



Security Council

Seventy-fourth year

8519th meeting
 Tuesday, 30 April 2019, 10.55 a.m.
 New York

Provisional

President: Mr. Heusgen (Germany)

Members:

Belgium	Mrs. Van Vlierberge
China	Mr. Yao Shaojun
Côte d'Ivoire	Mr. Moriko
Dominican Republic	Mr. Trullols Yabra
Equatorial Guinea	Mr. Elé Ela
France	Mrs. Gueguen
Indonesia	Mr. Djani
Kuwait	Mr. Albanai
Peru	Mr. Meza-Cuadra
Poland	Ms. Wronecka
Russian Federation	Mr. Polyanskiy
South Africa	Ms. Sabelo
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Hickey
United States of America	Mr. Hunter

Agenda

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

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Abyei (S/2019/319)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.55 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 situation in Abyei (S/2019/319)

The President: In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representatives of South Sudan and the Sudan to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in the meeting: Mr. Jean-Pierre Lacroix, Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations; and Mr. Parfait Onanga-Anyanga, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Horn of Africa.

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/2019/319, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Abyei.

I now give the floor to Mr. Lacroix.

Mr. Lacroix: I thank you, Mr. President, for this opportunity to brief the Security Council on the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA) and its support to the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism, as set out in the Secretary-General's report (S/2019/319) before the Council. I shall also update Council members on recent developments since its publication.

Despite sporadic incidents of violence, the situation in Abyei remained generally calm and stable. That is evidence of the efforts of both Ngok Dinka and Misseriya communities to preserve peace in the area. In that regard, I would like to emphasize that this was first migration season since 2015 for which the situation no longer necessitated the implementation of the disengagement line, which I would recall was instituted by UNISFA to prevent large-scale intercommunal violence during the annual migration of the Misseriya and their cattle through the Abyei Area. That situation has been made possible by the communities' commitment to engage in dialogue in order to de-escalate tensions, together with

UNISFA's proactive engagement with the communities and its robust military posture, particularly along possible flashpoints. At the same time, regrettably, there was no tangible progress to further political dialogue between the Sudan and South Sudan on the issue of Abyei since the Council's previous consultations on the matter. The Abyei Joint Oversight Committee has not met since November 2017.

Let me now touch on the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism. I welcome the adoption of resolution 2465 (2019) renewing UNISFA's support to the Mechanism. The parties made notable progress on five of the seven benchmarks outlined in the previous resolution 2438 (2018). The parties maintained standing clearance for all UNISFA patrols. Two team sites were established in the 14 Mile Area of the Safe Demilitarized Border Zone within the reporting period following extensive sensitization efforts by the South Sudanese local authorities to allay fears of border communities in the area.

The Joint Political and Security Mechanism convened in ordinary sessions in October last year and March this year, meaning that they were not held under the auspices of the African Union High-level Implementation Panel, as in past instances. That points to an improved relationship between the Sudan and South Sudan. The border demarcation discussions were markedly advanced, with the parties deciding to demarcate agreed sections of the boundary line between the Sudan and South Sudan. Regrettably, no progress was made on verifying border-crossing corridors or on establishing customs and migration offices. In addition, the redeployment of forces from the Safe Demilitarized Border Zone remains a challenge.

In December last year, the team site at Tishwin noted the replacement of Sudanese military with police personnel at a camp within its areas of responsibility, while the Safaha/Kiir Adem and As Sumayah/Wierayen team sites within the 14 Mile Area continued to observe a South Sudanese military presence.

Let me now turn to UNISFA's operational challenges. With regard to the changing situation in the Sudan, thus far there has been no visible adverse impact on UNISFA's operations. It is too early to say whether that will provide opportunities for the settlement of the Abyei dispute. The mission maintains contact with interlocutors at the working level to ensure continuity of operations. However, it and Headquarters

remain watchful of any issues that might hinder mandate implementation.

With regard to the Council's request in resolution 2445 (2018) for the reconfiguration of UNISFA, particularly the troop reduction and police increase, there have been delays in the process. In the first phase of reductions, 360 troops were set to be repatriated by 15 March. That has not yet taken place for certain reasons, including the helicopter crash on 9 February, which created a shortage in air assets, and the current situation in the Sudan. I will take this opportunity to pay tribute to the peacekeepers from Ethiopia who lost their lives as a result of that tragic incident. There are plans to start the repatriation process on 12 May, to be completed within a week. As for the increase in police personnel, while the selection of individual police officers and a formed police unit has been completed, the 130 visas from the Government of the Sudan necessary for their deployment remain outstanding. That particularly affects the team from Jordan needed to conduct a technical reconnaissance mission to Abyei before the deployment of the formed police unit from that country.

As criminality remains the biggest challenge in the Abyei Area, I request the Council to urge the parties to take further steps to address law and order matters. I would like to take advantage of this meeting to request the Sudan to issue visas expeditiously to facilitate the deployment of UNISFA's police personnel. In the same regard, I ask South Sudan to move forward with the joint planning exercise for the establishment of the Abyei police service.

Also, pursuant to the request in resolution 2445 (2018), the report before the Council proposes an augmented civilian component in UNISFA to support the political process. The proposed civilian component would enable the mission to support the parties, the African Union High-level Implementation Panel and the African Union Commission to advance day-to-day solutions. That modest shift in the mission's role is necessary to match the reality on the ground. The proposed support is particularly pertinent given the difficult internal circumstances in both countries. It is important to prevent the dispute over Abyei and the border regions between the Sudan and South Sudan from becoming another frozen conflict and to preserve the gains achieved by UNISFA.

UNISFA continues to play a stabilizing role in the Abyei Area and along the border regions. However, the mission can provide only a conducive environment for the parties, whose own efforts remain essential to progress. I am encouraged by the significantly improved relations between the two countries in the past year, as evidenced by the Sudan's role in facilitating the revitalized peace agreement reached by the South Sudanese parties and the resumption of joint oil operations. The Sudan and South Sudan should continue that positive trajectory and extend their cooperation to move forward on the resolution of their disputes.

In closing, let me reiterate that it is imperative that the gains achieved by UNISFA, as well as the communities in Abyei, be preserved and used to advance towards a political resolution of the border issues between the Sudan and South Sudan. I seek the continued support of the Security Council for the Secretary-General's recommendations, as set out in the report before the Council, to continue the reconfiguration of the mission and extend its mandate by another six months.

The President: I thank Mr. Lacroix for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Onanga-Anyanga.

Mr. Onanga-Anyanga (*spoke in French*): Allow me to congratulate you, Sir, on your excellent presidency of the Council during the month of April. I would like to thank you for the opportunity to brief the Security Council, for the first time, on the implementation of resolution 2046 (2012), on the outstanding issues between South Sudan and the Sudan, on the one hand, and in the states of Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile, on the other hand.

I would like to begin by thanking the national authorities and representatives of the States in the Horn of Africa for their warm welcome. I am also grateful to the African Union and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, with whom I intend to continue the strategic partnership between our two institutions with the full support of the Security Council and all stakeholders in the region, particularly the Gulf and Red Sea States.

(*spoke in English*)

Both the Sudan and South Sudan are at a crossroads, with critical political processes under way. They face the challenges surrounding the effective implementation of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan and the

uncertainties of the delicate political transformations occurring in the Sudan. Indeed, since the briefing by my predecessor in October 2018, the Sudan has witnessed dramatic changes following the demonstrations that started in December 2018. The protests culminated in the removal of President Al-Bashir on 11 April. The Sudan is now reflecting, as the Sudanese stakeholders still need to agree on transitional and institutional arrangements. The current situation in the Sudan does not preclude a consolidation of the recent improvement of bilateral relations between the Sudan and South Sudan. However, the new authorities in the Sudan may need some time to resume active engagement in such bilateral relations, including concerning the border, the Two Areas and Abyei.

