



Security Council

Seventy-sixth year

8901st meeting

Wednesday, 10 November 2021, 10 a.m.

New York

Provisional

<i>President:</i>	Mrs. Buenrostro Massieu	(Mexico)
<i>Members:</i>	China	Mr. Geng Shuang
	Estonia	Mr. Lipand
	France	Mr. De Rivière
	India	Mr. Raguttahalli
	Ireland	Ms. Byrne Nason
	Kenya	Mr. Kiboino
	Niger	Mr. Maman Sani
	Norway	Ms. Heimerback
	Russian Federation	Ms. Evstigneeva
	Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	Ms. King
	Tunisia	Mr. Cherif
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . .	Mr. Kariuki
	United States of America	Mrs. Thomas-Greenfield
	Viet Nam	Mr. Dang

Agenda

United Nations peacekeeping operations

Police Commissioners

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the translation of speeches delivered in other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-0506 (verbatimrecords@un.org). Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (<http://documents.un.org>).

21-32894 (E)



Accessible document

Please recycle



The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

United Nations peacekeeping operations

Police Commissioners

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Mr. Jean-Pierre Lacroix, Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations; Ms. Violet Lusala, Police Commissioner, United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei; and Ms. Patricia Boughani, Police Commissioner, United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali.

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

The intention for this meeting is for it to be as interactive as possible, as we were at the same briefing last November (see S/2020/1092) and as we are in our dialogue with Force Commanders. We look forward to questions from Council members to the Commissioners and from the Commissioners to the Council.

I now give the floor to Mr. Lacroix.

Mr. Lacroix: I thank you, Madam President, for convening this briefing. I am especially pleased to be joined by two of our women Police Commissioners, who currently head our police components in Abyei and Mali, for this thematic discussion on women and peace and security in the context of United Nations police. This annual briefing to the Security Council is an opportunity to reaffirm the vital role that United Nations police play across the conflict-prevention spectrum, from peacekeeping to peacebuilding. It also provides a forum to discuss our achievements of the past year as well as priorities for the coming months.

The Action for Peacekeeping initiative continues to guide our collective responses to the challenges facing peacekeeping. Action for Peacekeeping Plus (A4P+) is our implementation strategy to move that forward. Today I will discuss how, as a key component of the United Nations peacekeeping, United Nations police are helping to advance A4P+ priorities and further strengthen the effectiveness of our peacekeeping operations. I will also highlight areas in need of greater

attention, and I would welcome hearing members' own views in support of the A4P+ agenda.

As we work to advance the priorities 1 and 2 of A4P+ and show the coherence behind political strategies and greater strategic and operational integration, I highlight that the Secretariat recently established the Inter-agency Task Force on Policing, co-chaired by the Department of Peace Operations and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. The Task Force will enable us to unite efforts throughout the United Nations system and maximize our collective impact by drawing on our comparative advantages, expertise and know-how to foster representative, responsive and accountable policing services.

To that end, United Nations police will also continue reinforcing its partnerships with regional and subregional organizations, particularly on strategic guidance, development and training. The Department aims to strengthen capabilities and mindsets, which lie at the core of the A4P+ priority 3, by aligning predeployment training by Member States with the Organization's in-mission training. For example, the Police Division, together with the Integrated Training Service, continues to make progress in the development of curricula under the United Nations Police Training Architecture Programme. In addition, next week in Brindisi, the Police Division and the Integrated Training Service will organize the first police-only meeting of the Light Coordination Mechanism. The meeting will bring together capacity providers and recipients to discuss how best to deliver and receive capacity-building, share good practices, de-conflict capacity-building initiatives and target the areas of greatest need.

To ensure the highest levels of accountability to peacekeepers, which is A4P+ priority 4, improving the safety and security of our personnel is critical. The Action Plan to Improve the Security of United Nations Peacekeepers, now in its fourth iteration, continues to structure our efforts to that end. At the same time, United Nations police carry on efforts to create an enabling environment, including by promoting women's networks within our missions, which advise mission leadership on living conditions for women peacekeepers and how to foster gender-responsive working environments.

In the United Nations Mission in South Sudan, former Police Commissioner Unaisi Bolatolu-

Vuniwaqa, who recently finished her tour of duty and whom we thank for her outstanding leadership, put in place an exit analysis strategy that involves mandatory anonymous surveys of women police officers to gain insights into their experiences and areas in need of improvement, in order to foster their meaningful participation. The Mission is currently working to correct concrete concerns identified in the survey.

To advance priority 5 — the accountability of peacekeepers — United Nations police reinforce zero-tolerance for sexual exploitation and abuse, including through enhanced predeployment and in-mission training.

Conduct also relates to how we manage the environmental footprints of our mission, and the United Nations police continues to refine its Environmental Management Framework by aligning the initiatives of police components in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic, the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali, the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the United Nations Mission in South Sudan with their missions' environmental risk management plans.

Regarding priority 6, on strategic communications, in line with the joint initiatives on hate speech of the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and the Department of Peace Operations, the United Nations police works to amplify the positive impact of our presence through enhanced strategic communications, including new engagement on social media platforms, as well as community-oriented policing and awareness-raising activities to combat misinformation/disinformation about the coronavirus disease pandemic in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, confront sexual and gender-based violence in South Sudan and encourage dialogue and trust between Cypriot communities. Further efforts will be made across all those missions to encourage more a network type of communication policies involving all mission components.

And finally, in line with A4P+ priority 7, our efforts to improve cooperation with host countries will enable smooth transitions, just as we witnessed in Darfur, where the United Nations police, in concert with the Sudan's police force, helped facilitate the drawdown of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid

Operation in Darfur and the transition to the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan, providing much-needed interim policing, police-planning capacities and knowledge transfer.

