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**Statement by Ambassador Yukio Takasu
Chairman of the Peacebuilding Commission
At the Joint Debate on the Report of the Peacebuilding Commission and the
Report of the Secretary-General
on the Peacebuilding Fund
General Assembly
10 October 2007**

Mr. President,
Secretary-General Ban,
Distinguished Delegates,

First of all, on behalf of the members of the Peacebuilding Commission, allow me to express our heartfelt gratitude to you, Mr. President, for providing a timely opportunity to discuss the annual report of the Peacebuilding Commission.

In September 2005, our leaders adopted the Outcome Document at the World Summit, which explicitly emphasized the need for a “coordinated, coherent and integrated approach to post-conflict peacebuilding and reconciliation with a view to achieving sustainable peace”. The Outcome Document further states that the Commission was established “to bring together all relevant actors to marshal resources and to advise on and propose integrated strategies for post-conflict peacebuilding and recovery”.

With that in mind, let me briefly look back on the first year of the work of the Commission. The first annual report of the Peacebuilding Commission, as contained in documents A/62/137 and S/2007/458, provides a detailed account of the work and activities of the Commission during the first year of its operation. The process of compiling the report reflects the seriousness with which the Commission’s membership has undertaken its work and the significance it attaches to its anticipated contribution to peace consolidation and the promotion of national ownership of peacebuilding measures in post-conflict situations. Here I would like to pay special tribute to Ambassador Martins of Angola for his dedication and leadership to steer the initial stage of the Commission.

In the course of approximately 50 formal and informal meetings and briefings held in its various configurations, the Peacebuilding Commission addressed critical organizational, methodological and thematic issues, as well as country-specific issues of Burundi and Sierra Leone, coordinating various contributions to sustainable peace and opening avenues for mutual commitments between the international community and the countries under consideration. I believe that, in its first year, the PBC contributed significantly to the promotion of integrated post-conflict peacebuilding strategies in Burundi and Sierra Leone.

In addition, the Peacebuilding Commission sought to accumulate best practices and lessons on critical peacebuilding issues. By introducing the Working Group on Lessons Learned, the Commission was able to benefit from existing experiences of peace consolidation.

As clearly underlined in its first annual report, the Peacebuilding Commission faced tremendous challenges during its initial phase of establishing its organizational structures, defining its working methods and finding ways to fulfill its core mandates. Some of these challenges are likely to be the subject of additional discussion during the second session. The "Conclusions" section of the Commission's first annual report is a serious reflection on key outstanding issues and challenges before the Commission, including the question of financing its field missions.

(Mr. President,)

The UN peacebuilding architecture is now in place, and the PBC is entering its second year of activity. Its activities need to be carried out in a coherent manner. We believe that it may be appropriate for the Commission to begin addressing the addition of new countries for its consideration, in close consultation with the referring bodies.

Second, strengthening the Commission's relationship with relevant bodies and actors, such as the UN's principal organs, namely the General Assembly, the Security Council, the ECOSOC and the Secretariat, funds and programmes, regional and sub-regional organizations, IFIs and civil society, is essential. As part of such efforts, I myself, as Chairman of the Commission, will make constant efforts and avail myself of every opportunity to establish closer working relationships with those organizations.

Exploring thematic issues relevant to peacebuilding is also a matter of great importance. I am particularly convinced that discussing broad policy guidance on peacebuilding activities in general without focusing on a specific country is worth pursuing.

Raising awareness of the Commission's work, not only among relevant actors but also among the public at large, would greatly enhance the understanding of and necessary attention to the work of the Commission and the countries under its consideration. In this regard, we intend to make every effort to heighten the visibility of the Commission's work. At the same time, we would hope for individual Member States to join our efforts to promote the work of the Commission.

As Chairman of the Commission, I would like to assure all members of the General Assembly of our full dedication and commitment to the success of the Commission. In that spirit, we request all of you to lend your valuable and much needed support to our work at the Commission.

I would like to add just a few words in my capacity as Permanent Representative of Japan.

Japan has provided very active support for the PBC, and it coordinates its activities with those of the Commission. Recently, it sent high-level missions to Burundi and Sierra Leone headed by then-Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs Hamada for the purpose of enhancing the peacebuilding process in those two countries and a report on his visit to Sierra Leone was compiled for the Commission's forthcoming discussion. We share the view of the Commission in its annual report with regard to the critical priority areas and we have accordingly provided them with development assistance in fields such as basic infrastructure. Our activities have included the rehabilitation of power plants in Sierra Leone and community development in Burundi.

Japan accords high priorities to post-conflict peacebuilding efforts. As a contribution the Japanese government launched the new program for training civilian peacebuilding professionals from Japan and other Asian countries. The training takes place in Hiroshima and many other places in the world.

Japan will redouble its efforts to achieve the Commission's goal of building and consolidating sustainable peace through hosting the fourth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD IV) and the G8 Hokkaido Toyako Summit.

Thank you.