



# Security Council

Sixtieth year

*Provisional***5331**st meeting

Monday, 19 December 2005, 10 a.m.

New York

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<i>President:</i>	Sir Emyr Jones Parry . . . . .	(United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)
<i>Members:</i>	Algeria . . . . .	Mr. Katti
	Argentina . . . . .	Mr. Mayoral
	Benin . . . . .	Mr. Idohou
	Brazil . . . . .	Mr. Sardenberg
	China . . . . .	Mr. Zhang Yishan
	Denmark . . . . .	Ms. Løj
	France . . . . .	Mr. De La Sablière
	Greece . . . . .	Mr. Vassilakis
	Japan . . . . .	Mr. Oshima
	Philippines . . . . .	Mr. Chuasoto
	Romania . . . . .	Mr. Dumitru
	Russian Federation . . . . .	Mr. Denisov
	United Republic of Tanzania . . . . .	Mr. Manongi
	United States of America . . . . .	Mr. Wolf

## Agenda

### The situation in Africa

Briefing by the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and  
Emergency Relief Coordinator

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

### **Adoption of the agenda**

*The agenda was adopted.*

### **The situation in Africa**

#### **Briefing by the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator**

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

I invite Mr. Egeland 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.

At this meeting the Security Council will hear a briefing by Mr. Jan Egeland, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator.

There have not yet been any requests from representatives of interested countries to be invited to take part in this discussion. Moreover, as there is no list of speakers for this meeting, I would invite Council members who wish to take the floor to so indicate to the Secretariat as from now.

I now give the floor to Mr. Egeland.

**Mr. Egeland:** This is a very important opportunity for us to brief the Council on several major challenges that the humanitarian community faces in Africa at the moment, all of which have regional implications. I will start with what continues to be the largest humanitarian operation in the world — the crisis in Darfur — as well as with its impact on neighbouring Chad.

The humanitarian operation launched in late 2003 has been remarkably effective this year, against overwhelming odds. Some 13,000 international and

national relief workers have been providing relief to more than 3 million people in Darfur and Chad. The success of their work can be measured in the thousands of lives saved, as mortality rates among displaced persons have dropped by two thirds over the past year.

I want to pay tribute to the heroic work of those men and women. But we must realize that their work and their lives are under increasing threat and that our operations can now be disrupted completely by renewed conflict any day, and anywhere, in Darfur. We must be acutely aware that all that has been built up by the thousands of relief workers and by hundreds of millions of dollars in donor contributions could be destroyed. We could be on the brink of losing this huge humanitarian operation. In addition, no amount of humanitarian relief can provide what those threatened by the conflict have wanted most from day one: effective protection against violence of the most vicious kind, and the ability to return to their homes. Only an effective ceasefire, a political solution and a strong international security presence can accomplish those objectives.

We have to face up to the terrible reality that our colleagues on the ground are witnessing and reporting every day. The killings have not stopped. The rapes are continuing, as are the burning, looting and forced displacement that I first reported to the Council more than 20 months ago. For three consecutive months now, the situation has been deteriorating. We have had less humanitarian access during this period than at any other time since that first briefing, in early April 2004. More than 20,000 more people were displaced in the last few weeks alone. In a deeply worrying new development, camps for internally displaced persons (IDP) are themselves increasingly being attacked by militias.

The regional spillover effects of this crisis on Chad and the impact of Chadian groups crossing into west Darfur are also cause for great concern. Tensions between the 200,000 Sudanese refugees and Chadian host communities remain high. Attacks on innocent civilians by armed groups crossing from the Sudan continue to be reported, including the massacre in Modaina on 25 September, which the Council condemned. Only yesterday, it was reported that 100 people were killed in an attack on the town of Adré, in eastern Chad. Equally worrying are the recent political and military developments in Chad, including the mounting tension with the Sudan over Darfur. A further

deterioration of the situation would pose a threat to ongoing relief operations to Sudanese refugees and could trigger a serious humanitarian crisis.

The Council has taken many important steps to address the crisis in Darfur. But unless those measures have a real impact on the ground, the wound will continue to bleed. Our massive humanitarian operation will not be sustainable unless we finally see commensurate efforts in the political and security areas. The next few weeks will be critical, both for the talks in Abuja and as the Security Council and the African Union deliberate on the next steps. We need an expanded and more effective security presence on the ground as soon as possible: a presence that can provide more effective protection and, ultimately, allow people to return to their homes. That expanded presence is needed whether or not the Abuja talks succeed. It cannot be right that we have twice as many humanitarian workers in Darfur as international security personnel. I therefore appeal very strongly to the Council to show the sense of urgency and determination needed to achieve the objectives identified in its resolutions and to help bring this crisis to an end.

The second issue I want to address is the regional crisis caused by the activities of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) in Uganda, the Sudan and, most recently, the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In mid-September, a group of LRA fighters crossed from the Sudan into the north-eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. They remain in that border region, from where they threaten much of the Western Equatoria area of southern Sudan. LRA attacks on civilians and humanitarian workers have escalated, severely undermining our ability to provide relief to millions of people and disrupting the long-awaited return of refugees to southern Sudan. While the overall number of LRA combatants may not have increased, they have spread out over a larger area and now constitute a significant threat to regional security, with appalling consequences for several million people.

The specific impact of LRA activities on humanitarian operations has been as follows.

In northern Uganda, gains are being lost as security erodes. Access to the nearly 1.7 million IDPs encamped in the northern districts has decreased in the past three months. Recent violence has hampered assistance efforts, and we have seen a shocking new

tactic: the deliberate targeting of humanitarian personnel. In October and November alone, five humanitarian workers were killed by LRA ambushes in the Sudan and Uganda.

The United Nations can access only 18 of the 200 camps for internally displaced persons in northern Uganda without military escorts. Although the World Food Programme (WFP) is able to distribute food under heavily armed military escorts, many other organizations find fees for escorts prohibitively expensive or do not use them on principle. The non-governmental organization Action Against Hunger has reported that 57 per cent of internally displaced persons in one area — 480,000 people — were not accessible in November. Without access, the effects are predictable: increased mortality, rising exposure to human rights violations, and deepening vulnerability.

Life in the camps continues to be unacceptable. A recent joint study conducted by the Ministry of Health, the World Health Organization and non-governmental organizations indicated that crude and under-five mortality rates were more than double the emergency thresholds. Access by internally displaced persons to farming areas outside camps is extremely limited due to movement restrictions imposed by the Uganda People's Defence Forces. Less than half the internally displaced persons in Acholi districts can access land that is more than two kilometres outside of their camps, severely hampering their ability to produce their own food. At present, there is no prospect of a large scale return before the critical March planting season. Therefore, WFP will have to provide food aid to 1.5 million internally displaced persons through 2006.

Given the conditions in the camps, it is not surprising that many LRA combatants remain in the bush. We have not done enough to create the "pull factor" that could draw more of the LRA to disarmament and reintegration programmes. Those who have come in have found few chances to live a safe and productive life. We must dramatically expand our programmes for reintegration in order to give hope to those who still see fighting as a better option.

The LRA is also wreaking havoc in the Equatorias in the southern Sudan. Dozens of civilians have been killed since the LRA crossed the Nile in mid-September and over 100 people, including

children, have been abducted, many of whom have not returned.

The impact on our humanitarian operations has been dramatic. After three staff members of non-governmental organizations were killed, large parts of the Equatorias became inaccessible. In Central Equatoria, international non-governmental organization staff withdrew and critical health programmes in rural areas have been curtailed. In Western Equatoria, a UNICEF-led measles campaign has been disrupted and only covered 10 per cent of the targeted population. Some 180 primary health care facilities in Central and Eastern Equatoria are currently inaccessible to UNICEF and non-governmental organization partners.

The LRA attacks have also severely hampered the preparation for the return of refugees from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Central African Republic and Uganda. Many recovery projects to support the returnees have had to be suspended for now, including hospitals and water points. As long as there is a significant LRA presence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo/Sudan border area, it is difficult to imagine when refugees will be able to start returning to Central or Western Equatoria, areas that previously were among the safest in the southern Sudan. That has clear consequences for efforts to rebuild and stabilize that important region.

