



Security Council

Sixtieth year

Provisional

5152nd meeting

Monday, 28 March 2005, 3 p.m.

New York

<i>President:</i>	Mr. Sardenberg	(Brazil)
<i>Members:</i>	Algeria	Mr. Baali
	Argentina	Mr. Mayoral
	Benin	Mr. Adechi
	China	Mr. Zhang Yishan
	Denmark	Mr. Faaborg-Andersen
	France	Mr. De La Sablière
	Greece	Mr. Vassilakis
	Japan	Mr. Oshima
	Philippines	Mr. Mercado
	Romania	Mr. Motoc
	Russian Federation	Mr. Konuzin
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Emyr Jones Parry
	United Republic of Tanzania	Mr. Mahiga
	United States of America	Mr. Holliday

Agenda

The situation in Côte d'Ivoire

Fourth progress report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (S/2005/186)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A.

The meeting was called to order at 3.20 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Côte d'Ivoire

Fourth progress report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (S/2005/186)

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter from the representative of Côte d'Ivoire, in which he requests to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite that representative to participate in the discussion, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Djangoné-Bi (Côte d'Ivoire) took a seat at the Council table.

The President: In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure and with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, the Council has agreed to extend an invitation to His Excellency Mr. Aziz Pahad, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of South Africa, who is accompanied by Ms. Mojanku Gumbi.

On behalf of the Council, I extend a warm welcome to His Excellency Mr. Aziz Pahad.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Pahad (South Africa), took a seat at the Council table.

The President: In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Alan Doss, Principal Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Côte d'Ivoire.

It is so decided.

I invite Mr. Doss to take a seat at the Council table.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2005/186, which contains the fourth progress report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire.

At this meeting, the Security Council will first hear a briefing by Mr. Alan Doss, Principal Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Côte d'Ivoire. I now give him the floor.

Mr. Doss (*spoke in French*): Since the presentation to the Council of the third progress report (S/2004/962) of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI), dated 9 December 2004, the peace process in Côte d'Ivoire has not made any significant progress, and continues to suffer from the reverberations of the events of November 2004. As a result, the road map drawn up through the mediation of the African Union, under the leadership of President Mbeki, has gone largely unimplemented. The Government of National Reconciliation continues to lack ministers from the Forces nouvelles, and the military dialogue among the parties has been interrupted, thereby delaying the disarmament process. As the current report (S/2005/186) of the Secretary-General underscores, the security situation is volatile and the human rights situation continues to be a source of great concern, while the economic situation is daily worsening.

In February 2005, the Forces nouvelles proceeded to rearrange the areas under their control by creating five new spatial entities, which were entrusted to new warlords. At the same time, the Secretary-General of the Forces nouvelles, Mr. Guillaume Soro, announced the creation of a police and customs school and the effective opening of a deposit bank in Bouaké. Even though that operation does not indicate an immediate will to secede, it nevertheless reveals that the Forces nouvelles believe that this will be a long-term crisis.

The difficulties encountered in the implementation of the peace agreements call into question the feasibility of the presidential election planned for October 2005. That election — which all parties to the peace process want to be fair, transparent, free and open — is at the heart of all political calculations. Although time is quickly ticking away,

electoral tasks such as the resumption of identification efforts and the updating of electoral lists have yet to begin, and the Independent Electoral Commission is still being strenuously contested. There is increasing uncertainty about whether the general elections can be held in 2005 according to the agreed timetable. It is feared that failure to respect the timetable could lead to a greater crisis.

As a result of the lack of trust among the parties and suspicions that the Constitutional Council and the Electoral Commission are not impartial, in a letter addressed to the Secretary-General dated 18 February 2005, the G-7 opposition parties requested that the United Nations organize the upcoming elections in order to ensure their credibility.

In that context, characterized by the mutual mistrust of the parties, the temptation to resort to war as a solution to conflict is a constant danger. The UNOCI forces, supported by the Licorne force, remain vigilant, especially in the zone of confidence, where the situation has become very tense following the incident in Logoualé on 28 February 2005. The impartial forces have strengthened their deployment in order to prevent incursions and to confiscate individual arms. Unfortunately, we have seen that such violations have not been punished by the existing authorities. Moreover, the militias activities, which have increased considerably during the period under review, constitute a growing danger for security in the country.

The absence of judicial authority in the zone of confidence is of concern to the impartial forces, which do not have the mandate of supporting the judicial system. We have therefore proposed to the national authorities that exceptional measures be taken in order to deal with that gap, including through the nomination of temporary administrators. We have also proposed that the joint brigade composed of impartial forces, national forces and members of the Forces nouvelles be reactivated in order to patrol and combat rising crime in the zone. The Forces nouvelles have not yet accepted that proposal because they consider that the central power seeks to establish itself in the zone of confidence through that mechanism.

The lack of trust is heightened by the lack of direct dialogue between the armed forces, despite the efforts to relaunch that dialogue made by the impartial forces and the South African mediatory effort. In January, with the support of the Prime Minister, the

parties agreed on the principle of balanced representation on the National Commission for Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration and carried out an inspection of the cantonment sites in the two parts of the country. However, the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process and the overall security environment are threatened and remain precarious because of the militia activities sometimes staged by political actors. We must also stress that the Forces nouvelles continue to make progress at the political level a condition for their participation in the disarmament process.

In the framework of securing the territory, UNOCI has strengthened its operational cooperation with the United Nations Mission in Liberia in order to prevent the cross-border movement of arms and fighters. As well, the impartial forces must also deal with the increasing number of crimes, in particular in Abidjan, and with the abuses committed by certain elements among the security forces against the civilian population. In order to fight that scourge, the UNOCI civilian police, following the request of the Prime Minister, has organized, with the police prefectures of Abidjan, joint patrols to contribute to the security of those working-class neighbourhoods. That initiative has been very much welcomed by the residents of those neighbourhoods, where incidents of abuse have been notably reduced.

Resolution 1584 (2005) of 1 February, entrusted UNOCI and the Licorne force with monitoring the arms embargo. In order to implement the resolution, the impartial forces have undertaken unannounced checks of certain sites and intend to increase their number. Thus, they inspected sites within the Abidjan airport and the Bouaké airbase on 21 March without encountering any difficulties.

Under resolution 1584 (2005), the parties must, within the 45 days following the adoption of the resolution, provide UNOCI with a complete list of their military equipment. That measure has not been carried out in the set time, and we have formally reminded the parties concerned of their obligations in that respect.

The humanitarian situation remains very precarious especially in the west and north of the country. In order to help the most vulnerable sectors of the population, the United Nations has launched a consolidated appeal for \$39 million. To date, the appeal has not received the desired response from

donors. Only 5 per cent of the amount requested has been received. The humanitarian crisis in Côte d'Ivoire is not as visible as those existing in other African countries. Nevertheless, it is just as real, and the future of 3.5 million people is seriously threatened by the crisis. We therefore hope that donors will take that into account.

Political uncertainty and the volatility of the military situation, together with impunity and the collapse of the judicial system in both the north and the south of the country, have led to serious violations of human rights. The setting of many incidents of abuse since the beginning of the conflict, the west of the country is going through a situation of great insecurity, with grave consequences such as the displacement of the civilian population. UNOCI's human rights section documents the serious violations, and, on several occasions, UNOCI has brought to the attention of the national authorities their responsibility to bring the perpetrators of those crimes to justice. The Council has also received the report of the International Commission of Inquiry into allegations of serious violations of human rights committed in Côte d'Ivoire, and we hope that it will give the report all the necessary attention as soon as possible.

It has been noted that the broadcasting by public and private media of hateful and xenophobic messages has decreased somewhat since the last report of the Secretary-General. However, that progress remains precarious. The adoption of a new law on restricting the press through the implementation of decrees could be used to control the public media and influence the private press on occasions such as that of November 2004. UNOCI continues to submit reports on the media's compliance with the provisions of resolution 1572 (2004).

In order to introduce in the media environment of Côte d'Ivoire a neutral message and promote a culture of peace, UNOCI-FM has progressively extended its broadcasts from Abidjan towards the centre and the north of the country thanks to transmitters located in Bouaké and Daloa. But the development of that radio could be limited by the refusal of the National Commission of Audiovisual Communication to grant it frequencies in the interior of the country and because Ivorian Radio and Television has threatened to suspend the frequencies already granted.

(spoke in English)

As the Secretary-General has underlined in his report, the ultimate responsibility for resolving the crisis in Côte d'Ivoire lies with the Ivorian political actors. However, in the absence of a functioning internal political process, external mediation and pressure must help move the country forward towards a peaceful resolution of the crisis. President Mbeki has consulted extensively with the key Ivorian actors and will hold talks with them again in early April. His representatives will report to the Security Council later this afternoon and will indicate the progress of the mediation at this time. The Council, however, may wish to consider the use of all provisions of resolution 1572 (2004) to support progress in the next key steps of this process. I wish to assure the Council also that UNOCI will continue to work closely with the mediator and his team, as well as with the Economic Community of West African States and the African Union, in a sustained effort to advance the peace process.

The key issues that must be resolved in order to ensure the long-term stability of Côte d'Ivoire are well known: eligibility of candidates for the presidency; disarmament of all armed groups, including the militia; and the organization of fair, free and open presidential and legislative elections. For that to happen, difficult but unavoidable compromises will have to be made by all the protagonists so that the legitimacy of State institutions can be fully exercised. Those issues can be resolved only in a secure environment that inspires the confidence of all parties.

There is a peace to keep in Côte d'Ivoire, however fragile it may appear. The presence of the impartial forces is vital to prevent a complete breakdown in security, which would bring the political process to a halt and create more suffering for the people of Côte d'Ivoire. All the members of the Linas-Marcoussis Monitoring Committee are of one mind on this point.

The present strength of UNOCI is, however, a cause for serious concern. We will not be able to respond effectively or adequately should two or more major incidents occur at the same time. The responsibilities deriving from resolution 1584 (2005) have also created additional demands on the Mission's limited resources. While we have made it clear to the forces in place that UNOCI will implement its mandate

using the agreed rules of engagement, we must be sure that we have the means of our mandate so as to discourage any adventurism. In this regard, we hope that the Council will consider favourably the reinforcement requested in the third report of the Secretary-General, as well as the extension of UNOCI's mandate.

I cannot conclude my remarks without speaking briefly to an issue that has greatly exercised the Council of late. I refer to the issue of sexual exploitation and abuse. During the recent visit of the Deputy Secretary-General, we were able to brief her on the very energetic measures UNOCI has been taking to tackle this problem. We have put in place a number of specific measures aimed at preventing abuse and exploitation, including expanded training and awareness programmes, vehicle curfews and the designation of off-limit areas. All staff — military and civilian — have been forcefully reminded of their responsibilities in this respect and of the penalties they may incur for non-compliance.

Despite the many difficulties that the Mission has faced since its inception one year ago, I believe that we have earned the confidence of the international community. This is due in large part, I would like to recognize, to the unwavering commitment of the UNOCI staff and team, as well as to other United Nations colleagues working in the country. We hope that, with the Council's support and guidance, we shall build on that record of service to assist Côte d'Ivoire and its people to advance towards a better and more secure future.

The President: I thank Mr. Doss for his valuable briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Aziz Pahad, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of South Africa.

