

**Commemoration of the tenth anniversary of the signing  
of the General Peace Agreement in Mozambique**

4 October 2002

Opening Statement by the President of ECOSOC  
H.E. Dr. Ivan Šimonovič

Your Excellency Dr. Santo Simao, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Mozambique,  
Your Excellencies the Presidents of the General Assembly and of the Security Council,  
Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

This is a happy day for Mozambique and for the United Nations.

On the Fourth of October 1992, after 16 years of civil conflict in Mozambique, a General Peace Agreement was signed in Rome, in the presence of a number of African and other high-level officials, mediators and observers. The parties undertook “to do everything in their power for the achievement of genuine national reconciliation”. A United Nations Observer Mission was established and functioned for two years to monitor the implementation of the terms of peace.

We are here today to commemorate the tenth anniversary of the Agreement and to celebrate Mozambique’s efforts to create a climate of peace, and to put in place economic, social and political reforms that have led to significant advancements, with continued assistance from the international community, including from the United Nations.

A decade later, Mozambique is still one of the poorest countries in the world. The scars of warfare, shattered infrastructure, a million land mines, plus droughts and floods have greatly burdened the efforts to rise above the conditions of absolute poverty that characterize life for a high percentage of the population. Indeed in March 2000 ECOSOC met in an “emergency session” to mobilize an international response to the extensive floods that posed a danger to the country’s entire post-war reconstruction. Fortunately the danger was contained and Mozambique has resumed a robust growth. Sizeable foreign investments are beginning to materialize. A large portion of the external debt has been cancelled. The various economic and social indicators are rising, but the Council will need to remain alert to relevant issues as Mozambique completes its transition from rehabilitation and reconstruction to long-term development.

It is very fitting that we commemorate the anniversary of Mozambique’s peace agreement here in the Economic and Social Council. The main concerns of ECOSOC – in

the areas of international economic, social, cultural, educational, health, human rights and related matters – are now the main concerns in Mozambique. ECOSOC is a central body for policy coordination in the UN system, for undertaking studies and making recommendations to other entities, for cooperation with the Bretton Woods institutions and for consultations with non-governmental organizations. The Council is well-positioned for the examinations and actions necessary for humanitarian assistance, economic and social reconstruction and development, and human rights processes that are at the heart of peace-building. Accordingly, we look forward to presentations this afternoon on the experiences of Mozambique and of the United Nations in the past decade, and on the lessons to be had for the future.

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 other 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, and this morning ECOSOC took action to do so. The ambassadors will have inter-agency support in the conduct of their work, and we look forward to the analysis and report that will be coming from the group.

The experience of Mozambique will without doubt be instructive as we begin such country-focused work in ECOSOC. The efforts and adversities, and the lessons learned, should provide a valuable context for the work to be conducted in support of Guinea Bissau. The comments offered here this afternoon should thus have significance in relation to both countries, and we shall take careful note of these.

As stated in the Mozambique peace agreement, the signatories reaffirmed that “dialogue and collaboration are the indispensable means of achieving a lasting peace in the country.” This is fundamental. We commemorate that agreement today, and recommit ourselves to the spirit it represents.

Thank you.