



Security Council

Distr.: General
17 September 2020

Original: English and French

Letter dated 16 September 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council

I have the honour to enclose herewith a copy of a briefing provided by Mr. Jean-Pierre Lacroix, Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations, as well as the statements delivered by the representatives of Belgium, China, the Dominican Republic, Estonia, France, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America in connection with the video-teleconference on “United Nations peacekeeping operations”, convened on Monday, 14 September 2020.

In accordance with the procedure set out in the letter dated 7 May 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council (S/2020/372), which was agreed in the light of the extraordinary circumstances caused by the coronavirus disease pandemic, the enclosed briefing and statements will be issued as an official document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Abdou **Abarry**
President of the Security Council



Annex I**Statement by the Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations,
Jean-Pierre Lacroix**

I thank you, Sir for this opportunity to provide the annual briefing on peacekeeping reform. My remarks today will focus on the actions undertaken to advance the areas covered by the Declaration of Shared Commitments on United Nations Peacekeeping Operations, within the Secretary-General's Action for Peacekeeping (A4P) initiative, as adapted in the light of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic.

Last Wednesday, I briefed the Council (see S/2020/897) on the measures taken to address the enormous challenges posed by the pandemic to our operations and their host countries. As I outlined, those measures have contributed to preventing and containing the spread among field personnel to relatively low levels. We will continue those efforts.

Even as our missions are responding and supporting national responses to COVID-19, they have continued to pursue our Action for Peacekeeping commitments. The pandemic has created new challenges, but it has also created space for progress in areas such as policy and guidance work, and it has engendered dynamic and innovative new approaches for the delivery of A4P commitments.

Of course, much remains to be done, and we will sustain our efforts to continuously advance A4P. I would like to highlight some of the notable areas where we have made headway.

First, in the political arena, the challenging COVID-related circumstances have not impeded our missions from providing effective support to political processes and the implementation of peace agreements. The initialling of the peace agreement between the transitional Government of the Sudan and the Darfur armed groups, two weeks ago, was made possible through the technical, advisory and logistical support of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID). That included the facilitation of virtual negotiations in order to enable the conclusion of the agreement.

In Mali, the 18 August coup d'état required the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) to engage in good offices to support consultations on the modalities of the transition. We are encouraged that, in their first public statement, the leaders of the Comité national pour le salut du peuple expressed their commitment to the implementation of the 2015 Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation on Mali, which, despite uneven implementation, we consider to be the best road map for long-term peace in the country. Slow, but tangible progress has been made, with the deployment of reconstituted units to northern Mali earlier this year, marking the first formal State security presence there since 2012.

Across our missions, we are promoting inclusive processes and creating space for dialogue and participation. For example, in line with the youth, peace and security agenda, the United Nations Mission in South Sudan has ensured the inclusion of young people and other marginalized voices in the peace process in South Sudan, and has provided them an opportunity to engage with the national Government and the international community.

We count on the unified support of the Council, as well as that of key regional partners and other stakeholders, in order to ensure progress on the political track across all our operations.

Secondly, in the area of women and peace and security, we are encouraged by the progress being made on the women and peace and security agenda through our operations. That progress is enabled by a greater focus on data-driven tracking. We have seen an expansion of the political space for women's participation and leadership in peace and political processes across peacekeeping contexts. In the Central African Republic, for example, women's representation in formal implementation and monitoring mechanisms increased at local and national levels in 2019. And in Lebanon, the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon worked with women's organizations and the Government of Lebanon to develop the first national action plan on resolution 1325 (2000), endorsed in September 2019.

Thirdly, with regard to protection, our missions continue to prevent and respond to threats to civilians, which have unfortunately not decreased in the past six months. That is particularly true in Mali, the Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Although the pandemic has affected the footprint of our missions and restricted some patrolling, missions have taken creative steps to continue their protection work. In Darfur, for example, UNAMID has used WhatsApp to conduct awareness-raising campaigns on conflict-related sexual violence amongst internally displaced persons. In response to the pandemic, our missions leveraged expanded strategic communications to engage communities using FM radio and social media. Missions have worked alongside national counterparts — Government or civil society — remotely, and have provided local interlocutors with access to mobile devices and platforms.

More broadly, across the four large multidimensional missions, we have conducted major force transformation processes to shift mission postures and presence in order to strengthen strategic flexibility and operational adaptation. Temporary operating bases are in regular use, which enables greater reach and a more dynamic posture better suited to the protection of civilians threat landscape. Rapidly deployable battalions are increasingly used to reinforce the protection of civilians across large areas of operation. This transformation process has been fundamental to our efforts to improve mission performance with regard to the protection of civilians, and it is accompanied by a concerted whole-of-mission approach that combines the comparative advantages of uniformed personnel with civilian components. This approach has enabled integrated patrols in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and South Sudan, for example, to secure the release of children from armed forces and groups, thus having a life-changing impact on hundreds of boys and girls.

Of course, all that would not be possible without the continued support of Member States. We urge troop-contributing countries (TCCs) and police-contributing countries (PCCs) to continue to come forward with pledges, and call for continued support for civilian aspects of protection work.

I now turn to the area of performance. Improving performance and accountability in peacekeeping is a comprehensive effort involving all personnel — civilian, police and military — in our field missions, as well as here at Headquarters. Improving performance is a matter of interest to everyone, and a matter for everyone to take up and advance.

Over the past year, significant progress has been made. In line with resolution 2436 (2018), the integrated peacekeeping performance and accountability framework is being finalized. The framework covers all relevant performance evaluation tools, with the objective of improving coherence, identifying gaps and making further progress where required. It aims to strengthen accountability for underperformance and to recognize strong performance. For example, our Department of Peace Operations (DPO) military and police colleagues conducted a review of existing measures to recognize performance in field missions in order to identify good

practices. That will now be shared with the missions for implementation. In addition, DPO military staff established a unit specifically dedicated to performance, and we aim to create a performance improvement plan for field headquarters.

