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PARLIAMENTARY HEARING AT THE UNITED NATIONS

From Disarmament to Lasting Peace: Defining the Parliamentary Role

(New York, 19-20 October 2004)

Summary and Main Conclusions

The parliamentary hearing was convened by the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and organized in close co-operation with the United Nations Secretariat. It was attended by some 180 members of parliament from 70 countries, and was chaired by Senator Sergio Páez (Chile), President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union.

The meeting dealt with the overarching topic of "From disarmament to lasting peace: Defining the parliamentary role," divided up over three sessions: "Strengthening international regimes for arms control and disarmament," "Peacekeeping in the 21st Century: needs and objectives," and "An integrated approach to peacebuilding."

Introduction

The meeting was opened by Senator Sergio Páez, President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, who welcomed the parliamentarians to the meeting. He noted that as the representatives of the people's sovereignty, they were also the guardians of the aspirations of the global community, including a fundamental desire for lasting peace. The current hearing would examine the essential practical conditions for achieving peaceful coexistence and collective security in the world, which he suggested had three primary aspects.

The first was the need to work towards the universal application of multilateral disarmament treaties, improved compliance with the obligations that they entailed, establishment of the necessary transparency and guarantees of their irreversibility and verification. The second was to implement effective collaboration with United Nations peacekeeping operations, taking an integrated approach which would include their political, logistical and financial aspects. Peacekeeping operations had to have clearly defined mandates, roles and responsibilities, and to comprise coherent political and military actions. The third was to bring about a stable political environment, which could only be sustained by ongoing processes of reconciliation and reconstruction, on a basis of justice, truth, forgiveness, mutual respect, liberty and shared responsibility.

Mr. Jean Ping, President of the United Nations General Assembly, said that the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, as well as small arms and light weapons, represented a grave threat to humanity. Their elimination would require collective action with heightened involvement of the entire international community. Parliamentarians could play an important role in ensuring that government programmes were in conformity with treaty obligations, in voting the necessary credits to implement multilateral obligations, and in

ensuring that the relevant treaties were ratified and applied. Above all, they should spare no effort to imagine innovative responses to the topics of the present hearing, as governments were in great need of new approaches and ideas to find the way towards a more peaceful, prosperous and just world.

President Ping went on to note that no other parliamentary organization in the world has the geographical scope of the IPU, and no other parliamentary organization has such strong cooperation ties with the UN in nearly all the most important areas on the international agenda – from peace and security, to democracy and human rights, and to sustainable development.

This parliamentary hearing could not have come at a more appropriate time for the UN. Disarmament, peacekeeping and peace building are on the minds of many representatives of member states who are all too conscious of the contribution that parliamentarians can make to these debates.

Ms. Louise Fréchette, Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations, said that parliamentary action to implement multilateral disarmament treaties was vital, as such agreements required countries to adopt relevant domestic legislation. Peacebuilding involved not just policing cease-fires, but also tackling the root causes of conflict and helping people in fractured societies build lasting peace. Parliamentarians could help by taking a broad view of peace, and supporting efforts to include all sectors of society, including women, in peacebuilding efforts.

Not only a broad view of peace was needed, but a long view also. All too often, an initial burst of international attention and commitment to a peacebuilding effort withered away, leaving the root causes of conflict to fester, and allowing the violence ultimately to flare up again, as in the recent case of Haiti. The lesson that the international community had to stay engaged for the long term was currently being applied in Sierra Leone and Timor-Leste. However, peacekeeping also needed more resources and support. Currently some 56,000 troops and military observers were engaged in peacekeeping operations, and about a further 30,000, plus many more civilian personnel including police officers, were needed.

She urged all parliamentarians to work with their governments to help answer the urgent global call for the Blue Helmets, civilian police, and political and financial support for peace operations. United Nations peacekeeping operations were an excellent investment: in the entire history of the United Nations, expenditure on peacekeeping had totalled some US\$ 30 billion, which represented just one thirtieth of the previous year's global military expenditures.

Recalling that the IPU had enjoyed observer status at the United Nations since the November 2002, she looked forward to continuing cooperation with it in the future.

Strengthening international regimes for arms control and disarmament

Panelists: Mr. Nobuyasu Abe, United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs; Hon. Douglas Roche, Canada; H. E. Enrique Berruga, Permanent Representative of Mexico to the United Nations; and Mr. Philipp Fluri, Deputy Director of the Geneva Centre for Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF) Arms control and disarmament.

Arms control seeks to regulate how certain weapons are produced, marketed or used, disarmament seeks their physical elimination. The United Nations has been working towards both goals for over 50 years. Multilateral treaties are in force banning the production or possession of chemical and biological weapons, while the Nuclear Non-

Proliferation Treaty (NPT) couples non-proliferation obligations with a commitment by all its States Parties to pursue good-faith negotiations on nuclear disarmament. On the other hand there is little treaty law governing conventional weapons. The Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) outlaws some very specific types of weapons, due to their uniquely inhumane effects, and the other relevant instruments are the Antipersonnel Mine Ban Convention and the Protocol on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Mines, Booby-Traps and Other Devices.

