



Security Council

Fifty-sixth year

Provisional

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Thursday, 3 May 2001, 10.45 a.m.

New York

<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. Strømmen
	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 called to order at 10.50 a.m.

Expression of thanks to the retiring President

The President: As this is the first meeting of the Security Council for the month of May, I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute, on behalf of the Council, to His Excellency Sir Jeremy Greenstock, Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom, for his service as President of the Security Council for the month of April 2001. I am sure that I speak for all members of the Council in expressing deep appreciation to Ambassador Greenstock for the great diplomatic skill with which he conducted the Council's business last month.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

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)

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Angola, Burundi, Canada, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Japan, Namibia, Rwanda, the Sudan, Sweden, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania, in which they request to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the discussion, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

On behalf of the Council, I welcome the Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, His Excellency Mr. Leonard She Okitundu.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. She Okitundu (Democratic Republic of the Congo) took a seat at the Council table.

The President: I welcome the Special Envoy of the President of the Rwandese Republic, His Excellency Mr. Patrick Mazimpaka.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Mazimpaka (Rwanda) took a seat at the Council table.

The President: I welcome the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs and Regional Cooperation of Uganda, His Excellency Mr. Amama Mbabazi.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Mbabazi (Uganda) took a seat at the Council table.

The President: I welcome the Minister of Finance of Burundi, Mr. Charles Nihangaza.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Nihangaza (Burundi) took the seat reserved for him at the side of the Council Chamber.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Mangureira (Angola), Mr. Heinbecker (Canada), Mr. Akasaka (Japan), Mr. Andjaba (Namibia), Mr. Erwa (Sudan), Mr. Norström (Sweden) and Mr. Mwakawago (United Republic of Tanzania) took the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

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 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.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

I invite Ms. Ba-N'Daw to take a seat at the Council table.

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

Members of the Council have before them a letter dated 12 April 2001 from the Secretary-General to the President of the Security Council transmitting 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, document S/2001/357.

I should also like to draw the attention of the members of the Council to the following documents: S/2001/378, letter dated 16 April 2001 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Uganda to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council; S/2001/402, letter dated 24 April 2001 from the Permanent Representative of Rwanda to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council; and S/2001/433, letter dated 1 May 2001 from the Permanent Representative of Burundi to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council.

On behalf of the Security Council, I would like to welcome Foreign Minister She Okitundu of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Minister of State Mbabazi of Uganda and Minister of State Mazimhaka of Rwanda. We look forward to their remarks. We also welcome Ms. Ba-N'Daw, Chairperson of the Panel of Experts.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank our colleague Ambassador Mutaboba of Rwanda for his service to his country and the United Nations. We wish him a safe journey home and extend a warm welcome to his successor, Ambassador Gasana.

Today's meeting occurs against a backdrop of sadness and outrage in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the international community. Six representatives of the International Committee of the Red Cross were brutally murdered on 26 April.

In the presence of Foreign Minister She Okitundu, we extend our condolences to the families of the four Congolese victims. In the presence of our Colombian and Swiss colleagues, we extend the same message of sympathy for their nationals, who also lost their lives in the service of our common humanity.

We express the hope that the perpetrators of this crime will be brought to justice. We all need to work for the safety and protection of humanitarian personnel throughout the world and support those who seek to alleviate human suffering caused by conflicts that we seek to resolve.

I would like to note also that our discussion today takes place 15 months after the last United States presidency of the Security Council, and we also discussed the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Much has changed, but much remains to be done, and our discussion today on this important topic

should be seen in the context of this Council's determination to help bring the tragic conflict in the Congo to an end.

I shall now give the floor to 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.

Ms. Ba-N'Daw (*spoke in French*): I am grateful for this opportunity to present the results of our work to the Member States of the United Nations.

The mandate entrusted to us by the Security Council had three main points: to consider the illegal exploitation of natural resources and other forms of wealth in the Democratic Republic of the Congo; to research and analyse the links between the exploitation of resources and the continuation of the conflict; and to make recommendations to the Security Council. The results of our work are presented in the order recommended in our mandate.

First is the illegal exploitation of resources and other forms of wealth. The Rwandan and Ugandan armies, and to a lesser extent the Burundi army, have been engaging in massive looting of the natural resources of the Democratic Republic of the Congo since 1998. This exploitation has benefited from existing structures that date back to the war of August 1998. This exploitation takes two forms: mass-scale looting and the systematic and systemic exploitation of resources.

The mass-scale looting has consisted mainly of the extraction, removal and confiscation of natural resources, which are amassed or placed in reserve by private individuals, companies or other groups. Military and civilian officials of these two countries, as well as the rebel leaders, have profited directly in most cases.

The systematic and systemic exploitation has required good organization and appropriate infrastructure. In the case of Uganda, General Kazini has set up networks and circuits with individuals he controls. In the case of Rwanda, the organization is more sophisticated and involves various levels. In short, an entire system has been set up by the authorities of certain countries with a view to greater efficiency in the exploitation of the natural resources of the Congo.

As regards the Government, although we cannot speak of the illegal exploitation of natural resources, the Panel has nonetheless identified some rather surprising practices by which the Government of the late President took some of the profits of parastatal entities or granted concessions to the companies of associates, in violation of certain procedures.

On the first point of the mandate, the Panel concludes that certain Congolese and the Ugandan and Rwandan armies are engaging in the exploitation of natural resources and have set up structures to facilitate this exploitation. That exploitation involves coltan, gold, diamonds, timber, ivory, coffee and fiscal resources.

The links between the exploitation of resources and the continuation of the war are found at three levels: at the level of personal gains of high-ranking military and civilian officials, who benefit either from direct financial gains or from getting important contracts for their companies; in the field, because there is more fighting between the regular armies of non-invited States and the Mai-Mai and other negative forces in the mining areas than at the official front, where they have to deal with the Congolese Armed Forces (FAC) and its allies; and at the level of financing the conflict, because of the gap between the military expenditures of the various armies and the level of the defence budget of the various countries.

The conflict is financed in four ways, all of which are linked to the exploitation of resources of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The regular armies are financed from the public coffers. The problem often is how to meet the shortfalls. In some cases, it is the public coffers that provide that role. However, the public coffers often benefit from a trickle-down effect of the re-exportation economy based for the most part on the exploitation of the resources of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

There is also financing from secret funds, as well as free financing, which allows the armies stationed in the Democratic Republic of the Congo to receive funds directly or indirectly from local companies or individuals involved in the exploitation of natural resources.

There is also financing through barter, in which the authorities in control of a given area grant a mining

or other concession to one enterprise, which provides military equipment in exchange.

The recommendations are essentially of six kinds. However, the Panel stresses only four for the sake of presentation: sanctions against countries and entities illegally exploiting the natural resources of the Democratic Republic of the Congo; preventive measures with a view to avoiding the situation's recurrence; compensation for those suffering the illegal exploitation of their natural resources; and the establishment of a framework for the reconstruction of the occupied areas.

The Panel thanks all those who supported it in its work. This is also an excellent opportunity for us to thank in particular the Government of Uganda, which provided all the information we asked for.

The Panel had a difficult and very delicate mission that had to be carried out and completed in extremely adverse and hazardous circumstances in a sensitive region where the susceptibilities and ambitions of the belligerents have reduced the life of the local populations to insecurity and uncertainty. Life in the region today hangs in the balance. We are grateful to God for our safety and that of the many witnesses with whom we spoke, as well as and especially that of ordinary Congolese.

The President: I wish to acknowledge the presence among us of the Secretary-General and to thank him for coming.

I now give the floor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Mr. She Okitundu (Democratic Republic of the Congo) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, on behalf of Major-General Joseph Kabila, President of our Republic, and of my Government and people, as well as on my own personal behalf, I extend our deepest condolences to you, Sir, to the families of the victims, to the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), and to the Governments of Switzerland and Colombia over the cowardly murder on 26 April of six members of the ICRC, including four nationals from my country. My Government pays tribute to the dedication of the people of the ICRC who have given their lives to ease the suffering of my people. Despite this tragedy, it is our hope that the ICRC and all other

humanitarian organizations will continue their efforts to help the people of my country.

I express my delegation's pleasure at seeing you, Sir, preside over this open meeting of the Security Council on the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We are pleased that the Security Council is currently being led by the representative of the United States this month, a crucial and decisive moment for putting a final end to the war of aggression that has been waged against my country for 34 months. I also take this opportunity to extend to you, on behalf of my delegation and on my own personal behalf, my warmest congratulations on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council, the principal organ for the maintenance of international peace and security.

