

Speech: Visions for Peace Building and Sustaining Peace

Thank you Mr President. And may I start by thanking the Secretary-General, State-Secretary Neculaescu and Commissioner Chergui for their briefings. As I remember saying in Addis last September at the Security Council's joint meeting with the African Union PSC, our relationship is vital, and we must continue to strengthen it if we are to have success, so it is particularly good to see you here, Commissioner Chergui.

The UK shares the briefers' alarm at the scale and complexity of violent conflict today. The costs are mounting, whether we measure those in lost lives, displaced families, human rights violations, extreme poverty, or peacekeeping and humanitarian budgets. Our motivation to prevent further conflict and to sustain peace must be greater than ever. And I agree very much with the Secretary-General on the importance of human rights in this context, both of course as a warning or trigger of conflict, but not only that. We believe that activity at national and local level on human rights can be an important contribution in of itself to stability and conflict prevention.

The UK very much welcomes Secretary-General Guterres' vision for peace building and sustaining peace, and particularly the renewed focus on conflict prevention set out in his report. We also fully endorse the understanding that supporting countries to sustain peace should be a shared priority across the whole UN system, from peace and security to developments and human rights. Many of our own ministries and governments have come to this conclusion. The UK government has decided that over half of our development spend will be in conflict and fragile states, as that is the greatest challenge in reducing poverty today. This does not, as some might be concerned, does not mean that the respective mandates of different parts of the United Nations are under threat. And in this regard, we welcome the fact that both the General Assembly and the Security Council will adopt resolutions committing to further implementation of the Sustaining Peace Vision agreed in 2016.

The UK has identified three priorities for future work.

First, we want to see a stronger partnership for peace developed between the United Nations and the World Bank. Their combined vision, expertise and global presence are essential to ensure that multilateral investments and development tackle the drivers of conflict.

Second, we want to see more effective preventive diplomacy by the United Nations. In particular, addressing underlying causes. We all know the critical role that political agreements play and the openings they create for peacebuilding. And I very much endorse the Secretary-General's words on the importance of women's participation in such negotiations. We know from the research done that peace negotiations are 35 percent more likely to be

sustained for at least 15 years if women are involved in them.

And our third priority is ensuring smoother peacekeeping mission transitions from mission to non-mission settings, and I'll say a few more words more about that in my intervention. Right from the moment that we decide to deploy peacekeepers, we should be thinking about their exit. While recognising that fragile contexts will always be prone to risk, we on the Security Council need a clear vision of what a sufficiently stable end state looks like. And the Secretariat has a key role to play in this through generating deeper analysis and a mission implementation plan with clear benchmarks towards achieving that end state. These steps should then focus resource and allow the Council to track progress. This is being tested at the moment of course in Haiti.

The UN development system needs to be stepping up sooner in Mission settings. We welcome the Secretary-General's suggestion to link development assistance frameworks with Mission assessments. As the peacekeeping fund has sought to encourage Mali, peacekeepers and UN country teams need to work to the same script, the same deadlines and the same objectives. Funds, programs and agencies must be ready to tackle conflict rather than simply work round it. Mapping capabilities to do so, as was done in Liberia, should ensure we are all better prepared to fill gaps when a mission leaves.

Now the Secretary-General stressed the importance of enhancing coherence to support efforts by national governments. Not everything is up to the United Nations. National ownership, when politically inclusive, is what makes transition processes effective and resilient. We must always consider how missions handover to national institutions and actors. Côte d'Ivoire's experience demonstrates the impact this can have when done well. I think the salutary lessons you put forward Minister were important for us all, in particular about ensuring that the UN does not take on the functions of government and prevent them from being able to carry out their own tasks.

The development of a shared peacebuilding plan could help pull the mission, the UN country team donors, the host government and other national stakeholders together through and beyond the transition. That the US, Sweden and Liberia work together so effectively to develop a peacebuilding plan demonstrates the valuable role the Peacebuilding Commission can have. And that's why the UK has been one of the largest and longest standing donors to the Peacebuilding Fund.

And finally, we need to be creative about what the residual UN country team presence looks like. The creation of an enhanced Resident Coordinator's office in Liberia is a very promising initiative, and it reflects the recognition in the Secretary-General's report that the UN development system needs enhanced capacities to support countries at risk of conflict.

Transitions from Mission settings are just one dimension of what is a larger agenda for sustaining peace. But given that one of the most significant predictors of future conflicts is past conflicts, we must get them right. Daunting as solving the recurrent challenge of transitions may be, we do have good examples of innovative and effective action to draw on for our

inspiration. Now with the Secretary-General's reports on sustaining peace and peace building, we have a plan for making change happen. So there should be nothing, Mr President, stopping us in this Council from making change happen.