

Security Council Open Debate on the Maintenance of International Peace and Security: War, its lessons, and the search for a permanent peace, 29th January 2014, Security Council Chamber

Statement by Mr. Errázuriz, Permanent Mission of Chile to the United Nations

I should like to thank the delegation of Jordan for having convened this open debate and for having drafted the concept note (S/2014/30, annex). I should also like to thank the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Mr. Jeffrey Feltman, for his briefing.

We will approach this statement not from the point of view of crisis management but, rather, from that of the preventive function that this principal organ of the United Nations is called upon to play pursuant to the Charter of the United Nations.

My country is convinced that the best approach in terms of protecting the civilian population and for an efficient use of resources is the exercise of an active preventive diplomacy, understood in the terms expressed in the unique document entitled “An agenda for peace”. That means using the instruments that the Security Council has at its disposal to take “action to prevent disputes from arising between parties, to prevent existing disputes from escalating into conflicts and to limit the spread of the latter when they occur” (S/24111, para. 20), without forgetting that, in all cases, conflict prevention is a crucial responsibility of Member States.

A prevention strategy includes a commitment to the strengthening of the rule of law, respect for international law and for existing treaties, and the recourse to peaceful means for the settlement of disputes, with democratic institutions and practices that respect human rights, all of which, in the final analysis, would make it possible to establish a climate conducive to achieving greater levels of development and social justice.

In that context, we underscore that it would be useful to strengthen early warning systems and the role that regional and subregional organizations can play in conflict prevention, in accordance with Chapter VIII of the Charter. Through their geographical and cultural proximity, as well as their better understanding of the causes of the conflicts and the sensitivities of the various parties, such organizations can make a valuable contribution to such endeavours. Developing effective partnerships between the United Nations and regional and subregional organization is therefore crucial.

Furthermore, the role of civil society organizations in identifying early signs of violence and the capacity of such organizations to provide warning of dangerous situations to national and international authorities are crucial. We emphasize in particular the contribution and role that women must play in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in peacebuilding. We stress the importance of their equal participation in such processes and the importance of seeking to ensure and increase their representation in all levels of decision-making, in keeping with provision of resolution 1325 (2000).

The sort of preventive diplomacy proposed would avoid the fracturing of societies and the recurrence of conflict. Prevention strategies must include reconciliation processes in societies emerging from conflict. That is an issue at the heart of the Jordanian initiative in holding this debate. It was precisely “Post-conflict national reconciliation: role of the United Nations” that my country chose as a theme during its presidency of the Security Council in January 2004, under which the presidential statement cited by the Permanent Representative of Jordan (S/PRST/2004/2) was adopted.

We view reconciliation as both a goal — something to be achieved — and a process — a way of achieving that goal. We see it, therefore, as playing a preventive role, whereby, recognizing divisions, we can anticipate and avoid potential conflicts. On the other hand, with regard to existing conflicts, it would allow for the rapprochement of opposing parties. The process of reconciliation is far-reaching, deep, specific and differentiated and must necessarily be inclusive. Only in that manner can we address the root causes of the divisions and prejudices that exist. It also is a process that will be different for each society and can not be imposed from the outside, and it is one in which the role of the United Nations should be one of assistance, facilitation and support.

Reconciliation is not and should not, be a substitute for justice or accountability. Indeed, in order to be effective, reconciliation must be based on truth, justice and reparation. Recent United Nations instruments, such as the Updated Set of Principles for the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights through Action to Combat Impunity (E/CN.4/2005/102/Add.1) of the Economic and Social Council or, even more recently, resolution 68/165 of the General Assembly, entitled “Right to the truth”, recognize the importance of respecting and upholding those rights in order to end impunity and promote and protect human rights.

In that context, we recall the reference to transitional justice made by the Special Rapporteur on the promotion of truth, justice, reparation and guarantees of non-recurrence, which is to be understood not as a special kind of justice, but as a strategy precisely for realizing the right to justice, truth, reparation and non-recurrence.

The President of the Republic of Chile recently recalled before the General Assembly at its present session that, last September, our country “marked the fortieth anniversary of the most far-reaching and lasting upheaval ever to affect our democracy” and “the twenty-fifth anniversary of the start of the peaceful recovery of our democracy” (A/68/PV.5, p. 25). On that occasion, President Piñera Echeñique enumerated a number of lessons learned. The first is that no conflict, whether external or internal, ever justifies violence as a means of political action or the abuse of human rights. Secondly, democracy, peace and civic friendship are much more fragile values than we tend to believe, meaning we should never take them for granted. Thirdly, there is a very close relationship between the quality of democracy, economic progress and social justice, as they nourish one another and are mutually reinforcing. And fourthly, we must learn from our experiences so as to avoid repeating mistakes.

To establish the truth about what happened in my country, investigatory bodies and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission were established, with the task of investigating history and determining what had occurred, making recommendations, and suggesting modalities for reparations and for prevention. The legal instrument that established the Commission recognized that “... only on the basis of the truth will it be possible to meet the basic demands of justice and create the necessary conditions for achieving genuine national reconciliation ... Only by knowing the truth can the dignity of victims be restored in the public consciousness and bereaved families be allowed the possibility of honouring them properly ...” Of equal importance is the need to recognize their suffering, so that such suffering never recurs.

Allow me, Mr. President, to refer to the 2012 report of the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the promotion of truth, justice, reparation and guarantees of non-recurrence, who stated that, since 2000, prosecutions have been initiated or completed with regard to 76 per cent of victims of disappearances and executions in Chile (A/67/368). My country continues working today, in its process of reconciliation, and we stand ready to share our experiences with those members of the international community who deem them useful.

I conclude by calling on the Security Council to support the following specific actions: strengthen preventive diplomacy initiatives and early warning systems, so that they can send appropriate alarm

signals and react in a timely and effective way; promote the strengthening of mechanisms for the peaceful settlement of disputes and systems of human rights protection, at the international, regional and subregional levels; strengthen the activities of the subsidiary bodies of the Security Council and the Peacebuilding Commission, so that the assistance that they provide to Governments in post-conflict countries incorporates truth and reconciliation as a main axis of their work; and strengthen the mandates of peacekeeping operations elements that support post-conflict political processes.