



STATEMENT BY MR. NIRUPAM SEN, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE, ON AGENDA ITEM 47: INTEGRATED & COORDINATED IMPLEMENTATION OF AND FOLLOW-UP TO THE OUTCOMES OF THE MAJOR UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCES AND SUMMITS IN THE ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND RELATED FIELDS, AGENDA ITEM 113: FOLLOW-UP TO THE OUTCOME OF THE MILLENNIUM SUMMIT & AGENDA ITEM 149: UNITED NATIONS REFORM: MEASURES AND PROPOSALS, IN ORDER TO DISCUSS THE PROGRESS ACHIEVED IN THE WORK OF THE PEACEBUILDING COMMISSION AT THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON FEBRUARY 06, 2006

Your Excellency, Madame President,

Let me begin by expressing my delegation's appreciation to you for scheduling this discussion on an important subject, at such short notice. We also thank you, Madame President, the President of the Security Council and the President of the General Assembly; as well as the Chairman of the Peacebuilding Commission, the Chairs of the Country-Specific configurations of the PBC and the Chair of the PBC working group on Lessons Learnt, for the important statements made, as well as for the very important work they have undertaken.

Madame President, we also thank you for your decision to write to potential donors to seek further contributions to the Peacebuilding Fund, to ensure that the funding target is met. As a contributor to the Peace Building Fund, we welcome your support to the Fund.

I should also like to state our appreciation to the delegation of Jamaica, the coordinator of the Caucus of the Non-Aligned Movement within the PBC, for its diligence and for their statement today. We align ourselves with his statement.

Madame President,

While the statement made by our colleague and friend from Jamaica eloquently encapsulates the collective position of the Non Aligned Movement on this issue, I would like to very briefly explore a few ideas and make a few suggestions in our national capacity, with a view to encourage some introspection.

To start with, it has been of concern to us that since the establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission last year, we have spent a considerable amount of time on "housekeeping issues". Initially, when we were collectively engaged in defining what this body would do and how it would go about achieving its goals, this may have been

a valid exercise. However, at this stage, I submit that we cannot continue indefinitely discussing preliminary issues such as reporting responsibilities, participation and operational matters to the detriment of the larger goal of assisting in the consolidation of peace in post-conflict societies. To do so would be to miss the wood for the trees.

Secondly, in terms of procedure and priority, we accept the premise that the Country-Specific Meetings are a crucial element in ensuring that assistance and advice are speedily and effectively administered to candidate countries. However, it is difficult to accept that this 'process mechanism' takes precedence over the Organizational Committee, which is the steering mechanism of the Peacebuilding Commission. But we recognize that there are alternative views on this subject. Therefore, perhaps we should not ask ourselves which takes precedence. Instead, let us ask ourselves the more practical question: how the work of the Organizational Committee and the Country-Specific configurations can be harmonized and made more complementary.

In a similar vein, we believe that the success of the Commission is critically dependent on a harmonious and effective Organizational Committee. To reiterate the metaphor of steering, if 31 pilots argue over a ship's steering wheel, the ship will only run aground. It is therefore our view that we need to change the nature of discourse within the Organizational Committee. To some extent, this can be addressed if there is a larger sense of overarching purpose to our meetings. But over and beyond that, we need to find ways to increase mutual trust, to begin with, by creating a more collegial and consultative approach. The PBSO, the UN Secretariat and indeed, each of the member states on the OC, share a responsibility to do so.

We do not believe that such a broad understanding will be difficult to reach. The statements made last week by a number of partners in the peacebuilding process reflect a belief in the existence of a common ground. In our view, that common ground lies in recognizing that the goal is to assist candidate countries with funding, mobilize donor support and design policies that would consolidate peace. The painful history of the post-world war years illustrates the fragility of peace in post-conflict societies (here Nietzsche has sometimes been proved right – "peace is an interregnum between two periods of war"), therefore all of us equally emphasize the need for expeditious action. Consequently, we hold it self-evident that the Peacebuilding Commission is not merely about donors of money and recipients, but also about provision of advice and policy support, both through 'learning by example' and through assistance in designing policies based on the specificities of the society concerned. On the one hand, to really contribute fundamentally and be truly relevant, the Peacebuilding Commission would have to examine in depth and advise on the most urgent problems of today such as how to promote some understanding among a country's regional and ethnic leaders; assess the pace of say economic reform or elections, which, if embarked on too early or at the wrong time, may actually retard institution-building and plunge a country back into civil war. On the other, one size clearly does not fit all and what works in a small and more homogeneous country may not in a large and fractured State. Above all, it is important to focus on whether resources are going to the most important place – institution-building.

We also believe that there is no gainsaying the fact that the lead actor in any post-conflict peacebuilding instance must be the nation concerned. While we welcome inputs from all sections of society, both nationally and internationally, the primary focus cannot but be to strengthen the capacity of a post-conflict State to govern effectively and to mobilize human and material resources to achieve development. Every other perspective that is provided is useful, but equally, we should recognize that a non-national perspective can only be segmental; useful though they may be, such perspectives can only reflect part of the picture. The appropriate image is a circle whose circumference may run through and encompass many countries but whose centre is in one country.

This brings me to my final point. We believe that we need to renew our focus and our commitment to the larger cause of assisting the candidate countries that are before us. We need to listen more closely to their concerns and react with greater dispatch to their requests. If we do so, in a manner that most directly addresses their concerns, we will not only be able to assist the states concerned in the process of post conflict peace consolidation, but would have also demonstrated the efficacy of this new mechanism that the PBC is. This would have beneficial effects ranging from a more result-oriented discourse within the PBC, to greater donor willingness to assist not only the candidate countries themselves, but also to fund the PBC.

Madame President,

To summarize, therefore: it is our view that the “teething troubles” of which we are wont to speak, can be addressed once we place the larger picture and the overarching goal before ourselves. Once we do so, the debates over what are, in the final analysis, only minutiae, will recede into the background. It is only then that the PBC will come into its own. It is our hope that with the rapid acceleration of the PBC’s work in the coming months, all of us will be able to return to you at the first anniversary of the establishment of the PBC, with a more optimistic report card, and in a more forward-looking frame of mind.

I thank you.

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