Multilateral treaties on disarmament and arms control involve difficult technical and political challenges. It is generally agreed that they need as a minimum to be universal, irreversible and binding; to make provision for verification of compliance; and to include means of enforcement. These features are all difficult to achieve globally by *ad hoc* coalitions. This year, the Security Council adopted Resolution 1540, which requires all States to adopt measures to criminalize assistance to non-State actors seeking to acquire weapons of mass destruction, and to establish domestic controls to prevent the global proliferation of such weapons.

In October 2000, the Security Council adopted Resolution 1325, its first resolution specifically addressing the impact of war on women and the contribution of women to conflict resolution and peace. The UN Department for Disarmament Affairs is implementing an action plan for gender mainstreaming in all of its major programme activities.

There are many areas where parliaments can contribute to the strengthening of the various treaty regimes, which require a strong popular base of support. Parliaments are involved in the ratification of treaties; they are also responsible for enacting the relevant implementing legislation and for providing the money to sustain national commitment; they oversee the implementation of government policies and help in educating the public.

The nuclear danger

At the present time, there are 34,000 nuclear weapons in existence, 96% of them in the hands of the United States and Russia. Six further States have smaller numbers of nuclear weapons, but the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) reports that at least a further 40 have the capacity to produce nuclear weapons, and criticizes the inadequacy of export control systems to prevent an extensive illicit market for fissile materials and equipment.

Under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, the non-nuclear-weapons States agreed not to acquire nuclear weapons in return for an undertaking by the nuclear-weapons States that they would negotiate the elimination of all their nuclear weapons, and that the developing countries would share in the transfer of nuclear technologies for peaceful purposes. That bargain has never been lived up to by the nuclear-weapons States.

The NPT Review Conference will be held in May 2005, but it is alarming that to date the Preparatory Committee has not been able to agree to an agenda – evidence of a clear disconnect between a series of very dangerous trends in the world and the adoption of the disarmament and arms control instruments that would make it possible to counter them. The principal responsibility lies with the nuclear-weapons States, which at the 2000 NPT Review Conference gave an unequivocal undertaking to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals and to engage in an accelerated process of negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament.

In 1998, a grouping of seven middle power States: Brazil, Egypt,

A new coalition of States determined to save the NPT in 2005 must now be forged – and this is where parliamentarians have a special role to play.

Douglas Roche,
Senator, Canada

Ireland, Mexico, New Zealand, South Africa and Sweden, established the New Agenda Coalition, which has become a formidable rallying point for the “moderate middle” of the nuclear debate. Its annual resolutions at the United Nations First Committee have been gathering strength, and the current year’s resolution, entitled “Towards a Nuclear-Weapons Free World: Accelerating the Implementation of Nuclear Disarmament Commitments,” is intended to garner the support of all the NATO non-nuclear-weapons States as well as the European Union and other like-minded States.

The resolution comes at a crucial stage, given the potential that the NPT might fall apart, and it is for parliamentarians to speak up, to urge their governments to support the resolution. That would take courage and leadership: two qualities that parliamentarians possess in abundance.

Democratic control

The effort to promote universal application of multilateral disarmament and arms control treaties requires public understanding of the contribution that such treaties make to international security. All too often, specialized knowledge on disarmament, arms control and nonproliferation is retained within the executive branch, in particular the ministries of Defence and Foreign Affairs, with parliamentarians and the public being kept ignorant about the subject. But without comprehensively informed and committed parliamentary oversight, and scrutiny by an empowered civil society, arms control and disarmament treaties will not be sufficiently understood or successfully implemented.

Where the security sector leads an uncontrolled existence, typical results are a lack of transparency, flourishing corruption in the arms procurement sector, a self-serving bureaucracy, a limited rule of law, a lack of professionalism, and an undermining of both economic development and the credibility of the people’s elected representatives. It is

Enormous military spending is taking place in spite of famine, illiteracy, poverty and galloping deterioration of environmental conditions plaguing whole continents, and is the result of the era’s new strategic doctrines that permit preventive

against that background that the 2002 UNDP Human Development Report called for reform of the security sector at both the national and the international levels. Good governance of the security sector means that the executive and the security services have not only to safeguard the nation’s security interests but also have to comply with democratic and legal standards at national and international level. Informed and committed parliamentary oversight and guidance of the security sector prevent autocratic rule, convey democratic legitimacy to security sector decision-making, and strike a balance between the demands of security and those of liberty, a task which has

become painfully pressing in the face of ruthless terrorist attacks on peaceful citizens. The IPU/DCAF Handbook on Parliamentary Oversight of the Security Sector, intended as a tool for better understanding of parliamentary control, has already been translated into 30 different languages and some 40,000 copies printed.

International arms control and disarmament treaties are tools of good governance of the global security sector. It falls to parliaments to promote the universal application of such treaties and compliance with their commitments; to make available and monitor the funds for transparency-building, verification and implementation; to ratify arms control and disarmament treaties and to see to it that implementing legislation is enacted. Without a democratically governed security sector at home, and an informed and empowered public, within which women could take the leading role, parliamentarians will find it difficult to act credibly on the global stage.

