

Mr. President, Professor Jayakumar,
Mr. Chairman of the Ad hoc Working Group on Africa, Ambassador
Koonjul,
Ladies and Gentlemen, Your Excellencies,

It is an honor to participate in this discussion on the initial activities of the Ad hoc Working Group on Africa of the Security Council, on behalf of the Economic and Social Council. It is another important step in the improvement of cooperation between major UN bodies, while at the same time fully respecting their individual competencies and mandates.

The international community is indeed increasingly recognizing the importance of addressing conflict prevention and conflict resolution issues in Africa. It is a part of the general recognition of the importance of addressing the root causes of violent conflict, and the inter-linkages among relief, rehabilitation, reconstruction and longer-term development for building peace. Effective strategies to deal with conflict prevention and recovery require a comprehensive approach embracing actions in a wide range of areas, including political, diplomatic, humanitarian, human rights, and institutional measures, as well as, efforts to promote development. ECOSOC has important responsibilities in these areas, which it is beginning to address in a more concerted manner. It is also clear that the General Assembly, the Security Council, ECOSOC and other partners will need to work much more collaboratively than has been the case to date. The United Nations and its Member States must take on the many aspects of peace-building in order to fulfill the Charter's vision "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war".

The General Assembly and the Security Council have recognized the contribution that ECOSOC could make to the effective implementation of conflict prevention and recovery strategies. The Assembly has called upon ECOSOC to focus more upon actions related to the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa. The Security Council, in its January 2002 meeting on "The situation in Africa", reaffirmed the importance of strengthening its cooperation with ECOSOC through greater interaction, in accordance with Article 65 of the Charter. The Security Council also identified the enhancement of cooperation with ECOSOC as one of the purposes of its newly established Ad hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa.

As a central intergovernmental body for coordination in the UN system, as well as, for undertaking studies and making recommendations to other entities, ECOSOC has Charter-mandated functions that can help in examinations and actions dealing with root causes of violence, and with the humanitarian assistance, economic and social reconstruction and

development and human rights processes that are at the heart of peace-building. The Council's oversight role in matters of development cooperation and humanitarian assistance can have particular value in promoting better integration between the relevant policy and operational dimensions, thereby complementing ongoing work that takes place in the General Assembly and the Security Council. There is a gap between the ending of humanitarian and the beginning of systemic development assistance in countries emerging from conflict. This gap can be successfully bridged by undertaking a coordinated effort by ECOSOC through its functional commissions, agencies, funds and programs. Enhanced cooperation between ECOSOC and Bretton-Woods Institutions is also of utmost importance.

In this regard, of particular importance is the proposal that ECOSOC establish an ad hoc advisory group on African countries emerging from conflict. At the request of ECOSOC, a report of the Secretary-General on the possible mandate, composition and modalities of work of such a group has been published (document E/2002/12). It recommends a flexible, time-limited approach in setting up such an advisory group, at the request of the country concerned. Such a group would review existing arrangements to meet the country's humanitarian, reconstruction and development needs and would make proposals to ECOSOC on how to ensure that the country receives adequate and coordinated assistance in order to prevent the reoccurrence of conflict and promote long-term development. A draft resolution leading to establishment of the Ad hoc group will shortly be submitted for consideration by Member States. ECOSOC is scheduled to take it up in the near future, with the aim of establishing an advisory group first and then, putting it to practice upon the request of an interested African state.

In closing, I would like to emphasize again the importance of the issues and ideas being treated in today's meeting, and to express my satisfaction with the closer cooperation among the principal organs of the United Nations in attempting to cope with the problems set before us.

Thank you.