

NEW ZEALAND MISSION to the UNITED NATIONS



Te Māngai o Aotearoa

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UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY SIXTY-FIRST SESSION

AGENDA ITEMS 47, 113 AND 149: PROGRESS ACHIEVED IN THE WORK OF THE PEACEBUILDING COMMISSION

**STATEMENT BY
MS KIRSTY GRAHAM
DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE
ON BEHALF OF CANADA, AUSTRALIA, AND NEW ZEALAND**

6 FEBRUARY 2007

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Madame President,

It is my privilege to speak on behalf of the governments of Canada, Australia, and New Zealand.

CANZ strongly supports the Peacebuilding Commission and believes it has a critical role to play in coordinating and integrating post conflict peacebuilding activities. A strong Commission will move the international community past an ad hoc response to peacebuilding and on to a more coherent response regarding what needs to occur in a post conflict setting to achieve lasting peace.

In the year since the creation of the PBC in December 2005, good progress has been made in establishing this new institution, including determining representation on the PBC's Organisational Committee and also in starting a dialogue to clarify the Commission's specific functions within the UN system. We were also pleased to see Burundi and Sierra Leone referred to the Commission by the Security Council in June 2006.

Madame President,

Despite this progress, CANZ has been disappointed by the over-emphasis placed on procedural matters by some members of the Commission at the expense of substantive peacebuilding issues - the core mandate of the Commission. CANZ urges the Commission to find new ways of working that befit the challenges before it - including working informally when possible in order to maximise progress during this formative phase, refocusing on its core mandate of advising UN organs on integrated strategies for post-conflict peacebuilding, giving attention and resources to reconstruction and institution-building efforts, and serving as a focused forum for political discussions related to war-to-peace transitions.

This mandate needs to be approached in an action-oriented flexible manner with results identified that can be realistically achieved. CANZ also urges the Commission to develop modalities to ensure the active participation of civil society and other governments in all areas of the Commission's work since their input and participation are critical to the success of the peacebuilding process.

Madame President,

While we recognise that building peace is a long term process, CANZ continues to believe that the PBC should focus on those cases where it can have the greatest and most transformative impact and which can be viewed as immediate positive contributions to kick start a longer term peace process. Our Governments were very pleased to see the Peacebuilding Support Office undertake missions to Burundi and Sierra Leone to identify gaps in the peacebuilding process and to identify areas where the Commission could have

the highest impact, and that the governments of Burundi and Sierra Leone were subsequently able to identify key priorities for the Commission during its fall sessions. Now that these two countries have been declared eligible to benefit from the Peacebuilding Fund we are hopeful that there will be early disbursements and early results from the investment made.

Madame President,

As Burundi and Sierra Leone make the transition from fragile post-conflict toward lasting peace, international support remains critical for consolidation of gains reached so far. Sustainable recovery and peace cannot be achieved without addressing a country's needs in the political, social and economic spheres and the inter-linkages among them. CANZ governments were therefore pleased to see that the PBC's December sessions identify several cross-cutting thematic issues including support for political dialogue for Burundi, and strengthening democratic governance and gender mainstreaming for Sierra Leone. CANZ views this as very important work to ensure that whatever activities are undertaken by the Commission do not duplicate efforts already underway and meaningfully advance international coordination to ensure a positive contribution to the peacebuilding process.

Madame President,

While better coordination of the donor community and IFI's is a key objective for the PBC, CANZ views the Commission's work as more than just a location for pledging assistance. We are hopeful that the work that the Commission is doing in relation to the national peacebuilding strategies of Sierra Leone and Burundi will begin to build the basis of an expertise for identifying and addressing in an integrated manner thematic areas that require attention in all post conflict peacebuilding situations.

As Assistant Secretary General McAskie has pointed out, this task will require a new investment of intellectual capital aimed at developing a strategic peacebuilding framework. Needless to say, the PBC is unlikely to achieve its full potential until we are able to articulate this basic vision of the body's objectives and output.

This will require that issues including security sector and justice sector reform, disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration, gender equality issues, children and armed conflict, refugees and internally displaced persons, be taken up on a thematic basis, both within the Organisational Committee and in the country-specific meetings. In this regard, we were particularly encouraged when, at the first country specific meetings on Burundi and Sierra Leone, the Commission reaffirmed the centrality of SC Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security for the implementation of peacebuilding strategies. This work needs to be expanded to other areas of cross-cutting significance as the Commission seeks

to design a strategic framework against which the PBC can frame its advice and its interventions.

Madame President,

The Peacebuilding Commission is a vital component of the wider UN reform agenda. The transition from war to peace requires comprehensive concerted efforts to prevent a relapse to violence. We look forward to working with the Commission in the coming months and years as it seeks to clarify its role and make a positive contribution to the very important task of building durable peace in countries emerging from conflict.

Thank you.