

Security Council Open Debate on Peacebuilding in the Aftermath of Conflict
Wednesday, October 13, 2010

Statement by H.E. Thomas Mayr-Harting, Permanent Representative of Austria to the United Nations

My delegation is grateful to Uganda for having organized this debate, as it gives us an opportunity to continue our discussions on the latest two reports on peacebuilding, and also grateful to the Secretary-General for presenting them today. Austria warmly welcomes both reports and looks forward to the United Nations System's continued and coherent engagement to implementing the Agenda for Action, as well as the new Action Plan^[p1] laid out in the report on the role of Women in Peacebuilding. I would also like to welcome the Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission, Ambassador Wittig and thank him for his presentation and for his leadership of the Commission.

Austria associates herself with the statement to be delivered by the European Union later in this meeting.

The Secretary-General's follow-up report on peacebuilding in the immediate aftermath of conflict rightly points out that despite important progress made by the United Nations and its partners in the area of peacebuilding, the main challenges remain. We welcome his efforts to enhance effective leadership, both at Headquarters and in the field, as well as those aimed at improved planning and strategy development. Enhanced coordination must also take place outside of the UN system in order to avoid duplication and to ensure efficiency of peacebuilding efforts. We appreciate efforts to intensify cooperation with regional and sub-regional organisations, such as the EU and the AU, as well as the International Financial Institutions. It is essential to make maximum use of partners with a comparative advantage on the ground.

Austria has repeatedly stressed the importance of national ownership of peacebuilding processes. In order to promote national leadership and ensure the sustainability of progress, all peacebuilding efforts need to draw upon existing national capacities to the greatest extent possible. We therefore welcome efforts to assess existing capacities as a basis for the deployment of international civilian expertise. The ongoing review of civilian capacity will contribute to ensuring that civilian expertise for peacebuilding is deployed in an efficient and timely manner and that specialized skills to address women's needs are included.

Decisive action aiming at durable peace and long-term sustainable development must be undertaken from the earliest stage onwards and go hand in hand with the possible deployment of integrated peacekeeping missions. This is a point the Security Council has repeatedly discussed during the past years. Restoring the rule of law and ensuring respect for human rights, providing for effective disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration of former combatants, security sector reform and the return and reintegration of refugees and IDPs must be key priorities in the immediate aftermath of a conflict. This must be complemented by the reform and re-establishment of effective and independent justice institutions and reconciliation mechanisms.

A coordinated and coherent approach is needed in order to ensure women's full participation in all peacebuilding efforts. The relative absence of women from peace negotiations and post-conflict planning processes has recently been demonstrated by concrete figures in a UNIFEM study: Women rarely assume core government functions, they are not able to ensure their issues are addressed in peace accords and peace processes, and they are not in a position to ensure prioritisation of their needs in planning processes or adequate financial allocations to address them. This problem needs to be addressed by the Council and the UN system in a more consistent manner.

Austria therefore fully supports the SG's Action Plan for Gender-Responsive Peacebuilding with its seven commitments and calls upon the Secretariat and other relevant bodies and agencies to translate these commitments into concrete programs, ensuring that the peacebuilding priorities, as identified by the SG in his 2009 report, are met in a gender-responsive way to ensure women's full participation.

Austria highly welcomes the crucial role of the PBC in addressing a country's post-conflict needs and in promoting and ensuring women's participation in all peacebuilding efforts, as outlined in the report by the SG. We would like to underline the necessity for the Council to involve the PBC and make use of its advice from the very outset. This is clearly an area where an improvement is possible. By promoting a coherent and

integrated approach highlighting the principles of national ownership and regional cooperation, the PBC provides valuable support for long-term democratic consolidation and sustained economic development. The fact that Liberia has recently been put on the agenda of the PBC proves that the PBC's engagement continues to be perceived as providing substantial advantages and benefits to post-conflict countries. We welcome the Report of the three co-facilitators on the Review of the Commission, its thorough analysis of the strengths and weaknesses and the broad range of recommendations made therein; and it will be good to hear all three facilitators in the course of today's debate. Austria looks forward to the consideration of the report by the GA and the SC and to the adoption of a Resolution in due course in order for the SG and all other relevant actors to set the implementation of the recommendations in motion.

Furthermore, we are looking forward to regular updates by the SG on efforts to ensure women's full participation in peacebuilding. The indicators to measure progress in the implementation of Res. 1325 constitute a useful tool to track progress in this regard.

Finally, Mr. President, I would like to thank you and your delegation for preparing the Presidential Statement adopted today.