

OFFICE OF THE SPECIAL ENVOY OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL FOR THE GREAT LAKES REGION

Eight Session of the General Assembly Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals:

Conflict Prevention, Post-Conflict Peace building and Promotion of Durable Peace, Rule of Law and Governance

Remarks by Mrs Mary Robinson UN Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region of Africa 6 February, 2014 Trusteeship Council Chamber United Nations New York

I. Introduction

Excellency Mr. Casaba Korosi, Permanent Representative of Hungary to the United Nations and co Chair of the Open Working Group

Your Excellency Mr. Macharia Kamau, Permanent Representative of Kenya to the United Nations and co Chair of the Open Working Group,

Excellencies Members of the Open Working Group,

Distinguished guests,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Thank you for inviting me to address the 8th Session of the Open working Group which marks the final stage of a year long comprehensive, thorough and inclusive process of stock taking. You have accomplished a lot in the last few months. I followed closely the discussion on climate change last month, and on equality and women's empowerment this session. Both are highly relevant to our theme today.

I commend you for your impressive work and look forward to a successful completion of your mandate as you prepare for consensus building in the coming months leading up to your report to the 68th General Assembly of the United Nations.

Let me also extend my appreciation to the Technical Support Team for the excellent issues brief which they have prepared. It offers a comprehensive analysis and a well researched reference document.

I am honoured to have this opportunity to share a few thoughts on the post 2015 sustainable development goals.

Co-Chairs, Excellencies,

You have asked that I speak on the issue of Conflict prevention, post conflict peace building and the promotion of durable peace, rule of law and governance.

The late Madiba, Nelson Mandela once said : "Peace is the greatest weapon for development that any person can have."

This statement clearly encapsulates the notion that peace is an important enabling condition for sustainable development. Furthermore, the relationship between peace and development is on a continuum; there can be no peace without development, no development without peace, and neither can be achieved without human rights and the rule of law.

In the post 2015 agenda we need to ensure that we can achieve decisive breakthroughs on poverty eradication in all its dimensions, on achieving greater equality, and on ensuring we live within nature's boundaries while advancing human development. I would assert that this can only be achieved where there is peace and stability.

Peaceful and stable societies based on democratic governance, including the rule of law, benefit from higher levels of growth, more jobs, lower levels of poverty and higher rates of investment in sustainable development.

It is worth noting that while the Millennium Declaration emphasizes the critical role of peace as fundamental for human well-being, the MDG framework exhibited significant weaknesses, in its failure to account for peace and security, including freedom from fear of violence, oppression, and injustice and the urgency for disaster risk reduction, to both protect past and facilitate future development gains.

The nexus between peace, stability, human rights and development has never been more evident than today. The gap in MDG achievement between conflict-affected

and other developing countries is large and increasing. Achievement of the MDGs has been hampered by violence, conflict, a lack of rule of law and weak institutions.

Within this context the Secretary-General's High-level Panel on the post-2015 agenda recognized "peace and good governance as core elements of wellbeing, not optional extras", as a "universal agenda for all countries" and as one of five transformative shifts that needs to take place in the post-2015 period.

This was further emphasized during "The Global Thematic Consultation on Conflict, Violence and Disaster, and the Post-2015 Development Agenda," where participants noted that the impact of conflict, violence, and disaster on development is a universal issue; it should not be perceived as a problem only of fragile and conflict-affected countries. This has become evident with the changing nature of conflict, which has not only affected fragile countries. In the Arab Spring we witnessed popular uprisings in middle-income countries, meanwhile there has been an increasing trend of election-related violence, and increased competition over natural resources, particularly in light of the increasing impacts of climate change.

The High-Level Panel therefore advised against the 'special case scenario' in which peripheral 'enabler' goals are agreed for fragile and conflict-affected poor countries. They emphasized that the post-2015 development framework must aim for universal goals to which all states and peoples are accountable.

Furthermore, the consultations were unanimous in the call for the post-2015 agenda to address the causes and consequences of conflict, violence and disasters. They proposed an integrated and comprehensive, human security centered and human rights-based approach to conflict, violence, and disaster to guide the post-2015 agenda, as these share many root causes, such as poor governance, weak institutions, inequalities, climate change impacts and poor natural resource management. I fully support this approach. I also fully share the view that girls and women are central to tackling conflict and promoting development.

Therefore, in aiming for a peaceful society, the focus should be on dealing not only with direct forms of violence, but also indirect structural violence, including in relation

to manipulation of gender, masculinity and femininity that fosters physical, sexual or psychological violence which may become accepted in society to its detriment.

Eliminating structural violence requires the elimination of barriers in access to education, health, food, water, land and decent work, as well as the elimination of socio-cultural systems that perpetuate or condone violence.

