

Security Council Open Debate on Post-Conflict Peacebuilding: Institution Building
21st January 2011, Security Council Chamber (GA-TSC-01)

Statement by Mr. Rahman, Permanent Representative of Bangladesh to the United Nations

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) in our capacity as NAM coordinator in the Peacebuilding Commission.

Let me begin by thanking you, Mr. President, for organizing this important debate on the issue of institution-building in the context of peacebuilding in post-conflict countries. We also thank the Secretary-General, the Deputy Prime Minister of Timor-Leste and the Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission for their respective statements delivered this morning.

This debate is a very timely initiative, as it is taking place as the review of the peacebuilding architecture has just been concluded and the review of international civilian capacity is in its final stage. We believe that this debate will add important value to all relevant processes in further streamlining peacebuilding activities and bringing about sustainable peace in post-conflict countries.

While we recognize that each and every postconflict situation is unique, our experience is that there are some commonalities across all conflict or postconflict situations. They negatively impact the regular work of a society by causing damage to physical, psychological and social structures. They shatter institutions, take a toll on human lives, break social bonds and hinder regular activities. The institutional and other capacities previously created in society or embedded in the bond of social dynamics are either broken or remain dormant, and are not readily available to steer the peace process or to make it sustainable.

Therefore, the onus is on us, the international community, to work towards the achievement of sustainable peace by enabling national actors to rebuild their institutions, revitalize their economies and rejuvenate their peaceful lives. This process entails ensuring national ownership in all peacebuilding activities, including institutional capacity-building.

Sustainable peace can be achieved only when the process is shared and owned by those ultimately benefiting from the peace dividends. It is national actors who clearly understand the inherent values and normative priorities of their particular society. Given the diversity in post-conflict situations, the international community, in consultation with the relevant stakeholders, needs to find commonalities among national protagonists to advance their common development agenda. This requires broader political will within the international community and at least a minimal willingness on the part of the different factions in the post-conflict countries.

International support in such dynamic and evolving situations is to be based on broad political willingness and adequate and predictable resources. Efforts skewed towards unduly benefiting one group at the expense of others are likely to exacerbate a situation, igniting the causes of conflict. Active participation by members of civil society and by local and traditional authorities, including marginalized groups, may ease the situation and contribute significantly to ensuring national ownership for achieving peacebuilding goals through a common vision of national development. The full and effective participation of women can further strengthen the process.

We agree with the concept paper (S/2011/16, annex) that building institutional capacity in a postconflict country is a difficult task. However, it is not impossible. It requires coordinated efforts, constructive willingness, appropriate needs assessment and defining norms and standards. The volatile post-conflict environment is largely defined by a lack of vital resources, including physical infrastructure, human and financial capital and appropriate social bonds. While some of that stems from a lack of adequate confidence, mostly it has to do with insufficient financial resources, technical expertise and institutional skills. No supply-driven approach will suffice. On the other hand, a demand-pull approach coupled with national training and exchange programmes may help. In addition, the provision of adequate and timely resources is indispensable. In that context, the Movement believes that the following points must be kept in mind while planning and conducting postconflict institution-building activities.

First, any activity relating to peacebuilding in a post-conflict country must be based on the principle of national ownership. In that regard, institution-building activities should also encompass national priorities, taking into account the reality and necessities of the people who are the potential clients of the initiative.

Second, effective partnership must be forged among all Member States so that the varying capacities among them can complement each other and strengthen post-conflict institution-building efforts.

Third, gender mainstreaming and the role of women in post-conflict peacebuilding cannot be overemphasized. The institution-building process and its outcome should ensure gender perspectives as appropriate. While crafting such

norms and standards, sufficient attention must be given to ensuring that the concerns of women in the host country are adequately taken into account so as to empower them to effectively participate in the post-conflict country's economic, political, social and security-related activities.

Four, organizational coordination must be addressed. Without prejudice to the functions and powers of the other principal organs of the United Nations, the General Assembly must play the key role in the formulation and implementation of institutionbuilding activities. In this context, the Peacebuilding Commission should play a central role in providing policy guidance and strategies in conducting institution-building activities.

Five, there has to be cooperation among the different United Nations organs. Post-conflict peacebuilding activities should be conducted through intense and effective consultations among the main organs of the United Nations, while duly emphasizing their respective areas of competence.

Six, the role of peacekeepers and early peacebuilding activities need to be properly recognized. In that regard, the significant role of peacekeepers will further strengthen early peacebuilding activities. Furthermore, these activities need to be identified by the United Nations peacebuilding architecture in cooperation with the national Government, including the views of troopcontributing countries in relevant areas.

Seven, with regard to South-South cooperation, countries of the South have similar socio-economic experiences that need to be utilized in the process. In addition, the diverse capacities and skills in the South can be replicated suitably in the form of lessons learned and the development achieved from previous experience in nation-building.

Last but not least, efforts must also include a mechanism for including North-South and triangular cooperation. That would renew the strength of partnerships and complement South-South cooperation.

In conclusion, the Movement believes that the building of institutions in post-conflict countries must be based on a fair appreciation of the circumstances of justice and on the prevailing social situation for which the norms and standards are being postulated. They should reflect a collective thought process premised on the needs and concerns of the people who will ultimately uphold the institutions.

As a supporting partner, the international community must advance its capacities through institutional, technical, financial, human and other assistance in which it has the capacity to do so. The process must forge the effective participation of all stakeholders, including women, civil society and marginalized groups, so as to address the root causes of conflicts.