



# Security Council

Fifty-fifth Year

**4121**<sup>st</sup> Meeting

Wednesday, 29 March 2000, 10 a.m.

New York

*Provisional*

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<i>President:</i>	Mr. Chowdhury . . . . .	(Bangladesh)
<i>Members:</i>	Argentina . . . . .	Mr. Cappagli
	Canada . . . . .	Mr. Duval
	China . . . . .	Mr. Wang Yingfan
	France . . . . .	Mr. Levitte
	Jamaica . . . . .	Miss Durrant
	Malaysia . . . . .	Mr. Hasmy
	Mali . . . . .	Mr. Ouane
	Namibia . . . . .	Mr. Andjaba
	Netherlands . . . . .	Mr. Hamer
	Russian Federation . . . . .	Mr. Gatilov
	Tunisia . . . . .	Mr. Ben Mustapha
	Ukraine . . . . .	Mr. Yel'chenko
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . . . . .	Sir Jeremy Greenstock
	United States of America . . . . .	Mr. Minton

## Agenda

The situation in Guinea-Bissau

Report of the Secretary-General on developments in Guinea-Bissau (S/2000/250)

*The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.*

### **Adoption of the agenda**

*The agenda was adopted.*

### **The situation in Guinea-Bissau**

#### **Report of the Secretary-General on developments in Guinea-Bissau (S/2000/250)**

**The President:** I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter from the representative of Guinea-Bissau to the United Nations 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. Da Gama (Guinea-Bissau) took a seat at the Council table.*

**The President:** In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, and in the absence of objection, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Kiernan Prendergast, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

I invite Mr. Prendergast 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 the report of the Secretary-General on developments in Guinea-Bissau, document S/2000/250.

At this meeting the Security Council will hear a briefing by Mr. Kiernan Prendergast, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs. I give him the floor.

**Mr. Prendergast:** The report before you, Sir, is the fourth report of the Secretary-General on developments in Guinea-Bissau and the activities of the United Nations Peace-building Support Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNOGBIS).

As members of the Council will recall, the Representative of the Secretary-General in Guinea-Bissau, Mr. Samuel Nana-Sinkam, briefed the Council on 23 February 2000 on the results of the second round of the presidential elections and on the progress of the democratic process in that country. He also outlined the daunting post-electoral challenges facing the new Government of President Kumba Yala.

Members of the Council will also recall that following Mr. Nana-Sinkam's briefing the President of the Council issued a press statement, welcoming the return of constitutional and democratic rule to Guinea-Bissau and encouraging all parties in that country to work closely together in a spirit of tolerance, to strengthen democratic values, to protect the rule of law and to guarantee the protection of human rights. The statement also encouraged the new institutions to develop and implement programmes designed to consolidate peace, national reconciliation and economic development.

The present report covers developments in Guinea-Bissau since Mr. Nana-Sinkam's briefing. It provides further details of the Government's strategy for dealing with the post-electoral challenges that confront it. The report also describes the contributions of the United Nations Office, in collaboration with United Nations agencies on the ground, to promote peace and national reconciliation, human rights and the rule of law in Guinea-Bissau.

As members of the Council will recall, the mandate of UNOGBIS was adjusted to respond better to the post-electoral realities and was approved by the Council on 10 March.

If I might turn to highlights of the report, I am glad to report that the overall situation in Guinea-Bissau is peaceful and the humanitarian situation has noticeably improved. More political detainees have been provisionally released and the trials of some of them have already begun, despite the severe logistical and human constraints facing the judiciary.

Regrettably, the economic situation remains worrying. The Government still does not have resources to pay long-overdue salaries to civil servants and soldiers.

There are lingering concerns about the difficulties encountered in redefining the relationship between the new Government and the military establishment in the post-electoral period. However, it is encouraging to note that negotiations between the Government and the former military junta are continuing. They are led by the Bishop of Bissau and a group of mediators from civil society. The Representative of the Secretary-General is providing his good offices in this area, as required.

In view of the situation described in his report, the Secretary-General has urged members of the international community to provide urgent assistance for the Government's 100-day transitional programme. This programme is critical for the credibility of the new Government as it faces mounting pressures from ordinary citizens who are demanding basic services in areas such as water and electricity.

Allow me to take this opportunity to thank, on behalf of the Secretary-General, those Member States which have contributed to the trust fund in support of activities of UNOGBIS. I also appeal for continued support to this trust fund.

Since the report was completed, there appears to have been some positive movement on the issue of the role of the former military. Through the mediation of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Gambia, Mr. Jobe, President Kumba Yala met on 22 March with members of the former military junta led by General Mane. Following the meeting, the President announced that five posts of minister of state without portfolio had been offered to members of the former junta. The offer was accepted in principle, and its details are being finalized. General Mane was quoted as saying after the meeting that "there was not a single cloud between the new authorities and the military".

