

Speech: Reconstruction, reconciliation and representation as the keys to progress in Iraq

Thank you, Mr. President. Let me begin by thanking Special Representative Hennis-Plasschaert for your very thoughtful and comprehensive briefing. I think today's unanimous adoption of the resolution renewing UNAMI's mandate shows the strong Council support for your work and for the work of your mission.

Mr President, I think it's significant that this is our first Council meeting on Iraq since the liberation of the last of Daesh-held territory in the region. And whilst as a Security Council I think it's only natural that at times we tend to focus on the risks and the threats, I do think it's very important that we also reflect on the significant progress that's been made in Iraq to date and also that we thank the Iraqi government, the Iraqi security forces and the Iraqi people for the immense sacrifices that they have made in defeating Daesh.

Now, whilst the territorial defeat is a very important milestone, the path to reconciliation and stabilisation will be long and complex. Erasing the ideology of Daesh will take time and will require our sustained and collective efforts. In this regard, we recognise the important role that UNAMI continues to play in supporting the government of Iraq and its post-conflict recovery and stabilisation efforts.

Looking ahead, the immediate focus must be on ensuring that the conditions that first gave rise to Daesh do not re-emerge again. In the near term, we believe this means focusing on three areas: reconstruction, reconciliation and representation.

First, on reconstruction and the provision of basic services, these are clearly essential for Iraq's long term stability. We've all heard the staggering figures mentioned today by Cote d'Ivoire with over 1.75 million Iraqis remaining displaced, unable or unwilling to return to their homes. The governments of Iraq, the UN and the international community should continue to work urgently to address this situation, including by recognising and tackling underlying concerns and through the full implementation of the pledges made at the Kuwait conference on reconstruction, referred to earlier by the Russian Ambassador. Ensuring that all Iraqi citizens are able to access civil documentation must also be a priority, especially for internally displaced children who face disruption to their education.

Underpinning all of this is the need for strong state institutions, an inclusive and representative government. In this regard, we support Prime Minister Abdul Mahdi's efforts to reach agreement in the Council of Representatives to fill the remaining four cabinet positions and to ensure the broadest possible representation of women and minorities in all levels of

government.

Mr President, second, as Iraq continues to rebuild following years of conflict, reconciliation at all levels of society must be front and centre – a point raised by the French Ambassador. In this regard we welcome UNAMI's continued engagement with the government of Iraq as it advances an inclusive political dialogue. We further welcome the important role that the UN plays in supporting an effective and accountable Iraqi security sector – one that is able to effectively counter the ongoing threat from Daesh and provide security for all Iraqis.

Accountability is important, too, as Germany highlighted, and we thank the government of Iraq and the UN Mission for their ongoing support to the UN investigative team for accountability for Daesh crimes as it continues to carry out its vital work to ensure justice for survivors.

Mr President, third, turning finally to representation, the United Kingdom welcomes the UN mission's focus on gender across all of its activities, including its work to promote the enactment of the anti-domestic violence law. We strongly agree with Germany that women's protection and meaningful participation will support reconciliation and long term stability. As we are approaching the 20th anniversary of Resolution 1325 next October, we will continue to support Iraq to ensure that its next National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security is budgeted, implemented in collaboration with civil society and coordinated at the local and national level. We would also welcome the opportunity to hear from more female civil society briefers as in future Council meetings to learn from their experiences and expertise.

Mr President, the United Kingdom remains steadfast in our commitment to and our support for the important work of UNAMI and for the people of Iraq as they work to build a more stable and prosperous future.

Thank you, Mr. President.