In addition to integrating more technical tools and innovation in peacekeeping, the women and peace and security agenda is infused in all aspects of A4P+ and remains the foundation for improving our overall effectiveness. Gender-responsive policing efforts by the United Nations police ensure that the different security needs of men, women, girls and boys are considered. With the support of our Member States, the United Nations police has already achieved its gender parity targets for 2025, and I am very pleased that five of our police components are currently headed by women, including Police Commissioners Lusala and Boughani. We will continue to count on the Security Council's assistance in helping us expand and sustain those numbers.

A4P aims to refocus peacekeeping on realistic expectations, make peacekeeping missions stronger and safer, and mobilize greater support for political solutions and for well-equipped, well-trained forces. Through this, we are better placed to address today's challenges to peace and security and, ultimately, to improve the lives of the people we serve.

I thank all Council members for their continued dedication to implementing their respective A4P and A4P+ commitments.

We are grateful for the Council's support for our efforts, and we hope that we can continue to count on it.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Mr. Lacroix for the information he provided.

I now give the floor to Ms. Lusala.

Ms. Lusala: I thank you, Madam President, for the opportunity to take part in this important briefing.

I will first discuss the most recent developments in the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA).

UNISFA, which was established in 2011, is in its tenth year of operations. The improved relationship between our two host countries — the Sudan and South Sudan — has not yet translated into progress towards finding a political solution for the final status of Abyei.

Challenges to the protection of civilians and mandate implementation in general remain — among them, the limited rule of law structures, human rights violations, impediments to humanitarian assistance and the impact of the coronavirus disease pandemic.

The United Nations police (UNPOL) continues to mitigate the situation in Abyei in line with UNISFA's mandate, the Action for Peacekeeping (A4P) initiative and the women and peace and security agenda.

I will provide a brief analysis of the situation.

Resolution 1990 (2011) initially mandated UNPOL to help establish the Abyei police service, but that has not been realized to date as several invitations to the relevant parties to jointly plan for the police service have not been honoured. In the absence of the Abyei police service, resolution 2205 (2015) authorized UNISFA to enhance the capacities of the voluntary community protection committees. UNPOL currently works with 31 community protection committees and one joint protection committee station comprising 767 members, including 132 females, in the delivery of the protection of civilians. Activities include gender-responsive community interactive patrols; prevention and protection for women and girls from sexual and gender-based violence; the monitoring of human rights compliance; as well as training and capacity-building for the maintenance of law and order, respect for human rights, gender and child protection and community-oriented policing.

With regard to progress in the implementation of the protection of civilians mandate, the presence of armed elements, intercommunal clashes and cattle-rustling continue to negatively impact the implementation of the mission's mandate, despite UNISFA's continued role in the maintenance of public order, the prevention of crime and the protection of vulnerable populations. The transhumance migratory season, which is between October and April, is especially problematic.

The mission's response to those threats includes ground and aerial patrols conducted by UNPOL and the military, checkpoints and engagement with the local communities to foster dialogue and conflict resolution. UNPOL personnel, deployed in 7 out of 15 team sites, monitor and report on human rights violations and foster the maintenance of public law and order.

The mission's efforts have resulted in a reduction of acts of criminality and human rights violations.

For instance, compared to last year, the current year saw a 60 per cent reduction in arms-related incidents, including a 62 per cent reduction in the number of civilians killed.

UNPOL's efforts are hampered by the unwillingness of South Sudan to participate in a joint integrated planning exercise for the establishment of the Abyei police service; the failure of both parties to review and endorse the memorandum of understanding on the handing over of suspects; the reluctance of the Sudan to issue visas for UNPOL personnel to enable the component to reach the authorized ceiling of 148 individual police officers (IPOs) and to deploy three formed police units (FPUs). That has hampered the mission's efforts to address criminality. The continued non-existence of the Abyei police service has created a vacuum for local law enforcement. The lack of basic services, such as water, health and education, is also a criminogenic factor.

Regarding the situation in the three temporary detention facilities in Abyei, dilapidated structures and limited legal services have resulted in overcrowding, poor living conditions and prolonged detention periods. Services for survivors of sexual and gender-based violence remain non-existent, hence the need for the establishment of a referral pathway so that psychosocial, counselling and legal services are made available to survivors, most of whom are women and minors.

Concerning options for UNISFA to address the evolving situation, building on the gains made by UNISFA so far, UNPOL continues to actively engage the leaders of both communities in Abyei and encourage them to resume dialogue for intercommunal peace.

In terms of recommendations, there is a need for increased UNPOL capacity, through the deployment of the three FPUs and the additional IPOs, from the current strength of 50 to the authorized ceiling of 148 IPOs. I look forward to a situation where a significant proportion of the anticipated FPU deployment will be female, as that will enhance the response to the concerns and priorities of women and girls. In appreciation of the impact of the Secretary-General's Uniformed Gender Parity Strategy, I am pleased to report that the proportion of women in police components in UNISFA has reached 60 per cent deployed in professional positions, including the sexual and gender-based violence adviser, and 34.7 percent of individual police officers.

I urge the Council to impress upon the two Governments the need to immediately establish the Abyei police service. Moreover, the establishment of a public defender's office in Abyei would facilitate judicial action and alleviate conditions in the detention centres. The Governments of the Sudan and South Sudan should be encouraged to provide basic services across the Abyei Area.

Meanwhile, UNPOL continues to deliver on its mandate, adapting to the realities on the ground.

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

I now give the floor to Ms. Boughani.

Ms. Boughani (*spoke in French*): I am very honoured to address the Security Council on the topic of action on mainstreaming a gender perspective in support operations.

The concept of equality is old, but its application in the field of gender is more recent. The 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, as well as resolutions 1325 (2000) and 2122 (2013), lay the foundation for the integration of women into the heart of peace and security processes. The Security Council addressed this need by establishing a gender strategy for uniformed personnel in peacekeeping operations. In addition, resolution 2242 (2015) calls on the Secretary-General to implement a strategy to double the number of women in military and police contingents by 2020. Furthermore, in the context of the twentieth anniversary of resolution 1325 (2000), the Secretary-General urged that peacekeeping partners recommit to the women and peace and security agenda.

