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President: Mr. Hamidon (Vice-President) (Malaysia)

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In the absence of the President, Mr. Hamidon (Malaysia), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The Meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

Coordination, programme and other questions: long-term programme of support for Haiti (Item 7 (d) of the agenda) (E/2009/52 and E/2009/105)

The President invited the Permanent Representative of Canada to the United Nations Office at Geneva to present the report of the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Haiti (E/2009/105).

Mr. Morrill (Canada), presenting the report of the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Haiti, said that most of the questions raised in previous reports on the country remained acute and that the recommendations contained in those reports were still relevant. The Government of Haiti should, however, be commended for its major efforts to implement its Poverty Reduction and Growth Strategy paper (PRGSP) and for having made it the centre of attention of participants in the International Donor's Conference for Haiti (Washington Conference). Commendable progress had also been made with the reform of rule of law institutions, especially the National Police. Haiti had to remain on the international community's agenda support and needed appropriate support. In that regard, a strong United Nations presence on the ground, including through the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), remained essential.

The Group also considered that the deterioration of the situation in Haiti in recent decades required that international stakeholders conduct an in-depth review of their *modus operandi*. The Washington Conference and the appointment of a United Nations Special Envoy for Haiti had been decisive in maintaining a momentum in favour of the country. Nevertheless, it would be advisable if in future the activities of donors and government priorities were better aligned, as was pointed out at the Washington Conference. The Group also considered that more attention should be paid to the private sector, which had a key role to play in the revival of economic growth. It was important, however, in drawing up development strategies, to strike a balance between economic growth and access to essential services.

The Ad Hoc Advisory Group thought that its recommendations could be useful in the sense of providing to both the Government of Haiti and the international community insight into what needed to be done and how. They did not therefore constitute an exhaustive road map, because many aspects of the challenges Haiti faces need to be better understood. Thus, numerous questions could still be put to the different players present in Haiti – donors, international financial institutions, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) or United Nations funds, programmes and agencies – in order to elicit a better understanding of the efforts under way to improve the situation in that country. For that reason, the Group hoped that the Economic and Social Council would allow it to continue its work.

The Group had closely monitored the situation in Haiti since its mandate was extended in July 2009. While there had indeed been various positive developments, instability and vulnerabilities persisted. The Group would like to reaffirm that the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness had created a model of efficiency and partnership that should encourage the Haitian Government and donors to implement mechanisms for mutual accountability and for following up on commitments. In that regard, it was worth underscoring the progress made with coordination between donors and the Government, thanks to the centrality of the PRGSP. An exercise of that nature could always be perfected; consequently, it would continue to be subject to constant scrutiny. It was also important to understand the ins and outs of recourse to NGOs as agents for implementing development assistance. They can indeed reach beneficiaries quickly, above all with humanitarian aid, but it was also important to ensure that Haitian State capacities were strengthened.

Mr. Boutroue (Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator in Haiti) congratulated the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Haiti on the quality of its report (E/2009/105) and said that he fully supported its recommendations. The need for capacity-building at all levels and the catastrophic environmental situation were just two of the many challenges Haiti had to address as top priorities. There was a high level of interest in Haiti, but that was not matched by a commensurate level of financial support. Yet the capacity of the Haitian State to draw up, plan and implement strategies was limited. The administration

appeared to lose its way in interminable and complex processes that went nowhere. As for the international community, it added to the confusion and burden on the ministries and was not therefore particularly helpful. While it was true that the democratic process was on the right path in Haiti, the distribution of spheres of competence between the Prime Minister and the President of the Republic was none too clear and, overall, the trend was toward increasingly paralyzed institutions. The country could not afford that state of affairs at a time when it was vital for the State to assert its presence throughout the national territory.

The extreme vulnerability of the country needed priority attention. In particular, more funds had to be allocated to management of catchment areas, which were essential to protect human activities and the habitat, to stem environmental degradation and to put thousands of Haitians back to work. Alternative energy sources, which had been neglected, should also be exploited because they were crucial for stopping environmental degradation and ensuring the sustainable development of the country. As for the extreme vulnerability of the population, it would be advisable to tackle the problem of stagnating, if not declining, access to essential services, which were, moreover, of very poor quality. Access to such services as education, safe water or health care was not just a right; it was also a way to reduce Haitians' vulnerability to external shocks. Food security was another priority issue. More heed should be paid to developing domestic agricultural output. As for the rule of law, it was lamentable that it had not been accorded priority status. Of course it would take time to reform the system as a whole, but a number of specific measures that did not require major investment could be adopted in that sphere. Finally, with respect to national dialogue, a prerequisite for Haiti's long-term stability, that area, too, needed strengthening, although the efforts that resulted in the establishment of Presidential Commissions had been commendable.

