operations and as an emerging non-traditional donor for reconstruction activities. As such, India has a keen interest in the issue, as also in ensuring that the concept and implementation of a Peace-building Commission are well-defined from the very inception of the process.

In our view, the Secretary-General's decision to restrict the scope of the Peace-Building Commission's work to post-conflict peace-building, as opposed to the wider mandate beginning with structural prevention as proposed by the High-level Panel, is rational and pragmatic. The main advantages of a narrower, better-defined area of activity are that it would allow the Peace-Building Commission to concentrate its resources, both personnel and financial, in an optimal way. The broad canvas approach suggested by the High-level Panel would have meant stretching scarce resources. Each case taken up by the Peace-Building Commission in accordance with the High-level Panel's suggestion would have involved significantly greater time and resources. Moreover, structural prevention has already been addressed in numerous reports of the Secretary-General and in resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council. We also agree with the Secretary-General that the Peace-Building Commission should not have an early warning or monitoring function.

We believe that the main functions of the proposed Peace-building Commission should be to ensure greater coordination between the international community and donor countries on the one hand, and the national authorities on the other; to promote a sense of ownership among national authorities for the policies and programmes that are supported by the international community and donor countries; and, to provide assured funding for the activities that are agreed upon as priorities by the national authorities and the international community.

We need to ensure that the Peace-building Commission does not load the mandate of peace-keeping missions with the projects and programmes outlined by the Security Council. Such an approach may have a deleterious effect on the main purpose and objective of the peace-keeping mission. In addition, it may pose budgeting problems related to peace-keeping missions and the regular budget as, for example, in the budgeting for Disarmament, Demobilisation, and Reintegration (DDR) programmes.

The proposal relating to "core membership" in the Peace-building Commission is not clear in terms of the proportion of representatives from the various interest groups (Security Council, ECOSOC, donors, troop contributors) identified by the Secretary-General. Moreover, it is implicit, though not explicit, that members will be individuals nominated by their respective governments - as in the case of the Commissioners of UNMOVIC for example. No mechanism to determine the Chairs of the core bodies or country-specific meetings has been specified.

The denomination "core membership" would also appear somewhat misleading. The "core membership" will change continuously as non-permanent members leave the Security Council and elected members leave ECOSOC after completing their tenures. It is, therefore, not clear how these members would provide the institutional knowledge and continuity that would be required in the Peace-building Commission for long-term reconstruction and rebuilding in its core setting when its members change every year, whereas the country remains on the agenda of the Security Council for several years. It is also not clear what the criteria would be for selection of members from both the Security Council and the ECOSOC since the core membership is limited to between 15 and 20. Similarly, clarification on who would make the decision on the participation of countries in the Peace-building Commission would be required. Similar clarification would be required about ensuring the participation of leading Troop Contributing Countries and major donors.

The institutional structure of the Peace-building Commission needs to be defined clearly. The Secretary-General has proposed that the Peace-building Commission advise the Security Council and the ECOSOC in sequence, depending on the state of recovery. While this is functionally tenable, it does not take into account the fact that this important body would be answerable only to organisations with a select membership but not to the general membership. It is essential that the Peace-building Commission be made accountable to the General Assembly. This can be done without prejudice to its normal functioning but through periodic reports in which it must seek the guidance and approval of the General Assembly on policy issues.

Criteria on the basis of which a particular country under the Peace-building Commission would move from the Security Council to ECOSOC would need to be formulated. For example, the transition could begin from the time the Council starts a review of the force size of a peace-keeping mission. Ideally, the General Assembly could decide the transition through a review. It is somewhat unrealistic to set the transition

from the Security Council to ECOSOC only after the situation in a country is no longer on the agenda of the Security Council, as a country remains at times on the agenda of the Security Council for several years before it is removed on a no-objection basis. Consequently, ECOSOC and thereby the General Assembly may never have a long-term development role that the proposed Commission envisages and thus undermine the Peace-building Commission's mandate for long-term reconstruction and development. Furthermore, this criterion could be perceived as making long-term reconstruction and development aspects hostage to the priorities of the Security Council.

We await the outcome of Secretary-General's consultations on the participation of international financial institutions. Time and again, the best intentions and programmes for peace-building have been undermined by lack of funds. The programmes are often based on commitments made by donor countries that do not translate into actual cash. The Standing Fund for Peace-building potentially offers a solution. The mechanism for sustainability of the Standing Fund as well as accountability for the contributions made to the Fund need to be outlined carefully and agreed upon. It is, however, not clear whether the Standing Fund for Peace-building is solely meant to cover the "gaps" in funding or would become the regular source for financing for peace-building projects.

In so far as the mandate of the proposed Peace-Building Commission would include help to ensure predictable financing for early recovery activities and to provide an overview of planned financing for peace-building through assessed, voluntary and standing funding mechanisms, it would assist in identifying shortfalls and gaps. The proposed Standing Fund for Peace-building could then be utilised to address such shortfalls. This would help avoid situations such as seen recently where the Secretariat has sought provisions from assessed contributions to cover areas which have been traditionally in the domain of voluntary funding.

The Peace-building Support Office should draw as far as possible on expertise and capacities already available in the Secretariat as also elsewhere in the UN system since it would have many functions that are already being carried out, but perhaps not in a coordinated way. Similarly, there should not be any duplication of capacities with regard to the Rule of Law unit which will form part of the Peace-building Support Office.

It is important to highlight the role of the proposed Commission in the context of proposing "overall priorities and ensure that those priorities reflect country-based realities" and to avoid repeating and reinforcing existing paradigm of externally formulating policies and programmes for countries transitioning from conflict to post-conflict peace-building. The "country-based realities" component is perhaps the most important aspect of setting priority goals in order to avoid the same sequencing structure – the international community setting the goals which cannot be implemented owing to a lack of understanding of the ground realities. It is, therefore, important to utilise the expertise of national authorities, in whatever nascent form it is available, to set the priorities which the international community can support. In some cases, these priorities also have to be appropriately modified. This should be perceived as an essential part of the process of capacity-building as well.

The Peace-Building Commission is required to perform the vital role of ensuring system-wide coherence. Any peace-building effort involves a number of actors, including representatives of the UN system, bilateral donors, troop contributors, regional organisations, international financial institutions etc. However, in any post-conflict situation, there are a very large number of NGOs and relief agencies involved as well.

One of the main drawbacks cited in post-conflict peace-building situations is the lack of coordination among the plethora of NGOs that compete for scarce resources, inevitably overlap in terms of areas of activity and divert local assets such as interpreters, trained personnel etc. for their own projects sometimes by paying extravagant sums, thus driving up the market rents and salaries. Perhaps the Commission should be mandated to attempt to provide a systemic coherence to all such post-conflict peace-building activities.

Mr. President,

In view of the limited time at our disposal, I am confining my statement to a few suggestions on the concept of a Peace-building Commission in the United Nations. Undoubtedly, this issue will be discussed at some length at the General Assembly, where different views on the modalities of the proposal will be aired. However, there is little doubt that the Secretary-General's proposal has sought to fill what he has described as "a gaping hole in the UN's institutional machinery". There is also little doubt about the imperative need and utility of such a body. India is fully supportive of the proposal and will be happy to engage constructively in discussions in the General Assembly on its establishment.

Thank you, Mr. President.

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