Gender is an evolving concept. I will focus on gender relations, without ignoring other aspects of gender, such as transgender. This is a key topic, and the police component has put in place certain actions. I would like to first give the Council an overview of the situation, both internally at the United Nations police (UNPOL) component in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) and in our support to the Malian security forces.

At the UNPOL level, as of 22 October, 71 of 306 individual police officers — 20.58 per cent — and 200 of the 1,450 members of formed police units — 12.70 per cent — are women. Women are deployed in Bamako and in the regions of operation, and they hold various

posts and carry out diverse activities. The visibility of women within UNPOL should help the Malian population and the Malian security forces to see the skills and strengths of women, and even to encourage women to pursue positions traditionally considered as male-only. Although substantial efforts have been made by police-contributing countries (PCCs) to deploy women, they are still under-represented in formed police units and command positions.

With regard to our support of the Malian security forces, the gender dimension is manifested through our joint patrols; co-location, which concretely demonstrates women's competence; our training courses, for which we systematically request women's participation; and education on gender issues during each training course. In addition, we also organize sessions on specific topics, such as the role of women in securing elections. Finally, at each of our strategic meetings, we stress the importance of recruiting and deploying female staff in central and northern Mali.

In addition to this general outlook, several actions are currently being carried out. Within UNPOL, there are three main areas of work.

The first is the monitoring of infrastructure in the regions. I remind the Council that, in the framework of the Elsie Initiative, the goal is to deploy a formed police unit with 30 women with a view to mobilizing PCCs in that regard. The second area, the fight against impunity, is also one of our priorities. We have finalized our judicial police chain with the deployment of specially trained police officers as the first responders for victims of sexual violence. We have also made the regional directors of the Malian security forces aware of the technical support we can provide in that connection. The third area is a change of mindset. Creativity is needed for creating greater synergy with the other substantive Mission sections in order to promote a gender perspective.

Given the cultural dynamics and considering the limited number of women from the Malian security forces deployed in the centre and the north, UNPOL is developing several strategies.

One such strategy is strengthening the capacities of the Malian security forces, especially through projects to build women's dormitories in certain regions, equipped with an adjoining office to improve our victim response. In addition, boreholes are always required alongside the construction of infrastructure — both

in the field and at Headquarters — in order to meet the water needs of the population and, by extension, of women.

Other measures include training courses carried out as part of a global project and the financial empowerment of women through quick-impact projects.

I would be remiss if I did not mention community policing. As part of the implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation on Mali, we are helping to establish community policing and operationalize advisory security committees, which are a consultative framework connecting representatives of the State, the security services and the local population. The end goal is inclusive management and the development of local crime prevention and security strategies.

MINUSMA and UNPOL are making great efforts to promote a gender perspective. We know that this is a major undertaking. I would like to end my presentation by expressing two wishes — the mobilization of PCCs for the deployment of even more female police officers, and to see the number of UNPOL staff increase in the near future.

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

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

Ms. King (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines): I have the pleasure to deliver this statement on behalf of the three African States members of the Security Council — the Republics of Kenya, the Niger and Tunisia — as well as Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (A3+1).

Our delegations attach great importance to the theme of today's discussion and to our briefers — Under-Secretary-General Lacroix, Commissioner Lusala of the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei and Commissioner Boughani of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), whom we thank for their insightful remarks. We value this opportunity to interact with each of them today, to learn more about the strategic vision for United Nations police components and to benefit from the operational perspectives of women's participation in the Abyei peace processes and of gender mainstreaming in MINUSMA. We thank the United Nations police serving in the field for their

commitment to peace, and to those at Headquarters for providing leadership and motivation.

It is an undeniable certitude, grounded in both historical fact and the contemporary political reality, that women are indispensable stakeholders in effective peacemaking, peacekeeping and peacebuilding. As we continue to bear witness, women are fundamental partners for just, peaceful and prosperous outcomes in all countries and for all peoples.

United Nations police peacekeeping has expanded considerably in the past few years, and its activities have become increasingly wide-ranging and complex. The A3+1 commends the work of United Nations police in maintaining peace and security. They are central to multilateral efforts to prevent, mitigate and resolve violent conflict.

The A3+1 remains committed to all efforts aimed at ensuring the full, equal and meaningful participation and leadership of women in United Nations policing, as well as in peacekeeping more broadly. The immense expertise, competitive advantages and wider societal benefits that women bring to peace operations in all roles, both uniformed and civilian, and at all levels at Headquarters and in the field are critical. Women's contributions are also essential to special political missions, peacebuilding initiatives and across the wider spectrum of development projects and programmes required to deliver lasting peace.

It is imperative that all those activities be well-coordinated to establish best practices for gender mainstreaming, successfully confront implementation gaps in the women and peace and security agenda and fully address the structural and systemic inequalities that continue to affect women and girls.

In addition, as we work to enhance women's participation in peacekeeping and United Nations policing, we must avoid assumptions that position women as limited to caring and nurturing, thereby restricting their participation in the sexual and gender-based violence response. Instead, we must consistently ensure women's meaningful participation and leadership in all aspects of peacekeeping, including police patrols, operations and planning, responding to the growing threat of small arms and light weapons, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and security sector reform.

We commend the demonstrated commitment to increasing the number of women in United Nations policing and the broader efforts to ensure gender-responsive policing and peacekeeping. In particular, the progress made in women's participation in the police components of the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus and the establishment by the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali of its gender unit are indicative of good practices among United Nations peacekeeping operations. In both instances, the wider commitment to gender analysis and gender responsive peacekeeping are evident. However, that must become the norm among all United Nations peacekeeping operations and special political missions.

With that in mind, I would like to ask Under-Secretary-General Lacroix how he envisions the delivery of a more comprehensive gender-mainstreaming strategy across all United Nations special political missions and peacekeeping operations. We seek more concrete proposals, as they are needed to enhance gender responsive policing and all other aspects of the women and peace and security agenda in relation to peacekeeping and peacebuilding.

