

Mr. Yoshikawa (Japan):

I would like to begin by expressing my sincere appreciation for Angola's leadership, as Chair of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, in consolidating peace and security in the region. I also thank the Secretary General and the guest speakers for their briefings.

Today, I wish to focus on one crucial issue — the importance of preventing lapses and relapses into conflict. According to the World Development Report 2011, 57 per cent of all countries that experienced civil war between 1945 and 2009 returned to conflict. Unfortunately, that is the case in the Great Lakes region. The people of the region have been suffering from instability for too long. In that regard, let me share with the Council the outcomes of the Peacebuilding Commission's Working Group on Lessons Learned.

As Chair of the Group until last year, I led discussions on the challenges faced by post-conflict countries during and after United Nations mission drawdown. From that exercise, we drew two lessons. The first is that there is a need for the sustained attention of the international community to mitigating political and financial gaps resulting from United Nations mission drawdowns. The second is that there is a need for countries in transition to build national institutional capacities to achieve lasting peace. The question is how to translate these lessons learned into practice in postconflict settings to prevent relapses.

The United Nations has various tools for funding. In addition to the funds and programmes of the United Nations, we have the Peacebuilding Fund and the United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security at our disposal. Let us make good use of them. These funds carry out great work. Let me cite some examples. In Burundi, the Peacebuilding Fund recently supported a group of 512 female community mediators in addressing more than 5,000 local disputes. These female mediators are helping to reduce tension within communities and also between communities and security forces. The United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security supported the empowerment of conflict-affected communities in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. That project supported the restoration of livelihoods and agriculture, benefitting returnees, internally displaced persons and members of host communities. It also provided access to improved social services and local infrastructure. Both funds contribute to empowering people in fragile situations and to enhancing social resilience against relapse into conflict.

Countries in transition can also make use of United Nations and bilateral donor partnerships to consolidate peace. Let me elaborate on the actions Japan has taken in partnership with the United Nations focusing on the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The first example is an institution-building programme. For 12 years Japan has provided training for more than 20,000 of the country's total of 100,000 police officers, in collaboration with police forces of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. This means that one of every five police officers in that country has been trained by Japan. We have also undertaken the training of trainers to strengthen the Democratic Republic of the Congo's training capacities. Given that most of that country's officers, unfortunately, start working without any training, we believe the programme has greatly contributed to enhancing the capacity of the police force of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The second example is a project for the reintegration of children formerly associated with armed groups into an education system in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. Children are mixed discreetly with other children in schools in order to avoid prejudice. This project provides support not only to the children, but also to the entire community so that children can go to school. For example, parents are given support to sustain their own livelihood. It is important that children are not relied upon as a source of labour. Also, a professional training centre for youth

employment has been built. This is an ongoing project carried out in collaboration with the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, UN-Women, the World Food Programme, the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Children's Fund. We look forward to its successful outcome.

Japan wishes to hold an open debate on the theme of peacebuilding in Africa during our Council presidency in the month of July. We would like to fully utilize today's very timely discussion in preparation for our open debate in July.

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