Also on 22 March, the first session of the newly elected National Assembly was solemnly opened. The debates will continue until 22 April. In their opening addresses, the President of the Republic and the President of the Assembly sought to reaffirm their commitment to respect for the authority of the State and for human rights.

Before convening a new round-table conference on Guinea-Bissau, the Government is planning to hold consultations with development partners on its overall

strategies and priority areas. This will take place on Tuesday, 11 April, in Bissau. At this forum, the Government intend to present their major concerns, their strategies and their priority actions for lasting development, the effects of which will benefit the majority of the population.

To conclude, please allow me to highlight three points made in the observation section of the Secretary-General's report.

First, the successful outcome of the legislative and presidential elections has brought to an end the transitional institutions put in place under the Abuja Accord of 1 November 1998.

Secondly, it is crucial that all Guinea-Bissau's parties, including the former military junta, fully accept this new democratic reality and work with the Government to solve the problems that lie ahead in a spirit of patriotism and national reconciliation.

Finally, I would like to re-state that without the combined efforts of the Economic Community of West African States, the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries, the United Nations and Member States, the transition to democracy in Guinea-Bissau would never have got under way. It is gratifying that this joint effort has produced tangible results. This may perhaps serve as an example of what the international community, with the full cooperation of national actors, is able to do with minimal resources. However, the task has not yet been completed, and there is no room for complacency.

**The President:** I thank Mr. Prendergast for his briefing and introduction of the report of the Secretary-General.

I will now give the floor to the members of the Council.

**Mr. Minton (United States):** I thank Mr. Prendergast for his briefing at a very important time in the development of democratic institutions in Guinea-Bissau. We welcome today's Secretariat briefing and the recent release of the Secretary-General's latest report on Guinea-Bissau. They indeed highlight a situation where timely United Nations and international intervention have made a difference in resolving conflict and restoring order.

During most meetings in this Chamber, the Council focuses on situations where law and order are threatened

and where the prospects for peace remain very dim indeed. Fortunately, today, in the case of Guinea-Bissau, peace has been restored, free and fair national elections have been conducted, and efforts are under way, with the assistance of the United Nations, to promote national reconciliation and to foster a favourable climate for economic development. These positive developments merit our special recognition and attention. They set an impressive standard of success.

The United States Government commends the people of Guinea-Bissau for their commitment to peace and for their efforts to work together to build a stronger society. My Government also commends the United Nations personnel serving with the United Nations Peace-building Support Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNOGBIS), under the very able and insightful leadership of the Secretary-General's Representative, Mr. Samuel Nana-Sinkam, for their efforts to strengthen democratic values, to promote the rule of law and to encourage the protection of human rights in Guinea-Bissau. The United Nations mission in Guinea-Bissau represents a good example of the critical role that the United Nations can play in conflict resolution and in post-conflict institution-building.

Of course, there is much work that remains to be done. With the successful conclusion of the presidential run-off election on 16 January, the new Government of President Yala and Prime Minister Caetano N'chama can now begin to develop and implement programmes designed to further democracy and promote economic growth. These tasks will not be easy, as I have said; many challenges still lie ahead. In particular, we would like to emphasize that members of the Council and of the United Nations will have to support vigorously efforts made by the Government of Guinea-Bissau to redefine the role of the military in the country in accordance with the rule of law and democracy. As a member of the group of friends of Guinea-Bissau, the United States stands ready to do what it can to help in this regard.

As a matter of policy and in conformity with our own domestic legislative requirements, we suspended direct bilateral assistance to the Government of Guinea-Bissau at the time of the May 1999 coup. However, in the wake of the November and January elections in that country, which were conducted — in our view — in a free, fair and transparent manner, we are now reviewing ways in which to recommence our bilateral assistance efforts. We hope to be able to provide trade and investment promotion support once remaining legal impediments have been removed, and to help on demining programmes as well.

The international community would react very negatively, in our view, should Guinea-Bissau return to military rule under any guise. Guinea-Bissau is just beginning to recover from civil conflict. It needs peace, reconstruction and development. Nothing could hinder that more than renewed military intervention in governance, and we do not expect to see this.

The people of Guinea-Bissau need and deserve the support of the international community. Thanks to international encouragement and intervention, Guinea-Bissau has taken the first critical steps towards re-establishment of a society based on national reconciliation and democratic values. We must continue to support these efforts.

We welcome the Secretary-General's recent decision to extend the mandate of UNOGBIS for one additional year, through 31 March 2001. In a fragile subregion fraught with many challenges and interlocking crises, the United Nations must continue to play a key role in assisting the Government and the people of Guinea-Bissau to continue building a strong foundation for peace.

