



Security Council

Fifty-sixth year

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Thursday, 19 April 2001, 12.40 p.m.

New York

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| <i>President:</i> | Sir Jeremy Greenstock | (United Kingdom) |
| <i>Members:</i> | Bangladesh | Mr. Amin |
| | China | Mr. Chen Xu |
| | Colombia | Mr. Valdivieso |
| | France | Mr. Teixeira da Silva |
| | Ireland | Mr. Cooney |
| | Jamaica | Miss Durrant |
| | Mali | Mr. Ouane |
| | Mauritius | Mr. Neewoor |
| | Norway | Mr. Kolby |
| | Russian Federation | Mr. Granovsky |
| | Singapore | Mr. Bhatia |
| | Tunisia | Mr. Jerandi |
| | Ukraine | Mr. Kuchinsky |
| | United States of America | Mr. Hume |

Agenda

The situation between Eritrea and Ethiopia

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The meeting was called to order at 12.40 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation between Eritrea and Ethiopia

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

There being no objection, it is so decided.

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

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

At this meeting, the Security Council will hear a briefing by Mr. Guéhenno on the situation between Eritrea and Ethiopia. Accordingly, there is no list of speakers. I shall call speakers as they apply to the President or the Secretariat in the normal way of our informal consultations in open chamber. If speakers raise questions, I might turn to Mr. Guéhenno to answer those questions as they come up.

I give the floor to Mr. Jean-Marie Guéhenno, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations.

Mr. Guéhenno (*spoke in French*): Since 13 March, when the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Legwaila Joseph Legwaila, briefed the Council on the situation in Ethiopia and Eritrea, a great deal of progress has been made. It is therefore with particular pleasure that I can report today on that progress in the peace process.

Yesterday, 18 April, the Special Representative announced the establishment of the Temporary Security Zone (TSZ), which marks the formal separation of the Ethiopian and Eritrean forces. This is an important stage which will allow for the restoration of the Eritrean civil administration and the return of displaced persons to the Temporary Security Zone.

The United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea welcomed Eritrea's announcement on 16 April that it had concluded the repositioning of its forces out of the Temporary Security Zone, as proposed. As the members of the Council are aware, UNMEE verified, on 7 March, the redeployment of Ethiopian armed forces out of the Zone.

In a statement issued yesterday, Special Representative Legwaila commended Ethiopia and Eritrea for the establishment of the Temporary Security Zone, as stipulated in the Algiers Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities. The United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea is continuing to work with both parties to resolve a number of outstanding problems concerning the southern boundary of the TSZ.

Mr. Legwaila's statement also notes that both parties have sought to make adjustments to the southern boundary of the Zone as presented to them by UNMEE after the 6 February meeting of the Military Coordination Commission. In this connection, UNMEE has expressed its regret that Ethiopia did not communicate the full nature of its redeployment plans in the Irob area. As members of the Security Council will recall, UNMEE protested on 22 March the presence of Ethiopian troops inside the then-proposed Temporary Security Zone. However, the Mission expects to reach agreement on the clarification of the redeployment lines provided by Ethiopia and to gain a more accurate understanding of the differences between the parties on the ground in specific localities. This will ensure, insofar as possible, the inclusion in the Temporary Security Zone of the villages to which Eritrean internally displaced persons are expected to return.

At a press conference on 18 April, the Special Representative reminded the parties that it was their obligation to ensure that all returnees are able to go back to their villages of origin. In addition, UNMEE has reported that some Ethiopian military forces in the eastern sector have moved forward slightly in the Temporary Security Zone from the confirmed redeployment position. Discussions on the subject with the Ethiopian authorities are ongoing.

In accordance with the 18 June 2000 Cessation of Hostilities Agreement, the establishment of the TSZ will permit the restoration of Eritrean civilian administration, including police and local militia, and allow preparations to be made for the return of the

population. On 17 April, UNMEE and the Government of Eritrea signed a protocol that will govern relations between UNMEE and the police and militia units that will return to, and be present in, the Zone. That protocol establishes, *inter alia*, that police and militia should be clearly identifiable and are allowed only to carry personal weapons, with an arms permit. While Eritrea has not yet shared with UNMEE all of its plans for the restoration of civilian administration to the Zone, some militia and police members have already started returning to areas in the TSZ. UNMEE is still awaiting notification from the Eritrean side of the exact numbers of police, militia, customs police and border police that will return to the Zone.

