

## **Remarks of ASG Mulet at a Seminar**

**co-organized by the Permanent Missions of Japan and Tanzania on “Inclusivity in Rebuilding States: Focusing Inclusivity of Peace Negotiations and its Impact on Post-Conflict Peace-building”**

**Thursday 6 June, 9:30-1:00pm**

- Excellencies, distinguished colleagues, ladies and gentlemen
- I would like to thank the Permanent Mission of Japan and the Permanent Mission of Tanzania for their kind invitation to participate in this seminar.
- Your two nations' consistent solidarity with people from around the world who are emerging from the scourge of war and who are struggling to rebuild their lives is well known to us all.
- Your significant troop contributions to UNMISS (for Japan) and to UNAMID and UNIFIL, among others, (for Tanzania) speak to this solidarity.
- I would also like to briefly mention here, in particular, your sizable financial contributions to Peacekeeping – Japan, as a matter of fact, contributes on its own 12,5% of the peacekeeping budget which makes it 2<sup>nd</sup> most important financial contributing country to Peacekeeping.
- It only befits two committed Peacekeeping contributors like you to also be on the forefront when it comes to conceptually advancing our thinking on how to strike the right balance between "stabilising" and "democratising" war-torn societies.
- The dangers of favouring one over the other are apparent. “Stabilising” these societies only and with an iron fist may silence political dialogue.

- At the same time, putting up for grabs each and every political decision in a society which is fragmented and traumatised by years of violence and war may carry the risk of a tension-overload and a re-ignition of violent conflict. This may so much be the case that some scholars have been advocating for delaying the first elections in post-war countries to avoid an overstretch that would jeopardise the still very fragile societal healing and peace processes.
- At the same time, peacekeeping in the sequencing of international post-conflict stabilisation efforts comes at a critical time when the groundwork for democracy development and longer-term peace and stability needs to be laid.
- How to reconcile this dilemma?
- Allow me, to suggest a few ideas to shed further light on this difficult question and, by doing so, to address the topic of this seminar which is inclusivity.

### **1) Peacekeepers as early Peacebuilders**

- *First*, to the casual observer, peacekeeping might appear to be only indirectly involved in the process of democratization. Peacekeepers could come to be seen as the ‘first-in’ in a post-conflict context and the ‘first out’ once the overall situation improves. Democracy, on the other hand, is a long-term and complex process, often requiring decades of efforts by national and international actors.
- However, the majority of UN peacekeeping mandates have either started or evolved into “multidimensional peacekeeping”, with integrated missions, comprising military, police and civilian components working to achieve political objectives.
- This has required a broadened focus from the more traditional and often purely security-related functions of peacekeepers, into a wide and

increasingly complex range of tasks. From South Sudan to Haiti, from DRC to Mali, from Kosovo to Afghanistan, UN Peacekeepers today assist political transitions, build institutions, help to strengthen the rule of law and support economic reconstruction. They supervise elections, disarm militias and former combatants and facilitate the delivery of humanitarian aid - all this under most challenging circumstances.

- Peacekeepers not only keep, but also help build peace and re-build states.
- In this regard, peacekeeping operations can bring to bear significant operational, logistical and political capacities. This can be through directly assisting with elections; provision of good offices by our SRSG's, supported by a comprehensive Political Affairs component; and our nearly 900 Civil Affairs officers deployed globally, often at the sub-national and community level, helping to keep local actors engaged in democratic processes. These elements, combined with the security guarantee of peacekeeping troops and police can realize a significant comparative advantage, both as a Mission, and in partnership with our colleagues in other Departments, international organizations and civil society.
- In sum, state-building is a long-term, generational effort. Multidimensional peacekeeping mandates with their wide variety of stabilisation and state-building tasks recognize the need for both stability and political inclusiveness post-conflict societies need to build strong institutions capable of managing societal conflict peacefully.

## **2) Peacekeeping creates the political space needed for inclusive political agreements**

- *Secondly*, peacekeeping remains above all a *political* instrument. One could say that peacekeeping is a technique designed to preserve the peace, however fragile, where fighting has been halted, and to create *political space*, for implementing agreements achieved by the peacemakers.
- In our latest mission, MINUSMA, the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali, our mandated tasks include among others support to a national political dialogue, the electoral process, and the extension of state authority. All of these imply consultation and where possible inclusion of all relevant political and societal actors who are willing to negotiate and implement the transitional roadmap adopted by the government of Mali.
- What does inclusivity mean in the context of UN peacekeeping? It certainly means that political agreements are built on the consent of the parties, on a common vision, and that the expectations between all involved in the agreement are aligned.
- Such inclusive political agreements hold a lot of promise. They are perceived as just, they generate stronger buy-in and ownership and are, therefore, more likely to lead to durable and sustainable solutions. Ultimately, we need to realize that any effort by the international community, no matter how extensive, can only work and take root if local stakeholders move the process forward.

### **3) Challenges to Political Inclusivity**

- Allow me to end with highlighting some of the challenges associated with fostering inclusive political processes.

- We all know that at the heart of the business of politics lay power and resources and the distribution of these two. With so much at stake, in a war-torn state where resources are up for grabs and institutions which otherwise would regulate the distribution of resources are missing, interest groups may have important incentives to ignore and spoil inclusive political processes.
- We, as the international community, need to continue to think about how we engage the local leadership in post-conflict countries, if democratic reforms potentially undermine the power base of these local leaders. What is our political strategy, what are our incentives, to make them buy into reforms? And more, how do we deal with spoilers, including the Talibans, Al-Shababs or M-23s of this world, who refuse to participate constructively in the peace process?
- At the same time, holding governments and elected officials accountable will constitute the other part of the equation. Our strong engagement on this front will have to include support to political parties and independent media, assistance in the development of legislative oversight and good governance processes, provision of enabling conditions for the emergence of a vibrant civil society, and providing the most basic guarantees of human rights, rule of law and safety.
- One thing remains certain. Including local authorities, national parliaments, civil society, women' and minority groups in broad-based political agreements combined with the security guarantees of peacekeeping troops and police, will contribute to addressing these challenges.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

- Countries have taken very different paths toward consolidation of peace and democratic practices. For some, it has been an effort to demilitarize politics while others have focused on depoliticizing state structures and services.
- Learning lessons from these experiences is a worthwhile endeavor and I thank the distinguished organizers of this event once again for giving us an opportunity to reflect about the importance of inclusive political processes when making peace and re-building states today. Thank you.