**Mr. Ouane** (Mali) (*spoke in French*): First, I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his report of 24 March and Mr. Prendergast for his supplementary briefing. In deference to the wishes of the President, I will be brief.

I would recall first that the holding of free, fair and transparent elections in Guinea-Bissau marked a major stage in the democratization of the country. As the Secretary-General's report states, with the completion of the transitional process, the country stands at a critical crossroad in its history, energized by the progress made so far, but conscious of the many challenges that lie ahead.

The need to satisfy the popular need for change, as shown by the overwhelming election victory of President Kumba Yala, who got 72 per cent of the vote, is very strong, which determines the post-electoral priorities for the authorities in Guinea-Bissau for the short and medium term. It should also reinforce the spirit of reconciliation among the people, consolidate the rule of law, and assure good administration of public affairs as well as respect for human rights.

We are pleased at the positive measures reported by Mr. Prendergast. At the same time, the new authorities in Guinea-Bissau must continue to improve relations with

neighbouring States and cooperation with the international community as a whole.

Despite the achievements made so far, however, the situation in the country is still fragile, and that is why we believe that the Security Council must send a strong signal to the political class of Guinea-Bissau, of all political parties, and to civil society in that country, a signal insisting on a return to normalcy and emphasizing the end of the transition period established by the Abuja Accord of 1 November 1998.

Likewise, we believe it urgent that the international community be mobilized to provide assistance for the rebuilding of the economy and the consolidation of lasting peace in Guinea-Bissau. In this regard, we look forward with interest to the donors conference that will be held in New York in May of this year.

The draft Presidential statement that has been submitted to the Council for consideration, which will be adopted following this meeting, may be viewed precisely from this twofold perspective.

I would like to recall the firm commitment of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to continue its efforts to consolidate the situation in Sierra Leone as well as to stabilize the entire subregion. President Konaré has made this a priority in his term of office as Chairman of ECOWAS, and has shown determination and resolve, as was recalled yesterday by Mr. Miyet in a very timely way.

In addition, I would also like to pay tribute to the representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Nana-Sinkam, to the people working in the United Nations Peace-building Support Office in Guinea-Bissau, and to the whole United Nations team, for their devoted efforts on behalf of Guinea-Bissau.

**Mr. Wang Yingfan** (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The Chinese delegation would like to thank the Secretary-General for the report that he has provided to us. We also thank the Under-Secretary-General, Mr. Prendergast, for his additional briefing.

Recently, the situation in Guinea-Bissau has remained stable, and Guinea-Bissau's relations with neighbouring countries have further improved. The current humanitarian situation in Guinea-Bissau has also improved. We are satisfied with developments in Guinea-Bissau. Since it came into office, the new Government has committed itself to

reform and has adopted positive measures in that regard. We express our appreciation for all this.

We agree with the observation in the report of the Secretary-General that Guinea-Bissau is at present at a critical crossroad. We encourage the Government of Guinea-Bissau to continue its efforts to enhance national reconciliation, consolidate constitutional rule and begin economic reconstruction at an early date so that peace and stability in that country can be maintained.

At the same time, we call upon the international community to continue to give attention and support to Guinea-Bissau and to support the peace process in particular. In this regard, we would like to thank the Economic Community of West African States and the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries for the enormous efforts that they have been making for a long time. We would also like to thank the Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Nana-Sinkam, and the United Nations Peace-building Support Office in Guinea-Bissau, for the positive role that they have played in the peace process in Guinea-Bissau. We also hope that, in the year to come, they will continue to work tirelessly for peace and development in Guinea-Bissau.

Before concluding, I should like to say that we support the draft presidential statement, which will be adopted later.

**Mr. Hasmy** (Malaysia): My delegation wishes to thank you, Mr. President, for convening this formal meeting today to discuss the Secretary-General's latest report, of 24 March 2000, on developments in Guinea-Bissau and the activities of the United Nations Peace-building Support Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNOGBIS). We also wish to thank Sir Kieran Prendergast for introducing the Secretary-General's report and for updating us on the situation.

The report has made clear that the people of Guinea-Bissau strongly desire peace and wish to put the traumatic events of the civil strife behind them. We welcome the fact that the process of normalization and the transition to democracy is taking place in earnest following the successful holding of the legislative and presidential elections in that country. The successful completion of those elections and the subsequent setting up of a new Government has ushered in a new chapter for the people of Guinea-Bissau, one full of the promise of a democratic and peaceful political future. It also brings to a close the

transitional Government established in accordance with the Abuja peace accord of 1 November 1998.