My delegation also acknowledges the excellent work of the delegation of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland during its presidency last month.

We also pay a well-deserved tribute to Mr. Kofi Annan, Secretary-General of the United Nations. My country is grateful to him for his outstanding efforts to restore peace to the Great Lakes region and to the Democratic Republic of the Congo in particular. He has shown enormous energy and perseverance in seeking to end the useless and senseless violence that has taken so many lives in our country. The Democratic Republic of the Congo, through its highest authority, Major-General Joseph Kabila, President of our Republic, hopes that the Secretary-General will be able, in a second term, to maintain the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo as one of his top priorities and to pursue his most commendable work towards lasting peace and reconstruction in my country.

Lastly, I would thank Mrs. Safiatou Ba-N'Dow and all 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 for their essential report, which is of great political and historic significance to us in the Congo. It demonstrates that the false pretext of border insecurity is no longer tenable and that the real motive for the aggression is the systematic plundering and illegal exploitation of the natural resources of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The aggressor countries have occupied Congo because of their vast economic

interests there, which fuel their warmongering. We therefore welcome the report in document S/2001/357.

We bitterly regret, however, the fact that the report confirms rather belatedly what my country has loudly proclaimed since the very beginning of the aggression, namely, that the main objective has not been the security concerns of the three aggressor countries: Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi. The memorandums and all the white books that my Government has conveyed to the Security Council since August 1998 clearly show the double link between the illegal exploitation of our resources and the unleashing of the war, as well as between the illegal exploitation and the mass violations of human rights and international humanitarian law. These documents have been submitted to the Council, which has issued them as official documents.

In paragraph 1 of General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV) of 14 December 1960, "Declaration on the granting of independence to colonial countries and peoples", whose provisions are essentially duplicated in resolution 2625 (XXV), it is stated that

"The subjection of peoples to alien subjugation, domination and exploitation constitutes a denial of fundamental human rights, is contrary to the Charter of the United Nations and is an impediment to the promotion of world peace and co-operation".

We thank you, Sir, and all members of the Security Council for having included on the Council's agenda the item on the illegal exploitation of the natural resources and other forms of wealth of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in violation of its national sovereignty. The item is indeed within the competence of the Security Council because of the Council's principal responsibility under the Charter for the maintenance of international peace and security. The subject logically falls within the Council's interest in a swift return of lasting peace to my country and my people.

My delegation is pleased that a consensus is clearly emerging today within the Council and the international community on the direct linkage between the planned massacre of the Congolese people, the shameless looting of the resources of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the continuation of fighting. All of this ends up seriously impoverishing our people.

My delegation is pleased that in order to delimit the goal of its work, the Panel of Experts decided to define and interpret the concept of “illegal exploitation”. This deals with all the extracting, producing, marketing and exporting activities carried out in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in violation of its sovereignty, in violation of mining and environmental measures and in violation of international contractual and customary law.

We would remind the Council of the following.

First of all, in the Corfu Channel case, in 1949 the International Court of Justice issued a ruling in which it affirmed that among independent States, respect for territorial sovereignty is one of the essential bases of international relations. The concept of sovereignty includes exclusivity, autonomy and full authority within the territorial region.

Secondly, General Assembly resolution 1803 (XVII) of 14 December 1962, entitled “Permanent sovereignty over natural resources,” in paragraph 7 states that violating the rights of peoples and nations to sovereignty over their natural resources and wealth is contrary to the spirit and letter of the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and hinders the development of international cooperation and the maintenance of peace.

The report of the Panel of Experts describes most eloquently the structures used by the occupying forces, namely, Rwanda, Uganda and Burundi, whose iniquitous and villainous methods are unequalled in the darkest chapters of modern history.

Death threats against the members of the Panel of Experts are unacceptable. It is up to the Security Council, which gave them their mandate, to ensure their security and to require that all States concerned cooperate fully with the United Nations so that the truth can burst forth.

The greed of the aggressor countries has sown death and destruction throughout my country. The Council will recall the terrifying figures cited by Ms. McAskie, Emergency Relief Coordinator *ad interim*, in her report on 28 November 2000. The report noted the 16 million Congolese who were directly affected by the war of aggression — that is 33 per cent of the entire population of the country. Two million died as direct and indirect victims of the war, including approximately 600,000 children under five years old.

Many other millions of innocent Congolese civilians have become refugees in other countries or are internally displaced. These figures have been confirmed by the European Office of Humanitarian Assistance and the International Rescue Committee, which reported on nearly 3 million dead in the areas occupied by the aggressors. This is an appalling, intolerable situation.

The Council will recall the massacres of peaceful Congolese civilians, the assassinations and murders of civilians and Congolese prisoners, the deportation of entire populations, attacks on individuals, rape and the deliberate spreading of the AIDS virus.

The Council should remember the suffering of the city of Kisangani, where three times the Rwandan and Ugandan troops clashed, bombing residential areas, cultural objects and places of worship despite their being protected by the provisions of article 53 of Additional Protocol 1 to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and thus causing loss of human life, especially among the vulnerable, mostly women and children. Following these hateful acts, the Council adopted resolution 1304 (2000) of 16 June 2000 and called for the immediate, unconditional withdrawal of Ugandan and Rwandese troops. We deplore the fact that today, about a year later, despite measures taken by the International Court of Justice in The Hague last July, the city is still occupied.

More recently in Ituri, Ugandan troops caused deadly clashes between the Hema and Lendu, two important ethnic groups in our Orientale province, who until then were living in peace.

On the moral, material and physical levels, the damage that has been done is enormous. The Congolese people, who warmly welcomed the report of the Panel of Experts, are now entitled to call for appropriate reparations pursuant to article 91 of Additional Protocol 1 of the Geneva Conventions. It provides that a party to a conflict which violates the provisions of the Conventions and the Protocol shall, if the case demands, be liable to pay compensation. It shall be responsible for all acts committed by persons forming part of its armed forces. Paragraphs 87 to 93 in the report of the Panel of Experts clearly indicate the names of individuals implicated in the looting.

Let me offer a few arguments proving that what has happened in my country did not happen by chance, but was rather premeditated and carefully planned. On

31 August 1998, my Government submitted a memorandum on the armed aggression by the Rwandan/Ugandan coalition against the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The memorandum, issued as an official document of this Council, showed how powerful alliances of interests made use of the move by aggressor countries to serve their goal of dismembering Central Africa for the purposes of economic domination and control of the sources of important raw materials.

The geographic zones of expansion of this Balkanization strategy extend from the north of the mining province of Katanga to the southern Sudan, passing through the forests of the province of Maniema, the Ruzizi valley in South Kivu, the province of North Kivu and Orientale province. These vast geographical areas contain enormous, coveted wealth, such as strategic minerals, gold, diamonds, oil, niobium, columbo-tantalite (coltan), timber, coffee, quinine and so forth.

At the environmental level, the illegal exploitation of natural resources and other forms of wealth of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in violation of its sovereignty, has had devastating and perhaps irreversible consequences for the management of the flora and fauna. Entire national parks — Virunga, Garamba, Salonga, Kahuzi-Biega — that were classified by UNESCO as the heritage of mankind have been completely devastated. First they were victims of the flood of Rwandan refugees and people displaced by successive conflicts. Then the parks became the target of poaching established as a practice of war and of organized illicit trafficking.

My delegation made a heartfelt appeal to the Security Council that it should call on the international community to react and help us protect unique species. Because of the savage slaughter with automatic weapons by the occupying forces, Congolese elephants, bonobos, gorillas in the eastern plains, mountain gorillas, chimpanzees, baboons, white rhinoceroses, okapis and Congolese peacocks are all being exterminated.

As a result of this enormous undertaking, only the people of the Congo are losing. Continuation of this unjust and senseless war and the illegal exploitation of the natural resources and other forms of wealth have greatly increased the suffering of our people.

We were outraged to hear that even yesterday Uganda was being praised by the Bretton Woods institutions when at the same time the report of the Panel of Experts, in paragraphs 187 to 190, shows how the systematic looting of Congolese resources has directly contributed to improving the balance of national accounts in that country and in Rwanda. The fact that our aggressors are on the list of countries benefiting from the Highly Indebted Poor Countries Debt Initiative is seen by my people as rewarding them for their crimes.

My country endorses the recommendations by the Panel of Experts in paragraphs 236 to 242. These relate to reparations and compensation for the Congolese people and show that it is necessary to set up a framework for the reconstruction of the country. To that end, the conditions should be created to bolster the powers of the State and to enable it to provide improved safety and security for people throughout its national territory.