To address the aforementioned challenges, a substantially increased level of financial support was needed, beyond that pledged during the Washington Conference. The appointment of a Special Envoy by the Secretary-General was an encouraging initiative which would allow Haiti and the international community to expedite reform in the area of cooperation, through dialogue and mutual trust. The cancellation, last July, of multilateral and bilateral

debts by the World Bank and the Paris Club were welcome developments. That would free up some US\$50 to US\$60 million that could be invested in poverty reduction activities.

It was important at the present time to ensure consistency between United Nations activities and those of other organizations, in such a way that adequate attention is paid, for a definite period of time, to established priorities. In that regard, Mr. Boutroue called upon donors to provide more generous financing for United Nations activities in Haiti. However, improving the modus operandi of the international community in Haiti depended more on willingness to change. The Haitians themselves needed to change: not just the authorities, but the private sector and civil society as well, including the political parties. In that respect, the United Nations Special Envoy to Haiti would undoubtedly prove extremely useful.

Mr. Exantus (Observer for Haiti) said that, since the creation of the Ad Hoc Advisory Group in 1999 and its reactivation in 2004, the opportunities for the country to benefit from the concrete and tangible support of the international community had been better than ever before. After the four devastating hurricanes in the summer of 2008, which dealt a severe blow to the economy and the environment, the conviction that Haiti merited special attention and support appeared to have taken root. The visit by the Secretary-General and his Special Envoy to Haiti testified to a determination to act. It also served to gauge the amount of resources to commit in the hopes of a short-term improvement in the situation and those that would be needed for the country's long-term economic, social and environmental recovery. The Government of Haiti was encouraged by that gesture, which formed part of the decision to abide by the priorities set by the Haitian Prime Minister at the Washington Conference. It was also pleased to note that the authors of the report had insisted that, however important the role of NGOs was, it could not fill in the gaps left by the State. On that note, Haiti wished to call for the implementation of new ways of channelling assistance; the fact that 80 % of that assistance by-passed government institutions did not help national capacity-building. It was by no means a question of discarding NGOs, whose usefulness had once again been demonstrated. However, it was important that their activities complemented those of the Haitian Government and

were in line with the priority objectives set forth by the Government in its reconstruction and revival plan.

Economic development and security were inseparable conditions for social and political stability in Haiti. The report under review had rightly emphasized that the combined efforts of the United Nations Stabilisation Mission in Haiti and the Haitian National Police had brought about a clear improvement in security. Now it was a matter of consolidating that progress by focusing on the achievement of development goals aimed at satisfying urgent needs and laying the foundations for a range of medium- and long-term objectives. The unprecedented mobilization of support for the country had to translate into specific and positive actions. That was why Haiti was still on the international agenda. Finally, Mr. Exantus asked the delegations to vote in favour of the draft resolution on renewal of the mandate of the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Haiti.

Mr. Rutgersson (Sweden), speaking also on behalf of the European Union, welcomed the draft resolution on the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Haiti and the report of the Group and its recommendations. Haiti faced significant development challenges and its social and economic situation remained extremely fragile. Vulnerability to extreme weather was a recurring obstacle to development. Ongoing implementation of the PRGSP by the Haitian Government and by all pertinent political parties was essential for meeting the country's most pressing needs.

The European Union was pleased at the appointment of a United Nations Special Envoy for Haiti, which had kept Haiti on the map of international community priorities and helped promote effective utilization of the means and resources allocated to that country. The European Union would provide 291 million euros in development assistance for Haiti in 2008-2013. The focus of the European Commission Support Strategy for Haiti, which was aligned with the priorities established by the Haitian Government, would be on infrastructure and governance. The European Union's general budget support would further assist the Haitian Government's macroeconomic reforms and help consolidate the rule of law. In addition, the European Union would support a bi-national programme, including development of the Dominican-Haitian border region. It commended the progress made in the security and rule of law sectors in Haiti as well as the country's efforts to implement the Convention on the Elimination

of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. That said, further work was needed to integrate the gender dimension in all social and economic development activities in Haiti. In conclusion, Mr. Rutgersson said that the European Union supported the draft resolution on the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Haiti.

