

**Professor Luck,  
Distinguished guests,  
Ladies and gentleman,**

Let me take this opportunity to thank the Center on International Organisation and Institute of African Affairs of the Columbia University for the invitation extended to me to participate in this important event to discuss issues related to peacekeeping and peace building.

This kind of brainstorming is particularly vital and timely as it is taking place at a crucial phase of the recently operationalized body which I have the honour to chair, the Peacebuilding Commission, established as in the framework of the United Nations Reform.

I therefore commend the organisers for having gathered here a group of distinguished African specialists with different backgrounds and fields of Work. We all represent those who feel on a daily basis the consequences of conflicts on the ground.

Let us agree also that this kind of event is also an opportunity given to us, despite our functions and responsibilities, to speak with our hearts, when necessary, on issues related to the task at stake.

In the letter sent to me, the organisers have asked the panellists to focus on whichever aspects of the topic related to the implications for Peacekeeping and Peacebuilding in Africa of the United Nations Reform.

I presume that I have been invited given my current position as the chair of the Peacebuilding Commission I will therefore

focus on the work of this body, its challenges, particularly for the African continent.

Let me first address the question of what is the state of affairs after the launch of the PBC and the holding of the two country-specific meetings on Sierra Leone and Burundi, the two countries on the agenda of the PBC.

After its first meetings which agreed on the process for country-specific meetings with reference to the countries on the agenda, the Organizational Committee had a substantive briefing on both countries during which their

representatives shared their vision on peacebuilding, indicating what they expect from the Peacebuilding Commission, while representatives of the UN, World Bank and IMF gave their assessments of what these two countries need in terms of post-conflict recovery.

During the main country-specific meetings held last month here in New York and attended by high level delegations from the two countries, members of the Peacebuilding Commission reinforced the Burundi and Sierra Leone government's views of the specific critical challenges that impede the consolidation of peace and need to be addressed as a matter of urgency in order to lay the foundations for sustainable peace and create a suitable environment for development and reconstruction.

The New York meeting selected concrete areas of intervention, while the governments of Sierra Leone and Burundi were invited to further develop strategies and plans for addressing the critical peacebuilding issues identified by the meetings. This task is obviously being carried out by the governments concerned with the assistance of the United Nations System at the country level and the Peacebuilding Support Office, whose representatives are at this moment engaged in the work on the field. This exercise is aimed at narrowing down the selected areas to enable concrete actions, possibly specific projects for consideration by the Peacebuilding Commission and the international community.

This exercise also clearly demonstrates the need for shifting the work of the Commission to the field at this crucial moment. I therefore share the claims of the governments of Burundi and Sierra Leone for more concrete actions in the field. In this regard we are considering kick start specific operations supported by the Peacebuilding Fund before the forthcoming Peacebuilding Country-Specific Meetings

On the other hand, shifting the focus of the work of peace building to the field does not represent a lack of action here in New York thus the Organizational Committee will continue to meet on procedural and thematic issues. It is my hope that the academic and research institutions such as the organisers of this event will play an important role in organising brainstorming on thematic issues in order to enrich the work of the peacebuilding Commission.

The Peacebuilding Support Office is also putting together data on non governmental institutions which deal with peacebuilding, including those located in Africa and other parts of the world.

I am pleased that the Centre on Conflict Resolution of the University of Cape Town led by Dr Adekeye Adebajo has taken an important step by organising, in collaboration with the Friedrich Erbert Foundation, a meeting on the African perspectives on the Peacebuilding Commission in Maputo from August of this year. The members of The Peacebuilding Commission are also recognisant to the fact that the first steps of the work of the Organizational Committee took place thanks to a meeting organised by the International Peace Academy in collaboration with some Permanent Missions.