In this regard, we would like to congratulate President Kumba Yala on his impressive mandate and wish him every success as Guinea-Bissau completes the process of a return to civilian rule. We support the President's intention to fight corruption and to build a more just and democratic society. The early identification by the Government of post-electoral priorities for the short and medium term is most heartening.

However, we note that, as Guinea-Bissau moves ahead with its democratization process, the military has, nevertheless, continued to maintain a high public posture. We strongly urge the former military junta to fulfil its earlier pledge that it would endeavour to stay out of politics and would remain loyal to the newly elected President. We are heartened to hear about the positive outcome of the negotiations between the Government and the former military junta to redefine the role of the military in accordance with the rule of law and democracy. We pay tribute to the Foreign Minister of the Gambia for the commendable role he has played in this regard. For a smooth transition to democracy in Guinea-Bissau, it is important for the military to support the supremacy of civilian institutions and the rule of law and to confine its role to that of national defence.

Meanwhile, we continue to be concerned about the wide circulation of small arms, which serves only to further complicate the security situation. My delegation therefore welcomes efforts to develop a package of incentives to encourage civilians to turn in their weapons under the coordination of UNOGBIS, with the active support of the World Food Programme and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. In addition, we must underline the importance of the World Bank mission to the country proposed for early next month in an effort to promote the demobilization and reintegration of the military into civilian life. Furthermore, we are pleased to note the improvement in human rights, as well as the overall humanitarian situation in the country, and the role that UNOGBIS continues to play in the process. The continued improvement in relations between Guinea-Bissau and its neighbours has helped to facilitate the smooth and early return of refugees to the country. We welcome this.

Guinea-Bissau requires our continuing attention and assistance as it moves forward to consolidate peace and stability in the country. Malaysia joins others in calling on the international community to support the Government's

three-month transitional programme, pending the organization of a new round-table conference. We agree with the Secretary-General that the ability of the Organization to fulfil its critical facilitation role in Guinea-Bissau is very much dependent on the continued and additional support of the international community.

In conclusion, Malaysia commends the Economic Community of West African States, as well as the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries, for their important roles in facilitating the transitional process. We also commend States Members of the Organization, particularly France, the Netherlands and Cyprus, for their contributions to the trust fund established in support of the activities of UNOGBIS. We also wish to join others in commending the Secretary-General's Representative, Mr. Nana-Sinkam, UNOGBIS and the United Nations country team in Bissau for their efforts thus far and for their continued success in assisting Guinea-Bissau in its peace-building efforts.

**Ms. Durrant** (Jamaica): I wish to thank you, Mr. President, for convening this open briefing on Guinea-Bissau, and we wish to thank Sir Kieran Prendergast for updating us on the current situation in that country. We also welcome the report of the Secretary-General contained in document S/2000/250.

The events that have been unfolding in Guinea-Bissau over the past month are, indeed, testimony to the fact that the United Nations, with the full cooperation of national actors and with sustained support from the international community, can make a meaningful contribution to a country's effort to move from a state of civil strife to one of peace. In this regard, my delegation applauds the sterling achievements of the United Nations Peace-building Support Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNOGBIS). We also extend congratulations to President Kumba Yala, and wish him and his Government every success.

The United Nations can be proud of the fact that its proactive steps, taken to restore constitutional rule in Guinea-Bissau, including the recent extension of the mandate of UNOGBIS for one year, means that this Organization is poised to embark on a new phase in its political role in Guinea-Bissau. With the revised mandate of the Support Office, emphasis has been aptly placed on peace-building facilitation. Equally, we wish to recognize the sterling contribution of the States members of the Economic Community of West African States and the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries for the key

role they played in the restoration of peace and security throughout Guinea-Bissau, particularly in the successful implementation of the Abuja Accord.

We join other delegations in paying tribute to the people of Guinea-Bissau, who have demonstrated the political maturity necessary for the success of free, fair and transparent elections, and who have clearly demonstrated a desire for peace. We were pleased to hear from Sir Kieran about the recent accord between the Government and the former military junta, and we express our delegation's appreciation to the Foreign Minister of the Gambia for his mediation.

We agree that Guinea-Bissau clearly stands at a critical crossroads. While the progress made is laudable, efforts must now be channelled into confronting the enormous challenges which lie ahead. The report of the Secretary-General identifies several of these challenges, including the consolidation of Guinea-Bissau's nascent democracy, the revitalization of State institutions, the demobilization and reintegration of retired military personnel, the return of refugees and the re-launching of the economy. These will require constructive partnerships, combining the efforts of national actors and neighbouring States. Jamaica shares the view that the Security Council must continue to play a role in the post-conflict peace-building phase in Guinea-Bissau by lending its political support. The draft presidential statement, which we will adopt later and which has the full support of my delegation, sends a strong message to the new Government of Guinea-Bissau as it consolidates its new constitutional role, while at the same time bringing to closure the transitional institutions deriving from the Abuja Accord and its additional protocol, and other related agreements which have now been completed.

