



Security Council

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Provisional

President: Mr. Esono Mbengono (Equatorial Guinea)

Members:

Belgium	Mrs. Van Vlierberge
China	Mr. Wu Haitao
Côte d'Ivoire	Mr. Ipo
Dominican Republic	Mr. Singer Weisinger
France	Mrs. Gueguen
Germany	Mr. Schulz
Indonesia	Mr. Djani
Kuwait	Mr. Alotaibi
Peru	Mr. Meza-Cuadra
Poland	Ms. Wronecka
Russian Federation	Mr. Polyanskiy
South Africa	Mr. Matjila
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Hickey
United States of America	Mr. Cohen

Agenda

Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and South Sudan

Report of the Secretary-General on the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (S/2019/44)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and South Sudan

Report of the Secretary-General on the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (S/2019/44)

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of the Sudan to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with article 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Ms. Bintou Keita, Assistant Secretary-General for Africa, Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and the Department of Peace Operations, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2019/44, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur.

I now give the floor to Ms. Keita.

Ms. Keita: I thank you, Mr. President, for this opportunity to brief the Security Council on the situation in Darfur and the operations of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID). I have just returned from a visit to the Sudan and Darfur with my colleagues Assistant Secretary-Generals Oscar Fernandez-Taranco and Mourad Wahba, of the Peacebuilding Support Office and the Regional Bureau for Arab States of the United Nations Development Programme, respectively. The objectives of our visit were, first, to inject momentum in the transition process; secondly, to convey joint messages on the withdrawal of UNAMID and the transition to the Government of the Sudan, United Nations interlocutors and key partners; and, thirdly, to explore challenges and modalities related to the transition and how those could be addressed early and effectively.

Before I share my observations and findings from the visit, I would like to touch upon several updates since the publication of the most recent report of the

Secretary-General, dated 14 January 2019 (S/2019/44). The most significant development was the declaration of a state of emergency by President Al-Bashir on 22 February, which applies to the whole country and is foreseen to be in place for one year. In that context, the federal and the state Governments were dissolved, while maintaining the national and state assemblies and the Ministers for Foreign Affairs, Justice and Defence. The Minister of Defence was appointed to also assume the functions of the First Vice-President. In addition, 18 new governors from the military and security apparatus were appointed to replace the dismissed governors, known as *walis*. The Sudanese Armed Forces have been given the task of delivering law and order, in addition to national defence.

Those developments came at a time when the Darfur peace process had come to a standstill once again, in the context of the ongoing demonstrations against the economic and political conditions in the Sudan. It should be noted, however, that all along sporadic protests in Darfur have taken place in Nyala, South Darfur, on 13 January, and in El Geneina, West Darfur, and Ed Daein, East Darfur, on 17 January. Yet, citing solidarity with the protest movements, the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM)/Gibril Ibrahim faction and the Sudan Liberation Army (SLA)/Minni Minnawi faction reversed their December 2018 agreement to resume talks with the Government of the Sudan in January 2019.

Meanwhile, President Al-Bashir declared an open-ended cessation of hostilities in Darfur and the two areas on 28 January. Subsequently, on 9 February, the SLA/Minni Minnawi, JEM/Gibril Ibrahim and two other groups — the Sudan Liberation Movement/Transitional Council and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North, led by Malik Agar — extended a unilateral cessation of hostilities in Darfur and Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile states for an additional three months. The impact of the recent developments in Khartoum on the dynamics related to the peace process in Darfur has yet to be assessed, but the replacement of all *walis* will have a bearing on the process, and some rebel groups have demonstrated a stiffening of their position.

In Jebel Marra, intermittent clashes between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Sudan Liberation Army/Abdul Wahid faction continue. On 17, 28, and 29 January, SLA/Abdul Wahid elements attacked Sudanese Armed Forces personnel in the Manabu farming area, 15 kilometres south-east of Golo, and

in total, three Sudanese Armed Forces personnel were killed. On 2 February, UNAMID heard sporadic gunfire in the area and sent out a patrol, but was prevented from proceeding further by the Sudanese Armed Forces, which cited the lack of security clearance. The Sudanese Armed Forces and the SLA/Abdul Wahid faction continued to exchange fire in Manabu on 9, 11, 17, and 19 February, resulting in the death of seven SLA/Abdul Wahid members and one Sudanese Armed Forces member in total.

In addition, infighting between two sub-factions of the SLA/Abdul Wahid was reported in Daya village, 12 kilometres north-east of Golo, on 17 January and 7 and 13 February, with four casualties. Reportedly, those factions disagree over their prospects as participants in the peace process, while some of their clashes also seem to indicate competition over scarce resources. Although those clashes have not resulted in new displacement, civilians in the area have been exposed to numerous incidents of robbery, abduction and violence, attributed to both personnel in military attire and SLA/Abdul Wahid elements. UNAMID also received reports of repeated sexual violence by the Rapid Support Forces in the Guldo area on 6 February.

As mentioned in the progress report before Council members, the intensification of the conflict in areas of Jebel Marra last year saw an increase in reported sexual violence incidents. Conflict-related sexual violence remains a threat to the population in Darfur, especially displaced women and girls, who face particular risk when they engage in livelihood activities outside internally displaced persons camps. And the fear of sexual violence also hampers the return of civilians to their places of origin.

I would like to emphasize in that regard that, during our visit to Darfur, and more specifically to the Sortony team site, we had an opportunity to have an exchange with internally displaced persons, all of whom expressed their deep concern over the departure of UNAMID in the absence of trusted and professional law enforcement agencies. I would like to call on the Government of the Sudan to continue its efforts aimed at creating conditions propitious for the return of internally displaced persons, and, among the confidence-building measures that could be envisaged, to pursue a constructive dialogue with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict and swiftly adopt a framework of cooperation as a basis for addressing

sexual violence, including justice and accountability, in line with resolution 2429 (2018) and consistent with the benchmarks presented in the report of the Secretary-General of 12 October 2018 (S/2018/912).

There were three incidents of movement restrictions around the Golo area by the Sudanese Armed Forces, who claimed a lack of knowledge regarding UNAMID's patrols. Another denial of access took place near Menawashei, South Darfur, by Sudanese military intelligence, which cited the lack of security clearance. As a result, the mission could not verify allegations made by the SLA/Abdul Wahid that Sudanese Armed Forces artillery fire had resulted in the burning of villages, thereby causing fatalities, on 24 January. The Sudanese Armed Forces denied UNAMID access south-east of Kutum, in North Darfur, claiming that the area close to the Libyan border was rife with rebels and that the safety of peacekeepers could not be guaranteed.

The frequency of inter-communal tensions and other security incidents remains relatively low, except for a few hotspots, in particular in the Jebel Marra area. A group of armed men in military attire fired indiscriminately on 13 January at a group of farmers in Ain Siro, in North Darfur 34 kilometres north-west of Kutum, killing one. The death of an Awlad Zaid man in West Darfur triggered clashes between Misseriya and Awlad Zaid in a village approximately 80 kilometers north-east of El Geneina on 16 and 21 January. Seven Misseriya and one Awlad Zaid were killed, and 560 houses were burnt in seven villages.

In line with resolution 2429 (2018), we completed the closure of 10 team sites by December 2018, which were handed over to the Government of the Sudan. The former sector headquarters in Nyala, Ed Daein and El Geneina are due to be closed by June, leaving the remaining 13 team sites in the greater Jebel Marra and the logistics hub in El Fasher. The new mission headquarters in Zalingei is now fully operational, while the office of the Joint Special Representative was relocated to Khartoum.

Meanwhile, UNAMID and the United Nations country team, with the support of their respective headquarters, continue to work together to ensure a smooth transition from peacekeeping in Darfur and lay the ground for sustainable peacebuilding. The entire United Nations system is committed to ensuring that we operate as one, in close coordination with the Sudanese Government. In that regard, on 7 February,

the Secretary-General issued a planning directive on the transition and, as I mentioned, during our visit with Assistant Secretaries-General Taranco and Wahba we participated in a retreat organized jointly with Government representatives, UNAMID and the United Nations country team to further enhance coordination during the transition process.