The gains in the relations between the Sudan and South Sudan should not be lost. During the reporting period, those gains were enabled notably by the Government of the Sudan in facilitating the signing and subsequent implementation of the Revitalized Agreement in South Sudan in September 2018. In return, President Kiir accepted President Al-Bashir's request to assist in the resolution of the conflict between the Government of the Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-North). Since then, Juba has hosted meetings of the SPLM-North, initially to help unify the different factions of the movement. Following the outbreak of unrest in the Sudan last December, talks between the factions were suspended and no date has been set for their resumption.

With the ouster of President Al-Bashir, there is concern that the absence of one of the principal guarantors of the revitalized peace agreement on South Sudan may have a negative impact on its implementation. There also seem to be concerns that the peace efforts in South Kordofan and Blue Nile states may be affected. Taking into consideration these concerns, both countries should be encouraged to stay the course. The Sudan should continue to provide support for the implementation of the revitalized Peace Agreement, and South Sudan should continue to play a constructive role in the resolution of the conflicts in the Sudan.

The notable mutual gains achieved in the reporting period include the intensification of bilateral cooperation in the oil sector after the Sudan helped South Sudan to resume oil production in its southern oilfields in the greater Upper Nile region. This has resulted in increased oil production. In the same vein,

the two countries have agreed on the Sudan assisting South Sudan in resuming oil production in the northern oilfields of the same region. Production, which is expected to come onstream at the end of April, is projected to ensure an additional 70,000 barrels per day. South Sudan's petroleum Minister announced that the upheavals in the Sudan had not affected his country's oil sector.

The Sudan and South Sudan have continued to engage on bilateral security issues, though with little substantive progress to report. This is reflected in the progress on the final status of Abyei. Both countries have, rather, focused on other bilateral issues they consider more pressing. We have a de facto status quo situation. In the absence of a joint Administration and the lack of progress on Abyei's final status, the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA) remains central to the prevention and resolution of intercommunal conflicts and the reduction of tensions over Abyei.

In the next few weeks, I intend to encourage the authorities in Khartoum and Juba to build on the gains achieved and take a fresh look at the Abyei issue, with a focus on the implementation of temporary arrangements for the administration of Abyei and engagement on its final status.

Let me now turn to the conflict in South Kordofan and Blue Nile states and the process led by the African Union High-level Implementation Panel (AUHIP). While the SPLM-North issued, in December 2018, a statement supporting the protest movement, its leadership remains cautious about the military takeover and what it perceives as a Khartoum-centric process. Yet the political transition in the Sudan may offer an opportunity to build new institutions that are better equipped to address the root causes of the Sudanese conflicts.

Immediately after the ouster of President Bashir, the Transitional Military Council declared an indefinite unilateral ceasefire across all of the Sudan, which was reciprocated by the SPLM-North in South Kordofan and Blue Nile states until 31 July. The Transitional Military Council also called on armed groups to join the political transition. The signatories to the Declaration of Freedom and Change, which include the political forces behind the protest movement, have stressed that the resolution of conflicts in the Sudan should be a priority of the transitional Government once it is established.

In the reporting period, despite the AUHIP's efforts, there has been no progress on the resolution of the conflict in South Kordofan and Blue Nile states. From 9 to 12 December, the AUHIP convened a meeting among the signatories of the 2016 road map agreement. While the AUHIP initially planned to discuss with the signatories the possible participation of the opposition parties in the constitution-drafting process and the elections expected to take place in 2020, this did not materialize. Three signatories to the road map — namely, the National Umma Party, the Justice and Equality Movement and the Sudan Liberation Movement-Minni Minnawi — insisted on the participation of non-signatories in the meeting, on the grounds that they represent the Sudan Call alliance rather than their respective organizations.

The SPLM-North delegation refused to meet with the Government of the Sudan to discuss the Movement's possible participation in the constitutional dialogue. SPLM-North stated that it was not willing to engage Government officials on this issue unless Khartoum accepted its precondition to hold the constitutional dialogue outside the Sudan, a request that was rejected by the then Government of the Sudan. SPLM-North reiterated that a negotiation process on the two Areas should start with political talks followed by security arrangements and, finally, by a permanent ceasefire.

The leader of SPLM-North is still claiming that the people represented by his organization are entitled to the terms of the comprehensive Peace Agreement negotiated for the South, a non-starter for the previous Government of the Sudan. That means that three key contentious issues still need to be addressed by future negotiations between SPLM-North and the new Sudanese authorities, including on whether SPLM-North can claim the right to self-determination in South Kordofan and Blue Nile states, the extent to which the application of Islamic law can be suspended in those areas, and the possibility for SPLM-North to keep its armed forces in a post-conflict setting. While the place of Islamic law in the Sudanese political system may be revisited in the ongoing political transition, the readiness of the new authorities in Khartoum to depart from the position of their predecessors regarding self-determination and the unity of the armed forces remains to be seen.

In closing, I wish to state that the political transition in the Sudan may offer an opportunity to redefine the relations between the centre and its peripheries

in a way that puts an end to discrimination based on ethnicity, religion and territorial belonging. Building on the unilateral cessation of hostilities declared by both the Sudanese authorities and SPLM-North, and in close coordination with AUHIP, we will encourage the parties to engage on the resolution of the conflicts in the Sudan on the basis of a new political dispensation.

The President: I thank Mr. Onanga-Anyanga for his briefing.

I think that colleagues around the table will agree that this is not one of the less complicated conflicts that we are following.

I now give the floor to those Council members who wish to make statements. In this context, I would like to point to our hourglass, which, for the last day of our presidency, has been refilled with fresh sand. We hope that this is an incentive for members to abide by the time indicated, which is now five and half minutes.

Mr. Hunter (United States of America): I thank the Under-Secretary-General and the Special Envoy for their briefings. The United States welcomes Mr. Onanga-Anyanga to his role and very much looks forward to working with him.

The United States is pleased to see that the Secretary-General's recent report on the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA) noted that the security situation in Abyei is generally calm. We welcome the expanding economic activity, including cooperation on the development of oil resources in the border region, and appreciate the commitment between local populations to preserve peace.

The United States would like to extend particular thanks to Ethiopia for its contributions to UNISFA. Without Ethiopia's efforts, the generally positive trend of developments in Abyei would not have been possible.

While the political situations in Khartoum and Juba remain fluid, the warming relations between the Sudan and South Sudan and a stabilized security environment indicate that there is great potential for those two countries to capitalize on shared interests along their border and work together to resolve border disputes. While we commend the African Union (AU) for its engagement in and support for addressing outstanding border issues, we note that the Council has not received a status update on the African Union's efforts despite repeated requests to the African Union High-level Implementation Panel. Sustained political engagement

by the AU on the Sudan and South Sudan's border issues is essential to ensuring that the two countries remain committed and engaged on resolving these issues. Taking advantage of recent trends to resolve border issues at this time would promote stability in the region and could be an easy win for the AU and the nascent governments in Juba and Khartoum.

In November 2018, the Security Council unanimously agreed in the UNISFA mandate that the improved security situation in Abyei necessitated adjustments to the peacekeeping mission (see S/PV.8400). The United States notes with disappointment that the troop reduction and increase in police that was agreed upon by the Council and the parties have not yet been implemented. We call on the Sudan to provide visas to the incoming United Nations police without delay and on Ethiopia to withdraw peacekeepers, in line with the current mandate.

