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Fifty-sixth year

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New York

Provisional

<i>President:</i>	Mr. Cunningham	(United States of America)
<i>Members:</i>	Bangladesh	Mr. Chowdhury
	China	Mr. Wang Yingfan
	Colombia	Mr. Valdivieso
	France	Mr. Levitte
	Ireland	Mr. Ryan
	Jamaica	Miss Durrant
	Mali	Mr. Ouane
	Mauritius	Mr. Neewoor
	Norway	Mr. Kolby
	Russian Federation	Mr. Lavrov
	Singapore	Mr. Mahbubani
	Tunisia	Mr. Mejdoub
	Ukraine	Mr. Krokhmal
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.	Sir Jeremy Greenstock

Agenda

The situation concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo

Letter dated 12 April 2001 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2001/357).

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The meeting was resumed at 3.10 p.m.

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter from the representative of Zimbabwe 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. Jokohya (Zimbabwe) took the seat reserved for him at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President: Before continuing with the list of speakers, I thought I would indicate that if any of the visiting Ministers wishes to take the floor again to comment on what has been said during the Council discussion after Council members have spoken, we would wish to give him that opportunity, and I would ask his delegation to inform the Secretariat so that I would know to give him the floor when the Council members have finished speaking.

Mr. Wang Yingfan (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The Chinese delegation welcomes the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs of Uganda, the Special Envoy of the President of Rwanda and the Minister of Finance of Burundi. We welcome their presence at this open meeting of the Security Council.

The Chinese delegation appreciates the efforts undertaken by the Panel of Experts and Ms. Ba-N'Daw in submitting the final report on the illegal exploitation of natural resources and other forms of wealth of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We support the President of the Council in convening this meeting to listen to the views of the parties concerned. This will help put an end to the looting and illegal exploitation of the natural resources of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Judging from the relevant information provided by the Panel report, the illegal exploitation and looting of the natural resources of the Democratic Republic of the Congo have become rampant and are closely linked

to the continuation of the conflict. On this question, like other countries, we believe that the Security Council should take appropriate measures to put an end to this looting and illegal exploitation and should pave the way for the proper resolution of the conflict. Therefore, we endorse the extension of the mandate of the Panel for an appropriate period of time.

From what we have heard today at this meeting, we understand that the report of the Panel has had various strong repercussions. While fully affirming the efforts of the Panel, we also believe that the report has room for improvement. In some of the information provided in the report, there is no clear distinction between cases with conclusive evidence and those with evidence that is either inadequate or merely hearsay. We hope that, in the next phase of its work, the Panel of Experts will apply stricter standards. It should, in particular, focus its work on the looting and illegal exploitation of the resources of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, address the principal questions of significance and base its conclusions on hard evidence.

For the sake of its domestic development and an expeditious resolution of the conflict, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, as a sovereign State, must exploit its own natural resources. To link all exploitation of the natural resources of the Democratic Republic of the Congo with the continuation of the conflict would contradict the facts and be inimical to solving the problem of illegal exploitation. The conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is an intricate and complicated one, involving such issues as the withdrawal of foreign troops, the internal political dialogue, the disarmament of armed groups, national reconciliation and the security concerns of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and its neighbours. To a great extent, these issues are interconnected and affect one another.

The international community, especially the countries of the Great Lakes region, must work together. The signatories to the Lusaka Agreement need to implement it in earnest and expeditiously translate into action the commitments made under it. In order to solve the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, it will be necessary in the long run to achieve reconciliation among all nationalities and all political forces within the country.

With respect to the external environment, all countries in the Great Lakes region must enjoy peace and stability on the basis of such norms of international relations as mutual respect for state sovereign, territorial integrity and non-interference in internal affairs; they must also coexist peacefully and develop normal inter-State relationships. We have noted that the situation in the Great Lakes region has recently undergone some positive changes. The countries of the region have had increasing contact and have made positive efforts to improve inter-State relations. We hope that the parties to the conflict will treasure the hard-won momentum towards peace, take positive measures in a proactive and determined way and with statesmanlike vision and courage, and make effective efforts to end the conflict as soon as possible and to establish a peaceful and friendly environment conducive to the continued existence and development of the Great Lakes region.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo has long been mired in an intractable conflict. The country and its people have experienced formidable hardships and are faced with daunting challenges to put an end to the conflict and achieve peace. Their post-conflict tasks rapidly to eradicate poverty, achieve national reconciliation and consolidate peace will be most arduous. We appeal to the international community to resort to all possible ways and means to support and assist the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The Chinese Government and people will, as always, work with the international community and continue to make tireless efforts in this regard.

Mr. Valdivieso (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation congratulates you, Sir, on your wisdom in including this debate among the first actions on the Council's programme of work for this month. The subject of the illegal exploitation of the natural resources of the Democratic Republic of the Congo is clearly related to the establishment of an environment of peace and security in the Great Lakes region.

We wish to express our pleasure at the presence of the Ministers of Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Uganda; the envoy of the President of Rwanda; and the members of the Panel of Experts on the Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources and Other Forms of Wealth of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which prepared the report. We have listened with attention and interest to the statements made by

the representatives of those countries, which will allow this Council and my own country's authorities to gain a clearer picture of the facts relating to the disturbing situation described in the report.

The exploitation of the natural resources of the Congo is the subject of our deliberations today because of its close connection to the persistence of the conflict that continues to drain the lifeblood from that country. According to recent figures, and as has also been mentioned at this meeting, that conflict has directly or indirectly claimed over 2.5 million victims since 1998. 200,000 deaths have been caused directly by the fighting, while the rest have been the result of famine and diseases that have afflicted the population in the inhospitable places to which they have had to flee in escaping the violence.

In such circumstances, tragic events occur, such as last week's attack against the workers of the International Committee of the Red Cross, to which a number of speakers have referred. We offer our condolences to the Congolese and other families that have lost loved ones and we wish to offer thanks for the expressions of sorrow and solidarity with us over the loss of our compatriot in that incident.

My delegation believes that, in principle, the exploitation of the mineral, timber or agricultural resources of a country — apart from the issue of its legality or illegality — must be condemned by the international community if it contributes to creating a tragedy of such proportions. It is unacceptable that millions of persons must live in fear and poverty in the midst of their own country's natural wealth.

The report of the Panel of Experts on the Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources and Other Forms of Wealth of the Democratic Republic of the Congo also warrants the following comments.

First, we believe that the Secretary-General followed the criteria laid down by the Council to select the Panel of Experts, presided over by Ms. Ba-N'Daw. We favour an extension of its mandate for three months and we await with interest its final report.

Secondly, we have found the information and data provided in the report on the persons, armed groups and countries that exploit and market the resources of the Congo in order to finance the conflict to be staggering. Without commenting on the evidence presented, which is under study, analysis and

evaluation by our Government and our mission, we believe that the Governments and groups mentioned should proceed independently to investigate these data and convey the results of their investigations to the Panel of Experts during the following months of its mandate.

Thirdly, we recognize that, for a long time now and because of its geographical location, the eastern part of the Congo has strong economic links to the neighbouring countries. That is why it came as no surprise to us that there is an active import-export trade there. It is appropriate nonetheless to preserve the mutual benefits of that trade with a view to the future reconstruction of the economy of the Great Lakes region. Any peace conference for that region should take that aspect into account.

Fourthly and finally, we have taken note of the sanctions proposed by the authors of the report. Sanctions are indeed a legitimate mechanism whereby the Security Council can effect changes in the conduct of the armed participants in conflict situations. Nevertheless, before considering the use of this mechanism, we have always advocated a respectful dialogue conducive to cooperation with the international community, such as the one we are holding today. We would hope that this will hold true in the current instance.

I wish to conclude by stating our conviction that any action by the Council on the item before us today should be part of a vigorous effort to achieve a lasting peace in the Democratic Republic of the Congo — a peace that respects the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the countries of the Great Lakes region, and that also takes into account their legitimate security interests.

It is in this spirit that my delegation has expressed its wish to take part in the next mission of the Security Council to that region of Africa.

Mr. Kolby (Norway): The Government of Norway welcomes this open debate on the important topic of examining the link between the exploitation of natural resources in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the continuation of the tragic conflict in the Great Lakes region. We welcome the participation here today of the Ministers of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda, Uganda and Burundi as a sign of their commitment to the issue and to a peaceful solution to the conflict.

We thank the Panel of Experts on the Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources and Other Forms of Wealth of the Democratic Republic of the Congo for its report. The report provides extensive information on the complexity of the conflict and significant food for thought for our further deliberations. Before commenting on the Panel's report, I would, however, like to make some general remarks.

Norway notes with concern the terrible toll the conflict is having on the people, economy and environment of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and we remain strongly concerned about the lack of governance and continued violence, particularly in its eastern regions. The Government of Norway strongly condemns the recent murders of International Committee of the Red Cross personnel in Orientale Province and underlines the need to hold the guilty accountable for this hideous crime. Norway calls on the parties to ensure the safety of all international personnel working to assist the region in its quest for peace, security and development.

