

Co-Chairs Summary of ECOSOC-PBC joint Special Event on  
“MDGs in countries emerging from conflict”  
19 July 2010

On 19 July 2010 the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) organized the 2<sup>nd</sup> joint Special Event in order to create synergies between the development and the peacebuilding agendas and to strengthen the relationship of the two bodies. Representatives of Member States, the UN system and academia discussed the special challenges and vulnerabilities of achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in countries emerging from conflict. There was consensus that in order to achieve the MDGs globally by the target date of 2015, the focus must be on countries that are furthest from achieving the MDGs, which is the case for most countries in post-conflict situations.

The clear message from panellists and participants was that more needs to be done, by all stakeholders, to systematically mainstream **security concerns into development** strategies and vice versa. Even though the MDGs in their totality may not always be the priority in post-conflict countries, it was recognized that security and development are directly linked and need to be reflected in parallel. Additional key messages included the following:

- Restoration of **basic security** after a violent conflict is the precondition for any reconstruction efforts, taking into account that even after the peace agreement violence continues to exist in different forms.
- **Risks** to a fragile security situation, such as drug trafficking or natural resource management have to be identified and tackled, including through regional security approaches.
- The **expectations** of the population shift relatively quickly beyond basic security needs to peace dividends which can only come through restored infrastructure and social and economic development. Strategies need to be flexible and adaptable to changing realities on the ground.
- Peacebuilding starts before a crisis happens, and therefore **conflict prevention** and **disaster preparedness** measures have to be included into national plans and strategies.
- **Youth unemployment** is a potential risk to peacebuilding. Short term measures can help to integrate former combatants into the workforce and to restore livelihoods. In the longer term, labour intensive growth strategies are important to enable sustainable development.

- To strengthen the prospects for sustainable peace access to **health services and education** have to be included in peacebuilding strategies. Free health services are particularly important to deal with the extremely high maternal mortality and infant and child mortality rates that continue to persist several years after the end of armed violence.
- **Women's needs** and empowerment measures are very important and have to be included in at all levels.
- **Country ownership** and national institution building are crucial for sustaining peace. Peacebuilding and development strategies should build on the existing capacities of a country, even in the most challenging situations.
- Most countries emerging from conflict face risks and needs that stretch beyond their **capacities** to deal with them and need increased support from the international community and the United Nations system.
- There must be an increased focus on the **financial architecture** of countries emerging from conflict, whose financial support is characterized by high volatility from international donors.
- **Official development assistance** (ODA) is crucial for complementing national budgets and mobilizing resources from other actors.
- Better **data** would help to measure success of MDG strategies.

The event showed that even though it is important not to equate progress on MDGs with peacebuilding, MDG strategies can help build trust in post-conflict societies. Peacebuilding, in addition, needs to recognize the causes of conflicts and also include re-conciliation efforts in the process. The MDG Summit in September can help paying special attention to the enormous challenges of countries emerging from conflict.