



**Permanent Mission of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines
to the United Nations**

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Statement

by

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**Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace: Transitional Justice in Conflict and Post-
Conflict Situations**

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Thank You Mr. President,

We wish to join other members in thanking Belgium for organizing this important briefing. We recognise and welcome the foreign Ministers present, and thank High Commissioner Bachelet, Father de Roux and Executive Sooka for their insightful and thoughtful briefings.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines welcomes today's discussion on Transitional Justice, a critical component of building and sustaining peace in many settings. We wish to recall our Council's discussion in November, under the UK's presidency, on the role of reconciliation. Transitional Justice facilitates reconciliation by ensuring accountability for perpetrators and offering justice for victims. Without justice, lasting and sustainable peace would remain elusive. Without reconciliation, our Council's work to build a peaceful and prosperous world will be futile.

Mr. President,

Transitional Justice mechanisms should always form part of a larger political strategy that addresses the structural inequalities in conflict-affected societies – to the benefit of *all* stakeholders without discrimination. This inclusive approach should consider the differentiated needs *and* abilities of all participants. Women, youth, ethnic and religious minorities, indigenous populations, persons with disabilities, the elderly, constituents of rural communities, and civil-society representatives must always be present as crafters, participants, and beneficiaries of transitional justice initiatives at all stages of the conflict cycle – before, during, and after the conflict. Indeed, building trust and ensuring justice is a never-ending process.

Transitional Justice mechanisms should also be complemented by sustainable development initiatives that address the root causes of insecurity and empower people to live in dignity. The Security Council should seek to engage, more often, the Peacebuilding Commission's strategic advisory capacities, and where necessary, make use of the Secretary-General's Peacebuilding Fund to address important governance gaps and to initiate projects and programmes that stimulate socioeconomic and political participation. We emphasize however, (like others today

have done) that there is no "one size fits all" approach. These initiatives must always be designed with respect for local customs and values. To this end, we welcome the African Union's continental guideline for transitional justice, adopted one year ago, that takes into account the many-sided complexities of mass violence, yet privileges local traditions when delivering justice and accountability. This comprehensive roadmap is a credible source of best-practices and lessons learned that all members of the international community may find useful.

Mr. President,

Transitional Justice safeguards institutional integrity and promotes structural improvements across the peace, security and development nexus. Well-designed Transnational Justice mechanisms help to restore public confidence in state institutions. They also foster normative realignments across societies as new precedents are created to provide accountability, rehabilitation, and reparations to survivors of injustices. On the issue of reparations, it must be emphasized that there should be no statutes of limitation that prevent restitution for mass atrocity crimes – especially where these historical injustices have left legacies of underdevelopment, intergenerational traumas, and social inequities in their wake. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines reiterates that the historical injustices of native genocide and chattel slavery, including the Trans-Atlantic slave trade, compel all former colonial powers to provide reparatory justice.

Excellencies,

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines is a young nation that has only reclaimed its independence a mere 40 years ago. Like many young societies, we understand that only by healing the collective memory, enmeshed deep within our social fabric, can we truly come to terms with our past indignities *and* embrace our future possibilities. This is the lens through which we view transitional justice - as a medium to bridge a painful past to a peaceful future by listening to those cries that too often go unheard.

Thank You.