



Ulla Tørnæs' tale ved konferencen "UN and peacebuilding: African perspectives"

Taler

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Excellencies, honourable Foreign Minister, distinguished participants,

Thank you very much for giving me the opportunity to speak at this conference on Africa, the United Nations, and Peacebuilding. This is my first visit to an African country in my capacity of Danish Minister for Development Cooperation. I am overwhelmed by the beauty of Ghana, the warm hospitality and energy of its people, and the promising economic and social development of the country.

I also wish to thank the organisers – the New York University's Center on International Cooperation; the Conflict, Security and Development Group at King's College in London; and the African Security Dialogue and Research (ADRA) based here in Accra – for their hard work and dedication in the preparation of this meeting.

The purpose of today's seminar is to discuss the United Nations and

Peacebuilding in an African context. I will therefore take the opportunity to convey two key messages: First, that Denmark recognises the need for continued and strengthened international focus on Africa. And second, that we must seize the momentum for thorough UN reform at the Summit this September, not least in the area of peacebuilding. European countries such as Denmark and countries in Africa should build a partnership in order to carry the reform agenda through.

But let me start by emphasising the basic assumption behind my speech: namely the deeply rooted inter-linkages between security, development, and human rights. I wish to state that Denmark fully endorses the spirit of the report by the Secretary-General, “In Larger Freedom”, which sets the agenda for the UN Summit this September. We are very conscious of the wider context of the Summit. It is to reaffirm the continuity with the Millennium Summit in 2000 – a continuity that has been weakened by intruding events, mainly the terrorist attack on 9.11.2001 and the Iraq war. The Secretary-General’s report reasserts the interlinkages between security and development. He thereby seeks to redress the relative decline of the development agenda in relation to the security agenda. For those of us who – like Africa – stand to gain from an upgrading of the development agenda, and for those of us who – like Denmark – believe in the necessity of development as a precondition for security and stability, it would be disastrous if the 2005 Summit were to fail because valuable and feasible reform proposals were held hostage to unattainable or premature political ambitions. The world in which we have to live and promote our interests and values will be much less favourable to us if the UN is discredited by such a failure.

We can avoid that if we act now!

1. Focus on Africa_ The close interlinkages between security, development, and human rights have enormous implications for how we respond politically to the special needs of Africa.

As the poorest continent in the world, with more than its fair share of violent conflicts, I believe that Africa needs more attention than it gets. Needless to say, it is no easy task that the international community – Africans and non-Africans alike – have at hand. The situation demands that we commit ourselves to an integrated strategy, which addresses both development issues and peacebuilding requirements in parallel.

Therefore, I was very pleased to read the Secretary General's call for increased attention to Africa in order to ensure that all countries on the continent reaches the Millennium Development Goals by 2015.

For Denmark, engaging in such an integrated strategy has involved acknowledgement of the direct link between our efforts to ease conflicts on the African continent – be that through our contributions to UN missions, our work in the Security Council or otherwise – and our large development co-operation programs.

We have recently developed a new comprehensive Danish policy towards Africa, called 'Africa – Development and Security'. In that paper, we outline the goals and priorities for our cooperation with African countries in the medium term; that is from now till 2009. As the title suggests, the policy is focused on the nexus between security and development, and is structured

around six overall goals:

. integrating Africa in the world economy,

. furthering development of the private sectors,

. ensuring peace and stability,

. strengthening our support to refugees in their regions of origin,

. deepening democracy and increasing respect for human rights, and

. focusing on health, education, water, and the environment.

We believe that a comprehensive approach is fundamental – not only by Denmark but also by the international community as such. The United Nations plays a unique role as it embraces it all: from classical development aid

through the various development programs, to hard security issues resolved in the Security Council.

2. The UN Summit on the implementation of the Millennium Declaration_ The upcoming UN summit in New York this September on the implementation of the Millennium Declaration will be a defining moment. It will provide us with an opportunity to strengthen the United Nations and improve our collective response to the great challenges that lie ahead. Let me spell it out once and for all: we need to achieve concrete and tangible results – results that can be measured and will be felt by individuals in their daily lives - on security issues, development, human rights, and on UN reform.