We have continued to roll out the comprehensive performance assessment system in order to aid missions in planning, coordinating, tracking and showing the impact of mandate implementation. With the outbreak of COVID-19, the system has been utilized to help prevent the spread of the virus in missions, while strengthening their capacity to support the pandemic responses of host countries.

Despite pandemic lockdowns, we have continued to ensure the operational readiness, including the COVID-19 preparedness, of military and police units, as well as individual military and police officers, through a hybrid model of in-person and virtual training, assessments and evaluations. Four units have been remotely assessed as part of mission-specific force generation processes, and three units have been remotely verified for the rapid deployment level. DPO military staff developed a concept for remote predeployment visits from April to July 2020 in order to assess the readiness of units before deployment. Three remote predeployment visits have been conducted for units to be deployed to the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) and the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO). That innovative response enabled DPO to confirm the basic readiness of units and to provide further training recommendations in order to improve the displayed performance the units.

It should be noted that remote predeployment visits, while necessary under current travel restrictions, inevitably have limitations compared to the insights and exchange possible through in-person engagement. Likewise, our training personnel are finding that virtual learning, despite its cost efficiency and its ability to facilitate knowledge acquisition, needs to be complemented by in-person training. It is for this reason that, following the resumption of July rotations, DPO police staff visited Djibouti, Ethiopia, Jordan and Senegal to pilot support efforts aimed at improving the operational readiness of PCCs.

Having the right equipment in the right place at the right time, with the right know-how, remains a critical aspect of performance. Contingent-owned equipment is, of course, key in that regard, and the number of units with critical gaps in contingent-owned equipment, or performance lower than 70 per cent, have decreased from 23 units in the fourth quarter of 2018 to 18 units in the first quarter of 2020. Over the past year, exchange platforms have been developed and key peacekeeping manuals and standards updated to enhance the access and awareness of troop- and police-contributing countries. For the first time, two units from the rapid deployment level of the Peacekeeping Capability Readiness System were successfully made available to be deployed to a mission within the required timeline of 60 days. I thank the Member States that made specialized capability pledges to MINUSMA and encourage others to do the same.

We are also pursuing the implementation of the force adaptation plans in MINUSMA and MONSUCO. They are indispensable to our operational effectiveness and are an integral part of A4P. We count on continued support from Member States for their implementation.

Expanding the role of women is another key dimension for improving the overall performance and effectiveness of peacekeeping operations. More women in peacekeeping simply means more effective peacekeeping. Resolution 2538 (2020), which the Council recently adopted, stresses that important goal anew, as well as the need for continued efforts to that end. In that regard, we continue to make

significant headway on ensuring gender parity among peacekeeping personnel. At Headquarters, parity has been reached for civilian staff in the Department of Peace Operations and in the shared regional structure, with some exceptions. In the field, as of July, women made up 22 per cent of civilian staff and 35 per cent of Heads and Deputy Heads of missions led by DPO and the Department of Operational Support. Targeted efforts are under way to increase the representation of women in the field.

With the support of TCCs and PCCs, most 2020 targets set out in the Uniformed Gender Parity Strategy 2018-2028 for uniformed personnel — military, police and justice and corrections personnel at Headquarters and in the field — have been met or surpassed. For instance, in June, women represented 22.6 per cent of military professional posts at Headquarters, compared to the target of 17 per cent. Similarly, in the field, women comprised 18.3 per cent of staff and military observers, compared to the target of 17 per cent. Women accounted for 28.2 per cent of individual police officers in the field, compared to the target of 22 per cent; and they made up 10.9 per cent of formed police units, compared to the target of 10 per cent. Women also represented 29.6 per cent of deployed justice and corrections personnel, compared to the target of 27 per cent. Nevertheless, we have yet to achieve our targets for women in formed contingents. We must collectively redouble our efforts to that end. While much has been achieved, the support of Member States remains critical to consolidating hard-won gains and reaching the targets.

Turning to safety and security, I want to stress that the safety and security of our peacekeepers continues to be of paramount importance. Allow me to pay tribute to our fallen peacekeepers and commend TCCs and PCCs for their steadfast commitment to international peace, despite the very real risks.

As we have continued our efforts to enhance safety and security, we have seen a continued decrease in fatalities in peacekeeping operations from acts of violence, falling from 59 in 2017 to 27 in 2018, 25 in 2019, to eight, so far, in 2020. The measures taken through the action plan to improve the safety and security of United Nations peacekeepers have, no doubt, contributed to that. We will make every effort to continue reducing that number, as even one peacekeeper fatality is one too many.

We are invested in the implementation of resolution 2518 (2020), a testament to the Council's commitment to the safety and security of peacekeepers. Over the past year, we have worked on developing clear policy and practices to ensure that we safeguard our personnel. We have also promulgated policies on casualty evacuation (CASEVAC), authority command and control, and the first combined guidelines on military and police cooperation mechanism. The new CASEVAC policy was preceded by rigorous stress testing, and missions have begun updating their CASEVAC procedures in line with the new policy.

Meanwhile, the support of MINUSCA, MINUSMA and MONUSCO to their host countries for the investigation and prosecution of serious crimes against peacekeepers resulted in an over 100 per cent increase in the number of investigated cases. In a landmark development, in January and February, six individuals were convicted in the Central African Republic for the killing of 11 MINUSCA peacekeepers in 2016 and 2017.

In the area of conduct, we continue to strengthen our approach to preventing and addressing violations of our standards of conduct, including in the area of sexual exploitation and abuse. While we have seen a general trend downward in the number of allegations, we continue to see intermittent spikes that indicate that we cannot let up. We have put in place analysis, risk-management, investigation and victim-assistance measures.

We must continue to strengthen our partnerships with Member States and regional organizations to reflect the holistic and collective nature of this work. We need timely action if we are to address pending allegations and expanded efforts to pursue criminal accountability, and we need solutions for victims of sexual exploitation and abuse, including those who raise paternity and child-support claims. Member State engagement is imperative. We urge everyone to continue to work with us, either by making a voluntary contribution to the Trust Fund in Support of Victims of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse or through a high-level meeting on conduct and discipline, to be held early next year. We encourage those that have not done so to become a signatory to the Secretary-General's voluntary compact on preventing and addressing sexual exploitation and abuse, and we encourage those that have signed to ensure its full implementation.

