

27 JUNE 2007

SECRETARY-GENERAL

STATEMENTS AND MESSAGES

SECRETARY-GENERAL COMMENDS PEACEBUILDING COMMISSION FOR DEVELOPING EXCITING NEW TOOLS FOR INTEGRATED RECOVERY STRATEGIES, IN SPEECH TO CLOSING OF FIRST SESSION

I am honoured to join you for this important meeting of the Peacebuilding Commission, marking the closing of your historic first session. As you conclude the first year of your work and reflect on your accomplishments, I am delighted to offer you my sincere congratulations and, if you allow me, to share with you my own thoughts on this exciting and important endeavour of peacebuilding.

By establishing the Commission, Member States of the United Nations have created an important new structure to support fragile societies recovering from the devastation of war. Such support is crucial in helping prevent their relapse into conflict and in helping to address the pressing needs of their populations.

As the first elected members of the Commission, you have focused your efforts on the considerable challenges facing the people and Governments of Burundi and Sierra Leone in their efforts to build peace. I have been following your work and I know how you have stood by these two Member States during this past year. You have faithfully fulfilled your mandate to bring together the relevant actors and you have already developed exciting new tools for integrated strategies for peacebuilding and recovery.

I am confident that you will continue to support the countries under your consideration, so that peace becomes truly irreversible. Your founding resolutions recognize that the international community needs to draw on the lessons of the past and pay sustained attention to countries emerging from conflict, as well as ensure predictable financing for early recovery.

In your deliberations, you have seen at first hand that efforts to consolidate peace and development must be based on the needs and perspectives of the countries themselves. The marriage of national ownership and international partnership is the key -- and that was the basic spirit behind the creation of the Commission. So is ensuring that national, regional and international actors operate from a common strategic framework and hold to common commitments.

In this spirit, you have invited key actors such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the European Community and the Organization of Islamic Conference to participate in your

efforts. You have also agreed on modalities to ensure that you can tap into the resources and skills of civil society. This makes the Peacebuilding Commission a truly unique body within the United Nations family.

The Strategic Framework for Peacebuilding in Burundi will allow you to further build upon this approach, and I congratulate you for completing this critical document so expeditiously. I know you are looking forward to completing a similar document with the new Government of Sierra Leone, once the electoral process is completed this summer. I can assure you that the United Nations system will support fully the spirit and the letter of this process, so as to ensure that, together, we make a real difference for sustainable peace.

In October last year, you encouraged me to declare Burundi and Sierra Leone eligible to receive support from the Peacebuilding Fund. In response, I was pleased to announce funding envelopes of \$35 million for each of the two countries. I am encouraged that the funds are already being used to support critical peacebuilding activities that reflect the priorities agreed between the Commission and the countries themselves.

With your Chairperson and Vice-chairs, you have done excellent work. There will be those who say it is not enough. However, I know what this first year of your work represents. As your Secretary-General, allow me to say that I am proud to be associated with your first year and your important achievements. The Peacebuilding Commission has a long and exciting future in front of it, with the support of the Peacebuilding Support Office and the generous financial contributions of many Member States to the Peacebuilding Fund. Your first annual report to the General Assembly and to the Security Council is testimony to your accomplishments.

Allow me to congratulate and thank the outgoing Chairperson, the Permanent Representative of Angola, and the two Vice-Chairs, the Permanent Representatives of Norway and El Salvador. Allow me also to thank the Permanent Representative of the Netherlands for his support.

I look forward to working with the soon to be elected Chairperson and Vice-Chairs of the second session of the Peacebuilding Commission. I know they will maintain the standard you have set. The entire United Nations system, at Headquarters and especially in the field, will continue to offer its full support. It is to all those struggling to maintain the path to peace that we must dedicate our best efforts and our full commitment.

PEACEBUILDING

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