Furthermore, Norway continues to believe that the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement remains the path to a peaceful and lasting solution to the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Great Lakes region. We certainly hope that the countries and the various rebel groups involved in the conflict do not forget this fundamental premise. We continue to urge the parties to explore thoroughly all political avenues that might be available for finding a peaceful solution. In our view the parties to the conflict have taken significant steps since the adoption of Security Council resolution 1341 (2001) in February of this year. The parties have begun the disengagement process, and the deployment of observers and liaison officers of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) is proceeding. However, other key aspects of the peace process, notably demobilization, disarmament, rehabilitation and reintegration of the negative forces operating in the region and a constructive inter-Congolese dialogue leading to effective governance of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, remain indispensable. We look forward to further signs of political will and common pursuit among the parties to achieve real progress in these regards.

The efforts to re-establish peaceful relations in the Great Lakes region must take due account of economic agendas in conflict. The Panel report

indicates that considerable illegal exploitation of the natural resources of the Democratic Republic of the Congo is taking place. We find this deplorable and appeal to all parties to cease without delay all exploitation activities that fuel the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In this regard, we would like to make some remarks regarding cooperation with the Panel of Experts. In both reports — the interim report of 16 January and the report of 12 April — the Panel complains about the lack of cooperation from certain countries, individuals and private companies. We regret that the Panel has faced “a problem of imbalance in the acquisition of data” (*S/2001/357, para. 11*) and that “This constraint can be felt in the report.” (*ibid.*) We would like to urge all parties to cooperate fully and to provide the Panel of Experts with relevant data as soon as possible. We will always need to ask ourselves what may have been omitted in a report like this. Information has come to our attention indicating that some private companies involved in this exploitation business are not mentioned in the report. We would like to ask the Panel of Experts to look into this matter.

Several members of the Security Council have asked the Chairperson of the Panel of Experts to provide the Council with a more assertive presentation of the findings, separating hard facts from more loosely based information. It is very difficult for the members of the Council to distinguish between information and accusations that are based on primary data that can link the accused parties to illegal exploitation with some certainty, and the parts of the report that are based on information obtained in interviews. If possible, the next presentation should contain corroborative evidence against those involved.

We agree with the assumption behind the mandate of the Panel of Experts that the parties to the conflict are motivated by the desire to control and profit from the natural resources. Moreover, we take note of the indications that the parties finance their armies and military operations by exploiting these resources. This is reflected in the initial conclusions and recommendations of the Panel. My delegation supports an extension of the mandate of the Panel of Experts by three months in order for the Panel to complete its work. Further confirmation by the Panel — beyond reasonable doubt — that countries in the region and other actors continue to be involved in exploitation activities fuelling the conflict in the Democratic

Republic of the Congo will be perceived as a very serious matter by this Council.

In conclusion, we urge the parties to the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement to maintain the momentum that has been created over recent months and look forward to the further dialogue on the next steps to take place after the Security Council’s mission to the area. We believe that the full commitment by all involved parties to peaceful negotiations will remain indispensable in the search for a lasting solution to the conflict.

Mr. Chowdhury (Bangladesh): Bangladesh gives warm greetings to you, Mr. President, on your assumption of the presidency of the Council. We are confident that under your leadership and the United States leadership, we will have an effective presidency.

We meet here against the backdrop of the horrendous murder in Bunia of six humanitarian personnel of the International Committee of the Red Cross. There can be no excuse for such heinous acts. My delegation conveys our sincere condolences to the bereaved families. We demand a prompt inquiry into the incident so that those responsible are brought to justice without delay.

We have great pleasure in welcoming the Ministers of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Uganda and Burundi, and the Special Envoy of Rwanda, who are with us today to discuss an issue of serious significance for peace in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Ms. Safiatou Ba-N’Daw, Chairperson of the Panel of Experts on the Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources and Other Forms of Wealth in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and her colleagues on the Panel — Mr. François Ekoko, Mr. Mel Holt, Mr. Henri Maire and Mr. Moustapha Tall — deserve our appreciation for their courage and commitment in pursuing the mandate given to them by the Council. Their comprehensive report and their findings and recommendations assume critical importance, particularly in view of the current forward movement in the peace process in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

We shall limit our observations to five issues. The first is the findings and conclusions of the Panel. The Panel has concluded that the plundering of the resources of the Democratic Republic of the Congo continues and that there is a clear linkage between

illegal exploitation and the continuation of the war. If the conclusion is established beyond doubt, all concerned will have to assume due responsibility and take measures to break the nexus between the illegal exploitation of the resources of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the continuation of the war.

The findings of the Panel in its present report should be examined, taking the views of concerned countries and other relevant parties fully into account. There are questions about the methodology used, about the quality of evidence and about the nature of the conclusions. In fact, the main purpose of today's meeting is to hear the various views. The Panel will do well if it can substantiate its conclusions against disclaimers offered.

The findings and conclusions of such expert panels have serious implications for the objectives pursued by the Security Council. We stress that reports of panels of experts issued in the name of the United Nations should meet evidentiary standards and other relevant norms. A panel should, at the same time, be able to investigate and to submit its findings with absolute independence and objectivity.

The second issue is the definition of illegality. We have noted the Panel's definition of illegal exploitation. It has been stated that the definition does not seem to conform to the provisions of the Lusaka Agreement. There are questions on the legality or illegality of exploitation of resources in areas under rebel control. The question is relevant, as some of the rebel movements are signatories of the Lusaka Agreement.

The third issue relates to an immediate response by the Council, concerned parties and Member States to the findings and recommendations. As an interim response, the Council should call for immediate cessation of the illegal exploitation of the mineral and other resources of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The Panel recommends a number of steps that, we believe, Member States can take unilaterally at this stage. They include steps with regard to the import, export and transportation of certain minerals and financial transactions that have been put into question. Countries involved may also consider declaring an immediate moratorium on the supply of weapons and all military matériel to rebel groups operating in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

A unique area of concern is conflict timber. The world is aware of conflict diamonds and other high

value commodities. It is a revelation to us that plundering extends to such mass-volume products as timber and non-timber forest products. We support the Panel's recommendation that concerned countries should, as per international practice, declare to the United Nations Forum on Forests the origins of the timber that is being shipped from their seaports, as well as the certification documents of such timber. Timber and non-timber forest products coming from warring areas should be declared as "conflict timber and non-timber forest products". Similar positive steps may also be considered by the countries on the demand side.

The Council's demand for such interim measures should extend to all actors involved in illegal activities: Governments, armed forces, individuals and public or private enterprises engaged directly or indirectly in the extraction, transport, import and export of resources of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The fourth issue relates to further action by the Council. Any specific measures by the Council should follow consideration of the addendum to the report that the Panel will be requested to submit before the expiry of its extended mandate. The Panel will be expected to respond to the comments of those cited in the report, update its data and complete unfinished tasks in the remaining areas of investigation. Council action in terms of appropriate measures can follow only after conclusive evidence is available and after parties responsible for the illegal activities fail to take corrective measures or to comply with the Council's demands.

Finally, we would like to underline that the Democratic Republic of the Congo should have full sovereignty over its national resources; exploitation, illegal or otherwise, by outside actors should not contribute to sustaining the war.

The Council's purpose in pursuing the matter is to facilitate the peace process; it should take all appropriate measures to that end.

Mr. Mahbubani (Singapore): We would like to join our colleagues in welcoming the ministers from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Burundi and Uganda and the high-level envoy from Rwanda. I think that this high-level participation reaffirms the importance of the debate we are having today.

We share the shock and horror that has been expressed by many of our colleagues over the killing of

personnel of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC); we hope that effective measures will be taken to resolve this state of affairs.

The advantage of speaking late in the day is that many of the points that we would have liked to make have already been made by our colleagues, including most recently by Ambassador Chowdhury, who said that we all have to reaffirm the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and that the looting and pillaging of resources are unacceptable. Thus, at this stage we have only two additional points to add to the discussion.

The first point we want to make is that the Panel of Experts, in delivering its report (S/2001/357) to us, has basically delivered what may be called a hot potato. It is a hot potato because it has created a dilemma for the Council, and the dilemma is this: if the contents of the report and the findings of the Panel are correct — and I stress the word “if” because we, as a national delegation, do not have the capacity to verify, confirm or deny the findings of the report — then the Council has an obligation to take action in response to the points made in the report. If they are not correct, then we have an obligation, as an institution, to clear the record and ensure that no false or misleading impressions are left behind.

Frankly, we are not sure what institutional strength we might have, as the Council, to verify the claims made in the report; but such verification we have to do. Clearly, before we make any decisions in the Council, we have to be sure that they are based on sound facts and due diligence. I am glad that this is a point that has been echoed in several of the speeches that have been made in response to the Panel’s findings.