Turning to partnerships, we have continued to deepen our collaboration with regional organizations. Our political partnership with the African Union (AU) remains a key part of our engagement, for instance in Darfur and in the Central African Republic. Strategic-level consultations on specific country situations have also deepened, with an increased frequency of regular virtual horizon-scanning meetings, for example between the AU and the United Nations. On the ground, peacekeeping missions operate on a daily basis in partnership with regional organizations, such as the AU, but also the European Union, as well as with agencies, funds and programmes, in order to maximize the collective impact of our action, be it for capacity-building or peacebuilding.

Our engagement in this area also extends to enabling and supporting peacekeeping partnerships — notably, through the Triangular Partnership Project. We have continued to build the capacities of TCCs in engineering, medical and signals in Africa and have now extended engineering training to members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and of the surrounding region. The Light Coordination Mechanism has already successfully matched a number of Member States on training needs.

Last but not least, with regard to peacebuilding and sustaining peace, our missions contribute to sustaining peace, of course, whether by supporting inclusive peace settlements or through capacity-building work. We do this with others in the United Nations system, as well as international financial institutions. For example, our partnership with the World Bank has contributed to improved joint delivery of security sector reform in the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mali and South Sudan. A strong focus of our work in this area is to ensure successful transitions that strengthen the United Nations system's engagement on sustaining peace.

Two years after the launch of A4P, we have made tangible progress in strengthening peacekeeping operations. This progress has been accomplished with support from Council members, TCCs and PCCs, host countries and financial contributors. The support of partner organizations has also been essential. As we look to the future, we must build on the progress made and shift into a second phase of A4P implementation.

The Secretariat has begun crafting overarching priorities for the next phase in 2021 and beyond, in the continued framework of the A4P Declaration of Shared Commitments. For the next chapter, we are drawing upon analyses of continued challenges and needs that our operations are facing, together with a push to complete pending tasks from the first phase. We are defining a limited number of global priorities for each A4P thematic area. These priorities will provide the strategic direction of peacekeeping reform efforts by both the United Nations system and individual Member States and other partners, to advance on our shared commitments.

Broadly speaking, our assessment is that priorities for the next phase should address at least eight critical systemic, cross-cutting issues that are relevant across A4P themes.

First, we must redouble our efforts to ensure that all our actions are coherent with, and contribute to, overarching political strategies that further positive peace. Aiming for short-term stability is not enough. Our missions should be vectors for inclusive, responsive and transformative futures for the people we serve. This means linking particular mandate areas — whether protection of civilians or institution-building — back to politics.

Second, the pandemic has taught us, painfully, how widespread inequality is and how social justice, development and peace go hand in hand. We need more substantive and strategic integration with development and peacebuilding actors on an ongoing basis, not only during drawdown and transitions.

Third, in today's challenging landscape, we need to work on deepening our integration within our operations, among civilian and uniformed components, and with the United Nations country team. We also need to do so, critically, with regional organizations and actors that have a tangible influence in conflict-affected countries.

Fourth, we will further our work on performance. We will continue to enhance mission and Headquarter performance and accountability, including through regular evaluations, policy frameworks and systemization of integrated structures in peacekeeping missions. Within the integrated Performance and Accountability Framework, we will also continue our efforts to better recognize good performance and identify and respond to cases of underperformance through appropriate remedial measures.

Fifth, we will continue our efforts to improve the safety and security of our peacekeepers, which is very much related to performance, as they are by essence linked. We will do this through ongoing implementation of the action plan to improve the security of United Nations peacekeepers in areas such as on force protection, camp defence and reinforced medical standards, training and care. We will also continue the shift towards more agile operations, with improved situational awareness.

Sixth, we must continue to strengthen our strategic guidance and planning capacities, including by developing clear objectives that are known to all and are reflected in directives that provide strategic direction. We must also fully implement critical new policies on command and control and CASEVAC and further improve medical and welfare support for all United Nations personnel.

Seventh, we need to deepen our efforts to achieve a more robust and agile posture, including by drawing upon new technologies and effective strategic communications. This means not only generating the right capabilities from TCCs and PCCs, but also shifting our traditional approaches to, for example, outreach, countering misinformation and disinformation, camp management, engineering and logistics.

Finally, we must apply a gender perspective across all our areas of work. Gender is not only about numbers, it is about the meaningful consideration of the gender-differentiated impacts of our work and what we hope to achieve.

The areas will draw upon and contribute to progress in the eight A4P themes, from mission-wide performance, safety and security, to sustaining peace, and women and peace and security. Looking forward, we want United Nations peacekeeping to continue to be an indispensable multilateral tool in the peace and security toolbox for years to come. We will need to continue to respond to the immediate challenges,

including fragmented armed groups, weak commitment to peace by conflict actors and the regionalization of conflict. Over the next 5 to 10 years, these challenges will be compounded by other ones. We are likely to see a world transformed by potentially lethal and disruptive technologies, climate-related disruptions and a more urbanized population. To have missions fit for purpose for the coming decades, we are examining responses to systemic issues, and have begun an internal reflection on the types of adaptations that will be required for United Nations peace operations to continue to make a difference in future.

As we continue our work to enhance United Nations peace operations, I want to pay tribute to the women and men in peacekeeping who are working every day in the field and at Headquarters to deliver on the mandates that the Security Council has entrusted to us, and to continuously improve our operations. We count on Council member support, as well as the support of other peacekeeping partners, to strengthen our operations through Action for Peacekeeping and beyond. Our shared commitments to peacekeeping, as embodied in the Declaration, remain the cornerstone of ensuring that peacekeeping is fit for purpose and able to tackle the challenges it faces. Our continued engagement for the implementation of these commitments remains indispensable.