Allow me to stress that, as noted during my visit, the United Nations system has made considerable political, humanitarian, and peacekeeping investments since the escalation of the conflict in Darfur 15 years ago. It is our collective responsibility to ensure that UNAMID's exit does not create a vacuum that leads to persistent local-level tensions or new risk factors. The engagement of the Government of the Sudan will be ever-more critical in that context. At the same time, our visit also served to bring to the fore the challenging factors that the Government, UNAMID and United Nations country team are facing to maintain the pace of the transition, including in terms of the availability of resources.

Indeed, despite all efforts by the Mission and the United Nations country team to conclude in less than two months the memorandums of understanding pertaining to the state liaison functions and the allocation of programmatic resources to the country team for the implementation of key mandated tasks in the areas of human rights, the rule of law and durable solutions for internally displaced persons, their effective implementation on the ground could end up being complicated by the shortages of liquidities. In addition, efforts should be made in earnest by the international community to mobilize the resources that are needed to support the UNAMID exit strategy and its immediate effect on the ability of the Government of the Sudan and the United Nations country team to address the challenges of the transition in Darfur, while focusing on a difficult economic and social and humanitarian context in the broader Sudan.

Moving forward, the recent developments and the ongoing evolution of the conflict dynamics mentioned earlier — namely, the lack of tangible progress in the peace process and the localized conflict in Jebel Marra — compels us to think through what can and should be done during the UNAMID drawdown and beyond. The way forward on the Darfur peace process needs to be discussed jointly between the United Nations and the African Union, including its objectives, expected outcomes and interlocutors and

their constituencies, particularly in the context of evolving national and regional dynamics. The Jebel Marra area is still a conflict zone, without a cessation of hostilities. Overall, there are still close to 2 million internally displaced persons in Darfur. Local rule-of-law capacity needs to be strengthened for the prevention and resolution of inter-communal tensions, particularly where clashes persist over access to land, migration routes and other sources of livelihood. Human rights issues, including as it pertains to the protection of women, children and vulnerable youth from violence, remain significant.

Between now and June, we will have an opportunity to assess and recalibrate what UNAMID has achieved and will leave behind. In that context, I would like to acknowledge Security Council presidential statement S/PRST/2018/19, of 11 December 2018, which clarified that some of the proposed benchmarks and indicators contained in the Secretary-General's report of 12 October 2018 are of more immediate priority and that some reflect longer-term peacebuilding objectives in Darfur. The strategic review, ahead of the presentation of the recommendations by the Secretary-General and the Chairperson of the African Union Commission for the UNAMID mandate renewal, will offer an opportunity to better unpack those indicators. In the meantime, I can assure the Security Council that UNAMID will spare no effort to give priority to progress against the benchmarks and indicators focused on the protection of civilians, particularly relating to internally displaced persons and returning refugees, human rights, the rule of law, the humanitarian situation and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, as requested by the Council. I look forward to discussing initial parameters of the review with members of the Council.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Ms. Keita for her briefing.

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements.

Mr. Hickey (United Kingdom): Let me begin by thanking Assistant Secretary-General Keita for her briefing on her visit and the latest developments on the ground. I will focus my remarks today on three issues: the situation in Darfur, the transition and the broader situation in the Sudan.

First, on the situation in Darfur, the United Kingdom welcomes the extension, until 8 May, of the unilateral cessation of hostilities by the Sudan

Liberation Army/Minni Minawi faction, the Sudan Liberation Movement/Transitional Council and the Justice and Equality Movement. We also welcome the open-ended cessation of hostilities announced by the Government of the Sudan. Despite that, however, we are concerned about ongoing violence in the Jebel Marra region between the Government of the Sudan and the Sudan Liberation Army/Abdul Wahid faction, including reports of retaliatory attacks on civilians, the destruction of property and the displacement of significant numbers of civilians. As we have stated many times before in the Chamber, we also continue to be deeply concerned by ongoing intercommunal conflict and widespread human rights abuses and violations, in particular the prevalence of conflict-related sexual violence. In that regard, we urge the Government of the Sudan to ensure justice and accountability for survivors and to engage constructively with the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict.

Secondly, turning to the transition from peacekeeping to peacebuilding and development, we welcome the progress made to date with the drawdown of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID). If Darfur is to transition successfully and sustainably away from peacekeeping, not only does armed conflict need to cease, but the root causes of the conflict must also be addressed. As Assistant Secretary-General Keita has just mentioned, the benchmarks, as set out in presidential statement S/PRST/2018/19, issued in December 2018, are crucial in that regard. The United Kingdom calls upon the Government of the Sudan to commit itself fully to making progress towards the achievement of those benchmarks so as to demonstrate its commitment to addressing root causes in Darfur and to laying a foundation for sustainable peacebuilding and development.

Given the substantial peacebuilding and development needs, as well as the ongoing humanitarian need in Darfur, it is also extremely important that the Council have a clear and accurate account of the situation on the ground. We therefore encourage the Government of the Sudan to cooperate with the relevant United Nations entities on the ground to ensure an accurate depiction of the situation in Darfur in order to ensure that peacebuilding, development and humanitarian efforts are adequately resourced.

Third and finally, given recent developments, I would like to touch on the broader current situation in

the Sudan. The United Kingdom is deeply concerned about President Al-Bashir's announcement of a state of emergency on Friday, which gives sweeping new powers to the security services and goes against the recommendations of the previous national dialogue. The protests that have been taking place across the Sudan are peaceful and demonstrate the expression of legitimate grievances. Individuals have a right to set out their views. Additionally, several opposition political leaders, activists and journalists remain in prison — some for over two months now. They should be released immediately.

The proposals made by President Al-Bashir in his speech on Friday will not help bring about the political consensus needed to stabilize the country. In the current environment, it is difficult to see how the proposed national dialogue can therefore be a success.

The political instability in the Sudan and the declaration of a state of emergency naturally affect the situation in Darfur. The United Kingdom has been deeply concerned by the violations committed by Government security services during the recent protests. Those are the very services that UNAMID is supposed to be handing over security and protection responsibilities to in Darfur. Not only will President Al-Bashir's announcements and the conduct of the security services further delay the agreement of a sustainable peace deal, but they also call into question the Government's commitment to delivering progress on human rights, the rule of law and security sector reform, which are so desperately needed in Darfur.

In conclusion, the United Kingdom will continue to closely monitor the situation in Darfur and the wider Sudan. We continue to urge the Government of the Sudan to embark upon the political and economic reforms necessary to deliver true stability, and we will continue to work with the members of the Council to ensure the necessary support to the people of the Sudan.

Mr. Schulz (Germany): I thank Assistant Secretary-General Keita for her briefing and her visit.

Since this is the first time that we have taken the floor on this agenda item, let me briefly outline Germany's approach to the situation in Darfur and the Sudan more broadly.

To start with, we could not agree more with the statement made by Assistant Secretary-General Keita that a political solution to the conflict in Darfur is key

to sustainable peace in Darfur. Germany supported this approach in 2011 and 2012, during our last term on the Council, and our actions today are guided by the same vision. That is why we support the mediation process between the Government and the armed groups. Today, we encourage all parties — the Government of the Sudan and the Darfuri armed groups — to build on the positive dynamics of the pre-negotiation agreement signed in Berlin in December 2018. Progress needs to be made urgently.

At the same time, we have to recognize that the peace process in Darfur cannot be separated from the overall political dynamic in the Sudan. Since mid-December 2018, a substantial number of Sudanese have demonstrated peacefully for respect for human rights, the rule of law and a political transition. By announcing a state of emergency on 22 February, President Al-Bashir has limited the scope for the rule of law and human rights in the Sudan. In this situation, it is necessary to look even more closely at the benchmarks for a withdrawal of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID), in particular the promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms. We call upon the Government of the Sudan to respond to the legitimate grievances of the Sudanese population politically and without force.