In some ways, we have bought ourselves some time. In giving the Panel a three-month extension, we hope that the Panel will make every effort to respond to all the points raised today — and I am glad that members of the Panel have been here listening to the statements made both by members of the Council and by the high-level envoys who are here — so that when the Panel comes back to us in three months’ time we will, we hope, be in a better position to respond adequately and effectively to the many strong claims found in the Panel’s report.

The second point we want to make here is that, in looking at the whole issue, we should be aware that in

some ways the issue of natural resources exploitation is only one of the dimensions of the conflict we are addressing. It may be useful to refer to a quote from a recent book by a writer named Michael T. Klare, who has just published a book entitled *Resource Wars: The New Landscape of Global Conflict*.

“Particularly vulnerable are once-colonized areas where the occupying power destroyed local institutions, plundered the countryside of its human and material resources, and departed without laying the groundwork for effective, self-financing national governments ... once a rebellion has erupted, the fighting often evolves into resource conflict.”

In the case of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, that legacy of exploitation began more than 100 years ago, when King Leopold II of Belgium colonized the region as his personal fiefdom and began the systematic exploitation of its natural wealth. More recently, the aftermath of the Rwanda genocide in 1994 and the rebellions in 1996 and 1998 have further complicated the situation and transformed economic activities and trade networks in the region.

Clearly, we have to address deep-rooted problems when trying to analyse the situation here. It is doubtful that we can do so very clearly in such an open setting. But we are pleased to note that the retreat we will have this weekend with the Secretary-General will touch on the issues of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. I hope that in that debate we will address openly some of the more difficult issues, which cannot be addressed in such an open session as this.

Finally, let me just state for the record that we support the presidential statement to be issued at the end of the day.

Miss Durrant (Jamaica): My delegation wishes to commend you, Mr. President, for convening this open meeting on the issue of the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, as this provides an opportunity for us to address in a transparent manner the issue of the illegal exploitation of the natural resources of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and its linkage with the continuation of the conflict in that country and the implications for the Great Lakes region as a whole.

My delegation wishes to thank Mme Ba-N’Daw for the presentation of the report of the Panel of Experts appointed by the Secretary-General at the

request of the Council. We recognize only too well, from the report as well as from Mme Ba-N'Daw's presentation, that the task has been an arduous one.

My delegation joins others in welcoming to the Council the Ministers from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Burundi, Rwanda and Uganda. We have taken careful note of their statements, because my delegation believes that it is important for those who have a direct interest in the report to be listened to by the Council before any action is taken.

My delegation has noted that the report contains disturbing allegations about the illegal exploitation of the natural resources of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Those allegations regard financial and economic matters, the diamond business, forests and timber. We have noted that they are extremely serious in nature and must be studied along with the comments we heard this morning from the representatives of the Governments concerned. In that regard, we welcome the determination expressed by several of the Ministers who spoke that investigations will be carried out and that where perpetrators are found, they will be brought to justice.

The Panel's recommendations revolve around six broad themes, and they carry very serious implications. It is in that context that we support the extension of the Panel's mandate for a further period of three months so that it can finalize its work. It will only be at that stage that the Council will be able to examine the recommendations and the further findings of the Panel so that it can take appropriate action.

My delegation supports the action to be taken by the Panel based on its action plan, as well as that outlined in the statement to be delivered by the President at the end of this debate.

We continue to be extremely concerned about the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, because with so many people affected, including more than two million internally displaced persons and refugees in neighbouring States, we have on more than one occasion drawn attention to the makings of an immense humanitarian tragedy.

We are pleased that progress has been made towards the implementation of the Lusaka Agreement. We believe that the mission to be carried out by the Council later this month will go a long way in providing a basis for further action by the Council in

support of the implementation of the Lusaka Agreement.

At this stage, my delegation wishes to express our sincere condolences to the families of the staff members of the International Committee of the Red Cross and to the Governments of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Colombia and Switzerland. Those persons who lost their lives in the cause of peace remind us of the immense pressure under which humanitarian workers — who go into areas into which we often would not send peacekeepers — labour on behalf of the international community.

The discussions today clearly attest to one fact, and that is the need for a comprehensive and lasting peace in the Democratic Republic of the Congo within a regional context involving the entire Great Lakes region. We look forward to that day, and we look forward to continuing support to the people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and to the people of the neighbouring States as the international community seeks to bring peace to that war-torn region.

Again we emphasize that there can be no military solution to the crisis in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. It is therefore important for us to continue to give our support to the steps leading towards national reconciliation.

Mr. Neewoor (Mauritius): Allow me, first of all, to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of May. We have no doubt that the United States presidency of the Council this month will be very productive and fruitful. We also thank you for holding this important public meeting to discuss the report of the Panel of Experts on the Illegal Exploitation of the Natural Resources and Other Forms of Wealth of the Democratic Republic of the Congo by various parties involved in the conflict in that country.

This public meeting is an important opportunity for all interested parties to comment freely on the contents of the report, and the views expressed here will undoubtedly help the Security Council in charting the course of its future action.

In this regard, my delegation is particularly pleased to welcome in the Council Chamber the Foreign Minister of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mr. Leonard She Okitundu; the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs and Regional Cooperation of

Uganda, Mr. Amama Mbabazi; the Minister of Finance of Burundi, Mr. Charles Nihangaza; and the Special Envoy of the President of the Rwandese Republic, Mr. Patrick Mazimpaka.

We also appreciate very much the presence of Ms. Safiatou Ba-N'Daw, Chairperson, and of the members of the Panel on the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

My delegation commends the Chairperson and the members of the Panel for the comprehensive report they have submitted in fulfilment of their important mandate. We must all recognize that the Panel has been entrusted with an extremely complex and daunting task. We thank the members of the Panel for the dedication and courage with which they have fulfilled their responsibilities.

A report of this nature, based on investigations carried out in difficult circumstances we all know, will obviously be questioned by concerned parties. There may be criticisms with regard to the form, method and depth of the investigations carried out, as well as on the conclusions, recommendations and comments contained in the report.

In certain cases, criticism may be genuine and justified, and in others just superficial. But overall the report has confirmed beyond a doubt that there is indeed massive illegal exploitation of the natural resources of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, including diamonds, coltan, copper, cobalt, timber and gold, and that there is a nexus between such illegal activities and the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo is a sovereign nation, and the resources of the country belong solely to its people. It is unfortunate that this important African country has been engulfed in conflict over the last few years and that several neighbouring countries have become involved in it for one reason or another. It is a sad reflection, however, that the conflict has served as an opportunity for many to plunder the resources of the Congo, particularly at a time when the country has been in a situation of crisis. We urge all concerned parties to cease forthwith all unlawful activities in the Congo.

With regard to the report of the Panel, my delegation supports the proposal that the mandate be extended to enable the Panel to pursue and complete its important work. We urge all parties concerned to

cooperate fully with the Panel and to ensure the security of the members of the Panel while it is carrying out its important mandate on behalf of the United Nations.

In the meantime, we support the view that the Security Council should keep in abeyance the application of measures recommended in the present report until the additional report of the Panel becomes available at the end of the three-month extension of the mandate.

We urge the Governments concerned to take such unilateral measures as they deem necessary to ensure that their nationals are not in any manner involved in illegal exploitation of the resources of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In this regard, we welcome the initiative taken by the Ugandan Government to carry out investigations in the country.

The conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo has not only inflicted immense suffering on the people of that country, but has also affected peace and security in the region as a whole. It has also impeded development and progress as well as regional cooperation. This deadly conflict must end, and the way to achieve that is full implementation of the Lusaka Agreement and full compliance with the disengagement plans which have been subsequently signed by all parties involved in the conflict. We urge all the parties to honour their commitments in this regard.

I cannot end without expressing our shock and dismay at the killings of International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) workers in Bunia. We hope that the parties that have influence in the area will help identify the assassins and bring them to justice.

Finally, Mauritius supports the presidential statement which is proposed to be issued at the end of this meeting.

The President: I thank the representative of Mauritius for his remarks addressed to me.

I will now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of the United States.

I think that we have had a very interesting discussion today which opens a new dimension to the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and my delegation and I listened with great interest to our guests from the region.

The United States believes that the Panel provided a broadly accurate picture of the emerging and troubling economic dimension of the crisis. We may not agree with all of the elements of the report, but we cannot ignore this dimension of the conflict if we want peace to come to the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the region. I am pleased that it seems that we all agree that the Panel should complete its work and should work to further refine its report over the next several months.

The report of the Panel reminds us that the resources of the Democratic Republic of the Congo are not being used for the benefit of the Congolese people. While we do not believe that the pursuit of wealth was a cause of the conflict, we do believe that the unregulated pursuit of the wealth of the Congo is a consequence of the conflict. The longer the conflict drags on, the more blurred the lines between cause and consequence become.

