

Security Council Open Debate on Post-Conflict Peacebuilding: Institution Building
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Statement by Mr. Nawaf Salam, Permanent Representative of Lebanon to the United Nations

Allow me first to thank you, Mr. President, for organizing this important and timely debate. Allow me also to thank Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, Ambassador Peter Wittig and the Deputy Prime Minister of Timor-Leste, Mr. José Luís Guterres, for their briefings and presentations.

It is well known that conflict weakens institutions and affects State capabilities. In the post-conflict phase, the scale of required institution-building varies from one country to another. It depends largely on the degree of institutionalization existing prior to the eruption of conflict, as it is easier to resuscitate institutional memory than to establish it from scratch. However, peacebuilding is not only about rebuilding what existed before the outbreak of violence. Actually, it may be the case that existing structures are part of the root causes of the conflict. Therefore, the goal of any peacebuilding operation must be to establish stable and accountable institutions that are able to provide good governance.

In that context, institution-building should be understood and pursued in its wider sense, not only to encompass organizational reforms, but also to instill a value system that would promote the peaceful settlement of disputes over the long term. The early engagement of civil society is also important, as it can help to promote a culture of greater transparency, accountability and the active participation of the population in defining its actual needs.

Institution-building is both a goal and a means to an end in complex peacebuilding processes. It should be integrated, along with other peacebuilding goals, into a national peacebuilding strategy serving as a framework that brings together peace, security and development. A successful peacebuilding strategy must strike a delicate balance between the need to quickly produce an impact and dividends on the ground, on the one hand, and to support long-term capacity-building, on the other, with the overarching goals of transforming the causes of the conflict and laying the foundations for justice and durable peace.

As others have already stressed, the greatest lesson to be learned from previous efforts at building institutions in conflict-ridden States is undoubtedly that there is no one-size-fits-all approach. Building functional institutions requires tailored approaches based on thorough analysis of the root causes and drivers of the conflict.

Institution-building should be nationally owned from the outset and involve leveraging existing capacities. Therefore, the United Nations and donors should seek out local initiatives, however nascent, and encourage them to grow. In addition to national ownership, equally important is the availability of sustained attention and financial resources for long-term tasks. There is often a gap between peacebuilding aims and the resources required in the long run, as funding tends to diminish precisely at the point when it is most needed. In this area, the Peacebuilding Commission could play a critical role in mobilizing additional resources to continue over a sustained period of time.

Post-conflict institution-building undoubtedly determines the shape and direction peace and stability will take. It is thus our responsibility to provide the necessary means for such an undertaking to succeed.