



Remarks

by

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President of the 68th Session of the United Nations

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Concluding Session

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H. E. Vitaly Churkin, President of the Security Council,
H. E. Antonio de Aguiar Patriota, Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my pleasure to join you for the closing of this first annual session of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC).

Let me begin by thanking you, Ambassador de Aguiar Patriota, for the kind invitation to be part of this closing session and also congratulate you for the leadership you have shown in steering the work of PBC. I am confident that under your able leadership, this body will grow even stronger and meet its objectives successfully.

As we are all aware, the PBC is a very important part of the UN's peacebuilding architecture. In 2005, it was established with high expectations to tackle the daunting challenges of reconstruction and development in countries emerging from conflict. Undoubtedly, over the last three years the PBC has made important strides towards implementing its mandate and core functions as an intergovernmental advisory body of the UN.

As parent organ alongside the Security Council, the General Assembly had a primary role to play in its inception and continues its engagement by participating in electing members of the PBC, as well as reviewing the PBC's Annual Report.

Excellencies,

Over the last nine years or so, the PBC has proven its value in addressing root causes and challenges associated with conflict, instability and underdevelopment, to prevent post-conflict countries from relapsing into conflict.

Countries that have been referred to the agenda of the PBC have benefitted from constructive international attention with a focus on their specific needs and challenges. The Country Specific Configurations have provided a platform to foster dialogue and cooperation among all parties involved in the recovery efforts, including regional actors, major financial and troop contributors, financial institutions and UN Representatives.

At the country level, integrated peacebuilding strategies have led to better dialogue among governments, civil society, international organizations and other relevant stakeholders. Successful partnerships between the Commission and these entities have resulted in much needed progress on the ground.

Yet at the same time, the PBC has focused on national ownership, which remains fundamental in assisting post-conflict countries to rebuild their institutions and sustain peace and development. To this end, we commend the Governments of countries on the PBC's agenda for their active role in rebuilding their respective countries. In recovering nations such as Sierra Leone, Liberia and Guinea we have witnessed the fruits of the collaboration between the PBC and host countries.

Another success of the PBC has been the Commission's ability to strengthen its relationship and cooperation with relevant organs and institutions, including the General Assembly, Security Council, and the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).

As the mandate of the Commission spans across the three pillars of the United Nations – peace and security, development and human rights – the PBC is in a unique position to explore and advocate for policy developments in a more holistic manner. In this context, I encourage enhanced and continued support for strengthening these relationships. In particular, I believe the review of the report of the Commission by the General Assembly provides a useful platform for Member States to consider peacebuilding perspectives and challenges and how they relate to other areas of the Assembly's work.

Next year, the General Assembly and the Security Council will conduct a mandated ten-year review of the Peacebuilding Architecture. This review will be an opportunity to explore how to strengthen the capacity and authority of the PBC to provide advice and specific recommendations on policies that improve the lives of people in countries emerging from conflict.

Distinguished Delegates,

An important milestone in the transition of a post-conflict country is its removal from the agenda of the Security Council. It is an important benchmark to celebrate, yet it is also a source of risk in a country's transition from war to peace. Along with a UN mission come resources – technical, financial and political – and attention from the international community. These resources are likely to decline with the departure of the Council-mandated mission.

The PBC was created to ease the transition in light of these risks and one of its primary roles has been to mobilise the required resources in post-conflict countries. Almost ten years since the establishment of the Commission, this main objective of the PBC remains more critical than ever before. For this reason, the theme for this first annual session entitled “Sustainable support for peacebuilding: the domestic and international aspects” is timely and relevant.

I understand that deliberations since the beginning of this first annual session have been positive and constructive. The discussions and themes you selected in your interactive working sessions are all instrumental in charting a way forward to ensure sustainable support for peacebuilding.

Indeed, peacebuilding requires substantial financial and human resources. While short-term or transitional assistance such as the “PBC envelope” provides much needed assistance, there is also a greater need for long-term, sustained financial support to enable post-conflict countries to consolidate peace and stability.

Critical in this transition is the mobilization of domestic resources to allow States to exercise ownership, invest in infrastructure, deliver services to the population and reduce dependency on external resources.

Yet, the pernicious nature of illicit financial flows makes this a difficult task. Large amounts of monies are leaving poor countries with far-reaching consequences for national economies. In this context, the international community and the General Assembly have an important role to play to control illicit flows and establish an international cooperation framework to manage this issue.

There is also a need for improved cooperation and coherence between national governments and the international community in order to avoid the duplication and waste of resources. National governments and the international community need to agree on relevant priorities and a division of labour, regarding the adoption of Integrated Peacebuilding Strategies but also throughout the implementation stage.

Cooperation should also extend to regional actors, whose buy-in is critical for the success of any peacebuilding efforts. Various regional organizations continue to play their respective role in the peacebuilding field.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I look forward to the outcome of this meeting and encourage Member States of the PBC to bring their recommendations to the General Assembly.

Ensuring that countries emerging from conflict do not relapse into war is absolutely critical to our global efforts to create a peaceful world. I am confident that under the able leadership of Brazil and H.E. Ambassador de Aguiar Patriota, the PBC can achieve its objectives and continue to assist vulnerable countries on the path to durable peace and prosperity.

Thank you.
