

**Statement by Amb. Koonjul on the Wrap-up discussion on the work of
the Security Council for the current month - 20 December 2002**

First of all, let me thank you, Mr. President, for convening this wrap-up meeting and for giving us, the departing members of the Security Council, the opportunity to share our views on the work of the Council over the past 12 months. This exercise will certainly be beneficial for the Council's future work as well as for the new members who will be joining the Council next year.

I should also like to congratulate you, Mr. President, and your delegation on the manner in which the business of the Council is being conducted this month. There is no doubt that it has been a very busy month, but we are happy to note that you have striven very hard to maintain your initial plan to end the Council's normal business today. I should also like to thank your deputy, Ambassador Franco, for the daily annotated programme that he has been sending to our Missions. That has helped us enormously in preparing for Council consultations and public meetings in a better way, with the result that the work of the Council has become more effective. It would be a good thing if that practice could be maintained in the future.

In addition, my delegation is very grateful to you, Mr. President, for having prepared and circulated a non-paper to serve as a general guide for today's meeting. In it you have asked us to assess the main contributions, political relevance, difficulties and dilemmas of the Security Council, using examples of the work accomplished during the year 2002, and to identify similar problems for the Council for 2003. I will try to follow your guidelines and will focus on a number of issues that, I believe, have been and will remain very significant for the Council.

Throughout the year, the Security Council has striven very hard to maintain international peace and security. Its commitment and perseverance have resulted in many success stories, such as an independent Timor-Leste and a stabilized and more peaceful Sierra Leone, Angola and Kosovo - to name only a few - as well as the remarkable Council action in Afghanistan. Those success stories can provide very useful lessons to the Council as it deals with other conflict situations and further complex issues.

During the course of the year, the Security Council has also made significant progress in its working methods, particularly in the area of increased transparency and interaction with the wider United Nations membership. The increase in the number of public meetings and of public briefings preceding consultations on certain issues has been highly appreciated by the general membership and has helped to break the divide between the Council and other United Nations Members. The Council should continue to give the general membership the opportunity to express their views and proposals on issues of which Council is seized. In our view, that approach remains the most effective way to obtain the greatest support of the international community for any Security Council action, as evidenced by the overwhelming response that resolution 1373 (2001) obtained through the methodology adopted by Ambassador Sir Jeremy Greenstock. Maintaining that approach, which in turn will strengthen the centrality of the Council, will be a major challenge for the Council in the years to come.

Closely linked to that is the need for the Council to be perceived as a credible and even-handed body that looks at all issues with the same objective, impartial and constructive approach. No distinction should be made, in our view, in the manner in which any particular subject is treated as opposed to another, nor should there be any distinction between one group of members and another within the Security Council. Any such divide would be harmful to the Council's long-term relationship with the rest of the international community. Council unity should remain the constant objective of every member, since we all know that the Council is most effective when it acts in unison. Consensus-building on the basis of collective interest, rather than divisions along the lines of national interests, needs to be emphasized.

One of the major challenges for the Council in the future will be the effective implementation of its decisions and resolutions. Dozens of resolutions remain unimplemented, some of them because of defiance by members and others because they are simply impractical. Several decisions concerning appeals and urgent calls — for example, on rebel movements in Africa or even for the disarmament of Kisangani - have not been complied with. It will be necessary for the Council to address that important issue to ensure its own credibility.

As the Council discusses situations in areas affected by conflict, we rely mostly on reports of the Secretary-General and on briefings by the

Secretariat or by Special Representatives of the Secretary-General, which undoubtedly are both comprehensive and extremely useful. However, our experience has shown that, no matter how comprehensive such reports or briefings are, there is much vital information that we fail to obtain. That is why we feel that it is extremely important for Council members to undertake regular field visits to familiarize themselves with the situation on the ground by interacting with the actors and the local communities. Such visits also help to create greater awareness among Council members of the real needs and expectations of people at the grass-roots level, thereby allowing for discussion beyond the purely academic level. We have found all the field missions in which we have participated to be extremely useful, enlightening and, in many ways, very effective in terms of the message that the Council sends to the parties.