The upcoming 2021 United Nations Peacekeeping Ministerial Conference in Seoul will be another opportunity to make tangible contributions. As we mark the seventy-fifth anniversary of the creation of the United Nations, the need, in the words of the Preamble of the United Nations Charter, to “save succeeding generations from the scourge of war” remains as imperative as ever. It is only through strengthened joint and collective international action and solidarity that we can ensure that progress continues to be made in the right direction.

Annex II**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Belgium,
Philippe Kridelka**

[Original: English and French]

I thank Under-Secretary-General Jean-Pierre Lacroix for his briefing. I would like to begin by paying tribute to the women and men who serve under the United Nations flag and, in particular, those who have paid with their lives for the commitment to peace. The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) has added to this terrible human toll. None of us forgets the sacrifices made by mission personnel.

Today, I will focus my remarks on three aspects: first, where we are in the reforms and what remains to be done; secondly, the protection role of the missions; and thirdly, the need for support for the rule of law in the missions.

With regard to reforms, Belgium is a strong supporter of the Action for Peacekeeping (A4P) initiative. We continue to work to fully meet our commitments. We welcome the work done on the theme of performance and, in particular the development of two central tools for a culture of effectiveness based on data, namely, the comprehensive planning and performance assessment system and the integrated Performance and Accountability Framework. Together, we can undoubtedly go further in the common use of the lessons learned from these tools. It would indeed be useful for the Security Council, when preparing mandate renewals, to have access to the detailed analyses and recommendations resulting from these tools, on the instructions to be given to missions.

It is important to remain committed to A4P with respect to all aspects of these mutual commitments. The recent resolution 2538 (2020), on women in peacekeeping operations, promotes the increased participation of women — both uniformed and civilian personnel — by advocating an approach that goes beyond stereotypes and proposes solutions to traditional obstacles to such participation. We must continue down this path. We also continue to promote the multilingualism of missions by translating staff training manuals into French.

Let me now turn to protection, another of the pillars of A4P and of the mandates of the Security Council. Peacekeeping has moved closer to local populations in recent years, and we welcome this development. That is reflected in the mandates, on the one hand, and on the ground in Bunia, Mopti and Malakal, on the other hand. This engagement also allows for effective identification of risks for the populations and the peacekeepers. Missions must be equipped with the tools of this engagement, and their personnel must have clear instructions, including for the protection of those with whom they come into contact. The recently distributed guidelines on information acquisition are one such tool. Finally, the protection of children in armed conflict must remain at the heart of the mandates for peace operations, and Belgium advocates the strengthening of the mission teams in charge of this protection.

The COVID-19 crisis has had a negative impact on the possibilities of engagement. The social-distancing imperative makes these contacts more complex, but not impossible. As we reinvent new ways of operating at the margins of this pandemic, missions must also reinvent themselves and find the tools to continue this engagement, with full respect for the health of mission staff and local populations.

That brings me to my third point, namely, the importance of rule-of-law support functions in the mandates and functioning of operations designed to support national authorities. Post-conflict reconstruction must be based in particular on a democratic police force that respects human rights, a reliable justice system and

humane penitentiary institutions. The solidity of these institutions lays the necessary foundations for lasting peace.

In this framework, the Security Council has mandated that some United Nations missions provide support for transitional justice measures. A calm and peaceful future must be based on justice, the recognition of victims and commemoration of past violations. We acknowledge the work carried out by the missions for almost 30 years in this regard and the support provided by the missions to national justice systems. We also acknowledge the variety of models for both transitional justice and mission support. With our partner, South Africa, we continue to work towards the adoption of a draft resolution on this important subject and thank the members of the Security Council for their support.

Annex III**Statement by the Deputy Permanent Representative of China to the United Nations, Geng Shuang**

[Original: Chinese]

I wish to thank Under-Secretary-General Lacroix for his briefing. I wish to take this opportunity to pay tribute to the more than 80,000 United Nations peacekeepers deployed in 13 mission areas, and commend them for their courage, sacrifice and contribution.

United Nations peacekeeping operations are an important creation for the maintenance of international peace and security. It has been two years since Secretary-General Guterres first proposed the Action for Peacekeeping (A4P) initiative, and it is now at a critical stage of full implementation. The sudden outbreak of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19), however, has brought huge uncertainty to conflict-affected countries and had a serious impact on United Nations peacekeeping operations.

At this very moment, United Nations peacekeepers are working alongside the people in their mission areas to fight the pandemic. Many peacekeepers have extended their mission periods and suspended their rotations. In mission areas such as Mali and South Sudan, some peacekeeping soldiers have been infected with COVID-19 and some have even lost their lives. We extend our deepest condolences to their families.

This is a very difficult time for every peacekeeper. United Nations Member States stand in solidarity and support with the Secretariat in its efforts to organize a proper response to the negative impact of COVID-19 on peacekeeping operations so that the implementation of the A4P initiative will continue.

The briefing by Under-Secretary-General Lacroix is extremely important. In this connection, I wish to make four observations on how to maintain the positive momentum for peacekeeping operation reforms and facilitate further implementation of the A4P initiative.

First, we must prioritize the mandate of peacekeeping operations. It is important to adhere to political means for peaceful resolution of disputes as one of the most essential principles of the United Nations Charter. Peacekeeping operations must always be carried out bearing in mind the fundamental goal of political settlement and the scope of mandate and key tasks of peacekeeping operations must be adjusted based on the developments on the ground. The mandate, whether it is comprehensive, limited or targeted, should take into consideration the need to advance the peace process and the expectations of the Governments and the people of the countries concerned, rather than the will of external forces.

Legal reform, the protection of civilians and the promotion of human rights are all tools that serve the political process. They should not replace the political process itself. Peacekeeping operations should strive to lay a foundation for the long-lasting peace and stability of the countries involved so that they can achieve self-reliance and continued development as soon as possible. A clear and feasible exit strategy is also an integral part of the entire plan of peacekeeping. The Security Council has already laid out exit arrangements and timetables for the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur, according to which withdrawal should be undertaken in an orderly manner, as planned, in order to create conditions for the Sudan's peacekeeping and transition.