In paragraph 239 of its report, the Panel of Experts recommends the establishment of an international mechanism that will investigate individuals named in that paragraph as being involved in economic criminal activities. That list should be expanded to include those named in paragraph 211 as being on the verge of becoming the godfathers of this illegal exploitation. My Government considers that the Council should act swiftly on the basis of these relevant recommendations.

With all due respect for Rwanda, the systematic looting of the natural resources of the Democratic Republic of the Congo has helped finance and support the war in my country. My delegation would recall that pillage is prohibited under article 33 of the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War.

The aggressors bear the shame of claiming to teach the people of the Congo a lesson in democracy and good governance. But in fact, they are bands of looters. They will answer to history for this barbarism, which will go down in the annals of mankind, along with their attendant atrocities and massacres.

I wish most sincerely to thank Angola, Namibia and Zimbabwe, which have come to my country's assistance in the framework of the self-defence provisions of the statute of the Southern African Development Community and in conformity with the

relevant provisions of the United Nations Charter. I must point out that, in the absence of the aggression of which the Democratic Republic of the Congo is victim, the allied troops of Angola, Namibia and Zimbabwe would certainly not be on Congolese territory.

My Government wishes also to pay hearty tribute to the entire Congolese people, which has tirelessly stated, loud and clear, its devotion to the Congolese nation and its keen wish to coexist within a united, strong country, in line with the founding accord of the republic and with the self-determination achieved on 30 June 1960.

My delegation assures the Council and the international community that His Excellency Major General Joseph Kabila, President of the Republic, is determined on behalf of the Congolese people to restore peace through a diplomatic solution to the conflict. On 2 February 2001, the Security Council heard His Excellency Major General Joseph Kabila, President of the Republic, speak at length about the illegal exploitation of natural resources and other forms of wealth in my country. That exploitation must end immediately: the consequences for present and future generations are already extremely grave.

The illegal exploitation of the mining resources of the Democratic Republic of the Congo by aggressor States and their nationals violates the right of the Congolese people to self-determination. It also violates the principle of the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which the Security Council has repeatedly reaffirmed in all its resolutions on the situation in my country.

With a view to attaining the peace demanded by my people, and in the light of the gravity of the situation, my Government calls on the Security Council to call for protective measures comprising an embargo on looted products in transit through, inter alia, Kigali, Bujumbura and Kampala. And principally we call on the Council to implement all the recommendations of the Panel of Experts on the Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources and Other Forms of Wealth in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, including: order the demilitarization of the city of Kisangani, reparations for material damage, and compensation for the population in accordance with resolution 1304 (2000) of 16 June 2000; state that only the total and final withdrawal by the aggressors can guarantee an end to the looting of the wealth of the Democratic

Republic of the Congo; recognize the grave moral, material and physical damage suffered by the Congolese people as a result of this war and the concomitant mafia-like activities; order meaningful reparations for that damage in order to restore the rights of the Congolese people; and order that legal action be taken against the perpetrators of this looting and their accomplices.

The President: I thank the Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Democratic Republic of the Congo for the kind words he addressed to me.

The next speaker is the Special Envoy of the President of the Rwandese Republic, His Excellency Mr. Patrick Mazimpaka, on whom I now call.

Mr. Mazimpaka (Rwanda): My delegation would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Council for the month of May. Our congratulations also go to your predecessor, Sir Jeremy Greenstock, for a job well done last month. I wish to thank you and, through you, the Security Council for convening this open meeting, at which delegations can express themselves on the contents of 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, document S/2001/357 of 12 April 2001, which has just been presented to the Council.

Rwanda fully cooperated with the Panel, as is rightly recognized in the report; since the publication of the report we have put forward the reaction of the Government of Rwanda, which is set out in document S/2001/402, to which reference has been made, for everybody to read through in order to see our detailed comments.

We believe that the mandate given to the Panel was not carefully defined; this led to contentious interpretations. In our view, there are four major issues that made the Panel of Experts produce a report that we do not endorse.

First, the report interpreted “illegality” to mean activities carried out without the consent of a legitimate Government or of an authority exercising power and control over territory. Those concepts, which are generally accepted, are, in the context of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, defined also in the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement: article III, paragraph 18,

stipulates that State administration shall be exercised by the Congolese signatories until new institutions emanating inter-Congolese dialogue are set up. That has not yet happened. Since that Agreement received and, we hope, continues to enjoy the support of the Council, we would have expected the Panel to adopt the letter and spirit of the Agreement.

Secondly, the Panel extended the definition of natural resources and other forms of wealth to include services, transport, finance, and other movements of goods and people. In our region, these are regulated by multinational agreements, which include those between our three countries — the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Burundi and Rwanda — and the conventions of the Economic Community of the Great Lakes Countries (CEPGL), as well as regional arrangements, such as those under the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) and the Northern Corridor arrangement; these conform also to World Trade Organization conventions.

Ignoring these historical ties among the peoples of the region is prejudicial to the socio-economic well-being of the people of the region, and more particularly those of the Democratic Republic of the Congo cut off from Kinshasa, who have been historically linked to the world through eastern routes through Rwanda, Burundi and Uganda.

Thirdly, the sources cited by the Panel do not reflect the efforts that the Government made to facilitate access to information. The Panel had an opportunity to meet Rwanda's head of State, President Paul Kagame, for two hours. Nothing in the report indicates that the Panel benefited from that meeting. It is also true that none of the conclusions were put to the President for discussion. The same goes for the large number of ministers and officials who made themselves available to discuss the issues with the panel.

Fourthly, the private sector, which was characterized as pivotal in the illegal exploitation, was never contacted to clarify their business practices or credentials to the Panel. That is against the norms of natural justice.

We can only conclude that the panel relied on unacceptable sources variously described in the report as deserters, a "high number of insiders living in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and in Europe" (S/2001/357, *para. 11*) and "reliable sources" (*ibid.*, *passim*) that are not identified. One wonders why the

Panel could not appreciate that such politically motivated sources would only give information to serve their own political agendas. Deserters would in normal circumstances be defectors from one side to another, and would only slur the side they had left.

We find it unusual that a panel of experts would evaluate its own report, pass judgement and impose punitive measures — as this one did — and that it would do that on the basis of a report that the Panel admits is today only 70 per cent complete. It surely should not include condemnations of heads of State and their families, companies and individuals without meeting the burden of proof of guilt. The way heads of State are treated in this report is simply unacceptable and sets a dangerous precedent.

Since the report concludes that economic reasons have superseded the security concerns of Rwanda, allow me to reiterate the reasons why Rwanda has had to defend its citizens against a murderous war waged from the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Members of the Council may recall that, after the genocide of 1994, the Security Council was on numerous occasions seized of the matter of the precarious security conditions caused by Interahamwe militia and ex-Rwandese Armed Forces (FAR) soldiers in refugee camps in Zaire. No solution was found by this body. It became necessary for Rwanda and its allies to find a solution to that situation. I am glad to say that this was done with a measure of success, because 1.5 million refugees were able to return home and security was restored to Rwanda for a while. However, the situation changed dramatically when the Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire (AFDL) Government of President Laurent Kabila decided to regroup and rearm those forces.

Once again, appeals to the United Nations to avert the looming crisis multiplied. The Security Council set up an International Commission of Inquiry that established beyond a reasonable doubt the existence of well-organized forces bent on destabilizing the Great Lakes region. Those included, and were organized around, the Interahamwe and ex-FAR militia, which at the time numbered 70,000. The report contained in document S/1998/1096 described as profoundly shocking the network of forces from Rwanda, Burundi, Angola and Uganda, the unhindered flow of arms to them, and the support they were receiving from the Government of the Democratic

Republic of the Congo. At that time western Rwanda, the prefecture of Gisenyi, Ruhengeri, Kibuye and Cyangugu and parts of Byumba, Kigali and Gitarama were described as red zones by United Nations agencies because of insecurity due to incursions by those forces based in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The situation changed dramatically when Rwandan forces were able to put an end to those infiltrations and push those forces back into the Democratic Republic of the Congo — helped that time by a rebellion against the Kabila Government. Security was gradually restored in Rwanda and, though not completely to date, in North Kivu. That situation enabled Rwanda to continue to repatriate refugees and to reintegrate them into our society. Close to 100,000 refugees have returned in the last six months alone, and a total of 18,000 ex-FAR soldiers have been reintegrated in the national army — the Rwandan Patriotic Army (RPA) — at command, staff and other ranks. The improvement in security and other developments in the human rights area convinced the Special Rapporteur to recommend, successfully, that the Commission on Human Rights put an end to its monitoring of Rwanda. We hope that this can be achieved in the whole region once we succeed in putting an end to the activities of the negative forces.