Much more needs to be done to address the threats and conditions I have just described. The Governments of Uganda, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Sudan bear the primary responsibility to protect and assist their populations, as well as to pursue the LRA. Unfortunately, their actions so far have not prevented the LRA from causing the devastation I have just described. The LRA continues to maintain bases and moves relatively freely throughout the region. A relatively small number of fighters is threatening a huge area and millions of people.

I would like to suggest a number of steps the Governments in the region and this Council could take.

It is of the utmost importance that the three Governments concerned fully acknowledge how dangerous the situation has become for civilians and humanitarian workers and that they do whatever they can to protect their citizens, secure access for relief workers and promote regional solutions.

As I noted in my recent briefing to the Council on the protection of civilians, efforts to find a peaceful solution to the conflict in northern Uganda must be strengthened through an internationally supported process. The United Nations must actively contribute to that effort.

While I welcome steps taken by the Government of Uganda to operationalize the national policy on internally displaced persons, more should be done by the Government and its army and police to assume responsibility for the protection of the civilian population. More must also be invested in the provision of basic services in the affected areas.

The Security Council should pay close attention to the regional dimension of the crisis and the threats to humanitarian work, and could consider several potential steps. The Council should strongly condemn the LRA's attacks against civilians and humanitarian workers. The Council should insist on an immediate cessation of violence and of all support to the LRA from all sources. To help the Council consider further steps and improve its understanding of the LRA, it could consider appointing a panel of experts. Such a panel could explore the sources of funding and support for the LRA and work with the three affected Governments and other parties to determine how the Council could most effectively contribute to reducing the threat emanating from the LRA. The Council could request regular updates on the effects of the LRA's activities on the region.

I also hope that, in their reports to the Council, the United Nations Mission in the Sudan and the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo can indicate what else they can do, within their mandates, to provide security to relief workers and help create the necessary conditions for the return of refugees and IDPs.

Finally, I have just returned from Zimbabwe and South Africa. As I reported to the Council in April, the humanitarian situation in the subregion is already very serious due to severe food insecurity, widespread HIV/AIDS and inadequate basic services. More than 10 million people in the region are in need of food assistance. The situation could deteriorate in 2006, particularly in Zimbabwe and Malawi, unless actions are taken to meet immediate needs and to reverse the decline in key sectors.

In Zimbabwe, the humanitarian situation has worsened significantly in 2005. More than 3 million people — almost one third of the population — will receive food through WFP in January and even more will receive assistance come April. Annual maize production, the basic staple, is one third of what it was several years ago. Basic services continue to deteriorate, particularly in the health, water and sanitation sectors. Inflation currently stands at over 500 per cent. In that context, and as I told the Government in my meetings in Harare, the massive urban eviction campaign of hundreds of thousands of people was the worst possible action at the worst possible time.

We are now entering the peak of the “lean season”. Food prices are rising fast, placing some basic commodities out of reach for a growing portion of the population. I welcome the memorandum of understanding finalized by the Government and the World Food Programme, which will ensure that these emergency needs are met. I also hope it will lead to better collaboration between the Government and the humanitarian agencies in other sectors.

Yet we much recognize that this huge need for food assistance is symbolic of the vicious cycle that we are caught in. It was raining when I left Zimbabwe, but all expected that next year’s harvest would be poor because of the lack of a skilled agricultural labour force, in part caused by the devastating toll of the HIV/AIDS pandemic; counterproductive agricultural policies and practices; and a lack of inputs such as fertilizer, seeds and tools. It is not sustainable to provide food assistance for millions of people year after year without making the necessary investment to get out of the situation. We can have a new approach that again will provide food security for all Zimbabweans. That will require major efforts from all, nationally as well as internationally. There is no substitute for engagement and dialogue at all levels in order to address the humanitarian crisis in Zimbabwe.

From my discussions with the Government of Zimbabwe, I am convinced that the United Nations and the humanitarian community at large must try to engage more actively with the Government to address the enormous humanitarian crisis. We reached agreement on some issues during my mission: a more active and systematic dialogue on food security; a more hands-on approach to resolving bureaucratic problems for humanitarian organizations through one-

stop shops at both the Government and the United Nations; and the initiation of a shelter programme for households affected by the eviction campaign.

However, sustained progress will require the following. The Government must stop further evictions and be more flexible in allowing shelter and other programmes for those affected. It must ensure that beneficiaries are assisted solely on the basis of need. The United Nations and our humanitarian partners, as well as the donors, should be guided in their own response by the needs of the population. We should provide the appropriate level of assistance where and when we identify the needs. Beyond food aid, we need to invest in food security, livelihoods and basic services. The Governments in the region and in Africa at large should engage more proactively with Zimbabwe to find constructive solutions, also given their interdependence and the risk of increased migratory movements. All parties must understand the importance of neutral and impartial humanitarian assistance.

More is currently at stake in terms of lives saved or lives lost in Africa than on any other continent. At the same time, there is great hope and opportunity, given the forward-looking initiatives of the African Union and the subregional organizations. Also, the Group of Eight countries and other donors have pledged more resources for Africa than at any other time. In this coming year, we must and can see change.

As humanitarian workers, we cannot accept that so many lives are lost every year on this continent to preventable diseases, neglect and senseless brutality. We cannot accept that low levels of funding impede our operations in so many places. We must demonstrate our humanity by responding equally to the needs of those affected, whether they are families returning home to the southern Sudan, young men and women looking for a future beyond the IDP camps of northern Uganda, or AIDS patients trying to sustain their families through a drought in Zimbabwe. I call upon all Member States to live up to their commitments to fund, support and facilitate a much more ambitious development and humanitarian agenda.

And finally, we must recognize that too many of these humanitarian crises result from a total absence of peace and security. Humanitarian aid cannot be an alibi for an unwillingness to address the root causes of conflict. The greatest contribution we can make to

addressing humanitarian crises in Africa is determined, energetic and sustained efforts to bring an end to the conflict and injustice that cause so much suffering in Africa.

**The President:** I thank Mr. Egeland for his briefing.

**Mr. Idohou (Benin) (*spoke in French*):** I would like at the outset to pay tribute to the humanitarian aid workers for their inestimable efforts to halt the humanitarian crisis in Darfur and elsewhere in Africa. In Darfur we must ensure the success of the Abuja negotiations. We must also find ways to stabilize the situation. The Security Council should re-evaluate the situation and, in close cooperation with the African Union, find ways to increase security and to ensure effective protection for civilian populations.

The situation in the Great Lakes region is a silent catastrophe that is taking place outside the view of the world. Very often, our gaze is clouded by the military and political aspects of the conflicts in the region. Perhaps the world has even become accustomed to reports of losses of human life and the unimaginable scale of the disasters that have been afflicting our planet since December 2004.

As astronomic as those figures are, they seem no longer to move us. Otherwise, how can we understand the passivity of the international community when faced with such a critical situation as that in northern Uganda, where about 2 million people are internally displaced and where more than 1,000 people die each week — a total far beyond the emergency threshold. It is said those figures are twice the mortality rate in Darfur.

The organizational policies of the camps, where freedom of movement has been curbed, thus promoting overcrowding, have led to the spread of diseases such as malaria and HIV/AIDS, not to mention the enormous stress that has also resulted. If the emergency level has been passed, we must immediately sound the alarm to mobilize the international community to save human lives.

We would like to thank the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, Mr. Jan Egeland, for his efforts to draw the attention of the international community to the everyday or forgotten hardships, which constitute violations of human dignity. We must deplore the fact that in a number of countries of the

Great Lakes region, returning refugees are becoming displaced persons in their countries of origin, due to the lack of adequate reintegration policies and, above all, because there is no possibility for those people to recover their property in order to rebuild their lives. Those are all issues that deserve the active commitment of the international community.

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the internal displacement of populations continues, especially in Katanga, where an offensive attack by the Government army is under way to dislodge the Mai-Mai from certain areas. That is taking place in a country where the United Nations is present and is maintaining one of the largest missions ever deployed. That presence should guarantee respect for international humanitarian law and for the effective protection of humanitarian workers and of population affected by the military operations.

The critical situation of refugees and internally displaced persons requires that we develop a comprehensive approach to their problems and that humanitarian assistance encompass not only the provision of survival resources but also the restoration of basic social services. For that reason, we welcome the new approach adopted in preparing for the consolidated humanitarian appeal that has just been launched for Burundi, which envisions involving humanitarian assistance in conjunction with longer-term goals.