In the ensuing debate, many delegations described the efforts that their countries had made and were continuing to make towards the goals of disarmament and arms control, and the following conclusions emerged:

- Several of the known nuclear-weapons States were not present in the current meeting. If parliamentary efforts towards disarmament are to be effective, it is essential that all countries holding weapons of mass destruction be involved. Above all, it is essential to bring the United States of America into the debate.
- Military expenditure is currently close to \$US 1 trillion a year. If only 10% of that amount were to be spent on official development assistance (ODA) or on the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, the change in the world would be enormous. The United Nations Secretary-General has estimated the amount needed to achieve the Millennium Development Goals at \$US 50 billion, but the amount pledged so far falls lamentably short of that, at only \$US 12 billion, and even less has actually been contributed.
- Progress towards the Millennium Development Goals has to be monitored by parliaments, and will not be achieved unless countries ratchet up their commitment for spending on ODA. With development aid being the budgetary item most vulnerable to cuts in times of economic stringency, because there was no domestic constituency for it, it is the responsibility of parliamentarians to remind governments of their commitments to poor countries.
- Under the umbrella of the so-called war on terror, observance of treaties is eroding. It is important for parliamentarians to stand up and voice their belief in international treaties. Likewise, it is crucial that human rights not be curtailed in the name of national security.
- There is a trend towards transferring powers from parliaments to the executive in the interests of conflict management and rapid reaction to attack. That trend should be resisted, and it should not be accepted that speed of reaction was to be achieved at the cost of the authority of parliament. The rule of law is paramount.
- Given that weapons are generally introduced into conflict areas from outside, weapons export and import control regimes need to be strengthened, and sanctions should be applied to countries that do not respect their obligations under disarmament and arms control treaties.
- Other proposals were for a global taxation levy to be applied to the profits from the production of and trafficking in weapons. It was also urged that production of and trafficking in weapons of mass destruction should be criminalized, and placed under the authority of the International Criminal Court.
- However, provision has to be made for the use of nuclear power for peaceful purposes.
- While some states consider that nuclear weapons are essential to their own security, in fact such weapons offer no protection against a terrorist attack. Consequently, it is in the interests of all nations to outlaw exchanges of nuclear technology and fissile material. That in turn dictates a real need for national and international control mechanisms covering fissile materials.
- The existing control mechanisms are neither respected nor applied, entailing a very grave problem of non-observance of United Nations resolutions and international law. The response of the United Nations can come at three levels, a call to observe

treaty obligations, expressed in the form of Security Council resolutions; sanctions, usually economic; and finally, in very grave circumstances, an authorization to make use of force.

- Enforcement is ultimately the responsibility of the Security Council. However, while the States Parties to the NPT have undertaken not to develop nuclear weapons, there is no way of dealing with those countries that are not signatories. Nor has the Security Council yet decided what would happen if a State Party to the NPT decides to repudiate its obligations under it.
- International law has not yet developed to a point at which States can be forced to dispose of their nuclear weapons, but they have to be reminded that they have a legal obligation, under the NPT which they have signed and ratified, to enter into arms-reduction negotiations. That point has been reinforced by an Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice.
- The handbook on Parliamentary Oversight of the Security Sector will need to be updated every year, with sections for each individual country, listing their degree of compliance with the various treaties. Another suggestion was to envisage holding regional conferences to disseminate knowledge of the content of international disarmament and arms control treaties. It was suggested that good practices in parliamentary oversight of the security sector should be codified and preferably made legally binding.
- The near-nuclear-weapons States should cease their development of nuclear weapons, as greater proliferation could only bring greater instability. At the same time, however, it is understandable that countries should seek to develop nuclear weapons if they see that the existing nuclear powers are not making good-faith efforts to divest themselves of their own arsenals.
- In one particular region of tension, the Middle East, there is a profound imbalance in that one side to the conflict has nuclear weapons while the other does not. An initiative is under way to have the Middle East declared a nuclear-weapons-free zone, which was applauded by many delegations, since when regions are already tense, proliferation of weapons dangerously exacerbates the situation.
- It was regretted that some countries did not observe United Nations resolutions, flagrantly flouting the Organization's authority. However, it was also pointed out that that is related to the present composition of the Security Council – with the permanent members having the right of veto, the asymmetry of power causes some less powerful States to feel justified in ignoring resolutions imposed upon them.
- However potentially deadly are weapons of mass destruction, currently thousands of people are being maimed and killed by small arms and light weapons, whether in the hands of armies, rebels, criminals or drug traffickers. Their low cost and ease of access make it extremely difficult for national authorities to control the spread of such weapons, although various regional initiatives to do so seem to have had some success.
- It is easier than ever before for terrorists, non-State actors, criminals, dissidents and authoritarian governments to possess small arms and light weapons. Bilateral and unilateral agreements cannot take the place of a global disarmament approach, in a multilateral framework that is transparent and verifiable. United Nations Member States must demonstrate commitment, undertaking to prevent, combat and eradicate trade in small arms and light weapons. The most effective way to do so is

by the establishment of legally binding instruments at international and national levels, thereby creating criminal liability against manufacturers, traffickers and users.