**Distinguished guests,**

Taking a new body as the Peacebuilding Commission off the ground is not a soft exercise. We have experienced many difficulties and challenges brought about by various factors, including the interpretation by member states of resolutions A/60/180 and 1645(2005) adopted by both the General Assembly and the Security Council, respectively. We all remember the difficult negotiations that preceded the adoption of those resolutions; the negotiations aimed at building the necessary consensus on the various positions held by member states.

I share the criticism of those who feel that the Peacebuilding Organizational Committee has been spending valuable time on procedural issues; one good example is the fact that the Organizational Committee has not yet agreed on the way the civil society, the private sector and NGO's are going to participate in the meetings of the Peacebuilding Commission. While some of these issues may appear to be trivial, the rules of procedure adopted by the organizational committee did not clearly resolve this matter. As a result of that this and other procedural issues will still demand a decreasing amount of out time.

**Distinguished guests,**

Peacebuilding is a matter of concrete actions; one of the most important concrete actions was clearly defined by the 2005 Summit by stating that the main purpose of the Peacebuilding Commission was to bring together all

relevant actors to marshal resources and to advise on integrated strategies for post-conflict recovery and peace building Fund.

Despite the contribution of \$140 million US dollars to the Peacebuilding Fund, this important tool still remains at a low level when measured against the urgent needs in post-conflict countries. Some important donors, the same who have significantly contributed in peacekeeping operations in Africa, are yet to translate their political commitments into concrete actions and contributions, while others have put forward some demands and conditions for their contribution to the Fund.

This trend should be reverted if we have to fulfil our mandate, as well as avoid a new setback to preventive diplomacy, particularly, in Africa. Although peacebuilding is not only a matter of financial resources, they can make a pivotal contribution for successful post conflict recovery in countries such as Burundi, whose process is critically under-funded.

**Distinguished guests,**

Peacebuilding is also a matter of coordination and partnership; however, bringing together the different players will require a sense of permanent dialogue and a clear definition of the bridge the PBC will have to build taking into account the diversity of the nature and the activities.

There is a need of taking into account the initiatives underway on the ground at the level of the African Union and the regional Economic Communities; It is for example important to define how the Peacebuilding Commission will complete the ongoing efforts of the ECOWAS which has established a Fund for Peace and development also involved in Sierra Leone, a country under consideration by the Peacebuilding Commission, as well as how the PBC will coordinate with the African Bank for Development, a participant to the PBC meetings on Sierra Leone as financial institution and important contributor to the above mentioned ECOWAS Fund.

**Distinguished guests,**

While we define the guiding principles of the PBC's work on the ground, Let's all agree that peacebuilding is not a new notion, even if we acknowledge that the name of this exercise may differ.

Peacebuilding means different things to different people and countries, based on their personal or national perspectives and experiences.

What the PBC does to support each country on its agenda will vary according to the security, political, economic, and social conditions in the country, and its neighbours and supporters (political and financial). And this security, political, economic, and social conditions will change as the country progresses. For this reason, it will be important for the PBC to be flexible in its approach, particularly while dealing with countries located in a very fragile political, and socio-economic environment as the one observed in some African regions and countries emerging from conflicts.

**Distinguished guests,**

Those concerns have a bearing on our capacity to respond and to fulfil the mandate of the Peacebuilding Commission, even more so if we take into account the dimension of the tasks to be fulfilled not only in the countries under consideration, but also in the increasing number of countries emerging from conflicts, particularly in Africa.

However as I referred in my remarks during the meeting of the Inter-parliamentarian Union last week, quoting Secretary-General Kofi Anan: “The Peacebuilding Commission has been slow to start and has yet to show its full promise. But good things take time, and we should not be discouraged by the fact that this new body is still trying to find effective ways of working”. End of quote.

So despite the difficulties it may face, let’s spare no effort to make it a viable project, let’s spare no effort and seize the opportunity presented to us by the Peace building commission. This is indeed possible with the necessary political will.

Before I conclude let me express my sincere wish that this event could represent an important contribution to a Preventive Diplomacy. Conflict prevention is by far less costly in both human lives and actual monetary resources.

I thank you