The war in the Democratic Republic of the Congo brought in several countries and generated rebellions against the Government. In a genuine attempt to find solutions to the multiple causes of the conflict, the belligerents negotiated the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement with the assistance of countries of the region. That Agreement addresses the sovereignty of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, including control over its resources, the rights of the Congolese people and the security of neighbouring countries. The Lusaka Agreement provides for mechanisms to rid the Democratic Republic of the Congo of all the negative forces. That is a task the Security Council can ignore only at the peril of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the region. Signatories to Lusaka, today at least, appear to be working in tandem to implement the Agreement as it is, and need unconditional support from this body. At this stage, the implementation of both the Lusaka Agreement and Security Council resolution 1341 (2001) is of paramount importance.

We are also busy preparing plans for the disarming of the forces upon which the Security

Council had imposed sanctions in connection with rearming through resolution 918 (1994). Had the Council reinforced that resolution, the Lusaka Agreement would be far advanced today and the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the region would certainly have improved. We urge the Council to re-examine its resolutions on the situation, and in particular with regard to the activities of the Interahamwe and ex-FAR troops, namely, resolutions 918 (1994), 997 (1995), 1011 (1995), 1013 (1995) and 1161 (1998), as well as the letter contained in document S/1998/438 and the report contained in document S/1998/1096. We also urge the Council to take action without further delay so as to neutralize these groups and their mushrooming allies — such as the Forces pour la défense de la démocratie (FDD) and the Mayi-Mayi. All countries should be discouraged from continuing to support these forces by all means available to the Council.

It came to our attention that the Panel is seeking the extension of its mandate to do what it terms the remaining 30 per cent of the work to be done. The Council may recall that in February 2001 the preliminary report was considered inadequate and inaccurate. At that time we pointed out those inaccuracies. To our knowledge, the Panel never went back to the field to cross-check the information. We are also forced to deal with a “final” report that the Panel itself admits to be only 70 per cent done, and on the basis of which Rwanda, its leaders and its citizens are unreservedly condemned. Such a request is simply meant to pre-empt reactions from people and countries, like Rwanda, that have been wrongly accused by the Panel.

Rwanda proposes that this report should be dropped altogether because it is inaccurate and inconclusive and does not in any way interpret the wishes of the Council. It does not reflect the genuine desire of members to establish the state of affairs in the Democratic Republic of the Congo so as to recommend ways and means of rectifying the situation, in the interest of the Congolese people. It does not do justice to countries like Rwanda, which went out of its way to cooperate with the Panel.

However, should it please the Council to reopen the investigations and correct the numerous lacunae in the report just presented, then Rwanda wishes to propose the following.

First, the Council and the Member States which are the subject of this investigation should agree on the terms of reference and spell out the appropriate methodology. Secondly, clear definitions of terms loosely used in the previous report, such as “illegal”, “legitimate”, “power” and “control”, should be established in relation to the specific and unique political situation prevailing in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and in the region. Thirdly, treaties, agreements and protocols governing the trade regime in the region should be duly recognized. And fourthly, the responsibilities of countries of destination of the resources should be determined with regard to both import and export activities.

My delegation respectfully wishes to urge the Security Council to keep on course insofar as securing peace and security in the Great Lakes region is concerned. The Council will be encouraged to know that, since the last meeting between the Council and the Lusaka signatories, the commitment to the implementation of the Lusaka Agreement demonstrated then has borne some fruit. The disengagement exercise, in spite of a few problems, is effectively complete. Joint planning between the Joint Military Commission and the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) for the disarmament, demobilization, repatriation and resettlement of negative forces is under way, as envisaged by resolution 1341 (2001). The inter-Congolese dialogue, crucial for re-establishing common State authority over the whole Congolese territory, was due to be launched in Lusaka this morning. The concept of the plans for the final withdrawal of all foreign forces from the Democratic Republic of the Congo was approved last month, and planning will start soon.

The Lusaka process provides us with the only realistic and long-lasting approach to the problems of the Great Lakes region. Rwanda believes that its security concerns cannot be minimized by any other considerations. It believes also that in Lusaka all the parties will find equitable solutions to the problems that face their respective countries. The Security Council and the whole United Nations system should continue to accompany our countries in the quest for the successful and timely implementation of the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement as it is.

The President: I thank the Special Envoy of the President of the Rwandese Republic for the kind words he addressed to me.

The next speaker is the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs and Regional Cooperation of Uganda, Mr. Amama Mbabazi, to whom I give the floor.

Mr. Mbabazi (Uganda): It is an honour for me, on behalf of the delegation I lead and of my country, to address this important meeting of the Security Council on the final report of the United Nations Panel of Experts on the Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources and Other Forms of Wealth in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

I am particularly happy to see the presidency of the United States once again taking an interest in the search for a lasting peace in the Great Lakes region. We can only assure you, Sir, of our readiness to render Uganda's full cooperation to enable you to achieve this noble objective.

We are equally grateful to Her Majesty's Government of the United Kingdom for the able leadership of Her Majesty's Permanent Representative, Sir Jeremy Greenstock, whose presidency last month made the necessary preparations for this meeting.

The Government of Uganda is most obliged to all of the members of the Security Council for the onerous task of the maintenance of international peace and security, which they all render to the world on behalf of the United Nations.

The Government of Uganda welcomes the release of this report. I wish to thank you once again, Mr. President, as well as the Council, for giving us the opportunity to respond to its contents. I will present to the Council Uganda's response in full. This response covers all of the allegations against Uganda in the report. I have also attached the personal response of President Museveni of Uganda, a copy of which he has already sent to the Secretary-General and which has, I hope, already been circulated to Council members.

Allow me therefore, in the short time I have, to give the Council a summary of this response. My summary, like the response itself, will cover three areas. First, we will talk about the principle itself of investigating these allegations. Secondly, we will make comments on the contents of the report, and especially on the quality of the evidence presented. Finally, we will talk about the way forward.

The report of the Panel raises important issues to be investigated which are of interest to Uganda. In 1998, Uganda and Rwanda heard of some allegations made against some officers of our armies operating in the Congo. At the summit held in Kampala in October 1998, a decision was made to establish a ministerial probe committee — which I was privileged to co-chair, along with my colleague the head of delegation of Rwanda — to look into those allegations.

It was as a result of those allegations that President Museveni, in his capacity as Commander-in-Chief of the Ugandan People's Defence Forces, issued an order dated 5 December 1998 to all Ugandan troops in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Government officials prohibiting them and their families from engaging in any trade in the Congo. It will be of interest to the Council to know that since that time, that order has been actively enforced and that some people who have fallen afoul of it have suffered disciplinary consequences.

We therefore support and welcome the principle of investigation. We take note of the Panel's serious allegations that, although the Ugandan Government is not institutionally involved, as the report states in paragraphs 7 and 85, top Ugandan military officers and civilians are involved in the illegal exploitation of resources in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. This is the first time that allegations of illegal exploitation have been specified, and we welcome the opportunity to put these matters to rest.

In the case of the military officers and civilians who are mentioned in the report, and in the case of the Department of Forestry, which is alleged to have colluded with private companies in a scheme to facilitate the certification of timber from the Democratic Republic of the Congo illegally, I am happy to inform the Security Council that the Government of Uganda has decided to establish a judicial commission of inquiry on this matter. The commission will be independent; it will work openly and transparently. The actual composition will be announced in due course in Kampala.

Having said that, I should like to say that Uganda has serious problems with this report. The report has fundamental flaws in it. The first flaw is the very basis on which it is founded: the definition of illegality. The Panel defines illegality as meaning the violation of sovereignty, and says that, according to this Council's

understanding of the definition, all activities in the Democratic Republic of the Congo which are taking place without the consent of the Government in Kinshasa are illegal. It goes further, saying that that interpretation suggests that only non-invited forces and their nationals are carrying out illegal activities in the Congo. Finally, the Panel deems illegality to be the carrying out of an activity in violation of regulations established by the Government in Kinshasa, stating that that definition is based on the Security Council's understanding of the term illegality.