Additionally, the High-Level Panel unanimously endorsed the UN System Task Team report, "Realizing the Future We Want for All", which calls for the inclusion of 'peace and security' as a fourth dimension of the post-2015 development architecture.

In adding Rule of Law as a crucial element, I speak as a former member of the Commission on Legal Empowerment of the Poor and strongly support the "urgent call to the Member States of the United Nations to declare now that justice, the rule of law, and legal empowerment are essential principles in the new global development framework". In that statement, we define Rule of Law by three principles: "First, the law is superior to, and thus binds, the government and all its officials. Second, the law must respect and preserve the dignity, equality, and human rights of all persons. To these ends, the law must establish and safeguard constitutional structures necessary to build a free society in which all citizens have a meaningful voice in shaping and enacting the rules that govern them. Finally, the law must devise and maintain systems to advise all persons of their rights, and it must empower them to fulfil just expectations and seek redress of grievances without fear of retaliation". Then we conclude as follows "By concentrating on five priorities—access to information, legal identity, rights to land and property, legal participation, and legal services—the new framework can ensure that no one is left behind".

It is evident that in learning the lessons from the MDGs and the impact that violence and conflict affected countries have had on the achievement of the MDGs, the post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals must include clear goals and targets related to peace, rule of law and governance.

Let me further emphasize the point that 'peace, rule of law and governance issues are interlinked and mutually reinforcing' and are critical 'enablers of sustainable

development in their own right,' by drawing on my current experience, as UN Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region of Africa.

II. The Impact of Conflict on Development

The link between economies and conflict in the Great Lakes region has come under increasing scrutiny in recent years, as it has become clear that violent conflicts have a devastating impact on the region's economy and the livelihoods of its peoples

The region is resource rich. The mineral wealth of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) alone includes uranium, tin, oil, coal, copper, coltan, diamonds and gold. It is potentially one of the richest countries. Meanwhile in Uganda it is estimated that the recently discovered oil resources in the Albertine Graben region, estimated at 3.5 billion barrels of oil equivalent reserves, could generate anywhere between USD 1 and 2 billion annually to the Government of Uganda, once full production operations commence towards the end of the decade, and could potentially add up the equivalent of 5% of GDP to the government's domestic financing envelope. Other countries including -but not limited to-Tanzania, Zambia, Kenya are also well endowed. The potential for renewable energy including hydro, solar and geothermal, is enormous if the investment is forthcoming, and would provide a better future for the region.

However, despite its natural and mineral wealth, the Great Lakes region is one of the largest recipients of overseas development assistance (ODA), accounting for around 35% of total ODA received in Sub-Saharan African since 2005. In 2011, the countries signatories to the International Conference for the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) received \$16.8 billion in ODA, with DRC, Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi alone accounting for \$11.4 billion that same year. Per capita income and human development indicators in the DRC are among the lowest in the world and lack of development is a key driver of acute vulnerabilities and limited resilience in many parts of the country. The DRC is currently the fifth largest recipient of humanitarian aid in the world. Some 6.3 million Congolese require food and agricultural support and some 2.5 million children are affected by acute malnutrition.

This has been due to the ongoing conflicts in the region, which have severely undermined development.

The Great Lakes Region has been characterized by recurrent intra- and inter-state power-based, resource-based, and identity/ethnic based types of conflicts. The sources of conflict are intimately related to development issues, understood broadly to include political, economic and social development and issues of governance, human security, and sustainability. Currently it is estimated that there are more than 33 armed groups operating in eastern DRC.

The impact of violence on various dimensions of sustainable development is significant, long-term and occurs at the macro, community and individual levels. A country with low levels of human development has more difficulty improving institutions, increasing productivity and accelerating growth and decent job creation.

This not only heightens the risk of violent conflict, potentially trapping a country in a vicious cycle, but also leaves the country vulnerable to the impact of natural disasters. Natural disasters, many, but not all of which are climate related are estimated to have cost \$2.5 trillion this century. Conflict affected countries tend to suffer the most impact since they do not have the ability to adequately respond to these climate change challenges.

The number of indirect victims of violence during conflict is also much larger than the number of direct victims.

Conflict and violence have significant impact beyond a country's borders, through forced migration, humanitarian crises, pollution, communicable diseases, terrorism, piracy, organized crime or trafficking in humans, drugs, arms or natural resources. This increases the risk of regional instability as evidenced by the Great Lakes Region and impedes sustainable development.

The examples from the Great Lakes Region clearly illustrate that peace, rule of law and good governance are crucial for achieving sustainable development. An important step was taken in 2013 when eleven countries in the region adopted a UN-

brokered accord, The Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework, aimed at stabilizing the DRC and the region, which encompasses commitments at the national, regional and international levels to bring peace and stability to the eastern DRC and the region. After many years of conflict and fragility it has created a "Framework of Hope." It aims to tackle root causes, ensure that refugees can safely return, deal with conflict minerals and development issues to truly demonstrate peace dividends. It aims to have an inclusive bottom-up approach, involving historically marginalized groups such as women.

