

Bosnia and Herzegovina
22 March 2001

Mr. Neewoor (Mauritius):

I join my colleagues in extending a warm welcome to the new Permanent Representative of Tunisia.

My delegation wishes to thank Mr. Petritsch, the High Representative for the Implementation of the Peace Agreement on Bosnia and Herzegovina, for the candid briefing that he has given us this morning. We also thank him for the comprehensive report that he has submitted under the cover of his letter dated 12 March to the Secretary-General.

We have taken note of the strenuous efforts undertaken by Mr. Petritsch to implement the Peace Agreement. We appreciate the courageous measures taken to establish and strengthen vital institutions, so important for the consolidation of multi-ethnic democracy in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In particular, we welcome the establishment of an independent judicial commission charged with bringing about reforms to the justice system and the measures being taken to strengthen human rights institutions. We believe that the education sector should equally receive the highest possible attention since schools are where the younger generation of Bosnia and Herzegovina have to translate into reality the ideal of multi-ethnic harmony and coexistence.

We note with satisfaction that important economic reforms are underway. Obviously, a prosperous economy provides opportunities for employment for the people and reduces the risk of inter-communal tensions. We are also pleased that refugees are now able to return home in larger numbers. This is indicative of an improvement in interethnic understanding. We have no doubt that Mr. Petritsch will continue to do, as a high priority, everything possible to help create conditions so that all refugees and displaced persons can return to the homes that they abandoned due to the conflict.

We understand fully the challenges that Mr. Petritsch faces with ethnic tensions rising again across the border of Bosnia and Herzegovina. We wish to encourage him to confront any new nationalistic action that spills over into Bosnia and Herzegovina with the determination that he has demonstrated in all his work so far. We assure him of the total support of our delegation.