(spoke in English)

The most immediate challenge now facing Eritrea, and the international community, is indeed the return of displaced persons to the Temporary Security Zone. In a meeting with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General held on 18 April, President Afwerki confirmed that Eritrea considered the return of displaced persons prior to the rainy season to be a top priority. Accordingly, Eritrea is planning for the return of approximately 300,000 displaced persons to the Zone within the next six to eight weeks. So far, there have been only a few thousand returnees, most of them to areas of the TSZ which were under Eritrean control during the hostilities. UNMEE has made clear to the Eritrean authorities that a precipitous return could put returnees in a dire humanitarian situation. Linked to these returns is the threat posed by the large quantities of landmines and unexploded ordnance in the areas of return.

A steering committee for humanitarian assistance in the Temporary Security Zone, with the participation of the Eritrean authorities, the United Nations Resident Coordinator/Humanitarian Coordinator and UNMEE, was established in March. Between 2 and 5 April, a rapid village assessment was conducted in the area of Gash Barka, where many returns are expected. The Eritrean Relief and Refugee Commission and the humanitarian community team conducting the assessment noted the importance of the returns' beginning in time for the annual planting season. It also recommended, *inter alia*, that mine-related interventions and projects aimed at providing basic services — especially water, shelter, food, health care and education — be implemented, as they are essential to encourage returns. A similar rapid assessment rapid

is planned for Debub region beginning 23 April. Sectoral working groups chaired by the Government of Eritrea have been convened to address these recommendations.

The quick-impact project programme launched by UNMEE offers a limited but fast source of funds disbursement for essential projects in the Zone. As the Council will recall, the budget for UNMEE includes \$700,000 for the implementation of such projects in the TSZ and adjacent areas in both Eritrea and Ethiopia. So far, 14 projects — for a total budget of over \$160,000 — have been approved by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General. However, quick-impact projects are, as their name indicates, a stop-gap measure, which cannot substitute for much-needed larger-scale interventions. The humanitarian challenges linked to the establishment of the Temporary Security Zone are enormous. The United Nations calls upon the international community to contribute generously to the United Nations Country Team appeals of the two countries.

As I mentioned before, UNMEE remains very concerned about the landmine situation. In response to repeated requests from the Mission, Eritrean authorities recently provided 313 minefield records, which are currently being examined by UNMEE. The Ethiopian authorities have also provided some minefield information, but additional clarifications are being sought. As regards demining operations in the TSZ, these have been restricted to limited clearance operations, reportedly conducted by the military forces of both sides prior to their redeployment and realignment, and to the demining tasks undertaken by UNMEE's engineer units in support of the deployment of the peacekeeping operation. Currently, there are limited mine and unexploded ordnance clearance and minefield-marking activities being carried out inside the TSZ. In addition, an international demining non-governmental organization is conducting a dangerous area survey in the TSZ. Mine-awareness activities have been initiated throughout the mission area.

Turning to operational issues, I am pleased to inform the Council that the deployment of the Mission is now almost complete. As of 17 April, the strength of the military component of UNMEE stood at 4,360 personnel, of which 501 are national support elements. This figure includes 218 military observers. I am also pleased to inform members of the Council that the Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) with Ethiopia was

signed on 23 March. We also hope that progress will soon be made in our ongoing negotiations on the SOFA with Eritrea.

The issue of direct flights between Addis Ababa and Asmara, on which the Council was extensively briefed on previous occasions, is still unresolved. UNMEE continues to face repeated restrictions of movement in all three sectors. These are being addressed with military authorities on a case-by-case basis. In this connection, I would like to remind the parties of their obligations under the Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities, in particular the granting of unfettered direct-access flights and freedom of movement throughout UNMEE's area of operations. During the reporting period, there has been no significant violation of the ceasefire and the situation remains calm. I regret to inform Council members that, on 16 April, three Jordanian soldiers were injured, two of them seriously, when their vehicle overturned on a road in sector West.