Mr. Meurs (United States) welcomed the report of the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Haiti (E/2009/105) which, while demonstrating that Haiti still faced daunting challenges, provided a useful summary of the progress Haiti had made with a view to strengthening social services and combating poverty. As noted in paragraph 6 of the report, Haiti was at "a crossroads" and it was of the utmost importance that the international community continued to concern itself by helping, through ongoing and predictable assistance, to promote economic growth and generate jobs. Support for the police and the justice system, underscored in paragraph 19 of the report was also extremely important. Finally, it was essential to improve coordination of donor activities and to remedy the gaps left by the State by strengthening both national and local authorities.

Mr. Rogers (Observer for Chile) noted with satisfaction that the Advisory Group considered "the evolution of the situation in Haiti encouraging", particularly with regard to the Haitian Government's efforts to implement the National Poverty Reduction and Growth Strategy Paper. He said that Chile supported the recommendation of the Advisory Group that the international community continue to concern itself with Haiti. Chile supported Haiti in the framework of cooperation for peace and public security, but also by helping to build capacity with programmes relating to food security, primary health care, information technology facilities, Spanish teaching and education. It also awarded scholarships to Haitian officials to enable them to study at its universities and it cooperated with a number of traditional donors through triangular arrangements. Underscoring the pressing need to promote favourable conditions for employment-generating private investment, Mr. Rogers noted that cooperation in that area by the Haitian community living abroad was decisive.

Mr. St Aimee (Saint Lucia) said that his country, which had much in common with Haiti, was pleased to support the extension of the Ad Hoc Advisory Group's mandate. Currently at a crossroads, Haiti needed sustained support. Based on its own experience, Saint Lucia recommended several areas of possible

assistance. Watershed management, along with reforestation and agricultural development, should be actively pursued. The idea already put forward of associating part of the population of Port-au-Prince with projects in those areas was worth re-examining. Alternative forms of energy, such as hydroelectricity or aeolian energy could also be exploited. Enterprises would needier products found outlets abroad. Finally, it was important to strengthen local authorities.

Haiti, the first black republic in the world, had a hard-working and highly capable population, which the international community should help put to good use. The members of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) were doing their utmost (CARICOM) to boost cooperation with that country.

Mr. Novaes de Almeida (Brazil) supported the extension of the mandate of the Ad Hoc Advisory Group proposed by the Council. That proposal showed the importance that the Council attached to the correlation between security and development. The Advisory Group could also help build upon the positive outcomes of the Washington Conference while expediting the disbursement of the funds pledged. It was indeed essential to match words with deeds, if assistance was to be credible. Brazil was pleased that Mr. Clinton had been appointed United Nations Special Envoy as it considered that his cooperation with the Advisory Group could be beneficial to Haiti. Apart from its contribution to MINUSTAH, Brazil provided assistance to Haiti through various bilateral and trilateral cooperation initiatives, which it was prepared to continue and develop if the Haitian authorities so wished.

Mr. Alia (Observer for Benin) thanked Mr. Morrill for presenting the report of the Advisory Group and welcomed the progress made by the Haitian Government. Since he supported the country's recovery efforts, he also supported the draft resolution.

Ms. Lucas (Luxemburg) subscribed to the statement made by Sweden on behalf of the European Union. In her capacity as President of the Council, she was an ex officio member of the Ad Hoc Advisory Group and had taken part in that capacity in the mission that visited Haiti in May 2009. The report that had been presented gave a good description of the complexity of the situation and the established priorities. In terms of the correlation between socio-economic development and political stability, Haiti was practically a textbook case and it was very important

that the State fully play its part in promoting development and the provision of basic services. The report rightly underlined the need for ongoing commitment by the international community to support the priorities established by the Haitian authorities. Finally, as the representative of Saint Lucia had emphasized, it was important to adopt an interdependent approach to the questions of water management, agriculture and reforestation. Ms. Lucas concluded by announcing that Luxemburg co-sponsored the draft resolution under review.

