

**Opening Address by Mr. Ebrahim Ebrahim  
Parliamentary Advisor to the President**

**to the**

**Workshop on Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development**

Thank you Chairperson,

Your Excellencies,  
Distinguished Participants,

Thank you for the opportunity to address and participate in this important workshop. I am happy to share my thoughts with you, but equally look forward to hearing the outcomes of the research that has been done and the various views of our distinguished panelists.

We are currently celebrating the 70th birthday of the United Nations. In the preamble of the UN Charter, the 'founding fathers' of the UN declared that a central purpose of the UN is to save future generations from the scourge of war. Without restating the cycles of peace and conflict over the past 70 years, I simply wish to observe where we are now. Thus, to state the obvious, we have not eliminated the scourge of war and the current cycle regrettably points to a resurgence of inter-state tensions, an upsurge in intra-state conflicts, as well as a number of global threats that threaten peace and security.

We must acknowledge that significant progress has been made in preventing, managing and ending inter-state conflicts since the Second World War. However, the volume, sophistication and distribution of weapons of conventional warfare as well as unconventional and new forms of warfare have opened up new battlefields such as cyberspace. As history should have taught us, the current global economic slowdown that started in 2008, the impact of climate change and the 'el Nino' effect on agriculture or food security, as well as the world's growing population and demand for the limited resources that the planet can provide would lead to tensions over scarce resources. In many instances some resources, such as water and oil, may directly lead to inter-state tensions and even open conflict in the name of national security. More broadly, however, we have seen potential and actual

conflict over resources, especially highly prized and scarce resources, from so-called conflict diamonds to the exploitation of marine resources in the name of 'national interest'.

At the level of intra-state conflict, we are witnessing an upsurge in civil society resorting to mass action to express dissatisfaction and increasing polarization, alienation and frustration that fuels ethnic tensions, extremism and even acts of terrorism. With regards to the resort to violence and acts of terrorism, it has now become more difficult to distinguish between inter-state and intra-state conflict. In other words, the world remains a very dangerous place and many, many people today are faced with the stark reality of the scourge of war.

Chairperson, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The spectrum of possibilities between conflict and peace is indeed wide and solutions to deal with traditional as well as new forms or manifestations of conflict continue to elude us. As the increasingly interdependent and interconnected global village evolves, we are compelled to consider new instruments for peace support that complement or even replace more traditional notions such as interventions under the Right to Protect (or R2P).

From peace-making to Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development (PCRD), the so-called international community is faced with the stark reality that we can, and must do better in achieving lasting peace. The outcomes of this workshop and the ideas you put forward will hopefully assist us to explore and enact better ways of achieving sustainable peace.

South Africa places peace and development at the forefront of its international relations. Therefore, South Africa uses every opportunity to promote peace, especially on our continent, and South-South cooperation to strengthen the collective voice of developing countries on global matters, because we are most often affected by the outcomes, such as the negotiations on climate change or the sustainable development goals (SDGs). During both terms that we served as an elected member of the UN Security Council we championed, amongst other things, the forging of closer cooperation between the UN and regional bodies such as the African Union (AU). We continued to champion cooperation on peace support as the Chair of the SADC Organ on Peace, Defense and Security, as a member of the AU Peace and Security Council, and by promoting and hosting joint training exercises towards operationalising

Africa's own Capacity for Immediate Response to Crises (ACIRC). The ACIRC is intended to attract greater participation and resources from across the continent to become a fully fledged African Standby Force (ASF). To this end, SA is proud to be the host of Field Training Exercise Amani Africa II in partnership with ACIRC.

Chairperson and distinguished participants,

As I alluded to earlier, the role and presence of the military is but a possible part of the spectrum of peace support. If mediation efforts do not succeed, then as a very last resort, military force may be required. But even if mediation succeeds in bringing about a cessation of hostilities, some military presence to ensure that peace and stability is maintained may be necessary. Unfortunately, this leads us to one of the criticisms of peace interventions, namely that there is not enough emphasis and resources allocated to the critical phase of Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development (PCRD). With violent conflicts elsewhere also needing attention and resources, focus is too often unfortunately shifted away once a peace deal is brokered. This is why I said history tells us otherwise and many instances occur where conflict reignites and violence again erupts sooner or later. Many analysts cite various reasons for such incidences where the peace is not sustained.