The international community also has a role to play in mobilizing the necessary financial support for the development of the state structures of Guinea-Bissau. The Secretary-General's report highlights the need to address urgently the economic and social needs of the population, chief among which is the eradication of poverty. It is our firm belief that commitment to the goals of peace and security must be matched by plans to foster sustained economic growth and sustainable development. We therefore encourage the cooperation of the United Nations system and the Bretton Woods institutions in the targeting of the priority sectors, such as health, education and agriculture, and look forward to the results of the forthcoming round table.

In conclusion, my delegation wishes to pay tribute to the Secretary-General's representative, Mr. Nana-Sinkam, and the staff of the United Nations Peace-building Support Office in Guinea-Bissau for their hard work and dedicated commitment to ensuring peace and stability in Guinea-Bissau.

**Mr. Levitte** (France) (*spoke in French*): I wish to join my colleagues in thanking the Secretariat, in particular Mr. Prendergast, for the introduction of the report of the Secretary-General on developments in Guinea-Bissau.

France appreciates the energetic activities in that country of the Representative of the Secretary-General in Guinea-Bissau, Mr. Nana-Sinkam, and the United Nations Peace-building Support Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNOGBIS). We feel that the presence of the United Nations there since June 1999 has allowed its transition from a state of war to one of peace and the gradual re-establishment of constitutional order. The courageous stances taken by Mr. Nana-Sinkam, as well as his close contacts with the authorities and the judiciary, have heightened respect for human rights and the rule of law. As Mr. Prendergast rightly noted, this is an excellent example of the essential role of the United Nations.

France welcomes the successful holding of the recent legislative and presidential elections in Guinea-Bissau. The first objectives set by President Kumba Yala seem to point in the right direction and deserve the international community's support. We feel that the President's concern to consult civil society on a regular basis with regard to the various programmes that have been undertaken is also well directed. France will, of course, be participating in a constructive and positive in the forthcoming round table to be organized by the United Nations Development Programme.

In view of the successful convening of the elections, we consider it important that civilian power be endowed with all authority necessary to implementing its action. We believe that full respect for the Abuja Accord of 1 November 1998 negotiated under the auspices of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) will require the dissolution of the junta. The full return to constitutional normality is a genuine priority. The armed forces must henceforth obey unequivocally the instructions of the civilian power.

At this point, I wish to pay tribute to the very positive role played by the Gambia, in particular by

Foreign Minister Jobe. We hope that the agreement reached on 22 March will be put into effect. We support all initiatives to promote the demobilization and reintegration of the military into civilian life and, like others, look forward to learning the results of the World Bank mission to take place in early April.

France encourages Mr. Nana-Sinkam, the Secretary-General's Representative, to pursue his consultations with the countries of the region so as to resolve the border security issues. The adoption of the confidence-building measures proposed by President Konaré of Mali, as current Chairman of ECOWAS, would also seem appropriate.

The loss of peace in Guinea-Bissau posed a threat to the peace and stability of the entire subregion. Undoubted progress has been made, but the information contained in the Secretary-General's report, indicating the continuing circulation of large quantities of small arms in civilian communities, is a genuine cause of concern to my delegation. I associate myself with Ambassador Hasmy's statement highlighting the importance of a vigorous implementation of the arms-recovery programme. This is an essential matter for the future of Guinea-Bissau and the stability of the entire region.

**Mr. Duval** (Canada) (*spoke in French*): Canada welcomes the extension of the mandate of the United Nations Peace-building Support Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNOGBIS) for another year. We thank Mr. Prendergast for his briefing and, like him, believe that the Office can build on the recent success of the democratic process and on the formation of a broad-based Government to assist civil society and government in the consolidation of peace in the country.

We commend in particular the support given by the Bissau Guinean military to the peace and democratization processes and its commitment to transforming the armed forces into a more professional army subordinate to civilian authorities. The reaffirmation by military leaders of the supremacy of the country's Constitution and their non-interference in the recently completed electoral process suggest an encouraging respect for civilian rule. We encourage Council members and relevant regional organizations to remain engaged in ensuring that the transitional military authority does indeed relinquish all powers to the elected civilian administration.

Relations between Guinea-Bissau and its neighbours continue to improve, in large part due to the exemplary work of the Secretary-General's Representative, Samuel

Nana-Sinkam, and of Alpha Oumar Konaré, President of Mali and current Chairman of the Economic Community of West African States, who have overseen the establishment of a joint monitoring mechanism along Guinea-Bissau's borders with Senegal and Guinea, as well as other confidence-building measures.