Mr. Morrill (Canada) presented, on behalf of the co-authors of the text, who had been joined by Guatemala, Luxemburg and Uruguay, draft resolution E/2009/L.13 entitled "Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Haiti". Under the terms of that draft, the council would decide to prolong the mandate of the group until its substantive session of July 2010, in order for the group to monitor the situation closely and advise on Haiti's long-term development strategy. Underlining the importance of extending that mandate, Mr. Morrill said he hoped the draft resolution would be adopted.

Ms. Pliner (Secretariat) explained that the draft resolution contemplated a consultation mission to Haiti in April 2010. The funds needed for that mission, estimated at US \$ 12,200 should, where possible, be covered by the appropriations provided for under Chapter 9 (Economic and Social Affairs) of the draft programme-budget for 2010 – 2011. Adopting the draft resolution would, therefore, not entail a request for any additional appropriation. The president, after asking whether other delegations wished to co-sponsor the draft resolution, added El Salvador, Saint Lucia, France, Norway and the Cape Verde Islands to the list of co-authors. He said that, there being no objection, he considered that the council wished to adopt draft resolution E/2009/L.13.

It was so decided.

The president ended review of point 7 (d) of the agenda.

Coordination, programme and other questions: ad hoc advisory groups on African countries emerging from conflict (Item 7 (f) of the agenda) (E/2009/51 and E/2009/54)

Mr. Muñoz (Chairman of the Organizational Committee of the Peacebuilding Commission) addressing the council via a video conference, said that

he regretted not being able to attend the council session in person, due to other commitments in New York. He insisted on the importance of cooperation between the Peacebuilding Commission and the Economic and Social Council and said he hoped that progress achieved in that regard would be further strengthened. The few years of experience that the Peacebuilding Commission had acquired had shown that the cessation of hostilities by no means sufficed to establish lasting peace: It was also necessary to ensure security, development and the rule of law. In the four countries on its agenda, namely Burundi, Guinea-Bissau, the Central African Republic and Sierra Leone, the commission had continued to promote better coordination in order to maximize the impact of peacebuilding measures and to facilitate the channelling of resources.

In Sierra Leone, the Commission had been guided by the national programme in focusing on governance, the rule of law, and efforts to combat drug trafficking and youth unemployment. It had ascertained that the existence of a single framework based on a national peacekeeping strategy greatly facilitated coordination. In Burundi, the strategic framework established for peacebuilding, which took into account the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, had enabled national players to take part. In Guinea-Bissau the commission had continued to facilitate the implementation of national priorities aimed at achieving a reform of security and of the fight against drug trafficking. The four countries on the agenda of the commission had so far received US \$ 86 million from the Peacekeeping Fund. Five other African countries (Comoros, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Liberia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo) had been declared eligible to benefit from the fund and had received US\$ 45 million in order to address immediate peacebuilding priorities.

The Commission worked with the United Nations and with regional and sub-Regional organizations. Mr. Muñoz said he would shortly be going to Addis-Abeba, at the invitation of the African Union, in order to strengthen cooperation ties with that organization. Noting that the Security Council was currently debating the question of peacebuilding in the aftermath of a conflict, Mr. Muñoz emphasised the need to find ways to improve coordination of assistance to countries emerging from a conflict, from the start. The review of the Commission's activities scheduled for 2010 would provide an opportunity to consider major questions,

such as reinforcement of the Commission's advisory role vis-à-vis the Security Council, the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council.

Mr. Hamza (Sudan) speaking on behalf of the Group 77 and China, recalled that the establishment by the Economic and Social Council of Ad Hoc Advisory Groups on African Countries emerging from conflict was designed to address the socio-economic causes of conflict and secure transition from the relief phase to the development phase. Two the countries considered by the Council, Burundi and Guinea-Bissau, were also on the agenda of the peacebuilding commission, along with Sierra Leone and the Central African Republic.

In order for peace to be truly irreversible, sustainable development had to be at the heart of peacebuilding. Mr. Hamza underscored the importance of rapidly achieving results so that countries could, with the support of the international community, ensure the provision of basic services and thereby demonstrate the usefulness of peace. The international community had to help countries emerging from conflict develop a long term poverty-reduction and sustainable development strategy, diversify their economies and restore their destroyed infrastructure and their institutions, all of which required flexible, reliable and sufficient financing.