We must also, in looking at the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, give serious consideration to the imminent report of the International Rescue Committee, which maintains that the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo has caused mortality to increase by 1 million deaths per year since the outbreak. We should also bear in mind the humanitarian and human rights reporting of our Secretary-General and his colleagues in the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Finally, we again recall with sorrow and outrage the murder of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) workers on 26 April.

There are two areas in the report of the Panel of Experts that I would like to call to the attention of the Chairperson and her colleagues in connection with their further work. The first is the inclusion of the former Rwandan Armed Forces (ex-FAR) and Interahamwe in a category labelled as "so-called negative forces". While we are certain that the Panel in no way meant to diminish the opprobrium with which the Council regards the perpetrators of the Rwanda genocide, this is an unfortunate linguistic construction that we hope can be avoided in future.

The second issue has to do with the Kiswahili language, which is misidentified as a foreign tongue spoken by those who invaded the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Kiswahili is widely spoken in the Congo

and is a lingua franca of commerce and intellectual life throughout East and Central Africa. It is an African language that binds Africans together within their countries and within their region, and labelling it as a foreign language in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is inaccurate.

The report tells us that the actions of those who are in violation of the sovereignty of the Democratic Republic of the Congo stand out as most objectionable. However, the report also states that the activities of the Congolese rebel groups, the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and some of its allies are contributing to these troubling events. In addition to the message that the Democratic Republic of the Congo's occupiers are financing their activities through illegal or illicit activities, we also take from this report the fact that the country remains subject to foreign and indigenous corrupt practices. While this is a colonial legacy, it is also a post-independence phenomenon. While foreigners must accept their responsibility for the plundering of the Democratic Republic of the Congo's resources, so, too, must Congolese, past and present, take such responsibility.

Another cause for concern has been the failure of the Government of Zimbabwe to cooperate with the Panel. We are not here to pass judgement on that Government's activities, but we must remind each other of our obligation to cooperate with this type of investigation. The Governments that have extended the fullest cooperation are those that came under the greatest criticism. This cannot be allowed to create a future dynamic whereby Governments choose non-cooperation as their best policy option.

I want to repeat something that other speakers have noted, because it is essential to our discussion here today and to the follow-up. Our goal is not to punish or apportion blame; our goal is, and must remain, the successful implementation of the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement and the relevant Security Council resolutions. I note that Minister Mbabazi and others this morning noted that the Lusaka Agreement offers a unique opportunity to find peace in the region. We agree, and we want to continue working with all of the partners in the area within the Lusaka process to realize its potential.

Peace based on the Lusaka Agreement and the relevant Security Council resolutions is the only answer in the region. That is why the Security Council

is sending a mission to the region later this month, and that is why we are here today. We believe that peace in the Democratic Republic of the Congo must rest on three pillars: the full withdrawal of all foreign forces; the disarmament, demobilization, resettlement and reintegration of armed groups, particularly the former Rwandan Armed Forces (ex-FAR) and the Interahamwe; and the implementation of a new political dispensation arrived at via the inter-Congolese dialogue. Ending the illegal exploitation of the natural resources of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and protecting its people cannot be accomplished in a vacuum, but they are both near-term and long-term requirements. The foreign and domestic parties must end such activities so as to help create a climate in which peace can take root. However, the Congolese parties themselves must also build the institutions that alone can provide for the human rights and welfare of their people.

With new momentum in the peace process, we hope that the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is coming to an end. As we look to the future, I recall the words of Abraham Lincoln, who, speaking in the waning days of our own national nightmare, said:

“With malice toward none, with charity for all ... let us strive on to finish the work we are in, to bind up the nation’s wounds, to care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow and his orphan, to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations.”

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Japan. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Akasaka (Japan): At the outset, I would like to express my Government’s shock and deep regret at the deaths of six workers of the International Committee of the Red Cross in the Democratic Republic of the Congo on 27 April, and to extend our sincere condolences to their bereaved families. Such heinous attacks on humanitarian workers must be condemned.

Before commenting on the report of the Panel of Experts on the Illegal Exploitation of Natural

Resources and Other Forms of Wealth in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, I would like to emphasize that the resolution of the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo — in which nearly half of the countries on the African continent are involved and more than 3 million lives have been lost — is critical not only to the countries directly concerned, but to the peace and prosperity of Africa as a whole. Japan urges all the parties concerned to implement the Lusaka Peace Agreement without further delay, and calls upon the Security Council to make every effort to fully implement phase II of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The illicit exploitation of diamonds and other natural resources must be stopped, as it poses one of the main obstacles to the settlement of the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and is a cause of recurring open hostilities. Indeed, as mentioned in the report of the Panel of Experts, the exploitation of non-diamond resources, including such mineral resources as gold and coltan, as well as timber, is also fuelling the conflict in the eastern part of the country. Although the report before us contains a number of recommendations for curtailing the illicit activities, today I would like to focus my comments on the following two points.

First, the relationship between the illicit exploitation of natural resources and the protraction of the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo must be considered in the wider context of consolidating peace throughout the region. This will require a comprehensive and integrated approach. In particular, as part of its efforts to achieve a peaceful settlement of the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Security Council should at the same time address the economic and security problems in neighbouring Burundi, Rwanda and Uganda. It will be necessary to pursue peace-building, post-conflict reconstruction, development and democratization from a regional perspective.

Secondly, in order to ensure the effectiveness of such a region-wide integrated approach, the Council must ensure the smooth transition from one stage of the peace process to the next, from conflict resolution to peace-building to post-conflict development. This will require a coherent strategy throughout the entire period of United Nations involvement. Any gap in the extension of international assistance required at

different stages, particularly at a point of transition from one stage to the next, must be avoided.

As pointed out in the Secretary-General's recent report on the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (S/2001/373), the Council must now begin to contemplate entering phase III, which involves the withdrawal of foreign forces as well as the implementation of the process of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration or resettlement of ex-soldiers. In this reconstruction and development phase, social and economic assistance will be especially critical. To ensure that it is extended as smoothly and efficiently as possible, it is incumbent upon the Security Council to cooperate more closely with major donor countries, as well as with international financial institutions such as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank and with the United Nations Development Programme.

Before concluding, I would like to offer my comments on the reference made in the report to the companies located in various countries, including Japan, which the report claims are importing uncertified timber from a Ugandan-Thai forest company called the DARA-Forest, located in the Ituri area of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The Japanese authorities are investigating the matter and would appreciate any concrete evidence that the Panel of Experts might have to substantiate the statement made in the report and that would assist our Government in its investigation. I wish to assure members that Japan is doing its utmost to halt such illegal practices.

In this connection, I would like to call the attention of the members of the Council to the communiqué that was issued at the conclusion of the G-8 Okinawa Summit last July, which contained a paragraph calling for the suspension of illegal logging and trade practices in the interest of sustainable forest management. Japan is committed to implementing the provisions of that communiqué in cooperation with the international community.

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

Mr. Duval (Canada): Canada welcomes the report of the Panel of Experts on the Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources and Other Forms of Wealth of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The

members of the Panel were set an extraordinarily difficult task, and through Ms. Ba-N'Daw we thank them for their work.

For almost three years, the Democratic Republic of the Congo has been torn apart by a conflict regional in scope and devastating in toll. As in Angola and Sierra Leone, where the illicit exploitation of diamonds and other resources has helped fuel conflict, we have had reports of systematic looting of the natural resources, fuelling continued violence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. As the report before us makes clear, economic interests have been at the very heart of this conflict.

The war in the Democratic Republic of the Congo constitutes a disturbing example of a new sort of conflict, one in which war itself has become profitable, where economic interests compete with political objectives and where the aim of some belligerents is not to prevail, but to sustain the conflict and those conditions that allow criminality to flourish. Advancing peace and human security in such a context is a daunting task.

(spoke in French)

The report of the Panel of Experts contains disturbing allegations that the Council must consider carefully. Where the allegations are borne out, the Council must act. In the first instance, the Council should work with the relevant Member States to ensure that action is taken to stop the looting of resources. If those Member States refuse to cooperate, the Council must consider more robust action.

As several speakers have emphasized, it is not a matter of punishment or blame, but rather of ensuring the implementation of the Lusaka Agreement and the decisions taken by the Council. Any individuals, Governments and armed groups that have illegally exploited the natural resources of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and, through their activities, have contributed to the perpetuation of the war there, merit our condemnation. The exploitation of resources, and the fuelling of war, must end without delay. Progress in this regard will be critical to reducing the flow of arms circulating in the region, which is itself a key prerequisite for the achievement of peace.

The illegal exploitation of resources of the Democratic Republic of the Congo contributes directly to the suffering of the civilian populations. The

International Rescue Committee estimates that up to 3 million people have died as a result of the war, directly or indirectly. Three out of four children in the Democratic Republic of the Congo are dying before the age of two. Those who do not die run the risk of being recruited by armed groups fighting for control over regions rich in resources. In some instances, these groups are engaging in deliberate campaigns of terror among civilian populations and committing violations of human rights and humanitarian law with impunity. Populations, forced to flee from violence and to leave their land and homes, are deprived of their means of subsistence, further exacerbating this humanitarian crisis. More than 2 million people are internally displaced, and hundreds of thousands are refugees.