It recognizes that the drivers of today's conflict require new approaches that bring together the organs of state as well as civil society and the private sector to collaboratively address challenges of peace and development. The Plan of Action adopted by Heads of State and Government last week during the AU Summit in Addis, to support the implementation of the PSC Framework, recognizes that the solution to these challenges does not lie solely in the hands of the governments of the region. It promotes, throughout the implementation process, collaborative partnerships between various stakeholders in the Great Lakes region.

III. Drivers of Peace that Impact on Sustainable Development

As previously mentioned, achieving peace and eradicating violence entails progress on many different dimensions and goes beyond the absence of violence. It must be comprehensive and multidimensional.

Specific strategies that can be implemented include:

Creating responsive, transparent and inclusive governance that addresses the structural causes of conflict, violence and lack of safety. For example, decentralized, rights-based and participatory decision-making structures and social dialogue, with direct involvement of marginalized communities, can help reduce the risk of violence by providing political space to address grievances and aspirations.

Promoting dialogue between the organs of state, civil society and the private sector is essential for enhancing governance, transparency and accountability. Increasing transparency in the flow of public funds, and accountability for how revenues are distributed by the government would increase people's trust in government institutions. I was delighted to help launch the Women's Platform for the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the DRC and the Region at the recent AU Summit, to ensure that the work of women's groups is both visible and resourced.

Guaranteeing citizens' right to access to public information would also increase people's trust in government institutions. Free, independent and pluralistic media, including local community media, is important for promoting dialogue, peace and reconciliation.

Inclusive economic governance, growth and development, such as equitable, transparent and accountable management of natural resources; combating youth unemployment; equitable distribution and access to social services and extension of social protection floors; wealth-sharing and the fair distribution of resources, are important components of peace consolidation.

Conflict prevention, transformation and resolution, and peacebuilding efforts channelled through inclusive local and national institutions within infrastructures for peace have proven to be effective.

Finally, in compliment to the various strategies, the international development community should work more collaboratively to ensure coordination and coherence of efforts to address the peace, development and human rights challenges in a comprehensive and holistic manner.

IV. Integration of Stable and Peaceful Societies into the Post-2015 Development Agenda

A sustainable Development Goals agenda needs to be transformational; encouraging transitions to sustainable economies and societies by all, and supporting developing countries with the means to make those transitions.

In terms of integrating issues of stable and peaceful societies in the post-2015 development agenda several reports have proposed goals and targets on peace, rule of law and governance, while others have proposed mainstreaming across other development goals, targets and indicators. The latter approach is due to the acknowledgement of the structural nature of the underlying causes of conflict, violence and insecurity.

As stated in the report of the High-level Panel on the post 2015 agenda, peace and gender should not be confined to specific goals. Peacebuilding, violence prevention, rule of law, equality and social cohesion must cut across all development goals. I strongly recommend that both approaches should be taken.

Although the case to explicitly include peace, rule of law and governance goals and targets seems compelling, I am aware that there is not yet consensus on this issue. One of the challenges mentioned is the perceived problem in measuring peace, rule of law and governance.

However, it is important to note that measurement of these indicators is not only feasible, but a number of core indicators related to these concepts have already been defined through international processes and are in use at the national and international levels. For aspects that traditionally have been harder to measure or where there have been less focused efforts, some indicator proposals exist, and robust monitoring processes are feasible. Under the Peace, Security, and Cooperation Framework for the Great Lakes, benchmarks and indicators have been agreed at the regional and national level and this is a monitoring process to review progress under the plan of action.

Where there are gaps, capacity building is key and the international community should continue to offer its support to the strengthening of national statistical systems.

It is important to note that within this process, national ownership over the development of indicators on peace, governance and rule of law and support for the capacities of national institutions, are central to measuring these issues in the context of the post-2015 agenda.

V. Conclusion

We must acknowledge that the eradication of extreme poverty cannot be achieved if parts of our world continue to be wracked by violent conflict and fragility, and by gross inequality, including that based on gender.

Resolving and preventing conflicts and violence, protecting women and children from their impacts, and ensuring the resilience of communities to conflict, violence and disaster are fundamental to human progress and integral to sustainable development.

In conclusion, it is clear that long-term commitment is needed for sustainable peace and development; tackling the root drivers of violence and conflict is crucial; measuring peace progress is a complex task but it can be done; and targets and accountability frameworks are being developed, which can measure progress.

There is a framework of hope in the Great Lakes Region, let us also create a framework of hope to achieve the post 2015 development goals with durable peace, rule of law and governance.

Thank you.