We feel that the Council should consider splitting visiting missions into two or even three groups, as in that way it would be possible for such a mission to visit more places and to meet with more people in a particular country. As the Council discusses the whole question of field missions, it may wish to consider such a proposal.

With the success of the peace processes in several conflict situations in Africa, namely Sierra Leone, Angola, Burundi and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the challenge that we will face will be the consolidation of peace in those countries. The Council must work towards that objective to ensure that those countries reach a stage where peace becomes irreversible. The signing of peace agreements is a crucial stage in any process. That is the time when the prompt support of the international community is most important. It is an opportunity which we cannot miss, even though sometimes we tend to become complacent and start focusing attention elsewhere. Our experience in Guinea-Bissau and in the Central African Republic should remind the Council of the importance of peace consolidation; in this context, we feel that it will have to work in close cooperation with all United Nations agencies for peace to be permanently anchored.

A full, comprehensive and effective programme of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) represents another challenge that the Council will have to address next year and in the years to come. Ways and means will have to be found to deal with those not willing to undergo voluntary DDR. My delegation has always supported the voluntary basis for

undertaking DDR, but at the same time we have always stressed the need to have contingency plans in respect of those who continue to undermine peace. Incomplete DDR is a source for future instability.

In the same vein, we feel that the demobilization, repatriation, resettlement and reintegration of excombatants should be taken at a regional or even continental level, especially in the case of Africa, where there is such mobility and such “demand” for combatants. We hope the Council will give serious consideration to this issue.

The Council has been quite effective with conflicts that are already full-blown. On several occasions, especially during brainstorming sessions, we have discussed the need for the Council to focus attention on preventive measures that can be more effective and more economical. At the beginning of this year, the Council very timidly addressed the crisis which Madagascar was experiencing at that time. Currently we have been doing the same with the crisis in Côte d’Ivoire. The Council is often reluctant, lest it be accused of interfering in the internal affairs of a sovereign State, to address what we would consider to be a clear pre-conflict situation.

While we fully understand the limitations, we believe there is a need for the Council to see how it can best intervene in situations where conflicts may be averted, before they escalate to uncontrollable scale. In this regard, we feel that the Council should work closely with regional and subregional organizations and should fully utilize their early warning systems. Closer cooperation with the African Union in the preventive field is absolutely vital. The New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD) and its Peer Review Mechanism provide the necessary framework to avert crisis situations, and the Security Council could work in helping to strengthen the institutional capacity of the African Union and in implementing NEPAD.

Mauritius will be completing its two-year term in the Council at the end of this month. Our membership has been an extremely enriching and challenging experience for us, especially in view of our size, resources and influence. But it is that very specificity which has led us to take a stand based on principles, objectivity, impartiality, sense of justice, evenhandedness, fair play and, above all, consensus building to preserve and strengthen the unity of the Council.

As one of the representatives of Africa, we have tried to focus the Council's attention on African issues and to bring a new perspective in dealing with some of the burning questions afflicting our continent. While advocating a global and comprehensive approach to problems in Africa, we have highlighted the specificities of each situation, which has to be viewed on its own merits. We are pleased with the establishment of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa, just as much as with the beginning of a new phase of cooperation between the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council. It is our sincere hope that the Council will continue to further strengthen such cooperation in the future. As we look back on our performance, we have a feeling of great humility, as well as some pride that our modest contribution may have helped consolidate peace and international security in the world.

I would like, in conclusion, to express my Government's sincere thanks and gratitude to all members of the Council, whose assistance and support have been of immense value to us. I wish to equally thank the whole Secretariat team for their support, especially during the Mauritian presidency. Last but not least, I want to thank my own team, both those who are sitting behind me and those who work behind the scenes, for their dedication and hard work. I would like to end my intervention by reading out a quote from former President Clinton of the United States, who has said that: "We have no choice but to learn to live together, to choose cooperation over conflict, to give expression to our common humanity by following simple rules: everyone deserves a chance; everyone has a role to play; we all do better when we work together; we are not as different as we think".