- It was noted that the disarmament and arms control efforts of the United Nations were directed towards illicit trade in weapons, not to weapons legitimately held for internal security or national defense. The United Nations also has confidence-building mechanisms such as registers of conventional weapons, records of armored vehicles, and so on.
- Greater participation should be granted to women in all organizations and fora promoting disarmament and arms control, because women suffer cruelly in armed conflicts and their voices tend not to be heard when measures to achieve peace are discussed or implemented.
- The most important next steps to be taken are the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, a halt in the development of new types of nuclear weapons, initiation of negotiations leading to an effectively verifiable fissile material cut-off treaty, and the establishment of a subsidiary body at the Conference on Disarmament to deal with nuclear disarmament.
- There is a need to raise the level of discourse concerning an agenda that will integrate disarmament, development and human rights. What is needed above all is a change from a culture of violent response to one of reconciliation, and here parliaments and parliamentarians have a major role to play.

Peacekeeping in the 21st century: needs and objectives

Panelists: Mr. Hédi Annabi, United Nations Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations; H. E. Adam Thomson, Deputy Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom to the United Nations; Hon. Olivier Kamitatu, President of the National Assembly, Democratic Republic of the Congo; and Mr. William O'Neill, Brookings Institution.

The complexities of peace-keeping

The nature of conflict is changing. Although actual numbers of battle-related deaths may have decreased in recent years – perhaps by as much as 80% since the end of the Cold War - those deaths are now overwhelmingly of civilians. And in most cases, civilian casualties are not an accident: civilians are intentional targets in the wars of the present day. Whereas in previous wars 90% of deaths were combatants and 10% were civilians, the proportions have now reversed, with 90% of the fatalities being civilians. In consequence, Security Council resolutions have become much more explicit in mandating peacekeeping troops to protect civilians.

The success of the peacekeeping mission [in the Democratic Republic of the Congo] was dependent on the observance of certain principles which were essential to bring about genuine acceptance and understanding of the mission by the Congolese people. These principles were: impartiality, propriety and consistency.

Olivier Kamitatu, MP, President of the National Assembly, Congo

At the same time, peacekeeping has become much more complex, owing to a wider variety of sources of violence, some of them with unclear chains of command, shifting boundaries, shifting areas of control, shifting alliances. That makes it absolutely imperative for peacekeepers, both military and civilian, to have a deep and broad understanding of the nature of conflicts, some of which have deep roots in previous alliances, politics,

history, economics, discrimination, and more. To cope with this greater complexity, peacekeepers need to be both very highly trained and able to make snap judgments under pressure.

Peacekeeping has traditionally been thought of as a military activity. While the military monitoring of cease-fires remains an essential component of peacekeeping operations, in the last decade it has become clear that unless peacekeeping engages in complementary peacebuilding, it will not be possible to sustain a lasting peace in post-conflict settings. In consequence, the peacekeeping mandates from the Security Council, and the operations themselves, are becoming increasingly multidimensional. They now involve not only soldiers but also civilian police, election officers, humanitarian officers, all kinds of specialists doing different tasks. Cooperation among all those different actors has not always been successful in the past, in part because of mutual stereotypes, particularly as between military and civilian personnel. But as the different actors have worked together, they have come to realize that they have much more common ground than difference.

There is a great need for peacekeepers to work closely with their national counterparts. Foreign peacekeepers need a healthy dose of modesty, need to realize that they can learn a great deal from their national counterparts: in parliament, in the police, in the bar association, and in many other communities. The task of international peacekeepers is to make themselves obsolete, to hand the task over to their national counterparts.

As well as the growth in the complexity of peacekeeping activities, there has also been a dramatic surge in their sheer numbers. In the past year, major multidimensional operations have been mounted in Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire, Burundi and Haiti, the mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo has been expanded, and an advance party has been deployed in Sudan, in preparation for another large and complex operation. And that surge is stretching capacity to the maximum: currently there are some 60,000 Blue Helmets active in 17 operations, as well as some 10,000 civilians. After all, no national parliament would ask its Ministry of Defence to run 17 military operations, with only 600 "officers," the 600 personnel of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO).

Meeting the cost

The cost, some US\$ 2.8 billion, is drawn from the contributions of all Member States, with peacekeeping thus representing an expression of the international commitment to peace. Although the total seems large, peacekeeping is a cost-effective way of conflict resolution, representing as it does less than half of 1% of the world's military spending. It is an eminently sound investment, given that a recent study puts the economic cost of civil wars at US\$128 billion a year.

One particular challenge in mounting these complex operations is that while all Member States contribute to the costs, most of the burden of actually putting troops on the ground falls on the developing countries. That causes difficulties for the DPKO, in particular in the recruitment of specialized force enhancers. Additionally, over and above the military capacities that the developed countries can contribute, United Nations operations are strengthened, and send a signal of political determination, when the whole range of Member States is deployed on the ground.

Another major challenge is speed of deployment. While the Security Council wills peacekeeping operations, it is not responsible for resourcing them, and it can take from three to six months to mount a complex operation, depending on how fast the Member States provide the resources. That can create considerable inefficiencies and shortages of critical specialized personnel. Here, the parliaments of the world can help, not only in approving the supply of peacekeeping troops, but also in speeding up the recruitment of

civilian specialists, for example by creating rosters of specialists – judges, lawyers, police officers, reconstruction experts – who could be deployed rapidly in a peacekeeping operation.