Mr. Pahad (South Africa): We thank Brazil, which holds the presidency of the Security Council, for having convened this important meeting to consider the situation in Côte d'Ivoire.

We would also like to thank the Secretary-General for his fourth progress report on the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire. The report identifies progress, as well as some concerns. The concerns expressed are inevitable in any conflict situation and must be looked at in the context of the overall efforts and progress made.

We should recall that the current crisis in Côte d'Ivoire began a decade ago when the leader of one of the Ivorian political parties, former Prime Minister Alassane Ouattara of the Rally of the Republicans (RDR), was prohibited from standing as a candidate during the 1995 presidential elections. As a result, the current President of Côte d'Ivoire and leader of the Front populaire ivoirien (FPI) decided not to contest those presidential elections. That combination of circumstances meant that a significant section of the Ivorian population had reservations about the legitimacy of the Government formed after the 1995 elections.

That initiated a political crisis that led to the 25 December 1999 coup d'état — the first in that country's history as an independent country. The presidential and parliamentary elections of 2000 did not resolve the crisis but, arguably, served to further entrench it. That was because, among other things, the elections excluded Alassane Ouattara and former President Henri Bedie, leader of the Democratic Party of Côte d'Ivoire-African Democratic Rally (PDCI-RDA), from the presidential elections. That resulted in the boycott of the parliamentary elections by the RDR. Furthermore, they were characterized by low voter participation.

The situation worsened radically when a coup d'état was attempted in September 2002, which resulted in the division of the country into two parts, with the south being controlled by the Government and the north by the rebel forces, the Forces nouvelles.

In January 2003, the various political forces of Côte d'Ivoire, including the Government, concluded an agreement at Linas-Marcoussis, France, which spelled out various steps intended to end the Ivorian crisis.

Prior to that, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) had also been involved in sustained efforts to help resolve the problems of Côte d'Ivoire, a State member of that Economic Community. The United Nations subsequently joined ECOWAS in that process, after the Security Council set up the United Nations Mission in Côte d'Ivoire (MINUCI) in May 2003, which was subsequently replaced by UNOCI as from 4 April 2004.

Concerned that by July 2004 none of these various interventions had produced any satisfactory result, the Secretary-General, Mr. Annan, acting in cooperation with the then Chairperson of ECOWAS,

President Kufuor, convened a meeting in Accra at the end of that month.

On 19 October 2004, two and a half months after Accra III, the Secretary-General expressed serious concern about the failure of the Ivorian parties to meet the deadlines contained in the Accra III Agreement. ECOWAS echoed this statement a few days later, stating that it “fully shares the views expressed by the UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan”.

Following the expression of those legitimate concerns, the situation in Côte d’Ivoire seemed to move even further away from a resolution of the crisis addressed during the Accra meeting and the implementation of the Accra III Agreement.

This was caused by the unacceptable attacks carried out by the Ivorian Air Force against the Forces nouvelles from 4 to 6 November 2004, which included the apparently accidental bombing of the positions of Licorne and the death of a number of French soldiers. French soldiers, in turn, destroyed some military planes belonging to the Ivorian forces.

We were faced with a situation in which “young patriots” were out in the streets in their thousands, and foreigners were being evacuated from Côte d’Ivoire. The airport in Abidjan was closed down. Business premises were destroyed and some houses were attacked. There was shooting outside the Hotel Ivoire.

It was in the light of all of those developments immediately preceding and following the November events, and of the fact that the peace process in Côte d’Ivoire seemed to have reached a cul-de-sac, that the Chairperson of the African Union (AU), President Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria, asked President Mbeki of South Africa to act as the mediator of the AU to expedite the Ivorian peace process within the context of the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement.

Understanding the urgency of the matter, President Mbeki acted immediately in response to the request of the AU Chairperson. Accordingly, he visited Abidjan on 9 November 2004, even as the city was in the grip of a serious security crisis following the events of 4 to 6 November.

That sense of urgency continues to inform the activities of the AU mediation, especially given the need to hold the next presidential elections as planned in October this year, and the fact of the deteriorating socio-economic situation in Côte d’Ivoire.

After considering the interventions that had been made since 2002 to resolve the Ivorian crisis, and having engaged the entire spectrum of the Ivorian political leadership in discussion, the AU mediation arrived at the following conclusions. It concluded, first, that, as mandated, it should seek a solution of the Ivorian crisis within the framework of the Linas-Marcoussis and the Accra II and III Agreements; secondly, that it should work out a road map with specific time frames, indicating a variety of steps that would have to be taken to put the Ivorian peace process back on course; and thirdly, that all the Ivorian parties should agree to those propositions and thus commit themselves to a peaceful and negotiated resolution of the Ivorian crisis.

It is our view — and we wish to confirm this to the Security Council — that the continuing efforts of the mediation are based on the acceptance of these fundamental propositions by all the Ivorian parties.

As the Security Council knows — and as is normal in any situation of protracted conflict, such as that in Côte d’Ivoire — deep-seated mistrust among the Ivorian leaders continues to hamper the advance towards the resolution of the Ivorian crisis.

We therefore consider it of cardinal importance that, despite the differences among them, Ivorian leaders are at least united behind the three fundamental propositions we have mentioned, without which it would be impossible to arrive at a peaceful and negotiated solution of the Ivorian crisis.

We would also like to emphasize this point because it is clear that the peace settlement in Côte d’Ivoire requires the cooperation and involvement of all the Ivorian leaders. It is therefore vitally important that we operate on the basis of the principle and practice of inclusion rather than that of exclusion.

This is especially important given that the ideology and practice of exclusion lie at the very heart of the Ivorian crisis. Accordingly, that crisis cannot be solved on the basis of the exclusion or marginalization of any of the players that Côte d’Ivoire needs to arrive at a lasting settlement.

Needless to say, that does not mean that any of those players has a right wilfully to obstruct or block progress towards such a settlement. It is therefore centrally important that the Security Council and the African Union have the possibility of imposing

effective sanctions against any of those players who might act wilfully to deny the people of Côte d'Ivoire their right to peace, democracy and development.

We appreciate the fact that the Security Council is fully conscious of the factors that led to the Ivorian crisis, including factors we have not mentioned. Nevertheless, we must emphasize the distinguishing feature of contemporary Côte d'Ivoire — that it is home to many African national groups, some of which originate from neighbouring countries.

Pervasive poverty makes it inevitable that the struggle for access to economic resources and opportunities must be a distinct feature of African politics. The liberal policies implemented by Côte d'Ivoire since independence, combined with regional developments during the colonial period, resulted in the emergence of a cosmopolitan population in Côte d'Ivoire.

Consequently, a significant proportion of that population, of different generations, originates from neighbouring countries. As has happened in many other countries elsewhere in the world, in conditions of relative economic hardship, xenophobic tensions arise. In Côte d'Ivoire, this has found expression in the concept of "ivoirité".

As the Security Council knows, arriving at a fundamental and long-term solution of the Ivorian crisis requires that Côte d'Ivoire successfully address a whole range of matters, including issues that bear on nationality, political rights, the land question and coexistence in a multicultural, multi-ethnic and multi-religious society.

All of this means that the understandable concern to address immediate issues, which might be symptoms of more fundamental problems, should not lead to short-term solutions that would then make it more difficult to arrive at solutions addressing the more long-term, and therefore more fundamental, problems of Ivorian society.

Both the African Union and the United Nations have an obligation to pursue efforts to resolve the Ivorian crisis with sober minds and to resist the temptation to arrive at short-term solutions that disguise the real problems and therefore create the basis for an even more intractable crisis in future.

The African Union mediation is preoccupied with all these considerations and is working on the basis of

the interconnection between the short- and long-term interests of the Ivorian people. In that regard, we sincerely hope that the United Nations and all those interested in the future of Côte d'Ivoire will not allow for an unbalanced approach to the short-, medium- and long-term interests of the Ivorian people.

We believe that the Security Council is in possession of the reports that the AU mediation has submitted to the Chairperson of the AU, especially the third report of 9 December 2004, which goes into greater detail about some of the points I have been making.

Our road map is attached to the report. We continue to pursue that road map with the Ivorian parties as the only available route towards the settlement of the Ivorian crisis.

We would also like to take advantage of this opportunity to thank all those who contributed to the elaboration of the road map. As the Security Council is aware, President Mbeki asked representatives of various institutions to join his delegation when he visited Côte d'Ivoire last December. Accordingly, his delegation included representatives of the Secretary-General, the AU, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the European Union, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. The road map to which we have referred was drawn up by that delegation jointly, rather than by the AU mediation on its own.

The AU mediation was pleased that the important institutions we have just mentioned were able to take joint ownership of the programme of action that emerged from a five-day process of detailed consultations with the Ivorian parties.

Apart from anything else, all of this confirmed the importance of the follow-up mechanisms provided for in the Linas-Marcoussis and Accra III Agreements, and the obvious need for the AU mediation to work together with those mechanisms.

With the Council's permission, we will now proceed to speak of the progress and problems we have experienced with regard to the implementation of the road map — copies of which we believe have been distributed to each member of the Security Council. But, first, we would like to draw the attention of the Security Council to some principled conclusions.

In general, the AU mediation believes that significant progress has been made with regard to the adoption of the legislation prescribed by the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement. We will report further on this issue.

The constitutional text of article 35 agreed at Linas-Marcoussis, relating to the matter of eligibility for the presidency, has been adopted by the National Assembly by a majority that is even larger than that prescribed by the Constitution of Côte d'Ivoire. However, the process of amending the Ivorian Constitution in that regard has not been finalized.

In that respect, we must make the observation that the Ivorian Constitution requires that all amendments on matters affecting the election of the President of the Republic be approved by referendum. No provision exists in the Ivorian Constitution that would exclude article 35 from this stricture.

As indicated in the Accra III Agreement, it is possible to override the constitutional provisions with regard to article 35, provided that exceptional circumstances in Côte d'Ivoire make it physically impossible to hold a referendum.

The AU mediation believes that it is necessary to get the collective view of the Ivorian political leadership to arrive at an optimal position for the finalization of the article 35 matter, in both the immediate and the long-term interests of Côte d'Ivoire. The AU mediation is therefore taking the necessary steps in this regard.

We believe also that the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) process should start as soon as the regroupment or assembly sites have been prepared, to enable them to receive members of the National Armed Forces of Côte d'Ivoire (FANCI) and the Forces nouvelles. Some concern has been expressed about the commitment to start the DDR process, especially on the part of the Forces nouvelles. The mediation position on this matter is that we should accept the expressed willingness of the Forces nouvelles to go into regroupment sites. Our task is to ensure that the DDR sites in the north are ready, and later we will indicate the progress that has been made in that regard.

We believe that the Government of National Reconciliation — the principal State institution responsible for the implementation of the various

transitional measures leading up to the presidential and parliamentary elections later this year — is still not functioning effectively. This is due in part to the continuing non-participation in that Government of the ministers of the Forces nouvelles. They have cited security reasons, which we will deal with later.

Various problems persist with regard to the general political situation, which undermine the peace process in Côte d'Ivoire. For example, this was manifested in the recent unacceptable events in the western part of the country, when an armed group from the south crossed the zone of confidence, in violation of the ceasefire, which resulted in a number of people being killed. The western part of Côte d'Ivoire has a long history of conflict that could be exploited. Close attention will have to be paid to some of the underlying causes of conflict. The Forces nouvelles informed the mediation about possible new attacks on its positions, and the mediation immediately communicated that information to UNOCI.

