stated that private business should scrupulously abide by the relevant Security Council and General Assembly resolutions and other codes of conduct.[13]

Council members agreed on the need to build on the experience accumulated in managing economic factors as a source of conflict. The representatives of France and Benin expressed interest in the report of the inter-agency group established by the Secretary-General.[14] The representative of Romania suggested that the Secretariat put together a report highlighting the significance of the broader regional and global dimensions of the political economy of contemporary intra-State conflict. A major part of that report could focus on the political economy of post-conflict transformation since it was at that stage that business involvement could take on a really strong positive connotation.[15] The representative of Chile suggested that the report should focus on the complex interrelationships between the private sector and conflict and make recommendations on prevention and post-conflict reconstruction that could be taken up by the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council for implementation in future peace operations.[16]

Several speakers drew attention to the role of the United Nations in monitoring international business activity, illegal or legal. The representative of France said that it might be timely for the Council to systematize its approach for taking into account economic factors in conflict zones and crisis situations by the establishment of a mechanism using independent experts.[17]

The majority of the speakers welcomed the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme as a significant contribution to the maintenance of international peace and security.[18] The representative of China appreciated its contribution to severing the link between the illegal trade in diamonds and armed conflicts.[19]

Noting that the need for private sector involvement was particularly acute in conflict zones in

Africa, several Council members commended the New Partnership for Africa's Development, which had acknowledged the importance of creating the conditions for investment and business, and stressed the importance of international support for that initiative, particularly in the form of private investment in economic development.[20]

The representative of Algeria observed that, at the end of the emergency reconstruction phase of countries emerging from conflict, the international community was faced with a lack of any significant investment, which was the only thing that could lead to sustained and lasting growth.[21]

B. Role of civil society in post-conflict peacebuilding

Initial proceedings

Deliberations of 22 June 2004 (4993rd meeting)

At its 4993rd meeting, on 22 June 2004, the Security Council included in its agenda the item entitled "Role of civil society in post-conflict peacebuilding". The President (Philippines) drew attention to a letter dated 1 June 2004 from the representative of the Philippines, transmitting a background paper on the item.[22] Statements were made by all members of the Council and the representatives of Australia, Bangladesh, Canada, Egypt, Ireland, Japan, Nepal, Peru, the Republic of Korea, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Uganda.[23]

In his introductory statement, the Secretary-General noted that the growth of the partnership between the United Nations and civil society reflected the need for the latter to contribute to post-conflict decision-making in an era of globalization and State fragmentation. While welcoming the Council's efforts to strengthen its informal relations with civil society, he felt it was now necessary for the Council to deepen its dialogue and place its relationship with such groups on a more firm footing. He asked the Council to pay serious attention to the recommendations contained in

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[13] Ibid., p. 13.

[14] Ibid., p. 18 (France); and p. 22 (Benin).

[15] Ibid., p. 14.

[16] Ibid., p. 17.

[17] Ibid., p. 18.

[18] Ibid., p. 12 (Algeria); p. 13 (China); p. 14 (Romania); p. 16 (Chile); p. 17 (France); p. 19 (United States); p. 20 (Angola); p. 23 (Pakistan); p. 25 (Russian Federation); p. 26 (United Kingdom); and p. 28 (Brazil).

[19] Ibid., p. 13.

[20] Ibid., p. 12 (Algeria); p. 21 (Angola); p. 26 (Russian Federation, United Kingdom); and p. 29 (Brazil).

[21] Ibid., p. 12.

[22] S/2004/442.

[23] The representative of South Africa was invited to participate but did not make a statement.

the report of the Panel of Eminent Persons on United Nations-Civil Society Relations.[24] The Council, he added, should view inputs by civil society as a way to add quality and value to its decisions, rather than as attempts to usurp the role of governments.[25]

The President of the Economic and Social Council stated that non-governmental organizations were significant actors in crisis and post-crisis situations, and their number and diverse mandates made it essential for United Nations agencies to coordinate with them to ensure the coherence and impact of their combined efforts. She said that, through its subsidiary bodies, including the Commission on the Status of Women, the Economic and Social Council had established close contacts with non-governmental organizations and other private entities to discuss topics that the intergovernmental bodies were addressing. Furthermore, the ad hoc advisory groups on Guinea-Bissau and Burundi had engaged civil society organizations in their efforts to consolidate peacebuilding in those countries.[26]

The Secretary-General of CARE International noted that the central lesson of peacekeeping and conflict-resolution efforts was that many peace efforts faltered from the outbreak of local conflicts. To prevent such local conflicts from undermining national peace agreements, peacekeeping mandates needed to go beyond their traditional focus on the national level, to the heart of local communities. He urged the Council to demonstrate its leadership in the form of a strong presidential statement expressing its commitment to engage civil society representatives in all phases of peace processes.[27]

The Vice-President of the International Center for Transnational Justice stressed the need for direct access of civil society to the Council, not only in New York but also whenever the Council went on a mission to post-conflict countries, and expressed his strong support for the recommendations by the Panel of Eminent Persons on United Nations-Civil Society Relations. He stressed that peacebuilding missions and agencies also needed to be more open to the advice and involvement of local civil societies.[28]

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[24] See A/58/817 and Corr.1.
[25] S/PV.4993, pp. 3-4.
[26] Ibid., pp. 4-5.
[27] Ibid., pp. 5-7.
[28] Ibid., pp. 7-9.

