

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

Statement by H.E. Ambassador Philip Parham, Deputy Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom to the United Nations

We are very grateful for this opportunity to discuss the Secretary-General's reports on peacebuilding in the immediate aftermath of conflict, and women's participation in peacebuilding. I would like to thank the Secretary-General and the chair of the Peacebuilding Commission for their briefings today.

Over two and a half years have passed since the first peacebuilding report was commissioned. That report was commissioned as a result of concerns about the support provided by the international community, including particularly the UN, to countries emerging from conflict. Many of the issues that it identified were not new. But the process gave fresh impetus to the effort to resolve familiar problems of fragmentation, weak leadership, lack of strategy and sluggish deployment of civilian experts and finance.

The same is true for the women and peacebuilding report. Many of the issues in this good report are also not new. The problem has been delivery, not ignorance of the issues.

We have made progress over the last two years, but not enough. What we now need over the next two years is a shift from reflection and debate in New York to roll out and implementation on the ground.

To do that we propose a five point course of action.

First, we need to wrap-up outstanding programmes of reform.

These include finalising the civilian capacity review, clarifying roles and responsibilities, and putting in place new and creative ways to enhance the relationship between the UN and World Bank.

Second, we should learn lessons about what works from those reforms that have already been completed, notably on leadership, integrated planning and finance. We must ensure that these lessons are systematically fed into the planning and implementation of other missions. And here I would like to highlight the example of Sierra Leone, where good leadership and integration of effort has led to a real step change in the UN's support to the country.

Third, we need to focus on issues where there are persistent bottlenecks to sustainable peacebuilding. The UN system, working closely and more effectively with other international partners, should get better at helping a country unblock these bottlenecks. We have seen time and again that a lack of progress in a number of key areas – including particularly reforming the security sector and strengthening the rule of law, restoring other core government functions and revitalising the economy can hold back progress and risk a return to conflict.

Fourth, we need to see real progress on the ground in priority countries. For example, in Liberia, we want to see the transition of the UN's presence shortly after the elections. We see the Peacebuilding Commission [following its very helpful, recent review] having a critical role in preparing for this, by helping to extend and boost police capacity, so that the UN can handover responsibility for safety and security to the national authorities.

Another example is the Democratic Republic of Congo. This Council sent a strong signal earlier this year, in turning MONUC into MONUSCO, that the focus should increasingly be on stabilisation, with peacebuilding going hand in hand with robust peacekeeping. We cannot successfully address the root causes of the violence and insecurity that prevail in DRC without reforming the police and the army, and without real improvements in the capability of DRC's justice sector.

Fifth and finally, post-conflict peace building cannot be truly successful without ensuring that women are an equal part of the process. They need to be routinely involved in conflict resolution, post-conflict peacebuilding and governance in order to achieve sustainable peace. In this, the tenth anniversary year of 1325, we welcome the Secretary-General's report on women's participation in peacebuilding as an important step in that direction.

The challenges to effective women's participation in peacebuilding are significant, but this is all the more reason for unity of effort. The Secretary-General's report sets out a clear direction for the UN system, the international community and conflict-affected states to deliver a practical difference to women's involvement on the ground. And we consider that the newly established UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women – UN Women - will have an important role in driving this forward.

Thank you Mr. President.