As we have already indicated, the AU mediation and the Ivorian parties are committed to the holding of the presidential elections in October, as scheduled, notwithstanding some technical matters that have to be dealt with. The mediation is therefore ready to engage the electoral calendar that the Prime Minister has drawn up, which is targeted at ensuring that the elections this year are held as scheduled.

The Forces nouvelles and the G-7 opposition parties have called for the United Nations to play a bigger role in the conduct of the elections. The mediator raised that matter with President Gbagbo during the December 2004 visit, and the President indicated that he would welcome such assistance. What remains is for the United Nations to indicate how such a role may be defined. The Ivorian parties need assistance with ideas and proposals regarding what is possible; they are not themselves able to make specific proposals. The mediator has communicated that request to the United Nations Secretariat and awaits its urgent response.

The AU mediation is also concerned that the necessary steps should be taken to ensure the unity, peace and stability of Côte d'Ivoire after the completion of the stage of the transitional period that will conclude with the presidential and parliamentary elections this year. However, the mediation is fully aware of the reality that, in order to get to the situation

when, after the elections, practical steps can be taken in that regard, it is vitally important that the road map be implemented in a manner — and within time frames — that will ensure that credible elections are held later this year, as planned.

To resolve the outstanding challenges with regard to the implementation of the road map and to ensure further movement towards a lasting peace in Côte d'Ivoire, a critical meeting between President Mbeki and the principal political leaders of Côte d'Ivoire will take place in South Africa in six days' time, on 3 April 2005. The AU mediation will be honoured to report to the AU, to the Security Council and to the Ivorian people about the outcome of that immensely important meeting.

Let me now briefly address some of the matters on which I said I would brief the Council at this stage.

With regard to the legislative report, the parties agreed that the mediation should constitute a legal team that would make a determination about the compliance of adopted legislation with the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement. The mediation constituted a team of lawyers from Burundi, Rwanda and South Africa. That team travelled to Côte d'Ivoire and had extensive interaction with the Ivorian parties. The team then submitted its determination to the mediator, who accepted its findings. A copy of the legal report is attached to the text of my presentation for the information of Security Council members.

Generally, the findings of the legal team confirm that significant progress has been made in relation to that part of the Agreements. Although there were differences among the parties on the appropriate legislative texts, such differences related mainly to the interpretation of Linas-Marcoussis rather than to a reluctance to implement the Agreements. There are areas in which the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement is not totally in line with prevailing international practice, such as with respect to the composition of a human rights commission. The legal team's mandate, however, was not to improve Linas-Marcoussis or to bring it in line with current international practice, but to interpret it strictly.

The findings of the legal team have been presented to the Ivorian parties and have largely been well received. Some of the parties have indicated that they still wish to raise some political issues arising out of the legal report.

On disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR), there has been little progress. One complaint from the Forces nouvelles is that the Government of National Reconciliation has no comprehensive plan for the restructuring of the new defence force in Côte d'Ivoire. The mediation has urged the Prime Minister to ensure that such a comprehensive plan is adopted by the Government. The Prime Minister has initiated a programme leading to such adoption.

The Forces nouvelles have also raised the concern that they fear being attacked once they move their forces into the DDR sites. To assist in that regard, the mediation has proposed that an African country be approached to supply additional forces to UNOCI with a view to securing Forces nouvelles DDR sites. Such a force would be under the control of UNOCI but would be deployed to ensure security around Forces nouvelles sites. The Forces nouvelles have assured the mediation that they are ready to start the DDR process. They have indicated that they have initiated a month-long sensitization process to prepare their forces for DDR. The Secretary-General of the Forces nouvelles has stated that he has issued an instruction to that effect.

The main challenge related to DDR is that the regroupment areas in the north are not ready. The mediation has been part of a team of experts from UNOCI and the National Commission for Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration that has been conducting inspection of such areas with a view to determining how best to expedite the rehabilitation of sites in the north. The National Armed Forces of Côte d'Ivoire have also indicated that they are ready to start DDR once the preparations can be completed.

With regard to the functioning of the Government of National Reconciliation, we stress once again that the Government is not functioning properly. The main problem in that regard, as I have indicated, is that ministers from the Forces nouvelles have raised concerns about their security in Abidjan. Some South African security experts visited Côte d'Ivoire recently to assist in resolving that matter. The experts have now prepared a comprehensive security plan, which will be presented to the Ivorian parties at the meeting scheduled for 3 April.

The AU mediation would like to take advantage of this meeting of the Security Council to sincerely

thank the Council and the United Nations as a whole for their sustained interest in the speedy resolution of the Ivorian crisis. We request that the Council remain seized of this question. We also request that the Security Council be prepared expeditiously to take such decisions as may be necessary to empower UNOCI and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General to help secure a peaceful resolution of the Ivorian crisis. We welcome the Secretary-General's recommendation regarding the emergency deployment of an additional 1,226 troops.

In that context, we are privileged to make the solemn commitment that the AU and its mediation will cooperate fully with the Security Council, the Secretary-General and other United Nations institutions and personnel to bring lasting peace to Côte d'Ivoire as a matter of urgency. We also trust that, in their conduct, the United Nations and all its institutions and agencies will respect and support the peoples of Africa, represented by the African Union, as they strive to find an African solution to the eminently African problem of the Ivorian crisis.

We therefore appeal to the Security Council sincerely to coordinate its future actions on Côte d'Ivoire with the African Union in the interest of genuine peace, stability and development in a united Côte d'Ivoire. The African Union understands, respects and supports the global responsibilities of the United Nations and of the Security Council on various matters, including the central matter of international peace and security. The Union is also firmly committed to its own responsibilities with regard to the future of Africa and therefore to the elimination of all threats to international peace and security that emanate from our continent.

We believe that those considerations provide a firm basis for a properly structured relationship between the United Nations Security Council and the AU Peace and Security Council, which would further reinforce global progress towards world peace and lasting universal stability. The African Union is ready to do everything it can to ensure that Africa contributes to such outcomes.

We would also like to assure the members of the Security Council, both singly and collectively, that the African Union is unreservedly determined to help resolve the Ivorian crisis within the context of the parameters we have indicated in this Statement. We

look forward to effective cooperation between the United Nations and the AU in that regard.

We thank you, Mr. President, the other members of the Security Council and the Secretary-General for the opportunity you have given to the AU mediation on Côte d'Ivoire to address this body. We fully understand that there are many problems that we must overcome. But, if we deal with the broader, major, overall challenges, then the other problems can be dealt with more effectively. We therefore look forward to working together with the Council much more closely in the coming period.

The President: I thank Mr. Pahad for the kind words he addressed to my country, Brazil.

Mr. Motoc (Romania) (*spoke in French*): Permit me at the outset to thank you, Mr. President, for having convened this important meeting today. We hope that it will be able to sound the alarm on the major risks posed by the political crisis persisting in Côte d'Ivoire. I would also like to thank Mr. Doss for having introduced the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) (S/2005/186) and to congratulate him on his outstanding efforts as Interim Special Representative of the Secretary-General in recent months.

I should like to warmly welcome Mr. Aziz Pahad, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of South Africa. The members of the Security Council and the Members of the United Nations in general have been eagerly awaiting news concerning the mediation efforts of President Mbeki. We highly appreciate the personal commitment of President Mbeki, as well as his energy and perseverance in carrying out the difficult task entrusted to him by the African Union (AU). We have every confidence in his capacity to contribute to the resolution of the situation, and we are prepared to support him in his future efforts in that regard.

We must vigorously continue our common search for a political solution to the crisis. We hope that, at the 3 April Pretoria meeting, all the key Côte d'Ivoire actors will show that they fully understand the gravity of the situation and the urgency of working towards a compromise political solution in the framework of the peace plan laid down by President Mbeki. I wish here to reaffirm our appreciation and support for the involvement of the African Union (AU) in addressing the crisis in Côte d'Ivoire. We are deeply convinced of

the value added by African management of problems of this nature.

We have come a long way from the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement to the present peace plan. But on the ground the signs are increasingly discouraging. It should now be clear that this process is the only alternative to a return to violence, which would have incalculable consequences for the unity and the future of Côte d'Ivoire and for the stability of the entire subregion.

Under the initial plan we would already be completing the disarmament phase. But uncertainty remains even about the date for that phase to begin. The Government is not yet functional, and parallel state structures have been put in place in the north of the country. Crime is on the rise, and the lack of trust among the parties is more marked than ever. The message of the mobilization of militia-type groups is entirely incompatible with the spirit of the peace process.

We cannot tolerate any attacks on United Nations personnel or on civilians. All those who fuel violence and block the implementation of the peace agreements must bear responsibility. In our view, now is the time for firmer action in that regard, including action by the Security Council.

We were surprised to learn that the perpetrators of the attacks in Logoualé, who were arrested by UNOCI and handed over to the Ivorian authorities, were released the next day. The widespread culture of impunity promotes the persistence of a generalized climate of intolerance and violence, which is also fuelled by the propaganda of hatred. But again, efforts to get the situation under control are proving insufficient.

I wish now to comment on the matter of elections and on the role of UNOCI.

The timetable for the elections seems to be in jeopardy in the light of the current political tension. It is critical that the parties deal with major pending political problems before the elections are held. In our view, the possibility of an enhanced United Nations role in the electoral process should be considered in the light of future developments on the ground. UNOCI will then continue to play an important role in these extremely complex circumstances, which pose numerous challenges.

We would like to see United Nations forces effectively carry out their mandated tasks, including those recently defined in resolution 1584 (2005). In that context, we are prepared to lend support to the strengthening of UNOCI in line with the Secretary-General's proposals. In any event, we believe that analysing its overall mandate could be extremely useful for a better understanding of the Operation's limitations and of the possibilities for strengthening its operational capabilities.

In conclusion, I would stress that on numerous occasions the Security Council, through its resolutions and statements, has firmly and clearly communicated its message concerning Côte d'Ivoire. Through President Mbeki, the African Union has shouldered the task of bridging the confidence gap between the two parties and of relaunching the peace process. But what is needed is the will of the parties to work together in a spirit of good faith to attain the shared objective of preserving the stability and the development prospects of Côte d'Ivoire in the common interest of the subregion and the entire African continent.

The President: I thank the representative of Romania for the kind words he addressed to my country, Brazil.

Mr. Adechi (Benin) (*spoke in French*): I congratulate you, Mr. President, on having taken the timely initiative of organizing this public meeting on the situation in Côte d'Ivoire.

We thank Mr. Alan Doss for introducing the report of the Secretary-General (S/2005/186), and we welcome Mr. Aziz Pahad, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of South Africa, and his delegation. We are particularly grateful to him for the extremely useful information he has provided on recent developments related to the African Union mediation: a new attempt by the international community to end the crisis in Côte d'Ivoire. We take this opportunity to hail South Africa's efforts to restore peace to Côte d'Ivoire.

The crisis in Côte d'Ivoire is a true tragedy. The Secretary-General has described it in great detail in his recent report, which Mr. Doss introduced earlier this afternoon. As the situation continues to deteriorate, the prospects for peace are becoming more remote, with growing delays in the implementation of the agreements signed by the protagonists in the Ivorian crisis.