We have a very serious problem with that definition in many ways. First of all, as the Council knows, Uganda fully participated in the debate when the resolution establishing the Panel to investigate this matter was adopted by the Security Council. This question of legality or illegality was, indeed, debated in the context of whether the investigation should cover the whole of the Congo or part of the Congo. The argument that the investigation should cover only the eastern Congo was based precisely on the question of legality and legitimacy. But there was an argument, clearly presented by my colleague from Rwanda, that, in fact, the Lusaka Agreement clearly took care of this point, because it defined the question of legality during the period of the implementation of the Lusaka accord. It was agreed that for that period, as provided for in the Lusaka accord, the three Congolese parties signatories to that accord — the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Congolese Rally for Democracy (RCD) and the Movement for the Liberation of the Congo (MLC), as it was then known — would each be charged with the responsibility of administering the area that it controlled until State administration was re-established after the national dialogue resulted in a new political dispensation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

This argument was presented to this Council and, obviously, the Council, in its wisdom, decided that the investigation should therefore cover the whole of the Congo, not just part of it. I therefore have no reason to believe the Panel when it says that this definition was the understanding of the Security Council.

Secondly, if, indeed, that definition as stipulated by the Panel in the report had been intended, there would have been no need to have an investigation. It is public knowledge that 40 per cent of the country is under the control of the Government in Kinshasa and that the other 60 per cent is under the control of rebel

authorities. It is also common knowledge that normal life — normal in the context of a war situation — goes on in the areas controlled by the rebels. It would not, therefore, have been necessary to establish a Panel to investigate something that everyone accepted: the fact that the central Government in Kinshasa had no authority and was therefore not consenting to the activities that were taking place in 60 per cent of Congo, which would, therefore, have been declared illegal straight away.

The importance of this point lies in the fact that the rest of the report, and the rest of the investigation, was based on the understanding that every activity — the extraction of minerals, production of any kind and any commerce or export in areas not controlled by the Government — was illegal and therefore defined as looting and plundering of the resources of the Congo. We think that that is erroneous; it is an incorrect definition of illegality, and we do not believe that that was the meaning conveyed to the Panel by this Council.

Of course, the results are obvious; they are self-evident. Although the report says that the Panel did not receive cooperation from the Government side and its allies, there is no indication that there was actually a serious attempt to carry out an investigation. Indeed, the report clearly discloses that the Panel acted on the assumption that whatever happened on the side controlled by the Government was legal and therefore not subject to investigation.

The second flaw in this report is the quality of the evidence presented. Most of the evidence is either hearsay or falsehoods, and the Panel makes statements which are not attributed. As I said earlier, in our response we tackled the report paragraph by paragraph to show that most of the evidence on which it is based is, in fact, hearsay. I will pick out one example to illustrate the point. Paragraph 27 of the report states that

“Numerous accounts in Kampala suggest that the decision to enter the conflict in August 1998 was defended by some top military officials who had served in eastern Zaire ... and who had had a taste of the business potential of the region.”

It does not give us the sources. However, we know that these stories are abundantly available in the public

domain in Uganda. They are in newspapers; they are on the streets.

We think this is a very serious matter. Uganda has given its reasons why it got involved in the Congo. These reasons not only were accepted by the belligerents in Congo, but the security concerns are actually contained in the Lusaka Agreement. Indeed, the Lusaka formula proposes to handle that specific problem. So, if the United Nations Panel of Experts is to contradict that position, to contradict what you, the Council, have accepted in various resolutions, surely it must present clear evidence that leaves no one in doubt about its truthfulness and credibility — not numerous accounts in Kampala.

If you go to Kampala, Mr. President, you will find a lot of street gossip about what is happening in the Congo and about what is happening in the Security Council today. But if a panel of experts is going to make recommendations that sanctions be imposed against a country of 23 million people, surely it must present evidence that is credible, that leaves no one in doubt that what they are saying is true.

The Panel of Experts has made statements in its report that the members of the Panel know to be false. They acknowledged maximum cooperation received from the Government of Uganda. They were received by the President, the Vice-President, the Prime Minister, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Minister of Defence, the Minister of Finance, the Minister of Transport, the Minister of Energy and Minerals, the Minister of Forestry and all sorts of other officials. Everyone they asked for they met. But regarding what they say in paragraph 11 and paragraph 89, that they asked for individuals and their request was turned down — they named this specific individual as Brigadier General Kazini — I would like to inform this Council that this is not true. First of all, they never asked for Kazini. I saw this for the first time in their report. Secondly, in fact, General Kazini met them, not once, but twice. Thirdly, when they met the military commander, General Odongo, he offered the Panel specifically that if they passed out questionnaires or asked for any officers in the Congo they wanted to interview, he was ready to make these officers available. Up to this moment, they have not made such a request. So to report that they requested these people — presumably they made these requests to the Government of Uganda and the Government of Uganda

turned them down — when they know this is false is totally unacceptable.

On 6 March this year, we communicated with the Chairperson of the Panel on the follow-up to the interim report, reconfirming our continued support for its work and inviting any questions, clarifications or additional data, as well as extending another welcome to the Panel to revisit Uganda before the finalization of the report. The Panel did not respond to this.

What we find most despicable is the attack by the Panel on the person of President Museveni. Let us look at paragraph 211. I will read out a sentence:

“Presidents Kagame and Museveni are on the verge of becoming the godfathers of the illegal exploitation of natural resources and the continuation of the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.”

Godfathers are Mafia. Godfathers are those who control criminal cartels, criminal syndicates. Therefore, to call President Museveni a godfather is a very, very serious matter. Or to call President Kagame a godfather is a very, very serious matter. There must be evidence for them to justify this label. What evidence is there in this report? None, absolutely none. The only time they mention the name of President Museveni is to say that he has a blood brother called General Saleh, who is said to have shares in a company that is dealing in business in the eastern Congo; that he has a son who has shares in a business suspected to be doing business in the eastern Congo; and that he has a sister-in-law who has shares in a company that is dealing in business in the Congo, all of which, of course, is, by that other definition, termed illegal.

But even if it were true that these relatives of the President were in fact engaged in that business, is it logical, is it normal to call the President, or anyone for that matter, names; to give him a label for the acts of relatives without showing any evidence that he was party to those actions?

The casual manner in which the name of the President has been handled is totally unacceptable to the people of Uganda. President Museveni is the head of State of a Member country of the United Nations. If you are to call him names, surely you must have evidence. They call him an accomplice to crime. Why? Paragraphs 201 to 206 say that some rebel in the Congo is alleged to have stolen money. The report was given

to President Museveni and he did not act against that rebel; and therefore President Museveni qualifies as an accomplice to crime.

We find this despicable, we do not accept it and we do not know how you will handle this, Mr. President, because it is setting a very serious precedent. Even ordinary people's reputations are protected. Obviously, all these allegations against the name of the President are calculated to injure the reputation of President Museveni without cause. We demand an apology, we demand that they be withdrawn and we request that this Council look into this matter and take appropriate action.

When we meet with the Secretary-General, we know that this Panel, as a body of the United Nations, enjoys criminal and civil immunities, but our view is that the manner in which it has treated the name of President Museveni is an abuse of privilege.

Uganda therefore feels that the quality of the report is so low that its value and credibility are seriously diminished and undermined. That is why we support the extension of the mandate of the Panel, in the hope that a better job will be done. In this connection, Uganda would recommend that a new panel be put in place or that the current one be expanded, with a new chairperson, to inject some level of professional competence, impartiality and serious leadership into the investigation process. We believe that it is also important to achieve a level of balance in the new panel of experts in order to make sure that bias and prejudice are avoided.

Uganda has also learned one lesson, an important lesson: it pays not to cooperate with this United Nations Panel of Experts. The Panel of Experts acknowledges, as the Chairperson did this morning, the maximum cooperation that Uganda rendered. This ranged from meeting the President himself, the Vice-President and others to giving the Panel all the data it requested. There was nothing that was not given. What reward do we get? Abuse of the President and recommendations of sanctions against the people of Uganda. What evidence is there that Uganda was institutionally involved in the illegal exploitation of resources? Some individuals, numbering approximately 10, were involved, yet this Panel recommends that the United Nations impose sanctions on 23 million Ugandans. Why not ask for the arrest of those individuals? On the other hand, countries that are

suspected of actually being illegally involved in the exploitation of natural resources in the Democratic Republic of the Congo have had their dubious interests legitimized, if this report does so. Who has said that a sovereign State cannot commit a crime?

Uganda believes that the cause of all this is war in the Congo. It is the absence of a stable, strong State in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Therefore, we believe that the primary focus should be on creating peace in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. This can be only through the implementation of the Lusaka Agreement. In this context, we would expect the Security Council to handle this matter with the utmost care, because — and members have heard the language used this morning — this report and what has been said have seriously poisoned the atmosphere in the region and have the potential of being diversionary from the cause of pursuing peace through Lusaka. The exploitation of natural resources is not the cause, but the consequence of the war and the absence of a strong State.