In addition, we should give special attention to the increased risks for humanitarian workers in the region, who are more and more often mistaken, at worst, for combatants or, in the best of cases, for Blue Helmets. We must find ways to ensure more effective protection for humanitarian aid workers.

Furthermore, the negative impact of the cross-border flow of displaced persons and refugees on the social situation in the countries receiving them constitutes a very harmful factor for destabilization, which can lead to insecurity and the proliferation of armed bands, because mass cross-border movements are difficult to control and foment the circulation of arms and cross-border crime. We need a coordinated, consistent response to those concerns.

Special attention should be given to the problem of the reintegration of child soldiers. We should increase resources for the social reintegration of child soldiers, because, as is the case in numerous countries

of the Great Lakes region, the lack of assistance programmes results in child soldiers becoming involved in organized crime. We must break that vicious circle and establish a virtuous circle that ensures a more promising future for the affected countries.

Finally, we welcome the General Assembly's establishment of the Central Emergency Response Fund to respond to disasters and humanitarian emergencies.

**Ms. Løj** (Denmark): I would like to begin by thanking Under-Secretary-General Jan Egeland for his comprehensive briefing. I commend the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and Mr. Egeland for the active role that they have played.

Given their gravity and magnitude, the humanitarian crises of Africa merit more of our attention and our political and financial resources. Some of the humanitarian crises highlighted by Mr. Egeland have been with us for much too long, while others have only recently become a major concern. Violent conflicts, food shortages and governance crises are among the most widespread causes. If we have the collective will, all those causes can be influenced and corrected through concerted action by all parties involved.

Let me take this opportunity to comment on the situations of Zimbabwe and northern Uganda. But let me underline that the humanitarian situation in Darfur also requires the close attention of the international community, and I thank Mr. Egeland for his update on the situation in Darfur.

With respect to Zimbabwe, I am afraid that President Mugabe's statements concerning Mr. Egeland's person and the United Nations family in general speak their own tragic language. We once again urge the Government of Zimbabwe to allow the international community to alleviate the suffering of the Zimbabwean people. We request a minimum of respect for Mr. Egeland's commendable efforts to assist the people of Zimbabwe.

The situation in Zimbabwe is getting worse every day. There is a real risk that, unless the international community starts making operational plans immediately, thousands of people in Zimbabwe will die of hunger within the next couple of months. Zimbabwe is not the only country facing that dire prospect. The

food situation is indeed precarious in neighbouring countries as well. But the food shortage in Zimbabwe, which is amplified by ill-conceived economic policies, could have disastrous consequences if nothing is done. The food shortage is particularly disturbing since only a few years ago Zimbabwe was a net exporter of food supplies. The disastrous situation will only intensify the current stream of people fleeing from Zimbabwe, adding new burdens to the neighbouring countries.

In that regard, we urge the Governments and the international institutions of the region to address this issue urgently and to make an extra effort to develop a common approach to Zimbabwe. Such an approach should be guided by the overarching goal of alleviating the plight of the people of Zimbabwe and restoring the rule of law.

Similarly, the United Nations should play a key role in trying to re-establish a mutually respectful dialogue with the Government of Zimbabwe. To the extent that the present climate of mistrust spurred by the outrageous recriminations of the Government of Zimbabwe can be replaced by a respectful dialogue, we would like to suggest the consideration of a visit to Zimbabwe by the Secretary-General as soon as possible. I would appreciate it if Mr. Egeland could comment on that, including his views on how a possible visit by the Secretary-General could help lubricate relations with the Government of Zimbabwe.

Let me now turn briefly to the situation in northern Uganda. As the Council has just heard from Mr. Egeland, this is one of the most tragic conflicts in Africa. Approximately 1.5 million people are suffering, and there is an urgent need to strengthen our efforts to identify ways and means to end the conflict.

It seems to be an annual pattern on the part of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) to express willingness to negotiate for peace as the festive season approaches and as the rainy season complicates operations on the ground. This time, the LRA must combine its expressed wish for peace with concrete proof by declaring a ceasefire and by putting a definite end to the despicable, cruel acts continually being carried out in northern Uganda and southern Sudan. There is no reason for the LRA fighters not to disarm. A well-designed disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme is in place and provides an important incentive, at least for lower- and middle-ranked LRA members.

The Government of Uganda, for its part, is encouraged to vigorously pursue a peaceful approach to the conclusion of the conflict. We would welcome any attempt on the part of the Ugandan Government to enter into dialogue with the LRA, while taking the necessary steps to ensure the protection of the vulnerable civilians living in northern Uganda. People are killed not only by bullets. The majority of deaths occur in the camps of the internally displaced persons as a result of the extremely poor living conditions. That is intolerable and simply has to stop.

Finally, let me take this opportunity also to assure the Council of the Danish Government's continued willingness to provide funds in response to the numerous humanitarian crises in Africa. With respect to northern Uganda, the Danish humanitarian contribution amounted to \$2.6 million in 2005. And with respect to Southern Africa, our humanitarian assistance is expected to exceed \$12 million before the end of the year.

**Mr. Oshima** (Japan): I wish to express my gratitude for the convening of this timely meeting on the humanitarian situation in Africa. I also thank Under-Secretary-General Jan Egeland for his comprehensive briefing, which follows his briefing to the Council two weeks ago on the protection of civilians in armed conflict (see S/PV.5319). My delegation welcomes the practice of regular briefings by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs on behalf of the United Nations humanitarian community in order to bring the Security Council up to date on those issues of grave concern to the international community.

With respect to the situation in Zimbabwe, we appreciate the sustained efforts of the Secretary-General to engage with the Government in order to improve the overall situation in that country. The just-concluded visit by the Emergency Relief Coordinator, focused on the humanitarian situation, was also welcome.

As was made clear by Mr. Egeland, dialogue efforts with the Government to develop a sound cooperative relationship between the authorities and the United Nations and other humanitarian actors have been difficult, and that is to be regretted. However, we encourage those efforts to continue, despite the apparent lack of progress at the present time.

We are concerned at the deepening humanitarian crisis in Zimbabwe. The crisis is not limited to the problem of housing those affected by the Government's Operation Restore Order but includes the ever-worsening situation in food and non-food areas, where privations and shortages are reaching critical proportions. The reported fact that the average life expectancy of the people has been reduced by almost half, from 60 to 36 years, is a clear indication of how bad the situation in the country has become.

We expect the Government in Harare to pay serious heed to the voice of the international community and to cooperate effectively and in a spirit of sincerity with the United Nations and other humanitarian actors to help those affected by the eviction campaign and those in need of life-saving assistance. The international community, for its part, should respond to that dire humanitarian situation by stepping up its assistance and engaging with the Government with a view to promoting dialogue.

For our part, Japan has provided humanitarian assistance in the form of blankets and food aid. We strongly hope that the Government of Zimbabwe will demonstrate a greater willingness to work with the international community in a joint effort to provide protection and assistance to its own men, women and children in need. We would like also to see a more active engagement on the part of African Governments in the region with the Zimbabwean Government to improve the situation.

We remain seriously concerned at the situation in Darfur, where humanitarian conditions appear to be worsening, not improving. The only way to alleviate that situation is to ensure tangible progress in the ongoing negotiations in Abuja among the parties, and we hope to see those negotiations lead to concrete results without delay.

In the meantime, we deeply appreciate the activities undertaken by the African Union to maintain security in the region, which is a prerequisite for humanitarian assistance. We are also concerned at the fact that Sudanese refugees have fled to neighbouring Chad, causing many problems there.

The humanitarian situation in northern Uganda and in southern Sudan, involving close to 2 million internally displaced persons and where the Lord's Resistance Army is wreaking havoc on populations, is equally worrying. We commend the humanitarian

personnel who are engaged in humanitarian aid work and protection activities there in spite of the adverse security conditions. We are concerned at the present stalemate in the dialogue between the Government of Uganda and the Lord's Resistance Army, and we call on both parties to work to bring about positive results urgently.

Here again, neighbouring countries also have important responsibilities and critical roles to play in improving the situation. We expect them to exercise as much influence as possible to that end.

In that regard, Mr. Egeland suggested several potential practical steps that the Council could take to help address the regional dimension of the crisis, including the idea of appointing a panel of experts. I believe that those suggestions deserve our support and careful consideration.