Thus, today's Council meeting is important. It is our impression that the protagonists have decided to ignore the international community's numerous appeals and its multifaceted efforts to help them back onto the path of peace. The political leaders of Côte d'Ivoire must choose cooperation and dialogue rather than violence, provocation and confrontation.

As the date of the elections approaches, great uncertainty looms concerning the future of Côte d'Ivoire. Here, we agree with the Secretary-General's analysis, especially when he sketches the bleak and alarming picture that is Côte d'Ivoire today. There is no doubt that at present the peace process is at a critical stage with respect to the many challenges on the path back to stability in Côte d'Ivoire.

The first and certainly the most urgent of those challenges is to bring about the resumption of dialogue among the Ivorian parties. Dialogue among the Ivorian parties remains the Achilles heel of the transition process. For that reason, we welcome with keen interest the announcement of the forthcoming Pretoria meeting among the key actors in the crisis. We hope that this will mark a vigorous resumption of the peace process. We hope too that the parties will play by the rules and, this time, strictly respect their commitment to restore peace in Côte d'Ivoire.

The second challenge relates to security. We are deeply concerned both by the "irregular" recruitment now under way, by the mobilization and arming of militias and other illegal groups and by the looming threat this poses to the peace and tranquillity of the Ivorian population and to security throughout the subregion.

The United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) has recently achieved successes in the field, and it is important that it continue to thwart the activities of illegal armed groups by means of vigorous action carried out in liaison with Licorne forces. It is also of the greatest urgency that there be quicker movement towards the establishment of concrete conditions for the effective launching of the programme of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR). Once begun, the various activities of that programme will inevitably contribute to an improvement of the security conditions in the country, which is sine qua non for the establishment of a stable and lasting basis for economic recovery.

Measures must also be planned to deal with all individuals who might commit or encourage acts that are in violation of human rights or who would protect the perpetrators of crimes committed in that context. The collapse of the country's judicial system and the fragmented state of the national police, which promote the reign of impunity, are, we believe, a serious problem that must be resolved, although the solution is hardly evident in the present conditions of a de facto partition of the country.

The restoration of security also depends on the cessation of the campaign of hate and violence orchestrated by some of the media. Here we welcome the significant work carried out by UNOCI through its information office and its radio station. We encourage it to pursue its commendable action in this area.

Given the level and pace of deterioration of the situation in the field, and given the real risks of a conflagration and the predictable consequences for the subregion, it is our view, and that of the Secretary-General, that the Council should plan for the possibility of a periodic assessment of the implementation of resolutions 1572 (2004) and 1584 (2005) in order to take the necessary measures.

The third challenge is that of organizing the elections. The holding of elections within the scheduled time frame remains important for the transition process, and the Ivorian parties must do everything possible to overcome the vagaries observed both in the establishment of the electoral commission and the electoral list and in bringing election legislation into line with the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement and Accra III.

Beyond the three major challenges, we think that the humanitarian situation in Côte d'Ivoire, above all in the northern regions of the country under the Forces nouvelles, deserves particular attention. Here we would like to back the Secretary-General's appeal to donors to make available the resources needed to continue international assistance to 3 million individuals in need and for more effective action for the 5 million children under the age of five who have been affected by the crisis.

To go back to UNOCI, we fully share the view of Madam Louise Fréchette, the United Nations Deputy Secretary-General, on the sensitive situation of the Operation in Côte d'Ivoire. During her recent visit to Abidjan she rightly emphasized that the expectations of

the Ivorian parties often go beyond the means available to the Operation to implement its mandate. In particular, we wonder about its reaction capacities in the context of the electoral timetable expected in the country, which will raise the level of tension. Therefore, there is a need not only to extend its mandate by one year but also to provide it with a human and logistical means requested by the Secretary-General to enable it to effectively discharge its expanded mandate with regard to the new responsibilities we recently entrusted to it.

It is our conviction that beyond any and all mediation, regardless of the means made available by the international community to the cause of peace in Côte d'Ivoire and regardless of the determination demonstrated by the mediators in the crisis, it is first and foremost up to the Ivorians themselves to take over the peace process and ensure its success through their daily behaviour. Benin firmly supports the programme of action for African mediation, whose well-thought-out sequence seem to us likely to restore hope in Côte d'Ivoire.

To conclude, we call upon the Ivorian parties to make good use the Pretoria meeting by renouncing once and for all the suicidal option of an endless war in Côte d'Ivoire. We urge them to conclude compromises — difficult ones, perhaps, but inevitable and necessary to move the peace process forward. It is our sincere hope that they will succeed in doing so in the higher interest of the people of Côte d'Ivoire.

Mr. Zhang Yishan (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The Chinese delegation welcomes the Deputy Foreign Minister of South Africa, Mr. Pahad, upon his undertaking such a long journey to brief the Council on developments in the situation in Côte d'Ivoire. China highly appreciates the mediation efforts undertaken by President Mbeki on behalf of the African Union (AU) to expedite a settlement of the Ivorian question. We look forward to positive outcomes from the meeting to be held in South Africa at the beginning of April. We also appreciate the efforts by Mr. Alan Doss, Principal Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General, and his briefing. We appreciate too the efforts of the Secretary-General himself and of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in this connection.

China has always closely followed developments in the Ivorian situation and sincerely hopes that Côte d'Ivoire will achieve reunification of north and south and attain peace and stability as soon as possible. We are pleased that, thanks to the good offices of President Mbeki, the Ivorian situation has undergone some positive changes. The Ivorian Government has taken necessary measures to ban street violence and establish an atmosphere conducive to dialogue. We welcome and appreciate these developments.

However, it must also be noted that the current political process in Côte d'Ivoire remains at a stalemate and that the security situation is still volatile. In order to break that stalemate, the first imperative is for all Ivorian parties to honour the commitments they made to President Mbeki during his visit to Côte d'Ivoire and advance the peace process in accordance with the road map endorsed by the AU. Accra III and the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement — the foundation for a political situation of the Ivorian question — must be fully implemented. Most important, the Ivorian parties should remain firm in seeking to solve their disputes through dialogue. At the same time, the international community should continue to provide assistance to Côte d'Ivoire.

Over the past year the Security Council adopted three resolutions on Côte d'Ivoire, which have played a positive role in maintaining peace and stability in that country and the subregion. The United Nations should continue to enhance its coordination and cooperation with the AU and with ECOWAS and other subregional organizations, work with President Mbeki in his mediation efforts on behalf of the AU and support the AU's leading role.

In principle, China endorses the Secretary-General's recommendation that the mandate of UNOCI be extended. China stands ready to study the details involved, together with other members of the Council.

Mr. Mahiga (United Republic of Tanzania): I thank Mr. Alan Doss for presenting the latest report of the Secretary-General. My delegation also welcomes and appreciates the presence of Minister Aziz Pahad, the Deputy Foreign Minister of the Republic of South Africa, to brief the Council on President Mbeki's mediation in Côte d'Ivoire on behalf of the African Union (AU).

It is more than two years now since the eruption of the conflict in Côte d'Ivoire, in September 2002.

One should appreciate the speed with which the international community responded to the conflict. The West African subregion, through its regional organization — the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) — promptly deployed a peacekeeping force with the full political backing of the African Union. Concrete peace proposals were negotiated that led to the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement, which was revisited and reaffirmed in Accra.

The response of the United Nations to the Ivorian crisis was equally swift, starting with its resolution 1464 (2003) of 4 February 2003, which firmly supported the implementation of the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement. The Security Council has consistently remained seized of the Ivorian crisis. The ceasefire agreement of 3 May 2003 has remained shaky. That was clearly demonstrated by the events of 28 February 2004 and by the November 2004 crisis, when the situation took a dramatic turn for the worse. Neither the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement nor the Accra III Agreement has been fully implemented. It is against that worrisome background that President Mbeki's initiative must be seen and appreciated. It is the responsibility of all who are interested in seeing an end to the crisis to make sure that President Mbeki's initiative succeeds. It is above all the responsibility of the protagonists in the Ivorian crisis to guarantee the success of President Mbeki's peace efforts.

As the report of the Secretary-General (S/2005/186) points out, the international community cannot replace or substitute the political will of the Ivorian leadership and people to move the peace process forward, facilitated by the various peace frameworks already on the table and with the support of the Council. Indeed, Ivorian leaders bear full responsibility for finding a way out of the current crisis and making the hard decisions and visionary compromises that are urgently required. They cannot renege on agreements, they have to honour commitments and they ought to respect the Constitution. President Mbeki's initiative on behalf of the African Union provides yet another opportunity for reflection by the parties concerned, and lends momentum to the parties to the conflict to go the extra mile needed to pursue a peaceful settlement.

President Mbeki's initiative enjoys the support of all political forces in Côte d'Ivoire. That is the way it appears. It also enjoys the support of the Economic Community of West African States, the African Union

and the United Nations. We are here to deliberate on President Mbeki's initiative on how to restore mutual trust among the parties and move the peace process forward. More specifically, we are here to consider how to break the impasse in the legislative programme; the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme; the redeployment of Government administration across the country; and the conduct of free and fair elections based on benchmarks previously agreed.

President Mbeki's proposals are innovative and will be useful in creating an atmosphere conducive to a breakthrough. We should give him all the support and cooperation he needs. We look forward to a successful outcome to the meeting planned to take place in South Africa early next month. One of the biggest challenges with respect to supporting President Mbeki's initiative is to come up with appropriate incentives to sustain the current peaceful political atmosphere of compromise and to move towards a situation in which all parties have a shared stake in a new political dispensation. The Security Council should work with President Mbeki to identify and apply the appropriate mix of incentives and other measures in the context of previous Security Council resolutions.

In conclusion, it should be emphasized that the political initiatives we are welcoming and commending cannot move very far if the security situation in Côte d'Ivoire does not improve. My delegation strongly supports the Secretary-General's request that the Council approve the additional military, civilian police and civilian resources proposed in the third progress report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI). We also support the recommendation that the mandate of UNOCI be extended for another 12-month period, until 4 April 2006.

Mr. Holliday (United States of America): We would like to thank Deputy Foreign Minister Aziz Pahad for his work and for his briefing to us today. We also thank Alan Doss for presenting the report of the Secretary-General (S/2005/186) and for his work in Côte d'Ivoire.

We welcome the Secretary-General's latest progress report. We are reviewing it carefully. We would like to commend the work of President Thabo Mbeki in his efforts to mediate between the parties in

Côte d'Ivoire, as well as the work of the African Union in addressing the crisis.

We call on all Ivorian parties to respect their commitments under the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement, which has been called into question several times during the past year. We particularly urge the parties to demonstrate a true commitment to peace and reconciliation in the upcoming emergency talks to be held in Pretoria in early April.

We remain concerned about the humanitarian situation and, obviously, about the vulnerable population that is affected by this conflict.

In our review of the Secretary-General's latest report, we of course will be looking at all aspects. We continue to have questions about the utility of expanding the strength of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) beyond its current mandate, given the lack of political will shown so far by the parties to move the peace process forward. We do, however, believe that it is absolutely critical to see progress, and that UNOCI should consider using all the tools at its disposal.

Finally, we call upon all the parties to reduce the level of violence and the level of unconstructive rhetoric, as well as to renew their commitment to the rule of law. I would also like to commend the mission in Côte d'Ivoire for its work to address the issue of sexual exploitation and abuse. We look forward to working with our Council colleagues on this critical issue.

