

STATEMENT BY MR. NIRUPAM SEN, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE, ON THE REPORT  
OF THE PEACEBUILDING COMMISSION AND THE REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-  
GENERAL ON THE PEACEBUILDING FUND AT THE 62<sup>ND</sup> SESSION OF THE UNITED  
NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON OCTOBER 10, 2007

Mr. President,

Thank you for presiding over today's event; I am really pleased to see you chairing this event at which I am taking part. Let me also thank you for scheduling today's timely discussion on the Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Fund. Let me begin by expressing our appreciation for the work that Japan has already put in as Chair of the PBC, for the PR of Angola, for his work over most of the past year as the first Chair of the PBC; for the Chairs of the country-specific configurations and for the Chair of the Working Group on Lessons Learned. We also associate ourselves with the statement made by the distinguished PR of Jamaica, on behalf of the Non-aligned Movement, and we thank him for his work as NAM coordinator in the PBC.

Mr. President,

India is strongly committed to the objectives and work of the PBC, and have also contributed to the resources of the PBF. We have read the report of the PBC, and that of the UN Secretary-General on the PBF. We note the important points made in these reports. Indeed, since we were associated with the finalization of the PBC report, we are well-acquainted with it! These reports will be of lasting value to the international community, and to the PBC, as we chart our course in the area of peace consolidation in the year ahead.

Mr. President,

Without dwelling on these reports, which are public documents, I must point out that much is left unsaid. In the case of the PBC, this is natural, since multilaterally-negotiated reports inevitably highlight the lowest-common denominator. Nevertheless, it encapsulates several of the more important achievements of the group, which are

not inconsiderable developments, and are worthy of praise. However, I would like to focus upon some elements that are not reflected, but are of central importance, in India's perspective, for the future work of the PBC.

Firstly, we need to collectively exert greater efforts to move beyond debating issues of process to implementing measures. Process issues distract us from the real purpose of the PBC, which is to assist countries on our Agenda with focused, topical advice, and through the marshalling of resources. To us, it seems evident that we can only resolve this problem by confronting it squarely, not by bypassing it and moving on. Therefore, while it is understandable that some see the empowerment of the Country-specific configurations as a means to deliver concrete outcomes, this is not a durable solution. The solution lies in making the Organizational Committee, which is the steering mechanism of the PBC, work better. We must therefore harmonize the deliberations of both the Organizational Committee and the Country-Specific configurations, and make both more result-oriented.

Secondly, while providing advice is both logical and natural for a body that is defined as an 'advisory body', there is a need to also listen to those whom we wish to assist. Sometimes the discourse in the PBC, whether within the OC or the Country-specific configurations, does not suggest that this is the case. At one level, countries on the Agenda of the PBC do need to hear the full gamut of views and suggestions, made with the best of intentions, by each of us. Providing good, constructive and candid advice dispassionately is important, and therefore it is difficult. But this is not nearly as difficult as listening carefully to what the various actors on the ground are saying. While their views may diverge from our advice, meaningful advice must involve a two-way dialogue, not one-way transmission. Here it would help if the countries concerned could also tell us clearly the areas in which their need for assistance is most critical. Such inputs should form the basis of more focussed, action-oriented and practical discussions within the PBC.

I might add in this context, that the PBC could certainly do better—at least, we could certainly be more creative—regarding the form in which the PBC provides advice. For instance, would it have a better impact if the PBC facilitates access by target countries to eminent specialists who have the expertise to provide advice in key areas of peacebuilding?

Thirdly, while it is important to focus upon the advisory role of the PBC, there is occasionally a tendency to neglect its role in focusing international attention and in particular, assisting in the marshalling of resources. Important though it may be, advice alone will not consolidate peace. The mobilization of resources is the key vehicle by which post-conflict societies can begin to address critical issues in peace consolidation. Thus far, this aspect has received inadequate attention in the PBC, and we look forward to discussing creative solutions by which the PBC could be more involved with this central aspect of peace consolidation.

In this context, I should draw attention to the Peacebuilding Fund. We welcome its operationalization, and the fact that it has begun to disburse "catalytic funding" to Sierra Leone and Burundi, as recommended by the Organizational Committee of the

PBC, and also to other countries in need of emergency assistance. However, while the operation of the PBF is certainly within the letter of its founding resolution, we are not fully convinced that it is operating fully within the spirit of that resolution. To be candid, far more transparency is needed in the operation of the PBF; much more consultation with the PBC, and more prompt relaying of information to the PBC regarding the utilization of Funds. This is essential not only for purposes of information, but for the credibility of the PBF. Ultimately, since the PBF is based on contributions from member States, it would only detract from its sustainability if it is not more transparent and consultative.

My fourth point relates to the capacity of the PBC and its support mechanism, the Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO). While the PBSO has done well in assisting the PBC even as recruitment for the PBSO was underway, there is now a need for greater involvement of the larger UN system—in New York and on the ground—in the work of the PBC. The PBSO alone cannot compensate for the entire UN system. Other arms of the Secretariat, including the UN Country Team, must provide information to the PBC on developments on the ground in the target countries where the PBC is involved. This is particularly so since the PBC is comprised of member states who may not always have diplomatic representation on the ground in the countries concerned. We all know that access to good, succinct and relevant information from the ground is usually priceless, and this is nowhere more so than in the PBC.

The last—though certainly not the least—point relates to perspective. We must keep in mind that the ultimate goal of our collective efforts is to enable countries on our Agenda to develop the capacity to implement development programmes and to consolidate peace independent of our direct involvement. That is to say, irrespective of how many actors we may wish to listen to on the ground, the protagonist can only be one: the government of the country concerned. The primary focus cannot but be to strengthen the capacity of a post-conflict State to govern effectively and to govern well. If it does so, it will be able to mobilize human and material resources to achieve development, and it is development that is the most enduring guarantee of any long-term peace consolidation strategy. Only then will we have truly succeeded in our efforts.

Mr. President,

I conclude by once again underlining India's commitment to the fullest participation in the PBC, and in continuing to work to make this organization not only effective, but above all, relevant to the challenges for which it was created.

I thank you.

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