Our view therefore is that the Security Council should remain determined to play a leadership role in the search for peace and stability in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. I have been much more pleased than I was the last time I visited this Council by its level of involvement. Everybody is happy that the peace process at long last appears to be moving towards disengagement. The Political Committee has adopted a schedule of withdrawal of foreign forces. National dialogue is on the move. Forces have moved. Uganda has moved seven battalions and will be moving another two within the next few days, and we are considering completely moving out. The Lusaka peace process provides a unique opportunity to address the security concerns of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and its neighbours and to create favourable conditions for an internal dialogue on a new democratic dispensation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The withdrawal of all foreign forces and the emergence of a strong and stable State are the only guarantee of an end to the illegal exploitation of natural resources in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

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

Mr. Nihangaza (Burundi) (*spoke in French*): Allow me at the outset to perform the pleasant duty of

congratulating you, Sir, and, through you, the Government of the United States on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of May. We are convinced that your presidency will allow the work of the Council to progress on the path towards peace throughout the world, in particular in the Great Lakes region.

Let me also welcome the presence of the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, and commend him for his commitment to peace and development in the world, in particular in the countries of the Great Lakes.

The Government of the Republic of Burundi has received the report in document S/2001/357, issued by the Panel of Experts on the Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources and Other Forms of Wealth of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We wish to draw the Security Council's attention to the following points.

First, in its report, the Panel did not find sufficient evidence to indict Burundi. In view of the publicity in the media focused on the accusations levelled against Burundi, anyone might have expected to find a mass of very specific data in the report to substantiate those accusations. It will be noted from a reading of the report that Burundi is named from time to time, appearing in a perfectly ritual fashion on a list of countries to be targeted.

It is only in paragraph 105, on page 25 of the English version of the report, that we find three sentences that might be regarded as containing these so-called accusations against Burundi. This is the substance of the paragraph:

“An IMF office memorandum indicates that ‘Burundi does not produce gold, diamonds, columbo-tantalite, copper, cobalt, or basic metals’. Burundi however has been exporting minerals it does not produce. As in the case of Uganda and Rwanda, Burundi's export of diamonds dates from 1998, coinciding with the occupation of the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. The coltan exports span a longer period (1995-1999), perhaps suggesting that this might be a regular activity.”

This is the only sort of accusation against Burundi contained in the report: a reference to an International Monetary Fund (IMF) document of which there is no trace; I have looked in Washington and hunted in my country, and this IMF document does not exist. In

short, paragraph 105 confirms that Burundi is not involved in plundering the wealth of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Secondly, paragraph 105 seems to suggest that there are no mineral ores in Burundi and that there is no trade with the Democratic Republic of the Congo. This is quite astounding. Trade between Burundi and the Democratic Republic of the Congo has always existed and includes a wide range of products. I would like to inform the Council that before the war approximately 40 per cent of Burundi's exports went to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and the same is true today. As far as ores are concerned, the document presenting the position of the Burundi Government, which was submitted to the Security Council, provides statistics that attest to Burundi's exploitation of gold, cassiterite, coltan and tin.

It should also be noted that *comptoirs* for gold and diamonds existed long before independence, both in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo and in Bujumbura. They were run either by Congolese or Burundians, or by nationals of other countries.

Thirdly, the grave nature of the conclusions on Burundi contrasts with the lack of supporting data that one would expect to find in the body of the report. When we were in school, we were taught that the conclusion of a composition should reflect the substance of the body of the text. In the case of this report, five whole pages of serious conclusions and recommendations correspond to just three sentences in the body of the report. This disproportion undermines the credibility of the report as far as Burundi is concerned.

Fourthly, Burundi is still prepared to cooperate with the Panel of Experts. Despite the indiscriminate way in which Burundi is implicated, the Government of Burundi is still prepared to offer its full cooperation with the Panel of Experts. Indeed, it intends to carry out its own inquiry into the possible involvement of Burundians. We recommend that the experts revisit Burundi and interview people on both sides of the border. To this end, Burundi is glad that the Security Council has decided to extend the mandate of the Panel of Experts.

Burundi has always stated that the deployment of security arrangements on its border with the Democratic Republic of the Congo was dictated by security concerns and by the need to keep open the

trading corridor via Lake Tanganyika. My country has no political or territorial ambitions vis-à-vis any neighbouring country.

In conclusion, the Government of Burundi refutes the serious accusations that have been levelled against it, and calls on the Security Council to take into account the anomalies identified in the report where Burundi is concerned.

Burundi takes the view that resolving security issues between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and its neighbours would end all of the problems and elements of tension associated with the state of "subregional conflict". The report of the Panel of Experts should not distract us from genuine security concerns. This is why Burundi once again states its readiness to pursue a dialogue with the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the other partners of the subregion in order to secure our common borders and find long-term responses to the underlying causes of the conflicts that are tearing that region of Africa apart.

In this context, the Government of Burundi notes with concern that the Burundian rebels and other negative forces based in the Democratic Republic of the Congo are shifting towards other rear bases in the subregion with a view to provoking total war in Burundi. The Government will shortly be making proposals to the Security Council that will be aimed at ensuring that the successful implementation of the Lusaka Agreement does not have the unfortunate result of causing the death-mongers to move into neighbouring Burundi and other adjacent countries — a situation that would imperil the Arusha Peace Agreement and that we hope the international community will not allow to develop.

The President: I thank the Minister of Finance of Burundi for his kind words addressed to me.

I shall now turn to members of the Council to speak. It was important to hear the statements from our guests this morning, particularly the Ministers. I would like to note that I still have a number of speakers on my list and the hour is growing late. I intend to suspend the meeting between 1 and 1.15 p.m. and to resume later in the afternoon, because we obviously will not finish now.

Mr. Mejdoub (Tunisia) (*spoke in French*): My delegation would like to express its appreciation to Ms.

Safiatou Ba-N'Daw and the other 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 for the significant amount of work they have done pursuant to the mandate given to them by the Security Council. The report they have prepared is an extremely important document.

My delegation would also like to welcome the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Uganda, the Special Envoy of the President of Rwanda and the Minister of Finance of Burundi. Their presence here today bears witness to the importance that those countries attach to this meeting and to this issue. Their contribution to our debate is essential in clarifying certain aspects of the matter under consideration so that we can objectively assess the situation.

Our meeting is taking place at a decisive moment in the implementation of the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement and the relevant resolutions of the Security Council. This meeting is also being held just before the Council's mission to the region to evaluate progress made in the peace process. The Council's mission will take account, *inter alia*, of the links between the exploitation of the resources of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the continuation of the fighting.

In its report, the Panel of Experts provides sombre information about the scope of the illegal exploitation of the natural resources of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and about the continuation of the conflict. It also identifies a correlation between the economic interests of certain outside actors and the continuation of the conflict.

We attach the greatest importance to ending the illegal exploitation of the natural resources of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and to putting an end to the war once and for all. It is a question of reasserting the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and its sovereignty over its natural resources, as the Council has affirmed in its resolutions on the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Unfortunately, as the Panel notes, it is the Congolese people that is suffering the consequences of the pillage of its resources and of the continuation of the war. The people of Congo, who desire a better

future, are counting on the support of the international community to end the war and the pillage of its resources, and to restore peace, security and stability to the region.

The conclusions and recommendations of the Panel of Experts are of great importance and could have significant consequences for the Democratic Republic of the Congo, for the region and for the Security Council's efforts with respect to the situation in the region. They therefore merit our careful consideration and frank and constructive dialogue with the parties concerned.

We have heard the Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Democratic Republic of the Congo express his Government's satisfaction with the report and describe the expectations of the Congolese Government. We have also heard high-level representatives from Burundi, Rwanda and Uganda explain the views of their respective Governments. Indeed, the aim of today's meeting is to enable the States named in the report to provide the clarifications they deem appropriate or useful with respect to what is very serious information.

Today's meeting and the talks the Security Council mission will have in the region will enable more in-depth discussion of Council follow-up to this matter in the light of additional information from the Panel of Experts and of its assessment of the situation. In our view, the report should encourage the parties to genuinely implement Council resolutions and to take concrete steps to advance the peace process. In that context, we expect the withdrawal of foreign forces from the Democratic Republic of the Congo to be swift, complete and final. Any new initiative by the parties to that end would certainly be welcome.

While there has been progress in the implementation of the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement and of Security Council resolutions, a heinous crime has disrupted that progress: last week's murder, at Bunia, Orientale Province of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, of six members of the staff of the International Committee of the Red Cross — four Congolese, one Colombian and one Swiss — who gave their lives in the cause of peace. Last Friday, the President of the Security Council, on behalf of the members of the Council, condemned that heinous and cowardly crime.

