Mr. President,

Pakistan has abstained in the vote on this draft resolution. Let me explain the reasons.

2. On July 30, this Council adopted resolution 1556 (2004). Within a week of the adoption of resolution 1556, the Government of Sudan and the Special Representative of the Secretary General Jan Pronk agreed on the Darfur Plan of Action. The Plan acknowledged that the Government of Sudan may not be able to fulfill all the requirements of resolution 1556 within 30 days.

3. In his briefing to the Council on 2 September, SRSG Pronk reported positively on 10 of the 12 areas in which the government had made progress in fulfillment of its commitments. In 2 areas, the SRSG reported that the government had not met its commitments. The humanitarian access had improved and the things seemed to be moving in the right direction. The Government of Sudan was fully engaged with the AU. Peace talks had commenced in Abuja. This trend deserved to be encouraged.

4. However, the draft resolution presented was neither consistent with the report of the Secretary General, nor with the briefing of the SRSG. It failed to objectively recognize progress. We were told that the central purpose of the resolution was to strengthen the role of the African Union. However, the provisions of the original draft did not reflect this central purpose of the resolution.

5. Nevertheless, the Pakistan delegation remained constructively engaged in the negotiations. We circulated our suggestions to improve its provisions and make it more balanced. We welcome the reflection of some of these suggestions in the final text, including an acknowledgement of the steps taken by the Government of Sudan to improve humanitarian access, greater emphasis on the obligations of the rebel groups, and reaffirmation of the sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of Sudan, which we believe must be unconditional in accordance with the Charter. We particularly welcome the greater emphasis on the central role of the African Union.

6. Nevertheless, we have stated from the outset that we do not believe that the use or threat of sanctions would be helpful. That is why we had abstained on resolution 1556. Considering that progress was being made, we did not feel it was justifiable, or necessary, to threaten sanctions explicitly and only against the Government of Sudan, sanctions moreover which are much broader in scope and stringent in their potential impact, even as compared to resolution 1556.

7. It has also been our concern that, apart from being unfair, such a threat might evoke a response that would be counter-productive threatening international
humanitarian relief and eroding the mediatory efforts of the AU. It could also harden the position of the rebels at the negotiating table, which seems to have already happened. Therefore, we could not endorse the provisions of OP-14.

Mr. President,

8. We agree that the Security Council can make a useful contribution to support the primary role of the AU. We look forward therefore to the meeting of the Council with the President of Nigeria, H.E. Olusegun Obasanjo on 24 September.