

Statement by Ambassador Manjeev Singh Puri, Acting Permanent Representative of India at the UNSC Debate on UNMIK on 12th May 2011)

Thank you, Mr. President.

I would like to join other colleagues in thanking Secretary General's Special Representative and Head of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) H.E. Mr. Lamberto Zannier for his comprehensive briefing on the situation in Kosovo and the activities of UNMIK. I also want to thank H.E. Mr. Vuk Jeremic, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Republic of Serbia, for his statement outlining his country's perspective on the situation in Kosovo. We have also carefully listened to the statement of Mr. Enver Hoxhaj, Pristina's representative.

2. Mr. President, the Secretary General's report on UNMIK for the quarter ending 15 April 2011 has brought out in detail the ground situation in Kosovo. We note with satisfaction that UNMIK continues with its endeavour to provide transitional administration to Kosovo, as mandated by the UNSC Resolution 1244(1999), with active cooperation and support of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the Kosovo Force (KFOR) and the European Union Rule of Law Mission (EULEX).

3. We welcome the commencement of a dialogue process between Belgrade and Pristina, facilitated by the European Union in accordance with UNGA Resolution 298 of 13th October 2010. We all know that 'from small beginnings come great things'. India has always believed that the Kosovo issue should be resolved peacefully through consultation and dialogue between the concerned parties. We are happy that both the sides have agreed to start discussing the topics which impact the daily lives of the affected population most. We hope that both sides would continue with a serious dialogue till these immediate issues are resolved and eventually begin to deliberate on more complex political issues. We urge that no party should take any unilateral action that undermines this reconciliation process.

4. We appreciate UNMIK's contribution to facilitation of this dialogue process and feel that its continued engagement would be helpful.

5. We have also noted with satisfaction that UNMIK has facilitated cooperation between Belgrade and Pristina on the issues of missing persons, through the Working Group on Missing Persons, chaired by the International Committee of the Red Cross.

6. Mr. President, while the overall security situation in Kosovo, especially in the northern part, has remained relatively calm, it is a matter of concern that the underlying tension continues. Many untoward incidents of criminal assaults, armed robberies, murders, shootings, damage of religious places, etc. continue to be reported. We would appeal to the local authorities, especially the Kosovo Police, to be more vigilant and watchful.

7. The continued voluntary return of refugees, recorded by the UNHCR, is heartening but we are concerned by reports of opposition by some receiving communities.

8. It is noted that a population and housing census took place during the period of the report, except in the northern Kosovo where it would be conducted at a later date. It is hoped that the census would appropriately reflect the displaced persons and would not legalize any ethnic cleansing.

9. We have also noted the Secretary General's view that the Kosovo authorities remain fundamentally skeptical about UNMIK facilitation of their engagement in international and regional initiatives. We hope that they would not seek to undermine UNMIK's role, mandated by the UNSC and, instead, shall fully cooperate with UNMIK & other UN and EU institutions.

10. We agree with the Secretary General's view that there is a need for thorough, impartial and independent investigation in the allegations contained in Special Rapporteur Dick Marty's report. All stakeholders should agree on creation of a mechanism to carry out the follow up investigation, which should be fully supported by national and international entities present in Kosovo.

11. In conclusion, Mr. President, let me reiterate India's consistent position that all issues concerning Kosovo should be resolved peacefully through consultation and dialogue between the concerned parties. Only thus can the aspirations of all the peoples be met on an enduring basis and lasting peace and stability be established in the region. We applaud the role being played by UNMIK for upholding the goals of the United Nation.

Thank you.

BACK TO SECURITY COUNCIL