As indicated in the Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities, and as UNMEE has reiterated to the parties on numerous occasions, the TSZ is temporary in nature and does not prejudice the final status of the contested areas, to be decided by the Boundary Commission established by the 12 December Algiers agreement. In this connection, it should be mentioned that the Boundary Commission held its first informal meeting in The Hague on 25 and 26 March, with the participation of the agents for both Ethiopia and Eritrea. At that meeting, the Commission presented to the parties a tentative timeline of activities. A team from the Office of the Secretary of the Commission is currently in Asmara drawing up a plan of action for the on-site activities required by the delimitation and demarcation of the border.

However, the formal orders putting in motion the work of the Commission can be issued only once the challenge to one of the Commissioners, interposed by Ethiopia, is resolved. At the request of the President of the Boundary Commission, the Secretary-General has been asked to resolve this challenge. He has a similar responsibility with regard to the challenges interposed by both parties to three out of five members of the Claims Commission. The Secretary-General met yesterday with the Permanent Representatives of Ethiopia and Eritrea to seek a solution to the current impasse.

The Presidents of both Commissions have requested the parties to make deposits to cover the initial costs of these two bodies, pursuant to the commitments undertaken by the parties in the 12 December Algiers Agreement. While some contributions to the Claims Commission have been received, the parties have not yet made any deposits to the Boundary Commission.

In conclusion, I would suggest that the Security Council express its appreciation for the remarkable progress achieved so far. At the same time, the Council may wish to encourage the parties to cooperate fully with UNMEE and the United Nations in the resolution of all outstanding issues and, in particular, with the Secretary-General in his efforts to resolve the impasse regarding the composition of the Boundary Commission and the Claims Commission. As members of the Council are aware, the exit strategy of UNMEE is linked to the successful completion of the work of the Boundary Commission. It is therefore essential that the Commission be able to begin its work without further delay.

Mr. Hume (United States of America): We are very grateful for the briefing just provided by Under-Secretary-General Guéhenno. We would like to congratulate the Secretariat on the progress achieved in establishing the Temporary Security Zone and, in particular, on the work done by Special Representative Legwaila in dealing with the two capitals.

Deploying the Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE) has become a real model for peacekeeping operations and much of the credit goes to the troop contributors.

The establishment of the Temporary Security Zone is the third real milestone in the Ethiopia-Eritrea peace process. We had the June Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities, then the December peace agreement, and now the Temporary Security Zone.

We are encouraged that some positive steps have been made on the Boundary and Claims Commissions and on the successful repatriation of prisoners of war and internees.

The United States has worked hard with the parties, colleagues here, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, UNMEE and the Organization of African Unity to help move this process forward. We will continue our efforts and we

support the critical work being done by UNMEE and others. In this regard, we share the concern expressed that the parties need to take important steps to bring about peace and stability in their area. One of the most important things they can do is to ensure that the return of internally displaced persons is carried out in a careful manner, not a precipitous one. We urge the parties to aid UNMEE to proceed cautiously, particularly in the light of the thousands of mines that they have distributed generously in the area.

Mr. Jerandi (Tunisia) (*spoke in French*): I, too, would like to thank Mr. Guéhenno for his very important briefing to us and, above all, for the good news he has just announced, in particular regarding the signing by the two parties yesterday of the agreement establishing the Temporary Security Zone.

We believe that, as the two parties have already reached agreement, they should focus their efforts on the implementation of the final, decisive stage of the peace process: the delimitation and demarcation of the borders. In this context, we would like to encourage the Governments of the two parties to redouble their efforts to finalize arrangements for the establishment of the Boundary Commission, in accordance with the provisions of the peace Agreement of 12 December and the Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities, so as to enable the process of demarcation and delimitation of borders to begin.

Furthermore, we earnestly encourage the two parties to continue to cooperate fully with the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE), in particular in the area of demining, a subject about which Mr. Guéhenno provided so much detail. The question of the demining of the border zone is of pivotal importance, and we would like to know whether UNMEE has available all the necessary maps showing the location of the landmines so that they can be removed, thereby enabling displaced persons to return to those areas before the beginning of the rainy season.

Of course, we cannot fail to pay tribute to UNMEE for the outstanding efficiency that it has demonstrated in carrying out its mandate.

Mr. Kuchinsky (Ukraine): We would like to thank Mr. Guéhenno for his very informative and comprehensive briefing.

