



Security Council

Fifty-first Year

3694th Meeting

Friday, 30 August 1996, 12 noon

New York

Provisional

<i>President:</i>	Mr. Eitel	(Germany)
<i>Members:</i>	Botswana	Mr. Nkgowe
	Chile	Mr. Searle
	China	Mr. Qin Huasun
	Egypt	Mr. Abdel Aziz
	France	Mr. Ladsous
	Guinea-Bissau	Mr. Lopes Cabral
	Honduras	Mr. Martínez Blanco
	Indonesia	Mr. Wisnumurti
	Italy	Mr. Fulci
	Poland	Mr. Matuszewski
	Republic of Korea	Mr. Park
	Russian Federation	Mr. Fedotov
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Gomersall
	United States of America	Mr. Inderfurth

Agenda

The situation in Liberia

Eighteenth progress report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia
(S/1996/684)

The meeting was called to order at 12 noon.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Liberia

Eighteenth progress report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (S/1996/684)

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter from the representatives of Liberia and Nigeria, in which they request 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 those representatives 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. Bull (Liberia) took a seat at the Council table; Mr. Ayewah (Nigeria) took the seat reserved for him at the side of the Council Chamber.

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

Members of the Council have before them the eighteenth progress report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia, document S/1996/684.

Members of the Council also have before them document S/1996/701, which contains the text of a draft resolution prepared in the course of the Council's prior consultations.

I should like to draw the attention of the members of the Council to document S/1996/679, which contains the text of a letter dated 21 August 1996 from the Chargé d'affaires *ad interim* of the Permanent Mission of Nigeria to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council, transmitting, on behalf of the Head of State of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and Chairman of

the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the final communiqué of the Heads of State and Government of the Economic Community of West African States Committee of Nine on Liberia, issued at its fourth meeting, held at Abuja on 17 August 1996.

The first speaker on my list is the representative of Liberia, on whom I now call.

Mr. Bull (Liberia): As you end your presidency of the Council for this month, Sir, I should like, on behalf of the delegation of Liberia, to warmly congratulate you on having so skilfully carried out the responsibilities entrusted to you. We particularly applaud your recent initiative in convening a formal meeting to discuss the issue of demining in the context of United Nations peace-keeping. This matter is of vital importance to the reconstruction efforts of countries which have been ravaged by war, such as Liberia.

My delegation also extends its appreciation to your distinguished predecessor, the Ambassador of France, for the able manner in which he guided the Council's work last month.

The Council will shortly take action on the Secretary-General's recommendations outlined in his eighteenth progress report on the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia, contained in document S/1996/684 of 22 August 1996. Permit me to thank the Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, for the report and for his continued commitment to the quest for lasting peace in Liberia.

The outbreak of hostilities in Liberia last April was a serious setback to the peace process. Today, the renewed hope in the continuing progress and viability of the Abuja Accord is due to the commendable efforts of the leaders of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and other national, regional and international actors who worked tirelessly over the past four months to prevent the country's slide into a state of anarchy.

Since the signing of the revised Abuja Agreement, which incorporates far-reaching decisions, including a new timetable for encampment, disarmament and reintegration of combatants and the holding of democratic elections by 30 May 1997, the leaders of the warring factions have pledged anew their commitment to the implementation of the revised Agreement.

To be sure, the repeated failure of the warring factions to honour more than 12 previous agreements has raised reasonable doubts about their sincerity and commitment to these new undertakings. Nevertheless, the delegation of Liberia believes that several recent developments have increased the prospects for a peaceful transition in Liberia. First, the Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) adopted a resolution during their annual meeting, held in Yaounde, on 8-10 July 1996, which threatened the faction leaders with punitive measures, including the imposition of sanctions against them and the possibility of establishing a war crimes tribunal for Liberia. This OAU resolve was reinforced at the subregional level by the Heads of State and Government of the Economic Community of West African States during their Summits held in Abuja on 26-27 July 1996 and 17 August 1996.

Secondly, the resumption of armed hostilities in April and the inability of any warring faction to overwhelm another, even with the non-intervention of the ECOWAS Cease-fire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG), has clearly demonstrated that there cannot be any victor in the war.

Thirdly, the ECOWAS member States have taken concerted action on several important issues: the Abuja Agreement has been extended until 15 June 1997 and a new timetable formulated for its implementation; other member States in the subregion — Mali, Gambia, Burkina Faso and Côte d'Ivoire — have decided to deploy troops or personnel to Liberia. Moreover, there is a new resolve by the ECOWAS countries, under the leadership of its current Chairman, President Sani Abacha of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, to remain fully engaged in the resolution of the Liberian conflict.

Fourthly, the re-emergence of civil society in the peace process reflects the determination of the civilian majority to actively participate in decisions affecting them. It was civilian groups which advocated a change in the chairmanship of the Council of State, leading to the selection of Mrs. Ruth Perry, former Senator of Grand Cape Mount county and the first female to assume the highest post in government since the country's independence 149 years ago. She is expected to be formally inaugurated in Monrovia on Tuesday, 3 September 1996.

These developments make us confident that if internal and external pressures are maintained on the present leadership, the faction leaders will realize that it is in their best interest to implement, without further delay, the provisions of the Abuja Agreement. Indeed, since the

signing of the Agreement on 17 August 1996, the faction leaders have publicly pledged their total commitment to peace and are taking measures, including the dismantling of checkpoints and the partial disarming of some of their forces, pursuant to the terms of the Agreement. While these are encouraging developments, nothing short of their full compliance with the terms of the Agreement will lead to durable peace.

It is well known that since the commencement of the civil crisis, the member States of ECOWAS have continued to make substantial sacrifices in pursuit of peace in Liberia. While the ECOWAS peace initiative has experienced some financial and administrative problems, it nevertheless represents a pioneering effort to bring to fruition Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations. This praiseworthy effort is deeply appreciated by the Liberian people and deserves greater support from the United Nations.

In this connection, the Liberian delegation would like to re-emphasize the urgent need for the United Nations to ensure that there is a mechanism whereby subregional and regional peace-keeping operations undertaken with the approval of the Security Council receive the requisite support.

In order to build on the recent positive developments in the peace process, ECOMOG must be fully supported. In keeping with recent decisions, ECOMOG has to increase its troop strength to 18,000, and an estimated \$132 million is required to assist ECOMOG to implement its mandate. The lack of support from the international community following the signing of the Abuja Agreement in August 1995 prevented ECOMOG from deploying throughout the country as called for by the timetable formulated by the parties. The tragic developments which ensued in Liberia as a result of this deficiency are well known to the international community. It is therefore the prayerful hope of the Liberian people that these negative developments will not be allowed to reoccur because of lack of support for ECOWAS.