We are encouraged by reports from civil society groups in Guinea-Bissau that the human rights situation has improved substantially and by the Government's decision to free a number of people detained following the May 1999 coup. Some 50 remain, however, in what the Secretary-General has described as deplorable conditions. We also note the technical assistance provided by United Nations bodies in strengthening local judicial capacity, which has already helped to expedite trials in a fair and transparent manner.

Finally, we are encouraged by the efforts of UNOGBIS to promote the rights of women through discussions with local women parliamentarians and by the Government's commitment to creating an institute for women and children.

**Mr. Ben Mustapha** (Tunisia) (*spoke in French*): I wish at the outset to thank you, Mr. President, for having convened this meeting on the situation in Guinea-Bissau. I also wish to thank Mr. Prendergast, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, for his introduction to the report of the Secretary-General on developments in that country.

The delegation of Tunisia notes with satisfaction the gradual return to constitutional and democratic order in Guinea-Bissau following the holding of free, fair and transparent elections. In this regard, we welcome the efforts of the new Government to consolidate the nascent democracy, to promote national reconciliation through grass-roots involvement in the decision-making process, to provide for good governance of public affairs and to once again become part of the overall dynamic of development in the subregion, within the Economic Community of West African States.

It is clear that the return of Guinea-Bissau to a lasting state of normalcy will require large-scale national, subregional and international efforts. It is, of course, the responsibility of the Bissau Guineans themselves to undertake this task by tackling the economic reconstruction of their country, while ensuring the consolidation on a daily basis of national reconciliation, with a view to bringing about lasting stability.



In extending the mandate of the United Nations Peace-building Support Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNOGBIS) for a year as of 31 March, the Security Council has reaffirmed its resolve to continue to lend the necessary support to the consolidation of peace and stability in Guinea-Bissau. The international action which took that country from a state of war to a state of peace is for us a source of pride. The cooperation of all Bissau Guinean parties, with the support of ECOWAS, the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries and the United Nations, proves that the mobilization of the entire international community to work for peace always provides grounds for hope.

The satisfactory outcome of the conflict in Guinea-Bissau should encourage protagonists in other areas of tension and conflict to reflect on this example and opt resolutely for peace.

Mr. President, the Tunisian delegation supports the statement that you will be making on behalf of the Council, which reflects our full support for the process of reconciliation and its requirements, as well as the role that the international community will continue to play in building peace in Guinea-Bissau.

**Mr. Hamer** (Netherlands): I thank the Under-Secretary-General for his introduction of the report and for the additional information that he has provided. The report overall seems quite positive, although we have Sir Kieran's concerns in mind of the worrying economic situation in Guinea-Bissau.

As the Secretary-General states in paragraph 23 of his report, Guinea-Bissau serves as a positive example of a case in which the region, the international community and the United Nations together were successful in promoting a peaceful solution with relatively modest means. We must keep the subject on the agenda to help Guinea-Bissau consolidate peace and democracy and to see to it that the moderate elements will continue to prevail.

The return to constitutional and democratic order in Guinea-Bissau is now complete, and it is important that the extra-constitutional structures, which had a role to play under the Abuja Accord and related agreements, now give way to the newly established constitutional institutions.

Our chief concern in this regard remains the military junta. The junta must be told in no uncertain terms that with the installation of the new Government its role has come to an end, and the military must now be depoliticized. The international community will not tolerate a revival in

any form of the junta on the political scene in Guinea-Bissau.

Another remaining source of concern is the slow pace of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration. The Government of Guinea-Bissau must take up this matter with priority. We also encourage the World Bank to accelerate its efforts in this regard. As a member of the Group of Friends, the Netherlands will continue to support the United Nations Peace-building Support Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNOGBIS) Trust Fund and is ready in principle to make a further contribution of 500,000 Dutch guilders.

Finally, my delegation will be happy to support the presidential statement to be made by you, Mr. President, and we thank the delegation of Mali, which currently holds the chairmanship of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), for its efforts in preparing these statements.

**Mr. Yel'chenko** (Ukraine): We would like to thank Sir Kieran Prendergast for his report, which offers solid grounds for hope that the concerted efforts of the people of Guinea-Bissau and of the international community have not been in vain.

We all recall the time of hardship in Guinea-Bissau, when the country was plagued by political tensions that sparked a brutal civil war. The United Nations was there at that time, ready to help the country to create an environment conducive to the restoration of peace, national reconciliation and democratic principles. The political controversy in the country has been resolved, and credit must be given to the efforts of the people of Guinea-Bissau, to the demonstrated political will of the parties involved, to the neighbouring countries, to the support of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries (CPLP), and to the outstanding work of the United Nations Peace-building Support Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNOGBIS).

The recent political developments in that country clearly demonstrate the strong will and the ability of the people of Guinea-Bissau to vote for change and to take the path of democracy, national reconciliation and unity.

