

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

Statement by H.E. Mr. Gérard Araud, Permanent Representative of France to the United Nations

I thank you, Mr. President, for convening this debate. France endorses the statement to be delivered by the representative of the European Union.

I think that everyone around this table is in broad agreement regarding the need to improve the effectiveness of the means by which the international community takes action to prevent a country recently emerged from conflict from relapsing into a crisis. I believe there is also consensus on the fact that this is a long-term and difficult endeavour. It is difficult because it requires that institutions with very different practices and traditions, and that clearly cherish their autonomy, work together. It is also difficult because we must simultaneously conduct a set of very different tasks — from the disarmament of armed groups to the strengthening of State institutions — and because one cannot employ a sequential approach. As we have already heard in this Chamber, we have to simultaneously conduct peacekeeping and lay the groundwork for peacebuilding. Lastly, it is difficult because we must better assess the risks associated with new threats, such as drug and human trafficking, organized crime and even corruption, which have great potential to destabilize fragile countries.

In this respect, I believe that there is no more telling example of what we are discussing here than the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. I am not the first to cite this example. We know that we cannot indefinitely remain in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, but that we can withdraw the United Nations forces only if we leave behind State institutions that are sufficiently sound to ensure the development and stability of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We will do so, of course, alongside the Congolese authorities.

These reconstruction tasks are tremendous. Moreover, we might well ask ourselves whether the area is really in a post-conflict situation. It is therefore essential that a responsible relationship be established between the authorities of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the actors of the international community as a whole. The United Nations have drafted a state reconstruction plan for Kivu — the stabilization and reconstruction plan for areas emerging from armed conflict — and we must ensure that all the international institutions, in particular the European Union, which is the leading donor to and backer of countries emerging from crisis, work together towards the same goal. There is a need for synergy. Given the gravity of the crisis from which the Democratic Republic of the Congo has only recently emerged, it is the primary challenge for our Organization.

We have examples of relative success. Sierra Leone was raised as an example by my British colleague, but we also have the positive experiences of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in the Central African Republic and the United Nations Integrated Office in Burundi. We must learn from these experiences insofar as they guarantee a political dialogue with the authorities of the host country and close coordination in the reconstruction efforts led by various United Nations agencies.

The withdrawal strategy for these offices should be carefully prepared — because these situations are looming already and will continue to be an issue — in order to avoid opening new gaps or the re-emergence of tensions due to a lack of resources or attention from the international community. There is no one-size-fits-all solution. Each problem must be considered on a case-by-case basis by the international community.

We are closely following the work of the Senior Advisory Group for the Review of International Civilian Capacities, led by Mr. Jean-Marie Guéhenno. This matter was raised by Mr. Peter Wittig and the Ambassador of Austria. We are awaiting bold recommendations to better meet the real needs of post-conflict countries and the competencies available at the international level from other Member States and our system as a whole.

To work towards peacebuilding as soon as an armed conflict has ended is to pay due attention to the contribution of women as a key aspect of peacebuilding. How could we imagine setting aside half of a society that is trying to rebuild itself? Leaving women out would undoubtedly pave the way for future disasters. That is why we believe that women must have access to decision-making in the political, economic, social and cultural arenas in a more systematic manner and on an equal footing with men. In this regard, we fully support the

work of the Secretary-General and we invite the United Nations system — and above all UN Women and its Executive Director, Ms. Bachelet — to implement it.

We have been discussing this matter for a long time. It is a complex task, but we have unfortunate examples in Timor-Leste and Haiti demonstrating that, without integrating the peacebuilding stage into the very design and implementation of peacekeeping operations, we will fail. We must therefore continue to improve the resources at our disposal. That is why, Sir, I thank you once again for organizing this debate.