Lastly, there is a clear need to do as much as possible to bring lifesaving humanitarian relief to people in dire need of assistance — internally displaced persons, refugees and others who are affected. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and humanitarian agencies therefore deserve our fullest support — moral, political and financial — and should be provided with what they need.

At the same time, it is clear that the root causes and compounding factors of these more serious humanitarian crises, whether they occur in Africa or elsewhere, do not lend themselves to an easy solution. Conflict, underdevelopment and poverty, the scourge of HIV/AIDS, poor governance and neglect, policy failures, criminality and natural disasters are some of the causes and complicating factors which are routinely observed. Humanitarian aid agencies and aid workers are doing excellent work in many areas, but these problems are beyond the power of humanitarians to resolve. As Mr. Egeland said, humanitarian aid cannot be an alibi for unwillingness to address the root causes of conflict.

Only through the concerted efforts of the entire international community can the root causes of these problems be addressed, and the Security Council has an obvious and critical role to play in that effort. At the same time, the international donor community — both traditional and emerging donors — have a shared responsibility to assist and scale up their contributions as much as possible.

For its part, Japan will continue to work bilaterally with the countries affected and multilaterally, through the United Nations and other avenues, to play its role in the context of this shared responsibility. In Africa, our efforts will consist mainly of promoting good governance and economic development on the basis of the twin notions of encouraging Africa's ownership and of promoting its partnership with the international community, consistent with the spirit of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD).

The now-established Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD) continues to be an important avenue for our cooperation with Africa. Yet another potential vehicle for effective cooperation in that regard is the promotion of the idea of human security, the key concept of which was endorsed in the September summit outcome document. Our support for Africa and our cooperation with African States will be strengthened, and this includes working through the United Nations whenever possible and necessary.

**Mr. Sardenberg (Brazil):** Mr. President, allow me at the outset to thank you for having convened this meeting. I wish also to thank Under-Secretary-General Jan Egeland for his comprehensive briefing today, which is indeed the third one this year on the humanitarian situation in Africa.

As observed during earlier meetings, millions of people in Africa continue to bear the brunt of famine, extreme poverty and pandemics, and they survive each day in squalor. Children are hungry and suffer from illnesses that often would cost very little to treat. Millions living with HIV/AIDS do not have access to lifesaving medicines.

I should like to touch on a few issues relating to the humanitarian crisis in Africa. In some situations, people in Africa also suffer from all kinds of violence during insurgencies and armed conflicts. It is troubling that conflict kills more people in Africa than anywhere else and that the African continent hosts the largest displaced population in the world. We should not overlook the devastating costs for countries in conflict or the impact on their neighbours.

Much remains to be done by the States affected and by the international community as a whole. The United Nations, including the Security Council, has rightly given priority to Africa, which is underscored

by the fact that African issues now constitute more than 60 per cent of the Council's agenda. However, most of the humanitarian crises in Africa result, to a large extent, from a combination of interrelated factors. We must continue to devise true multidimensional approaches to address such crises.

It is necessary to recognize that decisive questions in the humanitarian and development assistance sphere, such as financing, do not fall under the purview of the Council. In that respect, it is encouraging that the General Assembly decided last week to upgrade the current Central Emergency Revolving Fund to the Central Emergency Response Fund, so as to ensure swifter and more predictable responses to humanitarian emergencies. Let us not forget, for instance, that, after access restrictions were lifted in Darfur, it took four months for funds to be committed to the relief appeal.

It is also encouraging that the Fund will continue to operate in accordance with General Assembly resolution 46/182. We hope that this new mechanism will help ensure that humanitarian assistance is provided on the basis of existing need and allocated in a non-discriminatory, balanced and proportionate manner.

We must continue to work with the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, since those bodies address humanitarian issues in a comprehensive manner. At the same time, we hope that the establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission will provide for better coordination among United Nations bodies and other actors, so that deep-rooted social and economic causes of conflict can be tackled in order to prevent the emergence, spread or recurrence of conflict. We need to continue to focus on effective approaches to break the destructive and vicious circles in which conflict, banditism, lack of development and dire social conditions perpetuate one another.

We thank Mr. Egeland for his detailed account of the humanitarian situation in the region, which deserves our careful examination.

**Mr. Vassilakis** (Greece): Like others, we wish to thank the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Mr. Jan Egeland, for today's enlightening and detailed briefing. We welcome this discussion and we thank you, Mr. President, for convening this meeting on the humanitarian situation in Africa.

Humanitarian crises in Africa, as elsewhere, are multifaceted. They are often the result of different but mutually reinforcing factors, such as conflicts, natural disasters, pandemics, poverty and bad governance. Like many processes that lead to death and destruction on a large scale, humanitarian disasters often undermine States as the basic unit of the international system and have a wide range of regional repercussions.

Until recently, conflict and, usually, civil strife were the most important factors causing humanitarian disasters in Africa. Fortunately, however, remarkable progress has been made in this domain in the past decade. Conflicts have ended in Angola, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Burundi, to name a few. In addition, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, after decades of war the country is now in a transitional phase and is rigorously preparing for national elections, while in Sudan the 20-year civil war ended this year with the signing of the comprehensive peace agreement.

Nevertheless, our efforts are not as successful as we would have liked them to be, and there are still a number of ongoing conflicts that have created protracted humanitarian crises.

The situation in Darfur continues to be a source of great concern and presents additional challenges on the humanitarian level. According to the Secretary-General's November report on Darfur, 3.4 million people are affected by the crisis, while the number of internally displaced persons is 1.75 million. In this respect, we welcome the recent launching of the 2006 work plan for Sudan, which has called for \$1.7 billion in resources to face the enormous humanitarian recovery challenges in the country.

In northern Uganda, the horrific war waged for the last 18 years by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) has targeted civilians, especially children. During the course of the conflict, over 25,000 children have been abducted, while 1.7 million people have been displaced.

The examples of both Sudan and northern Uganda highlight the regional implications of conflicts and the humanitarian spillover that they often create. For example, since the conflict in Darfur began in early 2003, more than 200,000 Sudanese have fled over the border to Chad, while the LRA has been operating in three countries — Uganda, Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. These examples underscore the

need for regional cooperation in order to target humanitarian crises and address the root causes of the conflicts. They also demonstrate that individual States cannot be indifferent to the problems facing their neighbours. Regional partners have come to understand the importance of regional and transborder cooperation, as the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region clearly demonstrates. The growing importance of the regional dimension of humanitarian crises has also affected the Security Council in its conduct of work. The promotion of inter-mission cooperation is a clear example.

According to many Africa analysts, crises of governance, often coupled with natural disasters or pandemics, are the main root of humanitarian disasters on the continent. Counterproductive economic policies and a lack of political will to address the problems created by these policies are common phenomena.

Zimbabwe, for example, is facing a critical economic situation involving food shortages and a ballooning budget deficit, together with inflation, unemployment and the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Approximately 20 per cent of the population is infected with AIDS, while there are 1.5 million AIDS orphans. It is obvious that Zimbabwe is in urgent need of international humanitarian assistance in order to face a real emergency affecting a large section of the population.

We welcome the fact that the United Nations is making significant efforts to address the situation. We welcome Mr. Egeland's recent visit to Zimbabwe, as well as the agreement signed by United Nations agencies and the Government of Zimbabwe for food assistance and HIV/AIDS programmes. We also note the exchange between the Government of Zimbabwe and the United Nations over the need for assistance with shelter.

Today's discussion once again demonstrates the need for the United Nations to have a comprehensive approach towards resolving humanitarian crises. Greece will contribute its share, commensurate with its possibilities, and we will consider positively the steps proposed by Mr. Egeland. The three pillars of development, security and human rights are especially relevant in addressing humanitarian problems. In this approach, the role of the Security Council as guarantor of international peace and security is of vital importance.

**Mr. Manongi** (United Republic of Tanzania): We too join in thanking Mr. Egeland for his insightful briefing this morning. We also wish to commend the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs for the great work it is doing in Africa.

Millions of Africans live in countries where there is ongoing armed conflict or the imminent risk of such a conflict breaking out. This is a legitimate concern for all of us. On the other hand, many encouraging peace processes are currently in progress with respect to all major conflicts in Africa, despite continued instability. Increased commitment to peace and security on the part of African organizations is an example of this, as is the cooperation between the United Nations and our organizations in Africa.

