

(As delivered)

Statement by H.E. Mr. Yukio Takasu  
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of the Peacebuilding Commission  
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The Peacebuilding Commission had a three-fold purpose: first, to promote awareness and understanding of the unique challenges that each post-conflict country faces; second, to bring all relevant stakeholders together; third, to marshal all kinds of support and resources, political, financial and technical. I believe that the PBC collectively made great strides in meeting all these objectives in the past two years since its creation.

Above all, I think we should be proud of concrete progress that the PBC could contribute in each of the four countries on our agenda, and we are very grateful to the leadership of the chairpersons of the four country-specific meetings. Also, through the discussions in the various configurations of the PBC, we noted that some common elements have emerged which are useful and essential for successful peacebuilding efforts, not limited to specific countries. For instance, respect for national ownership and international partnership, no one-size-fits-all approach, close linkages between security, development and human rights, and the importance of accountable nation-building – these are a few examples. I took the liberty of including a much more comprehensive list of this in the formal meeting of the OC on 23 June 2008. I believe that these points could be further elaborated in the future in close collaboration with other interested organizations that are making similar efforts.

The challenges for peacebuilding are obviously enormous in the years to come, and I personally believe that peacebuilding is going to be a very important agenda for the United Nations and international community in the next two or three decades. We in the PBC have to continue to make concrete progress, building upon the achievement made so far. I would like to share three issues, and I would like to expect that my successor could further strengthen our work in these three areas:

1. Strategic and policy discussions. There are many issues that need broad strategic discussions without limiting them to one country. I mentioned already the elaboration of elements or guidelines for effective peacebuilding strategy that still require additional work. Youth

unemployment, income generation, and the role of the private sector – there is the report on this of which we took note – will require continued attention and implementation. Other issues such as peace and justice, regional dimension and the relationship between peacekeeping and peacebuilding have been mentioned in this group, but we have not had time to address them properly, in depth. I believe that the Organizational Committee can play a certain useful role – I am not saying that the OC can do everything, but it can play some important role, as appropriate, if proper preparation is made. An outcome of such review will be beneficial for the efforts not only in the countries who are suffering and struggling in post-conflict situations, but all other countries.

2. The need to deliver concrete change and outcome on the ground. This cannot be over-emphasized. In post-conflict countries, people should feel safer than during the time of conflict, and the arrival of peace must be felt and reflected in their daily lives. Education, energy and health services need to be properly delivered more than during the conflict time. Young people need to have opportunities for productive work, instead of fighting, and more productive social activities. Many people have made commitments, but this must be translated into actions, and I think it our work to make sure of this. In this context, I would like to repeat, as I have said many times in this group, that the measurement of success for the PBC is not really a well elaborated document or strategy, but concrete changes on the ground. I am very pleased that each of us made an individual contribution to this. I felt each time that we are challenged personally as to what we can contribute to promoting this change on the ground.
3. The PBC cannot achieve all its intended goals by itself. It must coordinate closely first of all with the General Assembly, Security Council and ECOSOC. Also, it must mobilize all stakeholders not only in but outside the UN. I feel that the strength of the PBC is legitimacy, that we are representing genuine priority of the country and the mobilizing power of bringing all stakeholders together. We have a very good instrument, the so-called integrated peacebuilding strategy, and this should be used as a very good vehicle to mobilize this partnership of all stakeholders. We need concrete, more conscious engagement of International Financial Institutions, and we have already paved the way for that. We are very grateful to the leadership of the World Bank, IMF, UNDP and other major organizations and bilateral programs for their engagement and active participation in the work of the Committee but also on the ground. We need to strengthen such partnerships and further reach out to the local and also global civil societies.

I can tell you that 2009 will be another difficult or challenging year. First of all, the preparation of the Secretary-General's report on peacebuilding and early recovery in the early part of this year is very important. This occasion will test the ability to make substantial inputs to important policy formulations in the United Nations. Also, the review of the terms of reference of the Peacebuilding Fund and the preparation of the comprehensive review of the PBC will be important for the future work.

Lastly, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to first of all my colleague, the vice chairperson, and also the chairs of the country-specific meetings and the working group on lessons learned, but also members, partners and observers of the PBC. Also, I am very grateful to Assistant Secretary-General Jane Lute and her colleagues in the PBSO for marvelous work to support us. It was a great honor to work with all of you and an enriching experience personally.

During the past two years, I think we have succeeded in generating confidence and a sense of cooperation among the members of this group. Always we came up with solutions to difficulties and were not sidetracked by procedural discussions, but concentrated on substance. Also, the national governments had high expectations for us. This was made possible by the dedicated efforts by each and every single member of the commission, and I am deeply indebted. Without your support and commitment, the PBC could not achieve anything. I believe this is one of our major achievements: such high regard that we are receiving in the UN community and also outside New York, and I hope that the PBC remains active with the new vitality of additional members and under new leadership.

Thank you very much.