

Madame President,

I am particularly honored to address this August Assembly in my capacity as Chairman of the Peacebuilding Commission on the Agenda item 49 related to the United Nations reform, namely the progress achieved in the work of the Peacebuilding Commission.

The holding of this session by the General Assembly is of great political importance and symbolism; indeed, the decision on the establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission was taken by the 2005 Heads of States Summit in this very Conference Hall. This is also the case for the subsequent adoption of the Founding Resolution on December, 20 of the same year. The General Assembly was also the framework in which the difficult but rich negotiations on the United Nations reform which led to the establishment of this new body took place.

This preliminary debate exercise which precedes the submission in June of the report of the PBC to the General Assembly constitutes also an expression of the reiterated interest of the general membership of our organization in the state of affairs in the Peacebuilding Commission since its launching.

This interest of the general membership in the work of the Peacebuilding Commission, as demonstrated by the number and quality of participation in the open debate held by the Security Council last week, equally represents a mark of political will of the member States aimed at finding ways of moving faster in order to meet the high expectations on the ground, particularly in the countries emerging from conflict.

The decision by the international community to establish the PBC brought a new ray of hope to millions of people trapped in post-conflict situations. However, bright ideas won't be enough if they are not followed by concrete actions; I therefore hope that our debates both at the Security Council and today here at the General Assembly, can serve as a catalyst for the achievement of concrete results on the ground, the acceleration of the clarification of procedural outstanding issues in the PBC, and most importantly, the achievement of the PBC main purpose provided for by the 2005 Outcome document, namely, bringing together all relevant actors to marshal resources and to advise on and propose integrated strategies for post-conflict peacebuilding and recovery.

In this connection, the General Assembly can play a very important role by rallying its entire membership towards achieving the shared aim of realizing the possible outcome of a common strategy, capable of mobilizing the resources needed for post conflict reconstruction in the country on the PBC agenda.

Madame President,

I am confident that in your personal capacity as President of the General Assembly, you have the moral and political authority to appeal to the international community for a positive response towards meeting the pressing demand for contributions to the Peacebuilding Fund. Indeed, a more satisfactory response to the PBF by the international community could determine the difference between success or failure in peacebuilding.

Madame President,

While speaking at the Security Council last week, I stated that the PBC is a body to which the member States dedicated much valuable time to establish. I also stressed that this body will only perform in accordance with the means you and the international community will put at its disposal, in order to meet the high expectations of the populations from the countries emerging from conflict.

Moreover, I described peacebuilding as a complex by nature and long term process requiring an equally persistent and long commitment by all. It is consequently an ambitious project which needs adequate means. Meanwhile, it has been generally observed that the Peacebuilding Commission experienced a very modest start if we take into account, among other factors, the then agreed requirement that a small Peacebuilding Support Office be established within the existing resources, while many member States equally believed that it was important to give the Office and the Commission the ability to function from the very beginning.

As we proceed, we measure the magnitude of the tasks before the Peacebuilding Commission and the need for suitable means; I am convinced that, taking into account its responsibilities, the General Assembly will play an important role in the assessment of the ambitious tasks required means of this new body at the appropriate time, including on the occasion of the discussion of its first report to be submitted in June.

Madame President,

We are at a turning point of laying the foundation for this new project; After holding two country specific meetings and a briefing on the countries under consideration in the Peacebuilding Commission, as well as the launching of a working group on post conflict lessons learned and the ongoing staffing of the Peacebuilding Support Office, the Peacebuilding Commission has paved the way for the next decisive step and for the formation of strategies which fully take into account the interests of the peoples and governments of Burundi and Sierra Leone. I believe the fundamental principle of national ownership is being safeguarded.

The elaboration of a Country specific Plan of Action as well as a Programme of Action of the Organizational Committee, will allow the Commission to serve better the interests of the countries under consideration, including through field visits, while efforts are underway to provide needed and timely information on a regular basis to the Member States and the international Community on the activities of the Commission.

Madame President,

As it has been frequently referred, rebuilding societies after conflict is much more complex and difficult than putting an end to fighting. Solutions cannot be imported; peace has to be built by the people affected. But, they cannot do it alone. The international community can and must help them to consolidate peace and overcome the legacies of war. If this does not happen, local conflicts will resume, threatening to destabilize larger regions, undermining development and hope for a brighter future. We have just started this process to revert this trend and succeed in Burundi and Sierra Leone. It is only then we will be able to give hope to those living in post conflict situations expecting an equal contribution from the Peacebuilding Commission thus fostering its credibility.

The Peacebuilding Commission can also fully benefit from its nature and composition, as well as from the experience accumulated by the General Assembly, the Security Council, the ECOSOC and other bodies can succeed or fail depending on the commitment which I am sure this debate in the General Assembly will help to galvanize.

I thank you.