Building sustainable peace requires a long-term strategy. To avoid relapse into conflict in Darfur, the current transition processes, from peacekeeping to peacebuilding, need the full support and attention of the Council, the international community, the United Nations system and the host Government. The visit by Assistant Secretaries-General Keita, Fernández-Taranco and Wahba reflects the priorities for United Nations engagement: peacekeeping, peacebuilding and long-term development. Germany supports those priorities and we consider it to be our joint responsibility to ensure that the decade-long international engagement in Darfur delivers concrete and lasting results for the people of that territory. In this context, I would like to make three concluding points.

First, we have to do everything we can to ensure that UNAMID, as long as it is deployed in Darfur, delivers against the mandated tasks. That means all mandated tasks. It means not only peacekeeping to start with, of course, and as a priority, but also mediation, including intercommunal mediation, peacebuilding and support for internally displaced persons. Presidential statement S/PRST/2018/19, of December 2018, clearly outlines

the benchmarks that need to be achieved. An integrated transition strategy and cooperation among all relevant United Nations entities is therefore of utmost importance. The upcoming strategic review should therefore be used to assess the United Nations engagement comprehensively and make recommendations on the United Nations reconfiguration.

Secondly, we see it as the responsibility of the international community, and in particular the Security Council, to ensure that a relapse into conflict is prevented. Any transition is challenging and any transition demands responsibility and adequate attention. In that context, we need to make sure that UNAMID continues to receive sufficient political support and sufficient financial means, including programmatic funding, to implement its mandate. That includes operational peacebuilding and stabilization measures. We also need to make sure that a sufficiently strong United Nations presence on the ground is built up, in parallel with the UNAMID drawdown, and that it will be in a position to support the consolidation of the peacekeeping gains already achieved and continue to advance mediation, peacebuilding — in particular in the security sector — and development tasks. Germany is committed to taking on responsibilities in this regard as co-penholder, with the United Kingdom, on the UNAMID file.

Thirdly and lastly, Germany is convinced that we can succeed only in close collaboration with the Government of the Sudan, but this must be a partnership built on mutual trust; resolving the pending issues around UNAMID's access to parts of Darfur; demonstrating tangible progress in establishing a presence of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in the Sudan, with access to Darfur and human rights monitoring capacities; and engaging with the Peacebuilding Commission. Those are steps that would increase trust at the international level and work towards progress in the mediation process, as well as on intercommunal matters such as land and water.

Mrs. Gueguen (France) (*spoke in French*): I should like to warmly thank Ms. Bintou Keita for her important and enlightening briefing. Her joint mission to Darfur with Assistant Secretaries-General Fernández-Taranco and Wahba is an initiative that I commend. It is a good practice, in conjunction with efforts to ensure genuinely integrated United Nations action, which is particularly essential in the post-conflict transitional phase and in line with the reform of the United Nations

system sought by the Secretary-General and supported by Member States in promoting synergies among the various pillars. This good practice could be usefully replicated elsewhere. I would like to focus today on three points.

The first is that the improvement of the situation in Darfur must not eclipse the importance of the remaining challenges. The Secretary-General's latest report (S/2019/44) shows that the security situation in Darfur is relatively stable. However, we deplore the recent clashes in Jebel Marra starting last year, which have led to the displacement of thousands. France is also alarmed by the high level and seriousness of human rights violations, and in particular the ongoing sexual violence we have witnessed. We call for the perpetrators of that violence to be brought to justice and punished.

The Sudanese authorities and armed groups must necessarily make progress in the peace process. They must put an end to hostilities, but also must address the root causes of the conflict. France welcomed the signing, on 6 December in Berlin, of a pre-negotiation agreement between the Government and certain armed groups to resume the peace process. Unfortunately, negotiations have since been postponed.

That postponement is taking place in the context of social strife, which the Sudan has been experiencing since 19 December, and which France is following very closely. We have taken note of the declaration of a state of emergency and call on the Sudanese authorities to guarantee the right to the freedom of assembly, association and expression, in accordance with their international commitments. All parties should exercise restraint and refrain from any further use of violence, so as to calm the situation.

My second point is that, due to this precarious situation, the withdrawal of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) must be undertaken in a prudent manner and adapted to the situation on the ground. In that context, we must ensure that it is gradual and cautious, as the situation on the ground permits. In its presidential statement S/PRST/2018/19, adopted in December, the Security Council recalled that particular consideration should be given to certain elements, including the situation of internally displaced persons and refugees, respect for human rights and respect for the rule of law. It is also important that UNAMID remain operational and actively participate in the stabilization of Darfur until

its closure. In that regard, I welcome the mediation efforts of UNAMID, which have been very useful in resolving and avoiding local conflicts.

Finally, we must now prepare for the post-UNAMID period in order to make a successful transition from peacekeeping to peacebuilding. The main challenge for all of us today is to ensure that the situation in Darfur remains stable after the mission's departure. We must now prepare for the post-UNAMID period. As indicated by the Secretary-General in his report, the issue of funding will be crucial, as the departure of the peacekeeping operation will mean the cessation of mandatory financial contributions and the transition to voluntary contributions for the country team's activities. We must tackle this issue head-on, in a responsible way. That is also in keeping with our commitments under the Action for Peacekeeping initiative. We have indeed pledged to support United Nations country teams in transition periods to enable them to continue to assist host countries in peacebuilding efforts. We also encourage UNAMID and the country team to work together as much as possible in order to best prepare for that transition.

It is also important that the international community be able to monitor developments in Darfur. The country office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights will play an essential role. The Peacebuilding Commission can also be a relevant forum for constructive dialogue with the Sudanese authorities on peacebuilding in Darfur. We must pursue those discussions with the Sudanese authorities, and in close consultation with the African Union, which is, and will continue to be, a key actor in peacebuilding efforts in Darfur.

Mr. Cohen (United States of America): I would like to thank Assistant Secretary-General Keita for her briefing on the latest developments on the ground in Darfur.

We continue to evaluate the impact President Omar Al-Bashir's announcement last Friday. We are deeply concerned about the declaration of a national state of emergency, and call on the Government of the Sudan to respect the rights of all individuals in the Sudan, bring an immediate end to the violent repression of peaceful protests and seek accountability for those responsible for violations and abuses. Rather than taking steps to expand the ability of the security services to target peaceful protesters and opposition, what is needed are

steps to create an environment for an inclusive political process that truly addresses citizens' legitimate grievances and that will lead to sustainable peace and democracy in the country.

Just over two months ago, the Security Council agreed on a presidential statement (S/PRST/2018/19) in which it noted some progress in the security situation in Darfur and expressed support for the eventual transition from peacekeeping to peacebuilding and development. That expression of support also included a call for clear and achievable benchmarks and indicators to assess progress on critical areas in advance of the eventual exit of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID). We believe the existing benchmarks must be refined to align with the mission's mandate and strategic priorities. Chief among them should be the cessation of hostilities, the protection of civilians and a mutually acceptable comprehensive political agreement. We await the Organization's strategic assessment and its recommendations on the pursuit of critical benchmarks and indicators ahead of that transition.

Again, we urge the Government of the Sudan to end the use of violent measures to address the protests, and to hold all responsible for human rights abuses and violations accountable. We call for an inclusive political process towards elections where all Sudanese citizens can exercise their rights to the freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly; the immediate release of all journalists, political opposition leaders, human rights activists and other protesters who have been arbitrarily detained; and for the Government of the Sudan to afford those facing charges full access to legal representation.

Mr. Matjila (South Africa): At the outset, let me thank you, Mr. President, for convening this meeting today. Allow me to also express our appreciation to Ms. Bintou Keita, Assistant Secretary-General for Africa, for her comprehensive briefing on her recent visit to the region and developments regarding the situation in the Sudan. We also commend the work being done by the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID). In addition, we welcome the statement to be delivered by the Permanent Representative of the Sudan to the United Nations.