In continuation of the initiative of the Secretary-General to recommend the reconfiguration of UNISFA for the upcoming mandate renewal, the United States supports further advancing the efforts that this organ made in the fall of 2018.

First, the United States calls for a reasonable reduction of uniformed personnel in UNISFA. The improved security environment and positive bilateral developments between the Sudan and South Sudan must be reflected in UNISFA force levels and composition.

Secondly, the United States calls for increasing the number of police relative to troops in UNISFA. As the Secretary-General has observed, a reorientation towards a police-style mission is needed to ensure that UNISFA continues to fulfil its primary role in protecting civilians and reducing predominantly criminal threats.

Thirdly, the United States calls for a civilian leadership component within UNISFA. That civilian leadership component could further facilitate engagement among the parties to create space for a political resolution. Those recommended changes will appropriately reconfigure UNISFA to better suit the security and political environment on the ground.

Finally, regarding the Secretariat's reporting on UNISFA's performance, the United States calls for improvements in the quality and quantity of information provided to the Council, in line with resolution 2436 (2018), which mandates clear detailed

and standardized reporting across all United Nations peacekeeping mission.

In conclusion, the United States remains committed to peace and security for Abyei and the region, and looks forward to working with the Council and the parties to ensure that UNISFA is adapted to the current political and security environment.

Mr. Albanai (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank the Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations and the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for their briefings.

I will focus today on three issues: the situation in the area of operations of the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA), the development of the mission and the way forward.

We appreciate the stabilizing role of UNISFA in Abyei. The Security Council must therefore focus its attention on the Abyei region to protect it from any surrounding events causing instability. We express our concern about the reference contained in the report of the Secretary-General (S/2019/319) on the presence of military elements from outside the region, which demonstrates the need to accelerate the establishment of the Abyei police service. We hope that the two countries will continue to regularly hold meetings within the Abyei Joint Oversight Committee and implement the benchmarks set out in resolutions 2445 (2018) and 2465 (2019).

We welcome the presence of the Special Envoy, Mr. Onanga-Anyanga, among us today. We stand ready to cooperate with him in order to consolidate peace and stability in the entire Horn of Africa, which is a vital part for our Arab countries and their strategic neighbourhood.

We also welcome the central role that UNISFA plays in Abyei, and we take note of the Secretary-General's recommendations contained in his report before us. We stress our support for the mission and its officials and call for facilitating its work. We call as well for a careful and gradual approach to developing the mission so that it can maintain security for Abyei and its population and establish peace there.

We welcome the implementation of resolution 2445 (2018) in reducing the military personnel of the mission and the selection of Jordan as a police-contributing country to provide a formed police unit. We hope that the unit will begin its work in Abyei as soon as possible.

We also reaffirm the need for Council members to agree on addressing the recommendations in the report before including them in a draft resolution on the mission mandate. We are grateful to the United States delegation as a penholder for engaging with all parties and seeking consensus on the mandate renewal.

We are well aware of the current critical phase, the specific circumstances and the time frames facing the Sudan and South Sudan. We therefore believe that the Council should not rush either country. We welcome the progress made by both countries in implementing the border-demarcation benchmark. We look forward to the implementation of the remaining bilateral agreements in order to establish all the relevant institutions in Abyei and support its people, while mitigating any conflict and defusing any tensions.

We reiterate our position that any future steps should be taken in consultation with the parties to secure their consent before the steps are taken, which is one of the three peacekeeping principles. We must consider the internal situations in both countries through the adoption of a draft resolution that defines an applicable mandate amid the current circumstances.

In conclusion, Kuwait stands ready to cooperate with the Sudan, South Sudan, members of the Council and the Secretariat to reach a final settlement in Abyei.

Mr. Djani (Indonesia): Let me begin by thanking Under-Secretary-General Jean-Pierre Lacroix for his important briefing. My delegation would also like to congratulate Mr. Parfait Onanga-Anyanga on his appointment as Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Horn of Africa. We thank him for his informative briefing and encourage him to continue to engage with all parties. My statement today will focus on three key messages.

First, the presence of the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA) remains essential to stability in Abyei and along the border region between the Sudan and South Sudan. Indonesia is pleased that the security situation in Abyei remains generally calm, with the exception of sporadic incidents of violence, as documented in the report of the Secretary-General (S/2019/319). My delegation attaches great importance to UNISFA's continued efforts to facilitate engagement, mediation and confidence-building among communities in Abyei. Indeed, improved intercommunal relations have resulted in the establishment of the Amiet common market, which has become a vibrant economic hub

and provides opportunities for peaceful coexistence among different communities in Abyei. Indonesia also commends the important role of UNISFA's police component in strengthening law and order, including by providing capacity-building to community protection committees in response to the increase in criminality and in the absence of an Abyei police force.

Earlier this month, our Ambassador in Khartoum had an opportunity to visit Abyei and witness at first-hand the fruits of UNISFA's work. In a similar vein, my delegation also acknowledges UNISFA's support for the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism (JBVMM), which is an important tool for maintaining stability along the border region. We are pleased to see marked improvement in the implementation of the JBVMM, compared to previous years, including towards meeting the benchmarks outlined in the relevant Security Council resolutions.

Secondly, we need to continue our strong encouragement to the Sudan and South Sudan to resolve their outstanding issues. My delegation regrets that little progress has been registered to implement the 20 June 2011 Agreement on Temporary Arrangements for the Administration and Security of the Abyei Area, including the formation of joint interim institutions. Concerning the JBVMM, Indonesia also notes a lack of progress on critical issues, including the complete withdrawal of forces from the Safe Demilitarized Border Zone and the establishment of customs and immigration offices. We have also yet to see the regular holding of meetings of the Joint Political and Security Mechanism. The Sudan and South Sudan need to capitalize on the stability created by the presence of UNISFA, as well as the significant improvement in their bilateral relations, to resolve the Abyei and border issues. The international community should support the African Union High-level Implementation Panel in its engagement with the two countries to promote the timely implementation of their obligations under the 2012 cooperation agreement.

That brings me to my third point. We are cognizant of changes in UNISFA's operating environment since its establishment in 2011. We must also not lose sight of a wide range of difficult challenges that both the Sudan and South Sudan are currently facing. For Indonesia, the priorities are clear — to preserve and build on the many important gains achieved throughout the work of UNISFA and ensure that the interests of the civilian

population, including women and children, are taken into account.

Against that backdrop, we see the merit of the Secretary-General's proposal to reconfigure UNISFA in order to reinvigorate the political process. For such a reconfiguration to be effective, my delegation underscores the importance of securing the support of both the Sudan and South Sudan, while also taking into account the views of troop- and police-contributing countries.

Indonesia has peacekeepers on the ground in UNISFA and will continue to contribute more if needed. We will continue to support UNISFA's mandate renewal and stand ready to contribute constructively to the discussion. Indonesia would also like to commend all United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, together with their partners, which provide humanitarian and recovery assistance to people in need in Abyei.

I should like to conclude by expressing our condolences to UNISFA and the Government and the people of Ethiopia over the loss of three Ethiopian peacekeepers who perished in a tragic helicopter crash in February. May the exceptional brothers whom we lost that day rest in peace, and we will continue to honour their contribution to peace and security. My delegation reaffirms its long-standing support for the Sudan and South Sudan in finding a peaceful solution to their outstanding issues, including through their participation in UNISFA.

By the way, Mr. President, thank you very much for the quicksand-filled hourglass.

The President: The representative of Indonesia delivered his statement in under five and a half minutes, for which I thank him.