The A3+1 welcomes continued progress by all peacekeeping missions towards implementing the United Nations zero-tolerance policy on sexual exploitation and abuse. Those standards and codes of conduct deliver protective mechanisms not only to women who serve in United Nations peace operations, but they also deliver positive normative changes to the most marginalized communities where peacekeeping personnel are deployed. All allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse, wheresoever and by whomsoever committed, should be thoroughly investigated and the perpetrators brought to justice. Furthermore, we urge all stakeholders to fully implement all provisions of resolutions 2518 (2020), 2538 (2020), 2594 (2021) and other Security Council decisions that address the interlinkages between peacekeeping and the women and peace and security agenda.

The A3+1 reiterates its support for the various efforts of the Secretary-General, including the Action for Peacekeeping and Action for Peacekeeping Plus initiatives, aimed at strengthening partnerships, enhancing effectiveness and accountability, boosting safety and security, improving conduct and delivering political solutions through peacekeeping. We also commend the continued efforts to further develop and implement the Strategic Guidance Framework for

International Policing, which reinforces and enriches all peacekeeping, rule-of-law, protection-of-civilians and peacebuilding activities.

Women are crucial participants in achieving all those noble ambitions. In all contexts and under all circumstances, we must ensure that women not only meaningfully participate, but also lead in building consensus, advancing reconciliation and establishing stable and resilient democratic societies. Without the greater mobilization, participation, leadership and promotion of women, from all backgrounds and in their full diversity, the successful mission transitions and sustainable exit strategies that we all look forward to will be hard to envisage, and even harder to attain.

The simple truth is that women are not only effective peacekeepers and police officers; they are also powerful peace advocates, diligent community organizers, conscientious political leaders and tireless nation-builders. We must therefore redouble our efforts to ensure that women are always fully represented at each decision-making table and level, without discrimination or bias, as equal participants, key decision-makers and primary beneficiaries. Any obstacle to women's engagement provides a barrier to lasting peace. Let us remove those barriers and build a more peaceful and prosperous world, to the benefit of all countries and peoples.

Ms. Byrne Nason (Ireland): I thank Mexico for convening today's briefing. I want to also thank Mexico for the important focus that your country, Madam President, is putting on women and peace and security.

Ireland is truly proud to work together with Kenya and Mexico in forming a trio of presidencies committed not just to highlighting but to amplifying and mainstreaming the women and peace and security agenda in the work of the Council. Highlighting and giving priority to the importance of women's participation, particularly in peacekeeping and peacebuilding, is key to that initiative. United Nations policing is no different. We know the essential contribution women make as United Nations police and the important role that the United Nations police (UNPOL) plays in enhancing the protection of women on the ground, importantly enabling women's participation in peacemaking and peacebuilding.

I would like to say a sincere thank you to Under-Secretary-General Lacroix, as well as to the Police Commissioners, for their insightful and informative

briefings. I am delighted to once again to see Ms. Boughani, with whom we met during our recent visit to Mali.

We receive regular reports of the important work that the Commissioners and their teams carry out on the ground. Their work is critical. From their working with communities in Abyei to preventing gender-based violence and working with national police forces in Mali, we know that they operate in challenging environments. Their work is sincerely appreciated, and we thank them for their continued commitment.

Their contributions to the advancement of the overall women and peace and security agenda are fully recognized. Indeed, they act as real role models for women in policing everywhere. Ireland has been a proud peacekeeping nation for more than 60 years. That includes more than 30 years contributing to UNPOL, including through our current deployment to the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus. We put a premium on our policing contributions.

We acknowledge that UNPOL has made significant strides in relation to gender, with women making up more than 14 per cent of deployed officers, but the truth is that we can and must do better. That means looking beyond the numbers, addressing the structural barriers that we have heard about in the briefings earlier and creating enabling environments for women's participation. We know that continued efforts to combat gender stereotypes will help advance us further along the road towards better gender balance in policing. The mainstreaming approach to women and peace and security, set out in the Action for Peacekeeping Plus (A4P+) initiative, offers UNPOL the opportunity to both enhance its role in peacekeeping and advance gender equality more broadly.

I also want to take this opportunity to commend UNPOL for its work in conflict prevention and post-conflict peacebuilding. The work of UNPOL in deterring violence, defusing tensions, while addressing deficits in training and mentoring, and advising host State police allows for the development of effective, legitimate and credible mechanisms and structures that can help societies on the ground and communities to rebuild.

UNPOL can also play a critical role in transitions contexts. As we have said before, when the time comes for peacekeepers to leave or for a peacekeeping operation to be reconfigured, the wider United

Nations system needs to be ready to step up and to step in. We know from experience that the move from a peacekeeping to a peacebuilding presence is most successful when the process is inclusive — that means including women — nationally owned, financially supported and, crucially, when there is a strong focus on the protection of civilians.

Resolution 2594 (2021), on United Nations transitions, places a particular focus on the need to enhance States' capacity to protect their own civilians, emphasizing the importance of quality security sector reform. That is an area where UNPOL has a pivotal role to play through training and support, with a focus, of course, on ensuring compliance with international law.

While States bear primary responsibility for the protection of their populations, the Council also has a responsibility to encourage and support Governments in developing and implementing national strategies to do that job. For that to happen, we need the full participation of local communities and stakeholders, especially women, youth and civil society. We need a continued focus on human rights.

It is vital that we view the reconfiguration of the United Nations presence in the field as a strategic process that enables and supports long-term peacebuilding efforts. That means considering and integrating the roles and responsibilities of UNPOL in early transition planning. In particular, we believe that that should focus on the bridge-building role that UNPOL can play between the United Nations and local communities on the ground, as well as on training and coordination.

