United Nations

General Assembly

Item 29: Report of the Peacebuilding Commission on its Eighth Session

and

Item 109: Report of the Secretary-General on the Peacebuilding Fund

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Statement delivered by

H.E. Mr. Thomas Mayr-Harting

Head of Delegation
Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations

Check against delivery
Mr. President, I speak on behalf of the European Union and its Member States.

The Candidate Countries the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, Montenegro* and Albania*, the country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as the Republic of Moldova and Georgia, align themselves with this statement.

Mr. President,

Thank you for having convened today's important session revolving around the Annual Report of the Peacebuilding Commission on its eighth session and on the Peacebuilding Fund. This represents a good occasion to take stock of the achievements made over the past twelve months, draw some lessons and apply them for the future.

The EU is engaged in peacebuilding activities in many countries, through our broad and long term engagement in political dialogue, development, economic cooperation, trade and other instruments. This is why the EU has fully participated in the PBC's work since its establishment. The EU has also been a member of all Country-specific configurations of the PBC since their inception and is trying to provide the best support possible for their success.

2015 will be an important year for the PBC with the comprehensive ten-year review of UN peacebuilding architecture. We see this year’s review of the UN peacebuilding architecture as an opportunity to enhance its effectiveness and impact in countries that emerge from conflict, on the basis of past experiences and lessons learnt. We look forward to actively participating in the review process, both in the current phase with the Advisory Group of Experts and after 30 June during informal consultations on the basis of the Experts' report.

Mr. President,

The two annual reports before us today are both comprehensive documents, illustrating the complexity of peacebuilding challenges.

We appreciate the efforts by the Organizational Committee and the Peacebuilding Support Office to provide an assessment of the PBC’s work in pursuing its Forward Agenda for 2014. The EU applauds the successful organization of the first ever PBC Annual Session on 23 June 2014 around the theme of "Sustainable support for peacebuilding". In addition, the advance preparations of the 2015 review have been very well conducted by the Chair of the Organizational Committee.

The EU welcomes the Terms of Reference for the 2015 Peacebuilding Review, which allow for a broad approach beyond the UN Peacebuilding Architecture (PBA). At the same time, the review should take a hard look at the vision and principles behind the establishment of the PBA in 2005. This approach should allow for an honest assessment of the PBA within the UN system and beyond.

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* The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.
On substance, the EU believes that the Peacebuilding Review should be linked to all other ongoing review processes in order to ensure coherence in the UN's actions. As for global peacebuilding trends, the discussion should be linked to broader policy developments, including processes and instruments of mutual commitment and accountability such as the New Deal (g7+). It is important to choose the right format for a particular peacebuilding context and avoid duplication.

Peacebuilding was conceived well before the creation of the PBA to address the gap between security and development in fragile post-conflict countries. A basic premise is that peacebuilding should be done at the country-level and that there is no "one size fits all". To be truly effective in its response in fragile states, the UN system needs to work in a more integrated, flexible and coordinated fashion – both at country level and headquarters level - and give more weight to prevention and early warning tools.

Peacebuilding should be done on the basis of a long-term vision and a holistic approach. It should focus on the structural causes of conflict; provide for an inclusive and participatory political processes; build strong and effective institutions, capable of addressing the root causes of conflict and responsive to people’s needs; promote national ownership, both from Government and the civil society; and a “bottom-up” approach.

There is a clear role for the PBC when it engages with countries that undergo a transition period. The PBC needs to be able to respond better to challenges identified by SRSGs, RCs, and other actors. In so doing, it could significantly contribute to the "One UN" vision.

The PBC’s greatest comparative advantage is its convening power: the ability to call to task a large number of Member States and help reconcile their approaches. But its ability to deliver this political added-value is hampered by a number of factors. Some country-specific configurations of the PBC have taken a more flexible and politically attuned approach, and lessons should be learned from these experiences. The Peacebuilding review should explore ways to maximize the potential and added value of PBC's unique composition, assembling all relevant actors around the same table. Another one of PBC’s comparative advantages relates to its capacity to maintain sustained attention on peacebuilding processes. The PBC can also play a valuable advisory role in support of the Security Council.

Mr. President,

Turning to the performance of the Country-specific Configurations over the past year, there is some good progress to report, while many challenges remain to be tackled. We commend the efforts of all Configuration chairs. In our view, the PBC still has a role to play in all these countries, perhaps through more flexible forms of engagement which will be discussed during the review. Other country or regional situations could also be addressed through such flexible 'group of friends' type formats with a clear link to the field.

The EU commends the efforts of the Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea Configurations in dealing with the peacebuilding aspects of the Ebola crisis. The continued accompaniment of Burundi in the run-up to this year's elections, in particular after the closure of BNUB, is an excellent
example of how the PBC can play a politically-attuned role. The PBC’s engagement in Guinea-Bissau following the successful elections and return to constitutional order last year has also been very useful, including in the run-up to the successful Donor’s Conference held in Brussels on 25 March.

The Central African Republic arguably presents the biggest challenge of all Agenda countries and its needs coming out of a major crisis go well beyond the mandate of the PBC. Being one of the case studies of the peacebuilding review, it presents a troubling example of relapse from which lessons should be drawn. In the short term, the CAR Configuration could focus on supporting the electoral process, which faces a significant budget gap. Organizing a well prepared outreach meeting in New York in this regard, preceded by demarches to potential contributors, would in our view be very helpful. So far, the EU is almost the only contributor to the electoral budget, and failing to fill the gap could delay the end of the transition.

Mr President,

Before concluding I would like to extend my gratitude to the former Chair of the PBC, Ambassador Antonio Patriota, whom I would like to thank for his commitment.

We also look forward to working hand in hand with the new Chair, Ambassador Olof Skoog, the PBC membership and the Peace Building Support Office to move things forward. We welcome the intention of the new Chair to make sure the OC’s activities are supporting the country-specific work of the PBC as much as possible.

The EU stands ready to continue to support the efforts of the UN in all peacebuilding activities.

I thank you.