

STATEMENT AT THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

Agenda item 2:

Oral report of the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Burundi

BY H.E. MR. JEAN-MARC HOSCHEIT,

**AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF LUXEMBOURG
TO THE UNITED NATIONS,**

ON BEHALF OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

Mister President,

1. I have the honor to take the floor on behalf of the European Union. The Acceding Countries Bulgaria, Romania, the Candidate Countries Turkey and Croatia¹, the Countries of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Serbia and Montenegro, and EFTA countries Norway and Iceland, members of the European Economic Area, align themselves with this declaration.

2. Ambassador Kumalo, the European Union is grateful for your report on the situation in Burundi and the work undertaken by the Ad Hoc Advisory Group. We commend the constructive engagement of ECOSOC in Burundi through the work of the Ad Hoc Advisory Group, which you chair in a dedicated and visionary manner, and we congratulate and thank you and the members of the Group for the outstanding efforts you have undertaken.

Mister President,

3. Since we last met to assess the situation of Burundi in the Economic and Social Council, some positive developments have taken place. First of all, the European Union wants to commend the work that the United Nations have undertaken in various fields. We welcome the recent cooperation between the Ad Hoc Advisory Group, the UN Development Group (UNDG) and the Executive Committee on Humanitarian Affairs (ECHA) to improve the UN activities on the field during the transitional phase. We strongly support the coordination efforts made by the United Nations Operation in Burundi (ONUB) and the different UN agencies. This collaboration shows once again the United Nations' experience in situations of transition from relief to development.

4. As Ambassador Kumalo correctly pointed out, the international community made great efforts in the field of debt relief for Burundi. The European Union and its Member States

¹ Croatia continues to be part of the Stabilization and Association Process.

are among the most committed actors in this regard. But as we just heard from the Ad Hoc Group's report, the international support is far below the commitments made at the Forum of Development Partners held in Brussels one year ago. This is the reason why we encourage the donor community to follow their commitments and increase their support for Burundi.

5. The European Union welcomes the launching of the Demobilization, Reinsertion and Reintegration Program in December 2004. In this context we commend the exemplary cooperation between the UN system, the international donor community, the World Bank and the Burundian authorities. With the arrival of ONUB and the coordination of the process by the UN DDR/SSR unit, the Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration process has been rationalized, restructured and adapted to the needs on the ground.

Mister President,

6. Despite outstanding issues and delays, an end to the Burundian transition period is in sight. All parties, including the army, have accepted the need for the transition process to be finalized. Preparations for elections are being made and Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration as well as the Security Sector Reform are processing. Furthermore ONUB is pro-actively carrying out its mandate as an over-horizon-force, which is having a positive influence on the process. Nevertheless, hurdles still need to be overcome.

7. In conclusion, let me reiterate the EU's congratulations to the Government of Burundi for the progress achieved. We also congratulate the chairman of the Ad Hoc Advisory Group, H.E. Ambassador Kumalo, for the work undertaken by him and the members of the Group. I can assure you, the engagement of the EU will continue.

8. As stated earlier, the EU recognizes, that there have been considerable developments in the UN on the issue of postconflict peacebuilding since the establishment of the Ad Hoc Groups. In this regard, the High Level Panel's recommendation to create a Peacebuilding Commission resonates strongly with the European Union's determination to address the

institutional gap identified on so many occasions between the end of armed violence and the return to development activities in a secure environment.

Thank you, Mister President.