In conclusion, we believe that we must highlight the critical role that UNPOL can play in the protection of the most vulnerable — children. That requires specialized predeployment and in-mission training, as well as appropriate comprehensive child-sensitive prevention and protection responses. We see the enhanced coordination between police components and child protection advisers, as well as the inclusion of gender and women protection advisers in missions, as of particular importance in delivering on that.

I just want to ask Under-Secretary-General Lacroix if he could say a little more to us about which areas of the recently launched A4P+ initiative he would like to see UNPOL prioritize and how we in the Council can assist him in that work.

Mr. Geng Shuang (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank Under-Secretary-General Lacroix; Ms. Boughani, Police Commissioner, United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA); and Ms. Lusala, Police Commissioner, United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA).

I take this opportunity to pay my highest tribute to all peacekeepers and peacekeeping police officers working on the front lines and delivering their mandates. I also congratulate Superintendent Malla of Nepal on being presented with the Woman Police Offer of the Year Award for 2021.

Police are an important force in ensuring the safety and security of citizens and maintaining social order. Over the past decades, the role of United Nations police in United Nations peacekeeping operations has gained more and more prominence, and its place in the United Nations peace and security architecture has become increasingly important. Currently, the international security situation is more complex and security threats are much more diverse. The United Nations should therefore make better use of its police components.

In that regard, I would like to make the following points.

First, it is important to have the positioning right. The Secretary-General's Action for Peacekeeping initiative makes political solutions to hotspot issues a top priority. When designing the police mandates of peacekeeping operations, it is always necessary to bear that point in mind and to see it reflected throughout its actual work. China hopes that the police component of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali will continue to assist with the implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali in restoring the Malian Government State authority in the central region of the country. The police component of the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei has made outstanding contributions to the maintenance of local public order. Efforts on the part of the Sudan and South Sudan should continue to promote the establishment of a joint police service in Abyei.

The ultimate goal of the work of United Nations police is to prepare its local counterpart to resume policing responsibilities, rather than acting as a substitute. In Haiti for nearly three decades, the United Nations has made significant efforts in that regard. However, as the host Government has not shouldered

its responsibility, those efforts have failed for some time to achieve the desired results. The international community should learn from past lessons and conduct more robust training for the Haitian National Police to assist them in effectively fulfilling their responsibilities and progressively addressing the problem of local gangsterism.

Secondly, it is essential to strengthen capacity-building. In accordance with the Declaration of Shared Commitments on United Nations Peacekeeping Operations, the Secretariat, the host States, troop- and police-contributing countries and financial contributors should effectively honour their commitments, shoulder their respective responsibilities, provide comprehensive training and secure sufficient resources to ensure that every member of the United Nations police has the skills and equipment needed for mandate-implementation and self-defence.

The ultimate purpose of a performance assessment is also to improve capabilities. The Comprehensive Planning and Performance Assessment System is being rolled out in all peacekeeping operations. On the basis of the assessment, we hope that targeted measures will be taken to address weaknesses and shortcomings.

With regard to protecting vulnerable groups, promoting women's participation and strengthening community engagement, female police peacekeepers have a unique advantage. Peacekeeping operations should provide equal opportunities for women in the areas of training, recruitment and promotion. With respect to logistics and security, steps should be taken to gradually increase the number of female police officers.

Thirdly, it is imperative to ensure the safety and security of personnel. As Under-Secretary-General Lacroix often states, one death is one too many among peacekeepers. As with other peacekeeping personnel, the security risks faced by United Nations police have increased considerably in recent years. China calls for the full implementation of resolution 2518 (2020) to enhance safety and security support for peacekeepers in a comprehensive way. China welcomes the establishment by the Secretariat of a Safety and Security Focal Point for Peacekeepers, as requested by the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations. We believe that that will help the Secretariat strengthen internal and external coordination and improve emergency response capacity. As Chair of the Group of Friends on the Safety and Security of United Nations

Peacekeepers, China will convene a meeting of the Group this month to discuss how to better strengthen camp security in peacekeeping missions.

Since their initial deployment in peacekeeping operations in 2000, Chinese police peacekeepers have accomplished various mission tasks in difficult circumstances. They have set the record for no violations, no repatriations and no combat casualties. Since 2015, through the China Peacekeeping Police Training Centre, China has also assisted other police-contributing countries and trained thousands of peacekeeping police officers. China stands ready to continue to support, promote and participate in United Nations peacekeeping operations and work together with all peace-loving countries around the world to help maintain international peace and security and build a safe world for all.

In conclusion, I have a few questions for the two Police Commissioners. The mandate of peacekeeping police is different from that of peacekeeping forces, and associated risks are also quite unique. The specificities of Mali and Abyei are somehow representative. What are the weakest links with regard to enhancing security for peacekeeping police? What areas need to be strengthened most? What measures should be taken?

Mr. Dang (Viet Nam): I would like to join other colleagues in thanking the Mexican presidency for organizing this annual briefing. I also thank Under-Secretary-General Jean-Pierre Lacroix, Police Commissioner Lusala of the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei and Police Commissioner Boughani of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali for their briefings. We express our appreciation for their work on the ground at this very challenging time.

Peacekeeping is a critical tool in the maintenance of international peace and security. Viet Nam has been a steadfast supporter of United Nations peacekeeping operations, including the work of United Nations police. We highly value their contribution to the common objectives of missions and the promotion of international peace and security. Over the past 60 years, police components have made commendable efforts in carrying out mandated responsibilities and built up their capacities and experience. In the context of increasingly complex challenges and mandates, United Nations police have demonstrated strong potential as they work with the civilian and military components

of peacekeeping missions to support host countries and local populations in leading and owning their destiny, through the relevant assistance in peacebuilding efforts.

In that pursuit, the contribution of United Nations female police officers cannot be overemphasized. Women have an indispensable role in increasing the overall performance and effectiveness of peacekeeping operations. Their presence can contribute to building the credibility and reputation of missions among the population, closer and more effective community engagement and enhanced protection responses.