The Ad Hoc Advisory Groups for African Countries emerging from a conflict, had undertaken a review of their work and had drawn several core lessons that the Commission should take into account, including the need to have appropriate mechanisms for mobilizing donors and obtaining funds in a swift and predictable manner, to define from the outset a long-term recovery and support programme, to remain committed for the long-term and make good use of the work of the United Nations in order to compliment the policy approach of the inter-Governmental body with strong technical and operational support. The Member States of the Group of 77 and China congratulated the Chairman of the Organizational Committee of the Peacebuilding Commission on his work and suggested he might have recourse to the competencies of the Council and subsidiary bodies in various areas of key importance for countries emerging from conflict, such as efforts to combat drug trafficking, crime and violence, public administration and fiscal affairs, employment and decent work. The Commission would also, no doubt, find it useful to follow the guidelines that the Council provided to United Nations funds,

programmes and agencies on the subject of coordination.

Mr. Muñoz (Chairman of the Organizational Committee of the Peacebuilding Commission) said that it was very important for the Commission to achieve swift results in order for the population to acknowledge the benefits of peace from the outset. That was why it was currently reviewing a number of complimentary areas with governance for which financing would facilitate the achievement of such rapid success, one example being efforts to combat youth unemployment. Furthermore, the Commission was conscious of the fact that the current crisis hit countries emerging from conflict hardest, and, with the Economic and Social Council and the World Food Programme, it was examining the possibility of organising a seminar on the economic and food crisis and its consequences for the countries in question.

Ms. Gallardo Hernández (El Salvador) was pleased that for the first time a meeting had been organised between the Economic and Social Council and the Peacebuilding Commission and considered that it was important for that dialogue to continue. Joint initiatives of those two bodies would be useful not only to countries emerging from conflict, but also to those that wished to be informed and to help the countries in question with their peacebuilding process.

Mr. Barusasiyeko (Observer for Burundi) said that his delegation fully subscribed to the statement made by the Sudanese delegation on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. His country thanked the United Nations for its initiatives aimed at helping countries facing several simultaneous challenges – security, economic and other – emerge from conflict. Among those initiatives the fast track projects had been very much appreciated by Burundi and the poverty reduction programmes had also proved particularly useful.

Panel discussion: “The empowerment of women in countries emerging from conflict: the role of parliaments.”

The President, speaking as the facilitator of the discussion, said that the active involvement of women in peace and peace-building processes was central to the successful rebuilding of countries emerging from conflict. It had been proven that those processes were more likely to succeed if women were fully engaged as

participants. One indicator for the participation of women was their representation in legislative bodies and in positions of responsibility in the social, political, and economic spheres. Women’s participation in parliament was the most effective way to ensure that legal reforms promoted gender equality and non-discrimination and that recovery efforts accorded due priority to women’s needs in key sectors, such as health care, education and housing.

Mr. Chungong (Observer for the Inter-Parliamentary Union – IPU) said that women had a major role to play in institutions of Government, especially in post-conflict situations, in as much as any institution of Government had to be representative of all segments of society if it wanted to be democratic and operate effectively. As part of its activities, the IPU attached particular importance to women’s representation and their contribution to institutions of Government, especially parliaments. It carried out surveys, tracked women’s participation in institutions of Government, provided technical assistance to parliaments to help them adopt practices responsive to women’s concerns and organised information exchanges to share women’s experiences.

Parliaments played a decisive role in post-conflict situations, because societies recovering from a conflict needed to establish new legal frameworks to ensure that the mistakes of the past were not repeated. By allocating budgetary resources fairly, they could help correct past injustices that sometimes may have been the principal cause of the conflict. Their role might also consist of promoting human rights and putting transitional justice mechanisms in place – special courts and truth and reconciliation commissions, for instance – in order to ensure justice for the victims of conflict.

Women’s representation in parliament is often very high in countries emerging from conflict. The need for new laws may be an opportunity to introduce provisions likely to promote and strengthen women’s participation in political life. It was also important that women make a significant contribution to parliamentary work. Following a conflict, parliaments were often weak and resources scarce. International community assistance was decisive at that point. Many women, elected for the first time, lacked political experience. It was important to arrange capacity-building activities for them. The IPU advocated a number of measures to improve women’s

representation in countries emerging from conflict: seeing that representation quotas are applied, not to favour women, but to ensure equity; adopting electoral systems – proportional representation, for example – that favour women's representation; encouraging political parties to open themselves to women's participation, especially by giving more public funds to the parties that modify their practices in that direction; encouraging parliaments to establish Commissions responsible for women's issues in order to ensure that women's interests were taken into account in all decisions; creating partnerships between men and women, as well as with society and the media, in order to correct negative stereotypes with respect to women who take part in political life; and encouraging the adoption of practices that help elected women to combine their parliamentary work and their family responsibilities (flexible working hours, childcare services, etc).

