

## **Security Council Open Debate on Post-Conflict Institution Building**

January 21, 2011

Under the leadership of this month's president, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Security Council took up the issue of post-conflict institution building in an open debate forum on Friday, January 21. Each of the fifteen Council members, as well as non-members of the Security Council, offered comprehensive statements on the importance of institutions in cultivating public trust and support in post-conflict societies. Bosnia-Herzegovina has pressed this issue of institution building due to its own peacebuilding experience in the aftermath of war and, as such, has shown impressive leadership.

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, the Vice Prime Minister of Timor-Leste (representing the Group of 7+, a group representing post-conflict-affected countries) and Peter Wittig (current Chairperson of the Peacebuilding Commission) all addressed the Council providing background briefings on the current status of peacebuilding and institution building from a UN, national and sub-committee perspective, respectively. The Secretary-General's statement stressed three main points: national ownership of the process through which already-existing institutions are built upon, the full empowerment of women and other civil society groups and development of country-specific methods to avoid a single plan to be applied universally. Ambassador Wittig, speaking first in his capacity as Chairman of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) and then as the German representative, pointed out the need for further development of the institution-building capacities of the PBC. More specifically, he argued in favor of identification of crucial institutions that will best work within the national capabilities, strengthening of international and national partnerships and more sustainable funding plans.

As was made evident through the Secretary-General's statement, the three main points of consensus among the vast majority of the delegations were: national ownership of the institution building process; full inclusion of women's groups, the private sector and civil society in post-conflict institution building; and avoidance of a 'one-size-fits-all' approach. Furthermore, another commonality was the call for a greater and more prominent advisory role for the PBC as well as improved, up-front financing for peacekeeping missions. Likewise, the terms 'peacekeeping' and 'peacebuilding' were noted as simultaneous and complementary processes as a means to sharpen tools for peace, rather than sequential processes whereby 'peacebuilding' occurs only after so-called 'peacekeeping' is complete. It was noted that the blue helmets are peacebuilders as much as they are peacekeepers. The Nigerian delegation, along with its German counterpart, made a specific note that institutions reach beyond strictly 'government' to the entirety of the social fabric representing all the ways through which the state interacts with its people.

Global Action and its women, peace and security partners are pleased to report that the United States, Germany, India, Brazil and Portugal were among those delegations that made specific references to the indispensable role of women in post-conflict institution building. The empowerment of women, along with other traditionally marginalized groups, is imperative for more effective peacebuilding, to deliver core government functions and to provide the support necessary for national institution building.