Humanitarian access must be provided to help all these people. All parties to the conflict must respect their obligations, including the need to ensure the safety and freedom of movement of humanitarian personnel. Canada is deeply saddened by last week's tragic murder of six Red Cross workers, and our condolences go to the families of the victims. These events remind us of the often difficult and dangerous environments in which humanitarian workers are operating, often finding themselves in peril while trying to provide protection and assistance to those most in need.

The Lusaka signatories, many of which are at this table, must, without delay, bring this conflict to an end. The implementation of the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement and relevant Security Council resolutions constitutes the only viable solution to the crisis in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The inter-Congolese dialogue is also crucial to peace and stability in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and must be held as soon as possible. We are encouraged by the latest achievements of the facilitator, whose Office Canada broadly supports. We welcome the cooperation now extended to the facilitator by the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The Government of Canada remains fully committed to the peace process in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which, we hope, will bring a just and lasting peace to the region.

Full consideration must be given to the report of the Panel of Experts, and the Panel's mandate must be extended so that it can complete their work. A full understanding of the causes of this conflict must be

achieved if the international community is to assist the parties in establishing effective political solutions and in choking off economic incentives for the continuation of the war.

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

Mr. Schori (Sweden): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The Central and Eastern European Countries associated with the European Union — Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia — and the associated countries Cyprus, Malta and Turkey align themselves with this statement.

The European Union also welcomes the report of the Panel of Experts, and we recognize the work accomplished by the Panel so far and note with interest the conclusions and recommendations put forward in its report.

The European Union supports the decision by the Security Council to extend the mandate of the Panel of Experts for a period of three months. It is important that this time be given to allow the Panel, *inter alia*, to gather additional information on aspects not fully covered in the report of 12 April, such as the role of certain regional actors, to fully analyse existing data and to gather comments from parties and actors cited in the report. We welcome the commitment by the Security Council to consider both the current report and the expected addendum when the Panel reports back in August with an update on the situation. It is our hope that the follow-up will contribute to the peace process in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which has seen encouraging developments already.

Though further investigations and consultations are warranted, the European Union wants to put on record today its concern at the general findings in the report. They indicate that widespread illegal exploitation of natural resources and other forms of wealth has occurred in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and that there is a link between exploitation and the continuation of the conflict. That is, in short, unacceptable.

The European Union urges Governments and rebel groups to investigate the information contained in the report, to take action to prevent any illegal

exploitation and to refrain from exploitation contributing to the continuation of the conflict. We also call on other actors, individuals and private companies alike to act responsibly and cease any involvement in illegal exploitation. For its part, the European Union has taken note of the information in the report relating specifically to alleged activities by European companies, and member States are following up on that information.

Today's meeting is crucial as a forum for parties to elaborate their positions in response to the report by the Panel of Experts. The European Union particularly appreciates the presence here today of the Ministers of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda, Burundi and Uganda, and I welcome the announcements made this morning by the Ministers of Uganda and Burundi on investigations to be carried out regarding the activities of their nationals. We take their active involvement as a sign of commitment on the part of their Governments to engage in a constructive dialogue on the issues addressed by the Panel. Such political dialogue, both among the parties directly concerned and between them and the Security Council, the United Nations and the international community as a whole, should be pursued to enable measures effectively putting an end to illegal exploitation and to exploitation which sustains the conflict.

Establishing a legal framework for a sustainable management of natural resources is crucial for any long-term development policy. As the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the neighbouring countries gradually emerge from the devastating conflict that has engulfed the region, the opportunities to invest in rehabilitation, reconstruction and socio-economic development will grow. The European Union remains ready to respond to these needs, including by assisting the countries of the region to establish a sustainable framework for resource management.

The European Union reaffirms its position that lasting peace in the Democratic Republic of the Congo can be achieved only through a negotiated peace settlement that is fair to all parties; through respect for the territorial integrity and national sovereignty of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and for democratic principles and human rights in all States of the region; and by taking account of the security interests of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and its neighbouring countries. We reiterate our strong support for the Lusaka Agreement as the consensual basis for

peace in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the region.

In this context, the European Union welcomes the report of the Secretary-General of 17 April reflecting that some progress has been made in the implementation of the Lusaka Agreement and confirming in particular that phase II of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo has been launched. The European Union also welcomes the plans for a Security Council mission to the region later this month and hopes that this active commitment by the Security Council can assist the parties in taking the right decisions towards peace.

Studying the interface between economic interests and armed conflicts is vital in order to get a full understanding on a global scale of today's threats to international peace and security. The European Union welcomes the increasing attention given by the Security Council to this aspect in the context of a number of conflicts currently on its agenda.

Finally, I want to add my voice to those that have expressed today their sorrow and outrage at the murder of the six workers of the International Committee of the Red Cross in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Our sympathies go to their families and relatives.

The President: The next speaker on my list is the representative of Namibia. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Andjaba (Namibia): I wish to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council and to thank you for arranging this important meeting.

I would also like to take this opportunity to commend Ambassador Greenstock for the excellent manner in which he conducted the work of the Council in April.

My delegation welcomes the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, as well as the Ministers from Uganda and Burundi and the special envoy from Rwanda.

I would also like to thank the Chairperson of the Panel of Experts, Ms. Ba-N'Daw, for introducing the report of the Panel this morning.

At the outset, I would like to express my delegation's profound sorrow and deep condolences for the tragic murder of six staff members of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) on 26 April in Ituri province in north-eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. They died while providing much-needed humanitarian assistance to the people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. It is our hope that this tragedy will not seriously disrupt the important work of the ICRC and other humanitarian organizations. My delegation condemns this cowardly act in the strongest possible terms and calls for immediate investigations to ensure that the perpetrators and their instigators are brought to justice. These murders, furthermore, should be condemned by everybody. This latest incident is again proof of the massive violations of human rights and international humanitarian law that are being committed in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Contrary to what we have heard from some delegations this morning, the Panel produced an objective, comprehensive and well-substantiated report. Its working methods were sound and it had an inclusive approach by holding extensive discussions with Governments, international organizations and non-governmental organizations. The use of primary resource documents, often produced by countries themselves, and of vital statistics objectively revealed the discrepancies between exports and trade before and during the war in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. This approach has confirmed beyond any doubt the ruthless plundering of the resources of the Democratic Republic of the Congo by the aggressor countries, the rebel groups and individuals beyond normal trade under bilateral or multilateral trade agreements.

I, for one, did not expect the countries of Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi to say: "Yes, we are looting the resources of the Democratic Republic of the Congo". Even in 1998, when these countries first aggressed the Democratic Republic of the Congo, they were denying that they had troops in the Congo, but eventually they admitted it. Burundi in particular denied it until recently, when they confirmed to the world that they had withdrawn three battalions from Congo and that two remained. This information is with the Security Council, and we believe that the international community should not be fooled by such denials.

Furthermore, the quality of the report reflects the high degree of professionalism of the Panel members. Throughout their work they have maintained a strict evidentiary standard to substantiate their findings. The conclusions reached in the report also clearly show that the invasion of the Democratic Republic of the Congo took place for economic reasons, not because of security concerns as claimed by the invading forces. The Security Council should take strong measures to correct the situation and to deter the committing of similar atrocities in the future.

My delegation fully supports the conclusions reached by the Panel. Throughout, the report contains alarming revelations, such as the role of some international financial institutions in directly or indirectly encouraging the illegal exploitation of the natural resources of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The fact that those institutions never questioned the increasing exports of resources by the aggressor countries, and even rewarded them with the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Debt Initiative when it was clear that they were plundering the resources of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, is of deep concern and should be further investigated.

We have said from the beginning that Namibia's involvement in the Democratic Republic of the Congo was never motivated by economic benefit, but rather by the principle of helping defend a fellow State member of the Southern African Development Community against aggression from outside. That action was in full conformity with the Charter of the United Nations and with the charter of the Organization of African Unity, and it was aimed at restoring peace and stability in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The Namibian Government supports the recommendations made by the Panel of Experts aimed at curbing the illegal exploitation of the natural resources of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. It is of particular importance that due compensation be paid to the people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo for the expropriation of their property and for the general looting of the country. The Namibian Government, furthermore, supports the extension of the mandate of the Panel of Experts, which will allow the Panel to conduct follow-up investigations.

Namibia's support for the implementation of the Panel's recommendations is rooted in its firm belief that all avenues should be explored and all

opportunities investigated to cultivate an environment conducive to the implementation of the Lusaka Agreement. In that regard, we call on the Security Council to ensure that the Lusaka Agreement, the Kampala and Harare disengagement plans and relevant Security Council resolutions are fully implemented. Of particular importance is the implementation of resolution 1304 (2000), which, among other things, demands the complete demilitarization of Kisangani.

