

STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BY MR. SULTAN AL-MAHMOUD, PERMANENT MISSION OF THE STATE OF QATAR TO THE UNITED NATIONS, INTRODUCING DRAFT RESOLUTIONS:

AD HOC ADVISORY GROUP ON GUINEA-BISSAU (E/2004/L.30); AD HOC ADVISORY GROUP ON BURUNDI (E/2004/L.31); ASSESSMENT OF THE AD HOC ADVISORY GROUPS ON AFRICAN COUNTRIES EMERGING FROM CONFLICT (E/2004/L.29), UNDER AGENDA ITEM 7(F): AD HOC ADVISORY GROUP ON AFRICAN COUNTRIES EMERGING FROM CONFLICT, AT THE SUBSTANTIVE SESSION OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL (New York, 21 July 2004)



Mr. Vice President,

It gives me great pleasure to introduce three resolutions by the Group of 77 and China under Item no 7(f) on the Ad hoc Advisory Groups on African countries emerging from conflict. These resolutions relate to the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Guinea-Bissau, the Ad hoc Advisory Group on Burundi and on the Assessment of the Ad hoc Advisory Groups on African Countries emerging from conflict.

Mr. Vice-President,

I place before the Council the draft resolution E/2004/L.30 on the ad hoc Advisory Group on Guinea-Bissau. As you will know from last week's discussion in the Council, the Group recently paid a joint visit with the Security Council to Guinea-Bissau. This led to the first ever joint input by ECOSOC and Security Council to a report before the Security Council, which, incidentally, drew very positive comments in that Council when it was discussed on Friday. The ECOSOC ad hoc Advisory Group on Guinea-Bissau also produced a very good report, high-lighting the positive developments in that country in recent months. It also provided an overview of actions by other parties and made specific suggestions to the Economic and Social Council for its action.

In our resolution we tried to capture the main moments of that report. We acknowledge the progress that has taken place in Guinea-Bissau and the actions by the new government to give effect to their side of the partnership approach that they have recommitted themselves to. The report also indicates that the response by the international community has been below expectations. The resolution mentions the need for the international community to respond positively to these developments.

The report also contains some very specific requests of the Economic and Social Council which we tried to reflect in our resolution. We further believe that the ad hoc Advisory Group should continue to be seized of the situation and developments in Guinea-Bissau as we believe that the new government has embarked on a road that would need support and encouragement. ECOSOC could not be seen to be walking away from that country at this time.

We look forward to engaging our partners in fruitful discussions on this draft resolution and anticipate an early conclusion to discussions.

Mr. Vice President,

We also place before the Economic and Social Council the draft resolution E/2004/L.31 on the ad hoc Advisory Group on Burundi. You will note that this resolution is somewhat shorter.

You may recall that the Group in its report of last week reflected on the two main developments since the beginning of the year, namely the Forum of Development Partners that took place in Brussels in January and the Security Council decision of May to establish a peacekeeping operation in Burundi. Both these events are highlighted in the resolution. The resolution then proceeds to ask that the ad hoc Group again report to the Council at its organizational session in 2005. The Group of 77 and China regard it as important for the ad hoc Advisory Group to remain seized of developments in Burundi as it is heading towards major developments in the coming months and we believe that the group should engage with the government and the UN presence in that country to ascertain progress and assess the road ahead, following the elections scheduled for later this year.

We are confident that we would be able to conclude our negotiations on this resolution in a very short time.

Mr. Vice President,

I also present to the Council a draft resolution E/2004/L.29 on the assessment of the ad hoc Advisory Groups on African countries emerging from conflicts. You will note that this is a more substantial resolution.

Mr. Vice President,

There could be no doubt in any delegation's mind about the contribution that the ad hoc Advisory Groups have made to the work of this Council and to the countries concerned. In a time of active debate about how to make the work of this Council more relevant to the real problems experienced by member states, we have found that the ad hoc Advisory Groups have done just that. We believe that the spontaneous applause we witnessed in this Council at the end of last week's discussion on this item is a graphic indication of the appreciation that member states have for the contribution that these Groups have made to the work of the Economic and Social Council. We thus believe that this instrument should be nurtured and strengthened, which is what we have tried to accomplish in our draft resolution.

We understand that the report of the Secretary-General referred in some detail to the experiences that the Groups had in relation to the specific countries of Guinea-Bissau and Burundi. We, however, tried in our resolution to be as general and generic as possible in order to provide guidance to any future ad hoc Advisory Groups. We were also guided in the drafting of our resolution by the mandate provided in ECOSOC resolution 2002/1 of 15 July 2002 and the request for the assessment as contained in ECOSOC resolution 2003/50 of 24 July 2003.

After providing the full legislative background in the preparatory paragraphs of the draft resolution, we recount some of the positive commendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General, as those could provide good guidance to future ad hoc Advisory Groups. This is followed by suggestions on areas for enhancement of the effectiveness of ad hoc Advisory Groups.

We also try to address the issues of the consideration of the report of these ad hoc Groups and of the need to conclude the mandate of the Groups. We also reflected the need to provide human and financial resources to enable the Groups to function in a smooth and effective manner. This would also assist the Groups to contribute to the Council to its full potential.

In fact, Mr. Vice President, it is extremely difficult for the groups to give full effect to its current mandates, which makes it almost impossible for other African countries emerging from conflict or countries from other regions, to receive appropriate attention from this Council.

My Group is again convinced that we would easily find agreement with our partners on the contents of this resolution.

Mr. Vice President, I thank you for your attention.