Ms. Bintou's briefing highlights the intricacies and challenges of making peace. Accordingly, the peacemaking journey in Darfur has not been an easy

one, as we have all witnessed during the past 14 years. However, the tireless efforts of the international community and consistent support over the years have resulted in the considerable improvement of the security situation in Darfur. The improvement of the security situation has even propelled the drawdown of UNAMID. In that regard, South Africa welcomes the continued improvement of the security situation in Darfur during the reporting period, as well as the absence of intercommunal violence, as reported. We also note that the number of crime-related incidents and human rights violations declined during this period.

However, it is clear that we are not where we should be. Areas of concern remain, particularly in Jebel Marra. The continued clashes between armed groups and the Government of the Sudan serve to highlight that more efforts are required in that region. The ongoing insecurity obstructs the lives of many vulnerable civilians. In that regard, we call upon armed groups, particularly the Sudan Liberation Army/Abdul Wahid faction to resolve their disputes through the avenues for political dialogue that have already been established.

Furthermore, it is imperative that all parties continue to implement the outstanding provisions of the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur. It remains essential for all parties to continue their commitment to the negotiations process under the auspices of the African Union High-level Implementation Panel. In addition, as the international community, we should continue to support the process to ensure that we do not reverse the gains that we have achieved thus far.

South Africa remains concerned about the violations of human rights reported in the Secretary-General's report (S/2019/44). Women and children continue to be the most affected by sexual violence, which has increasingly become a weapon of war and conflict, and affects the long-term prospects for achieving peaceful and prosperous communities. We would like to urge the Government of the Sudan to combat sexual violence in conflict and bring the perpetrators to justice.

South Africa has noted the continued reduction of the military strength of UNAMID, as well as the handover to UNAMID's formed police units and the redeployment of the police units. It is important that UNAMID provide adequate rule-of-law and livelihood services in terms of its mandate to address the security concerns of the local communities and the 2 million internally displaced persons. We therefore wish to stress

the importance of humanitarian support and access to the affected areas in Darfur. It is crucial that there be an eventual transition from humanitarian support to reconstruction and development in the Darfur area, as UNAMID eventually exits the Sudan. It is imperative for UNAMID to continue to provide technical and logistical assistance to the Sudan disarmament, demobilization and reintegration commission to assist with the disarmament and demobilization of armed combatants.

In order to facilitate the implementation of the transition, including through the relocation of the Office of the Joint Special Representative to Khartoum, it is vital to involve the relevant local authorities and officials in the Sudan in that process, so as to ensure an open dialogue and transparent processes that will lead to the engagement of the Sudanese Government. As the UNAMID mission transitions out of Darfur, we strongly support the Secretary-General's observation recommending the close partnership and continued engagement of the Government of the Sudan, the African Union and the United Nations system. That partnership has been a key ingredient in the notable achievement in Darfur. That partnership will also be equally important in maintaining future progress and stability in the area. Similarly, for any peace to be sustained, we need to harness our efforts in addressing socioeconomic development in the Sudan. Economic development will alleviate potential conflict triggers in future.

We should also guard against spoilers utilizing the current socioeconomic challenges in the Sudan to further their own narrow interests. Our efforts in making peace in the Sudan have showed and continue to show signs of progress. We should remain steadfast and tireless in that trajectory. Making peace in Darfur will continue to positively affect the region as we all contribute to the African Union's aspirations of silencing the guns by 2020.

Lastly, we would like to express our appreciation to those working at the coalface in Darfur — Joint Special Representative for Darfur Jeremiah Mamabolo and his team — for their continued commitment to building peace in the region.

Mrs. Van Vlierberge (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, allow me to warmly thank Assistant Secretary-General Bintou Keita for her informative briefing. Belgium also welcomed the recent February

visit by Assistant Secretaries-General Keita, Fernandez-Taranco and Wahba. We believe that the visit served to underscore our obligation to identify and lay the groundwork for the United Nations role and presence on the ground following the withdrawal of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID).

The signs that progress has been made in Darfur are clear, and Belgium reaffirms its support for the transition from peacekeeping to peacebuilding and the development of Darfur. Complacency would, however, be an inappropriate response. A cautious approach to closely supporting the withdrawal is required. In general, the establishment of the rule of law and fundamental respect for human rights are key elements to ensuring Darfur's future. The protection of the civilian population and the improvement of the humanitarian situation, as well as disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and reform of the security sector, remain necessary for reaching a lasting solution to the crisis.

Although a general improvement in the security situation in Darfur is encouraging, Belgium remains especially concerned about the situation in the Jebel Marra area, given the armed incidents between the Sudanese Government and the Sudan Liberation Army/Abdul Wahid faction. In addition, human rights abuses continue, primarily affecting children and women, including sexual violence in an environment of impunity. Belgium welcomes the signing in Berlin in December 2018 of the pre-negotiation agreement between the Government of the Sudan and two Darfur-based groups. However, the delay in the launch of negotiations among the parties is regrettable. The non-inclusive nature of the national dialogue and the inoperability of the various entities responsible for implementing the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur are also worrisome.

The situation in Darfur must be considered in its specifically Sudanese context and cannot be separated from it. Belgium expresses its concern about the current situation in the Sudan, characterized by protests and the authorities' violent response. On 22 February, the President of the Sudan, Mr. Omar Al-Bashir, declared a one-year state of emergency throughout the country, as well as the dissolution of the Government at the federal and state levels. As the country undergoes a difficult situation, Belgium calls for restraint in the use of force by the security services and the immediate

release of demonstrators who were arbitrarily detained. The authorities must fully respect the right to demonstrate peacefully, protect civilians and guarantee strictly proportionate use of force. The current tense environment risks negatively affecting the engagement of the parties to the conflict in Darfur in the dialogue.

Mr. Djani (Indonesia): First of all, I would like to thank Assistant Secretary-General Bintou Keita for her important briefing on the recent developments on the ground. We noted that there are still clashes and the loss of life, and we regret that fact. My statement will focus on three key issues, namely, the security situation, persisting challenges and support for the transition in Darfur.

Concerning the first issue, Indonesia is pleased that the security situation across Darfur outside Jebel Marra is relatively stable. The continued improvement in the security situation has enabled the phased withdrawal of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) and the plan for its eventual exit in 2020, in line with resolution 2429 (2018). My delegation commends the critical work of UNAMID in Darfur. Indonesia takes pride in being a part of UNAMID, and is currently represented by 477 peacekeepers on the ground. We welcome the progress in reconfiguring UNAMID, including the inauguration of its new headquarter in Zalingei in January. UNAMID should continue to play a crucial role in protecting civilians and supporting capacity-building in the area of the rule of law. Indonesia also commends the Sudanese Government for its efforts to create security in Darfur, including through the weapons-collection campaign and promoting the peaceful resolution of intercommunal conflict. The Sudanese Government should eventually be able to bear the primary responsibility for security in Darfur as we proceed with the UNAMID reconfiguration. Indonesia sees the Security Council's intention to establish key benchmarks to review its measures on Darfur as a step in the right direction. I should like to underline that UNAMID's exit should not be allowed to create a vacuum that would lead to further tension and conflict. The needs of the civilian population should be prioritized.

Secondly, Indonesia remains cognizant of many persisting challenges. Further efforts are needed to address the root causes of the conflict, including land and intercommunal disputes. Intermittent clashes in Jebel Marra and destabilizing activities by the Sudan Liberation Army/Abdul Wahid faction continue to

result in civilian casualties and displacement. We ask all parties to exercise restraint. There can be no military solution to conflict in Darfur.

Indonesia joins others in urging all non-signatories of the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur, including Abdul Wahid Nour, to join the peace process. We hope to see a follow-up to the signing of a pre-negotiation framework between by the Sudan Liberation Army-Minni Minawi and the Justice and Equality Movement.

The needs of internally displaced persons (IDPs) must also be addressed. There must be unfettered access for the delivery of humanitarian assistance. We also call on all parties, including the Government of the Sudan, to create a conducive environment for the return of IDPs.

The difficult economic situation and the risks associated with it remain a cause for concern and underline a strong case for the provision of development assistance. In that regard, the international community should continue to assist the Sudan. Peace would be difficult to achieve without real and tangible economic development, including improvements in governance, infrastructure and institutions.