We welcome the fact that yesterday the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE) officially established a Temporary Security Zone along the countries' common border. This represents a milestone in the resolution of the conflict. It is an important step towards eliminating the legal and security vacuum in the relevant areas. It allows for the immediate restoration of civil administration and the return of internally displaced persons, which is particularly urgent given the impending rainy season and the need to reconnect existing villages and communities to their administrative support systems.

We are also pleased to note that, on Sunday, UNMEE signed a protocol agreement with Eritrea outlining rules of interaction between United Nations peacekeepers and Eritrean security personnel in the Temporary Security Zone. We call on both parties to continue to support the efforts of the Special Representative, Ambassador Legwaila, keeping in mind that the zone is a temporary arrangement and in no way prejudices the final status of contested areas. We also wish in particular to emphasize the importance of the work of the Boundary Commission, entrusted with the delimitation and demarcation of the border between the two countries.

Finally, I have a few questions to put to Mr. Guéhenno. The Council was informed some time ago that the Government of Ethiopia had objected to one of the commissioners nominated by Eritrea. Has this issue been resolved? The success of the Boundary Commission will depend upon adequate financial support for its activities. We are aware of the limited resources of the Trust Fund, but is there any indication from the parties of the financial arrangements that they have made, or intend to make, to meet the obligations undertaken in the agreement of 12 December?

Finally, Mr. Guéhenno informed us that there are still some problems with the establishment of direct flights between the capitals. This question was discussed during our most recent meeting and we were also informed by the representatives of the two countries that they are ready to do their utmost to deal with this precarious situation. What, therefore, is behind the delay this time?

Mr. Teixeira da Silva (France) (*spoke in French*): I, too, would like to thank Mr. Guéhenno for his statement, which contained some good news.

I shall confine myself to putting a question to him, echoing what Ambassador Kuchinsky has just said about the work of the Boundary Commission. In paragraph 6 of resolution 1344 (2001), which we adopted a month ago, the Secretariat was asked to provide more detailed information about the financing of the work of the Commission. We would like to know when that information will be available and whether the Assistant Secretary-General would, as of today, be in a position to provide further details about the funding of the work of the Commission. We recognize the importance of the Commission, and would like to know about the commitment of the parties themselves, the payments made to the Trust Fund and the nature and degree of the support that the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea can contribute to the work of the Commission.

Mr. Neewoor (Mauritius): I should like to thank Mr. Guéhenno for his very comprehensive and informative briefing on the current situation in Ethiopia and Eritrea. We appreciate it, especially in the light of the positive developments on which he has reported. We welcome the establishment of the Temporary Security Zone (TSZ), as announced by the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE) yesterday. The establishment of the TSZ, which marks the formal separation of the Ethiopian and Eritrean forces is indeed a very important milestone in progress towards the resolution of the conflict. The signing of the agreement between UNMEE and the Eritrean commissioner for coordination with UNMEE, outlining the rules of interaction between United Nations peacekeepers and Eritrean law enforcement and security elements, is of great significance in ensuring the complete freedom of movement of UNMEE.

We fully support this important progress, which is so vital for the successful fulfilment of the mandate of UNMEE. We regret, however, that the subject of a direct air link between Addis Ababa and Asmara is still unresolved. We would like to call upon both sides to address this issue without further delay, as it interferes with the freedom of movement of UNMEE.

We commend and thank Ambassador Legwaila for all the efforts that he has undertaken to resolve the impasse that had delayed the establishment of the TSZ. We are hopeful that, given the recent developments, the work of the Boundary Commission will gain momentum.

Finally, I would like to appeal to both Ethiopia and Eritrea to address, on humanitarian grounds and without further delay, the question of internally displaced persons and refugees. We believe that this is a very important issue for the final resolution of the difficulties between the two countries.

Mr. Cooney (Ireland): I shall be brief. I would like to thank Mr. Guéhenno for his briefing and for the good news that he has brought today. We agree with his proposal relating to elements for the message that the Council should send out from today's discussion.

I would like to make just one point, relating to the work of the Boundary Commission. We agree with his suggestion that the Council urge the parties to cooperate with the Secretary-General with a view to removing the obstacles to the start of work of the Commission. But we would also like the Council to remind the parties of their obligation to provide financial contributions to the work of the Commission as a tangible demonstration of their commitment to this process.