Mrs. Gueguen (France) (*spoke in French*): It is a pleasure to welcome Mr. Parfait Onanga-Anyanga to the table here in the Security Council in his new capacity as Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Horn of Africa. I wish him every success in his mission to support efforts towards peace in a context of profound change in the region, and I hope that such efforts will lead to lasting peace and better and fairer conditions for all. I thank him, as well as the Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations, Mr. Jean-Pierre Lacroix, for their clear and informative briefings, as always.

I would like to briefly address two points of particular interest for my delegation.

First, the political process has, unfortunately, not made enough progress. France regrets the lack of progress in the implementation of the 2011 Agreement on Temporary Arrangements for the Administration and Security of the Abyei Area, as our two briefers mentioned. In his latest report (S/2019/319), the Secretary-General calls on the parties to relaunch the political process so that the Abyei issue does not join the long list of frozen conflicts. We share that concern and call on the parties to implement their commitments without delay.

The mere presence of the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA) will not be enough to resolve the Abyei issue. Only the sincere and determined commitment of both parties to resolving their differences, with the support of the African Union and the United Nations, will allow progress towards a lasting solution. The establishment of the Abyei police service and the meeting of the Joint Oversight Committee are essential steps in that direction. In that regard, I would like to ask our briefers about the prospects of that happening. The political status quo is not inevitable. We have seen in recent months that the demanding attention of the Council has resulted in encouraging progress on border demarcation. The political developments in the Sudan represent an opportunity that we must seize to encourage the parties to relaunch the political process.

Secondly, we must proceed with the reconfiguration of UNISFA. The recommendations that the Secretary-General made in his letter on 20 August (S/2018/778) and his latest report provide a good basis for reconfiguring the mission. France supports a further strengthening of the police component of UNISFA to address the challenge of crime, particularly in the Amiet common market. Those police forces are also intended to prevent the escalation of intercommunal tensions that we have been witnessing, which are often rooted in the theft of livestock. In that regard, I regret that the Jordanian police unit that was to be deployed could not be so due to the lack of visas. France calls on the Sudanese authorities to do their utmost to facilitate the implementation of resolution 2445 (2018) as soon as possible.

We believe that it is also important to strengthen the civilian component of the mission by deploying a

political section and appointing a civilian as deputy head of mission. That would allow UNISFA to better prevent local conflicts and strengthen cooperation with the African Union High-level Implementation Panel for Sudan. We agree that UNISFA should support the political process more actively, without replacing the African Union's High-level Panel, which has our full support. We also support an adjustment of the troop strength and believe that a moderate reduction in the overall strength could take place without impacting the mission's effectiveness.

In conclusion, I would like to commend the work of the Ethiopian troops, who make it possible, on a daily basis, to stabilize the situation in Abyei and along the border between the Sudan and South Sudan.

Mr. Trullols Yabra (Dominican Republic) (*spoke in Spanish*): We extend our thanks to Mr. Lacroix and Mr. Onanga-Anyanga for their briefings.

We welcome the relative calm in the Abyei Area, although we are concerned about the sporadic incidents of intercommunal violence, the presence of armed elements and the abundance of small arms and light weapons, as well as the growing criminality generated by the difficult economic situation. We hope that those events will not undermine the prevailing calm, for which we believe that the presence of the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA) remains crucial.

We also share the feelings of frustration over the lack of progress in the implementation of the commitments undertaken by the parties in the Agreement on Temporary Arrangements for the Administration and Security of the Abyei Area and the concern of the Secretary-General over the intensification of the political rhetoric on the appropriation of the Abyei Area. We are hopeful that those events will not escalate and that the Ngok Dinka and Misseriya communities and their leaders will remain steadfast in their commitment to peaceful coexistence and not be discouraged by the elements attempting to disrupt the process. We call on the Sudan and South Sudan to continue to build on the positive progress achieved so far. In that regard, we congratulate the Sudan and South Sudan on the re-establishment of joint oil operations.

However, despite such progress, much remains to be done. The disputed territory between the two countries must not become another unresolved conflict. It is necessary for the political process to continue forward

and for an agreement to be reached that improves the lives of the people in the area — a population with growing humanitarian needs, including some 200,000 people in a state of vulnerability.

Time is of the essence, especially in the midst of UNISFA's ongoing reconfiguration process. Without a sustainable peace plan and the eventual departure of United Nations forces, the chances of a resurgence of conflict are very high. If we take history as an indicator, we know that a new conflict between the two sides could have devastating results. We also hope that the current dynamics in Khartoum will not negatively interfere with Abyei. In that regard, we recognize the efforts of the African Union to establish a consensual and civilian-led transition process in the Sudan.

With regard to the reconfiguration of UNISFA, we welcome the increase in police elements and the proposal to strengthen political support, which, in short, will help to alleviate the growing number of crimes committed, effectively manage intercommunal relations and in general, maintain peace in the Area.

Another aspect of particular importance that we would like to emphasize is UNISFA's commitment to increasing the number of women in the mission, as shown by the deployment of a women and child protection adviser to the Abyei Area and the involvement of women leaders from the Misseriya and Ngok Dinka communities in gender and women's rights initiatives. In the same vein, we applaud the holding of various seminars on resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security, with special emphasis on the role of women as agents of peace and the empowerment of women to assume more active roles in community conflict resolution mechanisms.

Another border element that is undeniably critical is the need to fulfil UNISFA's mandate for the protection of civilians and peacekeeping in the Area. We are optimistic about the latest progress in the implementation of five of the established parameters, including the authorization for air and ground patrols in the border areas, the establishment of two bases of operations, community outreach activities, the holding of meetings of the Joint Political and Security Mechanism and the demilitarization of the border areas. We particularly commend the reactivation of the Joint Border Commission and the Joint Demarcation Committee.

In conclusion, the presence of UNISFA and its support to the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism have played a decisive role in the stability in the Abyei Area, especially in the rapprochement between Juba and Khartoum and the Misseriya and Ngok Dinka communities. However, in order for the rapprochement to be sustainable, both the Sudan and South Sudan must do more, as soon as possible, to fulfil their commitments and we, in the Council, must continue to seek ways to make UNISFA operations more effective. In the end, those two elements together will allow UNISFA to continue to operate successfully.

Mr. Meza-Cuadra (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): We welcome the holding of this meeting and are grateful to Under-Secretary-General Jean-Pierre Lacroix for his comprehensive briefing. We also welcome Mr. Parfait Onanga-Anyanga in his new role as Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Horn of Africa and wish him every success in discharging his duties.

We would like to begin by highlighting the stabilizing role of the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA) in Abyei and along the border between the Sudan and South Sudan. Its presence in strategic trouble spots and its proactive role as a mediator among the communities has enabled it to respond effectively to violence in those areas. We attach equal importance to the mission's support for capacity-building in key areas such as the maintenance of law and order, the rule of law and gender equality. In that regard, we highly value the inclusion of women in community protection committees.

With regard to law and order, we reiterate the urgent need to establish a police force in Abyei. We call on the Government of South Sudan to continue its joint planning efforts for the establishment of that force, and on the Government of the Sudan to expedite the issuance of visas for UNISFA police personnel so that they can contribute to the full establishment of the rule of law in Abyei as soon as possible.

We also note with concern that inflation and the economic crisis in both the Sudan and South Sudan have aggravated the humanitarian situation in Abyei. We welcome the efforts of humanitarian personnel to address this situation through food assistance, health services, capacity-building and educational activities, among other things. We hope that international cooperation can continue to provide the

necessary resources for development projects and the establishment of adequate basic services.

We welcome the progress made by both Governments on the border demarcation. However, we are concerned that no progress has yet been made on key issues such as the completion of the withdrawal of forces from the Safe Demilitarized Border Zone and the full establishment of border crossing corridors, as well as customs and migration offices.