It is clear that there are urgent needs which must be quickly satisfied in order to advance the peace process in Liberia. Foremost among these is the need for assistance to ECOMOG to facilitate its deployment throughout the country, leading to the encampment, disarmament and demobilization of combatants and their reintegration into civil society. Concomitantly, Liberian refugees would be repatriated and resettled and pilot programmes undertaken to rehabilitate combatants. The army and paramilitary

organizations would be reorganized and preparations for elections undertaken by a reconstituted and independent Elections Commission.

As regards elections in Liberia, it is imperative that they be preceded by the complete disarmament of combatants. It is important to stress the need for the electoral process to be internationally supervised and declared to be free and fair. Due to the adverse effects which the civil war has had on all Liberians, the people will not accept any leadership which attains political power by fraudulent means. This is why the international community must help support the disarmament and electoral processes as means of ensuring permanent peace in Liberia.

The total disarmament of combatants will prevent intimidation of the electorate, build confidence and facilitate national reconciliation and reconstruction of the country. It is most unfortunate that those who have pledged to honor the terms of the Abuja Agreement which, *inter alia*, requires the disarmament of combatants, would oppose rather than support the process in its entirety, since it is widely seen as a precondition for durable peace. Would opposition to total disarmament not imply some hidden agenda? Would total disarmament not ensure that those bearing arms after the completion of the process were doing so illegally, thereby ensuring accountability and restoration of civil society and the rule of law?

It is important to emphasize that these laudable objectives cannot be achieved without the support of the international community. On behalf of the Liberian Government and people, I appeal to all Member States to contribute generously to the Trust Fund for Liberia. We thank all the countries which have made contributions to this important effort. The Liberian people, who have been deprived of their rights for so long, are depending on the Security Council to take the lead in supporting the efforts of ECOWAS to achieve peaceful change in Liberia.

As the security situation continues to improve in the country, the Liberian delegation appeals to governmental and non-governmental organizations to resume fully their activities in Liberia, activities which are so vital to the humanitarian needs of the people and the revival of development activities in the country.

We endorse the draft resolution on Liberia now before the Security Council and join in its appeal to Member States to comply fully with the arms embargo on Liberia.

The United Nations has been involved in the peace process since the commencement of the civil crisis in Liberia. In spite of the setbacks, we must not allow ourselves to be discouraged. Liberians have the faith and the determination, as recent developments confirm, that the path ahead will ultimately lead to the restoration of peace and democracy in Liberia.

The President: I thank the representative of Liberia for his kind words addressed to my predecessor and to me. I take it he was not aware of the new practice of the Council to encourage speakers to forgo the expression of compliments to the President and his predecessor.

The next speaker is the representative of Nigeria. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Ayewah (Nigeria): Almost one year ago, on 15 September 1995 to be precise, we were holding a similar meeting in this Chamber, welcoming the Abuja Agreement of 15 August 1995 on Liberia. The Council will recall that on that occasion we were generally confident and optimistic that at last Liberia was on the road to peace and security, after the nightmare of the civil war of the previous six years.

The leaders of the subregion had made an appeal to the international community to assist the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in the implementation of the Accord. They also sent a message to the factional leaders about their frustration at their lack of cooperation in implementing the Accord and the need for them to deliver on their commitments in the interest of peace. Members of the international community collectively reaffirmed on that occasion their commitment to the cause of peace in Liberia and promised not to abandon its people. A pledging conference on Liberia and the requirements of ECOMOG was subsequently held here at United Nations Headquarters.

Unfortunately, we are meeting here today in the Security Council not to welcome the installation of a new Government in Liberia, as called for in the implementation plan, but to support the extension of the implementation schedule of the Abuja Accord, by a period of almost another year.

There is enough blame to go around for the setback that we have witnessed, but the major responsibility lies with those who signed an Agreement to end the war in their country but later reneged. During the open debate on

Liberia last May, Council members and other United Nations Member States carried out a critical assessment of the state of play in Liberia and agreed to delay further action until after the meeting of ECOWAS leaders in August of this year.

Fortunately, we have achieved some positive results, which is the basis of our deliberations today. After intensive consultations with all parties concerned and painstaking preparations, the ECOWAS Committee of Nine, at its Summit Meeting in Abuja on 17 August 1996, came up with a new implementation schedule for the Abuja Agreement. While we welcome what has been achieved in Abuja, for which we commend the leadership of ECOWAS, my delegation is all too aware that only with the commitment to peace and national reconciliation of the Liberian parties, particularly the factional leaders, and with the continued support of the international community will we be able to ensure that this will be the last extension of the implementation schedule.

None the less, we believe that on the basis of past experience, the new plan, with its provision for the periodic review of progress in the implementation of the Agreement and the formulation of a code of conduct for members of the Council of State and transitional government, as well as the decision to impose sanctions against any party not in compliance with these measures, may well help to usher in peace and stability in Liberia. We, however, need to be vigilant in ensuring strict adherence by the parties to the implementation plan and schedule, and to this end, a well-equipped and highly motivated ECOMOG force is essential — even more so since in the ninth preambular paragraph of the draft resolution it is suggested that a continued presence of the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL) is predicated on the presence of ECOMOG and its commitment to ensure the safety of UNOMIL. We would in turn suggest that the Council ensure that ECOMOG is enabled to do so through assistance to it. In this regard, the recent steps taken by ECOMOG to enhance its capability need to be complemented by international assistance in the form of logistical and financial resources. Such assistance should be unfettered and given to ECOMOG directly so as not to undermine its cohesiveness as a unified peace-keeping force. We are happy to note the indications of positive response from various quarters. We hope that the pledges of support will soon materialize. Time is of the essence. As we have come to realize at great cost in human lives and material resources, any long lull between a cease-fire and demobilization of combatants risks jeopardizing the tentative gains that have been made on the path to peace.

At the same time, UNOMIL's presence needs to be beefed up significantly and in timely fashion to complement ECOMOG's deployment. We note the intention of the Secretary-General in this regard and urge him to consider further increases in line with his own assessment of the situation and on the basis of the mandate which he already possesses.

For so long we have addressed the Liberian parties and factional leaders. We have called upon them and appealed to them to try to overcome their political differences in the interest of peace and reconciliation in their country. They have so far failed to heed those calls and appeals. This is unfortunate. One positive development, however, out of the recent unfortunate fighting in Monrovia, is the increasing assertiveness and visibility of the civilian population concerning the direction of their country. We welcome this trend, and believe it can only have a salutary and positive impact on the peace process. We hope the Liberian parties and leaders will now agree to conduct themselves in the interest of peace, national reconciliation and reconstruction. The new implementation plan offers them that opportunity.

In concluding, we wish Ms. Perry well as she assumes next Tuesday the mantle of leadership of the Liberian Council of State.

With regard to the draft resolution, we agree with its general thrust and import. It is a continued commitment by the international community to the cause of peace in Liberia. Expressions of support are, however, not enough, and in this context, we note the request to the Secretary-General in operative paragraph 5 of the draft resolution to come up with concrete proposals to assist the process. We hope those proposals will also take into account the requirements of ECOMOG in its leading role in finding a solution to the Liberian crisis.