Mr. Kolby (Norway): We welcome the fact that Ethiopia and Eritrea have cooperated constructively with the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE) since the signing of the Algiers peace Agreement. We are encouraged by the latest progress; certainly, the establishment yesterday of the Temporary Security Zone is a milestone. The full deployment of UNMEE can now be undertaken, and that is a key element in the implementation of the peace Agreement.

We note with appreciation the expeditious deployment of UNMEE, facilitating the redeployment of the military forces of both countries, and we would like to express our appreciation to those Member States that have provided UNMEE with forces and with additional assets. Norway, for its part, has deployed five military observers to UNMEE, and we have also contributed resources to the civilian component of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) military observation unit. We strongly support Ambassador Legwaila's mission.

We would like to emphasize the close relationship between UNMEE and the Boundary Commission established under the comprehensive peace Agreement. As we understand it, termination of the mandate of UNMEE requires completion of the process of delimitation and demarcation of the Ethiopia-Eritrea

border. Therefore, an early start of the work of the Boundary Commission, including proper arrangements for the Secretary of the Commission, would, in Norway's view, constitute a most cost-effective use of resources. We therefore support the approach proposed by the Secretary-General in that regard, and we favour an expeditious handling of the manner in order to facilitate the earliest possible start of the pivotal work of the Boundary Commission. We also appreciate the efforts of the Netherlands in facilitating the recent preliminary meeting of the Commission, which was convened at The Hague.

The Government of Norway has contributed substantially to the United Nations trust fund established for border delimitation and demarcation, and we hope that other members also will be able to provide contributions.

Building on the momentum created by the establishment of the Temporary Security Zone, every effort should now be made by the parties to find practical solutions to the remaining outstanding issues, especially those related to the Irob area, to allow the peace process to move forward. We also believe that the establishment of a direct air corridor between Addis Ababa and Asmara, to ensure freedom of movement for UNMEE flights, and the conclusion of the necessary status of forces agreement between Eritrea and the United Nations would also enhance the peace process.

Norway would like to urge the parties to continue their efforts in the following areas: first, to facilitate mine action in coordination with the United Nations Mine Action Service — Norway will continue to support mine action activities; secondly, to ensure the release and the voluntary and orderly return, under the auspices of the International Committee of the Red Cross, of civilians and prisoners of war, and generally to provide humane treatment; thirdly, to ensure safe and unhindered access for humanitarian assistance to those in need and to respect strictly the relevant provisions of international humanitarian law; and finally, to redirect efforts towards reconstruction and development, and to work towards reconciliation with a view to normalizing relations and further stabilizing the Horn of Africa.

Norway continues its support, *inter alia*, for dialogue between the religious leaders of the two countries. Norway froze and withheld development aid at the height of the war last year, but intends to

continue development cooperation with both countries. We will contribute to the humanitarian appeals of the United Nations. We consider it important at this stage that the parties, with the assistance of the international community, focus their efforts on peace, reconciliation and stability measures supported by activities in the areas of democracy, human rights and good governance. We believe that only democratic development and an environment of good governance in both countries can guarantee the future stability of relations between the two countries.

The President: The speakers' list has grown a little. I would like to come back to the Under-Secretary-General to pick up the points that have been raised so far. Then I shall suspend the meeting until later this afternoon. I call on Mr. Guéhenno.

Mr. Guéhenno (*spoke in French*): The first question, posed by the representative of Tunisia, related to mines and demining efforts in the area. Cooperation with the parties has been good in terms of obtaining the information we need. As I have noted, Eritrea has provided 313 detailed maps of mined areas; Ethiopia too has provided substantial information, and we are expecting supplementary information from Ethiopia. The full demining of the area will undoubtedly involve considerable work; in the meantime, we must mark mined areas and keep the population away in order to avoid the tragedy of civilians stepping on unmarked mines.

(*spoke in English*)

The representative of Ukraine asked about the status of the commissioners. We hope that the issue of commissioners both on the Boundary Commission and on the Claims Commission will be resolved promptly. Both parties have shown a spirit of cooperation, and we hope that that spirit will help resolve this problem. But at the moment I cannot give an answer to the question.