Thirdly, Indonesia sees the need for stronger support for peacebuilding and development in Darfur. The sustained engagement of the United Nations and the international community, based on mutual respect and national ownership, is key to preventing a relapse into conflict. Indonesia recognizes the importance of sustained and predictable financing for peacebuilding in Darfur, as well as the role of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture as a crucial enabler for transition. We welcome the proposal to hold a pledging conference for Darfur to ensure sufficient funds for the United Nations country team. There is merit in exploring the potential of South-South and triangular cooperation.

I should like to close by reiterating our long-standing support for our Sudanese brothers and sisters in their quest to achieve peace and stability. We have contributed concretely in that regard through our peacekeepers. Darfur has come a long way. The onus is on all of us — the Sudanese Government and the international community — to consolidate and not jeopardize what has been achieved thus far. In the end, the civilian population is the most important aspect.

Mr. Singer Weisinger (Dominican Republic) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, I would like to thank

Ms. Bintou Keita for her detailed briefing on her recent visit to Darfur. We welcome her commitment to the discussions on the eventual exit of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) from Darfur.

With regard to the situation at hand, we welcome the reports of relative calm and stability in Darfur, with the exception of hotbeds of tension in Jebel Marra, where the conflict between the Government and the rebel forces of the Sudan Liberation Army-Abdul Wahid persists. We are pleased by the recent reductions in incidents of intercommunal violence and conflicts generated by the destruction of crops. However, it is worrying that the root causes of intercommunal conflicts remain unresolved, and that conflicts generated by land disputes that affect internally displaced persons upon return to their places of origin remain ongoing.

Also of particular concern are the diminished but persistent attacks and threats against humanitarian personnel and the denial of access to some areas, specifically in Jebel Marra, to UNAMID personnel. We encourage the Government of the Sudan to continue to implement initiatives such as the disarmament of the civilian population, as established in the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur.

On the other hand, we are optimistic about the progress made in the peace process in Darfur, such as the signing of a pre-negotiation framework agreement between the Government, the Sudanese Liberation Army-Minni Minawi and the Justice and Equality Movement, the meeting for which was convened in Berlin on 6 December 2018.

With regard to the Doha Document, we underscore the urgent need to reinvigorate that implementation, especially with regard to the return of displaced persons and the reintegration of ex-combatants, as well as the need to fulfil the international community's promises of financial support, which is crucial for stability and sustainable peace in the country.

However, we are concerned that, recently and as a consequence of the eruption of protests on 19 December 2018, that process has been postponed. We are also concerned by the latest reports of the Government's actions, such as the announcement of a state of emergency throughout the country, the dissolution of the federal and state Governments and its implications for the UNAMID restructuring process. We call on all parties to commit to the peace process in order to

ensure a definitive ceasefire and full humanitarian access to the population affected by the conflict.

Another aspect of particular importance to us is violence against women and girls. Despite reported declines in such incidents, it is concerning that the protection of girls and women from sexual violence remains a challenge to the peace process in Darfur. The high levels of threat of sexual violence restrict the freedom of women and girls in the vicinity of refugee camps and areas of return for displaced persons, especially in the Jebel Marra area, in the context of clashes between Government forces and the Sudanese Liberation Army-Abdul Wahid. We encourage further discussions between the Government of the Sudan and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict on the establishment of a cooperation framework for prevention and response in those cases.

Moreover, Darfur has been described as the first climate-change conflict. That is of particular importance to my delegation, as it is one of the priorities of the Dominican Republic. Darfur is a diverse ecological zone that is affected by droughts and is a first-hand witness to the advance of the Sahara desert. That strengthening process of desertification and drought has slowly eroded the availability of natural resources that are essential for survival and peaceful coexistence.

Former Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said that the conflict in Darfur began as an ecological crisis caused, at least in part, by climate change. According to the United Nations Environment Programme, temperatures will continue to rise in the coming decades in the Sudan, which could lead to a 70 per cent decrease in the cultivation of grains such as sorghum. We are concerned about the implications that this drought-conflict cycle may have at the community level and the increase in communal conflicts over water scarcity. Therefore, in addition to the concern we have already expressed, we see that situation as an opportunity for the Council to address, in a unified manner and with a practical approach, the risks associated with those climate phenomena and their role as multipliers of fragility, vulnerability and generators of conflicts.

With regard to the current process of downsizing UNAMID and limiting operations to the Jebel Marra area, we understand that it should be operational and not a reduction in the responsibility for monitoring human rights and protecting civilians in Darfur. It is necessary

to ensure a smooth and seamless transition involving local authorities, autochthonous administrations, internally displaced persons, youth and women. Any reduction should reflect genuine improvements in the situation on the ground and assurances that the United Nations country team will have the necessary resources and support to fill the gaps that have arisen.

Furthermore, we should ensure that any handover, future transfers or closures of support offices or team sites are made in consultation with local authorities and for the benefit of communities, with attention to the human rights of individuals. In addition, the Sudanese Government must fulfil its role as the main party responsible for achieving peace, stability and development for the Sudanese people, with the cooperation of the United Nations and other entities.

The Government of the Sudan must take national ownership of that process and make a commitment to working constructively and effectively to fulfil the parameters established by the Secretary-General and ensure a successful transition. We call on it to consider allowing the mission to return to its former areas of operation should further conflicts erupt down the road. It is also essential to ensure a transparent justice process for the men, women and children who have been victims of human rights crimes and violations committed by both sides during the conflict. Their voices must be heard. All allegations must be properly investigated and those responsible brought to justice.

Mr. Polyanskiy (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We are grateful to Assistant Secretary-General Bintou Keita for her detailed briefing on the situation in Darfur and her own impressions of her recent trip to the Sudan.

We share our colleagues' assessments of the current state of affairs in Darfur and note the continuing generally stable situation in the region. We are pleased that there have been no major armed clashes there for a long time and that intercommunal conflicts are virtually non-existent. It is encouraging that on the whole the Government of the Sudan is successfully implementing its package of measures for collecting weapons from the population and is doing a great deal to normalize the situation in Darfur. We note Khartoum's constructive role in resolving regional issues, including its contribution to advancing the peace process in South Sudan, and we should also single out the efforts of the Sudan generally and President Omer

Al-Bashir personally regarding the African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic, which resulted in the signing of the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic.

I am sorry to be compelled to point out here that a number of our Western colleagues have once again used today's meeting on the situation in Darfur to criticize the Sudanese leadership regarding episodes that have nothing to do with that subject, which is a completely unacceptable tactic. It is crucial to evaluate the prospects of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) solely in the light of the situation in Darfur itself. We will not support attempts to drag any other issues related to the internal situation in the Sudan into this discussion. As regards Darfur directly, given the positive momentum in the region, we believe it is important to continue the process of drawing down UNAMID's military component in accordance with resolution 2429 (2018). We share the view that in order to avoid relapses into conflict it is important to prevent a power vacuum in the region and focus on building the capacity of State institutions in Darfur. That is a goal of the transition concept of the functioning of UNAMID approved in the resolution, designed to support the people of the Sudan in launching the peacebuilding phase of the settlement in Darfur.

We call on donors to fulfil their commitments made at the Cairo and Doha conferences in March 2010 and April 2013, which we believe, along with a relaxation of the unilateral sanctions on the Sudan, will undoubtedly help to normalize the socioeconomic situation in the Sudan as a whole as well as resolving issues related to the efforts for peacebuilding and consolidating security in Darfur. We are satisfied that almost all the provisions of the 2011 Doha Document for Peace in Darfur have been met.

We deplore the fact that although the unreconciled armed opposition has forfeited its presence on the ground, it has continued its attempts to undermine the situation and incite new outbreaks of violence in the region. We have long known that the Darfur peace process has been stalemated thanks to the unhelpful negotiating position of the Sudan Liberation Army-Abdul Wahid. It is unfortunate that the Secretariat has continued to resort to false equivalencies by essentially refusing to admit that. We believe that flirting with the unreconciled opposition only harms the peace process and that the Sudanese opposition's external sponsors

should not encourage the unreconciled opposition to hold meetings in their capitals and should work actively to convince their protégés to make more realistic demands.