We trust that the Governments of the Sudan and South Sudan will capitalize on recent developments in the region to move forward with concrete measures leading to the resolution of the issue of the status of Abyei and the full determination of the common border. In that context, we reiterate our support for the Secretary-General's recommendations on improving the civilian component of the mission, with a view to smoother cooperation with the African Union Commission and its High-level Implementation Panel. We believe that the Abyei issue cannot be postponed indefinitely. Building sustainable peace requires progress on the political process through the Abyei Joint Oversight Committee and the Joint Political and Security Mechanism.

I will conclude by expressing our hope that, despite the difficult conditions, the Governments of the Sudan and South Sudan will be able to make joint progress that will lead to the resolution of the issue of the status of Abyei and the determination of the common border. The Council must continue to support the parties. UNISFA must remain in the Abyei Area, adapt its mandates to the situation on the ground and create the necessary space for a viable political solution to the conflict.

Mr. Hickey (United Kingdom): I would like to begin by extending a warm welcome back to the Security Council to Special Envoy Onanga-Anyanga. We look forward to working with him on this very important topic.

I think we all agree that this is a very complex issue. It also strikes me that this is an interesting time to be discussing this issue given the major upheavals in the Sudan, which the Special Envoy referred to. We share his view that it is absolutely vital for the Sudanese authorities and the Government of South Sudan to continue to cooperate, despite what has been happening on the ground, and to implement their agreements in relation to the border.

I also very much agree with the tone set by both of our briefers today on recent developments. There is much to welcome over the past six months. Overall, the security situation in Abyei has remained generally calm, despite sporadic instances of violence. We should also welcome the improved cooperation between the Government of South Sudan and the authorities in the Sudan, and the progress made against the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism benchmarks. However, we continue to have two major concerns.

First, we share the concerns expressed today by Under-Secretary-General Lacroix about intercommunal tensions and the political rhetoric and criminality that exacerbates them. This remains the largest challenge to stability, and we think that the support of United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA) for local mediation, community protection and judicial initiatives remain absolutely vital, as does the full deployment of UNISFA's police assets. On that issue, like Kuwait and the United States, we remain very concerned about the delays in the issuing of visas for key personnel, especially for the Jordanian technical reconnaissance delegation. We urge the Sudanese authorities to issue those visas without delay. I would like to request of our Sudanese colleagues to update the Council on the issuing of those visas during their intervention.

Our second concern is related to the issue raised by the Peruvian Ambassador — the humanitarian situation in Abyei — which, as he said, has been caused by both rapid inflation and the economic crises in both countries. The United Kingdom is providing \$40 million this year in emergency humanitarian support to help the Sudan's most vulnerable and excluded communities with their basic food and health needs. We urge all States Members of the United Nations to assist in that regard.

Finally, turning to the question of UNISFA's upcoming mandate renewal, we commend the really important work that the mission is doing on the ground, particularly with regard to mediation among the various parties. We therefore support the recommendation for a six-month mandate renewal. We agree, however, with the Council members who have said that the mission does need to adapt to the situation on the ground. Therefore, we also support the recommendation on enhancing the mission's civilian component in order to help with its support to the African Union Commission and its High-level Implementation Panel.

Mrs. Van Vlierberge (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I would like to warmly thank the Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations, Mr. Jean-Pierre Lacroix, as well as the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Horn of Africa, Mr. Parfait Onanga-Anyanga, for their very insightful briefings.

We are aware of the current political situation in the Sudan, and the issue of Abyei is inextricably connected. Belgium continues to closely monitor developments and encourages the parties to continue their dialogue to find a solution that establishes a political transition authority led by civilians, in line with the will of the people of the Sudan.

We welcome the fact that the security situation in the Abyei Area remains relatively calm. Nevertheless, it is still tense and unpredictable due to persistent challenges on the political, humanitarian and economic fronts. The situation could deteriorate rapidly, with unacceptable consequences for civilians. Therefore, we fully agree with the Secretary-General that the continued presence of the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA) remains crucial. I wish to underline two points — the need for a political solution and the role of UNISFA in that regard.

The Council has long been committed to peace and security in the Abyei Area and must continue to play a role in the prevention of violence. Stability in the region remains our main goal. The primary responsibility for implementing the agreements of 2011 and 2012 lies with the Governments of both countries. However, it is clear that no progress has been made since last November in terms of keeping to the commitments agreed by the parties. Increasingly belligerent political remarks, noted by UNISFA, highlight the need and urgency for renewed dialogue.

The Security Council should encourage the Governments of the Sudan and South Sudan to quickly establish joint mechanisms, make progress on border demarcation and, in the longer term, develop a political solution to settle the final status of the Abyei Area and other border disputes. We call on the African Union High-level Implementation Panel, led by President Mbeki, and the African Union Commission to revitalize their support for political dialogue between the parties.

As the name of the mission indicates, UNISFA was established as an interim security force in 2011. The environment in which it operates has evolved since then. The Council will have to renew the mandate of

the mission in two weeks' time, and the mandate should be adapted to the situation. A lasting political solution is needed for Abyei. The Council must make sure that the dispute between the Sudan and South Sudan over Abyei and the border region does not become another frozen conflict.

We support the recommendations of the Secretary-General, in particular the recommendation to strengthen the civilian component of the mission — to which my French colleague also referred — with a view to facilitating the revitalization of the political process and devising a possible exit strategy.

The Council should also consider how to adapt the military and police components of the mission to effectively address the challenge of rising crime rates in the region in the absence of national security forces. We call on the parties to facilitate the operations of the mission, including the issuance of visas.

I would like to conclude by saying that dialogue is the only option for resolving the Abyei issue. The presence of UNISFA remains crucial for the stability of the region, but it cannot replace the role of the State. Only a political settlement can address the causes of the conflict and ensure the long-term stability of both the Sudan and South Sudan. The Council must therefore ensure that the mission has the necessary resources to support the achievement of that fundamental objective.

Mr. Moriko (Côte d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): My delegation thanks Mr. Jean-Pierre Lacroix and Mr. Parfait Onanga-Anyanga for their briefings on the evolving situation in Abyei, the operationalization of the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism and the mandate of the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA). Their observations and recommendations, whose relevance we welcome, have moved my delegation to make the following comments on the security, political and humanitarian situations, as well as on the mandate of UNISFA.

With regard to the security situation, my delegation notes with concern the persistence of criminal acts and intercommunal violence despite the relative stability that prevails in the Abyei Area. In that regard, my delegation welcomes the stabilizing role of UNISFA and the commitment of community leaders to engage in dialogue as a means of resolving their differences, which is a good example of the inclusion of local populations in peacebuilding efforts and the strengthening of peaceful coexistence between the two communities

living in the Abyei Area. My country strongly supports that commendable initiative and encourages UNISFA and all the relevant actors to continue along that path.

My delegation remains concerned by the increase in disturbances of the peace, which made it necessary for the Sudanese and South Sudanese parties to jointly establish the Abyei police service and rapidly deploy formed police units, in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions and agreements between the parties. Côte d'Ivoire calls on all parties to speed up the process of implementing those procedures.

With regard to the political situation, my country notes with regret that the parties have not been able to capitalize on the recent improvement in their relations to accelerate the implementation of the provisions of the agreement between the Government of the Republic of the Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement on temporary arrangements for the administration and security of the Abyei Area of 20 June 2011.

Côte d'Ivoire therefore urges the Sudanese and South Sudanese parties to work towards the rapid deployment of a common administration for the Abyei Area with a view to consolidating the gains made with the support of UNISFA. My country also urges local communities to refrain from any actions that could jeopardize the current stability, the conclusion of the negotiations on the final status of Abyei and efforts to build resilience.