Another area where parliamentarians can help is in making their electorates, and their governments, aware of the need to support peacekeeping operations both materially and morally. Perhaps the single most important thing that parliamentarians can do is to promote the rule of law. It is clear that when the rule of law disintegrates in a weak state, this creates greater room for tensions based on ethnic or sectarian differences. Thus parliamentarians also need to take collective and determined action against the politics of ethnicity and sectarianism, as conflicts are now overwhelmingly driven by those poisons. Parliamentarians collectively should explore what they can do to support countries at risk of instability: whether through rigorous observation of elections, or interaction with their parliamentary colleagues in the country, or whatever will help.

Once the peacekeepers have arrived, the local population expects to see some peace dividends. That is when it is essential to integrate the military peacekeeping effort with humanitarian and development partners from elsewhere in the United Nations system. Effective peacekeeping plays an essential role in laying the foundations of peace and reconciliation, but a lasting peace depends on the emergence of a functioning and legitimate framework for justice, security and economic development. That takes time, and the international community has to stay the course, demonstrating diplomatic stamina and financial commitment.

The cheapest peacekeeping, by a very long way, is the one that prevents a conflict from ever taking place.

Ambassador Adam Thompson. United

Formidable challenges remain, challenges as basic as the fact that the Security Council does not consist of experts in putting countries back together again - the Council is learning on the job. But perhaps the greatest challenge is to create peacekeeping operations that are not for post-conflict reconstruction at all, but for conflict prevention. The cheapest peacekeeping operation, by a very long way, is the one that prevents a conflict from ever taking place.

In the ensuing debate, many delegations described the efforts that their countries had made and were continuing to make in support of peacekeeping operations, and the following conclusions emerged:

- The need for impartiality, not neutrality, in peacekeepers was stressed. The role of the peacekeepers is to watch over the parties to the conflicts, and to monitor the commitments that they have freely undertaken. As has been seen in several arenas, striving for neutrality can lead instead to involuntary complicity. The situation is particularly difficult when one side to a conflict does not respect the peace and turns on the peacekeepers. When the peacekeepers then legitimately defend themselves, accusations of a lack of impartiality can ensue. Impartiality demands flexibility and quick thinking of the peacekeepers, requiring them to be highly trained and adequately equipped.
- Given the need for highly trained peacekeeping troops, it may be advantageous to set up a peacekeeping training centre.
- For all its weaknesses, it is better to have a transitional parliament, offering a semblance of democracy, than to have nothing at all. The IPU can help in establishing a transitional parliament in post-conflict countries, and it is very important for the IPU to be a forum for dialogue among parliamentarians.

- The rule of law is paramount. However, this does not only mean that the populations of a post-conflict country have to abide by the rule of law: the same applies to the peacekeepers in that country. If they, above all, do not observe the rule of law, then effective peacekeeping operations will be impossible.
- In the area of economic reconstruction and reintegration of combatants into civil life, the World Bank can help by financing infrastructure projects on which the former combatants can be put to work.
- Peace is not simply the absence of war. Peace is also the absence of poverty and of other factors that can lead to violence. The drug trade in particular, with its intimate links to terrorism and crime, is a major scourge and obstacle to peace. Drug trafficking can be combatted only by joint action, and it is up to parliamentarians to urge their governments to join and support such action.
- Contribution of troops to peacekeeping operations represents a huge budgetary burden on the developing countries, because the reimbursement for the troops is paid out only later. A way needs to be sought for providing advance financing to ease the burden on the contributing countries.
- There is a similar budgetary burden when peacekeepers' equipment is lost, without compensation. There is a need for some compensation or replacement mechanism to be set up. The United Nations has suggested to some donor countries that they could make an advance to enable the troop-contributing country to purchase the necessary equipment, with the donor being reimbursed once the United Nations has reimbursed the contributing country.
- Troops need to be committed, and the peacekeeping process started, as quickly as possible. However, the approval of the national parliament is generally required before troops can be sent out of the country. Troops should not be moved from one peacekeeping mission to another: for a new mission, fresh troops are needed.
- Parliamentarians need to ensure that their governments provide the necessary resources for peacekeeping operations. That is an important aspect of the cooperation between the United Nations and the IPU.
- Given the danger usually present in peacekeeping operations, it is also urgent for parliamentarians to urge their governments to ratify the Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel.
- Parliamentarians also have an obligation to urge their governments to pay their arrears of peacekeeping contributions, which currently stand at US\$ 1.2 billion.
- Particularly in the face of the danger that unrelenting media coverage of conflict and casualties may sap public will to remain engaged in peacekeeping operations, it is the duty of parliamentarians to urge their governments to stay the course. Peacekeeping is not only, obviously, preferable to war; it is also much cheaper: about US\$ 2.8 billion in 2004 as compared with an expenditure on armaments of close to a trillion dollars.
- Peacekeeping operations have to fully respect the provisions of the United Nations Charter, and to have clear mandates and command structures. They also have to observe the principles of non-intervention in the internal affairs of States and the right to self-determination, and to recognize that every society is unique, respecting historical and cultural diversity.

