

On February 11, at the initiative of Brazil, this month's Council President, the Security Council held an Open Debate on the "Intersection between Security and Development." The debate was presided over by Brazilian Foreign Minister Antonio de Aguiar Patriota and attended by numerous distinguished delegates, ambassadors, and a large number of foreign ministers. Among the speakers was Eugene-Richard Gasana, the Permanent Representative of Rwanda and Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), who asserted the PBC's ability to help turn the discussions at-hand into concrete actions in conflict-ridden societies. UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon also opened the debate with a statement affirming the need for the UN to strengthen its coordination, to address the devastating role of small arms in organized crime, and to recognize the key role of women in advancing social and economic development.

The World Bank, represented by Sarah Cliffe, also briefed the Council. Many distinguished speakers reiterated the important role the World Bank plays in advancing development in low-income countries, subsequently raising the security level in such societies. Furthermore, Ms. Cliffe gave a statement discussing what the World Bank believes are the four tracks to improving deficits in security and development as well as seven guidelines to strengthen coordination and provide greater levels of peace and education. The four tracks are: an increase in capacity for justice reform, adjustment to internal assistance reform, regional approaches to support political convening capacities with regional institutions, and marshalling financial resources of low, middle, and high income countries. The seven guidelines mentioned by Ms. Cliffe consist of: changing security and development linkages, implementing historical timelines for institutional and government changes, the necessity for early results to restore confidence in governments, prioritization of institutional change (especially elections), the necessity for national innovations for institution building, and a call for practical program tools at the national level.

There were several recurring themes that emerged throughout the debate. The following issues received a general consensus from the parties to the debate: security and development are interlinked and mutually reinforcing (supported by the assertion that not a single low-income state has yet to accomplish a Millennium Development Goal); coherence is vital to development and security; peacekeepers should not and cannot take over tasks that others are more qualified to do; it is essential to respect international law as well as human rights; more emphasis should be placed on women playing an active role in the development process.

Disarmament and demobilization were mentioned extensively by Bosnia and Herzegovina and Costa Rica. Bosnia and Herzegovina stated that each individual state must work towards peace and stability in order to achieve the desired level of security and development. The Costa Rican delegation explained that only after these have been reached can successful disarming and demobilizing take place. The Foreign Minister of Costa Rica stressed the importance of disarmament stating that if 10 percent of the worldwide expenditure of military would go towards Millennium Development Goals, the international community would be close to completing them. He assured the participants that the Arms Trade Treaty is an intricate part to achieving the sought-after peace, security, and development.

Global Action welcomes the Council's initiative on drawing a connection between security and development, especially the particular emphasis on the full participation of women in advancing social and economic development as well as the focus on the arms trade and other disarmament-related issues. Although development does not fall under the Council's mandate, it is nonetheless important to recognize its intersection with other issues of peace and security for which the Council is responsible.