Mr. De La Sablière (France) (*spoke in French*): I too would like to thank Mr. Alan Doss for the briefing he has just given us regarding the situation in Côte d'Ivoire. I would also like to thank Mr. Aziz Pahad, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of South Africa, and Ms. Mojanku Gumbi for being with us today. Their presence in New York is of particular importance to my delegation, as I believe it is for all the members of the Security Council. It is important for a simple and fundamental reason: that the international community places great hopes on the efforts of South Africa and the personal involvement of President Thabo Mbeki to help extricate Côte d'Ivoire from the deep-rooted crisis in which it finds itself.

The crisis in Côte d'Ivoire is indeed of concern, because the stakes are so high, first and foremost for Côte d'Ivoire and for Ivorians. For two years now, that

country has been divided, fragmented and increasingly impoverished. That cannot continue indefinitely. The stakes are also high for the West African subregion as a whole. That has been said often around the Council table. I believe that everyone here is quite certain that if Côte d'Ivoire were to collapse, the entire region would be seriously destabilized for a long time to come.

Lastly, we believe that what is at stake here also involves the entire African continent. At a time when Africa is organizing itself and taking its future into its own hands, it is unacceptable that a serious crisis should continue in a major country of the continent that had for years been viewed as the most successful country in West Africa in terms of development.

Unfortunately, it must be noted that, despite the outstanding efforts made by President Mbeki, Côte d'Ivoire is still very far from returning to the path of reconciliation. What have we observed? We have observed, first of all, that the Ivorian parties have not abandoned the military option, as evidenced by the very serious events that took place at Logoualé on 28 February last. That is unacceptable.

The Ivorian parties must be aware of the fact that the international community will never agree to a settlement of the crisis by force or by arms; such a settlement would not, in any case, be a lasting one. The international community will also ensure compliance with the arms embargo, in accordance with resolutions 1572 (2004) and 1584 (2005). I would add that, in such a context, a strengthening of UNOCI troops seems to us a *sine qua non* and very urgent.

Secondly, media campaigns to incite hatred and spread disinformation persist in Côte d'Ivoire. This cannot be tolerated either, for we are well aware of the potentially devastating consequences of such campaigns.

Thirdly, the political situation remains deadlocked, and no major progress has been made with respect to the key elements of the reconciliation process as defined by Linas-Marcoussis. The cantonment of forces and the disarmament of the Forces nouvelles have not begun. The militias have not been disbanded; indeed, it is clear that they are armed and continue to pose a serious threat to the country's stability, in Abidjan and elsewhere. And finally, article 35 of the Constitution has still not been revised. These obstacles must be overcome.

Indeed, time is running out. Everything possible must be done to be sure that elections are held according to the timetable that has been set, that is to say, next October — seven months from now — because the holding of free, open and transparent elections is the only solution to the crisis. I have to say that, if the elections are not held in October as planned, Côte d'Ivoire will be embarking on a path that will take it into unknown territory that is fraught with danger.

In that context, it is France's view that the efforts of President Mbeki are vital. I would like to take the opportunity of Mr. Pahad's presence here to vigorously restate the fact that France fully supports the mediation efforts begun by President Mbeki on behalf of the African Union. We are aware that his task is by no means an easy one, but he must succeed. The discussions which will begin in several days with him in Pretoria are critical here. It is our hope that they will make it possible to relaunch the dynamic process of peace in Côte d'Ivoire. To do so, all of the Ivorian parties will have to demonstrate a sense of responsibility, and, as the Council has often stated, any commitments they might make to President Mbeki must be kept. The international community will have to be vigilant in that respect.

The last point I wish to raise is that of the renewed consideration, in the next few days, by the Security Council of the mandate of UNOCI and of the Licorne forces. The debate that will be taking place and the decisions to be taken by the Council will be decisive. The Council will have to work in close cooperation with South Africa, the African Union and the Economic Community of West African States.

That is why it is crucial for the Council to pay very close attention to the African mediation and to heed its analyses and recommendations. The mandate of the impartial forces will end on 4 April, when discussions will be ongoing in Pretoria between President Mbeki and the Ivorian parties. The Council will have to be aware of the results of that meeting and of President Mbeki's analysis of those results. My delegation therefore proposes renewing the mandate of the impartial forces for one month, until 4 May. That will give the Council time to do its work, and we would then have President Mbeki's report on the discussions that will be taking place in Pretoria.

Today, one month from 4 May and seven months from the elections, I can only underscore here once again our deep concern at the situation in Côte d'Ivoire. It would be serious indeed if there is no breakthrough in the next few days as regards the implementation of Linas-Marcoussis. Once again, that is why we are counting on President Mbeki to make that breakthrough, and the Security Council is there to assist him in so doing.

In conclusion, I should like to emphasize that France has always acted in accordance with the mandate which the Security Council has entrusted to it. If the Council, taking on board the African viewpoint, wishes to so do, it will continue to shoulder that responsibility.

Mr. Baali (Algeria) (*spoke in French*): I should like first of all to welcome the presence among us of the Secretary-General. I wish also to welcome Mr. Aziz Pahad, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of South Africa, and to thank him very warmly for his outstanding presentation on the results of President Mbeki's mediation, on behalf of the African Union, in the context of the Ivorian crisis.

On behalf of Algeria, I should like to pay tribute to South Africa and to President Mbeki for his personal commitment and for his untiring efforts to break the impasse in the peace process, and I wish to assure him of our full support. Algeria would like also to thank Mr. Alan Doss for his presentation.

Algeria is keen to see the Ivorian actors take the opportunity of the meeting to be held in Pretoria on 3 and 4 April to announce a serious relaunching of the political process. The situation in Côte d'Ivoire is getting out of control, and therefore all parties involved must discharge their responsibilities. The salvation of the country should have priority over narrow interests and personal ambitions.

It is important that the protagonists in the crisis understand that the international community is starting to lose patience, given the unjustified shilly-shallying that is taking place and the failure to adhere to the commitments undertaken. In his plan of action, President Mbeki has gone to considerable pains to address the objective concerns of all parties. He has, quite rightly, made the re-establishment of confidence between the parties a sine qua non for the relaunching of the peace process. The African Union and President Mbeki have also quite rightly asked and obtained from

the Security Council an additional chance for dialogue and cooperation, as the Council has agreed to suspend the implementation of the measures envisaged in its resolution 1572 (2004).

We must, however, recognize that the parties do not seem to have resolutely opted for peace and reconciliation — far from it. The international community expects them to make additional efforts and to agree to mutual concessions.

Everything must be done to ensure that the elections are held as scheduled. In that respect, it is vital that the parties undertake initiatives to give the country visibility and to provide the Ivorian people with a reassuring outlook.

The worst-case scenario that I am willing to envisage would be political deadlock at the time of the October deadline. In order to avert such a situation, the Forces nouvelles must be able to take their place once again without delay within the Government of National Reconciliation and begin the disarmament process. The Ivorian authorities must, for their part, agree to find a solution to the issue of article 35 and to ensure that the legislative reforms will contribute in a meaningful way to rooting out the causes of the crisis.

The development of the Ivorian crisis has had a direct effect on the situation of UNOCI. The conditions that were in place when its mandate and its composition were originally determined have significantly changed. At its start the mission was designed to help Ivorians to implement the political compromise agreed to at Linas-Marcoussis and reaffirmed at Accra. UNOCI should therefore serve as a guarantor for the proper implementation of the agreements entered into, particularly with regard to the most sensitive aspects, such as disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, the reunification of the country and the holding of credible, open and transparent elections.

However, because of the way things are, and also because of the will of the Security Council, UNOCI's mandate and the rules of engagement have been subject to change. It is now essentially concentrating on dealing with the symptoms of the crisis, which, with the continuing impasse in the peace process, are getting worse day by day. UNOCI has become a stabilization force. Thus it has been carrying out tasks for which it is not necessarily prepared. The report of the Secretary-General describes the various situations that

face UNOCI, particularly in the north of the country and in the confidence zone. The Security Council should carefully examine those problems the next time it reviews the mission's mandate. During that assessment, we must bear in mind that pressure on UNOCI's resources will only increase. As the October elections approach, the mission's responsibilities will increase, quite independently of the development of the political situation in Côte d'Ivoire.

The international community certainly does not want to see UNOCI remain passive and powerless in the face of a possible deterioration in the situation. This means that it is now more than ever essential to strengthen its resources and, perhaps, to adapt its mandate.

In conclusion, my delegation would like to reiterate its full support for the mediation efforts of President Mbeki, and awaits with great interest the assessment that he will make after the meeting in Pretoria in April.

Mr. Oshima (Japan): We would like to express appreciation to you, Mr. President, for having convened this public meeting today. We would also like to thank the Deputy Foreign Minister of South Africa, Mr. Aziz Pahad, for his statement, in which he gave us an insightful assessment of the situation in Côte d'Ivoire from the point of view of the African Union's efforts to implement the peace plan. We also thank the Principal Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Alan Doss, for his informative briefing. We welcome the presence of the Secretary-General.

We share the deep concern about the existing stalemate in the political process in Côte d'Ivoire, where, according to paragraph 81 of the Secretary-General's report (S/2005/186), "There is a very real danger that events may spin out of control with incalculable consequences for the people of Côte d'Ivoire and the subregion as a whole."

Regrettably, the strong will of the Ivorian parties for a negotiated solution seems sorely lacking. The attacks in Logoualé in February, for example, have shown how precarious the situation is and how easily it can deteriorate into something much more serious. The way in which the armed youth involved in the attacks were subsequently handled casts serious doubt on the Ivorian parties' political will to advance the peace process.

In these difficult circumstances, the efforts of the African Union (AU) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), although they have yet to produce tangible results, become all the more important, and we strongly support their continued engagement — in particular President Mbeki's mediation effort — as a clear demonstration of the African ownership in peacemaking for Côte d'Ivoire. These African initiatives must be encouraged and should be supported with appropriate action by the United Nations system and decisions of the Security Council. I would like to highlight three points in this connection.

First, we hope that the mediation effort of President Mbeki will be intensified in the following weeks, as explained by Deputy Foreign Minister Pahad in today's statement. It is important that the Council continues to be informed by the AU and President Mbeki's team about how they assess the evolving situation and what they expect of the United Nations and the Security Council in helping to advance the peace process in Côte d'Ivoire. For this purpose, it is critically important to strengthen the information exchange and the coordination and cooperation efforts between the AU and President Mbeki's team and the United Nations on the ground.

Secondly, all Ivorian parties must be made fully aware that any failure to cooperate in the facilitation of President Mbeki's efforts will render them subject to the sanctions regime, in accordance with resolution 1572 (2004). Human rights violations, acts of provocation and attacks against the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) and the Licorne, and incitement to hatred must not be allowed to continue. If the current obstruction of the peace process continues, the Security Council must show its readiness, in consultation with the AU, to immediately apply sanctions against those individuals responsible for the sabotage. That would send a clear message from the international community to the Ivorian parties that sabotaging the peace process will not be tolerated.

