

Statement of the Permanent Representative at the Security Council meeting on the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) on 18 July, 2003

Thank you, Mr. President for organizing this very important meeting. I am grateful to Mr. Jean-Marie Guehenno for his briefing. Like others, I also wish to thank Mr. Ngongi for his presence here and for his briefing. I would like to take this opportunity to express our sincere appreciation for his recent role as the Secretary-General's Special Representative in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and wish him well for the future. We would like to welcome the appointment of his successor, Ambassador William Swing. It is also a pleasure to welcome Mr. Xavier Solana to this chamber. We thank him for briefing us about his recent visit to the region. We welcome the commitment of the EU to the rehabilitation and reconstruction of the DRC.

The conflict in the Democratic Republic in the Congo has been long and bloody. It has claimed the lives of an estimated 3 million people and left millions more destitute. It has rightly been called "the greatest tragedy of our times." The crisis in DRC is a complex one, and compounded by competing political domestic and foreign agendas, inter-ethnic rivalry and hate, and the rampant and illegal exploitation of the rich natural resources of this large and strategic nation. While the war has not produced any clear victors, millions of innocent civilians in the Congo have clearly become its victims. It is they who have suffered and will continue to suffer as long as the conflict continues.

This month we are seeing the first real sign of hope with the inauguration of the Government of National Unity and Transition. This is the culmination, we hope, of a long and painstaking process of negotiations. It is indeed a bold step taken by all who have chosen to participate in it and we hope all will participate in it. Pakistan hopes that the formation of this government will open the way not only to real political reforms in the country but also bring to an end the fighting which has ravaged the eastern parts of the DRC. It is now the responsibility of those who have agreed to share power to do their utmost to end the fighting and peaceably resolve the issues which underlie the conflict.

In addition, to making peace at the national level, there is a need to support peace initiatives at the local level, especially the Ituri Pacification Commission as well as the process of disarmament, demobilization, reintegration, and where appropriate of resettlement and repatriation, of combatants in the provinces of North and South Kivu. It is necessary to support these peace initiatives through the provision of appropriate security. The presence of a robust peacekeeping force is necessary to create the necessary political space for the peace process to take root and sustain itself. We welcome the multinational force deployed under French leadership in Bunia. This temporary arrangement should be replaced with a more sustainable force in good time. It is for this reason, my delegation supports the expansion of MONUC to a ceiling of 10,800 troops, a Chapter VII cover for Ituri, as well as, if required, for the Kivus, and a the presence of brigade size force in Ituri with a clear, realistic and robust mandate. We support the draft resolution which is close to finalization on the DRC which includes all the above elements.

The expanded presence of MONUC must be accompanied by a strong message to the warring factions and those who back them that further hostilities, which undermine the peace process, will no longer be tolerated. In this regard, my delegation supports the imposition of the arms embargo on all the warring parties. However, in doing so we urge the Council to make this embargo credible, effective, and implementable. If we do not do so, the very unworkability would undermine its own credibility. An appropriate mechanism should be set up for this purpose. In making the arms embargo more effective, the Council must consider ways to track the illegal exploitation of resources to their sources of funds, as well as the points where these resources

and funds are converted into arms. It is at these “source points” that embargo should be designed to be most effective. The Pakistan Delegation will come back to this point in the near future.

For durable peace, the countries in the region must support the peace process and refrain from contributing in any way to the continuation of hostilities. Pakistan fully supports the convening of a regional conference to promote peace, security and development. We also support calls for the conclusion of a good-neighbourly relations agreement between the DRC and its various neighbours. It goes without saying that peace in the region would immeasurably help peace in the DRC. Improvement in socio-economic condition through international assistance is essential. The humanitarian situation in the DRC is an integral part of the conflict and not a subsidiary or auxiliary one.

The humanitarian plight of the common people in the war zone in the DRC is truly heart-rending. They have suffered grievously. Their suffering is a blot on our collective conscience. They bring to mind Joseph Conrad's remarks in his memorable novel 'the Heart of Darkness' set in the Congo, written nearly a hundred years ago, that *“the belief in a supernatural source of evil is not necessary; men alone are quite capable of every wickedness.”* The culture of impunity which has prevailed in the DRC so far must now be brought to an end. There can truly be no genuine peace without justice. The crimes committed must be punished. This should be done either through existing mechanism or through specially courts – as in Rwanda.

Pakistan remains ever ready and committed, in both its capacities, as a member of the Security Council as well as a major contributor of the UN peacekeeping forces, to the restoration of peace in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

I thank You Mr. President