

Democratic Republic of Congo
2 February 2001

Mr. Neewoor (Mauritius): Mr. President, allow me first to congratulate you warmly on your assumption of the presidency of the Council. We thank you for starting your presidency with this important meeting on the Democratic Republic of the Congo and also for placing that country and Africa high on the Council's work programme during the month of February.

My delegation joins the other members in extending a very warm welcome in the Security Council Chamber to His Excellency Mr. Joseph Kabila, President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

First of all, on behalf of the Government of Mauritius, I wish to present to the President, the Government and the people of the Democratic Republic of Congo the sincere condolences of the Government and people of Mauritius on the tragic death of the President's father, the late President Laurent Kabila. We also wish to felicitate the Government and people of Congo for the courage they have demonstrated during the difficult time following the recent tragic event in Kinshasa and for the remarkable manner in which the transition is being managed.

We have listened very attentively to the important statement that President Joseph Kabila has just made before the Security Council, and we feel greatly reassured by it. We believe that he has the right vision to achieve the goal of peace and security within the framework of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of his country. The road to peace and security there requires, obviously, the participation of all the Congolese people in an inclusive political process. The Lusaka Accord that all the Congolese parties, as well as the non-Congolese parties involved in the conflict, signed in July 1999 remains unquestionably the foundation upon which peace and normalcy should be built in the Congo.

Unfortunately, so far the inter-Congolese dialogue, which is an essential and integral part of the Lusaka Accord, has not really got off the ground, and in a significant measure this has resulted in the stagnation of the Lusaka process. We are confident that President Kabila will do what is necessary for the inter-Congolese dialogue to begin without delay, in accordance with the provisions of the Lusaka Agreement. We urge all the parties to the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement to recommit themselves to implementing this Agreement in all its aspects and to comply with all its provisions.

In the wake of the recent events in Kinshasa, the Security Council promptly received communications from Rwanda and Uganda to the effect that they did not intend to take any advantage of the situation. This has been very much appreciated.

We have no doubt about the commitments of both Rwanda and Uganda for the full and early implementation of the Lusaka Agreement. In this regard, we welcome the meeting earlier in Washington, D.C., between President Kagame and President Kabila. That bilateral meeting will help build confidence for the peace process. In the same vein, my delegation would like to urge Rwanda and Uganda, the two important neighbours of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, to take steps to implement the disengagement plans which they signed in Harare a few weeks ago along with the other parties. This important step should mark the beginning of a process for the withdrawal of all foreign troops from the territory of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, pursuant to the Lusaka Agreement.

There is absolutely no question that the deployment of a United Nations peacekeeping operation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is necessary for the implementation of the Lusaka Agreement. Indeed, the people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo have already been waiting far too long for the deployment to take place. There are certainly many reasons why the Lusaka process has not moved forward in the last year and a half since it was signed by all concerned parties. The undue delay in the deployment of the United Nations peacekeeping operation has undoubtedly contributed to the stagnation of the Lusaka process.

Today there are hopeful signs all around for the implementation of the Lusaka Agreement. President Joseph Kabila has stated his clear intention, both in Kinshasa and in his important statement today in the Security Council, to move the peace process forward. We also have assurances in this regard from the other capitals concerned. We have no doubt that all the Congolese parties will also rally in a spirit of patriotism and solidarity and will help bring peace and stability to the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The inter-Congolese dialogue can ultimately determine the future political course of the country. The United Nations, for its part, must fulfil its responsibility and deploy the long-awaited peacekeeping operation without any further delay, in accordance with Security Council resolutions 1291 (2000) and 1332 (2000).

Before concluding, I wish to commend the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Ambassador Kamel Morjane, and his small team of observers for their remarkable work in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. I also wish to pay tribute to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the International

Committee of the Red Cross and the other relief organizations for their important humanitarian work in providing relief and assistance to numerous refugees, internally displaced persons and other victims of the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Finally, I wish to state that Mauritius wishes to President Joseph Kabila every success in his endeavours to bring peace, unity and democracy to his great country.