

Kosovo (Federal Republic of Yugoslavia)
16 March 2001

Mr. Neewoor (Mauritius):

I will try to heed your appeal, Sir, and to be brief. I shall not comment on all the points that are relevant in this case.

First, we are pleased to welcome Mr. Hans Haekkerup, the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Kosovo and the head of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK). We thank for the briefing he has given us on the situation in Kosovo. We also thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report.

We are fully conscious of the huge dimension of the work UNMIK is shouldering to consolidate peace, tackle ethnic violence, establish and conduct an effective administration and prepare Kosovo politically for the democratic process necessary to its autonomy within the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. These are important challenges and we are satisfied that UNMIK is addressing all the issues efficiently. We appreciate the role of the Kosovo Force in ensuring peace and security, which are so vital if the work of UNMIK is to succeed.

We know that there are extremists in Kosovo whose agenda is not the same as that envisaged under Security Council resolution 1244 (1999). These elements will, of course, be involved in acts of violence and desperation in the run-up to the elections later this year. This should not deter UNMIK from implementing the mandate of Security Council resolution 1244 (1999). It is, however, extremely important that there should be maximum participation of Albanians and Serbs alike in the elections so that the outcome is fully credible and a representative legislative body may emerge following the elections.

We also believe that the Government of Yugoslavia should be involved in the process leading to the emergence of an autonomous Kosovo within the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. In this regard, it is important to establish the proposed UNMIK office in Belgrade as early as possible

Mauritius, as a multi-ethnic nation, has no doubt at all that a multi-ethnic Kosovo is an achievable reality. We would like to see the leaders of the Albanian and Serb communities in Kosovo impress upon their communities the need to be fully behind the UNMIK framework and to discourage the extremists on their respective sides. At the same time, UNMIK must take care to ensure that the administration and the judicial system are absolutely fair to all communities, totally free and non-discriminatory.

Finally, I would like to assure Mr. Haekkerup that he has the full support of Mauritius in this important responsibility.