

## Peace building, 5 February 2001

**Mr. Neewoor** (Mauritius): First of all, allow me to thank you, Sir, for convening today's open debate on the important subject of "Peace-building: towards a comprehensive approach". I also wish to thank the Secretary-General for his opening statement today.

This meeting is indeed very timely, as over the next two days the Fourth High-level Meeting will take place between the United Nations and regional organizations, which will also reflect on this important issue. We thank you, Sir, for your comprehensive background document.

The Charter of the United Nations speaks of wars, aggressions, disputes and conflicts essentially as situations of belligerency involving two or more sovereign States. In such situations, United Nations peacekeeping operations would normally involve deployment along the international frontiers of the opposing sides so as to keep peace between them. There is no scope for a larger role for a United Nations operations in conflict situations of this kind.

Since the United Nations Charter was written, the world has changed dramatically. We may not be totally freed from situations in which two or more States use or threaten to use force to resolve differences, but increasingly at the United Nations, and in the Security Council in particular, we have been dealing instead with civil conflicts. The striking examples are Somalia, Angola, Cambodia, Liberia, the Central African Republic, Yugoslavia, Rwanda, Burundi, Sierra Leone, Haiti, Georgia, East Timor and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The United Nations has been drawn into all these cases, either through peacekeeping operations or missions of other kinds, so as to stop the fighting, to prevent genocide or to deal with massive humanitarian situations and, in some cases, has even provided interim administration, such as in East Timor and Kosovo.

The Brahimi report, in our view, rightly concludes that "peacekeepers and peace-builders are inseparable partners" (*S/2000/809, para. 28*). Civil wars usually leave populations bitterly divided. More often than not in post-conflict situations, new political processes need to be undertaken for the emergence of a credible Government. Law and order need to be fully restored to enable refugees and internally displaced persons to return home in an atmosphere of security. Institutions have to be built to ensure proper governance. Human resources have to be developed through training facilities. Infrastructures damaged during the conflict have to be rebuilt. Above all, the devastated economy must be relaunched. All this can happen in a post-conflict situation only with the massive support of the international community for peace-building.

Following the first Security Council summit in 1992 and the subsequent publication of *An Agenda for Peace*, there have been a greater interest and engagement by the United Nations in post-conflict peace-building operations. Through these operations, our Organization has made a remarkable difference in the lives of numerous citizens in Namibia, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, Guatemala, El Salvador and elsewhere.

There is no doubt that, for a peace-building operation to be successful, it requires a comprehensive and holistic approach. Several components are essential to bringing about sustained peace in the aftermath of a conflict. The need for demilitarization, control of the illicit flow of small arms and light weapons, the setting-up of proper democratic institutions, respect for the rule of law, efficient civilian police, an improved judicial system, electoral reform and respect for human rights, along with socio-economic development, are crucial to the restoration of peace and normalcy.

I would wish to highlight the following aspects, which are deemed important for successful peacebuilding. By destroying yesterday's weapons used in conflicts, we would prevent their further use in future wars. The illicit trade and mass flow of small arms and light weapons on the African continent are only adding fuel to an already explosive situation.

We also believe that, after the settlement of a conflict, States should be encouraged and assisted to establish laws and procedures for the safe and effective collection and destruction of illegal small arms and light weapons. By so doing, the risk of the warring parties' turning again to the use of arms could be mitigated. In this regard, we wish to underscore the need for all arms embargoes to be fully respected by the international community. The United States and the Southern African Development Community signed a declaration in December last year on United Nations sanctions and restraint in sale and transfers of conventional arms to regions of conflict in Africa. The declaration, inter alia, calls on States to adopt and implement national controls and measures to prevent the flow in conflict areas in Africa of confiscated arms, as well as those collected following the cessation of civil and international conflicts. We consider this to be an important step towards peace-building in African situations.

We have seen in Mozambique weapons exchanged for such tools as sewing machines, hoes and construction materials that helped the rehabilitation of former combatants. In Albania, community-based pilot programmes provided health care, new schools and proper infrastructure to communities in exchange for arms and ammunition. We believe that this kind of programme should be integrated into all peace-building operations.