We have noted the conclusion on 6 December, through the mediation of the African Union, of a pre-negotiation agreement with the non-signatories to the Doha Document. We are sorry it did not last long. We view it as another concession on the part of the Government to the radical opposition, and we hope to see it produce serious rapprochement efforts from the latter. If Abdul Wahid Nour does not meet the African Union's demand that he take part in the negotiating process unconditionally, we are willing to consider the possibility of sanctioning him through the Security Council.

We believe that establishing the necessary preconditions in Darfur will enable us to arrive at a full withdrawal for the mission in accordance with the time frame outlined for it in resolution 2429 (2018), which is the end of 2020.

Mr. Alotaibi (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would first like to thank Assistant Secretary-General Bintou Keita for her valuable briefing on the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) and her visit to the Sudan. I also thank Mr. Oscar Fernandez-Taranco and Mr. Mourad Wahba for their presence at this meeting. Today I will address four issues with regard to Darfur — the security situation, displaced persons, UNAMID's exit strategy and the transitional period and peacebuilding.

With regard to the security situation, today and for the past several years, well before Kuwait joined the Security Council, the security situation in Darfur has continued to improve steadily, with the exception of clashes initiated by a particular faction that has continually rejected the peace process from the very start. We therefore reaffirm the importance of supporting the efforts of the Sudan to extend its sovereignty throughout its territories, including by assuming its primary responsibility for protecting civilians in view of UNAMID's military drawdown, a process that confirms the continuing stable situation in Darfur and the diminishing need for a United Nations military presence there.

The displaced persons and civilians in Darfur in general remain a central priority for the Security Council, and their safe, dignified and voluntary return

must therefore remain our common goal. Their return is evidence of the efforts to successfully address the root causes of the conflict without creating new benchmarks or indicators. We welcome the ongoing cooperation between UNAMID and the Government of the Sudan, as well as with communities in Darfur, in meeting with the displaced, as we saw in Nyala this year, because communicating with them will move us closer to ensuring their desired return.

With regard to UNAMID's exit strategy, we welcome and affirm the importance of ensuring that the Sudan and its partners continue working on implementing the remaining provisions of the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur in order to pave the way for the mission's withdrawal next year. The Doha Document remains a cornerstone of the settlement in Darfur, and we urge the Security Council to give priority to political solutions that fulfil the mandates of peacekeeping operations. We commend the timely visit by the three Assistant Secretaries-General, which we were briefed about today, reflecting UNAMID's changing mandate with a view to ensuring a smooth exit. With regard to the transitional period and peacebuilding, supporting sustainable peace in Darfur requires that we closely monitor the needs of the Sudanese Government and UNAMID. The visit was therefore a welcome and much-needed development after our meeting last September on the margins of the high-level week of the General Assembly to discuss peacebuilding in Darfur. It is high time that we expedited our efforts to help the Sudan and its people in order to present it as an example of how to transition from peacekeeping to post-conflict peacebuilding.

In conclusion, we affirm our willingness to support the efforts of the Secretariat in assessing the needs of the next phase, and we renew our call for support to the Sudan in achieving stability and a comprehensive peace throughout its territories, as it is doing with neighbouring countries.

Mr. Wu Haitao (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China would like to thank Assistant Secretary-General Keita for her briefing. Together with Assistant Secretary-General Wahba, of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and Assistant Secretary-General Fernandez-Taranco, of the Peacebuilding Support Office, Ms. Keita recently made a joint and very timely visit to the Sudan that was conducive to regional peace and stability in Darfur and to advancing the smooth implementation of the transition plan for the African

Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID).

The security situation in Darfur has remained generally stable in the past few years. Since the latter half of last year, during which UNAMID was gradually transferring its responsibility for security to the Government of the Sudan, the situation has remained stable. China appreciates UNAMID's contribution to the maintenance of peace and stability in Darfur and welcomes the Sudanese Government's voluntary enhancement of governance and security capacity-building in Darfur, its continued weapons collection campaign and its efforts to reach out further to the non-signatories to the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur, and we trust that those measures will be conducive to Darfur's long-term stability. At the same time, however, Darfur is still dealing with problems of intercommunal tension, internally displaced persons (IDPs) and relatively limited socioeconomic development. I have three points to make in that regard.

First, it is important to continue to advance the political process for Darfur. The Government of the Sudan is committed to a political solution to the Darfur issue. There are some opposition and armed groups in Darfur that should lay down their weapons, participate actively in the peace process and work to resolve problems by political means such as dialogue and consultation. Countries with influence should work actively to exert pressure on them.

Secondly, priority should be given to assisting the Sudanese Government in strengthening its capacity-building. While the Government has the primary responsibility for the maintenance of regional security in Darfur, the international community should actively assist it in enhancing its capacity-building for the maintenance of law and order and security control in order to help its security forces take over full responsibility for security from UNAMID as soon as possible and ensure UNAMID's withdrawal from Darfur in 2020, in accordance with the road map. In the light of the latest developments, the Security Council should work quickly to conduct a review with a view to ultimately lifting the sanctions on the Sudan.

Thirdly, we should accelerate the reconstruction process in Darfur. In the light of the needs of the Sudan, the international community should continue to provide active humanitarian assistance and economic support. The immediate focus should be on assisting

the Government in addressing the return and settlement of IDPs, building and improving local infrastructure and enhancing agricultural production and food self-sufficiency. We welcome the necessary support of UNDP and the Peacebuilding Commission to the rebuilding and development of the Sudan.

China has consistently supported the Darfur peace process and is one of UNAMID's main troop-contributing countries. We have made positive contributions to the maintenance of peace and stability in Darfur over the years and would like to continue to make concerted efforts, in cooperation with the international community, to play a constructive role in realizing peace, stability and development in Darfur.

Ms. Wronecka (Poland): I would like to begin by thanking Assistant Secretary-General Keita for her comprehensive briefing, especially her comments on her visit to the Sudan. We also thank the Secretary-General for his most recent report (S/2019/44) on the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID).

Poland welcomes the improved security situation in Darfur. At the same time, we are aware that the progress that has been made is volatile and reversible, because the root causes of conflict have not yet been fully addressed. We remain concerned about the reports of continued clashes between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Sudan Liberation Army-Abdul Wahid in Jebel Marra and their consequences for the civilian population. We are also sorry to have to note that the human rights situation in Darfur remains problematic. We strongly condemn sexual and gender-based violence and the targeting of the civilian population, especially those most vulnerable — women, children, people with disabilities and internally displaced persons — including by Government security personnel. In our view, the Government of the Sudan should spare no effort to hold the perpetrators accountable and should do its utmost to fight impunity, provide security and ensure the rule of law in Darfur. In that context, we also see a need for enhancing the capacity of State institutions and law-enforcement agencies, and we urge the Government to continue cooperating with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict.

We reiterate our position that the only possible solution to the conflict in Darfur is a political one. In that context, we welcomed the signing in Berlin in December of a pre-negotiation agreement, although we

regret that the current internal situation in the Sudan has resulted in the loss of that recent momentum in the peace process.

With regard to the UNAMID drawdown, we welcome the fact that the Mission's reconfiguration is proceeding in accordance with the plan. We believe that the Council should closely monitor the impact on the ground of UNAMID's downsizing so as to ensure that the gains that have been achieved in Darfur will not be compromised. The Government of the Sudan should be held to account for ensuring progress towards the achievement of the exit benchmarks and indicators. The drawdown should be compensated for by an increased presence of the United Nations country team and, particularly important, by ensuring that the country team has sufficient and adequate resources to carry out its work in Darfur.