The representatives of Ukraine and of France also asked about the financing of the trust fund for the Boundary Commission, and about the financial arrangements for the Commission. First, let me say that the recent contributions and pledges to the trust fund would put its balance at \$5.7 million. And the Boundary Commission has requested each party to make deposits towards meeting the costs of the Commission. The budget for the logistics of the Commission is not yet there, because it has to be developed on the basis of a detailed assessment, in the

field, of what exactly will be needed. At the moment, a team from the office of the Chief of the Cartographic Section of the Secretariat is in Asmara; it will establish such a plan of field activities. It is on that basis that we will then be in a position to address very precisely the request of the Security Council about the exact logistical costs for the Boundary Commission.

The question of direct flights was also raised by several delegations. The Ethiopian party has agreed to a route that is almost direct but that slightly deviates from a direct route because that would overfly some Ethiopian defensive positions. At the moment, the Eritrean party insists on an absolutely direct route. It is that difference that, for the moment, has not yet been overcome and that prevents a direct route — and it is a really circuitous route that has to be taken: almost going through Djibouti, so it is two sides of a triangle instead of one line between the two capitals.

The President: I am going to suspend this meeting until 3.45 p.m., with a number of representatives still wishing to speak; I too wish to make a brief national statement. We have to come back this afternoon anyway for a further meeting, on the Angola monitoring mechanism. I understand that the Under-Secretary-General is travelling, and I hope that he will be represented at a senior level from within the Department of Peacekeeping Operations.

The meeting was suspended at 1.20 p.m. and resumed at 3.50 p.m.

The President: With the agreement of the Council, I extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Hédi Annabi, Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, and invite him to take a seat at the Council table.

I shall now call on those members of the Council that have indicated their wish to speak.

Miss Durrant (Jamaica): The comprehensive presentation made earlier in our meeting by Under-Secretary-General Guéhenno, as well as the answers he provided to questions raised by previous speakers, leave my delegation with little to add. I therefore wish to use this opportunity to pay tribute to the men and women of the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE) under the leadership of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Legwaila, for their signal accomplishments to date.

The decision to establish the Temporary Security Zone, which marks the formal separation of the forces of Eritrea and Ethiopia, recognizes the steps taken by both Governments towards the fulfilment of their obligations under the Algiers Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities. It also allows for the immediate restoration of civil administration and for the return of internally displaced persons in the areas of the Temporary Security Zone.

My delegation has noted other progress made since our last briefing, including the signing of the status-of-forces agreement, as well as those areas on which action is still outstanding, including on the restrictions on the movement of UNMEE as long as the issue of direct flights remains unresolved, and on the activation of the Boundary Commission. We have all recognized that these are crucial to the fulfilment of UNMEE's mandate, and we join those who have called for early resolution of these issues.

We have heard from Under-Secretary-General Guéhenno that some 300,000 internally displaced persons can be expected to return to the Temporary Security Zone prior to the rainy season, that is, within the next six to eight weeks. I repeat this in order to emphasize that this is a massive humanitarian undertaking, the success of which requires close collaboration between the humanitarian agencies, UNMEE and both Governments, the urgent completion of the surveys of the Temporary Security Zone to determine the extent of mine contamination and unexploded ordnance, the marking off of non-go areas and, most importantly, the sensitizing of the returning population, particularly children.

The need for the Boundary Commission to begin its work has been emphasized by previous speakers. I would only wish to draw attention to the fact that both Governments agreed in advance to accept the verdict of the Commission. It is therefore imperative that the problems related to the establishment of the Commission be addressed without delay.

In conclusion, my delegation hopes that the establishment of the Temporary Security Zone will create the desired climate of calm and confidence, and conditions conducive to the comprehensive and lasting settlement of the conflict, which we all hope to achieve.

Mr. Bhatia (Singapore): We would like to echo the eloquent opening remarks of the Permanent

Representative of Jamaica. She said that Under-Secretary-General Guéhenno's briefing and, indeed, the comments made earlier by members, have dealt with this issue fairly comprehensively. Hence, we shall restrict our remarks to just two points.

