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PEACEBUILDING COMMISSION

Statement by the

Chairman of the Peacebuilding Commission

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Working Group of the Whole

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Introduction

I wish to thank Ambassador Normandin for his invitation to brief the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations.

Like my predecessor, Ambassador Munoz of Chile, I find the informal briefing as an opportunity for the PBC Chair to engage the broader membership, the TCCs and the PCCs, as well as the Secretariat, on issues of mutual interest and of great importance to the future of the UN's response to post-conflict situations.

It also represents a very practical forum to engage the General Assembly on the interlinkages between peacekeeping and peacebuilding.

I recognize that there has been a great deal of interest generated around this topic within the general membership. I hope that our exchange today could situate this discussion in a broader framework of how the UN should strive towards more effective and coherent response in post-conflict situations.

The quest for sustainable peace: Linkage between Security and development

As we all are aware and hopefully convinced by now, the challenges facing the UN in the area of peace and security require a comprehensive and integrated response.

Two central questions occupied the debate within the UN, particularly over the past decade, namely:

(a) how to secure sustainable peace and prevent relapse into conflict? and

(b) how to protect the enormous investment made through the deployment of multidimensional peacekeeping operations?

In attempting to answer these questions, we recognized that sustainable peace and protecting the investments in UN peacekeeping operations require a new approach that links the security and economic aspects of peace.

The PBC was established as a dedicated mechanism to institutionalize this approach.

Peacekeeping: a tool to achieve sustainable peace

At the most recent SC debate on transition from and exit of peacekeeping operations, there was a great deal of convergence among members that peacekeeping is not and should not be an end in and of itself.

Peacekeeping is indeed a very important tool that the UN and the international community have been able to use to stabilize situations and

provide a conducive environment for implementing peace agreements and transition from conflict to normalcy.

The end objective, however, remained: sustaining peace, prevent relapse into conflict and lay the foundations for longer term development. The original vision behind the PBC is to help meet this end objective.

In fact, our enormous investment in peacekeeping will be best optimized by securing sustainable and long-term engagement by the UN and other regional and international actors, beyond the life of a peacekeeping mission.

Therefore, the linkage between peacekeeping and peacebuilding should not ideally be approached as an issue of reducing the mounting cost of peacekeeping operations.

We should rather take an approach aimed at protecting the enormous investments in peacekeeping by introducing an early perspective for a long term vision of the end objective for a peacekeeping mission.

Therefore, the discussion around peacebuilding components in peacekeeping missions is a practical manifestation of such an early perspective and is central to this long-term vision.

In other words, while peacekeepers are ideally early peacebuilders, they are not and should not be considered as long term peacebuilders. However, all early peacebuilding interventions must ultimately feed into an integrated peacebuilding process.

Partnerships: Peacekeeping with a long-term effect

To this end, UN peacekeeping operations need to take place within the framework of partnership with other relevant actors.

This partnership requires an early engagement of “peacebuilding” actors during the life of a peacekeeping mission.

A key challenge to building partnerships, is generating a common understanding of timing and sequencing among the many priorities in post-conflict situations. The prioritization needs to take place within the framework of a coherent and integrated strategy.

The SG’s report on peacebuilding in the immediate aftermath of conflict (released in July 2009) identified five peacebuilding priority areas in the immediate aftermath of conflict (these were also noted in the opening statement made by USG Le Roy to this Committee), namely:

- Support for basic safety and security
- Support for political process

- Support for the provision of basic services
- Support for restoring core government functions
- Support for economic revitalization.

Peacekeepers are considered major actors in the immediate aftermath of conflict by:

- a) creating an enabling environment for a peacebuilding process through support for basic safety and security and political process; and
- b) serving as a catalyst to set in motion activities that help lay the foundations for long-term stability, such as support for security-related stabilization activities such as SSR, rule of law, disarmament and demobilization and mine-action.
- c) contributing to the broader peacebuilding efforts and enabling other actors to undertake support for national capacity development in the areas of: provision of basic services, economic revitalization and restoring core government functions.

I trust that the strategy for critical peacebuilding tasks undertaken by peacekeepers, as announced by USG Le Roy in his statement to this Committee earlier this week, will help in highlighting how the second

among the aforementioned functions would be truly catalytic and contribute to the broader peacebuilding efforts.

The draw-down and withdrawal of peacekeeping missions should not be conceived as a signal of dissipating international attention and engagement. Instead, it should be seen as transition to longer term commitment on the path to sustainable development.

Potential role for the PBC

By being an inclusive and flexible platform of all relevant actors, the PBC offers a promise for such longer term commitment. The Commission offers advice to the General Assembly and the Security Council on approaches to secure coherent and integrated approach throughout the life of a peacekeeping mission.

The PBC could potentially play a critical advisory role in four broad areas, namely:

- Provision of early peacebuilding perspectives in the design and review of or transition from peacekeeping mandates.

- Identifying and promoting country-specific sustainability factors. This is particularly critical in jumpstarting early efforts for institution-building and

national capacity development in the areas of security, governance and economic generation.

- Catalyzing early partnerships with IFIs, regional and bilateral political and economic actors (such as donors)

- Benchmarking for and monitoring the progression from stabilization to transition and consolidation which is essential for a well informed exit strategy for peacekeeping operations.

Conclusion

As you are aware, the General Assembly and Security Council are leading a review process of the PBC. The process will be co-facilitated by the PRs of Ireland, Mexico and South Africa. I trust that the issues I attempted to highlight today will figure prominently during the discussion on the review and will, hopefully, also figure in its outcome.

I am also aware that this year will be critical in the review of UN peacekeeping operations. Therefore, we have a good opportunity in 2010 to strive towards increasing our knowledge and capacity to build and sustain peace beginning with more efficient and visionary peacekeeping.