- There is a place for regional organizations to undertake peacekeeping operations (as provided for in Chapter 8 of the United Nations Charter), particularly on the basis of their knowledge of the local situation, but such a regional approach must not serve to diminish the role of the Security Council, which under the United Nations Charter retains the principal responsibility for maintenance of international peace and security.
- It is essential to world peace that Security Council resolutions be observed. Where States occupy the territory of others in defiance of Security Council resolutions, it is up to the international community to call on them to leave.
- When the root causes of conflict are examined, a clear link between poverty and violence emerges. People who can see no other way out of their cycle of poverty resort to extreme methods, including violence and terrorism. The same process can be seen at the national level, when countries that see no way of breaking out of poverty by economic development seek to do so by force instead, through obtaining weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear arms.

An integrated approach to peacebuilding

Panelists: Mr. Danilo Türk, United Nations Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs; Hon. Guy Nzouba-Ndama, President of the National Assembly, Gabon; H. E. José Luis Guterres, Permanent Representative of Timor-Leste to the United Nations; Dr Necla Tschirgi, Vice-President, International Peace Academy; and Ambassador George Ward, Director of Professional Training Program, United States Institute of Peace.

Peacebuilding – what's that?

Recent history shows that almost half of all civil wars that end in peace agreements flare up again within five years. A failed peace is thus a significant source of recurring conflict, and post-conflict peacebuilding is a major factor in preventing such a recurrence.

The concept of peacebuilding entered the international lexicon at the end of the Cold War, during which time peace and development had been artificially separated. At the end of the Cold War, many of its proxy wars also ended, in Central America, Asia and Africa, and the process of reconstruction started, with the international community supporting those countries in their efforts to rebuild their societies. At the same time, the early 1990s saw a series of intra-state conflicts that did not lend themselves to the diplomacy and military intervention that had been the basic policy instruments of the Cold War era. In consequence, the United Nations examined how best to integrate different approaches and strategies to respond to the complex conflicts of the 1990s.

We as parliamentarians must claim local ownership of peacebuilding, non-proliferation of arms and trying to arrive at a development aid that takes the anger out of the hungry man.

Emerging originally as a narrow response to the challenge of rebuilding post-conflict countries, over the 1990s the concept of peacebuilding expanded radically, now representing an expansive concept linking humanitarian, developmental and security approaches to conflict resolution and post-conflict reconstruction. In addition to the obvious humanitarian advantage of preventing a return to conflict, it has been estimated that successful post-conflict peacebuilding also saves as much as US\$ 50 billion a year.

The components of peacebuilding – diplomacy, mediation, conflict resolution and military peacekeeping – do not occur in sequence, but simultaneously, involving a very wide

variety of external and internal actors, military and civilian, government and non-governmental.

Supporting peacebuilding

One essential aspect is the necessity for early funding and early action. A parallel might be drawn with what emergency room doctors call "the golden hour," that brief period of time in which prompt intervention can be especially effective not only in saving a life but also in reducing the difficulty and cost of long-term recuperation. In the medical world, increased resources are being put into emergency response mechanisms, but the same is not true in the world of relief and reconstruction: civilian relief and reconstruction organizations normally lack the capacity to be on the ground and operational when immediate relief could pay the highest dividends.

Peacebuilding demands adequate political will on the part of Member States, as the source of decision-making in the United Nations bodies, as well as sustained attention. Too often, donors and aid agencies withdraw or diminish their activities after the first couple of years, but it has been determined that it is in the middle of the post-conflict decade that aid is most effective. Aid needs to be rethought in those terms, and to be planned over a time span of 10 years, which will require a strengthening of political will.

Also required will be the further development of an institutional capacity in the United Nations to guarantee longer-term involvement at the highest policy-making levels. The Security Council is usually pressed with the immediate needs of a variety of situations at any given moment, making it difficult to sustain for a long period of time the attention needed to guarantee a successful post-conflict peacebuilding strategy. Something new is needed, and the possible innovations discussed have included focusing ECOSOC more on these issues, or establishing a subsidiary body under ECOSOC or under the Security Council to sustain the long-term strategic interest.

The United Nations needs more resources for peacebuilding. The needs are great, but it has to be remembered that the amounts are minute compared with those spent on warfare. All peacekeeping expenditures since 1946 have totaled some US\$ 30 billion, which equates to just one thirtieth of global military expenditure in 2003. The level of expenditure, too, has to be balanced against the complexity of the tasks at hand and the demanding nature of projects being implemented in a peacebuilding context.

The Security Council is usually pressed with the immediate needs of a variety of situations, and it is difficult to sustain for a long period of time the attention needed to guarantee a successful post-conflict peacebuilding strategy.

Danilo Türk, Assistant

In most post-conflict situations, a critical feature for success is the creation or strengthening of the rule of law and the judiciary. That takes time and expertise, and has to be undertaken with the necessary sensitivity to local needs and ownership. Of comparable importance is the

disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of combatants. In both of those areas, the United Nations lacks a coherent and fully developed institutional capacity to help. Here, there is a need for enhancement, perhaps within the office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights or the United Nations Development Programme.

The United Nations needs partners in regional organizations, with other countries and in the areas where post-conflict peacebuilding is taking place. As a special role for the IPU, the United Nations would like to encourage national parliaments to be involved in post-conflict countries and to invite external actors to engage in discussions on how resources should be spent and similar issues. Obviously, the parliaments in post-conflict countries

themselves have a critical role, but there is also scope for action by other parliaments as well. The more that a culture of accountability and involvement of elected representatives of the people in assessment of post-conflict peacebuilding is developed, the greater the hope for a high quality of peacebuilding.