On the humanitarian front, my delegation commends the United Nations agencies and humanitarian organizations, which in spite of the difficulties encountered are making considerable efforts to provide assistance on many levels to the people living in the Abyei Area, thereby helping to respond to the urgent health, education and subsistence needs of vulnerable populations. My delegation is also of the view that those efforts deserve the greatest attention and call for the continued mobilization of the international community, including the Security Council.

To conclude with the question of the implementation of the mandate of UNISFA, Côte d'Ivoire commends the invaluable support that it has provided to the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism in terms of stabilizing the Abyei Area, in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions. The Council's unanimous decision to extend the mandate of UNISFA until 15 October reflects its recognition of the progress made by the parties, in particular concerning

the implementation of the measures set out in paragraph 3 of resolution 2438 (2018). The Sudanese and South Sudanese parties should see in that decision the Council's encouragement to work harder to find lasting solutions to their border disputes by implementing the border agreements and operationalizing the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism.

While Côte d'Ivoire welcomes the renewal of UNISFA's mandate, it is also of the view that, in order to maximize UNISFA's efficiency and to preserve what it has achieved during its eight years in Abyei, the mandate should be adjusted in order to reflect the positive trends observed on the ground. In that regard, Côte d'Ivoire takes note of the Secretary-General's call for the strengthening of UNISFA's political component, in support of the efforts of the African Union Commission and the African Union High-level Implementation Panel.

In conclusion, Côte d'Ivoire welcomes the renewal of the mandate of UNISFA in the light of the recommendations of the Secretary-General and all the actors involved in the resolution of the Abyei issue, in particular the Sudan, South Sudan, Ethiopia and the African Union.

Mr. Yao Shaojun (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): We are grateful to Mr. Lacroix, Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations, and Mr. Parfait Onanga-Anyanga, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Horn of Africa, for their briefings. We support the Special Envoy in his very important new role.

At present, the situation in the Abyei Area is generally stable. Over the past six months, the Governments of the Sudan and South Sudan have strengthened their interaction on the Abyei issue and have actively cooperated with the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA) in the discharge of its mandate. Intergovernmental working mechanisms such as the Joint Political and Security Mechanism and the Joint Border Commission continue to function normally. This shows the two Governments' willingness to cooperate in settling the Abyei issue, which we welcome. At the same time, however, many challenges remain in the area. A proper settlement of the issue is important to ensuring the stability of both countries and the region as a whole. The Security Council should continue to monitor the situation and support African countries solving African problems in African ways.

The work for the next phase should focus on two specific aspects. First, we should continue to promote good cooperation between the Governments of the Sudan and South Sudan so as to achieve a political solution to the Abyei issue as soon as possible. Good cooperation between the two countries is the prerequisite for securing a political solution to the Abyei issue. The Council should continue to fully respect the ownership of the Sudan and South Sudan on this question, listen carefully to their views and support the mediation efforts of regional and subregional organizations such as the African Union (AU) and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development in promoting improved good-neighbourliness and enhanced mutual trust between the two Governments. Right now the international community should assist the two Governments in working together to establish administrative, judicial and public-security institutions in the area, ease tensions among ethnic groups and improve the community security environment.

Secondly, we should continue to UNISFA in performing its mandated functions, as it is an important force for maintaining stability in the Area. China supports the continued renewal of UNISFA's mandate and has taken note of the recommendations contained in the Secretary-General's report (S/2019/305). With regard to the mission's reconfiguration or adjustment, the Security Council should listen carefully to the views of both Governments, the AU and the troop-contributing countries. The Secretariat should strengthen coordination and communication with the relevant parties in order to enable the peacekeeping force to better play its role in facilitating a proper settlement of the issue. China is ready and willing to work with African countries and the international community to promote a settlement of the Abyei issue and to make its contribution to advancing peace, stability and development in Africa.

Mr. Polyanskiy (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We too would like to thank Under-Secretary-General Lacroix for his information on the inter-Sudanese settlement and the activities of the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA). We welcome Mr. Onanga-Anyanga in his new role as Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Horn of Africa and thank him for his briefing.

We believe that the joint efforts of both parties are vital to the successful promotion of an inter-Sudanese settlement. The bilateral agreements concluded in

September 2012 in Addis Ababa, along with the relevant resolutions of the Security Council, represent a good basis for the cooperation between Khartoum and Juba. We should not omit to point out that relations between the Sudanese parties have warmed significantly since September 2018. Khartoum's effective participation in the Intergovernmental Authority on Development's mediation efforts for the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan has helped the people of South Sudan overcome the deadlock in the peace settlement. We join the Secretary-General's call to build on this positive momentum in the interests of achieving a settlement in Abyei as well. We hope that the African Union High-level Implementation Panel will continue to be an important mechanism in assisting the normalization of relations between the two countries.

We are pleased that the situation in Abyei remains stable. We believe UNISFA's efforts to maintain constructive relations with local communities are important. The measures undertaken by the United Nations to prevent intercommunal conflict and establish intercommunal cooperation on issues of law and order and economic activity in the area of the Amiet common market deserve all possible support, as it will be impossible to restore trust and achieve reconciliation between the two communities without it. We deplore the fact that few of the provisions of the agreement of 20 June 2011 are being implemented. The power vacuum in the region continues, and the demilitarized status of Abyei itself and of the buffer zone at the border between the Sudan and South Sudan is being violated. We would also like to see more regular contact between the parties.

We have carefully studied the data provided by the Secretariat on the parties' implementation of the benchmarks established in resolution 2438 (2018) for launching the full functioning of the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism. We note that Khartoum and Juba have been working on meeting them throughout the reporting period and have made significant progress. However, we are quite certain that the success of these efforts will depend not only on the political will of the parties, which they have demonstrated, but also on the concrete circumstances and dynamics of the situation on the ground. In our view, the Mechanism is an essential element in the system for preventing incidents between the parties, and withdrawing UNISFA's support to it could have a very

negative effect on the prospects for achieving a final settlement of the situation around Abyei. We therefore supported the Council's adoption of resolution 2465 (2019), which extended UNISFA's mandate to assist the Mechanism through 15 October.

We are all familiar with the factors that are preventing Khartoum and Juba from expediting the process of reaching a settlement on Abyei's final status. In that context, maintaining UNISFA's continued presence in the region continues to be crucial, and in that regard, the Russian Federation supports the Secretary-General's proposal to extend UNISFA's mandate for another six months. However, we believe that consideration of the Secretariat's proposals with regard to the mission's civilian component should take into account the views of Khartoum and Juba, as the fundamental principles of peacekeeping prescribe.

Mr. Elé Ela (Equatorial Guinea) (*spoke in Spanish*): We salute Mr. Jean Pierre Lacroix, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, and Mr. Parfait Onanga-Anyanga, the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Horn of Africa, whose presence we especially welcome as he assumes his new functions.

Equatorial Guinea reiterates its appreciation for the stabilizing role that the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA) plays in the Abyei Area through its consistent efforts to communicate and mediate between the Ngok Dinka and Misseriya communities, which demonstrate its commitment to the welfare of the people of the Abyei Area and the border zones. The joint peace committee meetings between these communities should be regularly held for all the communities living in the Abyei Area with a view to bringing the conflict to an end. However, we are concerned about the increasing problems with law and order in the Area. In that regard, we encourage the Sudan and South Sudan, the two countries concerned, to continue their joint planning for establishing the Abyei police service by granting visas to increase UNISFA police personnel.