Secondly, we need to improve the performance of peacekeeping operations. It is our common goal and the joint responsibility of the Secretariat, the mission,

financial contributors, police-contributing countries (PCCs) and troop-contributing countries (TCCs). We believe that the performance evaluation system must be developed based on the specific situations on the ground, and evaluation of the performance of each mission, peacekeeping operation and peacekeeper must be done accordingly and appropriately. It is necessary to take into consideration situations in different mission areas and the actual circumstances of each TCC and PCC. It is also important to know that it is unrealistic to evaluate performance without considering the level of resources available to troops. It is also unfair to the peacekeepers who have made tremendous contributions. Providing sufficient resources for peacekeeping operations and ensuring their efficient use are critical to success in peacekeeping. Cutting resources for peacekeeping operations purely for financial reasons will hinder their performance, weaken their effectiveness and even pose new risks. That is why, at the recent Security Council meeting to extend the mandate of UNIFIL, China stressed that the resources should not be cut without careful considerations.

Thirdly, we have to ensure the safety of personnel in peacekeeping operations. Peacekeeping operations rely on people for their execution. The current operations are facing increasingly complex and dangerous environments, especially in regions such as Mali and Central Africa, where peacekeepers are confronted with acute security challenges. While peacekeeping operations are by no means zero-risk, we have a responsibility to minimize the safety risk and avoid any casualties and sacrifices that could have been prevented. To this end, Member States and the Secretariat should actively implement resolution 2518 (2020) to help missions strengthen their capabilities for early-warning and provide better equipment and medical conditions for peacekeepers by establishing an expressway for medical evacuations of peacekeepers. China suggests that the Secretariat appoint a full-time consultant to coordinate and implement safety issues for peacekeepers, which will help achieve tangible progress in a relatively short period of time. As one of the leading countries for the subject of personnel safety in the A4P initiative, China has helped other TCCs and PCCs with training and worked with other countries to explore feasible ways to improve the safety of peacekeepers.

Fourthly, it is imperative to strengthen partnership in peacekeeping operations. A strong partnership can effectively channel resources in different fields, strengthen cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations and expand the influence of peacekeeping operations. The Security Council, the Secretariat, financial contributors, TCCs and PCCs should strengthen their communication and carry out in-depth discussions through existing mechanisms, such as TCC and PCC meetings and Security Council peacekeeping working groups, in order to create synergy for peacekeeping reforms. The United Nations should work more with the African Union (AU), the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and other regional organizations. The United Nations can support these organizations, which in turn can do the same for the United Nations. Instead of seeking a dominant role in this process, each organization should use its strengths and work together to maximize the effectiveness of peacekeeping operations.

The AU's independent peace missions, as a good example of the African solution for African questions, provide important support to the United Nations peacekeeping operations. The United Nations should therefore provide them with sustained and predictable funding. In September 2016, the Secretary-General briefed the Security Council on recommendations to strengthen cooperation between the United Nations and African Union. This recommendation should be fully implemented. President Xi Jinping of China announced at the 2015 United Nations Peacekeeping Summit that China would continue to support Africa in its efforts to build an African standing army and rapid crisis response forces. All these commitments have been honoured.

China will, to the best of its abilities, continue to contribute to the peace and security in Africa.

The United Nations will celebrate its seventy-fifth anniversary in a week's time and the seventy-fifth general debate of the General Assembly will begin. The theme of this important event highlights our collective commitment to multilateralism. The United Nations peacekeeping operation is an important underpinning for upholding multilateralism and maintaining international peace and security. China will continue to work together with other peace-loving countries to improve peacekeeping operations, stand for multilateralism and safeguard the international system, with the United Nations at its core and international order based on international law.

Annex IV**Statement by the Permanent Mission of the Dominican Republic to the United Nations**

[Original: English and Spanish]

We thank Mr. Jean-Pierre Lacroix for his briefing today.

Peacekeeping operations are a vital and indispensable tool for the maintenance of international peace and security. We would like to express our support for, and commitment to, the Action for Peacekeeping (A4P) initiative and the Declaration of Shared Commitments on United Nations Peacekeeping Operations, and we encourage Members that have not yet endorsed them to do so.

Likewise, the Dominican Republic reaffirms its commitment to the implementation of resolution 2378 (2017). That is why we value the quarterly performance consultations held by the Department of Peace Operations, enabling us to make better-informed decisions that are even more relevant to the current context and address urgent needs.

We believe that the availability and timely deployment of properly trained and equipped personnel are among the elements that lead to better performance.

Collective action is vital to support missions, particularly as they face major challenges amid a pandemic in addition to the extremely demanding context in which they operate. Those challenges are exacerbated if the mandates are not matched with the proper funding for their implementation. As the Secretary-General said, we need a budget that accommodates the mandates, not mandates that accommodate the budget.

The importance of strengthening cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations to underpin the work of peacekeeping operations at the strategic and operational levels is evident, contributing to the efforts of Member States, both the host country and the troop-contributor countries. We therefore appreciate the number of tools and systems that have been introduced in peace missions for performance evaluation, while we believe that it is essential to share intelligence and to reduce the gaps in essential equipment, which will translate into greater security and staff performance.

There is an undeniable link among capacity-building, security and the protection of peacekeepers given that they are deployed in complex and challenging political and security environments, facing asymmetric threats. In addition, such personnel are consistently threatened by deliberate attacks against them. It is therefore imperative to ensure their safety and protection.

In that regard, we extend our condolences to the families of the peacekeepers who have lost their lives due to the coronavirus disease pandemic. That sad reality highlights the importance of closely monitoring and evaluating the impact of the pandemic on peacekeeping operations, particularly with regard to the protection of civilians, which, we believe, requires prioritizing, readjusting and the resources allocated to them probably increased.