First, in our view, the establishment of the Temporary Security Zone marking the formal separation of the two parties is indeed a welcome development. Secondly, however, an outstanding area of concern, as Mr. Guéhenno mentioned this morning, remains the restriction of movement imposed on the personnel of the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE) in certain areas. Incidents involving UNMEE patrols such as the one that occurred on 7 April are cause for concern. In this regard, we would like to know from Mr. Annabi whether the pattern of restrictions and incidents has eased up in recent weeks, or whether it has intensified. Has any plan of action been adopted by UNMEE to deal with this issue?

Mr. Amin (Bangladesh): We also want to join all others in commending the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Legwaila, and the men and women of the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE) for the sustained progress they have made in their important work. We also express our appreciation for the briefing given this morning by Under-Secretary-General Guéhenno.

We also add our voice to those of others who have expressed concern on the lack of progress in the establishment of the Temporary Security Zone. But we note that it has now been achieved, and we commend the Governments of Eritrea and Ethiopia on that.

The second point on which we also concur with the concerns expressed by others is the direct route of flight between the two capitals, whose establishment has not yet been possible. The discussion on this issue has been under way for almost three months. We are concerned that this has not been resolved. We think that this a matter in which you could play a constructive role.

We call on the parties to resolve the outstanding issues related to the Boundary Commission, and hope that the Commission can start working soon.

Mr. Chen Xu (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): Like other delegations, we wish to thank Under-Secretary-General Guéhenno for his briefing this morning.

The Chinese delegation is very pleased with the positive developments, in particular the establishment of the Temporary Security Zone (TSZ).

As Mr. Legwaila has said, the establishment of the TSZ marks the formal separation of the forces of the two parties. Indeed, this is a prerequisite for the complete implementation of the peace accord. We appreciate the positive efforts and sincerity of both parties, as well as the efforts made by the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea.

At the same time, the establishment of the TSZ does not mean that the problem has been resolved. We hope that the two parties will seize and cherish this opportunity and that they will promote mutual confidence by taking real action to properly settle such issues as the demarcation of borders, the establishment of direct flights and the repatriation of refugees in order to lay a solid foundation for a final settlement of their dispute.

Mr. Granovsky (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Russia greatly values Eritrea and Ethiopia's demonstration — in deeds, not words — of their dedication to their commitments to peace. Evidence of this is their steady compliance with the ceasefire regime and their consistent implementation of the Algiers Agreement.

We believe that the establishment of a Temporary Security Zone (TSZ) is a qualitatively new stage in the consolidation of the process of settling the conflict. We pay due tribute to the political wisdom of the parties, the efforts of the Secretary-General and the leadership and command of the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE), which have led to this important result.

The forward-moving process of stabilization in the conflict zone reaffirms our consistent position regarding the need for an early lifting of sanctions against both States.

We fully support the measures taken by the leadership of UNMEE within the framework of its mandate to ensure an orderly return of refugees to the borders of the Temporary Security Zone. This will determine to a great extent the irreversibility of the peace process. We emphasize the importance of having the parties continue unswervingly to comply with their commitments under international humanitarian law.

We consider it important for the international community to continue to render adequate support to the work of the Commission on the delimitation and demarcation of the Eritrea-Ethiopia border. This activity is of the greatest importance in order for the peoples of these two countries to return definitively to peaceful and constructive coexistence.

Mr. Franco (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): We are very grateful for the information given to us today by Mr. Guéhenno about the achievements of recent days. Those achievements demonstrate the parties' genuine commitment to the implementation of the peace Agreement signed in December last year. We invite the parties to continue to display that positive and constructive attitude, in order to reach an understanding on pending issues. In that regard, we would like to highlight the activities of the Border Commission, the establishment of an air corridor and the signing by one of the parties of the status-of-forces agreement.

We had prepared some questions, but they were answered by Mr. Guéhenno this morning. However, we wanted to take the floor in order to reiterate what has been emphasized by other speakers: it is important that the return of internally displaced persons and refugees should be carried out in an orderly manner, so as to prevent the clear risk of this becoming a humanitarian crisis. That is why we would like to ask the Secretariat to keep us informed about this matter.

Mr. Konfourou (Mali) (*spoke in French*): My delegation welcomes the good news we heard this morning from the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Affairs concerning the difficult conflicts that plague the Horn of Africa.

