



**REMARKS BY MR. NIRUPAM SEN, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE AT
THE INFORMAL CONSULTATIONS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON THE
PEACEBUILDING COMMISSION ON OCTOBER 21, 2005**

Co-Chairs,

Let me begin by thanking you for organising these Informal Consultations on the Peacebuilding Commission and for the very good Options Paper circulated in advance. Let me also thank the Representative of the Secretary General for his remarks.

At the outset, I would like to align ourselves firmly with the remarks made by the distinguished Permanent Representative of Malaysia on behalf of the Non Aligned Movement. I shall therefore be brief and confine myself to remarks that reinforce or supplement what he has said. In the first place, the decision to set up the Peacebuilding Commission was taken by Heads of State and Government in the General Assembly and therefore it is logical for the Commission to be operationalised through a General Assembly Resolution. It has become fashionable to quote the Secretary General. I would like to quote his Keynote Speech at the Conference on Reforming the United Nations at Columbia University on October 17. He stated "The Outcome Document calls for the Peacebuilding Commission to be operational (*in other words it has been set up and only has to be operationalised*) by December 2005. But its establishment still requires a final General Assembly Resolution" (*in other words a General Assembly Resolution and not any double or triple resolution with other bodies*).

On Sections III and IV, our approach is guided by the need for national ownership. While we accept that 'transnational' is typographical error, the fact that it occurs in both the Sections in succession may be taken as a Freudian slip meant to reinforce its opposite namely national ownership. As we have had occasion to say on an earlier occasion, it is not a question of politics or ideology. Detailed case studies on East Timor and Afghanistan, which we have cited on an earlier occasion, clearly show that

agendas of different international actors involved sometimes ignored the social and political complexity of actual reality; led to waste; could not deliver a national strategy; could not prioritise scarce resources; could not lead to a coordinated outcome of so many interests, policies, agendas and practices of donors and agencies. Therefore, national ownership is not a question of some abstract defence of legal sovereignty. It is the only practical and pragmatic answer to a practical problem. Even the Bretton Woods Institutions sometimes resisted coordination of activities and sometimes IMF policies were counter productive and in any case needed both close direction and closer coordination. In order to have an effective continuum where peacekeeping shades into peacebuilding, it may be necessary to deal with a situation where there is no clear cut national authority; even here embryonic national ownership has to be respected through clear guidelines on ascertaining and respecting the views of civil society and community representatives. We would therefore support III (a) and IV (a) and (b). Both for the above substantive and linguistic reasons the phrase 'as possible' should be replaced as suggested by NAM by the phrase 'where applicable', apart from correcting 'transnational' to 'transitional': national ownership is paramount and, as Oscar Wilde once said, "Good intentions invariably tend to be ungrammatical".

In Section VI, we would favour (a) and (c). In (a) in the second last line 'thereafter' makes for something unnecessarily rigid, limiting and schematic. As noted earlier, peacekeeping and peacebuilding have to be one continuum if even peacekeeping is to be optimal and successful. We therefore favour the NAM amendment replacing 'thereafter it shall provide advice' by 'and'.

On Sections VII and VII a, we agree with the EU that we should not reopen the Outcome Document regarding membership. But the Outcome Document only lists the different constituencies, sectors or groups. It does not provide a detailed mechanism of how these will find representation in the Peacebuilding Commission. As we have said once on an earlier occasion, we are not replacing or reforming an existing body but creating a new body. There is no reason therefore to find even a limited place for rigidities and distortions. The body we create must be modern in the sense of reflecting contemporary aspirations and the spirit of the times: the principle of election therefore must inform it throughout. We do not also disagree that the permanent members of the Security Council have an institutional memory and experience that is valuable: the point at issue is different: how is this experience to find representation in the Peacebuilding Commission? We are firmly of the view that from each category or group members must offer themselves for election to the General Assembly which should decide. In short, the General Assembly must elect all members of the Organisational Committee. This also has the practical advantage of bringing to bear a wider and richer perspective; case studies reveal several mistakes by the Security Council; the method suggested would prevent mistakes which could be made, correct those that have been made, complete what is half done and enrich what is inadequate. Even in the case of Troop Contributors, not all the top five or ten may be involved in a particular mission: through the exercise of choice and election by the General Assembly those contributors whose experience is of relevance could be selected. We would also support the suggestion made by the distinguished Representative of Rwanda that the General Assembly should also choose from the category of countries with post conflict nation building experience; each situation is unique but there are commonalities that can be usefully studied and

applied. Election by the General Assembly would enable such experience to be properly used.

I would conclude with two minor observations. It is not at all clear to us how gender balance (referred to in the EU statement) can be ensured in the Peacebuilding Commission. We also have doubts about the Swiss idea of including the private sector in an inter-governmental body. On this last suggestion therefore further discussions are necessary.

Thank you.

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