



Statement by Mr. Nirupam Sen, Permanent Representative of India to the United Nations in the Security Council open debate on "Peace Consolidation in West Africa on August 09. 2006

Your Excellency Foreign Minister Akufo-Addo,

It gives me great pleasure to participate in this open debate on the theme of "Peace Consolidation in West Africa". This initiative of the Ghanaian Presidency of the Security Council is timely and meaningful and we welcome it. It was to be expected from a nation that has consistently made noteworthy contributions to peace not only in its own region, but internationally as well. For me personally and for my country, it is an added pleasure to address the Hon. Foreign Minister of Ghana in the Chair today, given our traditionally close bilateral relations, and our experience of the wisdom and insight that the Hon. Akufo-Addo has always brought to any international forum he has graced with his presence. I have also been specially directed by our Minister of State for External Affairs, Mr. Anand Sharma who has asked me to convey to you his warmest good wishes.

The history of conflict in West Africa has shown that stability can be imposed for a while by force of arms and the determined involvement of the world. But history also tells us that such stability is often short-lived. Peace achieved through force of arms is often, to quote the Secretary General, a situation that is "stable but fragile".

Indeed, recent World Bank studies underline that "countries that have suffered conflict in the recent past are also likely to see conflict return: the risk that the country will fall back into conflict within the first five years of the end of a conflict is nearly fifty percent". This worrisome statistic is made worse by the fact that armed conflict inevitably increases military expenditure in the countries involved. This not only crowds out other public spending but, on a worldwide basis, exceeds spending on international development assistance. Furthermore, given the current international economic order, the

advantages obtained through employment-generation in parts of Africa have been squandered through negative resource flows, low commodity prices, lack of access to international markets, and the debt trap. In other words, global conditions make it likely that the vicious circle of conflict — peace — conflict becomes self-sustaining. Thus, creating peace has rarely ensured that peace remains.

The overarching question before the world today is to find ways to consolidate peace. In other words, how can regional organizations and the UN prevent States emerging out from old conflicts from lapsing into new conflict situations. We agree that in this context, we must promote sustained, equitable and employment-driven economic growth, as this is an inextricable part of the process of building durable peace. The effort to achieve these goals needs to be managed institutionally and driven internationally; it is this that gives relevance to the newly established Peacebuilding Commission.

We believe Sir, that conflict prevention efforts must include 'operational' prevention: a response to immediate and pressing crises such as preventive diplomacy, and 'structural' prevention, implying long-term structural preventive measures to prevent crises from arising or to prevent them from recurring. The latter often involves a long-term commitment to help vulnerable and poor countries develop human and institutional resources through increased development assistance. While peacebuilding focuses on preventing the conditions that foster conflict, development focuses on the structural conditions that prevent growth and equity, and thereby provide ground for conflict. Peacekeeping and peacebuilding must be part of the same continuum if peacekeeping is to succeed. Interestingly, studies show that military interventions in conflict ridden areas are actually more expensive than the adoption of preventive approaches. Estimates show that the international community spent around US \$200 billion on seven major interventions in the 1990s while a successful preventive approach is estimated to have hosted almost US \$130 billion less.

Fundamental to a successful and long term preventive approach are sound macroeconomic policies promoting sustained employment-driven growth. Expenditure on social sector programmes of poverty eradication, education — in particular of women — immunization and basic health, and on basic infrastructure, creates conditions for sustained economic growth.

In this context, I am tempted to note that developing societies such as ours do not live on bread alone, but equally on solidarity. India

and others have written off the debt of the seven Highly Indebted Poor Countries. India will continue its economic and scientific initiatives, such as TEAM 9, which involves a concessional credit of US \$500 million along with technology transfers to countries in the West African region; further cooperation with NEPAD, as well as the satellite and fibre optic connectivity mission announced by our President for the entire African continent.

Another essential pillar of the process of economic transformation involves development of effective mechanisms to resolve social tensions arising from the legacy of conflict, including through rehabilitation, reconciliation and reconstruction. It also includes the development of credible institutions of governance, stable political structures including political parties and credible strategies to effectively mobilize human and material resources. Hence, the need for the Peacebuilding Commission not only to work with the Security Council but above all to take into consideration inputs from other UN bodies and work under the overall guidance of the UN General Assembly. Effective coordination and consultation with regional groups and organizations must be encouraged as part of this effort.

Another key element for peace consolidation is the development of an overall country strategy framework to deal with post-conflict recovery and reconstruction. What is crucial here is 'national ownership'. As many other speakers before we have pointed out, it is the only pragmatic answer to a practical problem. In order to ensure peacekeeping blends into peacebuilding, it may occasionally be necessary to operate without clear-cut national authority. But in spite of this, it is essential that embryonic national ownership is respected through clear guidelines on ascertaining and respecting the views of civil society and community representatives.

This brings me Sir to good governance. Strong local, regional and national institutions are fundamental for societal transformation. Without legitimate laws, justice cannot be effective; without minimum standards of social equality, one cannot guarantee principles of justice and fairness. Thus, it is essential that good governance prescribed for recipient countries should equally be practiced by the international institutions doing the prescribing. The two speakers before we spoke we have pointed out recent success stories: Sierra Leone and Guinea Bissau. But it is important to note that recent experiences. For instance, when Sierra Leone relapsed into civil war, it had spent 83% of the intervening period between 1994-1998 under an IMF programme. It is therefore essential that international financial

institutional, especially the Bretton Woods institutions, undergo reform to reflect the voice of developing countries.

Lastly, it is essential that the process of peace consolidation is implemented at various levels. At one level, the Peacebuilding Commission will implement its mandate of proposing integrated strategies for post-conflict peacebuilding and recovery, ensuring predictable financing and developing best practices for cooperation between relevant actors and stakeholders. At another level, effective regional initiatives are essential. In this context, we fully support the efforts of the Economic Community of Western African States (ECOWAS) and the African Union in cooperating to address questions of peace and security in West Africa. Finally, there is the national level, at which it is equally essential that international institutions and partners find ways to support the efforts of countries emerging from conflict through highly concessional aid, debt waivers, assistance with disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of former combatants, employment generation strategies and extension of appropriate technologies. It is only through integrated action at all these levels that the consolidation of peace can be made effective and durable.

Thank you.

[BACK TO TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)