In the light of that grave event, we reaffirm the need for all parties to respect the principles of neutrality and impartiality in the provision of humanitarian assistance. We recall that it is the responsibility of all parties to ensure the safety and security of United Nations and associated personnel.

Mr. Krokmal (Ukraine): I would like to start my statement by expressing our deep concern at and our condemnation of the cowardly murder of six staff members of the International Committee of the Red Cross in an ambush in Orientale Province on 26 April. My Government conveys its sincere condolences to the Governments of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Colombia and Switzerland, and to the families that have been so sadly affected. We stress the urgent need to ensure that the safety and security of international relief workers and of United Nations peacekeeping and other personnel will be among the Council's priority tasks in the region.

Turning to the work of the Panel of Experts on the Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources and Other Forms of Wealth in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, allow me to say that we are grateful to you, Mr. President, for arranging this meeting of the Security Council, which enables countries with a direct interest in this issue and countries accused of the illegal exploitation of natural resources of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to participate and to help shape the Council's action in this regard.

We are pleased to welcome the Foreign Minister of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Foreign Minister of Uganda, the Special Envoy of the President of Rwanda and the Minister for Finance of Burundi to this meeting; we have listened carefully to their remarks.

We also would like to thank the Chairperson of the Expert Panel, Ms. Safiatou Ba-N'Daw, for her very useful and informative briefing and for all the work that has been done by the Panel in fulfilling its mandate, assigned through the statement of the President of the Security Council dated 2 June 2000 (S/PRST/2000/20). Allow me to reiterate Ukraine's full support for that statement and for the other relevant Security Council decisions, the goal of which is to put an end to the illegal exploitation of natural resources of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which fuels the conflict in that country.

We think that the nature of the Panel's report is in sharp contrast to that submitted to the Council in January, as it contains numerous recommendations, including coercive measures, which are the result of the Panel's review of the basic forms of illegal exploitation of natural resources of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and of the collection of extensive data on the structures engaged in such exploitation and their financial, commercial and transport activities.

It is of great concern to Ukraine that, according to the report, the illegal exploitation of natural resources of the country, in particular diamonds and other strategic minerals, is considerable. We call upon all Governments concerned to take immediate steps to end such activities and to ensure compliance by their individuals and corporations with legally acceptable standards of business.

It is of equal importance that they also provide full cooperation with the Panel in collecting information on all activities of illegal exploitation of natural resources of the Democratic Republic of the Congo as well as in identifying the links between such activity and the continuation of the conflict in that country. This matter should be a principal focus of the Security Council.

We believe that the Security Council should also pursue an approach that links efforts aimed at cessation of the illegal exploitation of natural resources and the achievement of the desired political objectives in the context of the process of the implementation of the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement.

In assessing the overall situation, my delegation believes that it would be responsible on the part of the Security Council to extend the mandate of the Panel of Experts for a final period of three months and to let the Panel complete its action plan.

My delegation feels that the Security Council should be given an opportunity to consider the whole situation in question before it decides on the proposed recommendations in this regard. We look forward to receiving the Panel's final report.

Finally, I would like to express my delegation's full support for the statement that you, Mr. President, will make at the end of this meeting. We are hopeful that it will build on the international community's

efforts to restore the peace and normality that the Democratic Republic of the Congo so sorely needs.

Mr. Ryan (Ireland): May I also welcome the Foreign Minister of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mr. Léonard She Okitundu, the Personal Envoy of the President of Rwanda, Mr. Patrick Mazimpaka, the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs of Uganda, Mr. Amama Mbabazi, and the Minister of Finance of Burundi, Mr. Charles Nihangaza, and thank them for their participation in this discussion.

May I also convey, on behalf of the Government and the people of Ireland, our sympathy and condolences to the Governments and the peoples of Colombia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Switzerland, and to the families of the murdered representatives of the International Committee of the Red Cross.

The report of the Panel of Experts is being reviewed carefully by the Irish authorities. We support an extension of the mandate of the Panel to allow it to continue its work, and we look forward to receiving a comprehensive addendum to this report. We hope, in particular, that this will provide the international community with a fuller picture of the complexity and the extent to which the exploitation of resources in the Democratic Republic of the Congo contributes to sustaining the conflict in the region. This would deepen the understanding of the international community of the range of issues which feed the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and assist our efforts to support the parties in advancing the peace process.

Sweden, as Presidency of the European Union, will be making a statement later in today's debate. Ireland subscribes fully to the position of the European Union. I make the following points in my national capacity.

The remit of the Panel was broad, focusing on illegal exploitation and the link between exploitation and the continuation of the conflict. The report of the Panel of Experts makes some very serious allegations against all parties to the conflict. Today's meeting has given those countries against which allegations are made an opportunity to respond.

We have heard the concerns of some parties named in the report that the information is unsubstantiated or incorrect. Nonetheless, the

allegations are of a sufficiently serious nature to merit thorough investigation by the relevant national authorities. The Irish Government expects the parties concerned to carry out such investigations and to extend every cooperation to the Panel of Experts in its future work. No effort must be spared by the relevant authorities to ensure that activities which undermine the peace process in the Democratic Republic of the Congo are halted and that the Congolese people can finally be allowed to benefit directly from the natural wealth of their own country.

In this regard, I welcome Minister Mbabazi's announcement of his Government's decision to establish an independent judicial commission of inquiry which will work openly and transparently to investigate the allegations relating to Uganda. I also welcome Minister Nihangaza's declaration of his Government's decision to investigate allegations and to cooperate with the Panel during its extended mandate.

At the same time, the concerns expressed by some parties named in the report cannot be dismissed out of hand. An extension of the mandate of the Panel will allow it, over the coming months, to pursue further, in a thorough manner, issues which it did not have the opportunity to address in depth in the final report. It will also facilitate further discussion with parties that have expressed concern with the final report. We strongly encourage all parties to engage in further full and frank dialogue with the Panel as it updates its report and assesses progress. We remind those parties that have not extended full cooperation to the Panel of their obligation to do so. Failure to do so would seriously undermine their international standing.

This report is but one element in the wider efforts of the international community to end the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. As the Panel proceeds with its work over the coming months, we will be looking at the impact of such activities in the context of the peace process and how the work of the Panel can support that process. In particular, we will look to progress from the parties on the three core issues set out in the Lusaka Agreement. The first is the preparation and adoption of a precise plan and schedule which, in accordance with the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement, would lead to the completion of the orderly withdrawal of all foreign troops from the territory of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The second is the preparation for immediate implementation of prioritized plans for the disarmament, demobilization,

reintegration, repatriation or resettlement of armed groups. The third is progress in the inter-Congolese dialogue.

The Security Council mission to the region later this month will provide the Council with an opportunity to engage with the parties on the wider dimension of the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, focusing in particular on the three core elements of the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement. We urge the parties to maximize the potential of that visit for concrete progress and to use the occasion of the visit to engage closely with the members of the Council on the core obstacles to peace in the region.

Mr. Levitte (France) (*spoke in French*): I thank you, Mr. President, for organizing this meeting on a subject of particular importance. France's best wishes go out to the United States presidency of our Council this month.

I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his lengthy presence among us this morning. I would also like to welcome very warmly the Ministers of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi, who are also present in the Chamber.

As my colleague from Ireland has said, the Ambassador of Sweden will in a short while set out the views of all the countries of the European Union. As my colleague has done, I too would like to add some comments in my national capacity as representative of France.

The information contained in the Panel's report is not, in fact, entirely new. Numerous elements had already surfaced in the press, and non-governmental organizations had also attested to the situation in various ways. But this is the first time that an overall picture of the looting of the resources of the Democratic Republic of the Congo has been provided to us. That picture is extremely disquieting.

I would like to commend the work done by Ms. Ba-N'Daw and the other experts. The report of the Panel is courageous and well documented. It should be stated clearly that we know that the safety of the experts was at times under threat. This is a matter of concern for the whole Council.

With regard to methodology, the Panel strictly followed the mandate given to it by the Security Council. This explains the large number of States

investigated pursuant to the broad interpretation given to the concept of illegality.

One conclusion must be drawn. Not only does the looting of resources feed the conflict; today we may even ask ourselves whether looting has itself become a motive for the continuation of the conflict. The Security Council must henceforth take into account this facet of the deadliest conflict currently besetting the African continent. All of us recall the figures put forward by New York's International Rescue Committee: 2.5 million deaths since 1998, 200,000 of which were directly related to combat. These figures are appalling. They demand action and mobilization on the part of our Council and of all the parties.