The President: It is my understanding that the Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. Unless I hear any objection, I shall put the draft resolution to the vote.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

I shall first call on those members of the Council who wish to make statements before the voting.

Mr. Fulci (Italy): I wish to thank the United States delegation for preparing this draft resolution, on which it was possible, with few amendments, for the members of the Security Council to reach a full consensus, thereby making it possible to transform it into a presidential draft.

Italy welcomes the results of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Summit of 17 August and the appointment of Ms. Perry as Chairperson of the Council of State of Liberia. I would be grateful to our colleague Ambassador William Bull if he would kindly convey to the new Chairperson all Italy's best wishes for a successful chairmanship with a view to the reconciliation and reconstruction of her country.

The results of the meeting of 17 August prove once again, in our opinion, the ability of the African regional organizations to play a major constructive role in crisis management. Italy fully supports the efforts of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in the framework of the ongoing attention my country dedicates to regional organizations, particularly in the African context. In this regard, I wish to express my particular appreciation for the role played by ECOWAS, through the good offices provided by our colleague and good friend Ambassador Gambari of Nigeria, to rescue some Italian families trapped in a difficult situation and bring them to the safety of the American compound in Monrovia.

We would be remiss, however, to think that the Abuja Agreement will put an end to our apprehension over Liberia. Too many times, alas, we have applauded new agreements there, only to see them violated a few days or a few weeks later. We sincerely hope that this will not happen again this time, and that the faction leaders of Liberia will finally show the political will to fully respect and implement the terms of the Agreement they have just signed. Should they not do so, the international community, as the Secretary-General rightly pointed out, will be left with no alternative but to withdraw altogether from Liberia.

The Somalia precedent should make the faction leaders aware of their responsibilities and of what to expect should they fail to honour the agreements just reached. Unfortunately, the theft of almost 900 motor vehicles belonging to the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) and to United Nations agencies is hardly a positive sign in terms of the attitude of some of the warlords towards the international community. This is why we insisted that terms be indicated for the Secretary-General to report to the

Council on the effective return of the stolen property, property which belongs to the international community. Ambassador Jonah, during his briefing to the Council, mentioned that the warlords were taken aback by world reaction to their behaviour. Thus, they must become even more aware that the international community will hold them personally responsible for breaches of human rights and humanitarian law in the country.

Let me once again voice our horror at one of the most despicable actions of the Liberian warlords: their practice of recruiting, training, and deploying children for combat. Training and often drugging children, many of them aged seven to fourteen, who often end up killing relatives and terrorizing their neighbourhoods, is an unconscionable crime. Words alone do not suffice to condemn this heinous behaviour. This behaviour must be stopped immediately, by every means the international community has available, including that of writing some provision, the framework of what will soon become the international criminal court, in order to bring to justice the perpetrators of such intolerable acts.

Finally, we fully support the Secretary-General's recommendation to extend the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL) mandate to 30 November 1996. For all these reasons, and in complete agreement with the rest of its content, Italy will vote in favour of the draft resolution.

Mr. Elaraby (Egypt) (*interpretation from Arabic*): The result of the latest Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Summit, held on 17 August, which concluded with the signing by faction leaders of the revised timetable to implement the Abuja Agreement on national reconciliation in Liberia, has revived hopes once again that the faction leaders will this time fulfil their commitments and rise above personal differences and narrow ambitions, and that national interests and the interests of the people of Liberia will prevail over all other considerations.

Despite some positive indicators, most importantly respect for the cease-fire and the redeployment of the ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) in Monrovia, the record of the peace process in Liberia is still replete with well-known setbacks, most seriously the interfactional combat last April. These regrettable incidents, which have frustrated the international community, prevent us from having a great deal of optimism or hope today, and from counting on the seriousness or good intentions of the faction leaders. We

were pleased that some days ago Mr. James Jonah, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, firmed that the ECOWAS countries have taken a number of measures to ensure the good conduct of the faction leaders, including the creation of a list of sanctions that may be imposed on their factions and their families in the event they renege on their commitment to elaborate a code of conduct to govern relations between factions. We are also pleased at the election of Ms. Ruth Perry to preside over the Council of State, which will ensure its autonomy and enhance its authority.

The measures taken by the ECOWAS countries, which are in harmony with similar measures taken by the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the clear position the OAU took on this subject, emphasize the extreme importance of the African regional arrangements aimed at restoring peace and stability in Liberia.

During the last six years ECOWAS countries have made efforts that deserve encouragement and support. The latest resolution to increase the strength and effectiveness of ECOMOG, despite the difficult circumstances in which these countries find themselves, furnishes ample evidence of their determination to proceed in their endeavour to establish peace in Liberia.

In this context, we must thank the countries that provided technical and financial support to ECOMOG and the United Nations Trust Fund for Liberia. We must also express the hope that ECOMOG and the Fund will receive further financial contributions to help them in future tasks.

The Egyptian delegation supports the draft resolution before the Council and will vote in favour of it. We are convinced that the Liberian people need another chance. As has been rightly said by many, this may be its last chance. We hope that future developments will reinforce the hope that elections will take place on the 30 May 1997, as decided, and that the Liberian leaders will cooperate in preparing appropriately for the elections, including by establishing an independent national committee similar to the one successfully established in Sierra Leone.

In conclusion, I would like to note that Liberia has a long way to go, even after elections. Daunting tasks lie ahead, the most important of which are the reintegration of demobilized soldiers into civilian life and the reconstruction of the country's structure and infrastructure, which have been devastated by the war. However the international community, which stood by Liberia's side in its plight and

during the war, will surely lend support in time of peace until Liberia's regional and international status is restored.

Mr. Nkgowe (Botswana): The recent Summit meeting of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) was an important milestone in the search for peace in Liberia. The outcome of the meeting reflects the unity of purpose of the States of the subregion and their resolve to help Liberians find a permanent political solution to the crisis which has bedevilled their country for far too long. Botswana commends ECOWAS member States for the monumental work they have done to give Liberia yet another chance to settle its political problems, even after several such chances were in the past squandered by the faction leaders.

We particularly welcome the decision of the Heads of State of ECOWAS to impose measures on those leaders who obstruct the peace process. The active participation and contribution of the organizations of civil society at the Abuja Summit is an important development in articulating the voices of the disenfranchised people of Liberia. They represent the hopes and aspirations of the silent majority that we have been calling on the international community not to abandon, and it is time the faction leaders paid close attention to what they have to say.

The commitment and determination of the member States of ECOWAS to resolve the crisis in Liberia is beyond reproach. The revised schedule for the implementation of the Abuja peace Agreement is a demonstration of the importance ECOWAS attaches to the peace process in Liberia. Significant adjustments have been made to the mandate of the Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) to enable the subregional peace-keeping force to meet any challenges and obstacles it may encounter in the implementation of the revised schedule. Moreover, several States of the subregion have stated their readiness to contribute additional troops to strengthen the operational capability of ECOMOG. ECOWAS has thus responded constructively and creatively to the suggestions made by some members of the international community to stay the course. It is only fair that the international community should respond appropriately to the needs of ECOMOG to enable it to deploy its troops in accordance with the revised schedule.