Elections in post-conflict situations

The question of when elections should take place is an important one. It is a mistake to hold them before certain institutional guarantees are in place or before the security conditions are propitious. If elections are held too hurriedly, there is no time for the process to be owned by the population. Additionally, the victims of war tend to be forgotten and their problems and interests glossed over.

Postponing elections for too long is also a mistake. As has been learned in Afghanistan, where the original date for the elections was based on the Bonn agreement of 2001, such decisions have to be adjusted to circumstances as they evolve. Knowledge of how elections were held in earlier operations helps to get the timing right.

One round of elections does not normally create political stability. Several rounds are generally needed before post-conflict peace and stability can be considered irreversible. That is a part of the reason that the international community has to stay engaged for 10 years or more. Efforts have to be expended on ensuring that elections are fair, regular and free, because otherwise the elections themselves can often trigger an outbreak of violence. Preventing this perverse outcome requires universal suffrage, reliable electoral rolls, strengthening of anti-fraud measures, participation of candidates in the entire electoral process, and free and equal access to public media for all. Politics is not a fight, but a contest, in which all actors have to accept the rules.

The way to peace

Dialogue is the best antidote to conflict. Dialogue has to be universal, encompassing all minorities, political, ethnic or social, young people and women, and to embody the cardinal virtues of tolerance, humility and forgiveness. Tolerance is the acceptance of the other in his difference. Humility involves accepting that we are not alone in society, whether domestic or international, and that we cannot always be right. We have to accept our errors, and admit when others are right. Forgiveness is a *sine qua non* of all national reconciliation. If we cannot forget – and it may be right never to forget – we must at least forgive the wrongs that may have been done to us, and recognize the harm we may have done. One side must ask for forgiveness, the other must forgive.

The personal and group estrangement produced by ethnically or religiously based conflict is too often ignored in the post-conflict situation. As a result, in the absence of dialogue, competing narratives of conflict between religious, ethnic or other identity groups tend to magnify and feed off each other, increasing the possibility that conflict will reignite. Until the cycle of recriminations about the past is broken, revival of violent conflict remains highly likely. Practitioners of conflict management around the world are discovering that there is a way out of this trap of the past. It involves sustained dialogue, nurtured by skilled facilitators, focused on the future, and connected to concrete action plans for reducing fears and differences.

Essential to this process is the right team, comprising not only government leaders and legislators but also people from civil society; facilitators to lead the dialogue, who often will have initially to come from outside; a safe place in which to conduct the dialogue, which often will have to be guaranteed by peacekeepers or other military; creation of a common vision of the future; and acknowledgement of differences not only between ethnic groups

but also within them. Finally, dialogue must lead to an agenda of concrete action for transforming societies and building peace.

Parliaments around the world, with their traditions of debate and constructive dialogue, can be expected to reach out to support dialogue among opposing ethnic and religious groups in zones of conflict.

Adjusting external interventions to national priorities

One key issue is the relationship between international and external actors on the one hand and domestic actors on the other. Donors tend to channel their support in the form of time-bound projects without a strategic framework or long-term commitment to peacebuilding. Despite lip service paid to local ownership there is a disconnect between external programmes and national priorities. External actors consistently neglect institutional and capacity building, which are recognized as central to peacebuilding. In the absence of a strategic peacebuilding framework, external interventions are often uncoordinated and fragmented. Accordingly there is an important role for the IPU and parliamentarians around the world in supporting better alignment of international and internal strategies and responses.

Usually donors predetermine what they will fund, which may not necessarily be what the situation warrants, but countries emerging from conflict are obliged just to receive. There should be more dialogue on donor participation, more awareness of the need to agree with the recipients what reconstruction components need to be addressed.

This will involve two different sets of parliamentarians. In the donor countries, with strong peacebuilding programmes and resources, work needs to be done domestically to raise public interest and awareness of the nature of peacebuilding challenges, and of the need for increased and sustained support for peacebuilding operations. For the parliamentarians in the recipient countries, the important role they can play is to ensure that there is greater accountability on the part of donors in their support to damaged countries. It has been proposed that the IPU should use its existing procedures to encourage parliaments in fragile and post-conflict countries to invite major external actors to discuss their programmes and the alignment of them with nationally defined priorities. Preliminary results from the implementation of this proposal could be presented and reviewed at a conference on the role of parliaments in crisis situations being organized by UNDP for late 2005 or early 2006.

In the ensuing debate, the following conclusions emerged:

- The IPU could recommend to each parliament present in the hearing that it should allocate a national day when it would debate three points: non-proliferation of nuclear weapons (too often, this issue has become the property of the government, with too few other people aware of the issues); communications and dialogue (improving how parliamentarians talk to electors, and bringing transparency and accountability to parliamentary proposals); peacebuilding with a multifaceted approach (parliamentarians must claim ownership of peacebuilding and non-proliferation of arms).
- There is an urgent need to involve women in peacebuilding. They are among the leading sufferers in conflict situations, and their voice, and their unique perspective, should be heard as efforts are made to re-establish peace. Women should participate not only in elections but in the entire process leading up to the actual election.
- Parliamentarians have a duty to communicate with their electors about the need to ensure that sustained attention is paid to countries when their conflict is over. With the

tendency of the media to headline conflict but ignore reconstruction, there is a danger that voters will not understand that much still remains to be done.

