Mr. President,

I would like to thank Assistant Secretary General Kalomoh for presenting the Secretary General’s progress report on the implementation of the recommendations of the Security Council Mission to West Africa.

2. The Council’s Mission to West Africa took place during a particularly disturbing period. The peace process in Côte d’Ivoire was experiencing serious difficulties. Guinea Bissau, still struggling to cope with the challenges of post conflict peace building, was mired in political uncertainties and socio-economic problems. The security situation in Liberia was deteriorating rapidly, with portents of a major humanitarian crisis. Thus, the Council Mission could not visit Liberia. Sierra Leone provided the only reference for hope and relative stability.

3. Many of the country specific recommendations of the Mission were in relation to the respective situations existing at that time or were based on problems that could be reasonably anticipated. These recommendations were therefore relevant in the subsequent months which witnessed considerable evolution of situations in all the countries of concern.

4. During this period, the overall trend has been positive. The peace process in Côte d’Ivoire is getting back on track, after almost total breakdown. New proposals which could disrupt the process will hopefully not be pursued. Liberia has undergone a remarkable turnaround, following the timely intervention by ECOWAS and subsequent deployment of UNMIL. Progress in Liberia is expected to reinforce peace and stability in Sierra Leone. Guinea Bissau has also regained relative stability, despite intervening setbacks. However, its economic problems which remain largely unaddressed still pose a potential threat to a delicate peace.

Mr. President,

5. Other Council members have already addressed the specific country situations as well as cross cutting issues such as proliferation of arms, mercenaries and child soldiers, DDR, poverty and unemployment and the need for a regional approach. The Mission’s recommendations on these issues shall remain relevant and should be pursued. And we look forward to further work on those issues in light of the relevant reports to be provided by the Secretary-General.

6. I would like to make a few points of a general and “cross-cutting” nature:

First sustainable peace and stability in Western Africa can be achieved only if the underlying causes of conflict and instability are effectively addressed.
These causes involve among other things the exclusion of regional, ethnic or religious groups from participation in political and economic power-sharing.

**Second**, sanctions and even DDR programmes will not yield enduring results for peace so long as the incentives of many of the fighting militias as well as regime elements to persist in promoting instability are not removed. Proverbially, money is the mother of all evil. There is an obvious and well-established linkage between the illegal exploitation of natural resources and the fueling of conflicts in the sub-region. There is a need to unearth those who finance these wars by buying and trading the production of illegal exploitation of the region’s natural resources. The financial transactions involved in the illicit trade of arms and the illegal trade of natural resources should both be covered in any sanctions and monitoring regime. The UNITA sanctions offer a good model.

**Third**, peace and security is inextricably linked to sustainable development. West African crises, like those in other regions, arise from the politics of scarcity and poverty. The terms ‘comprehensive’, ‘global’ and ‘regional approach’ are frequently mentioned; but without a focus on development no policy is comprehensive. There is a need for a genuinely “developmental approach” to ease and resolve conflict and enable political accommodation among rivals. The West African countries and peoples must be given the opportunity to develop and progress. Enforcement (Sanctions) and peace-keeping measures should be accompanied by adequate international assistance. Guinea Bissau is an illustration. In Sierra Leone, a huge international effort has stabilized security; but without economic development the process could be reversed. Likewise in Liberia, reconstruction and development will form a major element for restoring sustainable security and peace.

**Fourth**, a comprehensive approach to West Africa and to each crisis situation is obviously essential. Recent developments especially in Liberia have offered the world community a good opportunity to adopt a holistic approach to the problems confronting the West African sub-region. Peace keeping is an important tool in the hands of the Council. Pakistan is proud to have played a major role in success of UNAMSIL. We are also participating in UNMIL. We have gained experience and insight into the problems confronting the region. Liberia, Sierra Leone and Cote d’Ivoire require equal focus and harmonious effort to ensure stability in the entire region. A peace-keeping operation is required in Cote d’Ivoire. A cautious and balanced approach has to be followed for the drawdown of UNAMSIL.

**Fifth**, a regional approach will have to rely essentially on regional partnership. This is emerging in West Africa. We wish to record our appreciation to ECOWAS which has played a key role in addressing regional conflicts both through its engagement at the highest political levels and also by timely deployment of peace keepers under difficult circumstances. This cooperation needs to be further concretized. We hope that the United Nations would respond to the needs for capacity building of ECOWAS.
7. Finally, the United Nations itself needs to act coherently in West Africa; addressing diverse needs in containing the West African crises and building peace and stability. It is imperative to achieve greater coordination and synergy between the endeavours of the UN’s three principal organs – the General Assembly, the Security Council & ECOSOC – in addressing the complex issues confronting the region. At the same time active engagement of NGOs, other UN agencies and in particular the international financial institutions is needed to bolster the whole effort. The idea of Composite Committees, suggested by Pakistan, may be one answer to building a comprehensive and coherent approach to complex crisis by the UN and the international community.

Thank you