A major impediment to peace-building and reconstruction after an internal conflict is, in many cases, the serious problem of landmines, millions of which remain scattered in the conflict zones. From Mozambique to southern Lebanon, landmines are still affecting the lives of millions of people. There can be no infrastructural development or agricultural activities in areas pitted with landmines. We would wish to appeal to countries with the necessary technical expertise and informative maps of the mined areas to redouble their efforts in assisting demining activities. This would indeed be a major contribution towards peace-building.

My delegation wishes to reiterate that there can be no durable peace without good governance, sound democratic practices and respect for the rule of law and transparency. Free and fair elections are one of the important pillars that sustain democratic societies. It is a fact that democracies rarely go to war against each other. It is equally true that democracies have a lower level of internal conflicts than non-democracies.

My delegation wishes to underscore the importance of putting in place a democratically elected Government once a peace agreement has been reached. It is encouraging to note that the Electoral Assistance Division of the United Nations is providing more and more assistance to electoral processes worldwide. Illegitimate and non-credible regimes very often carry the seeds of instability that eventually lead to frustration among the population, as a result of which conflicts may arise.

Governments have a major responsibility in the process of confidence-building. They should be encouraged to undertake national reconciliation and to promote unity, as well as demonstrate respect for human rights. States should avail themselves of the expertise of the United Nations, including through the High Commissioner for Human Rights, in drafting national plans of action for human rights and strengthening their judicial institutions. There will be no sustained peace and security if individuals continue to live in fear of arbitrary arrest and detention.

Newly established democratic Governments should also enlist the expertise of the International Civil Service Commission to help build a credible, transparent and accountable public administration. Corruption, malpractice and distorted decision-making not only stall economic development but also discourage foreign investment. For this reason alone, we ponder why several countries are still crippled in poverty despite being endowed with rich natural resources.

Last week we renewed the mandate of the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET), and everyone expressed satisfaction at the fact that the people of

East Timor were heading towards the achievement of their cherished goal of independence. The role of UNTAET in training the East Timorese to take charge of their administrative machinery and institutions, which are the prerequisites for a newly independent democratic nation, demonstrates the resolve of the United Nations for a comprehensive approach towards peace-building.

The success of a peace-building operation lies to a great extent in the sense of security felt by citizens. The training, reforming and restructuring of local police forces are very important components of peace-building. My delegation subscribes to paragraphs 39 to 41 of the Brahimi report, especially with regard to the call for a doctrinal shift in the use of civilian police and human right experts in complex peacekeeping operations, with a view to strengthening the legal institutions and improving human rights.

The rehabilitation and resettlement of the local population after conflicts remain the central objectives of any peace-building undertaking. Our efforts should be focused more and more at creating the conditions conducive to sustainable economic growth necessary for reconstruction.

United Nations agencies, regional organizations and non-governmental organizations are already heavily engaged in reconstruction activities. However, we would like to see more timely efforts applied towards the construction of basic physical infrastructures, proper transportation and telecommunications, schools and public health facilities as part of the reconstruction programmes.

Education would indeed provide the younger generation with technical and professional training, which is the essential foundation for the acquisition of skills. These are important elements that would eventually lead to job creation and consequently enhance the quality of life of the people.

In conclusion, let me add that with the designation of the Department of Political Affairs as the focal point within the United Nations for postconflict peace-building, there has been better coordination and progress in peace-building activities. We welcome the initiative taken to invite the World Bank to participate in the Executive Committee on Peace and Security, which is responsible for the design and implementation of post-conflict peace-building initiatives within the United Nations. We must also work towards enhancing the coordination role of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) within the United Nations, since with the growing number of conflicts, there is greater need to make peace-building operations a high priority. Article 65 of the United Nations Charter lays down clearly the parameters for cooperation between the Security Council and ECOSOC. We believe that Article 65, which so far has been applied only once — in

1999, in favour of Haiti — should become a vital instrument for comprehensive United Nations post-conflict peace-building efforts.

Finally, peace-building enterprises can succeed only if they are backed by the necessary financial support. We hope that the United Nations, the international financial institutions and the donor community will work together concertedly to make sure that what we are discussing today does not remain a dead letter.