

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE

**UN NGO Committee on Sustainable Development**

October 5, 2005

**POST-CONFLICT RECONSTRUCTION AND STABILIZATION**

**FOUNDATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

INTRODUCTION BY CHAIRPERSON, ROMA STIBRAVY

- Information on Committee (registration, membership, website-[www.unngocsd.org](http://www.unngocsd.org))
- Introduction of Ambassador Anne Patterson, Deputy Permanent Representative of the United States to the United Nations (former US Ambassador in El Salvador, Colombia; expert on Inter-American Affairs, etc.)

Reference was made to a recent IMF Bulletin: “IMF’s Work in Postconflict Countries – Kick-starting Economies After the Dust has Settled” –The Chairperson, in introducing the speaker and the topic made reference to this article (volume 34, September, 2005) as dealing with the economic and financial infrastructure work of the Fund under the circumstances of today’s topic.

Reference was also made to the definition of “Sustainable Development,” as first referred to in the Brundtland Report.

**AMBASSADOR PATTERSON discussed the increasing importance of sustainable development in peacekeeping operations**

Facts:

- Dramatic increase in conflicts since the end of the Cold War, especially since 9/11 (case: Afghanistan)
- Patterson’s personal experience in *El Salvador* (role of foreign guerillas as an obstacle to peacekeeping and development – parallel to Afghanistan), and in *Colombia*. There are on-going efforts to increase the attention of international community to help bring a resolution to this long-standing conflict.
- Recent peacekeeping efforts: international community’s engagement in Afghanistan
- From 1984 – 1989 there have been 18 Peacekeeping operations, since 2000 alone another **19** have been started
- Peacekeeping in effect has become an industry.
- Sub-regional conflicts make up for an important proportion within conflicts today. Many of these conflicts are not between countries, but also internal.

- Traditional diplomacy offers inadequate responses. Civil society, inter-governmental institutions, the UN, etc. are today more apt to respond.

#### Successful Peacekeeping/Sustainable Development:

- Parties of conflict must be and feel actively involved (case of *El Salvador* highlighted by Ambassador Patterson)
- Vital role of local organizations and civil society should be acknowledged and encouraged.
- Negotiated peace agreements are not enough: simultaneous to peace-building must be the provision of human security, basic governmental institutions, an inclusive political process, and the protection of human rights.
- Economic implications: promoting the economic growth rate as necessary for further development, reducing the risk of conflict by reducing dependence on ODA, external interventions, improving the trade balance.
- Coordination role of the UN representatives is having a greater impact than any one national ambassador.

#### WHAT DOES U.S. DO TO PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT?

- An enormous number of resources are devoted to reducing the number of conflicts and to avoiding them in the future on one hand, and on the other hand to also increase the effectiveness of reconstruction and rebuilding efforts; this means working at the same time on political, economic, and social fronts.
- 2004 the U.S. established a peace and security management mechanism to help in the rebuilding in African countries.

#### ACTIONS TAKEN BY US TO REDUCE POVERTY

- There is the acknowledged clear link between conflicts and poverty
  - Lack of formal, acknowledged property rights(Fernando De Soto) poses problems for the poorest of the poor to get out of poverty. Property rights must be established so they can not only be passed on to future generations, but also to establish credit and the ability to borrow.
  - The World Bank shows that the trade barriers erected by poor countries are much higher, sometimes twice as high, as the rest of the world.
  - Research and experience shows that corruption is a huge obstacle to post-conflict growth and development. There must be a greater emphasis on the fight against corruption as acknowledged by a recent UN resolution.
- 
- US revamped foreign aid programs
  - US legislation increased foreign aid by \$10 billion to \$20 billion.
  - Support for greater diversity of trade agreements in Africa
  - Law on Growth in Africa signed by President Bush
  - Negotiation of Free Trade Agreement with Southern African countries

- Negotiations with local unions
- HIV/AIDS emergency aid: USD 15 billion (within 5 years) to fight against AIDS

All of the above constitute economic initiatives to decrease conflicts in the future.

#### US ACTIVELY SUPPORTS UN WORK FOR STABILIZATION/ RECONSTRUCTION

- Support for Peacekeeping troops
- Improvement of stabilization training such as after the conflict in Iraq
- Office for Reconstruction and Stabilization created
- Institutionalization of the combined sustainable development, peace-building and establishment of market economies.

Recognizing CAUSES for violence: instability, lack of development

- A crucial element is the change in the way ODA is administered and the criteria for its use(i.e., good governance, democratic, transparent institution building)/
- Identification of Best Practices for development as, for example, natural resource development.
- Continuing establishment and expansion of UN Peacekeeping Missions.
- Peace-building Support Office to be set up by UN.
- Dealing with the problem of raising international attention to the importance of Police Academies, etc. during Peacekeeping operations.
- Help in recovery efforts and in making countries to be self-sustaining

Active thinking is ongoing as to how to implement new approaches

Determined efforts to better development approaches in conflict areas, especially in including considerations of sustainable development.