The humanitarian situation in Liberia requires the continued attention of the international community. Humanitarian organizations have been at the forefront of

the efforts to deliver much-needed assistance to the people of Liberia, sometimes at great risk to the personal safety of their personnel. The Council is therefore right to make a clear and unequivocal demand that the faction leaders strictly respect the status of personnel of the humanitarian organizations. The wanton looting of equipment belonging to United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations dealt a severe blow to the work of the humanitarian community. This is an intolerable pattern of behaviour which the Security Council cannot condone. It must stop. It is only right that the Council insist on the return of all stolen property. It is important for the faction leaders to realize that they cannot escape responsibility for the actions of the combatants they unleashed on the citizens of Liberia, on their property and on equipment belonging to the international community. We therefore look forward to the report of the Secretary-General on this matter.

Botswana fully supports the extension of the mandate of the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL) for a further period of three months. The States of the subregion deserve the strong support of the United Nations. It is important that the United Nations should continue to play an active role in the resolution of the political crisis in Liberia. The United Nations has an important contribution to make in the implementation of the Abuja Agreement. The cease-fire, the disengagement and the demobilization of the combatants, the return and resettlement of refugees and displaced persons and the electoral process are the major phases of the Abuja peace Agreement which need the support and close involvement of the United Nations system. The United Nations will also help bludgeon the Liberian faction leaders to implement in full and on time the commitments and obligations they undertook under the Abuja peace Agreement. The faction leaders must not be allowed to hold the whole nation hostage to their desire to rule at all costs. The Liberian faction leaders must not be allowed to frustrate the efforts of the international community to resolve the political crisis in Liberia. They must not be allowed to realize their objective of forcing the United Nations out of Liberia. It must be made clear to them that they will be held personally accountable for violations of international humanitarian law and human rights.

In conclusion, I wish to congratulate Ms. Ruth Perry on her assumption of the chairmanship of the Council of State. Ms. Perry assumes the onerous tasks of guiding government business at a crucial moment in the history of the Liberian peace process. She has the full support and best wishes of Botswana as she nurtures the very delicate process of turning despair into hope.

Mr. Qin Huasun (China) (*interpretation from Chinese*): The Chinese delegation will vote in favour of the draft resolution before us. We are in favour of the Secretary-General's recommendation to extend the mandate of the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL) by another three months, in support of the peace process in Liberia and the unremitting efforts of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to resolve the Liberian conflict.

We appreciate the contributions made at the ECOWAS Summit of 17 August to restoring the Liberian peace process. Over the years ECOWAS has made unremitting efforts to end fighting in Liberia despite its own economic difficulties. ECOWAS countries have sent peace-keeping forces to Liberia in accordance with Chapter VIII of the Charter and, braving hardships and setbacks, offered good offices and mediation to facilitate a peaceful settlement of the Liberian conflict.

China has consistently rendered firm support to regional organizations in their efforts to resolve problems in their respective regions, pursuant to the provisions of the United Nations Charter. We have noted that a new timetable and concrete measures were worked out at the recent ECOWAS Summit to ensure the implementation of the Abuja Agreement. This has demonstrated the determination, perseverance and confidence of ECOWAS. We are of the view that the international community should support the ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) in various ways for its successful fulfilment of the peace-keeping mission. We hope that ECOMOG and UNOMIL will continue to closely cooperate and coordinate with each other to ensure the effective implementation of the new timetable of the Abuja Agreement.

As is pointed out in the draft resolution before us, the final settlement of the Liberian conflict can depend only on the Liberian people themselves and on the readiness of the leaders of all Liberian parties, proceeding from the interests of their country and people, to demonstrate good faith in political reconciliation, to give up the use of force and to seek a political solution acceptable to all parties through patient and sincere negotiations and dialogue. At this critical juncture in the Liberian peace process, we sincerely hope that the parties in Liberia will seize the favourable opportunity of the extension of UNOMIL's mandate to complete the disarmament of their forces in earnest and to make good preparations for the general elections so as to ultimately

achieve national reconciliation and restore peace in the country through fair elections.

We support the international community, including the United Nations, in promoting the Liberian peace process together with ECOWAS, thus making their contributions to peace in West Africa. We have always believed that a stable and growing Africa is an important and indispensable component of a peaceful and prosperous world. We sincerely hope that Liberia, with the help of the international community, will achieve peace and stability at an early date. China will join the international community in making its own contribution to this end.

Mr. Wisnumurti (Indonesia): Like previous speakers, my delegation would like to express its appreciation to the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report on the latest developments in Liberia. We are hopeful that the outcome of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Summit, held in Abuja on 17 August 1996, will lead to a durable peace in Liberia, with the new timetable serving as a formal framework for the peace process. It is worth noting and commending the strong regional leadership role of ECOWAS and its determination to ensure that the parties respect the agreement they themselves have entered into.

We are also encouraged by the growing influence of Liberian civilian groups in the peace process, reflecting the aspirations of the Liberian people to end this ongoing tragedy. In this regard, we welcome the appointment of Ms. Ruth Perry as the new Chairperson of the restructured Council of State, which, we hope, will fully represent the will of all Liberians. We expect all faction leaders to respect the authority and impartiality of this body and its new leadership.

In view of the tendency of faction leaders to renege on their past commitments, the international community and regional actors cannot but remain extremely vigilant. Several areas remain of great concern to us, particularly the lack of security that continues to reflect a dangerous and volatile situation, the persistent violations of basic human rights, and the continuing inflow of arms. In this regard, the disarming and demobilization of Liberia's militia members is also essential in establishing a durable cease-fire and permitting international peace-keepers to operate to their full potential. The Council, furthermore, must urge all States to comply strictly with the embargo on all deliveries of weapons and military equipment to Liberia, in accordance with resolution 788 (1992).

Touching on the humanitarian situation, my delegation remains concerned that relief workers are still being seriously impeded from delivering assistance to certain regions and that the safety of relief workers is still threatened. At this stage, no comprehensive humanitarian assistance can be constructed to meet the needs of Liberia, where socio-economic activities have ground to a halt. Furthermore, over half of Liberia's population continues to dwell in neighbouring countries as refugees. Conditions have to be created to promote the return of Liberians and the reconstruction of their country. Another aspect of the conflict that has to be kept in mind is how to reintegrate a generation of young Liberians who have known nothing but war for the past six years.

Against this backdrop, we believe that the ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) and the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL) can play a considerable role in contributing to the implementation of the Abuja Agreement and enhance its chances of moving forward. In this regard, we believe that the United Nations has a role to play, and we therefore support the recommendation of the Secretary-General to increase the number of military observers and civilian personnel to assist UNOMIL in carrying out its mandate. However, since the continued presence of UNOMIL is contingent on ECOMOG's ability to ensure the safety of its personnel, it is therefore imperative for ECOMOG and UNOMIL to enhance coordination and cooperation.