The development, planning, implementation and review of peacekeeping operations must have a gender perspective. We trust that resolution 2538 (2020), an initiative of Indonesia, will reinforce that perspective and hence the full, equal and meaningful participation of women at all levels and positions in peacekeeping operations.

Likewise, it is necessary to strengthen the zero-tolerance policies for acts of sexual and gender-based violence committed by peacekeepers and ensure the deployment of gender and women's protection advisers, as well as child protection advisers, and that they are fully funded and have the appropriate level of seniority.

Last Wednesday, the Security Council held an Arria Formula meeting on the implementation of the resolutions on youth, peace and security by United Nations peace missions. Under-Secretary-General Lacroix, Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo and the other briefers were emphatic about the need to comply with such resolutions. We hope that the missions develop and implement youth, peace and security strategies tailored to each context and designate youth, peace and security focal points, in line with resolution 2535 (2020).

In conclusion, the Dominican Republic reiterates the fundamental role played by peacekeeping missions. Such missions are the best example of multilateralism and cooperation. Only through joint will and efforts will we one day successfully achieve lasting and sustainable peace.

Annex V**Statement by the Permanent Mission of Estonia to the United Nations**

I would like to thank Under-Secretary-General Lacroix for his very comprehensive briefing and for highlighting the current challenges facing United Nations peacekeeping. Today's meeting is a rare opportunity to reflect on peacekeeping as a whole. To narrow it down, I will be focusing on peacekeeping reform, performance and accountability, as well as the women and peace and security.

Estonia welcomes the Secretary-General's guidance in reforming the Organization. With regard to improving peacekeeping, his Action for Peacekeeping (A4P) initiative has proved to be an important framework for our collective efforts. It has successfully guided the adoption of several peacekeeping-related resolutions in the Security Council, such as resolution 2538 (2020), on the role of women in peacekeeping, and resolution 2518 (2020), on the safety of peacekeepers. It has led to the establishment of several key mechanisms by the Secretariat, such as the planning and performance assessment system. It was further operationalized by the successful adoption of this year's report of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations (A/74/19) in its new format. Estonia is proud to have been among the first to endorse the A4P Declaration of Shared Commitments on United Nations Peacekeeping Operations, and we will continue to encourage all parties to implement its commitments.

Turning to performance, one cannot overlook the impact of the coronavirus disease on peacekeeping. The responsibilities of United Nations peacekeeping missions have multiplied, as have the risks that they face. The ongoing pandemic is testing the performance of peacekeeping missions and their ability to deliver on their mandates, to promote conflict resolution and to protect civilian populations, in particular women and children. To that end, Estonia will continue to emphasize the crucial importance of implementing policies and mechanisms aimed at verifying and enhancing the performance of peace operations, with a particular focus on the protection of civilians and the promotion of human rights. We expect the strengthening of the comprehensive performance assessment system and predeployment visits to continue. The peacekeeping performance and accountability framework should be finalized very soon. In Mali, for example, we have stressed the need for increasingly mobile, flexible and robust troop postures and stronger early warning systems. These, however, rely on ensuring that the troops whom we deploy have adequate training and equipment, but also the capabilities necessary to fulfil their mandate. Strong mission performance is vital to the success of peacekeeping.

Speaking of improving performance, Estonia aims to achieve gender parity in our troop contributions by the end of this year. Evidence shows that a better gender balance leads to better peacekeeping and more effective engagement with local communities. In that regard, we will continue to underline the importance of implementing the women and peace and security agenda and its priorities, in particular promoting the full, equal and meaningful participation of women in peace processes. We will also continue to stress the importance of increasing the effectiveness of peacekeeping by better engagement with communities, in particular with the help of community liaison and human rights officers.

I would like to conclude by expressing gratitude and strong support to all United Nations peacekeepers — women and men — whose dedication and sacrifice bring hope to millions of people and help countries to navigate the difficult path from conflict to peace.

Annex VI**Statement by the Political Coordinator of France to the United Nations, Sheraz Gasri**

[Original: English and French]

I, too, would like to thank the Under-Secretary-General, Mr. Jean-Pierre Lacroix, for his insightful briefing.

On behalf of France, I would like to emphasize two points in particular.

First, we still have room for progress in strengthening the performance of peacekeeping operations. That presupposes sufficiently trained and equipped personnel, appropriate financing and evaluation tools. There has been progress on predeployment visits, which ensure the operational level of troops, but also with regard to trainers who can be sent to the field if necessary. Finalizing the integrated performance policy framework should consolidate such progress. France will remain particularly mobilized in supporting the training of troop-contributing countries from French-speaking countries, with a special focus on training in the area of international humanitarian law.

In order to perform well, peacekeeping operations must also be capable of adapting to changes on the ground. That requires the development of rapid deployment battalions, as was done in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in order to react as quickly as possible to increased tensions. It also involves improving equipment, filling capacity gaps, improving casualty evacuation procedures and adapting deployments on the ground, as was done in the Central African Republic and Mali in the context of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) adaptation plan. Intelligence-gathering and innovative technologies also need to be developed. Finally, performance is also based on the posture and the mindset of the troops, as well as their leadership.

The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has shown that peacekeeping operations can be sufficiently flexible to adapt to changing circumstances and undertake new actions, be it support for host States, awareness-raising or the sharing of expertise. Such efforts should be credited to peacekeeping operations and should be continued.

However, performance is only one aspect of the peacekeeping initiative, which France supports. That initiative should be implemented in all its components. That is my second point.

The effects of the initiative are real. Operations further integrate the priority given to political solutions, mandates are clearer and given clearer priorities, and the training and equipment needs of the Blue Helmets are better defined. But we need to go even further.

Like others before me have said, as we celebrate the twentieth anniversary of the women and peace and security agenda this year, it is necessary to strengthen women's participation in order to have a greater impact on the ground. In that regard, we commend the adoption of resolution 2538 (2020), on women and peacekeeping operations, which should help us to make some concrete progress in that area.

