

Wrap-up discussion on the work of the Security Council for the current month by Ambassador Koonjul – 31 January 2002

As this is a wrap-up meeting, by definition we are supposed to take stock of what we have done during the month, or what we have not done, or what we would have liked to have achieved. This exercise can also be an opportunity to evaluate the way in which the Council has conducted its business during the month. In that connection, I invite members to comment on all the issues that we have dealt with during the month, and also to comment on the manner in which these issues have been dealt with. I also invite the comments of members on how we can improve upon what we have not been able to achieve during the month.

For this meeting we do not have a list of speakers, and I invite those who wish to take the floor to raise their hands.

I would now like to make a very brief statement on how we have seen our own presidency before I open the floor to Council members.

The programme of work of the Security Council for the month of January has been determined mainly by the exigencies imposed by previous decisions of the Security Council. The Council renewed the mandates of four peacekeeping operations, examined 11 reports of the Secretary-General and adopted seven resolutions and two presidential statements. We also issued 12 press statements on various issues discussed during the month.

While the attention of the international community continues to be occupied with the situations in Afghanistan and the Middle East, as well as with the threats posed by terrorism to international peace and security, the programme of work for the month of January attempted to strike a balance in its approach by addressing these issues in an adequate manner and, at the same time, refocusing attention on conflict situations in Africa and elsewhere.

We are pleased that the public meeting on the situation in Africa, with the participation for the first time of the Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), attracted several ministers from both member and non-member countries of the Council. I wish to express my sincere appreciation to all those delegations that participated in the meeting, in particular those ministers from member and nonmember countries of the Council who travelled to New York for the occasion.

It is our hope that the presidential statement which we have just adopted will serve as a basis for greater and more effective interaction between the Security Council and the OAU. We also hope that succeeding presidencies will continue this focus on African issues by taking a global and holistic approach, and we are grateful in this regard that the United Kingdom delegation has already announced that it will do so during its presidency in July.

I invite members to comment on the open briefing by the Chairman of the Counter-Terrorism Committee, Sir Jeremy Greenstock, which took place on 18 January. Their comments could focus on whether that meeting was useful and on how we can further the work both of the Security Council and of the Counter-Terrorism Committee to attain the goals we set ourselves in resolution 1373 (2001).

During this month we also remained engaged and committed with respect to the situation in Afghanistan. We had our regular briefings; we lifted sanctions against Ariana Afghan Airlines; we were able to unfreeze the assets of the Central Bank of Afghanistan. Yesterday's address by Mr. Hamid Karzai, Chairman of the Afghanistan Interim Authority, stressed once again how important the continued involvement of the Security Council is to the Afghan people in their quest for peace and stability.

At the beginning of the month we had said too that we would try to promote transparency in our work. One of the ways we did that was by setting up a web site on which we provided daily summaries of meetings and consultations of the Security Council. Members of the Council may wish to comment on whether that was useful or

whether it could be further improved to make our work more transparent. In the same vein, I am very glad that the public meeting on the situation in Africa was broadcast live through a United Nations webcast. That was indeed a technological breakthrough which allowed the whole world to follow the business of the Security Council. It is probably too easy to find out whether this was well received, but it would be interesting to find out whether this kind of service could be of use in the future to promote transparency in the work of the Council.

During this month we were also able to pursue discussion of some issues relating to the documentation and procedures of the Security Council. We spent quite a bit of time both at ambassadorial and experts level to review the format and the content of the report of the Security Council to the General Assembly. This shows that it is possible, with good will, to have discussions on issues that may appear to be difficult. We are glad that on this issue we are, almost, near agreement and that we will be able to have something ready for next month.

During several past wrap-up meetings, we have laid emphasis on the need for the Council to interact with non-members of the Council in order to share views on issues before the Council. Members of the Council may wish to comment on the format we adopted during the debate on the work of the Counter-Terrorism Committee, whereby we heard three members of the Council, then three representatives of non-Council States, and had Sir Jeremy Greenstock intervene after every six or so speakers. Our aim was to promote some kind of interactive dialogue. I would like to get the views of members on whether that was successful and on whether it might be encouraged in the future.

We were also able during January to have two short but very interesting meetings on the format of future wrap-up meetings; even here we seem to be moving towards some consensus. We hope that we will be able to try the new format — on which, again, there is near-consensus — next month. During this month we were also able to start regular briefings on the situation in the Middle East, a subject which had remained in the footnote of the Council's programme for far too long. The briefing by Mr. Terje Roed-Larsen,

Special Coordinator for the Middle East Process, was, I hope, extremely useful, because we were able to get first-hand information from somebody who has actually been operating in the field. We are also very grateful that the President of the Economic and Social Council was able to respond to our invitation to participate in the public meeting of the Security Council on the situation in Africa. We hope that this participation heralds a new era of cooperation and coordination in addressing issues of international peace and security, in particular the post-conflict peace-building components of peace-building initiatives. The interaction between these two major organs of the United Nations had long been awaited. Members of the Council may wish to address this matter and to suggest ways in which we can improve the relationship between the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council.

The work of the Council during the month of January proceeded, in our view, without too much pressure: we had only one evening sitting. That was possible thanks mainly to the cooperation and support extended by everyone here to me and my team during the month. I will reserve my vote of thanks until everybody else has spoken.