Mr. Egeland has just informed us that no amount of humanitarian relief can provide what those who are threatened by conflict have wanted most from Day One, namely, effective protection against violence of the most vicious kind, and the ability to return to their homes. We agree. Indeed, strengthening Africans' capacity in conflict prevention in crisis situations and in crisis management must remain our main objective. Reactive military interventions and humanitarian measures are necessary to prevent further loss of life in emergencies, but even at their best, such efforts can only control a situation, not resolve it. Investment in tools that focus on development, capacity-building for mediation and peacebuilding is needed to ensure that existing conflicts are resolved, as well as future ones prevented. Without such investment, the demand for reactive measures can only increase.

Mr. Egeland illustrated how expensive such investment can be. It is noteworthy that Africa received around \$7 billion in humanitarian aid between 1995 and 2001. The cost of United Nations peacekeeping is estimated at \$2.8 billion for the period from July 2004 to June 2005.

Africa has demonstrated its willingness to deal with conflicts in the region. The Under-Secretary-General has also observed that we have not done enough in relation to Uganda. We have not done enough to create the "pull factor" that could draw the Lord's Resistance Army to disarmament and reintegration programmes.

Among the African Union's principles is respect for the sanctity of human life. It is in this regard that we reiterate the New Partnership for Africa's

Development view on how best to assist Africa to build its capacity to manage conflicts. This focuses on four key areas: the prevention and resolution of conflicts; peacekeeping and peace enforcement; post-conflict reconciliation; and combating the illicit proliferation of small arms, light weapons and landmines.

There are many complex and interconnected causes of humanitarian crisis in Africa. While we accept that policy choices can play a role, natural phenomena such as drought and the HIV/AIDS pandemic are factors as well. All these factors compound one another. It is on this totality of factors that we must focus.

**Mr. Wolf** (United States of America): First, I want to thank Under-Secretary-General Egeland for his thorough and troubling report, and in particular for his helpful suggestions for action.

We are pleased that the United Nations has remained engaged on the grave humanitarian problems facing Africa in general, and Zimbabwe, Uganda and Darfur in particular. The United States believes that a food crisis is a threat not only to the welfare of the peoples of Africa but also to regional stability and security, which is one reason we have tripled our commitment of aid to Africa in the past year.

The misery and terror sown by the actions of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) in northern Uganda are perhaps not as well known to the world as the situations in Darfur and Zimbabwe, but its murderous assaults, kidnappings, burnings of villages and fields and, especially, its kidnapping of children for use as soldiers or sexual and economic slaves marks the LRA as one of the most detestable groups of its kind, one that we should all be looking for ways to counter in order to bring its atrocities and interference to an end.

The Sudan remains a top priority for the United States. Among our international partners, the United States plays a lead role in supporting the Comprehensive Peace Agreement and the Abuja talks, providing life-saving humanitarian assistance in Darfur and southern Sudan, and spearheading efforts to end the violence in Darfur and to hold accountable those responsible for atrocities. President Bush was the first head of State to speak out publicly on the humanitarian crisis in Darfur. We were the first to highlight Darfur at the Security Council, the first to state that genocide had occurred in Darfur and the first to call for accountability for perpetrators of violence and

atrocities, as well as being a lead donor on humanitarian assistance, with more than \$506 million in food aid to Darfur and eastern Chad since the Darfur crisis began. We appreciate Under-Secretary-General Egeland's reminder of what remains to be done by us all.

Economic collapse and food insecurity are now chronic conditions in Zimbabwe, as we heard. Millions of Zimbabweans have fled to South Africa and elsewhere. Given the shortage of fertilizer and inputs during the current planting season, next year's harvest will be worse than this year's, with grave implications for food security. Food insecurity and economic meltdown are the result of bad policies, non-transparency and the breakdown of the rule of law.

The United Nations should remain engaged with the Government of Zimbabwe on fundamental economic and policy reform. The United Nations should continue to press the Government of Zimbabwe on the urgent need for dialogue with donors and international financial institutions. United Nations engagement can influence the behaviour of that Government, as we saw when the Government of Zimbabwe signed a memorandum of understanding with the World Food Programme on the eve of Under-Secretary-General Egeland's visit, and when Special Envoy Tibaijuka's intervention helped to end Operation Restore Order.

The United Nations should also urge the Government of Zimbabwe to reach out to all Zimbabweans, political parties and civil society groups to engage in a dialogue aimed at reaching a sustainable political settlement. Repressive legislation should be repealed. Zimbabwe needs a broad-based representative Government to face the country's huge economic and humanitarian challenges.

We believe that a visit by Under-Secretary-General Gambari to Zimbabwe early in 2006 would keep up the momentum of Under-Secretary-General Egeland's visit and should include the Sudan, Uganda and other countries in the region. Under-Secretary-General Gambari should encourage African nations to step up their engagement with all Zimbabwean parties to promote timely solutions to Zimbabwe's economic crisis. For example, South Africa's \$470 million loan, if conditioned on political and economic reforms in Zimbabwe, could be an element of a possible African solution.

The important thing is to restore democracy, economic growth and food security in Zimbabwe. If the conditions are right for genuine progress, Secretary-General Annan should visit Zimbabwe himself following Under-Secretary-General Gambari's visit.

We also believe there is an important — indeed, leading — role for African countries to play in resolving the crisis in Zimbabwe, and we encourage them to work with the United Nations and the international community to engage the Government of Zimbabwe in a constructive dialogue.

**Mr. Mayoral** (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like once again to thank the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Mr. Jan Egeland, for the complete briefing, his third, on the humanitarian situation in Africa, which clearly shows the critical situation facing many populations in that continent.

Given the seriousness of the situation, we need to ask ourselves the source of this recurring humanitarian crisis and why it takes place repeatedly. While it is true the reasons are deeply rooted in history relating to the continent as a whole, today they are also related to political elements that have been made worse by climatic disasters, famine, long-standing diseases such as malaria and cholera and newer pandemics such as HIV/AIDS that still have no immediate solution.

Unfortunately, Mr. Egeland's report reaffirmed the existence of continuing humanitarian crises in, among other areas, the Great Lakes region, Zimbabwe, Malawi, Niger and, as we have heard on a number of occasions, Darfur.

In this regard, we wish once again to stress the need for the Council to bear particularly in mind the human dimension of conflict. We cannot remain indifferent to the suffering of innocent civilians or to violations of human rights or international humanitarian law. We, therefore, affirm that no security consideration can override the obligation of all States to comply with those norms.

Similarly, we believe it vital to emphasize that parties to a conflict also have a direct responsibility to ensure respect for international humanitarian law, whatever the circumstances may be.

In the light of Mr. Egeland's comments, we would like to raise the following points. First of all, we

are particularly concerned about the relationship between recent incidents affecting the safety of humanitarian staff and the difficulties encountered by those humanitarian workers in gaining access to needy populations.

In that context, we should not underestimate the seriousness of the attacks against humanitarian workers in recent months in northern Uganda and Darfur, as well as their practical impact on access to affected peoples. In addition to the criminality of those attacks — which fall under the purview of the International Criminal Court — we should recall that Mr. Moreno-Ocampo, the Court's Prosecutor, referred to the issue last Monday during his briefing to the Council. We must underscore the fact that, in resolution 1296 (2000), the Council expressed its readiness to adopt appropriate measures in cases where assistance to civilians is obstructed, including evaluating situations in which impeding free access may constitute a threat to international peace and security.

Secondly, we are closely following with great attention and concern the situation of various groups of refugees and internally displaced persons. We realize the sensibilities that raising the issue of displaced persons may arouse, but we cannot forget that populations of displaced civilians are among the most vulnerable groups in conflict situations. It should be recalled that the Council has a subsidiary role to protect those people.

With regard to the specific situations mentioned by Mr. Egeland, we would also like to know his views regarding a possible agreement in the context of the Abuja process, including how he believes that could affect the critical humanitarian situation in Darfur and its possible impact on northern Africa.

In conclusion, we would like to say that establishing a new body within the United Nations may help to resolve, or at least alleviate, humanitarian situations, in particular on the African continent.

We would also like once again to express our gratitude to Mr. Egeland for his efforts to improve the situation for civilian populations. We reiterate Argentina's support for his ongoing work to provide protection for civilians in armed conflicts.

