

Thank you Mr. President for convening today's meeting on the situation in Kosovo and I also wish to thank Mr. Guehenno for his briefing on the latest situation in the Province.

2. Like other Council members Pakistan has strongly condemned the violence of March 17 and 18 which claimed at least 19 lives. We condemn not only the loss of innocent life and injuries but also the damage to Kosovo's cultural and religious sites which were damaged or destroyed in the onslaught – and we are happy that UNESCO is working with local authorities in Kosovo to rebuild some of them. We commend the efforts of UNMIK and KFOR in restoring stability in Kosovo. We appreciate the effective way in which the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Holkeri helped defuse this very difficult situation. We support, in this regard, Mr. Holkeri's request for additional police investigators and prosecutors for UNMIK. We hope that UNMIK will continue its investigations into the causes of this violence and in due course report to the Council on its findings. We commend also all those in Kosovo who have strongly condemned the violence and have called for calm and reconciliation.

Mr. President,

3. Some have described last month's violence as a "wake up call." Pakistan has been one of those few countries – perhaps the lone voice in this Council - which have consistently been calling for the clarification of the final political status of Kosovo. Let me be clear: violence must not be rewarded. There must be no impunity for those who carried out these acts – whether Albanians or Serbs. Nevertheless, the longer any movement towards status is delayed the more it will continue to feed into the frustrations of one side and the nationalistic rhetoric of the other – and the more it will perpetuate the cycle of violence. Such violence, Mr. President, will keep on repeating itself, unless and until some solution can be found on the thorny issue of status. We will say this again as we have said it before, the key to prosperity and peace lies in clarifying Kosovo's final political status.

Mr. President,

4. Pakistan's position on Status is independent of our position on the Standards. We take note of Mr. Holkeri's recent remarks that "the standards are not an obstacle to Kosovo's progress" – in our view they are not meant to be. We agree that the establishment of a multiethnic, tolerant, democratic and peaceful society in Kosovo remains a fundamental objective, in the implementation of resolution 1244.

5. We welcome the announcement of Implementation Plan by Mr. Holkeri in Pristina on 31st March. The Plan identifies policies in all the eight standards – policies which have to be implemented by certain deadlines, along with assigned responsibilities. This plan is to be implemented by the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government (PISG) of Kosovo – through the support and assistance of UNMIK and the international community.

6. Pakistan is, however, concerned that not every community has participated in the preparation of the Implementation Plan. We hope that this will not be later posed an obstacle in the implementation of the Plan. We are also concerned that the policy on two of the most important standards: ‘returns’ and ‘freedom of movement,’ has not as yet been finalized. These are crucial areas for which we hope early progress can be achieved. Also crucial is the need to remove the dialogue between Pristina and Belgrade which currently, as Mr. Guehenno said, “on hold”.

7. Like others, we are still in the process of studying the Implementation Plan. At this point we wish to offer our initial – though cautious - support for it, but with the following caveats. The first, is that the lack of support by any community or party must not be allowed to be used as an excuse to delay the achievement of standards or prevent any progress towards the finalization of status in the future. Second, in implementing the Plan, the bar should not be set so high that most countries represented in this organization, including the European Union, would have difficulty meeting those standards. Finally, the Plan should remain realistic and achievable. In this regard, we are happy to note Mr. Holkeri’s observation that “the Plan overall is a living document: it will be revised as time goes on. This makes sense, because some policies may not work and we may need new ones.”

Mr. President,

8. We understand that the Contact Group on Kosovo is preparing a Presidential Statement on Kosovo. We are looking forward to working with other Council members to finalize it. While we support the efforts of the Contact Group and we understand the delicacy of the situation, we would nevertheless encourage them to consult more widely with other Council members when preparing such documents.

The automatic concurrence of other Council members, who may have their own views on the issues involved, should not be taken for granted.

I thank you, Mr. President.