

UNMIK/PR/892

Saturday, 14 December 2002

Ambassador Ole Peter Kolby- Remarks at Reception, Pristina/Prishtinë, Dec. 14, 2002

The Security Council are focused on three key issues in Kosovo: standards before status, multi-ethnicity and integration.

We fully support the eight standards articulated by SRSG Michael Steiner as the yardstick for measuring Kosovo's progress. We also strongly endorse his priorities: "Standards before status". The foundation of all other standards is the rule of law.

The people of Kosovo have much to do in order to achieve these standards. Verbal support is not enough. Real efforts must be made on the ground to make the standards reality. Kosovo is still a long way from having truly functioning democratic institutions and a society where minorities can fully participate.

UNMIK has reached the stage of transferring responsibilities to Kosovo's provisional institutions; the more the institutions demonstrate they can execute the responsibilities they already have, the more they will be given.

Nothing is more important than a demonstrated commitment to multi-ethnicity, not only in words but in deeds as well.

All inhabitants of Kosovo must be able to live in security and dignity.

A Kosovo where members of minority communities are oppressed will face a bleak future of self-isolation.

Nothing would make a more powerful, positive impression on the International Community than significant and sustainable returns of displaced people.

As the majority, Kosovo Albanians must take responsibility for the security of members of minorities and their full access to public services.

All people of Kosovo must reject violence and condemn extremist and terrorist activities.

At the same time, members of minorities must integrate into Kosovo society. Parallel institutions have no future; integration is the only way forward.

We recognize Kosovo's progress in establishing inclusive democratic institutions. Now Kosovo's elected leaders must ensure that they operate democratically.

That means the majority respecting the rights and role of the minority. As the SG said on his visit here, "Democracy is not 'winner takes all'."

The Security Council fully supports the assertion of UNMIK's authority in the northern part of Mitrovica.

Recent progress in Mitrovica represents a major step in making Kosovo a multiethnic and integrated society founded on legitimate authorities and the rule of law.

Improving the quality of life in Kosovo is now almost entirely in the hands of the people of Kosovo themselves.

No unilateral steps will determine Kosovo's final status. The UN Security Council will, in consultation with all concerned, ultimately determine Kosovo's final status.

Those who have Kosovo's best interests at heart will focus all their energies on making progress toward the eight standards.

All the standards are important. Kosovo must demonstrate its commitment to building a multiethnic society based on the rule of law. This will determine whether Kosovo is seen as a problem or as a partner by the International Community.