In the light of the observations I have just made and of the positive role UNOMIL can play in Liberia, the Indonesian delegation will vote in favour of this draft resolution extending the mandate of UNOMIL for another three months, until 30 November 1996. We expect the parties to see this period as an opportunity for them to demonstrate, through concrete steps, the political will to resolve their differences and to start out on the path towards national reconciliation and development.

Mr. Gomersall (United Kingdom): My delegation will vote in favour of the draft resolution extending the mandate of the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL) for a further three months. The recent reports of the Secretary-General and his Special Envoy confirm that the Agreement reached by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Committee of Nine at Abuja on 17 August is a significant development that may at last offer real hope for the suffering people of Liberia. But it remains the case, as the draft resolution before us makes quite clear, that the key lies in the response, or otherwise, of the faction leaders

who have publicly committed themselves to this Agreement. They must now disengage, disarm and demonstrate their willingness to reach a peaceful, lasting and democratic solution to the conflict.

For far too long this Council has been given clear demonstrations of the disdain of the faction leaders for the help of the international community and for the interests of the people of their own country. Agreement after agreement has been torn up by the so-called warlords; cease-fires violated; innocent civilians killed; children forced into combat; and the country's infrastructure laid to waste — all to satisfy the egos and thirst for power of those leaders. Time and again this Council has heard renewed commitments to peace from such people, and it would be easy to take a cynical approach and call it a day. But it is greatly to the credit of the leaders of the ECOWAS countries that they have not given up. Indeed they have become more determined to bring peace to this part of their region, and we owe it to them to give them our support. We commend and endorse the Agreement reached in Abuja last month. It gives the faction leaders another chance, and we note that severe penalties will be imposed on any faction leader who fails to abide by his commitments.

The faction leaders must take heed of this draft resolution. They must be under no illusion. This is the last chance for Liberia to resolve its problems with United Nations assistance. It is vital that the factions cease their intimidation and attacks against United Nations, ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) and non-governmental organization personnel, end the looting and return all stolen property, including especially that of the United Nations. Without this small sign of good will, the international community cannot be expected to contribute to the rehabilitation of the country and to provide humanitarian relief.

The United Kingdom welcomes the readiness of ECOWAS to provide additional peace-keepers to the ECOMOG forces. ECOMOG in its reinforced composition is doing a difficult job well. Its presence is vital. We also warmly welcome the decision of the United States to provide additional logistical and financial support to ECOMOG. The United Kingdom is considering a further contribution to the Trust Fund for Liberia, which would be provided for assistance to ECOMOG. We also intend to help with police training once stability has been established, and we urge other States to provide additional logistical support.

The revised timetable for the implementation of the Abuja Agreement gives the faction leaders clear signposts towards a peaceful settlement of the conflict leading to elections next year. Early disarmament is a vital part of the plan. The faction leaders themselves have accepted the timetable. The three-month extension of UNOMIL's mandate will test the will of the faction leaders to take these necessary steps. We hope, and urge, that they finally bow to the will of their own people, of their neighbours and of the international community to see this terrible civil war come to an end.

Mr. Park (Republic of Korea): The situation in Liberia has taken a significant turn for the better over the past several weeks. The cease-fire in Monrovia has held since its re-establishment on 26 May 1996. The stalled peace process has been brought back on track, thanks largely to the patient and concerted efforts of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). We welcome the ECOWAS decision on 17 August 1996 to extend the Abuja Agreement of 19 August 1995 until 15 June 1997, as well as its adoption of a new timetable for the implementation of the Agreement.

The firm determination of ECOWAS member States not to tolerate any further obstruction of the peace process is backed by a comprehensive set of measures to ensure compliance by the Liberian factions with the peace plan. Of these measures, we note in particular the exclusion from future elections of those obstructing the peace process and the invocation of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) 1996 Summit resolution calling for the establishment of a war crimes tribunal to try all human rights offenses against Liberians. These are clear reminders to the Liberian faction leaders of the alternatives which await them in the event they fail to comply with the peace plan.

As the Secretary-General notes in paragraph 53 of his report, the ECOWAS decisions are intended to give the Liberian faction leaders one last chance to restore a democratically elected government. We have not forgotten the atrocities committed by the feuding armed factions in the streets of Monrovia last April. However, we believe that the Liberian faction leaders are fully aware of what they need to do to redeem themselves before the international community for all their past misdeeds. While we welcome the commitment of the Liberian faction leaders to the ECOWAS decisions, we will be watching closely how faithfully they abide by their commitments.

The final outcome of the peace process will hinge on whether free and fair elections are held on 30 May 1997. While ECOWAS Foreign Ministers have identified the requisite conditions to ensure free and fair elections, we attach great importance to the full independence of the electoral Commission and to disarmament substantial enough so that the free participation of the Liberian people in the democratic process will not be constrained. In this connection, the growing influence of Liberia's civil society, manifested in the course of ECOWAS decisions and the designation of the new Chairperson of the Council of State, Ms. Ruth Perry, are encouraging signs for peace and democracy in Liberia. We look forward to a greater involvement of civil society in the process of free and fair elections. We also emphasize that if disarmament is to have true significance, it should be backed by strict enforcement of the arms embargo imposed on Liberia by resolution 788 (1992).

Given the vital importance of the elections for the future of Liberia, the imperative of ensuring the impartiality and independence of the electoral Commission cannot be overemphasized. By ensuring the independence and impartiality of the electoral Commission, the international community can avoid a situation in which the conscience of humanity may be disturbed by the unfortunate election of any of those who commits the heinous crime of violating the basic rules of international humanitarian law. We share the view that the United Nations should play a central role in the organization and conduct of the elections. In this regard, we believe that the Council should give serious consideration to the request by ECOWAS and the Liberian parties for assistance. We encourage the Secretariat to study the optimal ways and means by which the role of the United Nations can be enhanced to support the efforts of ECOWAS and to create conditions conducive to peace, stability and national reconciliation in Liberia.

In view of the commitment of ECOWAS to revive the peace process and remain engaged in Liberia through the installation of a new Government on 15 June 1997, my delegation fully supports the extension of the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL) mandate for a period of three months, as recommended by the Secretary-General. We also support the deployment of additional military observers within the Mission's currently authorized strength, as developments warrant.

With these remarks, my delegation will vote in favour of the draft resolution before the Council. In concluding, I wish to express my Government's appreciation to those African States contributing troops to the ECOWAS

Monitoring Group (ECOMOG), despite serious financial constraints. We are also grateful to the United States Government for the generous financial support it has committed to ECOMOG. We remain confident that the active engagement of ECOWAS in Liberia can serve as a model of successful cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations in addressing the new kinds of challenges to international peace and security we now face in the post-cold-war world.

