



Permanent Mission
of the Federal Republic of Germany
to the United Nations
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Statement

by the

Permanent Representative of Germany to the United Nations

H.E. Dr. Peter Wittig

on the occasion of the conclusion of his term of office as

Chairperson of the Peacebuilding Commission

United Nations

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(Check against delivery)

Excellencies and distinguished colleagues,
Ambassador Amb Eugene-Richard Gasana, Chairperson-elect of the PBC,
Ms. Cheng-Hopkins, Assistant Secretary-General for Peacebuilding
Support,

A year ago, the members of this Committee entrusted me with a responsibility to chair the Peacebuilding Commission. It was a critical juncture of its evolution. I assumed this responsibility succeeding three colleagues who left behind distinctive marks which guided my steps in this office.

2010 was a year where “peacebuilding” and the future role of the United Nations Peacebuilding Architecture were re-examined. The mandated review by our colleagues from Ireland, Mexico and South Africa offered us an opportunity to look at the potentials of and the challenges facing the Commission.

You would agree with me that the review helped us regenerate our confidence in the future of the Commission. It also reiterates our commitment towards enhancing its impact in the field. I recently shared and discussed with the Committee and the chairs of the various configurations my proposal for a “roadmap of actions in 2011” to take forward the recommendations of the review. The suggested roadmap will hopefully help us focus on key priorities for the next year and engage all UN and non-UN actors.

Excellencies and distinguished colleagues,

In the inaugural meeting of this Committee under my chairmanship last year, I shared with you certain objectives for the PBC in 2010 which, in my view, deserved particular attention. Allow me to briefly revisit these objectives by underscoring three main areas:

First: enhancing the role of the PBC as a platform for building and strengthening partnerships with the International Financial Institutions, regional and sub-regional organizations and other relevant global initiatives.

Last year, I undertook to prioritize this area and worked in close consultations with the Chairs of the country configurations and the PBSO. My visit to the IFIs in February 2010 and the follow-up meetings of the Committee with senior World Bank and IMF officials all aimed at confirming the PBC's keen interest to forge a viable partnership, in particular at the country-level. A number of ideas emerged from these interactions and deserve follow-up. I am gratified to learn that the partnership with the World Bank is advancing quite well in certain countries on the PBC agenda. The release of the 2011 World Development Report on Peace, Conflict and Development will be an occasion to explore further how the World Bank and the PBC could work together to strengthen the linkage between peace and development, between the short-term nature of critical peace dividends and the longer term requirement for sustainable peace.

Furthermore, we convened the first dialogue with the AU Peace and Security Council. It confirmed that the PBC and the AU would mutually benefit from working in partnership in the areas of political accompaniment and advocacy for the countries on the Commission's agenda. I was personally pleased with the degree of enthusiasm demonstrated by the members of the AU PSC and the AU Commission. It calls for intensifying our common work at the HQ and country-levels.

I also participated in the first global meeting of the International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding which took place in Dili, Timor Leste last year. The meeting provided a good opportunity to learn more closely about the objectives and scope of this interesting initiative and the areas of potential collaboration in countries where the PBC and the Dialogue are involved. It would be important for the PBC to explore how the dialogue may contribute to enhancing resource flows for critical peacebuilding priorities and gaps.

Second: enhancing the role of the PBC's instrument of engagement as framework for mutual accountability and for monitoring progress towards broader peacebuilding objectives.

In 2010, the Commission responded to a new request for advice from Liberia, making it the fifth country to be placed on our agenda. Liberia challenged the Commission to demonstrate its ability to diversify and adapt its approach to the varying needs and priorities of countries in different stages of its peacebuilding processes. More than that: it offered an opportunity for the Commission, the Liberian and UN actors to design an

instrument of engagement around the principals of national ownership and mutual commitments: with clear targets and a review mechanism to help deliver and monitor these commitments. I am confident that under the guidance of His Royal Highness, Prince Zeid Al Hussein, and with the serious engagement of the members of the Liberia Configuration, the Commission can deliver in this crucial area which would prove its value added and real impact in the field.

Likewise, the Commission's engagement with the other four countries on the agenda continues to prove that our instruments of engagement are adaptable to changing circumstances and needs.

In this regard, I highly welcome the increased cooperation and coordination between the Chairpersons of the five Country Specific Configurations of the PBC, as also demonstrated last week by their first joint statement in a Security Council debate on post-conflict institution building.

Third: achieving a more structured relationship between the PBC, the General Assembly, Security Council and ECOSOC.

Throughout 2010 and most recently last week, the Security Council convened a number of debates with direct relevance to the UN peacebuilding agenda and the work of the PBC. As Chair of the PBC, I was invited by the Council to address these debates where I echoed the membership's views on the areas which can benefit from closer interaction between the two bodies. Most prominent among these areas, is the synergy between peacekeeping and peacebuilding. I am pleased to note that there

is increasing openness on the part of the Council to draw on the advice of the PBC in this area. All peacebuilding related statements made by the respective Council presidents confirmed this sentiment. Most recently, the first informal dialogue of the Security Council with the Chair of the Liberia Configuration took place where the Chair, the representative of Liberia and the SRSG for UNMIL interacted informally and constructively with the Security Council.

The countries with common membership of the Council and the PBC played a crucial role in encouraging this important step towards a more structured relationship between the PBC and the Security Council. These countries, including my own, should continue to help ensure that the Council draws on the broader peacebuilding perspectives and potential partnerships with other non-UN actors, which the PBC is capable of offering.

The relationships with the General Assembly and ECOSOC continued to develop and promise to generate increased understanding and appreciation of the challenges of post-conflict peacebuilding among the broader membership of the UN. We should continue to develop the relations with the two bodies as we attempt to broaden the base for engagement and support to countries on the PBC agenda.

In addition, we also had the opportunity to address important processes that are increasingly defining the UN peacebuilding agenda: for example the Commission contributed thoughts to the Secretary General's report on Peacebuilding in the immediate aftermath of conflict, his report on Women's participation in Peacebuilding and to the upcoming report on the Review of

International Civilian Capacities. The PBC also continued to engage in policy discussions on the role and activities of the Peacebuilding Fund, which is an important catalytic instrument.

I trust that under the guidance of Ambassador Gasana, the PBC will continue to pursue additional progress towards meeting these broad objectives.

Finally, I wish to acknowledge the role of the Peacebuilding Support Office, and of Assistant Secretary-General Cheng-Hopkins, in support of the Commission's work and activities. Despite being faced by enormous capacity challenges and high turn-over of staff, PBSO has still demonstrated the necessary dedication and professionalism which the PBC will continue to count on. The role of the PBSO assumes particular importance as the PBC seeks to draw on the expertise and commitment of operational entities within and outside the United Nations.

Excellencies and distinguished colleagues,

We should take satisfaction in the fact that "peacebuilding" is gradually evolving as a key feature of the United Nations' role in post-conflict countries. We should count on the engagement of the Secretary-General to ensure that peacebuilding becomes a strategic priority for the Organization. His recent reports on peacebuilding and on women's participation in peacebuilding, speak for his increasing commitment.

Let me conclude by noting that there is increasing conviction that the international community can no longer afford to fail in shouldering its

responsibility towards the populations in countries affected and emerging from conflict. We learned our lessons in many places and we promised to do better the next time. Let us insist that we will deliver on this promise. Let us start from here: the Peacebuilding Commission.

Thank you.