Ms. Mabobori (Member of the National Assembly of Burundi) said that women's representation in countries emerging from conflict depended to a large extent on the role they had played during the conflict and in the peace and negotiation processes. In Burundi, women had been mobilized from the start of the crisis in 1993 for initiatives aimed at restoring peace and peaceful coexistence among the various different segments of society. In April 2000, a meeting had been organised of women from all over the country and of varying political convictions. The document that emerged from that meeting, in which women expressed demands and made commitments, had contributed to the peace negotiations which were to culminate in the Arusha Agreement of 2000. In July 2000, following a meeting with representatives of all the political parties and all the insurgent movements, the women of Burundi had presented the negotiators with a set of recommendations, 60 % of which were built into the Agreement. The provisions on women in the Arusha Agreement had largely been incorporated into the constitutions, including the 30 % quota for women in Government, Parliament and the Senate. Following the 2005 elections, women accounted for 31 % of the members of the National Assembly and 34 % of those elected to the Senate; thereafter, 35% of Government portfolios had been assigned to women. Certain number of women, had been, however, subsequently replaced by men, and the authorities were currently attempting to devise mechanisms that would preserve women's gains. The role of women in the

establishment of peace and security had been recognized subsequently with the adoption of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security, which was no doubt inspired by the experience of Burundi.

Together with Sierra Leone, Burundi was one of the first countries emerging from conflict to have benefited from a partnership with the Peacebuilding Commission. Among the projects financed by the Peacebuilding Fund, established by common accord between the Government of Burundi and the Commission, there was one specific project aimed at strengthening the role of women in peacebuilding and which contained solutions to problems encountered by women, including the feminization of poverty, gender-based violence, and the effects of the conflict on women and girls. Management of the post-conflict reconstruction period involved a number of recovery programmes in which women's participation was particularly important. Women's participation in decision-making in the aftermath of a conflict had profoundly changed the perception of women in society, and a recent study had indicated that 69% of the population took a positive view of the fact that women were in positions of responsibility.

Mr. Doraid (Observer of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) said that the marked increase in the number of women representatives in parliament in the past few years in countries recovering from a conflict, such as, Rwanda, Burundi, Iraq or Timor-Leste, testified to women's willingness to contribute, through political involvement, to the construction of a better future. The participation of women in political and parliamentary life had enabled one half of the population to be fully represented, and that should be considered an end in itself. From a practical point of view it had transpired that, when women were present and influential, changes came about. Women had influenced budgetary and legislative decisions. In Rwanda, for example, the work of women ministers or parliamentarians had contributed to a major increase in the share of health care expenditure in total expenditure, from 3% in 1998 to 12% in 2006. In Mozambique, women had insisted on a law of the family, a draft of which was currently being reviewed.

In reviewing the four main obstacles to women's participation in decision-making processes, Mr. Doraid noted first that, of the 22 peace accords examined by

UNIFEM since 1992, women's participation in the negotiation delegations had only been 7.6%; they accounted for only 2.7% of the signatories of the peace accords and had never been the arbitrator. Secondly, he noted that women often had little experience in decision-making. It was a fact that had to be taken into account in formulating capacity-building measures or national action plans for implementing Security Council resolution 1325 on women, peace and security which aimed at women being better represented at all levels of the decision-making process.

Thirdly, Mr. Doraid observed that public administrations were largely dominated by men, a situation that called for reforms based on gender-equality considerations. Parliaments had an important role to play in that respect. For instance, in Afghanistan, in coordination with the Ministry for Women's Affairs, UNIFEM was conducting a project aimed at increasing the share of women in public office to 30%. Finally, Mr. Doraid noted that gender-based violence, which was a frequent phenomenon in post-conflict situations, discouraged women from participating in public life. There are still too many instances of women targeted because of their militant defence of equality, especially in Afghanistan and in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Ms. Gnacadja (former member of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women) addressed the role of parliaments in the empowerment of women following a conflict. She said that it was up to parliamentarians to ensure, by overseeing government actions, that the needs and concerns of women were taken into account, especially during the preparation of the budget. In order to increase the share of women in parliamentary bodies, a good example to take would be the quota system established in Burundi and Rwanda. In the latter country, that system had allowed women to occupy 56.3% of the seats in the Lower Chamber and 34.6% of those in the Senate following the 2008 elections.