Mr. Martínez Blanco (Honduras)(*interpretation from Spanish*): On several occasions Honduras has expressed concern at the hostilities and deterioration in security conditions in Liberia, since they represent a threat to the peace process, tend to deepen the political crisis and negatively affect the observance of human rights and humanitarian assistance. At the same time, Honduras has regretted the Liberian parties' lack of political will to comply with the Abuja Agreement and to make a serious commitment to maintain the cease-fire.

For these reasons, my delegation welcomed the fact that the faction leaders and Liberian civilian groups have expressed agreement with the decisions adopted by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Foreign Ministers at the Summit meeting held on 17 August last, with respect to a revised five-stage implementation timetable for the Abuja Agreement, the recommendation to establish a code of conduct for the members of the Council of State and the transitional government and the conditions to be met for holding free and fair elections.

There is no need to emphasize the importance of the faction leaders' acceptance of the ECOWAS decisions for the effective implementation of the peace process in Liberia. We hope that this time the Liberian parties will effectively comply with their agreements and commitments to enable the holding of free and fair elections in May 1997, as anticipated.

As emphasized in the draft resolution the Council is about to adopt, the continued support of the international community for the Liberian peace process, including the participation of the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL), depends on the Liberian factions' showing the will to resolve differences peacefully and achieve national reconciliation, pursuant to the commitments agreed to at Abuja.

My delegation also believes that a positive sign for the Liberian peace process is that the security situation is

improving in various parts of the country and that the cease-fire in Monrovia is holding. We nevertheless regret the attacks and acts of intimidation directed against the personnel of ECOMOG, UNOMIL and the international organizations and bodies that provide humanitarian assistance, as well as the looting of their equipment. It is deplorable that the factions do not respect the personnel status of these missions and that all the property stolen has not yet been returned.

My delegation also recognizes the importance of increasing the number of the UNOMIL military observers so that the Mission will be better able to verify disarmament when it takes place and will furthermore be able to undertake wider-ranging patrols, as well as that of the measures recently adopted by ECOMOG to strengthen its presence in Liberia and to guarantee its viability as a real peace-keeping force, even though it still does not have sufficient human and financial resources to carry out its tasks. We also recognize the ECOWAS efforts to restore peace and to establish a democratically elected government in Liberia.

For these reasons, and in view of the importance of continuing the presence of UNOMIL in Liberia, my delegation agrees with the extension of its mandate for a three-month period and will vote in favour of the draft resolution before the Council.

Mr. Fedotov (Russian Federation) (*interpretation from Russian*): The Russian delegation notes with satisfaction the current positive developments in the situation in Liberia, which once again are reviving the once-dashed hopes of the world community that the many years of devastating conflict in that country might soon be brought to an end.

A key role in these developments has been played by the Summit of the member States of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in Abuja, which has made possible the renewal of the peace process, the culmination of which must be the holding of free and fair elections by the end of May 1997.

We recognize the complexity of the implementation of these tasks, especially since in the past Liberian parties have repeatedly violated the agreements they themselves had signed. We hope that this time that will not happen, since the member States of ECOWAS, judging by the decisions they took in Abuja, are firmly determined to achieve strict implementation of the settlement plan.

We would also like especially to highlight those measures designed to enhance the vitality of the ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) as a genuine peace-keeping force: the establishment of a monitoring mechanism for the implementation of the agreement; the threat of harsh sanctions against the leaders of any faction that might presume to violate the rules of the game established in Abuja; the decision not to recognize any Government that might attempt to come to power by the use of force; and the desire to ensure full compliance with the arms embargo on Liberia.

It is exceedingly important that the member States of ECOWAS show the necessary determination and consistency in implementing this policy, clearly coordinating their activities. It is also necessary to have proper cooperation between ECOMOG and the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL) in carrying out their respective mandates; there lies the key to the success of the peace process.

Noting the substantial objective difficulties to the implementation of the Abuja Agreement, we believe it important that the efforts of the regional peace-keepers be supported by the necessary additional resources. At the same time, we are firmly convinced that responsibility for the establishment of peace in Liberia lies ultimately with Liberians themselves and with their leaders. We expect that they will make use of this last chance offered them for the speedy realization of the peace plan in all its aspects; otherwise, as is emphasized in the report (S/1996/684) of the Secretary-General, the international community will have no option but to leave Liberia.

The Russian delegation is prepared to support the draft resolution before the Council, giving a green light to the extension the mandate of the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia until 30 November 1996, and we note with satisfaction that this draft resolution clearly directs the Liberian parties to comply scrupulously with the commitments they have entered into and provides strong political impetus in support of the efforts to make progress in the peace process and in national reconciliation in Liberia.

Mr. Lopes Cabral (Guinea-Bissau) (*interpretation from French*): After a period of serious troubles resulting from the resumed fighting among the warring parties in Liberia, we can see — or at least we hope we can see — a period of relative, but important, peace and stability that has brought a partial return of normalcy to Monrovia. We welcome this turn of events. It represents the fruits of the

tireless efforts of the Economic Community of West Africa (ECOWAS), which has deployed the ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) in the city of Monrovia and surrounding areas, where they have carried out a seal and search operation to recover the weapons abandoned by the factions during their retreat.

Guinea-Bissau welcomes the decision extending the Abuja Agreement until 15 June 1997 and establishing a specific plan for its implementation, providing the means to verify the faction leaders' compliance with the Agreement, and stipulating measures that could be taken against factions for non-compliance with the provisions of the Agreement.

These unprecedented coercive measures adopted by ECOWAS are proof of the determination and the cohesion of the West African Community. They have been decisive in the decision by the Liberian factions to end hostilities, disengage their forces and to surrender their weapons. We welcome the designation of Ms. Ruth Perry as Chairperson of the Council of State and wish her every success in carrying out her mission, which is no doubt a difficult one, but one that enjoys the support of the international community. It has every chance for success, provided that the commitments entered into by the factions and the schedule and modalities for the holding of free elections are respected.

In view of this progress and the improvement in the security situation in Liberia, we support the Secretary-General's proposal in paragraph 23 of his report (S/1996/684) to deploy immediately an additional 24 military observers to the country, with a view to consolidating the presence of the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL). That presence would facilitate more frequent patrolling and future disarmament operations.

Guinea-Bissau, as a country of the subregion and a member of ECOWAS, has always expressed its frustration over the limited means available to ECOMOG. We therefore once again call on the international community to provide it with the necessary assistance to fully carry out its responsibilities.

In this connection, I wish to highlight the contribution of the United States, whose delegation deserves the credit for proposing to the other members of the Security Council a draft resolution that has been able to take into account and bring together all views. This has ultimately enabled us to reach the consensus that we welcome today.

I also wish to welcome the contributions of other countries, which, in our view, are of crucial importance. We thank them warmly, and we encourage other States to make their own contributions to the United Nations Trust Fund for Liberia.