The Panel disturbingly concluded that

“Exploitation of the natural resources of the Democratic Republic of the Congo by foreign armies has become systematic ... and the constitution of criminal cartels [is] becoming commonplace in occupied territories. These criminal cartels have ramifications and connections worldwide, and they represent the next serious security problem in the region.” (S/2001/357, para. 214)

That conclusion should provide enough urgency for the Council to take immediate action to put an end to those criminal activities.

Finally, my delegation welcomes the Council’s decision to send a mission to the Great Lakes region this month. We hope that the outcome of the visit will generate further momentum for the peace process in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

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

Mr. Erwa (Sudan) (*spoke in Arabic*): I wish at the outset, Sir, to congratulate you sincerely on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of May. We take this opportunity to hail the rich programme of work you have laid out for the month. In the same vein, my congratulations go also to our friend Sir Jeremy Greenstock on his sterling performance as President last month, and on the outstanding results achieved under the United Kingdom presidency.

We had originally had no intention whatsoever of making a statement at today’s meeting of the Security Council on the report of the Panel of Experts on the Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources and Other Forms of Wealth in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (S/2001/357). We are convinced of the validity of the reasons for which the Council established the Panel of Experts, and we believe that the Panel has put

a great deal of work into the preparation of this commendable report. We hope that, within the context of its mandate to maintain international peace and security, the Council will be able to find appropriate ways to put an end to the plundering of the wealth of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and to punish the perpetrators.

Yet because of the Ugandan regime — the stench of whose corruption has become suffocating — we are forced to make this statement. The President of that country and his regime — who are known to lie as easily as they breathe — have once again chosen to deflect the accusations against them by spreading falsehoods. They have therefore spread falsehoods regarding the reasons for their open invasion of the Democratic Republic of the Congo — an invasion that violates all international laws and customs — by using flimsy pretexts which include the need to contain the danger emanating from Sudan. Those pretexts include the false accusations contained in the letter from the Minister Counsellor of Uganda to the President of the Security Council (S/2001/378), which the Minister of Uganda said today contained their official position with regard to the report of the Panel of Experts.

Facts are always self-evident. Sudan’s borders with the Democratic Republic of the Congo are now, as they have been for more than 10 years, under the control of the rebels of the Sudan People’s Liberation Army (SPLA) in southern Sudan. Moreover, since 1996 the borders with Uganda have been under the control of the rebels acting in collusion with that country, which also undertook a similar invasion of Sudanese territory. The point nearest to the border between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Uganda to be under the control of Sudanese Government is over 150 miles away.

How could the false pretexts so often repeated by the Ugandan leadership be accepted logically? The ongoing pretexts put forward by the Ugandan regime to claim that the invasion of the Democratic Republic of the Congo took place to end security threats from Sudan did not stand for long. For the report of the Panel of Experts has revealed a fact which has become amply clear to everyone, which we have often repeated in this Chamber, in the General Assembly and in other forums, and which has nevertheless fallen on deaf ears. We have said more than once that the Ugandan invasion of the Democratic Republic of the Congo was part of that country’s very dangerous scheme to exploit

the wealth of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. That is also the conclusion reached by the Panel of Experts mandated by the Council to investigate such violations.

Paragraphs 27 and 28 of that report clearly indicate that Uganda's intervention in areas where gold and diamond mines are located took place for economic and financial aims. Political and security pretexts were merely a cover for systematic and broad-based operations to loot the wealth of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In the final analysis, those operations were in the interest of the corrupt President of Uganda and the corrupt members of his family. Is Uganda claiming that Sudan gave the order to set up the Panel of Experts, or that Sudan was the one to carry out investigations and draft the report of the Panel? Uganda's letter and its message against Sudan is, in our opinion, an insult to the intelligence of others.

The Ugandan regime that is trying to convince the international community, by using illogical and completely nonsensical pretexts with regard to its aggression against the Democratic Republic of the Congo, is the same regime that is causing the crises and catastrophes being suffered in the Great Lakes region. It is the same regime that threatens regional peace and security. It is the very same regime that violated international principles — foremost among those being the Charters of the United Nations and of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) — in an unprecedented action that runs counter to every international principle regarding international relations.

Even if we were to assume that Uganda intervened in the Democratic Republic of the Congo for security reasons, such a pretext should still be clearly condemned by the Security Council as far as international relations are concerned because it represents a distorted logic regarding safeguarding international peace and security. It is a very dangerous justification because it would theoretically allow any State to attack Uganda on the same basis. We must also bear in mind that several countries bordering Uganda face very serious security threats coming from Ugandan territory, including that Government's direct support for terrorists, outlaws, mercenaries and child abductors.

The Ugandan regime lamenting Sudan's support of rebel groups in Uganda before the Council today is the very same regime that has embraced the rebellious

movement in southern Sudan and is providing those rebels with logistical and military facilities for their terrorist acts in southern Sudan. In fact, the Ugandan regime is also carrying out the systematic exploitation and looting of the natural resources of Sudan in areas bordering Uganda that are occupied by the rebels, just as they are doing in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We also have information pointing to the systematic looting of Sudan's gold, timber and ivory resources. This makes it clear that the corrupt clique in Uganda was not satisfied with the wealth looted from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, wealth that transformed Uganda overnight into a gold- and diamond-exporting State. Instead they went further and proceeded to loot the southern part of Sudan.

The Ugandan regime can make all sorts of claims and allegations and advance all sorts of pretexts. But it will not succeed in convincing the international community that their intervention in the Democratic Republic of the Congo was for security purposes. The proof is clear and the report is self-evident; not to mention the fact that the leadership of Uganda has been known to be blood-thirsty and to have expansionist aims known to all.

The Ugandan President should be considered the new Hitler of Africa. He is attempting to build an illusory empire upon the skulls of the innocent peoples of the Great Lakes region.

Sudan has responded to all of the proposed initiatives and mechanisms aimed at putting an end to differences with Uganda. Unfortunately, they have not borne fruit because of the lack of political will on the part of the Ugandan side, which has attempted to impede all of the agreed-upon measures.

The Ugandan leadership must recognize that it is no longer protected by forces behind which it can stand as it implements its own agenda. The President of Uganda will no longer be the spoiled child of certain Powers. Times are changing, and interests are also changing. All of the immoral actions that have taken place have become clearly evident.

Sudan totally rejects the Ugandan accusations, which are aimed at drawing Sudan into a separate battle. This is a desperate attempt to turn attention away from the documented crimes of looting which are clearly set out in the report before the Council. Sudan calls on the Security Council to act firmly, after obtaining all of the evidence and the facts, to deter the

Ugandan leadership from its course of action, following public recognition of its invasion of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, its continued looting of that country's wealth and its continued presence therein.

The President: The next speaker on my list is the representative of Angola. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Mangueira (Angola): First, I would like to congratulate you, Sir, on behalf of my Government and on my own behalf, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the current month. I would like also to congratulate the outgoing President on the able and wise manner in which he conducted the proceedings of this body during his mandate.

I also would like to take this opportunity to express our gratitude for the holding of this open meeting of the Council on the report of the Panel of Experts on the Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources and Other Forms of Wealth in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and to acknowledge the presence of the Ministers of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda, Uganda and Burundi.

The report under consideration is a document of important factual value that describes the various modalities of the massive pillage and illegal exploitation of natural resources that is taking place in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and it particularly focuses on the ramifications and connections between the funding of such activities and the persistence of the conflict in that country. We compliment the group of Experts on their excellent research.

The circumstances of the presence and the mandate of Angola and its allies in the Democratic Republic of the Congo are widely known. The report actually makes a clear distinction between the role of the "invited forces" and that of the "invading forces" when it refers to Angola and Namibia as the two countries that fund their participation in this conflict with expenditure money from their ordinary budget and do not behave in a suspicious way.

In the case of Angola, that distinction shows a recognition of my Government's policy, which is based, inter alia, on the principle of the defence of a

country's sovereignty and borders; on respect for the sovereignty of other States; and on the pursuit of a policy of good-neighbourliness.

A solution to the Congo issue undoubtedly can be reached only with the implementation of the Lusaka accords and their additional protocols, as well as the implementation of the pertinent resolutions of this body, which would establish the necessary prerequisites for a lasting solution to the questions raised in the report, such as the pillage and illegal exploitation of natural resources and other riches - a process in which the international community can play an important role.

To conclude, it is our understanding that the recommendations of the Expert Panel are to be the object of special attention on the part of the Council, particularly with regard to the adoption of concrete measures to put an end to the illegal exploitation of natural resources and to seek compensation and reparations for damages in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The President: The next speaker is the representative of the United Republic of Tanzania. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Mwakawago (Tanzania): My delegation appreciates the opportunity to address the Security Council in this open debate on the Democratic Republic of the Congo. My delegation also welcomes the report of the Panel of Experts on the Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources and Other Forms of Wealth in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We see it as a notable contribution to our collective effort to create the necessary conditions for peace and prosperity for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and its people.