Thirdly, we strongly commend the efforts made by UNOCI and the Licorne to ensure security and stability in the context of the fragile situation in Côte d'Ivoire, and we recognize that UNOCI is playing an increasingly important role in Côte d'Ivoire. On the other hand, we believe that, given the degree of interconnectedness among the conflict situations in the region of West Africa, it would seem appropriate to

review the operational concepts of the various United Nations peace missions deployed in West Africa with a view to promoting inter-mission synergies among them for their flexible and effective operational use. In this connection, we noted with interest the observations in the Secretary-General's report, issued in March, on inter-mission cooperation among the peacekeeping missions in West Africa. We would like to encourage the further exploration of that idea.

As for the appropriate force level of UNOCI itself, we look forward to further discussions in the Council, including on how we can best optimize the peacekeeping operation assets and resources that are deployed and available in the subregion of West Africa as a whole.

The strong determination and commitment of the parties concerned is essential. Without it, neither initiatives for the peace process nor the peacekeeping operation presence will result in a lasting solution to the problem. While the peace and reconciliation process is at an impasse, the socio-economic and humanitarian situation of the country continues to deteriorate, directly affecting the people of Côte d'Ivoire. United Nations and other international humanitarian relief efforts must be supported. Now, more than ever, the Security Council and the international community must seriously consider taking steps to regain the commitment of all Ivorian parties to the peace process.

Mr. Konuzin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We welcome the participation of the Secretary-General at today's meeting of the Security Council. We appreciate the efforts being made by Mr. Pahad and Mr. Doss to resolve the crisis in the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire, and we thank them for their contributions to this meeting.

The Russian delegation is deeply concerned about the instability in the situation in Côte d'Ivoire and the continuing lack of progress in finding a settlement there. Despite the outstanding, praiseworthy and vigorous mediation efforts of President Mbeki of South Africa, the Ivorian peace process continues to be blocked and the parties are still demonstrating a high level of mistrust.

The political stagnation there is fraught with the danger that hostilities might flare up again as the result of yet another armed incident. There is increasing concern that the continuing deadlock is undermining

prospects for the timely holding of presidential and parliamentary elections in Côte d'Ivoire. Everything possible should be done to ensure that the elections are held on time, because rescheduling them would have the most serious consequences. The country and its State institutions could end up outside the rule of law, and the constitutional system itself could be threatened. Other sources of concern are the increasingly negative economic trends and the further deterioration of the social and humanitarian situation.

However important external assistance is to a settlement in Côte d'Ivoire, the full responsibility for making the hard decisions to find a way out of this crisis lies with the citizens of Côte d'Ivoire themselves. We call on the parties to the conflict to demonstrate political will and immediately to begin to honour their commitments under the Mbeki road map. There is also a need for the swift implementation of measures aimed at preparing for the elections; settling differences regarding the laws adopted in the context of legislative reform; adopting a revised article 35 of the Constitution, which sets out the requirements for presidential candidates; and launching the disarmament process.

The situation in Côte d'Ivoire is complex, and is fraught with the possibility of further deterioration; it dictates the need for enhanced effectiveness and coordination of international efforts to promote progress in the peace process in the country. We note that neighbouring States could play a particular role in that regard.

We share the Secretary-General's concern regarding incitement to hate and violence in the media, which is again increasing, and the widespread threats against United Nations and French peacekeepers. The parties in Côte d'Ivoire must immediately put an end to those unacceptable activities.

The complex security situation and the new objective of monitoring compliance with the arms embargo are clearly complicating the efforts of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) to effectively carry out its mandate with the existing resources. We agree with the Secretary-General's recommendations that UNOCI be strengthened and that its mandate be extended for another year, until 4 April 2006.

Mr. Mayoral (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, we want to thank you, Mr. President, for

having organized this meeting regarding a country that is experiencing a unique situation, as described by Mr. Alan Doss, Principal Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Côte d'Ivoire, whom we thank for presenting the Secretary-General's fourth progress report (S/2005/186). We also want to congratulate and thank Mr. Aziz Pahad, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of South Africa, for his statement and for his country's efforts to find a solution for Côte d'Ivoire.

The overall situation of Côte d'Ivoire is far from good. The situation is one of division. The recent ceasefire violation, on 28 February, by 100 armed elements that attacked the Forces nouvelles at Logoualé; Forces nouvelles ministers not participating in the transitional Government; the lack of agreement on the procedure for amending article 35 of the Constitution, relating to the conditions for eligibility for the presidency; the postponement of the beginning of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) of the Forces nouvelles; the "irregular" recruitment of troops into the National Armed Forces of Côte d'Ivoire; and the delay in implementing the necessary reforms that will make it possible to hold the elections planned for this October: all these accurately describe what is happening in Côte d'Ivoire. That is why we are greatly concerned about the future of the peace process.

The international community, the United Nations, the African Union and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) cannot substitute for genuine political will on the part of the parties to respect the letter and the spirit of the Linas-Marcoussis and Accra III Agreements. Therefore, we urge the parties to implement the measures necessary to prevent any further escalation of tensions. As identified by the African Union and by the Secretary-General in his report, those measures include: creating a climate of peace and promoting confidence between the parties; implementing the legislative and constitutional reforms stipulated in the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement; ensuring the functioning and composition of the transitional Government; beginning the process of disarming, demobilizing and reintegrating all militias; facilitating the restoration of national authority throughout Côte d'Ivoire; respecting the deadline for the holding of the elections; restructuring the country's National Police and Gendarmerie; and providing essential public services throughout the territory.

My delegation wishes to reaffirm its full support for the mediation efforts that President Mbeki of South Africa has carried out on behalf of the African Union, and for the efforts of ECOWAS to try to reactivate the peace process in Côte d'Ivoire. In that regard, we consider it important that the Security Council receive periodic updates on developments in the mediation process and on the future steps planned as part of that process.

In that context, we believe that the upcoming meeting, to be held in Pretoria in early April, could be an important step in the search for a political solution for the country and for the region. Likewise, we should begin to apply individual sanctions measures, provided for in resolution 1572 (2004), against persons who obstruct the implementation of the Linas-Marcoussis and Accra III Agreements, as well as those who commit any other human rights offence or violation in Côte d'Ivoire.

Finally, as is evident in the report of the Secretary-General, the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) — which has been equal to the circumstances and which is carrying out its mandate, even in difficult conditions — must continue to receive our support, particularly since it has often lacked the resources necessary for its activities. For all of those reasons, we recommend that the force continue with its work, and we support the extension of UNOCI's mandate for a 12-month period.

The President: I thank the representative of Argentina for the kind words he addressed to me.

Mr. Vassilakis (Greece): I would like to welcome the presence of the Secretary-General and to express our appreciation for his recent and insightful report on the situation in Côte d'Ivoire (S/2005/186). Many thanks go also to Mr. Alan Doss for the clarity of his briefing.

We would also like to express our thanks to President Mbeki of South Africa for his tireless efforts to bring peace back to a country that had for a long time been an example of peace and prosperity in the region. We also wish to thank Mr. Aziz Pahad for having taken the time to come to New York to brief the members of the Security Council.

The observation of the Secretary-General that the security situation remains precarious makes us all feel deeply concerned. His warning that, if the arming and

the activities of militias are not controlled there will be a very real danger that events may spin out of control, with incalculable consequences for the people of Côte d'Ivoire and the subregion as a whole, is even more disturbing.

It is regrettable that, despite the laudable efforts of President Mbeki on behalf of the African Union to advance the plan of action agreed upon by the parties in December 2004, important proposals contained in that plan have not yet been implemented. Unfortunately, progress has been limited and the country remains divided. The Ivorian parties, particularly those controlling militia groups, should exercise restraint and hold their leaders accountable for their attacks against civilians and peacekeepers.

The implementation of resolutions 1572 (2004) and 1584 (2005) is of the utmost importance for the improvement of the security situation in the country.

We are grateful to the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) and the Licorne forces for their efforts to monitor the implementation of the embargo. Taking into account the lack of progress in the peace process, we fully subscribe to the suggestion of the Secretary-General to reinforce the capacity of UNOCI and to provide it with additional resources in order that it may more effectively be able to fulfil its difficult mandate.

May I use this opportunity to recall that the arms embargo is an obligation binding on all Member States. That obligation is of particular relevance to the countries of the region. In that respect, in my capacity as Chairman of the Committee established pursuant to paragraph 14 of resolution 1572 (2004), I would like to appeal to all Member States of the region that have not yet done so to submit to the Committee the relevant information on national measures that they have taken for the strict implementation of the arms embargo.

The international community is following the situation in Côte d'Ivoire very closely. It would be particularly pleased to see the situation improve very soon, and the country return to peace and stability. If the situation continues to be volatile, there will be no other option but to proceed to the full implementation of resolution 1572 (2004) against those obstructing the peace process and committing violations of human rights.

The recent dramatic incident in Logoualé shows how volatile the security situation is and how easily violence could escalate further. We therefore call upon all the parties involved, in particular the Ivorian leaders, to face up to their responsibilities and to implement the terms of the peace process and the relevant Security Council resolutions. The upcoming meeting scheduled to take place in April in Pretoria will give them another opportunity, which they should grasp, in order to bring peace to their country.

Mr. Mercado (Philippines): We wish to thank the Brazilian presidency for convening this important meeting to discuss the situation in Côte d'Ivoire. The presence this afternoon of the Secretary-General himself underscores the importance of the crisis in Côte d'Ivoire. We welcome the comprehensive briefing made by Deputy Foreign Minister Aziz Pahad, and we thank Mr. Alan Doss, Principal Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Côte d'Ivoire, for introducing the report of the Secretary-General (S/2005/186).

The Linas-Marcoussis and Accra III Agreements showed signs of promise, namely, that a peaceful settlement could be reached in the situation in Côte d'Ivoire. However, intervening events, in particular the attacks of November 2004, have halted the positive momentum of those Agreements. The peace process is still experiencing serious setbacks. The implementation of the parties' commitments has been delayed. Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) programmes have yet to begin. And the threat of insecurity continues to rise as both sides to the conflict continue to violate the ceasefire. Meanwhile, the economic situation is declining steadily. Those developments raise the question of whether the elections scheduled for October will take place, a situation that the country can ill afford.

My delegation believes that those delays have the potential to create a serious crisis that could undermine the overall stability not only of Côte d'Ivoire but also of the subregion as well. The problems concerning the upcoming October elections and DDR have to be tackled as soon as possible. Preparations for elections, the composition of the Independent Electoral Commission and legislative reforms — most especially the adoption of a revised article 35 of the Constitution — have to be addressed urgently. Inasmuch as DDR is closely linked to the elections and the restoration of security in the country, the

difficulties among the parties in the DDR process must also be ironed out as soon as possible.

My delegation lends its full support to the unrelenting efforts of President Mbeki in instituting the African Union's (AU) plan of action to resolve the impasse among the Ivorian parties. We thank Deputy Foreign Minister Aziz Pahad for sharing with us the AU's mediation road map and the recommendations contained therein. We note in particular the suggestion to have an African country supply additional forces to the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) to secure DDR sites. That could be an important incentive for combatants to begin the DDR process.

We extend our support to UNOCI and the Licorne forces in their efforts to provide security in support with the peace process, and concur with the Secretary-General's recommendation to extend UNOCI's mandate for an additional 12 months. We value the continued cooperation among the United Nations, the AU and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), as well as their contributions to advancing the peace process under these challenging circumstances.

