

9 October 2008

**Statement of Mr. Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann,
President of the 63rd Session of the General Assembly,
at the General Assembly debate on the Reports of the Secretary-General on the
Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Fund**

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Friends All,

I am very pleased that we have this opportunity to discuss the Secretary-General's Reports on the Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Fund. The Commission and its Fund are two new initiatives born of our determination that the United Nations is equipped to assist countries emerging from conflict to secure long-term peace in the 21st century. They represent new additions to the Peacebuilding Architecture of the United Nations and we must keep in mind that they are still constructions in progress and need our full attention and support.

Given the record of peace accords that have failed in their first years, these reform initiatives fill a long-standing gap in our peacemaking architecture. They are examples of the UN doing things differently and learning from past lessons of success and failure. They arise from efforts to find new ways to promote partnerships and solidarity in post-conflict situations that have been misunderstood and neglected in the past.

The Commission, the Fund and the Peacebuilding Support Office are demonstrating the importance of these broad-based partnerships that count on the dynamic support of the entire UN membership including the main troop contributing countries to UN peacekeeping missions and the major donor countries.

With this support, these new entities bring together the Organization's political, security, development and human rights components in an integrated approach to address the tremendous challenges in post-conflict situations.

The success of the Peacebuilding Fund to meet its original target of USD 250 million and the broad base of its contributors are also testimony to the confidence vested in the United Nations. It reflects the commitment of the international community to close a critical funding gap in the transition from violence to sustainable peace and development.

After two years, the Commission and the Fund continue to explore new ways to address the challenges that many post-conflict situations represent to the world. The reports before us today reflect the encouraging progress made by the Commission, the Fund and the Peacebuilding Support Office in

addressing critical post-conflict priorities. Their initial work focused on the post-conflict situations in Burundi, Guinea-Bissau and Sierra Leone. Today they are also assisting the Central African Republic. The Fund has also supported peacebuilding initiatives in Cote d'Ivoire, Haiti, Guinea, Liberia, Kenya and Nepal.

The reports provide a candid analysis of the challenges that lay ahead for the Commission and the Fund. I have voiced my concern about the need to sustain these and other efforts to fulfill the Charter's mandates of peace and security as well as economic and social development in these times of global financial crisis. We must ensure that the collective action and commitment of member states, concerned countries, the UN system and all relevant international and regional actors are sustained in the months and years ahead.

The relevance and credibility of this new UN Peacebuilding Architecture will ultimately be measured by its ability to mobilize the international support that delivers tangible peace dividends for the people of Burundi, the Central African Republic, Guinea-Bissau and Sierra Leone. These dividends are needed now -- not two, three or five years from now.

It must also enhance national capacities to sustain peace and rebuild the foundations for longer-term socio-economic development. To succeed, its work must respect the principle of national ownership of all peacebuilding efforts and involve regional and subregional actors to widen the impact of peace and stability.

To this end, I call on the international community to continue to strengthen the capacities of the Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Fund. New and predictable financial and human resources must be channeled to address the critical priorities determined by the countries concerned.

The General Assembly will have other opportunities during this session to engage in critical post-conflict peacebuilding discussions. We welcome this responsibility as a parent organ of this Architecture. The Assembly will consider the Secretary-General's proposed review of the terms of reference for the Peacebuilding Fund. We will also review the Secretary-General's recommendations to improve the United Nations response in early recovery and post-conflict situations.

I also call on all members to demonstrate the partnership spirit and the responsibility to allow us to move ahead with electing the new members of the Commission from all pending categories of membership. I intend to invest the needed time and effort to realize this objective before the end of the year.

These represent opportunities for the General Assembly, with its universal membership and moral authority, to utilize the work of the Peacebuilding Commission and the services of the Peacebuilding Fund to advocate for a more democratic, coherent and agile United Nations. Our credibility and leadership will be measured by our ability to respond to the needs of societies aspiring for peace, stability and prosperity.

I see today's debate as an opportunity for member states to reflect on the question of how the General Assembly would best support and reinforce the lofty goals of the UN peacebuilding architecture. We must aim for nothing less than significant change in policies and attitude by all relevant stakeholders in addressing the plight of societies emerging from conflict.

Thank you.