The Council's responsibility is to work with all of the parties concerned to help end the looting, and this report will help us do so. By a unanimous decision of the Council, we will be extending the Panel's mandate for a three-month period. Over the next three months the Panel will keep us informed. It will further expand its knowledge of this very important issue, and, in three months' time, it will present to us a fresh appraisal of the situation.

In the Panel's work and in the mobilization of the international community, it will be important to ensure that, beyond the United Nations, the multilateral institutions concerned and the countries involved all participate fully in this endeavour. We would like the Council to work in a spirit of dialogue with all of those involved.

From this standpoint, I should like to welcome not only the presence of the Ministers around this table but also the statements that they have made. We must listen attentively to one another. We welcome their spirit of cooperation, and, in the same vein as my colleague from Ireland, we would also like to welcome the announcement by Minister Mbabazi of the creation in Uganda of an independent commission of inquiry. I welcome also the statement made by the Minister of Finance of Burundi.

All of the countries involved must demonstrate this same spirit of dialogue. For our part, we are listening attentively and objectively to them. At the end of the three months, when we have the additional report, we will consider in this Chamber possible further measures, which may be necessary if the progress that we hope to see towards ending the looting

of the Democratic Republic of the Congo has not been achieved.

All of the States involved must demonstrate a spirit of dialogue. Some of them have chosen not to state their position today, and I appeal to those not present in the Chamber and which have been implicated to demonstrate the spirit of cooperation shown by the Ministers who are here today.

Above and beyond this report, I think that we should all keep in mind the key objective that the Security Council wishes to achieve in the Great Lakes region. Our goal is to put an end to the conflict. Our goal is the restoration of peace — peace with security for all. Ultimately, our objective is a return to economic development. All of this requires the implementation of the Lusaka Agreement.

The United Nations is resolved to lend its fullest support to that goal, but, of course, it is the actions of the parties themselves that will make it possible to advance in that direction.

Sir Jeremy Greenstock (United Kingdom): We warmly welcome you to the presidency, Sir, and I thank you for your kind words earlier in this debate.

It is very good to see the Ministers of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi here with us today. It has been extremely important for us to listen to their statements and to engage in a very necessary debate.

Like my two predecessors in this discussion, I point to and fully support the statement which Sweden will make on behalf of the European Union later on today, but I want to make one or two remarks in my national capacity.

The United Kingdom takes very careful note of the work done so far by the Panel of Experts on the Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources and Other Forms of Wealth in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We thank the members of the Panel for their diligence and their courage.

The report of the Panel addresses an issue of considerable concern: the way the natural resources of the Democratic Republic of the Congo are being used to fuel the conflict there. There is more work to be done to shed light on this problem, and we therefore support the extension of the Panel's mandate.

In the presidential statement which the Council will adopt later today, we set out guidelines for the continued work of the Panel. Among other things, the extended mandate will allow the Panel to pursue further information which was not previously available and to follow up responses to the Panel's report, including the extremely important ones today. We believe that an addendum to the Panel's work will provide an opportunity to produce a fully balanced analysis and to record, as far as possible, corroborated evidence relating to all parties to the conflict.

This is a key element, because one of the most important things the work of the Panel has done is to bring this problem, of which we had all heard reports, closer to the surface. We now need a serious and frank dialogue with all concerned, but especially with the parties to the conflict. Today's debate is a start, and, given the vigorous contributions we have heard so far, the debate is, of course, going to continue.

We and all the parties agree that illegitimate exploitation has to end. That is a vitally important basis of agreement. But there is also, of course, some disagreement on the precise facts of what was and is illegitimate exploitation. That is inevitable, given the circumstances in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the scope of the problem. We must engage with each other and try to achieve greater clarity, but we also need to focus on the primary goal here, which is not to punish or narrowly to assign blame, but to tackle the problem in the interests of promoting the wider peace process and alleviating the suffering of the Congolese people. It is their resources which have been unscrupulously exploited for the benefit of others.

We do not regard resources as being the cause of the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, nor would addressing this problem alone solve that conflict. But the natural resources of that country have become part of what fuels the conflict, so all of the parties must recommit themselves to work across the board to bring an end to the conflict. In that context, the Panel might usefully focus, in the next three months of work, on better long-term sectoral strategies, concentrating on specific materials, for instance, gold, diamonds and coltan.

It is vital for the future peace, stability and development of the Democratic Republic of the Congo that its natural resources should work for the benefit of its people. In addressing the abuses, we must also be

prepared to help the Government and the people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to build effective and transparent structures for legitimate exploitation and trade in resources, including with its neighbours. We therefore look to the Panel to establish a comprehensive approach to the long-term aspects of the problem which could help determine the success or failure of the future of our efforts to bring peace and stability to the Democratic Republic of the Congo and to the region.

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

Mr. Granovsky (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I should like first of all to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency; I am confident that you will discharge your duties in the most effective way possible. We would also like to join others in welcoming the representatives of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda, Uganda and Burundi who are participating in today's meeting of the Security Council. We have listened very carefully to the important statements they have made.

The Russian Federation is grateful to the Panel of Experts, chaired by Ms. Safiatou Ba-N'Daw, for the substantive report that it has provided on the illegal exploitation of the natural resources and other forms of wealth of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We are disturbed by the information that it contains about the large-scale looting of resources, in violation of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. However, we do not believe that the report should prompt the over-hasty adoption of measures on the basis of an emotional response; rather, it should provide food for thought, as it contains information that we must study calmly and carefully. Accordingly, we support a three-month extension of the mandate of the Panel of Experts so that, at the end of that period, it can submit an addition to the current report, including commentaries by States named in the report. We call on all the States mentioned in the report to cooperate with the experts in their work and to clarify carefully the situation with regard to the natural resources and other forms of wealth of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Illegal activities, by whomsoever committed, must be brought to an end, and the sooner the better. Russia believes that, in the final analysis, it is the

armed conflict that underlies the problem of the illegal exploitation of the resources and other forms of wealth of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, just as it underlies the problems of refugees, internally displaced persons and child soldiers, human rights violations, humanitarian crises and many other problems. Only recently has there been some movement towards a settlement of that conflict. We believe that movement towards a political settlement in the Democratic Republic of the Congo must be a priority for the Security Council. That is how we see the Council's discharge of its responsibilities under the Charter for the maintenance of international peace and security.

Mr. Ouane (Mali) (*spoke in French*): I should like first of all to thank you, Mr. President, for having convened this public meeting to consider 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.

I note the presence at this important meeting of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs and Regional Cooperation of Uganda, the Special Envoy of the President of the Rwandese Republic and the Minister of Finance of Burundi. I should also like to express my delegation's gratitude to Ms. Safiatou Ba-N'Daw, Chairperson of the Panel of Experts, and, through her, to all the members of the Panel for the important work that they have carried out.

The report before us deals with a matter of concern to this Council: the link between the illegal exploitation of a country's natural resources and the continuation of the conflict that is affecting it. In this regard, I should like first of all to restate Mali's position of principle, which resolutely rejects any illegal exploitation of the natural resources and other forms of wealth of a sovereign and independent State.

In this regard, my delegation believes that the Security Council should thoroughly examine the information and recommendations contained in the report with a view to putting an end to the plundering of the natural resources and other forms of wealth of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Such plundering is fuelling the continuation of the conflict, causing unspeakable suffering to the Congolese people and destabilizing the whole region.

The message of this report is clear: measures must be taken to end the plundering of the natural

resources and other forms of wealth of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. From this standpoint, the international community and the Security Council must take steps to promote the peace process, which has recently taken a positive turn with the launching of phase II of the deployment of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC). As the Secretary-General emphasized in his seventh report (S/2001/373) on MONUC, everything must now be done to promote the successful transition to phase III.

In this context, we believe that the discussions begun today should be continued, in particular during the Security Council's mission to the Great Lakes region. It is essential to maintain the impetus of the Lusaka process, while respecting the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the Democratic Republic of the Congo as well as that of other countries in the

region, thus contributing to the return of lasting peace and stability in the Great Lakes region.

Mali looks forward with interest to the final report of the Panel of Experts; we will then state our views on the recommendations contained therein. That is why we support the request for an extension for a further three months of the mandate of the Panel of Experts.

In conclusion, I should like to join in condemning the murder, in the Bunia area, of six staff members of the International Committee of the Red Cross and to express our condolences to their families.

The President: If there is no objection, I propose to suspend the meeting for a lunch break.

The meeting was suspended at 1.10 p.m.