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Deputy Secretary-General's Remarks to the Second Annual Session of the Peacebuilding Commission [As delivered]

I thank our Chair and I thank the Peacebuilding Support Office for their leadership and for organizing this session, which focuses on a critical aspect of our work: “Predictable financing for peacebuilding.” In this regard, I am glad to see my friend, Donald Kaberuka of the African Development Bank, on the screen in front of you and joining us for this discussion.

The timing of the meeting coincides with the anniversary of the first meeting of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), which Member States mark as “Peacebuilding Day”. I am proud of having been PGA during and at the creation of the PBC in 2005. That afternoon of December 2005 I have not forgotten. At the same time, I am fully aware of the need to develop and strengthen this important body.

This year, the Member States are reviewing the institutional mechanisms which they established a decade ago to help countries transition from war to peace. Today, peacebuilding is at the core of UN activities in conflict-affected countries.

Still, we must concede that we need to be more effective in preventing the relapse into violence. And here, the lack of sufficient and predictable funding, as the chair just underlined, for critical peacebuilding priorities continues to hold back our efforts.

Next week, the Advisory Group of Experts of the Peacebuilding Architecture review, led by Ambassador Gert Rosenthal, is to present its report to the General Assembly and the Security Council. I hope that the Group’s recommendations will guide us towards higher predictability of financing, as well as addressing systemic challenges.

I also hope that the International Conference on Financing for Development in Addis next month will help generate commitments to the special needs of countries emerging from conflicts.

With this background, this session cannot be more timely and relevant.

I would like today to make four observations.

First, peacebuilding is underfinanced.

We do not know exactly how large the financing gap for peacebuilding is since there are no global estimates of peacebuilding needs. But there are clear indications that allocations to peacebuilding and to institution-building – which is closely related – in conflict-affected countries are grossly inadequate.

In a group of 31 conflict-affected countries, critical institution-building in the political, security and justice areas received less than 10 per cent of Official Development Assistance (ODA) during the period 2002-2013. For the six countries on the agenda of the Peacebuilding Commission, only 7 per cent of ODA was allocated to these areas.

There are also serious challenges within the United Nations regarding the financing of peacebuilding. As you are aware, the assessed budgets of missions mandated by the Security

Council do not include funds to strengthen national institutions in the political, security, human rights, public administration and rule of law areas.

This shortfall affects our ability to build and consolidate peace with short term and targeted support to national processes and plans.

Building institutions that form the backbone of sustainable peace can take a generation. This means that political, technical and financial resources need to be sustained over the long-term.

This is where both the Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Fund can play a key role.

The long-term character of institution-building and the difficulties in measuring peacebuilding results turn our task to advocate and defend the need for more funding for peacebuilding into a real challenge.

Yet, it is essential to spend more to prevent violent conflicts and invest in peacebuilding. We all know the costs of conflict. We must not be, if I may say so, “penny wise and pound foolish.”

This brings me to my second point: funding mechanisms among donors are fragmented.

Development, security, human rights and humanitarian activities are often funded from different budgets with separate decision-making processes. A few countries have addressed this issue, and they should be commended. But this remains a fundamental problem, which contributes, I dare say, to unpredictable donor engagement, inefficiencies and persistent underfunding of critical peacebuilding areas.

This fragmentation is also obvious, I admit, on the part of the United Nations, with insufficient coordination among various UN entities, competition for funds and lack of resources for strategic activities.

Global pooled funds, such as the Peacebuilding Fund, have played a positive role in breaking down the silos, incentivizing common analysis of needs, and promoting coherent approaches among Council-mandated missions and the UN Country Teams.

For example, in Central African Republic, the Peacebuilding Fund will help extend state authority by financing UNDP activities that are designed in collaboration with MINUSCA and synchronized with the World Bank. I also recall very vividly, at the moment when we really wanted to have people on the ground, eyes and ears on the ground, in the Central African Republic, the Peacebuilding Fund made it possible within a week or two to send and finance human rights monitors to the Central African Republic. A very crucial presence at a crucial time. This shows the flexibility and speed of action that the Peacebuilding Fund can show, and how important that is in certain situations.

My third point is that the fragmentation on the donor side is often mirrored on the recipient side.

Scattered activities, separate funds and a multitude of plans and strategies on the part of governments, the UN system and other actors on the ground do not contribute to coherence and a clear focus.

Here, we also have some good practices which can be replicated. For example, the Somalia Development and Reconstruction Facility brings together the international community and the Federal Government of Somalia in support of the Somali Compact. The Facility serves as a mechanism through which the Government can oversee and guide the activities of multiple international actors. It also pools funding under common governance arrangements involving the Government, the UN, the World Bank, the African Development Bank and others, with a joint mutual

accountability framework. In this way, a diverse, but coordinated, array of activities can enhance delivery of assistance to all Somalis.

The direct link to a government-led strategy is fundamental. Peacebuilding is inherently political. It must be anchored in national and inclusive political agreements, strategies and processes.

Fourth, and finally, countries emerging from conflict often lack robust tax and rule of law institutions to effectively mobilize domestic resources. Tax and customs offices are frequently faced with a shortfall in resourcing, capacity, training and equipment. A legal context conducive to tax evasion, corruption and illicit financial flows further compounds this challenge. This makes the need for early and sustained investment in capacity building by the international community even more critical.

Mr. Chair,
Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,

In my view, these four areas have been addressed only partially for far too long. I encourage you to have a thorough debate about these issues today to facilitate important deliberations and decisions for peacebuilding in the near future.

A first step could be at the International Conference on Financing for Development in Addis. As poverty is growing in conflict-affected countries, investments in institutions and peaceful societies will be critical for the implementation of the post-2015 development agenda. I hope the Addis conference will underline the importance of finance in conflict-affected countries, and for peacebuilding in particular.

At the Summit in September, the Member States are to adopt the post-2015 development agenda with the means of implementation to support it.

Subsequently, the deliberations in the General Assembly and the Security Council on the reviews of peace operations and the peacebuilding architecture will also have to take the important financing issue into account.

As part of these reviews, we need to make sure that the Peacebuilding Fund is placed on a solid footing. The Fund has a valuable role to play as a global pooled fund that brings together the political, security and development aspects of peacebuilding.

Since its creation in 2007, it has proven its worth through early, catalytic and risk-tolerant investments. I want to thank those who have contributed to the Fund.

But its limited scale is a serious impediment. These and other funding gaps, particularly in what I would call “aid orphans countries”, should be addressed without further delay.

Thank you again for supporting our crucially important peacebuilding activities across the world. I wish you a productive meeting, leading to improvement of our work, not least in the field, for the benefit of people in need after debilitating conflicts. And picking up on the introduction by the Chair, we must never lose the perspective of “we the peoples”, in the spirit of the UN Charter. It is the people we are to serve, and we have excellent instruments with the tools given by the Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Fund. And I am impressed by the attendance at this meeting, which shows the serious determination to make the peace system work even better for the people.

I thank you very much.
