

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

Statement by H.E. Mr. Ranko Vilić, Permanent Representative of Croatia to the United Nations

First of all, let me thank you, Madam, and your team for successfully conducting the Council's work during this month. At the same time, we would like to commend Bosnia and Herzegovina for selecting this important topic as the subject for this open debate. We are confident that, based on Bosnia and Herzegovina's wide experience in this field, the Council will have a successful debate and achieve mutual understanding on this important subject.

My delegation has aligned itself with and fully supports the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union. However, allow me to take part in this exceptionally relevant and timely debate by adding a few short comments in my national capacity.

One of the main purposes of every functioning State should be the prompt, efficient and sustainable delivery of core services to its citizens. Armed conflict annihilates not only this basic function of the State but, unfortunately, much more precious assets as well: human lives, health and dignity. It is thus only natural that post-conflict recovery start with emergency relief and humanitarian assistance. At the same time, it would be reasonable, if not necessary, to include in this process, from its very beginning, appropriate investment towards the recovery of the social network, on which everyday life depends. Genuine and sustainable peace can be achieved only through thorough rebuilding of core national institutions and their functions, as well as their employment on behalf of all social, religious and ethnic groups.

As we have heard time and again today, national ownership is the key tenet from which all peacebuilding efforts should start, and to which they should ultimately return. Thus reliance on and strengthening of local capacities, no matter how scarce, are fundamental preconditions for successful peacebuilding. Such an approach introduces a unique perspective otherwise not available to outsiders, consolidates necessary national governing structures and policies and paves the way for greater acceptance of a peacebuilding mission by the local population. It strengthens the hope that a peacebuilding dividend will be distributed among the local population and that peacebuilding efforts will survive long after the first appearance of signs of possible and expected donor fatigue.

In this context, Croatia is following with great interest what we hope will become a new and widespread practice of incorporating all peacebuilding efforts into a single national strategy instrument that encompasses all relevant peacebuilding programmes and activities. At the same time, Croatia believes that, on the other side of the equation, the international community, the United Nations and its agencies and all other stakeholders should attentively follow suit by unifying their actions under a proclaimed agenda, clearly dividing their roles and responsibilities and ensuring appropriate coherence and coordination in order to deliver as one.

From the very beginning, Croatia has strongly supported the establishment of the Senior Advisory Group tasked to undertake a review of international civilian capacity in order to strengthen the availability, deployability, coherence and appropriateness of civilian capacities based on an assessment of existing capacities. We very much look forward to the upcoming report on this issue.

We all agree that timely, flexible and predictable funding plays a crucial role in any peacebuilding effort. In that context, Croatia looks forward to further strengthening of a strategic partnership between the United Nations and the World Bank. We await with special interest the Bank's 2011 World Development Report on the theme "Conflict, security and development".

Croatia is heartened to see that broad cross- regional support for stronger peacebuilding is steadily increasing, encompassing Governments, international organizations and civil society. In that context, my country sees particular importance in further support to, and strengthening of, often feeble but steadily growing civil societies in countries that have recently emerged from conflict. Very often, civil society is precisely the necessary link between relevant international stakeholders and the strategy endorsed by the local population that requires activation in order for peacebuilding efforts to fully bear fruit.

Croatia recognizes and supports the Council's intention to further strengthen coherence among peacemaking, peacekeeping and peacebuilding efforts in its work. In that regard, we particularly welcome the Council's practice of transforming some former peacekeeping missions into integrated peacebuilding missions. This practice perfectly fits the mandates and activities of other stakeholders in charge of peacebuilding, especially the Peacebuilding Commission, and opens the door for their further fruitful cooperation. In that context, let me add our hope that the Peacebuilding Commission's relevant knowledge and experience with respect to specific issues of countries on the agendas of both the Security Council and the Peacebuilding Commission will find a path to the Council's deliberations.

Croatia welcomes the Secretary-General's detailed overview of the progress achieved in implementing his agenda for action set out in his progress report on peacebuilding in the immediate aftermath of conflict (S/2010/386), which was recently presented to the Council (see S/PV.6396), and particularly the recommendations contained therein. We equally fully support the Secretary-General's report on women's participation in peace-building (S/2010/466) and his strategic seven-point action plan introducing necessary practical suggestions for more active engagement by women in peacebuilding processes. In that regard, we offer our support to the ongoing efforts aimed at mobilizing resources for initiatives that address women's peacebuilding needs, advance gender equality and empower women in peacebuilding contexts.

Finally, let me express once again our appreciation for the excellent report on the review of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture (S/2010/393, annex), which was presented recently by the three co-facilitators and adds substantially to our comprehension of the complex issue of peacebuilding, opens new avenues for its further exploration and offers many valuable recommendations.

In conclusion, I would like to express our conviction that the new momentum witnessed in the field of peacebuilding, as well as the many valuable proposals and recommendations that have resulted from the regular and periodic reviews of peacebuilding activities, will not be wasted but will soon lead to new synergy between all relevant actors and yield eagerly awaited results.