As a mediator myself, I believe that it is critical:

- That PCRD efforts include sustained support for peace and stability through the continued presence of a recognised security authority.
- That continued broad-based participation of all spheres of society, including and especially women, be promoted in shaping the way forward.
- That the international community step back into a supportive role that allows for home-grown solutions and support capacity-building of local communities and former marginalized sectors and their leadership.
- That support be given to building needed institutions and that reconstruction efforts begin in earnest to visibly materialize the so-called Peace Dividend. The timing and sensitivity to local values, customs and norms must be factored in, so that institutions are inclusive, transparent and effective or else they may become bastions of clientelism, sectarianism and ultimately contribute to a resurgence in conflict.

It is also critical to therefore consider carefully the environmental conditions, both from the ecological as well as the psycho-social perspectives. In the case

of the ecological factors, we have to consider the destruction that may have occurred in the natural and the built environments as well as scarce resources and the need for basic conditions for daily survival. All too often we also ignore the psychological effects of the conflict and don't deal sufficiently with the mutual hatred that may have been incited as a basis for the conflict and the time and effort that is required to heal the physical, social and psychological scars of violent conflict. Sadly, this neglect of a more comprehensive and interdisciplinary approach to PCRDR is not because we don't have the knowledge but because it comes down to basic economics.

It is in this context that I want to briefly turn my attention to the second element of our discussion: South-South cooperation. Conflicts in developing countries usually receive attention when widespread gross human rights abuses or large scale fatalities occur. UN and / or Regional Bodies like the AU intervene to achieve a cessation of hostilities along the lines of the model I described above. If a country has valuable or scarce resources, the conflict can be further complicated by the interests of external players who may have a vested interest in the war economy, which can develop a life of its own and mitigate against reaching a peaceful settlement or sustaining peace if a peace dividend is not visible soon after the peace is brokered. It is for this reason that the international community, through the various international intergovernmental bodies as well as non-governmental institutions, have a crucial role to play in ensuring human security and PCRDR.

In all spheres and facets of PCRDR there are necessarily a multitude of stakeholders and role-players who need to be coordinated and aligned to the needs of the specific situation they are dealing with. Their various individual calls and uncoordinated efforts therefore, too often, go unheeded.

It is therefore incumbent on countries of the South to speak collectively in support of peace, equality and human rights in a more equitable and just world order. For example, as the Chair of the G77 plus China, South Africa presides over the largest negotiating group of State Parties with its 134 members representing over 80% of the world's population. In the broader context, and relevant for our discussion, is that the G77 plus China will collectively pursue issues such as the provision of financial resources, technology transfer, development and capacity building. Successful PCRDR requires predictable support, resources and sustainable means of implementation. We can therefore also not ignore the importance of partnerships with countries of the

North. The financial and subsequent economic catastrophe of 2008, the masses of refugees and Internally Displaced People (IDPs) as well as the global reach of terrorists, cyber-criminals, traffickers in drugs, people and illicit material are but a few examples of the need for global agreements and inclusive solutions. Through South-South cooperation and solidarity, we believe that the weakest and poorest of nations can truly have a voice alongside the strongest and richest countries to find sustainable solutions to the common problems that face us as individual nations and as humanity as a whole.

South Africa continues to play an important role in mediation on the continent and beyond. Over the past 20 years South Africa has played a role in peace support in countries like the Republic of Burundi, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Comores, the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire, the Kingdom of Lesotho, the Sudan, South Sudan, the Republic of Zimbabwe, and further afield in Northern Ireland, Palestine and Sri Lanka, among others.

South Africa has also placed significant emphasis on building capacity to ensure durable peace. To this end, South Africa has instituted a mediation training programme for participants from across the continent and other conflict zones and placed particular emphasis on empowering women mediators, who would be critical in ensuring the success of any PCRDR Programme.

Chairperson, Distinguished Participants,

South Africa will therefore continue to champion peace over conflict and call for the necessary support and resources to ensure sustainable peace and development. PCRDR therefore needs South-South cooperation, if we are to achieve our goals and our vision of "A better South Africa, in a better Africa and a better World".

I look forward to your inputs and a successful workshop.