Nevertheless, it is clear that the international community will not be in a position to continue to support the peace process in Liberia if the Liberian factions do not show beyond doubt that they are determined to settle all their differences through peaceful means and to achieve national reconciliation, in accordance with the Abuja Agreement of 17 August 1996.

In this context, we demand once again that the Liberian factions strictly respect all their commitments under the Abuja Agreement and the personnel statutes of ECOMOG, UNOMIL and other international organizations and agencies. Looting, thievery and other acts of banditry must cease immediately and all stolen objects must be returned. We must also demand that the Liberian faction leaders respect and protect the children whom they use as cannon fodder, an odious and abhorrent practice that we shall always condemn.

In conclusion, we subscribe to the Secretary-General's recommendation to extend the mandate of UNOMIL for a period of three months. My delegation will vote in favour of the draft resolution before the Security Council today.

Mr. Matuszewski (Poland): On many previous occasions, my delegation has expressed its deep concern about the situation in Liberia, about eruptions of violence directed against innocent civilian populations and about the Liberian leaders being unable to peacefully resolve their conflict. Serious questions concerning future involvement of the international community in Liberia have frequently come to mind. These concerns have not disappeared yet.

Nevertheless, the Polish delegation is going to vote in favour of the draft resolution extending the mandate of the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL) by three months, until the end of November 1996. By doing so we would like to confirm our confidence in and support for the leaders of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the decisions they took at Abuja two weeks ago.

We also take note of the declared readiness of the heads of the Liberian armed factions to abide by the

agreements they all signed and to allow the country to resolve its problems by political means rather than by resorting to violence, often in its cruellest form. It is our hope that this time the warlords in Liberia will not follow the well-known pattern of breaking their word.

The task of rebuilding the structure of the State, of repairing its social fabric and of restoring the peoples' confidence and morale is truly enormous. Nobody but the Liberians themselves is responsible for their future and for achieving peace, security and stability in their country.

Liberia is in need of international assistance. We expect the people of that country, and especially their leaders, to create and maintain an assistance-friendly environment. We ask them in particular to respect the status of the personnel of the Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group (ECOMOG), UNOMIL and international organizations and agencies to facilitate the freedom of movement of peace-keepers and ensure an uninterrupted delivery of humanitarian goods.

And last but not least, the Liberian leaders and their followers must live up to their obligations resulting from the Agreement at Abuja, including the timetable for implementation of this Agreement.

Let me conclude by expressing my appreciation of the initiative of the Permanent Representative of Italy to include in the draft resolution a clause condemning the practice of making children fight and kill. As a representative of one of the countries at whose initiative the General Assembly adopted the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, I feel it my duty to restate my full support for efforts aimed at the immediate cease of this inhuman practice.

Mr. Searle (Chile) (*interpretation from Spanish*): On many occasions when the Security Council has met to deal with the situation in Liberia, we have had to refer to breaches of the cease-fire, to resumptions of hostilities and, in general, to continually unfulfilled agreements.

My delegation hopes that we are coming to the end of that cycle of tragedies that has characterized the peace process in Liberia and that the new timetable for implementation of the Abuja Agreement, agreed to at the recent Summit of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) on 17 August, will mark the beginning of the final restoration of peace and stability to, and the reconstruction of, Liberia.

We appreciate the extremely valuable and effective role played by ECOWAS and the positive events that the Secretary-General relates in his latest report to the Security Council. These enable us to consider favourably at this time a three-month extension of the mandate of the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL), as well as to maintain the deployment of this force at appropriate levels.

Furthermore, the appeal contained in the draft resolution to provide logistical and financial support so that ECOMOG can carry out its mandate is fully in keeping with the above.

In the context of the new schedule for implementing the Abuja Agreement, we attach particular importance to the monitoring mechanism that enables ECOWAS to monitor compliance with the planned stages, as well as to the warning of measures that may be taken against those who might obstruct the Agreements.

The statement made by the Heads of State of ECOWAS that they would not recognize any government that came to power in Liberia through the use of force is very relevant, in the view of my delegation, since that is an essential element for laying the foundation of any lasting process of peace and reconciliation.

Furthermore, we welcome the designation of the new Chairperson of the Council of State, and particularly the fact that that decision reflects the increasing influence of Liberian civilian society in the peace process. My delegation urges that efforts continue at all levels to ensure that that influence grows, because we are convinced that it will be the most effective manner to achieve peace and stability for all Liberians.

In considering the peace process over the years, we think that it is timely to warn the leaders of the factions that they must bear clearly in mind that the international community's patience is not unlimited. The reprehensible events of last April, characterized by threats to the security of the people and the personnel of international organizations, as well as the generalized looting of property, cannot be tolerated again. Even less can we tolerate the continuation of the inhuman and barbaric practice of recruiting, training and using children in combat. For this reason, my delegation decidedly supports Italy's initiative, which has been supported by the Council and is reflected in paragraph 9 of the draft resolution before us.

We hope that actions, more than promises, will enable this Council to continue to back the peace process in Liberia and that the timetable decided in Abuja will be complied with without delay so that by installing in June 1997 a new, democratically elected government, the people of Liberia will start on its long-desired path to progress, development and well-being.

In conclusion, we wish to express our gratitude to the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, Ambassador James Jonah; his Special Representative, Mr. Anthony Nyakyi; and to all the military and civilian personnel of UNOMIL and humanitarian agencies who have been sorely tried in recent times, and who are now beginning this new stage with renewed hope.

The President: I now put to the vote the draft resolution in document S/1996/701.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Botswana, Chile, China, Egypt, France, Germany, Guinea-Bissau, Honduras, Indonesia, Italy, Poland, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

The President: There were 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has been adopted unanimously as resolution 1071 (1996).

I shall now call on those members of the Council who wish to make statements following the voting.

Mr. Inderfurth (United States of America): May I first express my delegation's appreciation to those members of the Council who have so kindly acknowledged the role we have played with respect to the resolution just adopted by the Council, as well as the assistance the United States provided in the evacuation of other nationals from Liberia.

During the past seven years, the factions in Liberia have conducted bloody, destructive civil war that has cost the lives of many thousands of innocent Liberians and robbed the country of its wealth and resources. Only a few months ago, Monrovia was in flames. Political and ethnic factions were engaged in street-to-street fighting. Looting, including of humanitarian and peace-keeping resources, was widespread. Thousands were taking refuge at the United States Embassy, and the United States and others were

working hard to evacuate boatloads and plane-loads of non-Liberians to safety. These tragic events seemed to mark a new low point in Liberia's descent towards political and social chaos, and were a profound sorrow to the friends of Liberia around the world and the international community, which had tried so hard and for so long to help.

One especially abhorrent practice in this tragic conflict — singled out by the Italian delegation for special consideration and condemnation in the Council's resolution — has been the recruitment, training and actual deployment of children in combat. Who can forget the photographs of child soldiers brandishing and using assault weapons? Who can imagine the psychological scars that will be left with these children for years to come? The Council is determined that this abhorrent practice shall not continue.