Reviewing the international instruments on the role of women, Ms. Gnacadja said that the most important one was undoubtedly the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, articles 7 and 8 of which provided for equality between men and women in the political sphere. At the regional level, she cited the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights, regarding women's rights in Africa,

article 11 of which concerned the protection of women during armed conflicts. It was paramount that African countries that had not yet done so should ratify that Protocol. Finally, at the national level, Ms. Gnacadja considered it important to establish competent national tribunals to try crimes committed in conflict situations, because international criminal courts only intervened once national remedies had been exhausted.

Mr. Ström (Sweden), speaking on behalf of the European Union, stated that it was necessary not only to strengthen the presence of women in parliaments, but also to implement institutional reforms aimed at promoting equality of men and women for the long term. The European Union considered that actions taken in the aftermath of conflicts could be an opportunity to remedy inequalities of that kind. Furthermore, equality between men and women could lead to more democratic integration and swifter and more lasting economic growth. The European Union called upon the United Nations to support actions aimed at mainstreaming gender equality at each stage in post-conflict situations. Significant progress had been made in the past few years at the regulatory level and it was now time to translate those regulations into deeds.

Mr. Barusasiyeko (Observer for Burundi) stated that the World Economic Forum had underscored the satisfactory results obtained by Burundi in the area of women's work. Furthermore, the school enrolment rate for girls had increased in his country, confirming a positive trend with regard to women's participation in society.

Mr. Ustinov (Russian Federation) asked the speakers what measures could be taken for women to be able to reconcile the very demanding work of a parliamentarian with their responsibilities at home.

Ms. Gallardo Hernández (El Salvador) asked what the inter-parliamentary union was doing to promote a change of mentality in political parties, knowing that it was often the political parties themselves that made it difficult for women to enter parliament. She also wanted to know how one could promote women's participation in peace negotiations and what opinion UNIFEM had on that subject.

Ms. Eckey (Norway) emphasised that women's participation in political life was beneficial for society as a whole, including men.

Mr. Doraid (Observer of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) provided details on activities conducted by his organization to promote women's participation in peacebuilding processes. In Sudan, UNIFEM had encouraged the participation of a group of women from Darfur in peace talks. In Uganda, it had been possible to put together a coalition for peace that had been able to take part in the talks and had had access to the negotiation teams. Mr. Doraid confirmed that the participation of women in political life was beneficial for society as a whole. Indeed, women generally attached greater importance to the fate of people displaced to the interior of the country and of repatriated refugees, as well as to property rights and the recovery of property following a conflict.

Ms. Mabobori (a member of the national assembly of Burundi) also considered that women's participation was beneficial to society as a whole. During a survey conducted in her country, the population deemed that women had more ability to listen, better management skills, more fairness and impartiality. They were also more available than men and ought, therefore, to hold more positions of responsibility at all levels.

Ms. Gnacadja (former member of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women) underscored the importance of cooperation between the Executive Branch and Parliament when it came to appointing individuals to key posts. In that way, the Executive would have an opportunity to promote the appointment of women to senior positions.

Mr. Chungong (Observer for the Inter-Parliamentary Union) likewise considered that the participation of women was beneficial for the whole of society. According to a survey conducted by the Inter-Parliamentary Union, 90% of the parliamentarians interviewed declared that women had a positive impact on parliamentary work and on the wellbeing of society as a whole. Mr. Chungong explained that the Inter-Parliamentary Union offered training courses for women, especially former women combatants, to prepare them for government office. As regards the difficulty for women parliamentarians of reconciling work and household responsibilities, he said it was important that parliaments adopt working practices that took the particular needs of women into consideration. He was of the opinion that it was necessary to promote a change of mindset within

parliaments in order to transform the working environment as a whole. The fact that women had household responsibilities should not be used as a pretext to keep them out of political life.

The meeting was adjourned 6.15 p.m.