

**Maintenance of peace and security**  
**7 March 2001**

**Mr. Neewoor** (Mauritius):

Let me begin by congratulating Ukraine once again on assuming the presidency of the Security Council for the month of March. I also thank Tunisia for its very effective presidency of the Council last month.

My delegation is grateful to you, Mr. President, for organizing this open debate on the follow-up to the Security Council summit held six months ago alongside of the Millennium Summit. We are also grateful to your delegation for the comprehensive background paper you have circulated with the aim of spurring meaningful discussion on this extremely important topic.

We appreciate that for today's meeting you have decided on the format introduced under Singapore's presidency that allows the non-members of the Security Council to speak first. This format enables the Security Council members to have the benefit of the views of the general membership of the United Nations and enables us to react to those views to the extent possible in an interactive process. This, we have no doubt, is much appreciated by the general membership.

When the leaders of the countries serving on the Security Council meet in a special summit, as it happened six months ago, and, following their serious deliberations, agree to a declaration that incorporates their collective views on a subject as important as "Ensuring an effective role for the Security Council in the maintenance of international peace and security, particularly in Africa", such a declaration not only requires our serious attention but should be implemented by all possible means as a priority. It is unfortunate that this important declaration has remained more or less dormant since its adoption at the summit level on 7 September last year.

Indeed, the declaration sums up most of the concerns the members of the United Nations have regarding the effectiveness of the Security Council today, as the apex world body for the maintenance of international peace and security. It addresses the serious challenges the Security Council faces in carrying out its responsibilities today in changing circumstances and makes important proposals for the way forward. It reaffirms the need for reform, so that representation in the Security Council can become more equitable and its decisions more credible.

There is no doubt that the institution of the Security Council as the instrument for the maintenance of international peace and security is in urgent need of rethinking if it is to continue to assume the role the Charter has given it. The Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi

Annan, speaking at the Security Council summit six months ago, could not have better portrayed the present state of affairs:

“Too many vulnerable communities in too many regions of the world now hesitate to look to the United Nations to assist them in their hour of need. No amount of resolutions or statements can change that reality; only action can: prompt, united, effective action pursued with skill and discipline to halt conflict and to restore the peace. Only such determined action can restore the reputation of the United Nations as a credible force for peace and justice”. (S/PV.4194)

We know that this important statement of the Secretary-General, which he reiterated this morning, is fully shared by most United Nations Members and is particularly relevant to the Security Council.

We all agree that the maintenance of international peace and security has become a much more complex proposition than was originally envisaged in the United Nations Charter. Unfortunately, we have not adapted our structures and methods to deal with the new situation. The Security Council, which has the primary responsibility in this regard, continues to function within the parameters of a world order that has long since changed, and does not reflect the realities of our times. Its decision-making is, more often than not, flawed and inconsistent as well as lacking in credibility. We believe that the ongoing discussion in the General Assembly on reform of the Security Council needs to be concluded expeditiously in order to enable the Council to function more efficiently in fulfilling the responsibilities conferred upon it by the United Nations Charter.

We would like to propose that we consider having a group of wise men, including former statesmen, discuss those issues of reform which continue to elude solutions in our discussions and make proposals to us for further consideration, because we need to move on with reforms of the Security Council.

The manner in which conflicts are addressed presently by the Security Council can at best be described as “firefighting” with inadequate material, financial and human resources. We send rumbling and ill-equipped fire engines, often much too late, to contain raging fires of conflicts, and then realize that we have entrusted an impossible job to our firemen. Somalia, Angola and Sierra Leone are examples in this regard. At times our fire engines do not even start, as we saw in the case of Rwanda, where millions were being killed in a cruel genocide and were crying for help from the international community, and also in the case of Palestine last year. We know, furthermore, that the Democratic Republic of the Congo has waited more than 20 months for the deployment of a peacekeeping operation.

Obviously, United Nations peacekeeping in Africa has been lacking in even-handedness, to the extent that there are allegations of double standards when it comes to deployment

on the African continent. The Security Council summit declaration appropriately called for particular attention to be given to peacekeeping in Africa.

The Brahimi report addressed many of the shortcomings of United Nations peacekeeping operations and has made important recommendations, some of which are being implemented gradually. One very significant recommendation, which is also being implemented, is that there should be regular consultations, at every stage of peacekeeping operations, between the Security Council and the troop-contributing countries. We are hopeful that the Working Group on Peacekeeping Operations established last month by the Security Council, under the chairmanship of Ambassador Curtis Ward of Jamaica, will deal with all relevant aspects for further improvement of United Nations peacekeeping operations.

The imposition of mandatory sanctions is the only other tool available to the Security Council for enforcing its decisions. Unfortunately, the Security Council itself does not have the capacity to ensure compliance with its sanctions regimes. In such a situation, the sanctions are violated with impunity and often fail to serve their intended purpose. We then have a situation in which everything remains at a standstill, sometimes for years. We also have situations in which sanctions bitterly affect the people rather than the defaulting regimes for which they are intended, and the sanctions become the subject of popular outcry because of the humanitarian crisis to which they often lead. The Security Council summit declaration referred to this problem, and it is now for us collectively to address this important issue in a comprehensive manner and come up with an appropriate solution.

The maintenance of international peace and security, as referred to in the United Nations Charter, has larger connotations than just peacekeeping operations. The Security Council summit declaration rightly recognizes this and emphasizes that peace-building and identifying the root causes of conflicts should be given due attention by the Security Council and the United Nations in general. In order to address these issues, there is a need for cooperation between the Security Council and the other organs of the United Nations system, in particular the Economic and Social Council. We believe that a special unit should be set up in the United Nations Secretariat to facilitate coordination between the Security Council and the various United Nations bodies in the areas of post conflict peace-building.

The maintenance of international peace and security also entails the prevention of conflicts. The Security Council summit addressed this issue and suggested that regional offices of the Security Council be established, with the responsibility of preventing conflicts. We strongly support that proposal. We believe that such regional offices could also work closely with the regional organizations, which, too, have an important role in conflict prevention as well as in the management of conflicts.

Finally, I would like to suggest that the Security Council establish a working group with responsibility to make recommendations to the Council on implementation of the summit declaration. Furthermore, consideration should be given to the possibility of holding a ministerial meeting of the Security Council during the next session of the General Assembly for a review of the Security Council summit declaration.