The crucial element of including and working with civil society in development work in conflict areas.

QUESTIONS:

- New Peace-building Commission: Does it have to do with new Human Rights Council?  
Why not put them together rather than separate?

ANSWER:

Integrating them has not been discussed, it has already been a very divisive issue. There will be two organizations for the moment.

- NGO's dispose of immense amount of knowledge/expertise all over the world, (future) role of them in Peacekeeping? Will there be an integration mechanism set up?

ANSWER:

NGO's dispose of a lot of information, NGO briefings are extremely useful, especially in trying to involve them more in the future. They are in any case highly appreciated.

- Coordination/integration of Peace-building within US government – offices within Pentagon? Inter-agency approach within UN efforts of Peace-building?

ANSWER:

Unless one has stabilization, functioning police troops in a region of conflict, there is no way for the US to leave Iraq, for instance. Therefore it has an immense incentive to integrate this also into the Pentagon's work, but there is a lack of both money, and people.

- Destabilization by drugs and crime both pre- and post-conflict observable (recent example Kosovo, drugs, arms, human trafficking)

ANSWER:

Role of drugs and corruption in destabilization known from Amb. Patterson's work in Colombia, similar situation in Afghanistan (Al Qaeda financed through drug trafficking), but it's hard to raise funds for taking up on this problem.

- Prevention of proliferation of arms

ANSWER:

World Summit's outcome document, some countries resistant to be forced to implementation of these policies.

- Role of CSD

ANSWER:

Each situation of conflict is different, expertise can be gained from each of them, CSD will be a forum of experts in individual situations to share experience, expertise.

- Emphasis should be put on sustainable peace, environmental implications of conflicts, among which is the role of water and sanitation.

ANSWER:

Ex. Nigeria: trade of timber to finance combat, environmental issue/activities to be considered more strongly in Peacekeeping/Sustainable Development.

- Conflict-initiating role of poverty not only due to poverty itself, but derives also from humiliation. Should aid be given in different way that does not exacerbate this humiliation?

ANSWER:

Conflict prevention is integrated in both U.S./UN aid programs (poverty reduction), as far as the right approach to intervention is concerned one needs to be prudent with decisions like who provides aid, who distributes.. to not reinforce conflicts with the aid.

- Institutionalize participation of NGOs

ANSWER:

UN institutionalized meeting Security Council, NGOs

- Post-conflict situation, programs for shelter (also for soldiers)

ANSWER:

Disarming soldiers, getting them back to villages, providing housing, allocation for them to return to civil society is a goal.

- Peace-building Commission: will it include least developed countries?

ANSWER:

Still in debate, considerable sympathy for this approach.

- Post-conflict/Sustainable Development in Millenium Development Goals, US .. (?)

ANSWER:

US government has done a lot for Africa in the past 5 years, emergency aid, HIV aid, trade benefits, debt relief; absolutely no recognition in World Community for that. There is often more criticism rather than recognition of what has been done and is being done.

- Shared asset agreements (arms, corruption), asset forfeiture, illicit funds, asset => adequately finance reconstruction/SD.

ANSWER:

Enormous fights between countries over this issue, very reluctant for giving them up, who should they be given to?

UN Crime Congress in Bangkok April 2005

- Women's issues in Peace-building (5<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Women, Peace & Security), does US have initiatives on post-conflict implication of women?

ANSWER:

Security Council in touch with NGOs, great consideration/progress in women's involvement in Peace-building, important future measure will be the appointment of female Peacekeepers to decrease incidents of sexual abuse in PK missions, more women in leading PK positions essential, according to Amb. Patterson.

- Best practices DPI/NGO conferences? Violence against women violence against human rights.

ANSWER:

Violence against women top priority for US, leading in this issue, not only in terms of domestic law (rigorous), raise conscience, then criminalize, then build up shelters, cooperation with NGOs.

*Very* successful in El Salvador, according to Amb. Patterson.

- Funding of Peace-building Commission, will it break down barriers?

ANSWER:

Lack of resources always comes up in SC when PK missions are to be established, Peacekeeping Budget crucial, PBC to search for donors in the future.

- Was PBC initially a US idea, or from other countries? Relationship PBC, Peacekeeping Forces? Interaction between those bodies?

ANSWER:

No US idea, but big enthusiasm for it because of post-conflict issues in Iraq. PBC to be supervised by SC, depending on how Secretariat develops PK support office.

- Venezuela's position in Peace-building

ANSWER:

Very disappointing, no constructive work in Peace-building, nor Human Rights Council, nor management reform, according to Amb. Patterson.

- Single greatest achievement/disappointment from World Summit outcome document?

ANSWER:

Oct. 5<sup>th</sup> 2005

Revolutionary reform of UN system (for instance, Board of Oversight etc), now reform to be implemented. Human Rights Council remains vague.