

**Statement by Mr.Masood Khalid, Deputy Permanent Representative of Pakistan
to the United Nations in the Security Council meeting on the Central African
Region , (17 February, 2004)**

Mr. President,

I wish 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 Central Africa.

2. Since the Security Council Mission visited Central Africa, a number of positive developments have taken place – including the improvement of the political and security situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and progress in the implementation of the Arusha Accords in Burundi with the participation of the CNDD-FDD in the Transitional Government of Burundi. There has also been an improvement in the relations of the countries of the region with the explicit desire of many of its leaders to move towards peace and reconciliation.

3. While we welcome these positive developments we must also be aware that much more needs to be done to consolidate peace in the region. We condemn the brutal kill of a Kenyan Military Observer last week and hope that the perpetrators of this crime will be brought to justice. In the DRC, more progress is still required in the areas of security sector reform and the rule of law as well as the function of interim administrations – particularly in Ituri.

4. While we welcome the holding of elections in mid-2005, this must not be seen as an end in itself – but a means to an end. Similarly, in Burundi, the peace process will not be complete without the inclusion of all the factions in the peace process – in particular the FNL-Rwasa faction. There is also a need to support the efforts of the African Union in Burundi, address the issues of transitional justice – which are a part of the Arusha Accords, and help the badly battered Burundian economy stand on its feet.

5. The objective of the international community in both Burundi and the DRC must remain the consolidation of peace and stability. The means to achieve this include assisting both countries in (i) extending their state authority; (ii) carrying out meaningful security sector reform with the creation of a truly genuine national army and police; (iii) facilitating the DDR of combatants – both local and foreign; (iv) strengthening of the rule of law and an end to impunity; (v) addressing the humanitarian issues and (vi) promoting national economic reconstruction and rehabilitation.

6. The recent tragic history of the region, has clearly demonstrated how easy it is for instability and conflict in one country to overspill into another. The borders are porous and do not make countries immune from the free flow of arms, fighters, and the worsening humanitarian situation. Such issues cannot be handled by any one country alone. A regional approach is, therefore, indispensable.

7. Such an approach, however, must be aimed at improving the political relations between states and to help them jointly resolve the challenges which they face. As

part of this regional approach, Pakistan supports the convening of the International Conference of the Great Lakes Region proposed for later this year. The Conference, however, must yield tangible results. This can only be done if the countries of the region and their partners outside the region can work together *a priori* to identify realistic objectives, themes, and structures. In the very least, this Conference must yield agreement on confidence building measures to help consolidate regional peace and stability.

8. At the same time, there are underlying issues of a cross cutting nature and will have to be addressed not only just within a national or regional framework:

First, one of the root causes of instability in the region is poverty. There cannot be any peace without poverty alleviation. The humanitarian situation, the success of DDR, and consolidation of peace are not possible without sufficient generation of sustainable economic activity. The international community must continue to assist not only the DRC and Burundi but also other countries in the region to promote long-term socio-economic development.

Second, while greed may not have been the cause of conflict, it has been responsible for perpetuating it. 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. Extension of state authority and institutional reforms are imperative so is the need for a "full disclosure of revenues covered from natural resources". We need a national, regional as well as a global approach to address these issues.

Third, the success of the peace process thus far has largely hinged on successful peacekeeping efforts in the DRC by MONUC and in Burundi by AMIB. Both need to be supported and, if required, augmented by the United Nations. Pakistan as a major troop UN contributor will continue to support such activities in the region.

9. Finally, on a policy level, the United Nations itself needs to act coherently in Central Africa in addressing diverse requirements for consolidating peace and stability in the region. 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 and 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 ad hoc Composite Committees, suggested by Pakistan, may be one answer to building a comprehensive and coherent approach to complex crises by the UN and the international community.

Thank you Mr. President.