We are most gratified at the fact that the commitments by the signatories to the Abuja Accord and other related agreements are being translated into

meaningful steps towards restoring democratic rule and constitutional order.

Following the transitional period, the new Government of Guinea-Bissau will be facing new and pressing challenges in various spheres, including the consolidation of democracy, the promotion of the demobilization and reintegration of the military into civil society, the strengthening of a fair judicial mechanism for those detained following the events of May 1999, and the energizing of the economy. The creation of social and economic conditions for the return of refugees and internally displaced persons should remain among the priority tasks for the young constitutional Government.

There is no time like the present for the international community to extend a helping hand to the people of Guinea-Bissau. The Security Council's approval of the revision and extension of the mandate of UNOGBIS for a year, starting from March 31, is an appropriate and essential step in this direction. However, political support alone cannot suffice; financial backing is also necessary in order to focus on the major needs of the country in the social and economic areas, and in this respect international donors must play a crucial role.

We sincerely hope that the case of Guinea-Bissau will vividly exemplify the success of the consolidated efforts of the people of that country and the international community at its best, and that the other countries in Africa which have yet to overcome their political and security difficulties will follow suit.

**Mr. Cappagli** (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): Let me at the outset thank you, Mr. President, for having convened this meeting in the form of an open briefing, which enhances the transparency of the work of the Security Council. This makes it possible for all of the Members of the United Nations to have access to the information provided to us.

We have read attentively the report of the Secretary-General of 24 March on developments in Guinea-Bissau, and we would like to thank Mr. Prendergast for his informative presentation.

The second round of elections, held in January, and the investiture of the new constitutional President of Guinea-Bissau, Mr. Kumba Yala, marked the close of the country's transitional phase, as provided for in the Abuja Accord.

Today we can state that this transitional phase has been successful. As emerges from the report of the Secretary-General, and from what we have heard from Mr. Prendergast, the general situation in Guinea-Bissau has improved. The rule of law has been restored to the country; relations with neighbouring countries are developing positively; and the humanitarian situation has improved, with the return of a large number of refugees to the country and of many internally displaced persons to their homes.

This has been possible thanks to the efforts of many people, first and foremost those of the people of Guinea-Bissau themselves. But we would also like to mention in particular the Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Samuel Nana-Sinkam, and the personnel of the United Nations Peace-building Support Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNOGBIS), among others.

Although, as we said earlier, the transitional phase has concluded, the tasks that the new Government must still face are daunting. As the report of the Secretary-General indicates, new relations must be established between the civilian Government and the armed forces, which must respect civilian authority; the problem of small arms must be addressed; the judicial system needs to be improved; and basic socio-economic needs must be met.

Successfully meeting these challenges will be a test for United Nations peace-building activities. UNOGBIS, whose revised mandate has been extended for a year as of 31 March, has a fundamental role to play in supporting the new Government of Guinea-Bissau. We urge the international community to give these tasks all the necessary support. We pledge our own support here in the Security Council.

Finally, we would like to lend our support to the draft presidential statement that has been prepared by the delegation of Mali.

**Mr. Andjaba** (Namibia): Namibia wishes to thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report on Guinea-Bissau. We also thank Mr. Prendergast for the update he has given us.

The situation of Guinea-Bissau was high on the agenda of the United Nations during the past year and it will continue to enjoy the attention of the international community, so as to enable the people of that country to consolidate their democracy. I therefore wish to take this

opportunity to congratulate the people of Guinea-Bissau. We commend them for the efforts they have made in bringing about peace and the rule of law in their country. The successful conclusion of the legislative and presidential elections and the formation of a broad-based Government are clear indications of their commitment to transform their country into a democracy.

We encourage the new Government of President Kumba Yala to embark upon a vigorous programme to promote genuine national reconciliation and to inculcate democratic values, the rule of law and good governance in Guinea-Bissau. These are important tenets for bringing prosperity and improving the quality of life for the people of Guinea-Bissau, whose ingenuity and enterprise can be realized with the full support of the international community.

In this connection, we pay special tribute to the Representative of the Secretary-General and to the men and women of the United Nations Peace-building Support Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNOGBIS) for the tireless efforts they have made in assisting the people of Guinea-Bissau. Our special thanks also go to the Member States, United Nations agencies, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries, for their support and the critical role they have played in the peace process in Guinea-Bissau. We call on the international community to continue to support the reconstruction process in that country.

Guinea-Bissau needs a dependable and democratically accountable defense force. The process for induction into the force must, as a matter of priority, take members with no track record of gross human rights violations or active involvement in politics. Members unfit for service in the force must be given skills that are transferrable into civilian life.