The holding of this Council meeting is just one way to send the message to the Ivorian parties that they must remain actively engaged in peace negotiations and that they must bring them to a successful conclusion. The international community, in particular the United Nations and the AU, must continue, and coordinate, its efforts to support the Ivorian peace process. However, as peace ultimately rests in the hands of Ivorians, they should be made to understand that difficult choices and sacrifices have to be made to put the peace process back on track. Restoring trust is also a necessity and a priority to move the peace process forward.

Lastly, we look forward to the next update on the peace mediation efforts of President Mbeki, in particular with regard to his meeting with Ivorian parties in Pretoria.

The President: I thank the representative of the Philippines for his kind words addressed to the presidency.

Sir Emyr Jones Parry (United Kingdom): I wish to extend my thanks to Alan Doss for his briefing and for the report of the Secretary-General (S/2005/186),

whose presence among us at this meeting is particularly welcome. If I may, I would also like to recall our appreciation for the work of the former Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Albert Tévoédrè, and for all that he did.

The magnitude of the difficulties we face in Côte d'Ivoire is quite clear. Today we owe a particular debt to Minister Pahad and to President Mbeki. I very much welcome the minister's commitment to an inclusive mediation process. It is important that the African Union (AU) work very closely with the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) in everything that is done. Like other Council members, the United Kingdom supports President Mbeki's mediation efforts aimed at putting the peace process back on track. But also like other delegations, we are most concerned about the current situation in Côte d'Ivoire: the deteriorating security climate, uncontrolled militias, the continued abuse of human rights, the serious judicial vacuum in the zone of confidence and the pervasive sense of impunity.

Therefore, in considering how the Council can now most effectively tackle those challenges, I would like to concentrate on just two issues. The first is how to ensure that all the Ivorian parties live up to their commitments under the Linas-Marcoussis and Accra III Agreements. That is essential if we are to achieve the goal of free and fair elections this October. It is important that we prepare well for those elections. The United Kingdom would support an increased role for the United Nations, if that is requested by all the Ivorian parties. Resolution 1572 (2004) made it clear that the Council holds all the parties in Côte d'Ivoire individually responsible for their actions and that we will take measures against those who fail to live up to their obligations. It seems to me, therefore, that it is time now for the Council to accelerate its preparation for such measures so that we are ready to act rapidly at the right moment against those who continue to obstruct the peace process.

Secondly, with respect to the role of UNOCI, the Secretary-General has underlined the strain on the Operation's present capacity and has asked for more resources, particularly given UNOCI's increased mandate. We must ensure that the Council's strategy in Côte d'Ivoire, the number of troops and civilian police comprising UNOCI and the mandate, the rules of engagement and the tasks given to the mission are all fully consistent with one another. In my view, we shall

have to look closely at how those requirements fit together as we consider how to extend UNOCI's mandate. In the meantime, I think it is sensible that we support Ambassador De La Sablière's proposal for a one-month rollover.

If I may, I should like to end simply by thanking France for its continued commitment to Côte d'Ivoire and for the essential contribution that the Licorne forces are making to supporting the United Nations mission and to preserving stability in that troubled country.

Mr. Faaborg-Andersen (Denmark): I should like to join others in expressing my gratitude to the representative of South Africa, Mr. Aziz Pahad, for his presence at the Council today and for his briefing on the mediation efforts of President Thabo Mbeki on behalf of the African Union. Let me also thank you, Mr. President, for convening this meeting to get the report directly from the South African mediators — something my delegation has been looking forward to.

Also, I should like to express my gratitude to the Secretary-General for his presence today and for the useful written report (S/2005/186) to the Council, as well as to the Principal Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Alan Doss, for his lucid and enlightening briefing on the most recent events in Côte d'Ivoire.

Côte d'Ivoire is still balancing on the brink: that is the unpleasant reality that all actors involved in trying to manage the crisis are faced with. There is a clear need to act prudently and swiftly. It must be made very clear to the main parties in Côte d'Ivoire that there can be only a peaceful, negotiated solution to the crisis. The military option would have no winners, only losers. In Pretoria next week, the responsible Ivorian parties should muster the courage to make the necessary concessions and re-establish the mutual trust needed to make the elections possible and to reconcile the country.

I share many of the remarks and the observations made by others. I will limit myself to only three brief points.

First, Denmark strongly supports and appreciates the tireless efforts of the President of South Africa, Mr. Thabo Mbeki, to mediate between the parties. We welcome the strong demonstration of African ownership in the crisis management in Côte d'Ivoire

and sincerely hope for a constructive and forward-looking outcome from the Pretoria meeting this coming week.

Looking ahead, there is a need for the strong re-engagement of all key external actors and a clear division of labour among the African Union, the United Nations, the Economic Community of West African States and other key national and regional actors in supporting the implementation of the crucial next steps in the peace process: the broader electoral framework and electoral process, the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) process and the fight against impunity.

Secondly, the lack of progress in the implementation of the peace agreement and the current reign of militias should lead us to reflect carefully on the goals of and the conditions for the international peacekeepers. A stronger presence of regional actors should be encouraged, and United Nations inter-mission cooperation in West Africa should be further developed. The harmful presence of ex-combatants from Liberia and Sierra Leone is just one reason why stronger inter-mission cooperation is crucial. At the same time, I would like to make it quite clear that my delegation shares the view of the Secretary-General with respect to the need to strengthen the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) and to extend its presence for the coming year. I should like to take this opportunity to commend Mr. Doss, Principal Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General, and the United Nations and French peacekeepers for their unwavering efforts in spite of the very difficult current situation on the ground.

Thirdly, I believe that one message should be made very clear to the Ivorian parties, both before the Pretoria meeting and after: action speaks louder than words. In resolutions 1572 (2004) and 1584 (2005) the Council has provided measures employing both carrots and sticks. Denmark continues to believe that pressure on the parties should be stepped up. As we have stated before, it was concerted, credible pressure that led to some progress towards the end of last year. When that pressure faded, so did the political progress. We should carefully study the findings of the International Commission of Inquiry into allegations of serious violations of human rights and international humanitarian law in Côte d'Ivoire and make the report, without the annex, publicly available. The increased lawlessness in Côte d'Ivoire is precisely the result of

the culture of impunity, which the report so vividly depicts.

It is clear that in situations of heightened tension and simmering conflict, irresponsible politicians often look to stereotyped messages on such issues as religion and ethnicity to rally support among their constituents. Such messages should not be allowed to eclipse the basic political questions of the polity of Côte d'Ivoire, to which the existing peace agreements have already provided satisfactory answers. The overwhelming majority of the people in Côte d'Ivoire want peace and want to continue their lives without constant fear of what tomorrow may bring. The responsible actors in Côte d'Ivoire should deliver that peace to the people now.

The President: I thank the representative of Denmark for his kind words addressed to me.

I should like to make a statement in my capacity as representative of Brazil.

In my national capacity, I, too, wish to thank Mr. Alan Doss for presenting the report of the Secretary-General (S/2005/186), and I take this opportunity to welcome the participation of the Secretary-General in this important meeting of the Security Council. I wish to convey my delegation's appreciation to Deputy Foreign Minister Aziz Pahad for sharing with the Council his assessment of the situation in Côte d'Ivoire and for his work on behalf of the African Union to move the peace process forward. I further welcome the presence of Advocate Mojanku Gumbi, President Mbeki's legal adviser.

Many relevant points have already been raised by my colleagues. The delegation of Brazil shares their concerns over continued violations of human rights, the prevailing climate of impunity and the absence of the rule of law in many parts of the country. I shall concentrate my comments on two points: security and the electoral process.

Regarding security, the most worrisome aspect of the current situation in Côte d'Ivoire seems to be the proliferation of militias. New armed groups appear to be constantly mushrooming in Côte d'Ivoire, and the situation cannot be dealt with from a political perspective alone.

The trafficking of small arms has to be curtailed, and options must be made available to the unemployed youth of Côte d'Ivoire. Development agencies and

partners should redouble their efforts in designing quick-impact economic projects in the communities, with a view to generating employment and income. There can be no peace without development. Minister Pahad stressed the deterioration of the socio-economic situation in the country.

Also related to security is the capacity to convey the right messages to the population in an effective manner. In that regard, we commend the work carried out by the public information section of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI), in particular UNOCI-FM, for the expansion of its outreach and for its increased monitoring of messages aired by local media. The report of the Secretary-General also refers to initiatives by Ivorian radio and television authorities that could compromise UNOCI's radio broadcasting — a point also raised by Mr. Doss. The station's role and independence must be preserved.

Furthermore, it is for us a matter of great concern that, following the positive impact of resolution 1572 (2004), the use of virulent language has recurred recently, as stated in paragraph 52 of the report. The Council should be able to assist UNOCI in minimizing all security risks in the country. That includes making good use of measures against those individuals who are preventing the peace process from moving forward and giving favourable consideration to the Secretary-General's request for strengthening UNOCI's capacity to deal with insecurity and to fully enforce the arms embargo, as well as to his recommendation to extend the mandate of the mission, as appropriate.

On the electoral process, it is crucial that all the Ivorian parties understand that, without free and fair elections, peace will remain elusive. Perhaps not all groups and factions actually want peace. But it is the firm belief of our delegation that the overwhelming majority of Ivorians do. Those elections may be held only if there is sufficient security on the ground and if certain preconditions are met, including the adoption of relevant legislation, in conformity with the spirit of Linas-Marcoussis, and the disarmament of the rebels and militias.

The continuing impasse between the major actors in Côte d'Ivoire jeopardizes even the October elections and, in consequence, the stability of the entire region. West Africa cannot afford to find itself mired again in instability and conflict, and Brazil therefore urges the Government and the rebel forces to reach a common

vision of the future and to participate in good faith in the plan of action laid out by President Mbeki and his team for sustainable peace in Côte d'Ivoire. We urge them to seize the opportunity offered by the upcoming summit in Pretoria and to work constructively with the mediation team.

In closing, I would like to express Brazil's appreciation to the African Union and, in particular, to President Obasanjo and President Mbeki, for their tireless efforts in Côte d'Ivoire, as well as to the Economic Community of West African States for its many initiatives aimed at preserving stability in the region. We have long discussed — in the Security Council, as well as in the General Assembly — the framework for cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations. We see it in the making in West Africa, and it is a very positive lesson upon which we will build. The delegation of Brazil wishes the mediators every success and welcomes any follow-up information they may share with us in the future.

I now resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Côte d'Ivoire, to whom I give the floor.

Mr. Djangoné-Bi (Côte d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for having organized this additional public meeting on the situation in Côte d'Ivoire. I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his presence today, as well as for his fourth progress report on the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire, introduced by his Principal Deputy Special Representative, Mr. Alan Doss, to whom I also pay tribute.

I would also like, on behalf of Côte d'Ivoire, to sincerely thank His Excellency Mr. Thabo Mbeki, President of the Republic of South Africa, for having so fully and resolutely dedicated himself to the search for peace in Côte d'Ivoire — efforts that have garnered the wholehearted support of all the parties to the conflict and of the entire international community.

Finally, I would like to express the gratitude of Côte d'Ivoire to the members of the Security Council, troop-contributing countries and all who have spoken this afternoon on this issue.

My delegation has taken note, with great interest, of the report contained in document S/2005/186. While

awaiting more complete observations on the part of my Government, I would like to make several preliminary comments, merely to ensure a balance of information.