We support what the French delegation said this morning about the linkage between the termination of the mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE) and the Boundary Commission. In resolution 1344 (2001), we agreed to address a letter to the Secretary-General concerning cost estimates for UNMEE's funding needs for the Boundary Commission. We would like to find out today what progress has been made in this field, and if we could perhaps have those cost estimates by the end of the month. My delegation calls on all of the parties to the conflict fully to cooperate to resolve the issues that are still pending.

The President: I should now like to make a statement in my capacity as the Permanent

Representative of the United Kingdom, and in doing so — and I hope the Secretariat will note this — bring out what the United Kingdom sees as quite a strong collective consensus on what has been said in this debate.

We very much welcome the formal establishment of the Temporary Security Zone (TSZ). This is a crucial step in the continued implementation of the peace Agreement between Ethiopia and Eritrea and signifies a heightened sense of trust between the two sides. We, like others, praise the efforts of Special Representative Legwaila and the whole of the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE) in this regard and agree that, as Under-Secretary-General Guéhenno said this morning, remarkable progress has been made so far.

We welcome the signing of the protocol between UNMEE and Eritrea and the signing of a status-of-forces agreement with Ethiopia, and we call on both sides to fulfil their commitment to the principle of freedom of movement for UNMEE. Like the rest of the Council, we want to see progress soon on the Boundary Commission, on flights, on demining and on the return of refugees and internally displaced persons. We hope that Member States will also take note of the funding requirements for these operations that have been noted in the debate so far.

We encourage the Governments of Ethiopia and Eritrea to move towards normalization and lasting reconciliation, and we reiterate our support for the Algiers peace Agreement, as well as the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement, signed in Algiers in June last year.

We welcome the fact that the parties have respected the ceasefire agreement for the past 10 months. Still, there is a considerable amount to do, and we expect the parties to live up to their responsibilities in this regard.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I give the floor to Assistant Secretary-General Annabi to take up any remaining points.

Mr. Annabi: Mr. Guéhenno regrets that he cannot be here this afternoon, as he has just left for the airport. He will be visiting the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC).

I think that there were essentially two questions. The first relates to freedom of movement. As Mr. Guéhenno indicated this morning, restrictions on the freedom of movement of the personnel of the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE) continue to occur from time to time. Those restrictions are, of course, taken up on a case-by-case basis with the military and, if necessary, with the political authorities on both sides. Some of those restrictions are due to an incorrect understanding of the orders received by local commanders on the ground, or misunderstandings about these instructions. Some of them are deliberate. There are occasions when one or the other of the parties may not wish us to see its positions, but these situations are, as I said, being addressed on a case-by-case basis.

We remind the parties on every occasion of their commitment under the Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities, concluded on 18 June last, under which they both agreed to provide unrestricted freedom of movement to UNMEE, as required for its operations.

There may also be some misunderstanding as to the exact operational requirements of UNMEE. In our minds, it is clear that in order to patrol the Temporary Security Zone and to be able to reassure both sides that nothing unusual is happening in the area, we need to be able to see beyond the limits of the Temporary Security Zone itself. For operational purposes, the Force Commander has indicated to the parties that we would need to go some 15 kilometres beyond the limits of the Zone to establish contacts with the authorities on both sides and discuss whatever practical problems may

have arisen in the area of operation. This is not always well understood by the local commanders, and we are continuing to discuss this with the parties. We hope, as I said, that they will work with us in accordance with their own undertakings and the Agreement of 18 June last.

As regards the second question, related to the cost estimates for logistical support for the work of the Boundary Commission, I think that Mr. Guéhenno indicated this morning that a team from the Cartographic Section, assisted by logistical experts who are on the ground right now, is looking at the requirements. That team will return by the end of the month with, we hope, an evaluation of the logistical support that will be required. Council members will, of course, be informed in due course of those estimates.

I think those were the only two questions.

The President: I thank the Assistant Secretary-General for the clarifications he has provided.

I think that the Secretariat has taken away a sense of the Council's views on this subject, but I would also like the Assistant Secretary-General to convey the warm appreciation of the Council for the work that the Special Representative and the whole of the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE) are doing on the ground. We very much applaud the progress that they have made.

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

The meeting rose at 4.10 p.m.