We believe firmly that during the transition from peacekeeping to peacebuilding there should be a particular emphasis on improving socioeconomic conditions in Darfur in the areas of the provision of health services and jobs, education, trade, basic economic infrastructure and agriculture, and on effectively establishing the rule of law throughout Darfur. Cooperation between the Government of the Sudan, the local authorities in Darfur, UNAMID and the United Nations country team is crucial in that regard. We believe that the international community should join those efforts and support the recovery and development of Darfur in order to avoid a relapse into conflict. In that context, we hope to see the new Darfur development strategy finalized as soon as possible, which could streamline international assistance.

In conclusion, I would like to express our gratitude to all UNAMID personnel and the United Nations country team for their continued dedication and contribution to promoting peace, security, stability and reconciliation in Darfur.

Mr. Meza-Cuadra (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): We would like to express our appreciation for the convening of this meeting and for Assistant Secretary-General Keita's important briefing.

The Secretary-General's 90-day report (S/2019/44) informs us that Darfur has never been more stable since the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) was first established. Intercommunal violence has diminished and the security situation has improved, despite the fact that

clashes have persisted between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Sudan Liberation Army-Abdul Wahid in the Jebel Marra area.

However, in this context of greater stability, we note with concern the recent measures issued by the Government that may jeopardize progress in Darfur. In particular, we refer to the state of emergency decreed throughout the country and the dissolution of the federal and provincial Governments. That is particularly sensitive when we recognize that only a political agreement will make it possible to achieve sustainable peace in Darfur.

The pre-negotiation agreement between the Government and some armed groups that are not signatories of the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur was an important step towards peace in Darfur, pending the start of negotiations among all parties to the conflict. It now remains to see the effect of the surprise measures on this process, which is entering a complex stage owing to the progressive withdrawal of the mission. In this context, we reiterate the call on all parties to cease hostilities in Darfur once and for all and to resolve outstanding substantive issues, such as the use of land and natural resources, through dialogue.

In the area of human rights, we deplore the continuing serious violations of fundamental rights, many of which have been attributed to the Sudanese Armed Forces, with women and children being particularly vulnerable. Conflict-related sexual violence continues to be considerable. In this context, the early implementation of the framework for cooperation between the Government of the Sudan and the United Nations in preventing and responding to sexual violence is of the utmost importance. We believe it is essential that UNAMID be able to effectively exercise its mandate throughout Darfur, especially in the area of Jebel Marra, which is particularly affected by this scourge. We therefore call on the Government to ensure that the mission and humanitarian personnel have unrestricted access to that area.

On the other hand, we are pleased to see that UNAMID's close coordination with the United Nations country team and local authorities has led to a significant reduction in the intensity of intercommunal violence. We welcome efforts aimed at addressing the drivers of the conflict, such as access to water resources and the rehabilitation of local police stations and rural courts. In this context, we welcome the return of part of the

displaced population to their places of origin, which we hope will be continued with the adequate provision of basic services. We are also pleased that the UNAMID reconfiguration process is proceeding as planned. We appreciate the efforts of the staff of the mission and of the United Nations team to carry out the transition process, focusing on the priorities established.

For that reason, we also welcome the recent joint visit of the three Assistant Secretaries-General — Bintou Keita, Oscar Fernández-Taranco and Mourad Wahba — and note the need for the donor community to contribute to these efforts. Resource mobilization will be essential to facilitate a successful peacebuilding process in the long term. In this regard, we stress the importance of giving priority to investments in development with a view to achieving sustainable peace.

Finally, we would like to reiterate our support for the African Union, the United Nations team and the agencies of the system, and in particular for UNAMID for its strenuous efforts to achieve a successful transition in Darfur amid the enormous challenges it faces every day.

Mr. Ipo (Côte d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): My delegation welcomes today's meeting, which is devoted to the latest developments in the situation in Darfur and the implementation of the mandate of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID). It thanks Ms. Bintou Keita, Assistant Secretary-General for Africa, Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and Peace Operations, for her comprehensive briefing following her successful visit to the Sudan.

After the outbreak of sociopolitical unrest leading to loss of life and material damage, Côte d'Ivoire calls on all parties to exercise restraint and encourages the Government of the Sudan to continue its efforts to find solutions to the root causes of this crisis in order to preserve the gains of the ongoing political process in Darfur. It also urges all Sudanese stakeholders to work in a consensual manner to create conditions of transparency and credibility for the elections scheduled for 2020.

With regard to the security situation, my country welcomes the relative stability that Darfur has enjoyed for several months. However, it deplores the resumption of clashes between Government forces and those of the Sudan Liberation Army-Abdul Wahid in

Jebel Marra. This situation is at the root of population displacements, loss of human life and persistent sexual violence against women and girls. Côte d'Ivoire calls on the warring parties to give priority to dialogue as a means of resolving their differences. In this regard, it supports the Secretary-General's call on Abdul Wahid to join the peace process without delay in order to bring the crisis to a definitive end.

In this context, my country notes with satisfaction the signing, on 6 December 2018, of a pre-agreement between the Government and two movements that are not signatories to the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur, as a prelude to the forthcoming peace negotiations. It welcomes these achievements facilitated by President Thabo Mbeki, head of the African Union High-Level Implementation Panel, and hopes that they will help to create the conditions for a final settlement of the crisis in Darfur.

My delegation also welcomes the significant decrease in intercommunal violence thanks to the combined efforts of national and local authorities, UNAMID and the United Nations country team. In this respect, it underlines the need to seek adequate solutions to land issues and difficulties related to access to basic social services. On the humanitarian front, Côte d'Ivoire welcomes the improvement in food security thanks to favourable weather conditions during the period from June to September 2018.

With regard to human rights issues, my country commends the remarkable work done by the Sudanese police forces, which have replaced UNAMID police elements, in securing some internally displaced persons camps. However, it notes with concern the Secretary-General's report's observations of repeated acts of violence against civilians, particularly in the Jebel Marra area, and the increase in sexual violence against women (S/2019/44). In this context, Côte d'Ivoire believes that it is important to ensure the strengthening of the capacities of judicial institutions in order to help establish the rule of law.

With regard to the transition process in Darfur, my country would like to support the sustained efforts of national and regional State actors, UNAMID and the United Nations country team to ensure a successful transition from peacekeeping to peacebuilding in Darfur. It also welcomes the multifaceted support provided by UNAMID and the United Nations country team to the Government of the Sudan, particularly in

the areas of strengthening the rule of law and access to justice. In the light of its own experience, my country reaffirms the need to establish strong institutions that guarantee the rule of law and to promote national ownership of the issue, with a view to peacebuilding.

In conclusion, Côte d'Ivoire invites the international community and development partners to provide the necessary support to ensure that the transition is funded and that Darfur's development needs are met.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as representative of Equatorial Guinea.

First of all, I would like to thank Ms. Bintou Keita for her excellent briefing on the situation in Darfur and for her trip to the area. We also welcome the presence of the representative of the Government of the Sudan at today's meeting.

From Ms. Keita's briefing, it should be noted that the overall situation in Darfur has stabilized quite a bit over the past few months. We continue to closely follow the evolution of the situation on the ground and are encouraged by the fact that progress is being made in terms of stability and the positive steps under way. The area has been free of serious violence for several months now, which is further evidence of the advances made with regard to Darfur.

However, as stated previously, we remain concerned about the violence that continues to negatively affect the population of Jebel Marra. Indeed, the Government of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea is concerned about the still precarious humanitarian situation and the difficulties faced by displaced persons returning to their lands, as well as the persistence of sexual violence. In this context, my country encourages all parties to the conflict to recommit themselves to the political process on the basis of the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur, and to cease and desist from engaging in deadly clashes, as they continue to cause unnecessary deaths and displacement of civilians.

We also call on the countries that host the armed movements to commit to the peaceful pursuit to a lasting solution in the Darfur region. In that regard, the Republic of Equatorial Guinea believes that in order to successfully address the root causes of the crisis that continue to lead to acts of violence related to land disputes, mediation and reconciliation efforts

are needed with a view to ending the conflict and preventing its recurrence.

We note that bringing peace to Darfur would be a firm step towards achieving the shared African aspiration of silencing the guns by 2020. We commend the Government of the Sudan for its support of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) and for the efforts it has made in its weapon collection programme. The full implementation of that programme is key both to sustaining the peace currently prevailing in Darfur and to restoring lasting peace to the region. This important programme is now being carried out in the Jebel Marra area.