We express our concern about the flow of small arms in the country, and we wish to associate ourselves with the point made by Ambassador Hasmy in this regard.

Finally, we wish President Kumba Yala and the people of Guinea-Bissau every success.

**Sir Jeremy Greenstock** (United Kingdom): I share the unity of view in both the thanks and praise that have come out of the statements this morning, and also in the note of optimism that we have seen a relative success for the United Nations in Guinea-Bissau.

I just wanted to make two quick points. One is that we must, on this issue, make sure that we get the post-conflict situation right. I think this is a chance for us to go on focusing on what happens after the worst has been resolved, with the help of the United Nations and the excellent work done by Mr. Nana-Sinkam and the United Nations Peace-building Support Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNOGBIS). That includes, as people have said this morning, focusing on the police and the armed forces in particular.

But there is another aspect to it, and that is the regional aspect. Too often in Africa we have seen progress at one point washed out by things moving back in from the region or from outside. The flow of small arms is one example, but regional politics can also do damage. We may have to watch that very carefully in Sierra Leone, for instance. But with the elections in Senegal, the success in Guinea-Bissau and — I hope — with an improvement in the fragile situation in Sierra Leone, West Africa is beginning to show us a bit of an example of how we can do things in Africa. We must keep an eye on that post-conflict situation. So I would want this subject to come back to the Security Council so that we can keep a check on this part of it and not turn our backs on it because we think that the work has been done.

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

I join my colleagues in thanking Under-Secretary-General Kieran Prendergast for his presentation this morning. Let me also thank the Secretary-General for his report on recent developments in Guinea-Bissau.

Indeed, there have been positive developments. The post-conflict transitional process in Guinea-Bissau, as envisaged in the Abuja Accord, has come to an end with the formation of a broad-based Government and the inauguration of a pluralist parliament in the country.

We are encouraged to note that human rights as well as the humanitarian situation in Guinea-Bissau continue to improve. The United Nations Peace-building Support Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNOGBIS) and Mr. Nana-Sinkam are playing a very useful role in this regard. We also welcome the focused attention being given to the issues related to women and children.

Since the challenge now faced by Guinea-Bissau is to consolidate peace, stability and democracy, the role of

the United Nations in that country is also changing. The transition from peacekeeping to peace-building has been signified by the revised mandate of UNOGBIS approved by the Council on 10 March 2000. However, we believe it is still too early to be complacent. As the report makes clear, the situation remains precarious. The military maintains a high public posture. The continuing circulation of small arms compounds the security situation.

The United Nations and the international community have to remain vigilant and supportive. We have to watch out for any moves to offset the process of institutionalizing democracy in Guinea-Bissau. The supportive role of the Council is indeed essential in this context.

As the Secretary-General mentioned in his report, Guinea-Bissau today represents a case in which the United Nations, with full cooperation from national actors and support from the international community, has made a meaningful contribution at a modest cost.

In conclusion, Bangladesh would like to congratulate the people of Guinea-Bissau on their successful transition to democracy. We would also like to thank the Economic Community of West African States and its current Chairman, President Konaré of Mali, as well as the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries for their constructive role in this regard.

I now resume my function as the President of the Council and give the floor to Mr. Prendergast to make any comments that he might like to make at this stage.

**Mr. Prendergast:** Maybe I could pick out five points from this very interesting discussion this morning. First of

all, I detected a very widespread view that there are solid grounds for hope in Guinea-Bissau, notwithstanding current economic and other problems. Secondly, there was also very wide and strong support for the people of Guinea-Bissau in the ongoing process of democratization and good governance. Thirdly, I must say I very much welcome the emphasis that was placed by speakers on the importance of consolidating the democratic process and on its essentially civilian nature. It was right to emphasize that. Fourthly, I noted — and this was not in my own introductory remarks — comments that correctly emphasized the dangers that small arms pose to the region, and therefore the importance of the arms-recovery programme.

Lastly, let me say how much I welcome the emphasis on post-conflict peace-building. The figure that one has heard is that about 60 per cent conflicts slide back into violence after settlements. This rather melancholy figure illustrates the importance of not resting on our oars once there has been a formal peace agreement. A lot remains to be done, and there are always Cinderella areas. And one of those, which I think is also highly relevant to Guinea-Bissau, is the question of demobilization and, particularly, reintegration into civilian society. Resources are required for this process; often in the past this has been placed on a voluntary basis, and it tends to be something of a Cinderella. So again, I very much thank those members of the Council who emphasized that this is an ongoing task and that we need to place more emphasis on post-conflict peace-building.

**The President:** There are no further speakers inscribed on my list. The next meeting of the Security Council to continue the consideration of the item on the agenda will take place immediately following the adjournment of the present meeting.

*The meeting rose at 11.25 a.m.*