

**Statement by Ambassador Munir Akram, Permanent Representative of Pakistan  
to the United Nations Open Meeting of the Security Council on Post-Conflict  
National Reconciliation: The Role of the United Nations (January 26, 2004)**

**Madam Foreign Minister,**

I would like to welcome you again to your presidency of the Security Council as we discuss this important issue. We thank you and Mr. Munoz and the Chilean delegation for holding an Aria formula meeting with NGOs. I also wish to thank Under-Secretary-General Kalomoh, UNDP Administrator Mark Malloch Brown and Ms. McAskie, Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator.

2. The conclusion of the Cold War, instead of promoting universal peace, coincided with the eruption of a number of conflicts, among and especially within States in various regions. The Security Council's agenda and UN PKOs over the last decade reflect this.

3. The Pakistan delegation has consistently emphasized the point – raised by UNDP Administrator and Ms. McAskie – that prevention is better than cure. The Security Council and the UN Secretary General have considerable scope for action to prevent conflicts through the modalities and mechanisms available under Chapter VI of the UN Charter. Reconciliation entails a multifaceted process.

4. The first fact which must be acknowledged is that there is no “one-size fits all” approach to promoting post-conflict national re-conciliation. Each situation is different and unique. However, some general guidelines can be identified in promoting post-conflict peace and reconciliation.

5. The first step in all situations must be to end the conflict and the accompanying violence, and violations of humanitarian law and human rights norms. Without this, expressions of the desire for post-conflict peace and reconciliation will continue to ring hollow. The onus for halting existing violence must fall equitably on all parties and especially on governments which have the institutional capacity and the clear international obligation to halt the recourse to imposed and violent solutions.

6. The second step, which can be initiated, in parallel with the first, is to address the root causes of the conflict. These causes can be both internal or indigenous – religious or group differences; political & social injustices; the struggle for power among rival groups and local leaders. Often, conflicts are, however, fueled by external influences and interests e.g. foreign occupation, arms supplies and the illegal cross-border exploitation of natural resources. In such cases, internal and external steps to halt conflict and violence would have to go hand in hand in a parallel and reciprocal process.

7. Economic deprivation, and discrimination, exercised over extensive periods prior to the conflicts, are often ignored although in most cases they are the root causes of the conflict. Post-conflict reconciliation can be facilitated considerably by equitable socio-economic development.

8. In the process of national reconciliation, transparency and openness, especially to impartial international actors – civil society, human rights organizations, and the UN – can be helpful in arresting ongoing violence and violations and encouraging the parties to address the underlying causes of the conflict.

9. The focus of providing “transitional” justice and redress for past violations and injustices for affected individuals and groups no doubt constitute an important element in promoting national reconciliation. This can obviously happen only once ongoing violations and violence are halted. The pursuit of justice, while essential, should not become an obstacle to peace. Brazil’s reference to “restorative justice” is interesting. In any case, there must be no impunity for the most serious violations such as genocide and violations of the Fourth Geneva Convention must not go unpunished.

10. The United Nations Security Council, the Secretary General and the UN Secretariat and agencies – like UNDP- are well placed to play an active role in post-conflict reconciliation. This is the desire of world public opinion and the people involved in various conflict situations. UN efforts should receive adequate financial support to realize their objectives. Over the last decade, the UN has gained considerable experience and developed institutional mechanisms and methodologies to respond to serial conflicts and post-conflict situations in various regions of the world. For example; East Timor, Bosnia Herzegovina, Cambodia, Sierra Leone, Afghanistan.

11. The precise response of the Security Council and the UN in each situation will naturally depend on its specific nature and context. The dispatch of a Special Envoy and to mediate between parties; fact-finding missions; utilizing the specific mechanisms of the Human Rights Convention and of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the appointment of a Secretary General’s Special Representative; peace observer missions; and where the efforts for post-conflict reconciliation are being conducted in parallel with containing conflicts, there may be need to buttress the process with full-fledged peace-keeping operations, such as in Afghanistan, Liberia and soon, hopefully, in Cote d’Ivoire. Such peace-keeping operations should encompass wider mandates to (i) monitor human rights violations, the progress in peace building and in reconciliation efforts, (ii) identify responsibility for war crimes, crimes against humanity, (iii) implement DDR programmes, provide technical, legal and institutional support.

12. One issue that needs to be addressed is the question of the consent of the parties concerned to the mediatory and peace-building role of the United Nations. The refusal by any state or party to allow the UN to play a helpful role in conflict resolution and peace-building cannot be a sign of good intentions. Obviously, where a conflict situation cannot be successfully addressed by the parties, the need for the Security Council and the Secretary General to assume a role should be evident, in accordance with the provisions of the UN Charter. Yet, even where the parties are

engaged in peace-building, the UN can and should play a useful role – in encouraging the parties, monitoring the process and playing a good offices and mediatory role as outlined in Chapter VI of the UN Charter – particularly where the UN has obvious and direct responsibilities under resolutions, decisions and decisions previously adopted by the Security Council.

13. Finally, we cannot ignore the fact that many conflict situations arise from the politics of poverty and scarcity. Post-conflict reconciliation will inevitably have to be built upon the provision of hope to destitute and desperate people for a better tomorrow. Thus economic and social development must constitute an integral part of the international community's endeavours to promote peace and reconciliation on a sustainable basis e.g. guinea Bissau. The UN and its family of organizations, including the Brettons Wood institutions, as well as civil society, have a vital role to play in generating equitable socio-economic developments in these countries and regions. To this end, the UN's principal organs – this Council, the General Assembly and the ECOSOC – must promote and pursue a coherent approach in helping to build peace and reconciliation in complex crisis situations.

**Thank you**