

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

Statement by Mrs. Maria Luíza Ribeiro Viotti, Permanent Representative of Brazil to the United Nations

I thank you, Mr. President, for convening this timely open debate. I also take this opportunity to thank the Secretary-General for an excellent presentation. I welcome Deputy Prime Minister of Timor-Leste Mr. José Luís Guterres, and congratulate him on the important strides that his country has made in recent years. We very much appreciate his thoughtful comments on State-building, based on Timor-Leste's own very successful experience. I also thank Ambassador Peter Wittig for his important remarks on peacebuilding.

Brazil aligns itself with the statement to be made by Ambassador Jan Grauls on behalf of the five Chairs of the Peacebuilding Commission country-specific configurations. I will now make brief remarks in my national capacity.

The strengthening of Government institutions is key to achieving sustainable peace in post-conflict countries. In several parts of the world, the fragility or the lack of institutions makes it difficult to solve or mitigate serious political, social or economic problems, thus increasing the risk of relapse into conflict. We are encouraged to note that a consensus has evolved on the need for a comprehensive approach to peacebuilding and institution-building.

The efforts of the international community should be focused not only on supporting institutions in the field of justice and security, as it is also important to enhance the capacity of the institutions in charge of economic revitalization, public administration and the provision of basic services. Those institutions are indispensable to promoting poverty reduction, which is a powerful tool for addressing some of the root causes of social strife and building long-lasting peace. Likewise, social policies have a positive impact on the political process, since they empower groups that were once excluded from making decisions to do so at both the local and the national levels. The contribution of women must be continuously emphasized, taking into account two dimensions: on the one hand, their presence in Government institutions and, on the other, the existence of institutions and governmental bodies capable of ensuring their fundamental rights and needs.

That is one reason why institution-building must start at the earliest stage of the post-conflict period. There are a number of ways in which the United Nations system can and does assist societies emerging from conflict in that regard. The development arm of the Organization, the centrepiece of which is the United Nations Development Programme, is indeed expected to have assistance in institution-building as one of its main tasks.

Nevertheless, that endeavour is to be undertaken by all parts of the United Nations system, according to their respective responsibilities. In that regard, it is encouraging to see the growing recognition of the need to resort to peacekeepers as early peacebuilders. We seem to be finally discarding the traditional approach, by which peacekeeping and peacebuilding were sequential and unrelated stages in the path towards peace.

Assistance in institution-building is also a task to be undertaken in coordination with international financial institutions and regional and subregional organizations, whose valuable experience and expertise can provide assistance tailored to the specific needs of post-conflict countries.

As has been stressed by previous speakers, national ownership is vital to peacebuilding processes. International support to building and strengthening institutions must be fully aligned with the interests of the countries concerned. That is particularly relevant to the United Nations in those places where United Nations missions are deployed.

That is why one guiding principle for proper assistance with regard to civilian capacities should be to tap into and help build national capacities, thus avoiding the damaging consequences of brain drain and dependency on foreign expertise. Partnerships with Member States, in particular South-South cooperation, are particularly important to achieving that goal. We are confident that the current review of international civilian capacities will submit concrete recommendations to ensure that that principle is translated into practical arrangements.

Finally, as Chair of the Guinea-Bissau configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission, Brazil is committed to promoting national ownership, nurturing national capacities, and assisting in the consolidation of national institutions as we move forward in helping Guinea-Bissau to consolidate peace and promote its development.