We commend the increasing number of women police officers and, especially, the six women currently serving as heads or deputy heads of United Nations police components in United Nations peacekeeping and special political missions. We are delighted to welcome two of them to today's meeting. Their briefings are clear examples of the effectiveness of women's leadership and reflect the potential of women police officers' contribution to gender equality and the advancement of women, as well as the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda in host countries.

It is therefore crucial that greater attention and resources be given to the promotion of women in peacekeeping operations, including policing activities. The international community should also enhance training and capacity-building support to developing countries, including for women police officers, overcome challenges and create a safer and more women-friendly working environment.

Viet Nam reaffirms its commitment to actively engaging in United Nations peacekeeping. We also continue to support the implementation of the Action for Peacekeeping (A4P) initiative, the A4P Plus initiative and the women and peace and security agenda. Bearing that in mind, we are preparing to increase and diversify our participation in United Nations peacekeeping in terms of missions and unit types.

Viet Nam's police officers are actively trained, in line with United Nations standards, in order to participate in peacekeeping missions at the earliest opportunity. I would like to take this opportunity to express our appreciation to the Department of Peace Operations, in particular the Police Division and related divisions, as well as regional partners that have provided us with valuable assistance.

Acknowledging that women and their empowerment are crucial to advancing the culture of peace, we have integrated the role of women in peacekeeping and peacebuilding into our legal framework and policies. In practice, the percentage of Vietnamese female peacekeepers in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic and the United Nations Mission in South Sudan has increased to 20.6 per cent, well above the Secretary-General's target of 15 per cent for uniform gender parity before 2028. In preparation for future deployment, we also take into consideration the call for greater nomination of women, including women police officers.

In conclusion, we would like to reiterate our readiness to join efforts with the international community in contributing to peacekeeping operations and ensure full, equal and meaningful women's participation in peacekeeping and peacebuilding.

Ms. Evstigneeva (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We thank Under-Secretary-General Jean-Pierre Lacroix, Police Commissioner Violet Lusala of the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei and Police Commissioner Patricia Boughani of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali for their briefings. Through their commanders, we would also like to thank all those who report to them for being conscientious in the conduct of their duties to support peace and security in difficult conflict situations.

We view police components as an integral part of United Nations peacekeeping operations. They help improve the unique mandate for each mission, which is determined by the specific situation in the country of deployment. That pertains in particular to the United Nations peacekeeping operations that our briefers represent today.

The challenges faced by the United Nations in Abyei and Mali are very different. However, in both regions there is work for the Blue Helmets. The majority of peacekeeping missions are deployed in countries where there is considerable weakening or, indeed, the total absence of national law enforcement agencies. In such circumstances, crime surges — organized crime, trafficking in persons, drug trafficking, sexual violence and violence against children. United Nations police are therefore better trained to deal with such circumstances and can make a significant contribution to the important

job of protecting civilians from direct security threats. They can also provide temporary assistance to national law enforcement bodies and, in some cases, even act as a substitute for them.

However, it is important to avoid situations in which the long-term presence of missions essentially leads to a long-term replacement of local police authorities by the United Nations. It is vital that United Nations police officers impartially fulfil their mandates, have an understanding of the political aspects of conflicts and maintain close cooperation with the authorities and the local population. Any potential mistakes can prove costly for both peacekeepers and the peace process.

Sometimes, an in-depth explanation of the mandate is necessary in order to simultaneously win the trust of local residents and avoid creating unrealistic or incorrect expectations. It is also important to take into account possible ethnic, religious and other factors, as well as the national specificities of the people living in the area of deployment.

In addition, those who are often in greatest need are women and children, who require a special approach to be taken. In that regard, the ranks of United Nations police must include both men and women officers. We are confident that the main focus in that regard should not be on the achievement of percentage-based gender indicators, but rather on the effective implementation of mandated tasks and assessments of the deployment circumstances and the security situation. It is also important for women to fill commander and leadership roles in line with the principle of geographical distribution.

Another important task being conducted successfully by the Blue Berets is the provision of assistance in the post-conflict reform of law enforcement institutions and building the national capacities of host States. That includes sharing experiences, defining work to be done and training personnel. The more effectively that task is carried out, the sooner responsibility for maintaining law and order can be fully transferred to national forces.

Of course, United Nations police officers must be properly and professionally trained and supplied with the necessary equipment, but they also need to be highly motivated to train others. In that regard, we support the efforts of the Secretariat, as well as the initiatives of many regional organizations, primarily the African Union, to improve the level of training among police peacekeepers.

Russia is actively contributing to that common cause. For over 20 years, hundreds of foreign police peacekeepers, including five commanders and a large number of women, from more than 50 countries around the world, mainly from Africa, have been trained at the United Nations-certified Russian National Peacekeeping Training Centre in the city of Domodedovo under the auspices of the Russian Defense Ministry. Russia has unique experience in the field of professional training for peacekeepers, which we stand ready to share. Hundreds of Blue Berets from Russia have contributed to the maintenance of peace and security around the world. Approximately 40 Russian officers, more than a third of whom are women, serve in various United Nations missions today. I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate them today, 10 November, when Police Day is celebrated in Russia.

We are convinced that the police component of peacekeeping warrants greater attention from States Members of the United Nations, both in the Security Council, when it comes to individual country situations, and in the General Assembly. We believe that the best forums for discussing general police matters are the Security Council Working Group on Peacekeeping Operations and the General Assembly Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations, where all police-contributing countries are represented and which is mandated to comprehensively consider issues related to peacekeeping.

Mr. Lipand (Estonia): I would like to thank Under-Secretary-General Lacroix and Police Commissioners Lusala and Boughani, of the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA) and the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali, respectively, for their comprehensive presentations and a thorough overview of the current situation on the ground and challenges in United Nations policing.

At the outset, I would like to recognize the contribution of United Nations police (UNPOL) to United Nations peacekeeping and peacebuilding processes, as well as their continued operational readiness throughout the coronavirus disease pandemic. United Nations police have a pivotal role in ensuring increased security, the protection of civilians and the return of law and order, whether in cooperation with host State law enforcement agencies or, in some instances, unilaterally, responding to public order issues.

