

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now call on Mr. Mark Malloch Brown, Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme.

Mr. Malloch Brown: I am grateful for this invitation to address the Security Council on this subject, which is very close to the institutional heart of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

Let me frame my remarks in terms of the political economy of reconciliation and therefore talk a little bit about the politics, the issue of building democracy, how quickly to do it, the issue of other processes which can sometimes substitute for or supplement democracy as a means of achieving a national dialogue, and the critical issues that we keep on running into of the minority rights and the rule of law, as well as the role of other institutions, such as the police, who are so critical to sustained reconciliation.

I also want to say a word on the economics of reconciliation, because, while it may appear to be less important than the political or even the social dimensions, it is a lot harder to reconcile populations that have been in conflict in a context of economic austerity and the lack of jobs and growth than it is if you can achieve an economically dynamic situation. Again, I want to say something about that, and then briefly something about the institutional side of this — the question you have posed, Madame, in this debate today of what the United Nations can do — and therefore, of course, particularly a little advertisement for what UNDP seeks to do, as well as an observation on the role of the Security Council.

Turning first to the political dimensions and democracy. There is no bigger advocate across the United Nations for democracy than UNDP. We have long since concluded that it is at the heart of sustainable development. However, I have to say that, perhaps precisely because we are so enthusiastic about it, we are also cautious about introducing it too quickly and in too imperfect a way. We have come to recognize from experience that, while over time you have to try and shift the competition between different groups in a society from an armed competition to a peaceful and democratic one at the ballot box, nevertheless, if you rush that shift — if you move immediately to a democratic competition without addressing the underlying causes of conflict — you can indeed drive parties further apart. We have been very struck by the value of the cautious approach adopted in Afghanistan of moving directly to a recognized interim Government and to a Loya Jirga process in order to both build a consensus and then endorse a Constitution and only at the end of that process to direct elections.

We contrast that to processes that we have been very involved in in Cambodia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Haiti or Kosovo and recognize that there is real value in getting it right and taking the time to put in place the conditions for an electoral exercise which will pull people together rather than drive them further apart. I think we are all struggling with that now in the context of Iraq. We are very anxious to see that the democratic processes evolve in a way which allows the maximum direct representation possible, while ensuring that the different parties in that country are not driven apart by the exercise.

It is for that reason that we as an Organization have become very involved in the promotion of national reconciliation dialogues, both where a Parliament and an election do not yet exist and in many situations where there is a Parliament but the democratic process has somehow become narrowed or not fully representative of the elements in a country. We have seen, particularly in Latin America, starting with the aftermath of conflict in Central America, how the important role which a dialogue that brings together different civil society groups with the political leadership can, at the very least, supplement — and often, in some cases, temporarily substitute for — a more formal democratic process and can critically lay the groundwork for a later democratic exercise which will enjoy broader support.

As we have reviewed these national reconciliation processes, we have noticed that, on a number of occasions — in Haiti in 1987, in Zaire in 1991, and in Côte d'Ivoire in 2001 — there were struggling indigenous reconciliation processes which were, perhaps, fatally handicapped by

the lack of strong international support. With the value of hindsight, one sees that, possibly, the small sapling of the beginning of a reconciliation that might have avoided later conflict never grew into a stronger oak because there was not the right international support and encouragement. Equally, we have seen the vital role of civil society in both formal democratic exercises and in these national reconciliation dialogues as well, where the requirement of bringing as broad a range of opinion to the table as possible is absolutely critical.

Let me make one other observation on the political process, concerning the issue of minority rights. Too often in straightforward, quick, early elections after conflict, we see a winner-takes-all mentality develop where those who have lost at the ballot box — and perhaps had been the losers in the previous military conflict — feel further alienated from the situation and that their rights are not protected. Of course, this is a tremendous incentive to conflict's renewing. Indeed, in our *Human Development Report 2002* on democracy, we spent a lot of time arguing for a second generation of democratic reforms, where the issues of minority rights and more broadly of human rights, the issue of media freedom and the broader culture of democracy — where the vote exists in a much broader set of cultural and ethical values in a society about respecting each other's opinions and allowing the competition of ideas to take place in a free political exchange — are critical. We must not blind ourselves into believing that democracy consists solely of an exercise of the ballot box.

As we have just heard from Mr. Kalomoh, behind these issues lies the critical issue of justice and reconciliation. He made many important points on this and I do not want to repeat what he has said, except to observe that, from UNDP's experience — and, I must, say, in part my own as well — truth and reconciliation, a little bit like democracy, cannot be rushed. I have been very struck by the experiences of Chile and Argentina, as well as by that of South Africa, that, for this to be a genuine internal process — with a society feeling strong enough and harmonious enough to take on these issues in a thoroughgoing way — usually some time has to have elapsed. Democracy needs to be well established, and the feeling that the ghosts of the past can be revisited without risk to the democratic present takes time.