The regional leaders, meeting in Abuja in mid-August, shared the frustration of the rest of the international community and took a bold step. They agreed to reinvigorate their 1995 Agreement, including a new timetable for implementation and the threat of sanctions for persons or groups that obstruct progress. The United States commends the efforts of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) under the new chairmanship of Nigeria to get the warring parties to end the violence, to disarm their combatants and to begin the process of national reconciliation, beginning with a cease-fire and culminating in the holding of free and fair elections.

The Liberian faction leaders appear to have accepted this new timetable. Their initial statements and actions offer hope that progress towards peace and stability is possible in the coming months. The Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) has successfully re-established and is maintaining Monrovia as a safe haven. ULIMO-J has delivered stolen heavy weapons. A new ECOMOG commander has taken steps that will make the peace-keeping force more effective. Ruth Perry has been named new Chairperson of the Council of State, and we wish her well in her daunting task of national mediation and unification.

Yet the recent history of Liberia is littered with broken promises and lost opportunities for peace. It is important that the faction leaders realize that the world is more concerned with their deeds than with their words.

The United States will be monitoring closely their actions under the 17 August Agreement.

It is only on the basis of honest implementation of the new timetable that the United States is able to support the Secretary-General's call for increased deployments of the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL). These deployments are justified, wise, and ultimately secure only if the peace process remains on track. We will follow events closely and calibrate our actions to coincide with progress towards implementation of the Abuja Agreement. In this regard, the United States will examine especially closely the Secretary-General's 15 October report called for by this resolution.

The Liberian factions bear a clear, unavoidable responsibility to respect the status of UNOMIL personnel and property, as well as those of ECOMOG and other international and humanitarian organizations and agencies. In this regard, we expect the faction leaders to take steps to return immediately all looted property.

More broadly, the ECOWAS States and the wider international community must insist on compliance and do everything necessary to ensure implementation by the parties. I would also like to stress the importance of close contacts and enhanced cooperation between UNOMIL and ECOMOG. Flexibility and active promotion of good relations by UNOMIL will be essential to ensuring that UNOMIL can fulfil its mandate. In this respect, the deployment of additional liaison officers is a step forward.

The United States believes that UNOMIL can play a positive role in the process if the Liberian factions demonstrate real commitment to the Abuja Agreement. The United States will be watching closely with every hope that we are indeed seeing the beginning of the end of this tragic episode in Liberia.

Finally, personnel serving with UNOMIL have endured hardship and served under perilous conditions. We commend them for their sacrifices and reiterate our belief that their safety remains a prime consideration. We also express our appreciation to Mr. James Jonah, in his role as Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, for his extremely useful contribution to the Security Council as it addressed this issue.

Mr. Ladsous (France) (*interpretation from French*): The French delegation has carefully studied the report the Secretary-General has issued on the situation in Liberia. This report gives a grim account of the consequences of the

clashes in Monrovia last April in humanitarian and economic terms. It also shows the grave consequences for the United Nations Mission, most of whose staff had to be withdrawn and a great deal of whose equipment has been looted. The French delegation vigorously condemns these misdeeds, and will attach special importance to the return of this equipment.

The new plan for the implementation of the Abuja Agreement, revised by the States of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) during its last meeting, on 14 and 17 August, gives rise to new hopes. We would like to pay tribute to the renewed efforts of the regional leaders in this matter.

We know how guarded hope should be in this respect, since experience has shown that the factions have several times disregarded their commitments. We venture to believe, as is indicated in the Secretary-General's report, that the sanctions accompanying the plan will be an important guarantee of its implementation. Yet another failure would be tragic, for it could lead to a withdrawal of the international community, to a widespread renewal of fighting and to a major threat to stability in the region.

France has constantly given its support to the peace process in Liberia. It will do so once again by agreeing, as is recommended by the Secretary-General, to extend the mandate of the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL) for a three-month period. It also supports the intentions of the Secretary-General with regard to the deployment of the Mission.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of Germany.

The civil war in Liberia has been a matter of deep concern for all of us since 1990. Since then, 13 peace agreements between the warring factions have been concluded and later broken. Our assessment of the situation in Liberia has always been clear: the responsibility for disrupting the peace process lies solely with the leaders of the various factions, who have shown no regard for the rights and lives of their people.

Since the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Summit of 17 August 1996 in Abuja, there is new hope that the peace process can be resumed successfully in Liberia. The ECOWAS States have decided to give the factions one last chance. The Committee of the Nine Heads of State and Government agreed on a strict timetable for the implementation of the

Abuja Agreement, commencing with the restoration of the cease-fire by 31 August 1996 and concluding with the holding of free and fair elections on 30 May 1997. Why do we think that there is new hope?

The Committee of Nine has built into its timetable a monitoring mechanism to ensure compliance with the Abuja Agreement. The five major stages of the timetable — cease-fire, disengagement of factions, disarmament, preparations for elections and, finally, elections — will be verified by international observers. They will monitor whether the peace process is developing in a correct and stable direction.

Moreover, the Committee of Nine agreed in Abuja that any person or group obstructing the implementation of the Agreement will be subject to the imposition of sanctions. These sanctions will have a direct effect on this very person or group.

Finally, ECOWAS has underlined its commitment to remain engaged in Liberia until the new government is installed.

We have learned from the Secretary-General's latest report on Liberia, as well as from Ambassador James Jonah in his briefing in the Security Council, that the Abuja Agreement was also reached because of the insistence of various Liberian civilian groups present at the Abuja meeting. We hope that this can be regarded as the first nucleus of a democratic process that will allow the people of Liberia to decide their fate for themselves in a democratic manner.

The extension of the mandate of the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL) and the deployment of an additional 24 military observers, in accordance with the resolution which we have just adopted,

is a first appropriate response of the United Nations to the new developments in Liberia. We agree that the ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) has to be provided with adequate financial and logistic resources to carry out its task. We also believe that future assistance will have to be more closely coordinated than in the past.

It should, however, be clear that the missions of ECOMOG and UNOMIL can only be continued in a meaningful way if conditions in Liberia allow them to fulfil their mandates. We therefore strongly urge the warring parties to seize this opportunity, which may be their very last.

International humanitarian assistance is also necessary to sustain the peace process and is an additional stabilizing factor. After the recent fighting in April and May of this year alone Germany has provided humanitarian aid and medicine worth about DM600,000.

The international community and, in particular, the Economic Community of West African States have not given up on Liberia. Our support and best wishes go the new Chairperson of the Liberian State Council, Ms. Ruth Perry, and there was consensus in our consultations that the United Nations should make another effort in support of the Liberian peace process.

On the basis of these considerations, Germany voted in favour of the resolution, which was initiated and introduced by the delegation of the United States, to which we wish to express our thanks.

I now resume my function as President of the Council.

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

The Security Council will remain seized of the matter.

The meeting rose at 1.40 p.m.