Estonia believes that the efforts of UNPOL in strengthening the rule of law, building the capacities of people-oriented national police services and assisting in security sector reform based on human rights are fundamental in establishing lasting stability in conflict-affected countries. We will continue to support the Action for Peacekeeping Plus initiative, and place high importance on its goals of improving the performance and accountability of peacekeeping, implementing the women and peace and security agenda and addressing capability and integration gaps. It is likewise imperative to remain vigilant on zero tolerance for sexual exploitation and abuse.

Estonia welcomes the specific focus today on accelerating the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda in United Nations policing. A more gender-equal composition of United Nations police components plays a critical role in effective policing and ultimately strengthening the effectiveness of peacekeeping operations. It is also crucial in increasing the effectiveness of community policing, countering the spread of misinformation and preventing and eliminating conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence.

Estonia will continue to underline the importance of implementing the women and peace and security agenda, in particular in ensuring the full, equal and meaningful participation of women in peace processes, but also in UNPOL by emphasizing the importance of the implementation of resolution 2538 (2020).

We note with appreciation the fulfilment and surpassing of the intermediate gender parity targets for 2020. In view of the goal of the Uniformed Gender Parity Strategy to create an enabling environment for uniformed women in peacekeeping operations, today's briefings have been insightful. It has been enlightening to hear from the Commissioners about their priorities in creating a safe, enabling and gender-sensitive working environment for women.

I would like to conclude by expressing gratitude and strong support to all United Nations peacekeepers — women and men — whose dedication and sacrifice bring hope to all of us. Like others, we extend our particular congratulations to the winner of the 2021 United Nations Woman Police Officer of the Year award, Superintendent Sangya Malla of Nepal from the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Mr. De Rivière (France) (*spoke in French*): I thank Mr. Lacroix and the Police Commissioners for their briefings. I would like to stress three points.

United Nations police have taken on a leading role that will only continue to grow. That role has evolved significantly over the past 20 years: one only has to look at the increase in deployment requirements, the diversity of missions, the doctrine developed since the year 2000 and the place of police in the Action for Peacekeeping initiative.

United Nations policing is essential, and the participation of women in that regard is indispensable, not only for reasons of representation within the Organization but also for reasons of equality. The unique contribution of women in internal security forces is widely recognized. United Nations police are involved in a variety of community-based projects to combat various types of violence, including sexual and gender-based violence, and to support the empowerment of women. In Mali, for example, United Nations police contribute to the protection of civilians and help to maintain relations between the State and the population through its presence alongside the internal security forces.

United Nations police are also a key component of transitions, supporting national capacity-building and security sector reform, as they are doing in the Democratic Republic of the Congo through their support for the implementation of the national police reform plan and the formation of community policing in the east of the country. We call on the national authorities to mobilize the means necessary for the success of these efforts.

I would like to stress that the linguistic difficulties encountered by personnel who have not mastered the language used in the host State can be an obstacle to the performance of missions. I am therefore pleased with the results of the partnership between the International Organization of la Francophonie and the United Nations Police Division.

The United Nations police has demonstrated its ability to adapt so as to increase the participation of women, including at the highest level. Currently, the targets set by the Organization for women's participation in United Nations policing are being met and even exceeded. But more needs to be done.

The implementation of the women and peace and security agenda is a priority for France. Through its feminist diplomacy, it promotes the full participation of women in peace processes. France calls on all partners to support the women and peace and security agenda and to adopt a national action plan. It also reiterates the need for women to participate in peace operations. The briefings this morning confirm the importance and relevance of such participation. In the three missions in which it is deploying 21 gendarmes and one police officer of all ranks, France is making sure that it brings the skills of women. I would like to salute their action in positions that are particularly important for the fulfilment of the mandates, and in which they are demonstrating remarkable professional efficiency.

Mr. Raguttahalli (India): At the outset, let me begin by thanking the Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations, Mr. Jean-Pierre Lacroix, for his annual briefing on United Nations policing.

Police everywhere are the most important law enforcement organ and, more importantly, the public face of security institutions. People's faith in the police or lack thereof substantially affects the security and law and order situation in any society.

Their role is even more important in the situations of armed conflict on which the Security Council deal is focused. They play an important role in implementing the mandates generated by the Council. In addition, United Nations police help in capacity-building in host States, especially in such areas as rule of law and civilian policing.

We appreciate the focus of today's briefing on the contribution of United Nations police to the women and peace and security agenda. I also thank the Police Commissioner of the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA), Ms. Violet Lusala, and the Police Commissioner of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali, Ms. Patricia Boughani, for their insights from the ground.

I take this opportunity to pay tribute to all women and men peacekeepers, including the 14 police officers from India, who sacrificed their lives in the line of duty and for their remarkable contribution to the restoration of peace and stability in their respective places of deployment.

India is also one of the leading police contributors, having deployed close to 3,000 police officers in approximately 24 United Nations peacekeeping operations. In fact, India is a pioneer in this field, as the first country to deploy a formed police unit in Liberia, in 2007. At present, around 175 Indian police personnel are serving in UNISFA, the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) and the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus. Indian police officers have served with distinction in each of their assignments, which has also been acknowledged by the United Nations and the host countries themselves. A number of current or former officers in Indian police services are also serving in various capacities in United Nations missions.

India has been an active participant in the deliberations on issues focusing on women's empowerment and gender mainstreaming in various United Nations bodies. India fully supports the Secretary-General's call to action for accelerated implementation of the women and peace and security agenda in implementing the Declaration of Shared Commitments on United Nations Peacekeeping Operations and work towards fulfilling Action for Peacekeeping Plus priorities. We also welcome the Secretary-General's uniformed gender parity strategy, and we are committed to complying with that strategy so that women's participation and their role in peacekeeping can be enhanced.