It is also, however, inevitable. I myself have yet to see what I would consider a full reconciliation after conflict where this process has not occurred. Thus, while, arguably, it should not happen at the beginning, it is an inevitable step on the road to a real healing. I think there is a real issue of the international role in this. Sometimes that international role may be a little heavy-handed and too early in terms of trying to move too quickly to a process of justice and accountability before a country is ready for it. Secondly, at a critical moment, international justice, through commissions or other forms, can be a key catalyst for the country itself taking hold of the issue and pushing it to conclusion. I therefore think this is an area of enormous interest.

Let me say, however, that some more mundane issues of institutions matter as well. UNDP as a development agency is, I think, continuously surprised to find the extent to which we have become a police training agency, because whether it is supporting the German-led Trust Fund in Afghanistan or, more directly, supporting police training efforts in countries such as Haiti or Mozambique over the years, with the help of Spain and many others in this room, we have found that, unless citizens feel that their personal security is being met by effective policing of their streets and communities, a lot of the rest of reconciliation and peace-building is hard to achieve. Yet this is, in terms of international support, one of the most costly, ambitious and difficult commitments to secure. It is one which very much falls on the shoulders of the United Nations, because the World Bank, for example, treats this — I think understandably — as being outside its mandate. One last institutional political comment is that the vital tasks of demobilization, reintegration and landmine collection are key to these reconciliation processes, as well as — often — being difficult to resource quickly or effectively enough in the period when reconciliation is just beginning.

I said at the start of my statement that I wanted to say a word about the “economy” part of political economy. It is a lot easier to achieve reconciliation in the context of economic growth than it is in the context of austerity and budget reduction. Yet the characteristics of a post-conflict situation are

usually austerity and budget reduction. A post-conflict Government almost always inherits a situation of either no tax base or a very impaired one. The response of many of the international financial institutions to that has been to insist on a reduction of Government expenditure to a level which reflects that situation — and for very reasonable reasons, because as demand is also at a low level in the economy, anything bigger on the Government side can be highly inflationary, as well as unsustainable.

Yet the fact is, unless you have an economic strategy which is based on expansion and therefore on job creation and the ability to finance the provision of services, including health education, to the other victims of conflict, and, above all, to manage the downsizing of critical areas of Government, such as, in particular, the army — which may have many of the ex-combatants in its ranks — the financial stability you may wish to achieve will fall victim to the absence of real stability and to the renewal of conflict.

At Davos over the weekend I chaired some very interesting discussions between the International Monetary Fund and Professor Joe Stiglitz — who is the champion of expansionary economics — on how to reconcile these two sides of the dilemma. I think that that is an area to which we need to give a lot more attention as we move forward.

I would like to make two institutional points. First, with regard to the role of UNDP, since the Brahimi report I think there has been a very clear understanding of the different roles played by the various parts of the United Nations, under the leadership of the Department for Political Affairs, in post-conflict reconstruction in general and, therefore, in reconciliation in particular. We as system have just had a report on transitional work, prepared under the chairmanship of Carol Bellamy of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), which touches on this.

For us in UNDP that presents a couple of critical issues. First, as we move from relief to reconciliation and our colleagues in the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) start to scale down their roles, while we are required to build up ours, we see a terrible funding gap. We see it today in Liberia. We have seen it in every post-conflict situation.

Secondly, whereas our colleagues in OCHA have an impressive massed strength in the different areas of relief work, we in UNDP are much less well resourced in areas such as disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, the rule of law and justice and early support for building electoral systems. We work in all of those areas and, under Julia Taft's leadership, have strengthened enormously our capacity in each. But I sometimes feel like those generals who say that they can deploy their armies in only one foreign operation at a time. I have huge difficulty in providing adequate support to half a dozen of these activities around the world at one time, and have therefore begun a conversation with key supporters in this area about how, first, we can strengthen our own capabilities in this regard — to both learn the lessons of these operations and have enough human capacity to deploy to support our country offices and United Nations teams in these areas — and how, secondly, the international community can make funds available more quickly for the early steps of reconciliation.

The situation is comparable to that of a heart attack victim. All the research tells us that the greatest propensity to revert to conflict is in the early months after conflict. But that is the period when we are least able to put up the resources for successful demobilization and reintegration. That brings me to a final point about the Security Council, and to another medical analogy. You are very good in the operating theatre — you do peace agreements well, you do peacekeeping well. But my challenge to you all — and I say this without making any comment on the debate between the various organs of the United Nations — is that the real statistics of peace-building demonstrate that the most critical interventions are, in a medical sense, in the preventive health phase — the pre-heart-attack phase — as well as in the rehabilitation — the post-heart-attack phase. Yet the focus of all your activities is in the operating theatre, not in the clinic afterwards — let alone giving the patient the preventive help beforehand.