The Security Council must also be able to plan for an effective transition between peacekeeping operations and the structures that will replace them, such as peacebuilding. The mandate on human rights that we entrust to peacekeeping operations should be an integral part of that strategy. The concept of partnerships

with regional organizations, especially the African Union, should also be at the heart of our considerations.

The security of peacekeepers operating in increasingly volatile environments should be further improved. As others before us have done, we pay tribute to those who have fallen in the cause of peace, more recently within MINUSMA, the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic and the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. As was underscored by the representative of Indonesia in particular, crimes committed against peacekeepers should not go unpunished.

To conclude, today more than 150 States have signed the Declaration of Shared Commitments on United Nations Peacekeeping Operations. Among them, France is, and will remain, resolutely and consistently committed to supporting such operations, which are an integral part of the DNA of the United Nations.

Annex VII**Statement by the Deputy Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations, Anna Evstigneeva**

[Original: Russian]

We would like to express our gratitude to Under-Secretary-General Jean-Pierre Lacroix for his briefing on the progress achieved in the reform of United Nations peacekeeping operations and the problems they have encountered in connection with the coronavirus epidemic.

We regard peacekeeping operations as a key instrument of the United Nations for maintaining international peace and security. United Nations missions are deployed in dangerous environments, complicated by dire humanitarian and socioeconomic situations. They are often accompanied by asymmetric threats. Such realities, combined with the changing nature and dynamics of conflicts, require the appropriate adjustment of peacekeeping mechanisms. Obviously, the outbreak of the coronavirus disease has also impacted the Blue Helmets' ability to fully fulfil their mandates.

We appreciate the efforts of the Secretariat to ensure the safety of peacekeepers and to mitigate the effects of the pandemic on missions, including by strengthening their response capacity, improving the medical service system and taking measures to reduce the risk of the spread of the virus among personnel and through interaction with the civilian population.

Assistance in countering the coronavirus can be provided to host States upon the request of national authorities within the framework of the respective mission mandates. We believe that positive examples in this regard have been set by the United Nations operations in the Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which have assisted host countries in developing pandemic response plans.

Any changes related to troop rotations should be implemented in close cooperation with troop-contributing countries.

Despite the current unprecedented circumstances, it is important that United Nations peacekeeping operations evolve in the right direction going forward. At the same time, it is absolutely imperative to respect the sovereignty of host States, uphold the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and observe the basic principles of peacekeeping.

We are convinced that the Blue Helmets must maintain their neutral status in all circumstances. The Security Council can provide robust or proactive mandates on a case by case basis, depending on the situation on the ground.

The goal of peacekeeping is the peaceful settlement of conflicts by political means. We therefore supported the call of the Secretary-General for a global ceasefire, which provided a favourable background for continuing mediation efforts to encourage parties to conflict to advance national reconciliation processes. Despite the temporary difficulties caused by the pandemic, the gains already achieved in implementing peace agreements must be maintained.

The most important prerequisite for the effectiveness of any peacekeeping operation is constructive cooperation with the host country. Amid the pandemic it has become even more important to build confidence and promote information exchange. Dialogue is especially necessary to ensure timely access to essential goods, medical equipment and medicines for United Nations mission personnel,

as well as to resolve other pressing issues, including those related to the possible introduction of restrictions necessary to combat the spread of the coronavirus.

Furthermore, we consider it extremely important to take into account the views of the host States and troop-contributing countries when considering issues concerning the extension of mandates and to consult with them when preparing recommendations for assessment reports on the effectiveness of the work of peacekeeping missions. In particular, significant provisions related to the highly sensitive issues of the use of modern technologies — unmanned aerial vehicles and surveillance equipment — that may affect the sovereignty of the host State have recently been made to the mandate of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon.

Such uncoordinated actions with the host State also impose an additional burden on the United Nations budget. In this regard, we see a contradiction in the positions of some States, which simultaneously inflate mandates and call for a reduction in the funding of missions and the number of peacekeepers. The slogan “do more with less” can be applied in economic theory, but is unlikely to be useful for ensuring the effectiveness of peacekeeping operations.

The optimization of the mandates of peacekeeping missions for the sake of efficiency must be accompanied by a reduction in secondary and non-core tasks for peacekeepers, in particular those related to human rights, social and gender issues. Mandates should not be populist, but clear and realistic.

We find it necessary to further improve the trilateral cooperation among the Security Council, troop- and police-contributing countries and the Secretariat in order to strengthen the spirit of partnership, cooperation and mutual trust. This approach is at the heart of the Secretary-General’s Action for Peacekeeping (A4P) initiative, which calls for close cooperation among all peacekeeping actors to ensure the effectiveness of peacekeeping operations.

During the most recent substantive session of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations of the General Assembly (C-34) this year, it was agreed that A4P could be further carried out in line with the views and recommendations of Member States, including those presented at the high-level event in September 2018. To this end, the structure of the C-34 report was aligned with the main thematic elements of A4R. We expect that the recommendations and decisions contained in the report of the Special Committee will serve as the basis for further activity of the Secretariat on the peacekeeping track.

In conclusion, we would like to take this opportunity to express our gratitude to the Under-Secretary-General, as well as the military and civilian personnel of the United Nations peacekeeping operations, for their unwavering commitment to fulfilling their duties in the current difficult conditions.

Annex VIII

Statement by the Acting Deputy Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations, James Paul Roscoe

I thank Under-Secretary-General Lacroix for his briefing today.

Today we take stock of a year in peacekeeping unlike any other. I want to salute the dedication and courage of our peacekeepers, as others have, who have persisted with mandate delivery in the face of the challenges of coronavirus disease (COVID-19). I also pay tribute to the peacekeepers who sadly have lost their lives this year.

The challenges of recent months underline why we must continue to pursue the Secretary-General's Action for Peacekeeping agenda. Reforms to improve planning and decision-making have helped missions respond with resilience to the challenges of COVID-19, including by using the Comprehensive Performance Assessment System (CPAS). The CPAS is just one vital component of the integrated performance policy framework mandated by resolution 2436 (2018).

