

Mr. Gaspar Martins (Angola): I would like to start by thanking you very much, Madam, for presiding over this important debate. This is a very important contribution by Chile, especially following the very rich Arria-formula meeting that we had last Thursday. I would also like to thank Assistant Secretary-General Kalomoh for his contribution and Mr. Mark Malloch Brown, Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and Ms. Carolyn McAskie for their respective contributions to our debate. I trust that this meeting will contribute to a better conceptual understanding of the issue we are addressing today, particularly on the United Nations role in fostering national reconciliation and assisting countries emerging from conflict to establish the rule of law and justice, the pillars of genuine reconciliation. The lessons learned from peacekeeping operations in various regions of the world point to the need to further explore the linkages between peace, security and justice on the one hand and economic and social development on the other. The challenge ahead is, therefore, to promote a coherent and integrated approach involving early warning, conflict prevention, crisis management, conflict resolution and post-conflict national reconciliation and reconstruction.

Every society emerging from conflict faces the issue of addressing the human rights violations committed during the conflict. Accountability for those crimes is not only a question of justice for the victims and for those guilty of committing such crimes but also of looking forward to a future of justice. The criminal accountability for war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity is, therefore, a critical component of the process of national reconciliation. The international tribunals for Rwanda, Sierra Leone and the former Yugoslavia, as well as the International Criminal Court (ICC), are very important instruments in rebuilding the foundations of a society governed by the rule of law and fostering national reconciliation.

Lessons can be drawn from post-conflict national reconciliation processes that stem from national specificities. In fact, countries emerging from conflict have employed a variety of accountability mechanisms as alternatives to criminal prosecution. A national apology, reparations to the victims, international public pressure and shaming, truth and reconciliation commissions and outright amnesties have been applied as means to end conflicts and set in motion processes of national reconciliation. Each method can be effectively applied under the appropriate political conditions as a price to pay for the attainment of peace. These alternative mechanisms can be successful in fostering peace and national reconciliation if the societies are ready and prepared to engage in a meaningful process of national reconciliation and if the forces causing the divisions are effectively isolated.

Today's meeting takes place two years after the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding at a symbolic and highly meaningful ceremony, which put an end to the long war in Angola. This is also, therefore, an appropriate occasion to take stock of the achievements and of the challenges that lie ahead, especially in fostering national reconciliation. The signing ceremony I am referring to not only signalled the end of the war, a very difficult and painful period indeed in the history of the nation; it also marked the beginning of a process and of a period of rebirth for a reconciled nation in which people, irrespective of their past and free from war, can live together and face together the challenge of building the pillars of reconstruction to prevent a return to the past.

National reconciliation is an imperative, and an expression of the people's will translated into practice by the political determination of the Government of Angola and of UNITA to live within a pluralistic political framework under the rule of law. In this context of national reconciliation, the competent institutions granted an amnesty for crimes committed during the conflict. The candidates elected in the legislative elections on the list of UNITA and other political parties assumed functions in the national assembly, enjoying the rights, freedoms, guarantees, immunities and privilege provided for by law. Social welfare and social reintegration programmes are being implemented throughout the national territory and, in application of the relevant provisions of the general principle of national reconciliation, members of different political parties were invited to assume posts in the national reconciliation Government and in local administration. A political process was set in motion, conducive to the holding of general elections, as a step towards the consolidation of democratic institutions and the rule of law. Basically, post-conflict reconciliation in

Angola is being pursued as a real process of forgiveness and reintegration, in which Angolans are called upon to forgive but not to forget the divisions and the crimes committed during the conflict, in order to build a peaceful society, aware of past divisions — and of the dangers ahead if the programme collapses.

Angola's experience and that of other countries confirms that there is no preset approach to post-conflict national reconciliation and that each situation calls for specific solutions. Every process of national reconciliation must, however, be participative, must enjoy popular adherence and must be seen as a way for the entire nation to reconcile itself with the past and to build a better future.

The Security Council has, in recent years, contributed to various aspects of post-conflict national reconciliation. This is reflected in the measures and norms instituted for the protection of civilians in armed conflict; disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes in the context of peacekeeping operations; and strengthening of international criminal justice. Assistance and financing for reconstruction and reconciliation processes are critical; much more needs to be done in order to ensure the success of reconciliation in countries emerging from conflict.

This goal can be advanced through greater coordination within the United Nations system, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council especially, as well as the Secretariat, the agencies and the Bretton Woods institutions, as has already been noted. In that connection, we look forward to the Secretary-General's report on this theme, which I trust will help to fill a gap that seems to remain and has not yet been satisfactorily addressed or covered, as was hinted at again this morning by the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme.

Special attention should be given to the appropriate organ for coordinating post-conflict assistance, comprehensively assessing and meeting the needs of countries emerging from conflict, and coordinating the actions of all international actors assisting in the reconciliation and reconstruction processes, in order to ensure its efficiency and the success of the whole enterprise.

This debate addresses an important area of the agenda of our Council, which will deserve more attention in the future. In order to be successful, peacekeeping operations will have to be followed by well-conceived and implemented post-conflict programmes related to cross-cutting issues involving the areas which are covered by the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council, bringing about cooperation between those two organs. The consolidation of peace following a successful peacekeeping operation stands as one of the main challenges to be addressed by our Council. This is therefore a timely debate.

Let me end by commending you, Madame, for including this theme on your agenda.