We cannot ignore the most recent developments in the Sudan in the context of the issues of Abyei, UNISFA and the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism. The state of affairs is still uncertain and we should monitor events on the ground closely. We believe that this is not the time to make new decisions with regard to the Sudan, and we must give the new authorities some time to reveal their intentions on

a wide range of relevant issues, clearly including the issue of Abyei and the Sudan's relationship with South Sudan. At this time, the Security Council's demands on the Government in Khartoum should focus on ensuring stability throughout its territory and remaining fully committed to its existing agreements, including those relating to a settlement of the conflict in Abyei. In that regard, we believe that UNISFA's involvement is essential to maintaining stability in these times of great uncertainty, including its contribution to the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism. In that context, the approval of the extension of UNISFA's mandate for six months is more than timely. For the same reason, we do not think that the number of UNISFA troops should be reduced, indeed we advocate rather the opposite, in order to maintain and preserve the achievements that have been made.

The 2011 Agreements remain the only way to achieve lasting stability in the region and the border between Sudan and South Sudan. All the parties must clearly reconfirm their commitment to them and make the necessary efforts to take steps to achieve peace and stability as soon as possible.

In conclusion, we thank all those who have made the progress in the Abyei Area possible — the African Union, the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism and the Ethiopian troops. They have shown commendable determination in the search for peace and security in the border area. We urge them to maintain the momentum and spirit of compromise required for the implementation of the signed agreements.

We also urge the Government in Khartoum to engage as soon as possible in talks with South Sudan and with regional, African and international partners, in particular UNISFA, in order to address the challenges facing the country with regard to Abyei in particular and its relations with South Sudan in general.

Ms. Wronecka (Poland): I would like to thank Under-Secretary-General Jean-Pierre Lacroix and Special Envoy Parfait Onanga-Anyanga for the information they have shared with us today. Allow me also to convey my best wishes to the Special Envoy and offer him Poland's full support.

I would like to focus my statement on two issues — the current situation in the Abyei Area and the mandate of the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA).

We take note of the relatively stable security situation in Abyei, but at the same time we recognize that many challenges still remain on the political, humanitarian and economic fronts. We note with regret that no progress has been made in the implementation of the 2011 Agreement on Temporary Arrangements for the Administration and Security of the Abyei Area. We are concerned that the lack of a genuine political process between the Sudan and South Sudan is solidifying the administrative vacuum that exists in Abyei. The absence of effective formal authorities in Abyei has resulted in limited law enforcement and a lack of good governance and the rule of law. It also hinders the delivery of basic services to the population.

We encourage Sudanese and South Sudanese authorities to build on the rapprochement between the two countries that we have witnessed over the past months and work together to achieve a lasting solution to the status of Abyei. At the same time, we call on all parties to refrain from any activities that put at risk the fragile peace achieved in Abyei.

Turning to the work of UNISFA and the renewal of its mandate, Poland believes that the relatively calm situation in Abyei is to a large extent a result of the stabilizing role played by UNISFA. We are convinced that every peacekeeping mission should adapt to the changing realities on the ground. Therefore, UNISFA also has to be able to adjust its tasks to the current situation in Abyei.

Last year we voted in favour of UNISFA's new mandate, which reinforced the police component within the mission in response to the weak rule of law in the Abyei Area. Today, however, we note with regret that the increase in police personnel has yet to be implemented, and we call on the Sudan's authorities to facilitate the mission's reconfiguration. At the same time, we commend the progress achieved by the Sudan and South Sudan in the implementation of the benchmarks set out by the Security Council with regard to the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism.

When it comes to UNISFA's mandate, we support its renewal for another six months. We agree with the Secretary-General that UNISFA should be able to engage in achieving a political solution in Abyei, in collaboration with the African Union Commission and the African Union High-level Implementation Panel. We therefore support the Secretary-General's recommendation to strengthen the political posture

of the mission and enhance its capacity to support a political process in the Abyei Area.

I would like to conclude by stressing that there can be no other way for the Sudan and South Sudan to resolve the question of Abyei than through dialogue, including intercommunal dialogue and reconciliation, and a genuine and inclusive political process that involves women and young people.

UNISFA's presence remains crucial for the stability of Abyei, but it cannot substitute the role of the State. Poland believes that the Security Council should remain unified on that issue and support all efforts to achieve a lasting solution to the status of Abyei.

Ms. Sabelo (South Africa): We join other delegations in expressing our appreciation to you, Mr. President, for holding this meeting, as well as to our briefers for their comprehensive briefings. We also would like to congratulate Mr. Onanga-Anyanga on his new role as Special Envoy for the Horn of Africa.

I would like to limit my intervention to the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA), the status of Abyei and the humanitarian situation.

With regard to UNISFA, South Africa welcomes the role that UNISFA has played in improving intercommunal relations through its proactive engagement with the communities, particularly along the flashpoints, as well as its efforts in supporting local-level dialogue between the Ngok Dinka and Misseriya communities. We note with concern, however, that intercommunal violence still occurs and that, although the current military threat to the Abyei Area remains limited, the presence of armed groups has the potential to inflame tensions between the communities.

South Africa wishes to remind the parties that resolution 1990 (2011) stipulated that the Abyei Area should be demilitarized from any forces other than UNISFA and the Abyei police service. In the absence of an Abyei police service, the United Nations should continue to advise and mentor the community protection committees on maintaining law and order.

In view of the forthcoming discussions on the mandate renewal of UNISFA, South Africa stresses that the extension of the mandate should take into consideration the evolution of the current political situation in the Sudan and the transitions taking place in South Sudan. Consequently, we should also guard against taking decisions that could possibly

aggravate the current prevailing political environment. Furthermore, we should ensure that the mission is fit for purpose.

South Africa supports the recommendations of the Secretary-General to maintain the presence of UNISFA in the Abyei Area and within the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism, which remains crucial to sustaining the stability achieved thus far. Equally, it is imperative that the mission continue to support the two Governments and the African Union in working to achieve a political resolution to the impasse.

Abyei has been a thorny issue for both countries for many years. We welcome and recognize the progress that has been achieved against the benchmarks. However, we also recognize that Abyei remains the one area that could unravel a lot of the good progress that has been achieved by both countries. In that regard, we should utilize the current political environment to recalibrate and redouble efforts to address all outstanding issues in order to create lasting peace.

We welcome the meetings of the Joint Border Commission between the two countries, which are a step in the right direction and another milestone on the path towards resolving the final status of Abyei.

Furthermore, the stabilization of Abyei remains critical, not only for South Sudan and the Sudan but also for the region and neighbouring States. We should therefore continue to encourage the implementation of all relevant agreements, which will ultimately lead to the final resolution of the status of Abyei and all its outstanding issues.

Lastly, on the humanitarian front, we welcome the work of UNISFA in facilitating the delivery of humanitarian assistance by providing logistical support. We also commend the United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations that continue to provide much-needed assistance programmes to more than 180,000 communities in the Abyei region and neighbouring States.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of Germany.

Before turning to Abyei and the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA), I would like to do what our South African colleague suggested — to look at the current political environment in Abyei. With regard to the Sudan, we are following events very closely. We see that the Sudanese people are

standing up peacefully and with determination for their legitimate demands. Germany echoes what the African Union and the European Union High Representative Mogherini have said in calling for a swift handover to a civilian-led transitional Government. I can only echo what Mr. Onanga-Anyanga has said with regard to the fact that the gains achieved so far should not be lost.

Turning to South Sudan, the peace process is at a crossroads. The date 12 May is approaching. Essential questions regarding the security arrangements and borders have not yet been resolved. Germany calls on the South Sudanese leaders to do their utmost so that in time the Transitional Government of National Unity is established.