**Mr. Zhang Yishan** (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I would first like to thank Under-Secretary-General

Egeland for his briefing on the humanitarian situation in several African regions. In listening to his briefings on many occasions, we have noted a common thread running through his presentations: his great sympathy and concern for suffering people and his willingness to fully carry out the role of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in order to alleviate that suffering.

As the Under-Secretary-General has told us, the humanitarian situation in certain parts of Africa is very serious. People are experiencing great suffering on a daily basis — including hunger, poverty, death and pandemics. China is very sympathetic to their plight and is concerned about the difficulties facing affected countries and peoples. We call on the international community to make a common effort to provide intensified humanitarian assistance to help those countries through these difficult times.

We should also realize that there are numerous reasons for humanitarian crises. Armed conflicts, natural disasters, epidemics and other factors all play a role. In providing material assistance, the international community should pay greater attention to the actual situations in the countries concerned, take the necessary steps to address the problems and emphasize the elimination of the root causes of humanitarian crises.

The alleviation of the humanitarian crises throughout Africa should rely mainly on the efforts of the countries concerned, while respecting their opinions and leadership and allowing their respective initiatives to be fully carried out. The international community should support and cooperate with the efforts of the Governments of the countries concerned. At the same time, we should also fully involve regional and subregional organizations, such as the African Union. We must also avoid politicizing humanitarian issues. Not only is that not conducive to resolving problems, it can also further complicate them. It is therefore not desirable.

**Mr. Chuasoto** (Philippines): My delegation joins others in thanking Under-Secretary-General Jan Egeland for his comprehensive briefing today.

Africa is facing huge political and humanitarian challenges. Continuing conflict in Africa has caused immense suffering. Civilians are often the main targets in conflict situations and have been denied fundamental peace and security. The outgrowths of

humanitarian crises usually have potentially disastrous consequences for peace and security. However, efforts to respond to such emergencies have often not been given proper attention, nor have adequate resources been provided to aid vulnerable populations in need.

Ensuring peace and security is the primary responsibility of the Security Council. Although the Council is the most responsive body of the United Nations system, addressing humanitarian crises is an endeavour that is best handled through the coordination and cooperation of all United Nations bodies and agencies. However, through the attention given to those crises, the Council's leadership can spur action, ensure sustained engagement and garner the support of regional actors and donors. In particular, Council action can provide the onus for achieving effective protection against violence on the ground and for addressing the root causes of conflict. In addition, the Council's support for initiatives aimed at strengthening local and national capabilities in humanitarian crises greatly increases the chance for success.

With the impending establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission, we believe that the opportunity has arisen for the Council to find ways to contribute to strengthening the linkages between humanitarian action and integration, rehabilitation and peacebuilding. That will enable the Council to strengthen its approach to humanitarian crises within the larger framework of peacebuilding efforts.

The humanitarian crises in Africa are of serious concern to my delegation, as are the obstacles that arise in meeting humanitarian needs. It is clear that serious challenges still lie ahead, especially in securing predictable funding in order to respond to humanitarian emergencies in a timely, efficient and effective manner. International responses to crisis situations in Africa need to be more forward-looking in their approach and should be based on coordinated and integrated partnerships between African Governments, regional organizations, development partners and local non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

We would like to take this opportunity to recognize the untiring efforts of NGOs and the media in raising the international community's awareness about these crises. Their advocacy continues to be an important contribution to addressing the humanitarian crises in Africa.

Lastly, my delegation reiterates its appreciation to Mr. Egeland and his team. We assure him of our continuing support for his humanitarian efforts in Africa.

**Mr. Dumitru** (Romania): We are grateful for your initiative, Mr. President, to convene this timely briefing. I would like to join other members of the Council in thanking Under-Secretary-General Jan Egeland for his comprehensive presentation.

The humanitarian challenges facing the African continent have once again called for the Council's attention and careful consideration. The practice of providing periodic briefings to the Council on humanitarian developments in Africa is indeed very welcome and useful. We commend in particular the work done by Mr. Egeland. The periodic missions he has undertaken to Africa are proof of his dedication and of the special emphasis placed by the United Nations on the need to address, as effectively and urgently as possible, the humanitarian needs of that continent.

Against that backdrop, I should like to focus here on three issues. First, with regard to the Sudan, we were particularly anxious to hear the briefing on the situation in Darfur, as the recent period has been rich in developments. Among them, the most encouraging is the seventh round of inter-Sudanese peace talks on the situation in Darfur that started in Abuja in November under the proficient mediation of the African Union. While we seem to have progressed politically, we want to see that translated on the ground into an improved humanitarian situation in Darfur. It is unfortunate, however, that violence and atrocities are daily occurrences and that they are directed at civilians, including women and children, humanitarian workers and international peacekeepers. At the same time, given the prevailing climate of insecurity in Darfur, it has become considerably more difficult to provide assistance to those who need it most.

We commend the crucial role played by the United Nations Mission in the Sudan and the valiant efforts of its personnel to provide comfort in that human tragedy. We also appreciate the constant presence of the African Union mission in Darfur. It is encouraging indeed to see regional ownership at work.

Secondly, with regard to northern Uganda, we agree that the conflict there has important regional dimensions with the potential to further destabilize the

already fragile security in the region and to disrupt the ongoing humanitarian efforts. It remains our belief that the resolution of that conflict is possible only politically, not militarily. Furthermore, the prospects for humanitarian improvement depend closely on the progress made on the political front, with the Government living up to its responsibilities to protect the population in the North and the Lord's Resistance Army ceasing immediately all acts of violence and pursuing political talks.

Like others, we share a specific concern for the situation of the nearly 2 million displaced people in northern Uganda. In that regard, I would like to ask Mr. Egeland about United Nations plans to meet the needs of the internally displaced persons, given that the majority of them relies extensively on international assistance to survive.

Thirdly, regarding Zimbabwe, we highly value the information just provided by Mr. Egeland, following his timely visit there in December. Romania shares the deep concern about the situation in Zimbabwe. The humanitarian response seems critical to that country, with the situation steadily worsening, the food shortage becoming chronic and the number of people in need of assistance increasing. In that regard, we urge the Government to work with the international community and the humanitarian agencies to address the needs of the vulnerable population. We accordingly welcome the progress reported by Mr. Egeland concerning the agreements reached with the Government on many issues, which will facilitate the United Nations response to the humanitarian crisis in Zimbabwe.

Finally, given that this is Romania's last intervention on this issue as an elected member of the Security Council, we would like to emphasize that, be it with respect to Zimbabwe or to northern Uganda, Romania believes that there is no excuse for the Security Council and the international community to simply hide behind the label of so-called forgotten or silent crises and to do nothing but neglect serious ongoing developments that, although perhaps silent and unknown, claim untold numbers of lives and cause unspeakable levels of human suffering. That is true, of course, not only for the African continent, but for other parts of the world, too.

**Mr. Smirnov** (Russian Federation) (spoke in Russian): At the outset, I thank Under-Secretary-

General Egeland for his detailed briefing on the humanitarian situation in several regions of Africa.

The real situation and the depth of crises in Africa require us to look into the issue of increasing humanitarian assistance. We pay tribute to the selfless work of the United Nations humanitarian staff in very difficult circumstances, in particular in Darfur and elsewhere. However, of no less strategic importance is the overall systemic approach that should allow us, *inter alia*, to avoid the inequitable distribution of humanitarian assistance on the continent and to put an end to the phenomenon of so-called forgotten emergency situations.

We believe that the situation should change in the near future with the reorganization of the Central Emergency Revolving Fund as the Central Emergency Response Fund. The basic modalities of that mechanism, as we all know, were established in a resolution recently adopted by consensus by the General Assembly. In particular, it provides for the Fund's resources to be allocated to natural disaster warning and to meet the obvious humanitarian needs of countries in which the necessary time frame is inadequate to mobilize resources for a consolidated conventional inter-agency appeal.

The United Nations and the Security Council are actively involved in Africa's problems. The Organization, with its unique experience in settling conflicts and in post-conflict recovery, can mobilize the international community and various regional and subregional machineries to achieve a comprehensive solution to the problems of African countries. The positive experience of increasingly fruitful cooperation among the major United Nations organs, within their mandates, is an important enhancing factor in that regard. The forthcoming decision to establish a peacebuilding commission will assuredly mark yet another important step in that direction.