The Republic of Equatorial Guinea urges the Government of the Sudan to improve the security environment in the political framework through the implementation of the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur with a view to achieving a definitive ceasefire. To that effect, broader support must be given to the political process led by the African Union High-level Implementation Panel. In that regard, we welcome the signing in December of the pre-negotiation agreement in Germany.

In conclusion, my delegation congratulates the Sudanese Government, Mr. Mamabolo, Joint Special Representative and Head of UNAMID, and all UNAMID personnel, and calls on them to continue their work to improve the living conditions for the people of Darfur. We must ensure that the possible withdrawal of UNAMID does not leave behind a power vacuum that could reactivate the conflict. It is important that the zone remain peaceful in order for post-conflict reconstruction to be effective.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I give the floor to the representative of the Sudan.

Mr. Mohamed (Sudan) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to begin by thanking you once again, Mr. President, for convening this important meeting devoted to the consideration of the periodic report of the Secretary-General (S/2019/44) on the situation in Darfur and on the transition from peacekeeping to the peacebuilding, recovery and reconstruction phase. That will be the core of my statement.

We thank the Secretary-General for his report. We also thank Ms. Bintou Keita, Assistant Secretary-General for Africa, Department of Political and

Peacebuilding Affairs, as well as her team. We thank Ms. Keita for her valuable briefing following her recent visit to the Sudan two weeks ago. We will gladly facilitate future visits at any time upon the submission of the proper request.

This meeting is taking place just as the stabilization process is gaining momentum in Darfur. That was recognized in Security Council resolutions 2363 (2017) and 2429 (2018). It also reflects what was agreed by the Sudanese Government, the African Union and the United Nations in February 2015 through the Joint Working Group on the importance of the gradual, phased and smooth exit of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID). We are delighted that the position of the Council is fully in line with the national and regional positions on this matter.

My delegation hopes that the transition from peacekeeping to recovery, stability, peacebuilding and reconstruction will enjoy the same support that was provided to UNAMID. The goal is to support the great improvement of the security situation in Darfur and to complement it with development efforts in order to achieve socioeconomic and environmental development and to address the consequences of the conflict in Darfur. In that context, it is important to recall that underdevelopment was the main factor that led to the insurgency in Darfur. It is also crucial to bear in mind the close link between peace and development. It is impossible to have one without the other.

In that regard, my delegation hopes that all the efforts of regional and international partners will support the Sudanese Government in laying the groundwork for stabilization, peacebuilding and reconstruction in Darfur, particularly with respect to repatriating internally displaced persons and refugees; disarmament, demobilization and reintegration; strengthening peaceful coexistence among various communities; contributing to capacity-building at the local level; and creating job opportunities for young people, who represent more than 65 per cent of the population of Darfur. This is a joint venture between the international community and us.

I have the pleasure to announce that the Sudanese Government is ready and willing to welcome the team that will be sent by the Secretariat and the African Union Commission in March to conduct a strategic review of UNAMID, in accordance with resolutions

2363 (2017) and 2429 (2018). The objective of that review is to define the parameters of the final exit of UNAMID by June 2020. As the Council is aware, the final exit will mark success in achieving the goal for which the Mission was deployed in 2007. It will be a joint national, regional and international success that should take its due place in the annals of the peaceful resolution of conflicts around the world.

I think we are all entitled to celebrate what has been achieved thus far. We are all entitled to celebrate the synergy of national, regional and international efforts that led to the conclusion of the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic on 6 February. Before that, those same efforts led in September 2018 to signing the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan. As the Council is aware, the broad and varied experience of the Sudan and the Sudanese was key in both of those achievements. Those achievements cannot be separated from the successful experience of UNAMID, which has had a positive outcome at the regional and international levels. I should like to touch upon a number of important issues that were raised by Security Council members.

First of all, it is important to understand and recall that the topic of this meeting is the situation in Darfur and its five states. The topic therefore does not include the regions outside of this geographical area. If, for whatever reason, the Council wished to consider the situation in any other area, including the Sudan, which exercises complete sovereignty over its own territory, the Council would first have to agree to address that topic in accordance its 1947 provisional rules of procedure, based on the majority or consensus. Members are well aware of that. If we are to consider shared responsibilities for addressing the situation in the Sudan in general, we must keep in the extremely important point that our country has been suffering for more than three decades from the effects of unilateral sanctions that have no precedent in international law and were neither recognized nor adopted by the Security Council.

Those sanctions have negatively affected millions of vulnerable people, including women, children and the elderly. They have deprived the Sudan of its basic needs, such as spare parts for our aircrafts, which has led to the failure and crash of civil aircrafts. Sudan Airways was undermined after having been the most famous airline in Africa since 1947. In addition, the

Sudan has been deprived of its rights as a post-conflict country suffering a huge debt burden and as one of the least developed countries, while hosting more than 2 million refugees. Just one of the aforementioned factors should qualify the Sudan for complete relief from its heavy debt burden and for favourable treatment by international financial organizations, which is anything but the case today.

Furthermore, our peace partners have not fulfilled their promises in the economic sphere, made following the conclusion of the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement, and followed by the peaceful resolution of the issue concerning the Republic of South Sudan in 2011, based on that agreement. Unfortunately, the peace partners, some of whom are permanent members of the Security Council, have turned their backs on their promises and commitments.

All members of the Council and the international community know that the core reason behind the conflict in Darfur is primarily related to development, as indicated by the Permanent Representative of the Dominican Republic. Undoubtedly, it also has to do with the deterioration of the environment and desertification that the west coast of Africa continues to endure. I recall what the former Secretary-General said in 2007 when he first took office. He said that the root cause of the conflict in Africa is the deterioration of the environment. I recall that after he said that, he was fiercely attacked in the media, and I still recall what the *New York Times* and *The Washington Post* wrote in that regard. However, that having been said, some would choose to compound this conflict by adding political reasons. They try to use the International Criminal Court in a way that completely distorts the facts.

Council members know that Jebel Marra is characterized by its unique situation, as recognized in resolution 2363 (2017). There are 2 million people in that area, but it should be recalled that it is only a small part of one state among five that make up greater Darfur. Given that perspective, the situation in Jebel Marra should not be used as the sole prism for viewing the situation in Darfur. That situation therefore should not be presented differently from the situation on the ground, owing to the simple reason that the Security Council has adopted a specific arrangement concerning the Jebel Marra area. The appropriate course of action for the Council to take, as viewed by us and by the majority

of Council members, is to act on the determination that it has expressed in the relevant resolutions and to follow up on the provisions of resolution 1591 (2005) which was adopted under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations.

Last month, I met with the Secretary-General and provided him with information confirming that members of the Sudan Liberation Army-Abdul Wahid faction, who have retreated into the difficult-to-access mountains, were behind the protests raising legitimate demands, as recognized by the President of the Republic. They used knives and guns during those protests.

Concerning the state of emergency that has been declared, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which the Sudan is a signatory, provides for the declaration of a state of emergency. We informed the Secretary-General last month of our intention to declare a state of emergency in the states of Kassala and North Kordofan, pursuant to the provisions of the International Covenant and of the 2005 interim Constitution of the Sudan. We will immediately update the Secretary-General on our declaration of the state of emergency in various parts of the Sudan, in line with the provisions of the International Covenant. The Government of the Sudan is fully committed to the inalienable rights of individuals, as enshrined in the Constitution of the Sudan, which are the same as those enshrined in the International Covenant.

In conclusion, my delegation expresses once again its gratitude to UNAMID for the work it has accomplished since its deployment in Darfur in 2008. We also thank all peacekeepers and the troop-contributing countries, the African Union Commission and the Secretariat, in particular the Department of Peace Operations, Department of Operational Support and the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs. We once again express our commitment to cooperating with UNAMID until its full withdrawal from my country after having achieved success and peace in our important region.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers.

I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at noon.