



## **The President of the Economic and Social Council**

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**Statement of the  
President of the Economic and Social Council  
H.E. Dr. Ivan Šimonoviæ,  
Permanent Representative of the Republic of Croatia  
at the Public Meeting of the Security Council on Cooperation  
between the UN System and the Central African Region in the  
Maintenance of Peace and Security  
22 October 2002**

Mr. President,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen

United Nations Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld - who gave his life in an effort for peace in the Central African region - is quoted as having said “The purpose of the UN is not to get us to heaven but to save us from hell.” Today’s open debate in the Security Council, forty-one years since his death, finds us working together to help bring peace and a brighter future in a region that has known too much misery.

We are increasingly aware that peace-building requires a comprehensive approach that encompasses a wide range of political, developmental, humanitarian and human rights programmes and mechanisms. Actions are needed that focus on fostering sustainable institutions and processes in many areas. This has been emphasized in the outcome of a number of Security Council debates. Moreover, the President of the General Assembly last week underlined the fact that peace and security are closely linked to issues of poverty, and that reducing poverty is the single most important and challenging of the Millennium Development Goals.

As a central intergovernmental body in the economic and social field for coordination in the UN system, as well as for undertaking studies and making recommendations to other entities, ECOSOC has 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.

Mr. President,

The Central African region is confronted with a myriad of cross-cutting challenges arising out of a number of conflicts, which have ravaged the subregion. As many of you have noted, several of the eleven countries in the region have been affected by civil conflicts, including Angola, Burundi, the Central Africa Republic, Chad, the Congo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda, which have resulted in major loss of life, large scale destruction of economic and social infrastructure and have created millions of refugees, returnees and displaced persons. Not surprisingly, of the 11 countries, all those experiencing conflicts, with one exception, are in the low human development category of the UNDP 2002 Human Development Report.

The Economic and Social Council recognizes the importance of cross-border influences and linkages in a number of conflicts in Africa and, in its Ministerial Communique of 2001 on the supporting the sustainable development of Africa, called for the exploration of the feasibility of creating subregional United Nations coordinating capability, possibly by using existing United Nations regional offices, which would assist the United Nations system in setting integrated policies and strategies, ensure the harmonization of activities and lend support to national and subregional peace-building efforts and initiatives, while supporting subregional integration. The Council will continue to advocate for the creation of such capability.

The Council believes that it is imperative for the countries of the subregion to own and lead their own reconstruction. The Central African region has enormous potential, with a population of 100 million and vast untapped natural resources. The Council deplors the illegal exploitation of these resources, especially because the sustainable development of these resources can serve to alleviate the humanitarian, economic and social consequences of conflict and put these countries on the path to long-term growth. We will add our voice to that of the Security Council in calling for an end to this practice.

Mr. President,

The Economic and Social Council welcomes the recent positive developments in the region: the withdrawal of troops from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the signature of the cease-fire agreement between the Burundi Transitional Government and two rebel movements, on the occasion of the Dar Es Salaam regional summit of 7 October and the decision to deploy an International Observation Force (IFO) to the Central African Republic (CAR) to promote calm, particularly on the country's border with Chad. We believe these are positive signs that the sub region is emerging from the nightmare of civil conflict and serve to create the environment for rebuilding economies and relaunching economic growth.

Mr. President,

You, addressing the Economic and Social Council in your capacity as President of the Security Council and quite a few others here in this chamber today, were present when ECOSOC recently commemorated the tenth anniversary of the signing of the General Peace Agreement in Mozambique. On the Fourth of October 1992, after 16 years of civil conflict, the parties to that agreement undertook “to do everything in their power for the achievement of genuine national reconciliation”. In the decade since, Mozambique has been an African and a United Nations success story, and an example of how peace and development interlink. We need such a success stories elsewhere in Africa as well.

This past July ECOSOC adopted a resolution that we hope will lead to very useful and positive steps by the international community in support of African countries emerging from conflict. This is the agreement to establish upon request an ad hoc advisory group, at the ambassadorial level, to examine the humanitarian and economic needs of the country concerned; to review relevant programmes of support; to prepare recommendations for a long-term programme of support that integrates relief, rehabilitation, reconstruction and development in a comprehensive approach; and to provide advice on ensuring the adequacy and coherence of international assistance. Guinea-Bissau is the first country to request that such an advisory group be formed. We are now working out the details of arrangements and I hope that we will be able to establish the Ad hoc advisory group on Guinea-Bissau this Friday, 25<sup>th</sup> of October. The Advisory group will have inter-agency support in the conduct of its work, and we look forward to the analysis and report that should be coming to ECOSOC by mid January. In performing its task, the ECOSOC Ad hoc advisory group on Guinea-Bissau will closely cooperate with Security Council's Ad hoc working group on conflict prevention and resolution in Africa.

Mr. President, let me conclude,

On the recent commemoration of 10 years of a successful peace agreement, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Mozambique affirmed that post-conflict recovery and peace-building are even harder to manage than peace-keeping and peace negotiations, as pressures are high for delivery of quick and sustained results, and for continuous proof that peace is more profitable than war. This is a sobering thought, and we should keep it in our minds when discussing the prospects of Central Africa.

Thank you.