Russia welcomes the strengthening of the role of African States in world policy and their efforts to settle the remaining regional conflicts on the continent, to promote economic and social development and to reaffirm human rights and democracy. We understand the magnitude of the problems facing Africa, and in that connection we attach special significance to the strengthening of the peacekeeping integration activities of the African Union and African subregional organizations. We note the fruitful results of the

African Union's intermediary efforts in settling conflicts on the continent.

The world community's attention to African problems must not abate. In the United Nations and other international structures, Russia will in future pursue a policy in keeping with the interests of the States of the continent and continue to participate in agreed measures for comprehensive assistance to Africa, including through the Group of Eight and other multilateral forums. We will continue to actively support efforts to settle crises and to enhance Africa's peacekeeping potential.

**Mr. De La Sablière** (France) (spoke in French): I would like at the outset to thank Mr. Egeland and to tell him how thankful we are for his commitment to the humanitarian cause and to the African continent. His regular reports on the humanitarian situation in Africa are important. The Security Council correctly devotes considerable time and effort to considering the situation in Africa, in order to help African countries, in coordination with the efforts of the African Union and subregional organizations.

I believe it is important for us to be thoroughly familiar with the humanitarian situation in various regions. We need to know the causes of crises, as well as their consequences, because often neighbouring countries and subregional stability are affected. Too many humanitarian crises are due to non-economic causes, as Mr. Egeland has noted. Providing food aid cannot be an alibi for a failure to recognize the causes of crises in which millions of people suffer so terribly. I fully support his comments on that point.

I wish to focus briefly on the main situations referred to by Mr. Egeland in his briefing. First, concerning Darfur, Mr. Egeland's description reminds us how disturbing that matter is. Undoubtedly, in 2006 the international community will need to continue to provide humanitarian assistance, including to Chad. The international community must make certain that access to camps is guaranteed and that no obstacles hamper the work of non-governmental organizations. However, improvement in the humanitarian situation, which is linked to the security situation, depends not only on bringing the necessary pressure to bear, but, also on an improved political situation.

Currently, pressure must be maintained on the parties in Abuja. I believe that the Council should

review that issue regularly, and within the framework of a comprehensive strategy.

One side note here is that I believe we tend too often, when considering the situation in Darfur and in the Sudan, to look at those problems separately. In fact, in his briefing, Mr. Egeland spoke of those two matters together, because they are related. Certainly those issues are complex, and for technical reasons the argument can sometimes be made that we should consider separately the humanitarian situation, the security situation, including the question of the United Nations possibly replacing the remarkable efforts made by the African Union, the political situation and, finally, the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. However it seems to me that from time to time we need to consider these matters together, in order to strengthen our commitment. I think we need a comprehensive view in order to assist the Sudan more effectively.

The activities of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) in northern Uganda and in the region has created an increasingly intolerable situation. It is clear that the Council should look into that matter. There are a number of issues beyond the humanitarian issue, including access to populations, which is of interest to the Security Council. There is also a regional dimension that has gained greater prominence.

In his briefing today, Mr. Egeland offered some proposals for the Council's consideration. His suggestions were interesting, and I assure him that we will be looking at them closely. It is time for a solution to the problem to be found. The solution can only be military, as the Council has often recalled.

I have a question that I often ask and that I now ask of Mr. Egeland once again. I do not understand how a limited number of combatants, however ferocious they may be, could have caused such tragic consequences: 1.5 million displaced persons and a contribution to regional destabilization. Any information that Mr. Egeland could give us on the number of these combatants would help us understand the problem, which I must admit I do not comprehend.

I turn now to Zimbabwe. Following the inexplicable and unpardonable operation to demolish shanty towns, which was condemned by the international community, the Council had to look at the situation. We take note of signs that the Zimbabwean authorities appear willing to work with the United

Nations. We believe that following Mr. Egeland's visit it would be useful for the Secretary-General to visit Zimbabwe as well, as I understand has already been suggested.

Limiting the measures taken by the European Union in the framework of article 96 of the Cotonou Agreement depend, we believe, on such dialogue and on concrete efforts by the Zimbabwean authorities — within the framework of the dialogue — towards finding a solution to the problems that they themselves created.

In conclusion, I echo a comment made by Mr. Egeland and express our concern at the weak response to some United Nations emergency appeals regarding certain situations; here I refer in particular to the Sahel. We need to find a solution to this problem, so that aid levels will match the gravity of the situation, rather than the media attention in donor countries.

**Mr. Katti** (Algeria) (spoke in French): I too would also like to express appreciation to Mr. Egeland for the detailed briefing he has just given us on some of the most serious humanitarian crises in Africa. We agree with him that a regional approach needs to be adopted in order to deal with the humanitarian crises to which he has just referred, given their cross-border implications. The Lord's Resistance Army and the refugee situation are examples of this.

I wish to make a few brief comments on situations to which he referred in his briefing. I will begin with Southern Africa, by welcoming the dialogue with the Zimbabwean authorities that began during Mr. Egeland's visit to that country and the agreements arrived at during that visit. But I want to stress one point to which he referred in his briefing: that regardless of the circumstances, humanitarian assistance must remain neutral and impartial and should not be used as a political tool.

We believe that it is important to take a coordinated approach towards the Lord's Resistance Army. Mr. Egeland has made some suggestions that we find interesting and which deserve further consideration by the Security Council, in consultation with the Governments concerned.

With respect to Darfur, we welcome a certain stabilization of the situation, including the military situation. The number of displaced persons has slightly

decreased. The malnutrition rate and the child mortality rate have been reduced. That progress was possible thanks to the mobilization of the international community. But the situation clearly remains fragile, because of the highly volatile security situation and the lack of a political solution to the crisis. Restoring order and security in Darfur will not be easy. However, it is clear that the conclusion of a political agreement will allow for a certain easing of tensions in the situation. It is important to place pressure on the parties so that the Abuja talks can lead to a lasting peace settlement.

**The President:** I shall make a statement in my capacity as the representative of the United Kingdom.

I join everyone who has thanked, Mr. Egeland for what I thought was a very powerful briefing and for his call for action to all of us.

First, with respect to western Sudan, the lack of progress, the deterioration of the situation and the problem of humanitarian access all demonstrate how precarious the situation is. We really need to do more. The results of the assessment mission of the African Union Mission in the Sudan — which is, I think, just now coming back from the region — are quite crucial. We need for the Council to be in a position to be able to consider the implications of that mission: what does it mean for the present African Union Mission, how does that Mission move forward next year to cover an even bigger task, and how does that fit in with what the United Nations is doing in the Sudan? All of those aspects are crucial. At the same time, it is necessary to exert maximum pressure on the parties to try to deliver a peace agreement in Abuja as soon as possible.

Secondly, with respect to the Great Lakes region and the humanitarian consequences of the activities of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, southern Sudan and northern Uganda, we all share the concern at the some 2 million displaced persons and at the impact that the relatively small number of fighters have on millions of people in those three countries. The LRA activity is causing an instability that is wider than even before. So, we must encourage the parties to try to reach a peaceful solution. We, as the United Nations — including the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) and the United Nations Mission in the Sudan (UNMIS) — must do whatever we can to help the Governments of the region actually tackle that problem. I think the

Council's role should be supportive of the Governments.

Thirdly, with respect to Zimbabwe, the United Kingdom shares the concerns that Mr. Egeland set out. There is a humanitarian situation which, owing to a natural disaster and man-made causes, is extremely serious and getting worse. I do not think that we have seen the improvements that we had hoped for, following the July visit of Special Envoy of the Secretary-General Anna Tibajuka.

The fact is, the United Nations and its agencies and non-governmental organizations are doing a very good job in the most difficult of circumstances. Mr. Egeland said very clearly that the action taken by the Government of Zimbabwe in terms of the eviction programme was the worst possible action at the worst possible time. We can only welcome the agreements that he was able to secure with the Government of Zimbabwe during his visit. What has been done by Mr. England on food security and what has been done by the World Food Programme in obtaining better access for non-governmental organizations are all essential elements. I think we would all look to see the Government of Zimbabwe now fulfil its obligations in terms of the agreements that it has entered into. I think that means that we should be encouraging an accountable and democratic Government, the rule of law and respect for human rights.