- Communication between parliamentarians and their electorates needs to be two-way. Parliamentarians should not fear that their electorates will inevitably take that view that "charity begins at home." On the contrary, it is often the voters who urge their representatives to ensure that aid must go to troubled countries, because voters understand the risk of ignoring them.
- The arms race is the result of countries' fear of external threats: if countries feel safe, they will not enter the race, but instead will invest resources in improving the standard of living of their peoples. On the other hand, arms-producing countries and companies seek to ignite wars in order to increase their sales and their profits.
- Enormous military spending is taking place in spite of famine, illiteracy, poverty and galloping deterioration of environmental conditions plaguing whole continents, and is the result of the era's new strategic doctrines that permit preventive wars, intervention and coercion. Until recently, such actions were abhorred and rejected by the majority of nations, but now they are elevated to legal means of policy-making.
- International law and the United Nations Charter have been proclaimed to be outdated and the United Nations itself expendable. Democratic institutions are facing mounting pressure from forces refuting morality and equity, and attempting to dismantle rules of international conduct to create a new world of unlimited domination through coercion. To derail those assaults and to bring the world back to the fold of normality is the urgency of the present time. It should be the paramount task of the United Nations and parliaments to prevent illegal use of force, ban coercion, combat international terrorism, and impose control on decisions by the executive branch on strategic doctrines, build-up of armed forces and arms development.
- It is urgent to ensure compliance with the United Nations Charter and with general principles of international law and order, and to stop revision and abandonment of valid international agreements on arms reduction and control.
- The United Nations is today in dire need of vigorous support from parliaments. Parliaments must resolutely defend both in their own countries and internationally the principles of multilateralism, international law and respect for the United Nations and its decisions.
- But parliaments and the IPU need in turn more United Nations assistance and support when defending these immutable values. Attempts at coercive actions and neglecting the United Nations Charter by the governments generally have potentially disastrous domestic repercussions, notably attempts to put parliaments under a tight rein, converting them into weak-minded rubber stamping machines for arbitrary decisions.
- A major factor in bringing stability back to a country is the holding of elections, which has to follow the strictly military aspect of peacekeeping as soon as possible. It might even be argued that it is better to hold imperfect elections relatively early rather than waiting for perfection. Establishment of fair, transparent and democratic elections is an iterative process and the elections will improve with time. However, nor can the elections be rushed: certain minimum basic standards have to be observed, such that the population can accept the results as fundamentally fair.

Parliamentary Hearing

From disarmament to Lasting Peace, Defining the Parliamentary Role

(United Nations Headquarters, ECOSOC Chamber, 19-20 October 2004)

PROGRAMME

Tuesday, October 19th 2004

10:00 - 10:30 Opening session – Introductory remarks by:

Senator Sergio PÁEZ, President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union;
Ms. Louise FRÉCHETTE, Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations;
Mr. Jean PING (Gabon), President of the General Assembly.

10:30 - 13:00 Session I - Strengthening international regimes for arms control and disarmament

Mr. Nobuyasu ABE, United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs;
The Honourable Douglas ROCHE, Canada;
H.E. Enrique BERRUGA, Permanent Representative of Mexico to the United Nations;
Mr. Philipp FLURI, Deputy Director of the Geneva Centre for Democratic Control of Armed Forces - DCAF;

- The impasse in inter-governmental negotiations;
- Ratification and implementation of international instruments. Democratic oversight of the security sector;
- Urgent measures to counter the threat posed by weapons of mass destruction;
- Specific approaches to curbing small arms and light weapons;
- Making the voice of women heard.

15:00 – 18:00 Session II - Peace-keeping in the 21st century: needs and objectives

Mr. Hédi ANNABI, UN Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations;
The Honourable Olivier KAMITATU, President of the National Assembly, Democratic Republic of the Congo;
H.E. Adam THOMSON, Deputy Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom to the United Nations;
Mr. William O'NEILL, Brookings Institution.

- Overview of today's peace-keeping operations
- The evolving role and mission of peace-keeping operations

- The political and budgetary requirements for peace-keeping operations
- Interaction between peace-keeping missions and national parliamentary institutions
- Lessons learnt for enhanced parliamentary support

Wednesday, October 20th 2004

9:30 – 12:00

Session III - An integrated approach to peace-building

Mr. Danilo TÜRK, UN Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs;
 The Honourable Guy NZOUBA-NDAMA, President of the National Assembly, Gabon;
 H.E. José Luis GUTERRES, Permanent Representative of Timor-Leste to the United Nations;
 Dr. Necla TSCHIRGI, Vice-President, International Peace Academy;
 Ambassador George WARD, Director of Professional Training Program, United States Institute of Peace

- Prevention and the vital need for local action
- Facilitating national reconciliation and post-conflict reconstruction
- Basic steps to ensure free and fair elections
- The special role of women

12:15 – 13:00

Round-up of discussions: conclusions and recommendations.

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