Turning to UNISFA, I would first like to pay tribute to all its personnel and the troop- and police-contributors that are active in the mission, in particular Ethiopia. I express my condolences over the three peacekeepers who lost their lives. UNISFA continues to be crucial to stabilizing Abyei as long as there is no political settlement and no Government structures that address the lack of socioeconomic development, criminality and the increased availability of small arms.

With respect to its new mandate, we believe that UNISFA must be equipped so that it can fulfil its mandate and address the challenges that I have just described.

We agree with the Secretary-General's recommendations. UNISFA should address the crime rate and support community-level peace processes, mediation and dialogue. My South Africa colleague has just pointed to specific communities. It is an obligation for UNISFA to contribute in that regard. It should also advance its support to the African Union Commission, the African Union High-level Implementation Panel and the two parties.

I want to echo what half of the members of the Security Council said with regard to the strengthening of the police component. I urge the Sudan to issue visas without delays. As my United Kingdom colleague requested, in his statement the Sudanese representative could perhaps address that issue and make a commitment that the visas will finally be issued.

We must strengthen the civilian component of the mission and support the community-level reconciliation, as I have mentioned earlier, but of course the mission needs the staff for that. We would also like

to highlight the need to strengthen the human rights monitoring component, including regarding assessing and combating sexual and gender-based violence, as well as fighting impunity and implementing the spirit and letter of resolution 2467 (2019).

In conclusion, the international community cannot solve the issues for the Sudan and South Sudan. The countries themselves must engage. We need timelines. We call on the parties to resume regular meetings of the Abyei Joint Oversight Committee and the Joint Political and Security Mechanism. We also urge that consultations on Abyei at the ministerial level be resumed as soon as possible.

Finally, Germany underlines and believes it essential to ensure the full and meaningful participation of women at all stages of the political process and peacebuilding in Abyei, as well as other conflicts. They can count on Germany's support for such efforts.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I give the floor to the representative of the Sudan.

Mr. Ahmed (Sudan) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would first like to thank you, Mr. President, for giving me this opportunity. I thank Mr. Lacroix, Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations, for his briefing. I also welcome Mr. Onanga-Anyanga, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Horn of Africa. I would like to express my country's appreciation for his work, and we stand ready to cooperate and coordinate with him.

At the outset, I reaffirm that my country's Government is committed to all agreements signed with the sisterly Republic of South Sudan, foremost among which is the Agreement between the Government of the Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement on temporary arrangements for the administration and security of the Abyei Area, signed on 20 June 2011, and the Cooperation Agreement between the Republic of the Sudan and the Republic of South Sudan, signed on 27 September 2012.

I take this opportunity to emphasize the importance of the 2011 agreement, which is the cornerstone of all arrangements related to the issue of Abyei, including the deployment of the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA). The two parties to the agreement agreed that the 2011 agreement would remain in force until the final status of Abyei had been settled. Both parties also agreed to refrain from making

any amendment to the UNISFA mandate without the approval of the three parties, namely, the Sudan, South Sudan and Ethiopia, the only troop-contributing country to UNISFA.

I also reaffirm that the issue of Abyei should be considered in the overall framework of the relations between the Sudan and the Republic of South Sudan. In that regard, my delegation refers to the progress made recently in the relations between the two countries, especially after the Sudan hosted the peace negotiations on South Sudan. That has led, as the Council knows, to the signing in September 2018 of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan, which has contributed to improving cooperation and coordination between the two countries and to the implementation of the provisions of the UNISFA mandate.

We hope that such cooperation will continue, since on 11 April the Sudan embarked on a new era in order to implement all the provisions of the June 2011 agreement, which is the principal agreement leading to the final status of Abyei. It sets up the Abyei institutions, namely, the joint administration for Abyei, the joint legislative council and the joint police force, I am sure that Council members will agree that those institutions are indispensable in order to manage the region, provide the services that the people need, promote peaceful coexistence among the various elements of society and ensure the proper conditions for settling the final status of Abyei in a manner that meets the aspirations of all stakeholders and is acceptable to all parties.

It goes without saying that the Abyei Protocol, which is an integral part of the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement, is the bedrock foundation recognized by the Security Council. The Protocol explicitly stipulates that Abyei is an integral part of the territory of the Sudan. That is a historical fact. It is therefore impossible to review the arrangements that are based on the Comprehensive Peace Agreement without completely recognizing that fact.

In conclusion, I would like once again to thank and express my gratitude to all our partners, friends and brothers in the Republic of South Sudan, who have worked in good faith to strengthen peace and stability.

We would also like to thank those who strive to facilitate the work of UNISFA, in particular the Government and the people of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia. We also thank all the staff of

UNISFA. We reiterate the Sudan's determination to continue working with UNISFA in order to ensure that it can discharge all its tasks in a smooth way.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of South Sudan.

Mrs. Adeng (South Sudan): I thank you once again, Mr. President, for allowing us to address the Council under your presidency for the month of April. On behalf of the Government of the Republic of South Sudan, I would like to thank the Council for holding this briefing on the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA).

We would like to recognize the presence of Mr. Jean-Pierre Lacroix, Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations, and Mr. Parfait Onanga-Anyanga, Special Envoy for the Horn of Africa.

The Government of South Sudan appreciate the diligent efforts of UNISFA, and the Governments of our two countries have been progressive in efforts to achieve an everlasting peace between the two countries. We are optimistic that the process started by the sisterly countries to resolve the issue of Abyei will continue, making it possible to create an environment conducive to the resolution of the final status of Abyei, which, as stated in the comprehensive Peace Agreement, should be done through a referendum of the people of Abyei.

In the case of troop deployment, consultation with and the consent of the parties before and during the deployment of troops is paramount, in line with the principles underlying peacekeeping operations.

We would like to assure the Council that the Government of South Sudan remains committed to the full implementation of the September 2018 revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan, as it is to the agreement signed between the Sudan and South Sudan.

We would like to acknowledge and express our appreciation to Major General Gebre Adhana Woldezgu, the outgoing Acting Head of Mission and Force Commander, for his determined efforts to maintain peace and stability in the Abyei Area.

To conclude, once again we would like to assure the Council that the Government of the Republic of South Sudan and the Government of the Republic of the Sudan are committed to the implementation of the

mandate. We are therefore requesting the continued support of the Council.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of Germany.

I would like to turn again to the representative of the Sudan and ask him if he could respond to the question that was put to him by several delegations around the table with regard to the issue of visas, in particular for police personnel.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I give the floor to the representative of the Sudan.

Mr. Ahmed (Sudan) (*spoke in Arabic*): Council members are aware that with respect to resolution 1990 (2011), which was preceded by the June 2011 agreement on the arrangements for Abyei, we were able, through the Council, to agree on an important institution for the Abyei area, namely, the joint police service for Abyei. We are of course aware that the Council adopted resolution 2438 (2018), under which the police component of the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA) was to be augmented. That requires various measures and consultations in order to avoid undermining the agreements that have been signed between the Sudan and South Sudan.

The Council and before it the African Union have said that the formation of essential mechanisms and institutions for Abyei is the only way forward towards defining the final status of Abyei. The relevant authorities of the Sudan are taking the necessary measures in order to create conditions favourable to the consideration of the issuance of visas to the proposed police personnel, in conformity with the Council's resolution. However, we need more time for that. We hope that the Council will understand the situation and give us more time, so that we can take the measures necessary to prevent any negative impact on the situation on the ground. It must also be taken into account that the situation is now changing in the Sudan and that these changes have had, of course, an impact on all State institutions that are seeking to create the proper conditions for UNISFA's work in Abyei.

To conclude, the consideration of the issuance of visas for the police components in Abyei is ongoing within the relevant institutions in the Sudan.

The President: I thank the representative of the Sudan for his clarification.

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 12.35 p.m.