For my part, I would welcome greater involvement by the United Nations in the dialogue on the political relationship with the Government of Zimbabwe. But I think we need to see substantial progress before we could think of the Secretary-General himself getting involved in that issue.

As for the part of the United Kingdom, let me be clear too, we will provide significant assistance to the needy Zimbabweans, both bilaterally and through the European Union.

In conclusion, I would like to make a few practical suggestions. First, Mr. Egeland's briefing demonstrates how humanitarian crises have implications for regional stability and security and how cross-border movements only underline the impact on further insecurity. So, the Security Council and the international community have a responsibility to monitor such situations and to provide better assistance to countries actually facing such crises. It seems to me to be quite obvious. The aim, quite clearly, is to try to

tackle conflict and potential conflict, provide protection for civilians and ensure the availability of humanitarian assistance and the access of that assistance to those who need it.

I thought Mr. Egeland's last paragraph really summed it up: security and stability actually go hand in hand with humanitarian crises. Where the former do not exist, crisis is more likely. The United Kingdom commends UNMIS and MONUC for what they are already doing to tackle armed groups, including the LRA. But I think that the lesson is that we need to be more involved in the efforts that we actually undertake to tackle those problems, given the graphic map Mr. Egeland has shown us of the path into the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the path out, and what might be possible by way of interdiction. It would be wholly consistent with everything that we have been saying with reference to the role of the International Criminal Court to say that the peacekeepers of the United Nations should be more active in trying to prevent the scourge of the LRA from contaminating other countries.

In conclusion, it seems to me that Mr. Egeland has provided the Council with a lot of material. I think it is for the Council to decide, perhaps at a slightly slower pace, how it can react to that. But certainly, it would be the United Kingdom's intention to put forward some suggestions in due course.

I now resume my function as President of the Council.

As there are no further requests for the floor, I give the floor to Mr. Egeland to respond to the comments raised so far.

**Mr. Egeland:** I thank you very much, Mr. President, for organizing this meeting, and I give my heartfelt thanks to the members of the Council for their support for this type of briefing and for the work that our colleagues are doing on the ground under very difficult circumstances, often with their own lives at stake as they try to prevent further suffering and a further loss of lives among our beneficiaries.

There is a strong consensus around the Council table that the situations that I have described must see positive change in the year ahead. Indeed, as the representative of China observed, our motive as humanitarians in bringing this up is that we need to see change. We want to see change. It is our job to bring to

the Council's attention situations that are going badly or which are deteriorating. In each of these three situations, there is at the moment a crisis that is deteriorating. What is happening in Darfur, in northern Uganda and in the region at large, and also in the southern African region, including Zimbabwe, is indeed a moral outrage.

First, with respect to Darfur, the reports we are getting from our colleagues in the field is that it all could end tomorrow. Together we have built up a remarkable humanitarian operation. Against all odds, mortality rates are now one third of what they were in the beginning of 2004. We have been able to provide logistical changes — a camp management operation, a food operation, a water sanitation operation, primary health care and primary schooling, which is remarkable. Now it is all in jeopardy. We are once again down to levels of access that are comparable to those we started with in 2004.

Our colleagues in the field say, therefore that they are extremely worried that the major gains we have made could be lost. Again, it goes back to not having had political and security progress commensurate to that made in the humanitarian area.

The parties — the armed groups, the armed men — are outrageously irresponsible, at all levels, in their acts against civilians and internally displaced persons. Some of them are also outrageously irresponsible in their whole attitude towards reaching a negotiated settlement. A question was asked as to what the consequences would be if no deal is reached in Abuja. Well, I do not dare to even think of the consequences, because the situation could potentially totally unravel. We would have 13,000 humanitarian workers caught in the crossfire and, of course, operations would be paralysed. Within weeks, millions would starve and be in the utmost peril.

We should therefore rather focus on how to achieve success in Abuja, so that our progress can continue and we can plan for the return of people. Again, it is the kind of situation that is unsustainable in the long term. We cannot have many millions of people on regular food handouts in overcrowded camps. It has to change for the better.

The same is, of course, true of the Ugandan situation. Not nearly enough attention has been paid to the crisis in northern Uganda. I hope that attention is forthcoming, as the crisis has now become a regional

one. I have tried to describe the situation: millions of people are being affected by the actions of as few as 1,000 combatants roaming around those areas. But when they target humanitarian workers and civilians, the consequence is immediate paralysis.

The representative of France asked how this could be, how the situation could continue — how such a small number of fighters could wreak such havoc. I really do not know. It may be due to neglect and ineffective action over so many years. The Lord's Resistance Army has been active in northern Uganda for nearly 20 years, and now it is acting regionally.

It is really an outrage to see what has been unfolding over the past 20 years. It must stop. It really must stop. It is the kind of situation where we have to say, it cannot continue like this in 2006, with yet another generation of children being abducted to become killing machines on behalf of that movement.

The proposed panel of experts would be one way of finding out why it does not stop, why it continues, why it is allowed to go on. I really urge the Council to look at the other proposals as well, regarding both northern Uganda and the regional dimension of the crisis. As humanitarians, we have the hope that we can now say, "Enough is enough. We have to see change."

Zimbabwe could continue to deteriorate, but it could also improve in the year ahead. If there is one country in the world that should be able to feed itself, it is Zimbabwe. As I tried to outline in my briefing, if there are changes in the various areas where we see the Government changing its policies and practices; if donors invest not only in food handouts but in financing agricultural production and livelihoods; if there is a climate in which the Government and others facilitate our work in all aspects so that we can become effective in all aspects, including in the area of shelter; and if the disastrous evictions and other practices stop — if all of those things happen, I think that we will see positive change in Zimbabwe. We need to see positive change; indeed, cross-border migration is also continuing, because the situation is becoming intolerable for many people.

The representative of Denmark asked about a future United Nations engagement with Zimbabwe. The Secretary-General has been invited by President Mugabe, who reiterated that invitation to me while I was there. The Secretary-General is planning to send Under-Secretary-General Ibrahim Gambari on a

mission to engage in dialogue with the Government. We hope to see progress on many fronts, so that both Mr. Gambari's visit and the possible visit by the Secretary-General can advance our work and our common agenda.

I should like to make two final and general points, which also surfaced during our debate. Indeed, humanitarian work is, overall, making major progress. We are thankful for the increased attention of Security Council members and for their increased investment in us. In 2005 we achieved an unprecedented number of goals; we reached more people more effectively and more speedily. With a new emergency Fund, we may have more predictable funding. With a better coordination structure among ourselves as humanitarian workers, our work will be more effective and we will have more leadership among humanitarian coordinators on the ground.

The technological revolution makes it possible for us to do miracles where before we had to be passive observers to suffering. But too often we see that this technological revolution is not being reflected in an ethical, moral and political revolution that would make it possible for us to really do our work.

Here I am very heartened to hear many members say that yes, there has to be progress on the political front, in terms of peacemaking and security. My first mission was as a young assistant to Torvald Stoltenberg and Lord Owen during the joint United Nations-European Union effort in 1994 in the Balkans, namely in Bosnia. I saw at that time how we discussed safe areas in Bosnia and the provision of increased food, water and sanitation to Srebrenica and to the other safe areas. People were not disarmed at the time, there was no political or security action commensurate with a large humanitarian operation, and then Srebrenica happened. Let us not repeat that in the places that I have described. We have to have some way of healing the wound, because we recognize we are the plaster on the wound.

I would like to end on a positive note, because, as the representative of Greece and others have noted, there has also been a lot of positive change in Africa in recent years. We as OCHA are phasing out of Angola, Sierra Leone — of a number of areas. We are phasing down in Liberia as we speak. We are discussing handing over operations in places in southern Sudan to our development colleagues in the course of next year.

Africa is the youngest continent, and it is one with great promise for positive change. With increased resources next year from the G-8, from the European Union — all of those who have promised greatly increased resources — I think we can do a lot. But then we must make progress on the political and security fronts. So I am very heartened to hear that Council members will now study our proposals. You say, Mr. President, that you will do it at a slightly slower pace, but I hope that it will only be slightly slower than the pace I have just suggested as being needed.

**The President:** Thank you very much indeed, Mr. Egeland, for your briefing and for the way in which you have dealt with the questions.

If there are no other comments from colleagues, then the Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

*The meeting rose at 12.20 p.m.*