Tanzania is a country that shares a border with the Democratic Republic of the Congo. As a result of the war in that country, we have had to host refugees from the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We have also painfully witnessed their suffering, even as we have to bear the burden of hosting them. This phenomenon has distracted us from more pressing issues of development in our border regions. Concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo, for my President, Mr. Benjamin Mkapa, and his Government, nothing has been of such singular importance as peace in that country. Peace for the

Democratic Republic of the Congo is therefore not only in the interests of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, but in our self-interest as well.

In this regard, we view with considerable concern the allegations made by the Panel of Experts in paragraph 145 of the report regarding the role of the seaports and airports in Dar es Salaam as a transit point for what are described as the commercial activities of the RCD-Goma, as well as that of the Bank of Tanzania as a holding point for diamonds from the Democratic Republic of the Congo before they are allegedly shipped to Belgium, the Netherlands and South Africa. We consider those to be serious allegations.

It is instructive that these allegations are made under part III of the report, entitled "Links between the exploitation of natural resources and the continuation of the conflict". The obvious and perhaps unintended implication is, of course that the port, the airport and the Bank of Tanzania are either knowingly or unknowingly being used to finance the continuation of the war in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In the event that these claims were true, such activities would no doubt be in clear violation of the stated policy and commitments of the Government. The Government is therefore interested in the veracity of the allegations.

Regrettably, the report does not offer much help in this regard. In paragraph 145, the report alleges that a preponderance of information obtained from documents and individuals in Dar es Salaam and elsewhere

"overwhelmingly suggests that RCD-Goma and others are marketing the natural resources of the Democratic Republic of the Congo — gold, diamonds and timber — through Dar es Salaam."

That paragraph, however, proceeds to note that the RCD-Goma has fashioned a mechanism that grants an appearance of legitimacy to the documents covering the shipments, "complete with the required stamps and signatures indicating approval and issuance in Kinshasa and Lubumbashi".

Yet surprisingly, the report fails to make a determination about the real likelihood of parties in Tanzania dealing with those documents at their face value and in good faith. This is of particular importance because, as a country, we have a legitimate undertaking to facilitate the lawful shipment of goods

destined for or coming from the landlocked countries along our western borders, including the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, as agreed between our two Governments.

Furthermore, it is also a matter of concern that in paragraph 146, the report alleges that

"The shipments of gold, diamonds and timber are also processed in Dar es Salaam in cooperation with RCD representatives by a company believed to be a covert business entity created for the purpose of facilitating support for the financial and logistical operations of RCD-Goma."

Both the RCD representatives and the covert company remain unnamed. It is even more puzzling that those activities are said, in the same paragraph, to be "exclusive of operations handled by the Government of Rwanda, via Kigali". My Government would like to have details so that it can investigate them.

My Government is willing and ready to play a very constructive role in our efforts to end the war in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. But we can do so only in the context of irrefutable facts or a transparent process. We are too conscious that this has not been an easy task for the Panel of Experts. However, under the prevailing circumstances, it is difficult for us to respond in a constructive and meaningful way to the allegations contained in paragraphs 145, 146, 182 and 191 of the report.

For my Government, the door for dialogue with the Panel and this Council remains open. Regrettably, notwithstanding the findings in paragraphs 145, 146, 182 and 191, apparently obtained through third-party sources, "overwhelmingly" suggesting the use of entities in Tanzania as a transit point for the inappropriate marketing of the natural resources of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Panel chose not to visit Dar es Salaam, as evidenced in annex II of the report. Consequently, no Government official, nor any known Tanzanian, was interviewed. This neglect may have unwittingly undermined the relevance of those parts of the report to which we are addressing ourselves. This significant flaw requires a remedy.

We also continue to extend our hand of cooperation. This we do in the interests not only of peace for the Democratic Republic of the Congo, but of peace and prosperity in the region.

In conclusion, my delegation joins previous speakers in expressing our deep regret for the loss of life of the six workers of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in the Democratic Republic of the Congo last month. We extend our sincere condolences to the ICRC and to the bereaved families. We condemn the perpetrators of the dastardly act; they should not go unpunished.

The President: The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Zimbabwe. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Jokonya (Zimbabwe): Like my colleagues who spoke before me, I would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of May. The timing of today's meeting, coming as it does immediately after the release of the Secretary-General's report on the Democratic Republic of the Congo, could not be more perfect, and my delegation regards it as a privilege to pronounce itself on an issue of such import before the Security Council.

My delegation welcomes the open debate on the report of the Panel of Experts on the Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources and Other Forms of Wealth of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Chairperson, Ms. Ba-N'Daw, and her Panel, for the sterling work they accomplished in such a short period of time. Ms. Ba-N'Daw and her team can confirm that, true to its word, Zimbabwe extended its full cooperation to the Panel when it visited Harare during the course of the investigation.

The revealing report before us provides insights into the economics underpinning contemporary armed conflicts in the Great Lakes subregion. For Zimbabwe, this report is a vindication of what we have said all along: the true cause of the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is not the loud discourse of grievance, but the silent force of greed.

Against a backdrop of past failures by the international community to account for the presence of economic agendas in conflict situations, which have at times seriously undermined international efforts to coordinate fragile peace agreements, this report, an indictment of those countries that have invaded the Congo, should impel this body to spare no effort in ensuring the withdrawal of the uninvited forces from

the Congo, in accordance with Security Council resolutions.

Let me hasten to point out that, while efforts by the enterprising aggressor States in the Congo to benefit materially from war through looting and/or other forms of violent accumulation is hardly a new phenomenon, this has been made possible by the wilful participation of an international private sector which must also be shamed for adopting a neutral stance on a conflict that has cost the lives of 3 million innocent Congolese. The international private sector, particularly the extractive and service sectors, must be engaged to establish how they view the role they have played in fuelling and sustaining the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

In the wake of the findings of this report, my delegation finds it extremely difficult to sustain the "security concerns" thesis of the aggressor States, on the one hand, and the "grievance" argument of their surrogates.

We can argue hither and thither about the grievance of the rebel groups, but this report shows beyond any reasonable doubt that what we have in the Congo is a greed-motivated rebellion.

While it is not my delegation's intention to belabour this point, let us remember the story of the two drunks who fought because they were drunk, and when asked about the altercation, they justified their drunken behaviour with explanations of grievance, arguing "He struck me first". The true cause of conflict — drunkenness — was masked by the discourse of grievance. In a real-world conflict, such as we are witnessing in the Congo, this discourse of grievance, whether along ethnic, political or social lines, also masks underlying realities about where the origin of the conflict lies. But thanks to this report, it is now evident that the prodigious endowment of the Congo with natural resources is a curse and not a blessing. The international community has an obligation to criminalize the primary commodity trade through which the aggressor States have done well out of war.

My delegation notes with interest that the report identifies Zimbabwe as a "special case". How interesting. By the statement of its President of 2 June 2000 (S/PRST/2000/20), the Security Council requested the Secretary-General to establish an expert panel on the illegal exploitation of natural resources of the Congo with a mandate to collect information on all

activities of illegal exploitation of natural resources and other forms of wealth of the Congo, including in violation of the sovereignty of that country. Bearing that in mind, allow me to remind this esteemed body that Zimbabwe is in the Congo at the invitation of the legitimate Government of that country.

On 27 March this year, President Joseph Kabila of the Democratic Republic of the Congo addressed the Parliament of Zimbabwe. After expressing appreciation for the “African solidarity” shown by Zimbabwe, Angola and Namibia in responding to the request of the legitimate Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to defend its territorial integrity and sovereignty, and after inviting and encouraging mutual beneficial economic cooperation between Zimbabwe and the Democratic Republic of the Congo and referring to “our mutual projects like SENGAMINES, among others”, he had this to say:

“The joint ventures between our two Governments are not to be confused with the looting of the mineral resources of the Democratic Republic of Congo, as is the case in the occupied zones of my country.”

He went on to invite experts from both sides to come up with “new creative projects that will benefit our two countries”, and said that “we must accelerate the implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding, which includes free-trade circulation of goods and people between our two countries”. President Joseph Kabila concluded by saying that

“The relationship between the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Angola, Namibia and Zimbabwe in particular and the SADC region in general must be a good example of integration and southern African cooperation.”

Who is better qualified to pronounce himself on the legality of the economic cooperation between Zimbabwe and the Democratic Republic of the Congo than the President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo himself?

The report before us insinuates that my President, Mr. Robert Gabriel Mugabe, once told unnamed interlocutors that the late President Kabila had given him a mine concession. The suggestion here is that my President derived personal gain from Zimbabwe’s intervention in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In the same breath, in paragraph 165, the Panel says

that it “does not draw any conclusions” from Zimbabwe’s economic cooperation with the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Why then does it allow this insinuation to be embedded in the report? My Government dismisses this innuendo with the contempt that it deserves.

