

Statement by Mr. Gokhool on the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina - 23 October 2002

I should like to join previous speakers in welcoming the High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina, Lord Ashdown, to today's meeting and to thank him for his comprehensive briefing. I also wish to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Klein, for his very useful briefing. In addition, we wish to commend the valuable contributions of the High Representative and of Mr. Klein to the success achieved thus far in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Most other delegations have commented on the elections, and I should also like to highlight certain points concerning them. First of all, we are pleased to note that the elections, held for the first time by the Bosnia and Herzegovina authorities, were conducted successfully and without violence. We therefore congratulate the authorities on that achievement.

Nevertheless, we have noted that a sizeable portion of the population in Bosnia and Herzegovina did not participate in the elections. As Lord Ashdown and Mr. Klein rightly pointed out, the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina may have expressed their frustration at the manner in which the outgoing Government conducted its business during its mandate. It is, therefore, imperative that the political leaders of the incoming Government focus on priority policies and programmes that will address the concerns of the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina. In that context, we should like to support the idea of establishing tests to judge the seriousness of the incoming Government on its commitment to the reform process, as mentioned in paragraph 46 of the report submitted by Lord Ashdown.

Various efforts have been carried out by the Office of the High Representative to establish the rule of law in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Some of those are commendable, such as the restructuring of the Bosnia and Herzegovina court system at all levels, ensuring that justice will be administered only by capable and honest judges in the future. We also note with satisfaction that the

new State Court will become operational on 1 January 2003, with a special jurisdiction to try serious violations of international humanitarian law. If we correctly understood Judge Jorda of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia when he addressed the Council in July, the new State Court will include international judges for a certain period of time. My delegation would like to be updated on progress in that regard. I have two questions for Lord Ashdown and for the Special Representative concerning the domestic debt crisis. It is mentioned in paragraph 17 of the report: "... Bosnia and Herzegovina could be in the grip of a severe domestic debt crisis. The country is racing against time".

I should like to know what programmes have been set up by the Special Representative and by Lord Ashdown to deal with this severe domestic debt crisis as soon as possible. We understand the need to implement programmes that will alleviate the debt crisis of the country, whose economy is in a nascent stage.

Secondly, we have observed that there is a need to attract foreign investment to the country. We should like to know from Lord Ashdown what incentives have been proposed in the programme to attract foreign investment in order to put the economy on an even keel.

Finally, we should like to make some observations as the Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina prepares its exit strategy. We are satisfied that the International Police Task Force has done an incredible amount of work. Bosnia and Herzegovina now has a police force that is adequately equipped to exercise police powers in accordance with democratic standards. The recent appointment of career professionals as police commissioners and the successful certification of an increasing number of police officials, as well as the participation of more women and members of minority communities in the police academies, indicate that the United Nations Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina (UNMIBH) has successfully completed its mandate and can readily hand over the baton to the European Union Police Mission (EUPM) when its mandate expires at the end of this year. We hope that the EUPM will preserve and continue UNMIBH's legacy. Indeed, the Security Council can claim the successful conclusion of another of its peacekeeping operations.