Speakers, including Council members, agreed that most contemporary conflicts were complex in nature, requiring an integrated and coherent response, with civil society playing an increasingly important role. They shared the view that civil society not only had a role to play in providing humanitarian relief and advocating national reconciliation, but could also contribute towards identifying, understanding and addressing the root causes of conflict. While recognizing the critical role of civil society organizations, including local and global non-governmental organizations, at the national and local levels, several speakers also advocated their involvement at the regional level. Most speakers welcomed the report of the Panel of Eminent Persons, agreeing that improved collaboration with civil society was a necessity for the United Nations, and should be promoted to make peacebuilding activities more productive, sustainable and cost-effective.

Several speakers stressed that the main responsibility for conflict reconstruction, however, should be borne by the United Nations and other international and regional organizations, and the Governments concerned. Civil society organizations, for their part, should support the central role of the United Nations and enhance coordination and cooperation with its various agencies. The representative of China stated that civil society organizations should be guided by the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, as was expected from Governments.[29] The representative of Egypt emphasized that what was required in future were norms, rules and mechanisms that would set limits and determine the responsibilities of all partners.[30]

Several speakers shared the view that in order to preserve the strength of its contributions, it was important to respect civil society's independence from Government, while respecting the principle of sovereignty of States and non-interference in domestic affairs. The representative of the United States observed that civil society organizations could only flourish in societies where good governance and the rule of law were applied; where civil institutions were strong and civil and political rights were recognized; and where participation in the electoral process was

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[29] Ibid., p. 23.
[30] S/PV.4993 (Resumption 1), p. 4.

guaranteed, and where human rights and freedom of expression were accepted.[31]

Several speakers focused on how to empower civil society to become an even more active partner in peacebuilding, and generally agreed on the need to strengthen communication, in particular through consolidating the dialogue between the Council and civil society, with a view to establishing a two-way flow of information. Several speakers supported the recommendations of the Panel on making better use of Arria-formula meetings and field visits.[32] Several speakers also emphasized the need to strengthen the capacity of, and assistance to, civil society organizations so as to make those actors real and effective partners.

While speakers generally agreed on the role of the Security Council in strengthening cooperation between civil society and the United Nations, the representative of Bangladesh emphasized that the Economic and Social Council should be the lead institution in involving civil society organizations in post-conflict peacebuilding policy recommendations, by engaging non-governmental organizations effectively through its consultative mechanisms, its subsidiary commissions and its ad hoc advisory groups on post-conflict countries.[33] The representative of Nepal expressed the hope that the Council would work coherently with other United Nations organs and agencies, such as the Economic and Social Council, which had mandates and competence in the domain of development, and not usurp their roles.[34]

C. The role of civil society in conflict prevention and the pacific settlement of disputes

Initial proceedings

Decision of 20 September 2005 (5264th meeting): statement by the President

At its 5264th meeting, on 20 September 2005, the Security Council included in its agenda the item entitled "The role of civil society in conflict prevention and the pacific settlement of disputes". The President (Philippines) drew attention to a letter dated 7 September 2005 from the representative of the Philippines, transmitting a concept paper to guide the discussion.[35]

The Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs made a statement on behalf of the Secretary-General. The Council then heard briefings by the Executive Director of the European Centre for Conflict Prevention; the Chair of the Columbia University Seminar on Conflict Resolution and Faculty Coordinator of the Columbia University Conflict Resolution Network; and the founder and Executive Director of the African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes. Statements were made by all Council members and the representatives of Canada, Peru, Slovakia and Switzerland.[36]

The Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs read out a statement by the Secretary-General emphasizing the important role of civil society in conflict prevention. He noted that both the United Nations and regional organizations had to do more to tap into civil society's comparative advantages, namely a strong local presence and experience on the ground. He pointed out that civil society had the capability to identify new threats and concerns faster than the United Nations system could and the fact that they were indispensable in "track-two" and "people-to-people" diplomacy, which was often integral to successful post-conflict political and reconciliation processes. Civil society organizations could also reach parties on the ground that Governments could not reach, as well as complement the work of the United Nations by offering valuable analyses originating from the field. For those reasons, he further stated, civil society organizations would have an important role to play in the deliberations concerning the establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission. He urged Governments, international financial institutions, regional organizations and civil society to work

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[31] S/PV.4993, p. 17.

[32] Ibid., p. 11 (France); p. 13 (United Kingdom); p. 23 (China); p. 24 (Brazil); p. 28 (Germany); S/PV. 4993 (Resumption 1), p. 8 (Peru); and p. 15 (Canada).

[33] S/PV.4993 (Resumption 1), p. 11.

[34] Ibid., p. 17.

[35] S/2005/594.

[36] Denmark, Peru, Slovakia and Switzerland were represented by their respective Ministers for Foreign Affairs. Romania was represented by the State Secretary for Global Affairs. The United Republic of Tanzania was represented by the Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation. The representative of the United Kingdom spoke on behalf of the European Union.