As pointed out by President Joseph Kabila, the joint ventures and other operations of Zimbabwean companies in the Democratic Republic of the Congo are above board and are carried out under agreements with the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and in compliance with the laws of that country.

Allow me to observe that many foreign countries and companies, the majority from the developed countries, are operating in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in accordance with international and domestic laws of that country in the same manner that Zimbabwe is doing, and yet they are not treated as “special cases”.

President Joseph Kabila’s explanation of Zimbabwe’s intervention in the Congo therefore differs very much from the conclusions drawn by the report before us, and it is not difficult to see why.

Because the report treats Zimbabwe’s intervention in the Congo from an ahistoric perspective, it renders the whole exercise a perfunctory one, whereby the Panel congratulates itself for doing its job by coming up with conclusions of non-cooperation, but for the wrong reasons.

To set the record straight, let us go back down memory lane to 1998. At the Southern African International Dialogue on smart partnership, held in the Namibian coastal town of Swakopmund at the end of July 1998, President Museveni of Uganda asked President Mugabe, in his capacity as Chairman of the Organ on Politics, Defence and Security of the Southern African Development Community, to convene a meeting to discuss the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Museveni told President Mugabe of Zimbabwe, President Mkapa of Tanzania and President Nujoma of Namibia that trouble was brewing in the eastern Congo, and that Mugabe and his colleagues needed to call Kabila of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Bizimungu of Rwanda to ascertain what was happening.

Pursuant to President Museveni's request, President Mugabe called a summit meeting of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Uganda, Rwanda, Zambia, Tanzania and Zimbabwe at Victoria Falls on 7 and 8 August 1998. The disagreement at the Victoria Falls Summit regarding the nature of conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo — whether it was an internal rebellion against Kabila, as claimed by Rwanda and Uganda, or a foreign invasion — resulted in the setting up of a committee comprising Namibia, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe that had a dual mandate. The mandate was as follows: to verify whether the fighting in the Democratic Republic of the Congo was the result of an internal rebellion or an aggression by neighbouring countries and to recommend a way forward, depending on the findings.

In pursuance of the above, the Foreign Ministers of Namibia, Tanzania and Zambia, headed by Zimbabwe's Foreign Minister, visited Uganda, Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, including Goma, from 11 to 18 August. During their trip, the team held extensive discussions with Presidents Museveni, Bizimungu, Kabila and Kagame and the rebel leadership in Goma, as well as the people of the eastern Congo, regarding the war situation.

The ministerial team concluded that while there were rebels in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, there was very clear and irrefutable evidence of a foreign invasion, that propped up the rebellion. In addition to eyewitness reports of Rwandese troops passing through the war front, there was also the interesting coincidence that the rebellion started only after Kabila had dismissed Rwandese officers from the army of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

After realizing that he could not contain the foreign invaders alone, the late President Kabila appealed for assistance from the member countries of the SADC. The request was made at a meeting of the Inter-State Defence and Security Committee that was held in Harare on 18 August to consider the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The military intervention by Angola, Namibia and Zimbabwe came as a result of this appeal by the internationally recognized Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, a member of SADC. Furthermore, the request of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to SADC was in line with Article 51 of the United Nations Charter regarding the right of a State to ask for military assistance when its security, sovereignty and

territorial integrity are threatened. The decision was also in line with a resolution of the Inter-State Defence and Security Committee at a meeting held in Cape Town, South Africa, in 1995, at which SADC countries agreed to take collective action in the case of attempted coups to remove Governments by military means. It was in this spirit that troops from Botswana and South Africa intervened in Lesotho to suppress an armed mutiny against the Government in 1998.

In line with the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement, Zimbabwe has started withdrawing its forces from the Congo and my delegation would like to take this occasion to reaffirm that Zimbabwe has no hidden agenda in the Congo and seeks only to safeguard its territorial integrity and sovereignty.

I would also like to bring to memory the role Zimbabwe has played in the cause of African liberation and dignity. Zimbabwe deployed its forces in Mozambique in 1995 to fight alongside their Mozambican counterparts against RENAMO, a surrogate of apartheid South Africa. Those same troops were to remain in Mozambique for seven years and effectively contributed to ending the war in Mozambique with only one purpose: to help Mozambique regain peace, stability and development.

My delegation supports the Panel's recommendations around the outlined broad themes of sanctions against countries and individuals involved in the illegal activities; preventive measures to avoid a recurrence of the current situation; reparations to the victims of the illegal exploitation of natural resources; improvement of international mechanisms and regulations governing some natural resources; and security issues.

In conclusion, let me quote David Keen, who has observed:

“Conflict can create war economies, often in the regions controlled by rebels or warlords and linked to international trading networks where members of armed gangs can benefit from looting. Under these circumstances, ending civil wars becomes difficult. Winning may not be desirable; the point of war may be precisely the legitimacy which it confers on actions that in peacetime would be punishable as crimes.”

The adoption of the report's recommendations will act as a disincentive to those forces that have

unleashed violence on the Congolese people, purportedly in search of security.

The President: I now call on the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs and Regional Cooperation of Uganda.

Mr. Mbabazi (Uganda): I wish, belatedly, to pass on our condolences to the bereaved families of the six workers of the International Committee of the Red Cross who died in eastern Congo and to inform this Council that the Uganda People's Defence Forces have undertaken to help in the effort to investigate and trace those who are responsible for committing this crime.

I would also like to inform this Council that, two days ago, on 1 May, at the border of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Uganda, at about 6 p.m. local time, a truck full of local people was coming from the market on the other side and was attacked, presumably by the Interahamwe. The local Muslim leader and his wife were killed, as were two businessmen, while three others were wounded. This is very close to the place where, in 1999 — in March, I believe — eight tourists and a Ugandan game park warden were killed by the same forces. I felt that I should give this Council that information so that it may be informed about the situation in the border area.

Finally, I would simply want to say that I will not respond to the statement made by the gentleman from Sudan, for fear that people may not be able to tell the difference between us.

The President: I thank the representative of Uganda for his statement about the effort by Uganda to cooperate in bringing to justice the killers of the workers from the International Committee of the Red Cross.

I call on the Special Envoy of the President of the Rwandese Republic.

Mr. Mazimhaka (Rwanda): I would like to make a few final remarks on the debate which, I think, has been very illuminating and very instructive for my delegation on the thinking and the direction of this very important investigation that the Council has undertaken to institute.

We have tried today to reiterate to the Council the historical reasons for our involvement in the Congo. The security problems caused by criminal forces based in the Democratic Republic of the Congo to our

countries — Rwanda, Uganda and Burundi — are not deniable. Examples are abundant. My colleague has just mentioned some of the latest. These should be addressed by the Council and ourselves through the process that we have undertaken to return normalcy to that region. This was one of our recommendations.

Unfortunately, before this meeting has even ended, we have begun to see the fallout from some of the problems that we think lie with the report. Member countries that would not cooperate with the Panel have used this occasion today to come and lambaste everybody and proclaim their innocence in the exploitation of the resources of the Congo. This was the case in the speeches made by the representatives of Namibia and Zimbabwe. They have used this occasion to bring back debates that we thought we had put to rest, debates of invited and uninvited parties to the Lusaka Agreement. This is not very helpful at all, and they take this courage from the report they thought was the point of departure in this.

Even if this was the case, I do not believe that the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo invited Namibia and Zimbabwe to go there to loot. So there cannot be any justification for feeling self-congratulatory, because they did not cooperate with the Panel.

My colleague did not say this, but I think it is important for us to note that the intervention of the President of the Sudan simply took up an issue that Minister Mbabazi had raised about exposing unduly the personalities in our region to abuse, and I believe the courage and the occasion to do that were given by the debate of an otherwise worthy cause, that is, the investigation of the misuse of resources in the Congo. I think we should take care that no other actions are taken based on this report until we have seen a full investigation and a fuller debate than what we have held today.

I wish to reiterate in front of the Council that the Government of Rwanda will once again cooperate with the Panel when it is exercising its extended mandate.

The President: I thank the Special Envoy for his statement and for his repeated affirmation of willingness to cooperate with the Panel in the future.

There are no further speakers inscribed on my list. I want to thank the Ministers, the Panel Chairperson, and the Panel members for their work and

their contribution to this phase of our discussion. I think the discussion, as the Special Envoy just said, has been illuminating in many respects. There are differences in perspective, of course, but there seems to be some grounds for hope that progress can be made in addressing and resolving the concerns that were raised and explored today.

I would express my own hope that in the future discussions in this Chamber on this subject and others we could avoid excessive rhetoric that does not contribute to the purposes of this Council.

The Council's own view of this phase of our discussions on the Democratic Republic of the Congo will be set out in a statement that I will make on behalf of the Council in the near future, that is, in the next five minutes.

The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council will remain seized of the matter.

This meeting is adjourned, to be followed by the next session of the Council in five minutes.

The meeting rose at 5.50 p.m.