Improving peacekeeping performance must remain a priority. When missions and personnel perform to the high standards we all expect, they are better able to deliver their mandates and ensure their own safety and security. We are encouraged by the progress made in developing a rigorous performance and accountability framework. I look forward to seeing this implemented.

In addition to action at the mission level, it is important that all of us as Member States live up to our respective peacekeeping reform commitments. The United Kingdom has continued efforts to streamline mandates on which it holds the pen, aiming to ensure that they are clear, focused, realistic and achievable.

This year, we worked with our German co-penholders to secure Council agreement to respond to the Government of the Sudan's request for help with their political transition while ensuring continued United Nations support for stability and security, particularly in Darfur.

As one of the largest and most consistent extrabudgetary contributors to the Department of Peace Operations, we continue to support projects that are helping to drive key reforms, totalling almost \$4 million this year alone. And as a troop-contributing country, we are responding to the capability needs identified by the United Nations, including through our upcoming deployment of a 250-strong long-range reconnaissance task force to the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali.

And finally, in this twentieth anniversary year of resolution 1325 (2000), we remain especially committed to advancing the participation of women in United Nations peacekeeping. To this end, we are continuing to support the Senior Women Talent Pipeline, as well as the Elsie Initiative Fund.

As we prepare to mark the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations, it is fitting that we reflect on how the collective enterprise of United Nations peacekeeping has evolved. It is imperative that we keep our reform momentum in order to give our peacekeepers every chance of success.

Annex IX**Statement by the Deputy Permanent Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations, Cherith Norman-Chalet**

I thank Under-Secretary-General Lacroix for his important briefing today and for the various updates on so many initiatives that he is undertaking, along with the Secretary-General.

The United States is deeply committed to United Nations peacekeeping as a critical tool for promoting international peace and stability. To ensure this tool effectively serves its purpose, we seek strong leadership, performance and accountability across missions.

Improving peacekeeping performance is an integral part of the Secretary-General's Action for Peacekeeping agenda, a priority for the Security Council, as outlined in resolution 2436 (2018), and a focus area of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations of the General Assembly, known as the C-34.

The United States was pleased to host a high-level event on performance in December 2019 during its Council presidency, where the Secretary-General reaffirmed his commitment to peacekeeping performance and to building "a framework, in cooperation with troop and police-contributing countries, to better systematize performance evaluation and accountability."

The Trump Administration is committed to elevating and maintaining momentum on peacekeeping performance and accountability, which it will emphasize in its preparatory event for the United Nations peacekeeping ministerial conference and which will certainly feature prominently in the ministerial agenda.

The United States remains the largest financial contributor to United Nations peacekeeping, as well as the largest capacity-building contributor. Since 2005, the United States has invested nearly \$1.5 billion through its military and police peacekeeping capacity-building initiatives alone. In addition, the annual budget for our United States Global Peace Operations Initiative increased over the past three years to over \$70 million. These investments have yielded positive outcomes for peacekeeping performance and for the populations whom the blue helmets protect and work alongside.

We deliver this support through partnerships with politically willing, operationally capable troop and police contributors that want to improve their national peacekeeping training and capacity. We also directly invest in the Secretariat's capacity to develop and implement performance evaluation frameworks and standards for uniformed forces.

We also recognize that missions must have the necessary resources and capabilities to fully carry out their mandated tasks in complex, fragile environments. Robust training and equipment are necessary, but not sufficient alone, to improve performance. They must be backed by a commitment to the mission and sustained by a culture of performance and accountability. Consistent with resolution 2436 (2018), troop- and police-contributing countries (TCCs and PCCs) should meet United Nations performance standards for personnel, while maintaining the highest standards of conduct.

Peacekeepers must adhere to the Secretary-General's zero-tolerance policy on sexual exploitation and abuse, and those who do not meet such standards should be held accountable, including by the relevant troop and police-contributing countries. Improved performance across the board provides safety and security to peacekeepers everywhere, and is in everyone's interest.

I want to also highlight the role of women in peacekeeping and its particular importance. Women improve peacekeeping performance and effectiveness, and we have long supported increasing the number and meaningful participation of women in United Nations peacekeeping. We were pleased to co-sponsor resolution 2538 (2020), the first stand-alone resolution on women in peacekeeping. We continue to encourage Governments to adopt and promote policies to address the persistent barriers to women's participation in peacekeeping and to increase women's participation both in United Nations peacekeeping, as well as in their countries' own militaries and police.

Good performance starts early in the force generation process, from the moment of the pledge, through the training and predeployment verification process, to deployment and operational readiness, to in-mission assessments of ongoing performance. It is a full-time pursuit that requires leadership and dedication.

The United Nations Peacekeeping Capability Readiness System (PCRS) is helping to regularize, register and validate the readiness of peacekeeping units. More than 200 capabilities are now registered in the PCRS. We should consistently leverage the Peacekeeping Capability Readiness System so that the most qualified and capable units are deployed.

Additionally, the Comprehensive Performance Assessment System is helping the Secretariat gather, analyse and integrate data on mission performance to drive more efficient and effective planning and decision-making. We fully endorse these data-driven approaches to reforming peacekeeping and improving performance and accountability, and we expect to see them more widely and consistently used.

The recent launch of the integrated performance policy framework represents the fulfilment of several performance and accountability requests made to the Secretariat over the past few years, and we appreciate the many months of work and consultation that have gone into creating this process. We welcome the framework's emphasis on whole-of-mission performance, civilian and leadership accountability, the importance of capacity-building and strengthening remedial and accountability actions for formed units.

In conclusion, the Trump Administration remains committed to advancing peacekeeping reform, performance and accountability. We remain equally committed to helping the United Nations develop and promulgate sound policy, doctrine, training materials and performance and accountability standards to help TCCs and PCCs perform well. We support the continued development and refinement of the integrated performance policy framework, and we look forward to its full utilization across missions.

Blue Helmets represent the best of all of us. Working together, we can ensure that the trust, competence and professionalism we recognize in so many peacekeepers remain the expectation into the future.