My field trip in Ghana has left me without doubt: there is a case for more aid to Africa! Therefore, in my perception, the Summit this September may only be counted as a success if it will lead to mobilisation of more development finance. It is my hope that the Monterrey High-level Dialogue meeting in New York this June will prepare the ground for a decision on more ODA. The Secretary-General's suggestion that we commit ourselves to delivering 0,5% in 2009 – as a concrete step towards the agreed goal of 0,7% - is a good guiding star. I assure you that inside the European Union, I will personally engage in the establishment of new and ambitious ODA-targets for the EU, thereby setting the scene for countries in other regions to follow suit. As you are aware, Denmark is currently one of only five countries in the world who contribute more than 0,7% of GDP to development assistance. And we have – in fact – just announced our policy to contribute at least 0,8%. I would be happy to welcome more countries in this club - which is far too exclusive!

But even full financing of the MDGs will not suffice if we fail to improve our collective conflict management and peacebuilding capacity, anchored in the

United Nations. In the past, we have often proved unable to avert looming crises. We have often proved unsuccessful when attempting to solve ongoing conflicts. And all too often, we have paid insufficient attention to securing a stable, positive development, once a conflict had stopped.

In the future, we must do better!

We need to empower the United Nations to deal with today's challenges and change. Reforming the Security Council to make it reflect the world of today is only one element - though a hugely important one. I believe that making the Council reflect the world of today will allow it to play a more proactive role in preventing conflicts even from emerging. And should conflict break out despite our efforts, then the Security Council should have better tools to take and enforce hard decisions to stop the conflicts.

The Secretary-General has suggested the establishment of a Peacebuilding Commission to avoid state collapse and to tackle the complex and multifaceted problems arising in the difficult transition from war to peace. I attach great importance to filling this institutional gap. Today, coordination between peacebuilding, civilian crisis management, and early reconstruction activities is not systematic. We are in need of a mechanism that brings together resources and actors to secure a basis for a stable long-term development.

As I see it, the main functions of the Peacebuilding Commission should be to ensure coordination, define coherent country specific strategies, monitor the situation on the ground and – possibly – deal with the provision of funds.

Among the issues to be elaborated further are aspects of prevention and early warning as well as the institutional status of the Commission. The Secretary-General has foreshadowed a more fully developed proposal before the Summit in September, and we look forward to studying the proposals.

It is with this in mind that Denmark has appointed a special representative to advocate for UN Reform and to advance the idea of a UN Peacebuilding Commission. I am pleased to inform you that our special representative, Ambassador Jørgen Bøjer, will speak on post-conflict and peacebuilding later this morning.

3. Conclusion_ To sum up, the Danish position is very clear. We need to engage the international community in a strengthened partnership in order to meet the challenges in Africa. It will be crucial to reach concrete results at the 2005 Summit in order to pave the way for such a strengthened partnership – a partnership characterised by a comprehensive strategy encompassing development and security issues alike. You can rest assured that Denmark stands ready to shoulder its part of the deal.

I wish to end my intervention by emphasising that now – these few months remaining before the summit in New York – is a crucial time to support the Secretary-General in his reform efforts. Countries such as ours, who benefit more than most from the work of the United Nations, should make sure that the momentum for reform is not lost in a competitive pursuit of advantages on minor points, nor in political posturing. Therefore, I encourage you all to engage in the preparatory work in New York. We need to create a positive and constructive debate. We need to demonstrate to the Secretary-General and to the world that we stand firmly behind his ambition to strengthen the United Nations. We need to speak out on the need for bold reforms.

As the Secretary-General has stated so clearly in his report: The world must advance the causes of security, development and human rights together, otherwise none will succeed. Humanity will not enjoy security without development, it will not enjoy development without security, and it will not enjoy either without respect for human rights.

On that note, I wish you all an interesting and stimulating seminar.

Thank you.

Tags

Politisk tale, Venstre

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