

## **Economic and Social Council**

### **Informal meeting to assess the Ad Hoc Advisory Groups On African Countries Emerging from Conflicts**

**Introductory statement by Ambassador Marjatta Rasi,  
President of ECOSOC**

**Monday 3 May 2004**

**Excellencies,**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

The Ad Hoc Advisory Groups on African Countries Emerging from Conflicts are a major initiative by ECOSOC over these last years. In 2002, when the Council created a framework for such Groups, it responded to a request made by the General Assembly in its resolution 55/217 on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa that ECOSOC consider the creation of an advisory group on countries emerging from conflicts with a view to assessing their humanitarian and economic needs and elaborating a long-term programme of support for implementation that begins with the integration of relief into development. The Council also answered to calls made by the Security Council in both a resolution and a Presidential Statement for greater inter-action between the two Councils on the situation in Africa.

It is a source of satisfaction for me to see how far we have come since these invitations were made to ECOSOC. The Council has made a great deal of work in establishing the Ad Hoc Advisory Groups on Guinea-Bissau and Burundi. Both have produced substantive reports with recommendations to ECOSOC. Among the numerous activities and initiatives taken by the m, I wish to highlight the ‘partnership approach’ proposed by the Guinea-Bissau Group and subsequently endorsed by ECOSOC, under which the authorities of Guinea-Bissau work on the rule of law and political stability while international development partners provide emergency financial support and technical assistance in various fields; I also wish to mention the joint mission of the

Group with the Security Council to Bissau in June 2003 as well as the visit of the Ad Hoc Advisory Group to Burundi in November 2003 and the subsequent participation of members of the Group to the Forum of Development Partners of Burundi, a major donor event for this country, which was held in Brussels last January. This has meant a new area of work for ECOSOC.

More detailed information on the work of the Groups appear in the aide-mémoire prepared and sent out to all Missions and invitees to this meeting.

This aide-mémoire also raises questions on the work of these Groups. As you know, what gathers us here today is an assessment process of these bodies. At its 2003 substantive session, ECOSOC decided in its resolution 2003/50 to “undertake an assessment of lessons learned based on the initial experience of such ad hoc advisory groups, no later than at its substantive session of 2004; to assess also progress made in the implementation of recommendations made by the ad hoc advisory groups; and to request the Secretary-General to provide a report on this subject to its substantive session in 2004”. Therefore, the objective of this meeting today is to start preparing for the substantive session of the Council through a brainstorming session on an evaluation of these Groups and of the scope and impact of their recommendations. Our debates will provide important elements for the preparation of the Secretary-General’s report to be submitted to the July session, which will help us complete the assessment process and guide the future role of ECOSOC on post-conflict and recovery issues. To that end, our debate today should review *inter alia* how the Groups have promoted international support to Guinea-Bissau and Burundi, how they have increased coordination and synergy within the UN system and with other partners, the Bretton Woods Institutions and donors, and also how at the institutional level, interaction between the Security Council and ECOSOC have improved and what the prospects for future interaction are.

I am pleased to note that all those who count in this process have responded positively to my invitation and are here today. I will not list them all. However, I wish to welcome on behalf of the Council Mrs. Séraphine Wakana, Minister of Planning,

Reconstruction and Development of Burundi. Allow me also to thank Ambassador Kumalo, the Chairman of the two Groups, who has played a critical role in the conduct of this process and who deserves our deep recognition, and Ambassador Gaspar Martins, Chairman of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Security Council on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa, who actively takes part in the work of the two Groups and incarnates the increased relationships between the two Councils. I also recognize in the room the Ambassadors who are members of the Groups and I congratulate them for their hard work. I wish to thank high-ranking officials from the Secretariat who are with us today as well as representatives of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund who came from Washington for this assessment meeting - we look forward to hearing your views - and last but not least, the representatives of the UN system in Burundi and Guinea-Bissau, namely Mr. Alberic Kacou, UN Resident Coordinator in Guinea-Bissau and Ambassador Nureldin Satti, Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Deputy Head of the United Nations Office in Burundi (UNOB). Thank you very much for coming all the way from Bissau and Bujumbura; your involvement in support of these Groups has been crucial and the lessons you draw from them are of great relevance to this process.

Our brainstorming session will be divided in four main segments to allow for focused and interactive discussions, as you can read from the programme. This morning, after introductory remarks from the podium, we will discuss the assessment of the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Guinea-Bissau. In the first half of the afternoon, we will consider the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Burundi. In both cases, we will hear remarks by our invitees and then turn into an interactive dialogue. In the second half of the afternoon, we will hold a dialogue on follow-up recommendations, with a more prospective vision of the future of these mechanisms. In order to give the floor to as many representatives as possible, I will ask all speakers to limit their remarks to 7 minutes, while interventions during the interactive dialogues should last 2 to 3 minutes.

Thank you very much in advance for your cooperation and involvement in this process.