The general tone of the report seems to show a considerable degree of sympathy for the point of view and attitude of the Forces nouvelles, the former rebels and opposition parties, while the position of the legitimate authorities is systematically called into question — when it is mentioned at all. Such an approach risks offering comfort to the former rebels in their intention to change the institutions of the country by violence and encouraging other rebellions in the subregion to develop. I would like to provide a few examples.

First, paragraph 7 states that

“the effective functioning of the Government has continued to be affected by a lack of clarity regarding the delegation of powers from the President to the Prime Minister and the ministers”.

However, since the Accra III Agreement, the President of the Republic has, in accordance with article 53 of the Constitution and with the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement, signed a decree delegating power to the Prime Minister of the Government of National Reconciliation — and this was agreed to. To characterize that delegation of powers as ambiguous is surprising, at the very least, unless that delegation of powers is understood as the outright renunciation by the President of the Republic of his constitutional prerogatives. Such an interpretation would be contrary to the spirit and the letter of the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement, as well as of the Ivorian Constitution, which remains the framework for interpreting the Agreement. In any case, article 53, which deals with the delegation of powers, is absolutely unambiguous.

Second, paragraph 8 of the report states,

“However, President Gbagbo has repeatedly stated his intention to submit the proposed constitutional amendment to a national referendum. This position has been challenged by the opposition parties, which have called upon the President instead to use his discretionary powers under the Constitution to amend article 35.”

By asking the President of the Republic to “use his discretionary powers under the Constitution to

amend article 35”, the political opposition and the former rebels of the armed Forces nouvelles are moving away from the relevant provisions of the Constitution — provisions that are recognized by the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement. In fact, article 126 of the Constitution clearly sets out the procedure for making such an amendment. It states that

“Any draft or proposed amendment relating to the election of the President of the Republic, the exercise of the presidential mandate, the vacancy of the Office of the President of the Republic or the procedure for revising the current Constitution must be subjected to a referendum.”

I should also like to point out that the President of the Republic has no choice but to respect the Constitution to which he has sworn allegiance. Furthermore, the Secretary-General has on several occasions recognized the validity of the referendum approach, stating in two reports on Côte d’Ivoire that only the amendment of article 35 is required to be submitted to a referendum under the terms of the Constitution. Thus, the “intention” of the President of the Republic to consult the general public is a constitutional obligation, not a choice or politically convenient arrangement.

Third, paragraph 9 states that

“The Monitoring Committee, established under the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement, and the tripartite Monitoring Group have reviewed the legislation on the Independent Electoral Commission and the nationality laws ... [and it is their view that] both pieces of legislation do not conform to the Agreement in all aspects.”

The Linas-Marcoussis Agreement recognizes the institutions of the Republic and the Constitution, with which it is entirely consistent. The Constitution gives members of the National Assembly the right to amend texts submitted to them. Furthermore, also under the terms of the Constitution, they cannot be given any mandatory instructions. Having therefore amended article 35 in good faith, they also, in good faith, adopted those amendments said by some not to be in conformity with the spirit and the letter of the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement.

Fourth, paragraph 13 states that

“Furthermore, the issue of ensuring maintenance of law and order and public security in the Forces

nouvelles-controlled areas during the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process has yet to be resolved.”

Given that the regrouping — the initial phase of disarmament — should allow for the reorganization of the public administration and the redeployment of the national security and defence forces, responsibility for order and security in areas previously controlled by the Forces nouvelles should fall under the competent administrative national authorities, unless anything to the contrary is contained in another agreement.

Fifth, paragraph 17 states that

“in addition to the legislative reforms envisaged in the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement that still need to be adopted, work on a significant number of technical tasks, such as updating the electoral lists, remain at the initial planning phase”.

It is paradoxical that the report states in this paragraph that the legislative reforms envisaged in the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement have not been adopted, while recognizing in paragraph 8 that

“the National Assembly adopted most of the legislative reforms planned under the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement which were subsequently promulgated”.

Sixth, paragraph 21 states that

“In the early morning of 28 February a serious violation of the ceasefire took place when more than 100 armed elements, allegedly belonging to the Mouvement Ivoirien de Libération de l’Ouest de la Côte d’Ivoire (MILOCI), attacked a Forces nouvelles checkpoint in Logoualé, north of Bangolo in the zone of confidence.”

Why say that the assailants “allegedly” belonged to MILOCI, when this is a proven fact? MILOCI is an illegally constituted movement, just like the Forces nouvelles, and therefore should be treated in the same way by the international community.

Seventh, paragraph 22 states that

“Pro-Government forces operating in the west include militias and so-called “patriotic youth organizations” (both armed and closely linked to FANCI) and the Dozos [traditional hunters], who are armed with traditional hunting weapons as well as automatic weapons.”

The link between the “patriotic youth organizations” engaged in autonomous activities in the western part of Côte d’Ivoire and FANCI should be demonstrated rather than simply stated gratuitously by the authors of the report, as this is very damaging to the National Armed Forces of Côte d’Ivoire.

Eighth, paragraph 35 states that

“The Linas-Marcoussis Agreement provided for the restructuring of the Ivorian National Police and the Gendarmerie, but the Government of National Reconciliation has yet to adopt a plan for this purpose.”

Reform of the security and defence sectors is a segment of the last phase of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process, and it cannot be planned without the participation of the former rebels, once they have been disarmed. However, such disarmament, which, according to the provisions of the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement, should have begun when the Government of National Reconciliation was set up, has not yet begun.

Those are my delegation’s observations preliminary to, as I said earlier, a more comprehensive and exhaustive report on my Government’s views.

I cannot conclude without touching on the modalities for the renewal of the mandate of the United Nations Operation in Côte d’Ivoire. My Government will announce its decision in that respect following the important meeting, set for 3 April in Pretoria, among the various protagonists and the South African mediator, President Thabo Mbeki. It will take account of the outcome of that important meeting and hopes that the international community will do the same.

The President: I give the floor to Mr. Alan Doss to respond to comments, if he so wishes.

Mr. Doss: I do not think that I have many comments to make. I think that the comments of the various delegations were very clear and largely go in the same sense.

As regards the remarks of the representative of Côte d’Ivoire, I have taken note of the various points he made. I think that some of them result from, perhaps, a reading of the report that would not be mine and that perhaps some areas need to be clarified — for example, as concerns Logoualé and the relationship with the National Armed Forces. In fact, in that

incident and in one or two other incidents, there have actually been serving members of the National Armed Forces among those who were detained who were involved in those incidents, so there has been some relationship with those groups that have been conducting armed activities.

The issue of the delegation of powers, I think, referred to the fact that the report referred to the decree that was signed by the President but which has not been translated into actual effect. I think that there is still some confusion between what was envisaged and what has actually happened. We are simply noting that fact; we are not commenting on it. I think the report simply notes it.

As concerns article 35, I will not go into that further. I believe that the mediation is dealing with this issue, and I am sure that it will be at the centre of the discussions in Pretoria.

As regards the legislation, I think that both the mediation and the Linas-Marcoussis group, the Monitoring Committee, felt that, in some respects, the legislation adopted and promulgated was not in conformity with the spirit and letter of the Agreement. Specific references were made and conveyed to the President of the Republic, the Speaker of the National Assembly and the Prime Minister. Our point was only to indicate that there was a difference between what was intended, as we understood it, and what was actually enacted. We, of course, have left it to the Ivorian authorities to decide whether they wish to take that any further. We have simply presented views based on our reading of the legislation.

I think that those are the specific points that I would like to make at this stage. As I said earlier, most of the remarks made were very supportive, and we would like to thank the members of the Council for that support.

The President: I thank Mr. Doss for the clarifications he has provided.

I give the floor to Mr. Aziz Pahad to respond to comments.

Mr. Pahad (South Africa): I, too, want to express our gratitude for the contributions made by many of the members of the Security Council. Clearly there is some concern about aspects of the security situation and the non-movement in the political process. Cognizant of that, we believe that, in the context of what has

happened in the last few months, there has been good progress in certain area of which we must not lose sight.

We believe that the leaders generally have at least committed themselves to sharing a common interest — to ensuring that each of them has the possibility of contributing to the achievement of the common and shared goal of returning Côte d'Ivoire to normality. We think that all of them — whether at Linas-Marcoussis, at Accra, or subsequently through the mediation — in all the consultations have agreed on the most essential elements of the comprehensive settlement that we are all seeking. They have all repudiated war and violent conflict as options for solving the Ivorian crisis. All have agreed that the task of ending this crisis is extremely urgent given its negative impact on the Ivorian population. All of them accept the fact that the solution to the Ivorian crisis is in the immediate interest of the West African region as a whole.

There is no debate about the unity and territorial integrity of Côte d'Ivoire. There is no debate about respecting the existing agreed framework for the solution to the Ivorian crisis, as provided for in the Linas-Marcoussis and the Accra II and III Agreements. There might be interpretations of its elements, but there is no general debate about working within that framework.

There is also general agreement, we believe, that we must resolve the nationality question, which lies at the heart of the Ivorian crisis. All elements of that question must be addressed, including the citizenship rights of many ordinary people and the issue of eligibility for the post of President of the Republic. The question is not whether that is accepted; the question is, what is the process to be followed to ensure that article 35 comes into force?

I believe it has also been agreed in principle — despite the existing difficulties — that the approved 2005 presidential elections must take place as scheduled, with all the people of a united Côte d'Ivoire participating and all those wishing to run for office being allowed to run. And, finally, there has been an agreement to implement in December 2005 the road map presented by the mediation and supported by the rest of the international community.

We have agreed on all those fundamental issues. The question is, notwithstanding the problems, will we now be able to ensure that those previous agreements

in principle are implemented much faster? There has been movement forward, despite some of the outstanding problems that have been referred to, and on that basis we believe it is the responsibility of the Ivorian leaders to take their leadership seriously, to use the opportunity that still exists to really engage in dialogue with one another, to talk among themselves, within the framework of the mediation and — in the interests of the Ivorian people, West Africa and Africa as a whole — to take this opportunity to move forward decisively and break any logjams that have prevented sufficient progress on the three major issues that have been identified: article 35, the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process and the elections.

Despite the difficulties, we are confident that there is a commitment to move forward if we can just find the right framework within which movement can take place. We look forward to the 3 April meeting, at which, we hope that for the first time the Ivorian leadership — sitting together, not having separate meetings — can assess what they have all agreed to and then agree together to make a decisive leap forward in order to ensure that we create the conditions for a Côte d'Ivoire that is at peace with itself, that is

prosperous and that becomes the engine of growth for the whole region. We are totally convinced that the Ivorian people expect that. It is in the interests of the Ivorians generally that the leadership take up the challenge that the Ivorians expect them to take up and move decisively so that we can achieve a breakthrough in the coming period.

As we have indicated in our report, we want to interact much more closely with the AU. We send regular reports to the Chairman of the AU on progress made. We would like to report back to the Security Council after reporting to the AU Chairman on the outcomes of the meeting. Let us try together to determine what we want to get moving after 3 April so that the next time we meet, we will be able to say that, despite the problems, we have made a decisive impact in trying to find solutions to what has been bedevilling the West African region for so long.

The President: I thank Mr. Pahad for the clarifications he has provided.

There are no further speakers inscribed on my list. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.