Women police officers and peacekeepers play an indispensable role in United Nations peacekeeping operations, in particular during high visibility patrols and search operations and in reaching out to communities where only female police officers are allowed to interact with female members of the community. They are better able to gain the trust of a large but marginalized section of society and help promote gender equality. They can also act as role models by inspiring local women and girls to pursue careers, including in law enforcement.

The Indian Female Engagement Team with MONUSCO has been instrumental in enhancing local women's engagement in Goma. The Team initiated, organized and provided security for local protection committee meetings, enabling women to share concerns, organize themselves more systematically and allow the force to incorporate women's inputs into operational planning. The information received from

women in the community has been utilized to focus on patrolling in high-risk areas and to plan civil-military coordination activities based on communities' needs.

Earlier, the Indian female formed unit in the United Nations Mission in Liberia, which I mentioned previously, helped increase participation of Liberian women in the security sector from 6 per cent in 2007, when they were first deployed, to 17 per cent when they left the mission in 2016. This contribution was repeatedly acknowledged by the then-President of Liberia and Nobel laureate Ms. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf.

India's individual police officers, particularly women officers, have also contributed immensely to United Nations peacekeeping. An Indian women police officer, Inspector Shakti Devi, who was deployed in the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, was awarded the International Female Police Peacekeeper Award in 2014 for her contribution in the creation of a women's police council in Herat, and more recently, Major Suman Gawani, deployed with UNMISS, received the United Nations Military Gender Advocate of the Year Award for 2019.

The contribution of United Nations police in supporting reforms in and restructuring and development of host State police administrations and other law enforcement institutions is critical. Women peacekeepers, particularly women police officers, can play an important role in understanding and responding to the specific needs of women in conflict and post-conflict environments, including the need for protection from sexual and gender-based violence.

We need to increase the share of women in United Nations police components. In this regard, I submit three specific suggestions. First, there is a need to identify and resolve the structural problems that prevent increased numbers of uniformed women in both United Nations and civilian peacekeeping roles. These impediments include logistics, barracks facilities and related working conditions, especially in difficult security environments. Providing basic physical infrastructure and a safe working environment is an essential imperative to ensure police components' smooth functioning.

Secondly, women need to be given equal opportunities. We often see women in leadership-support roles, like administrative work. They should be engaged in key roles as well, such as community engagement and outreach.

Thirdly, it goes without saying that we need to observe a strict zero-tolerance policy towards sexual harassment and abuse. Strengthening the conduct of peacekeepers through such preventive measures as adequate training and workplace monitoring and reporting mechanisms for allowing complaints to be addressed is key to tackling these issues. Such initiatives as deploying gender peace and security advisors to peacekeeping missions would also help to prevent sexual harassment and related violence.

Implementation of these suggestions will go a long way to further strengthening the role of the United Nations police in the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda and inspire more women to contribute to conflict resolution and peacebuilding missions.

Mrs. Thomas-Greenfield (United States of America): We are really grateful to Mexico for promoting sustained engagement at the Security Council on the women and peace and security agenda. I thank Under-Secretary-General Lacroix for his presentation, and the United Nations Police Commissioners — both of whom are women, I note. I really appreciate the insightful briefings that they bring to us directly from the field.

At the outset, allow me to express my condolences to the Government of Egypt for the recent shooting injuries of its police officers who had newly arrived in Bangui on 1 November to serve in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic. We hope that they will make a full recovery, and we urge a full investigation of the circumstances and context in which those peacekeepers found themselves wounded in a so-called friendly fire incident.

Today I would like to address three aspects of United Nations police: areas where we have achieved progress on the women and peace and security agenda, areas where there is more work to be done and measuring both by implementing an integrated performance and accountability policy.

First, we are pleased to see United Nations police make clear how they are advancing the women and peace and security agenda. Ten years ago, women represented 15 per cent of individual police officers deployed with the United Nations. Today that has doubled to 30 per cent, and while a significant increase, it is simply not enough. In 2011, only 5 per cent of police officers in formed police units were women; today it is 14 per cent.

Again, that is a significant increase, but much more needs to be done. This is important, however; women police play leading roles in rebuilding communities and trust among citizens and the security institutions that serve them. The United States strongly supports the Uniformed Gender Parity Strategy, and we urge police-contributing countries to embrace policies that increase women's participation in all levels of policing.

That leads me to my second point. As I noted, we still have more work to do to ensure that women are afforded equal opportunities to excel and lead across the full spectrum of United Nations policing. For example, very few formed police units have female commanders. We are therefore pleased to hear from Under-Secretary-General Lacroix that this continues to be a top priority for the United Nations. The Action for Peacekeeping Plus (A4P+) initiative, launched earlier this year, rightly calls for accelerated implementation of the women and peace and security agenda, and a key pillar of that agenda is increasing women's participation at all levels of peacekeeping.

At this point, I want to commend my Indian colleagues for the police units that they provided in Liberia, where I served as Ambassador. I was witness to their professionalism and their commitment, which made all of us proud to see them in uniform. I can tell Council members that they were effective role models for Liberian women and girls. I therefore thank them very much.

Thirdly and finally, three years after the unanimous adoption of resolution 2436 (2018), we repeat our strong support for the United Nations commitment to implement an integrated performance and accountability policy. That policy should be based on clear standards for all United Nations civilian and uniformed personnel working in, and supporting, peacekeeping operations. When peacekeepers fail to protect civilians or commit instances of abuse, that erodes trust with the local population and undermines mission effectiveness and damages the image of the United Nations and peacekeeping itself. The United Nations must hold those who serve in peace operations to the highest standards. We must hold ourselves accountable, address underperformance and misconduct, and select only those who are qualified and ready for deployment. Just as important, the United Nations should recognize outstanding performance. The annual United Nations Woman Police Officer of the Year Award is a great initiative. We would welcome

similar ideas from the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Police Division.

We need United Nations police to be effective, we need them to be successful, and we need to hold them accountable and above reproach. The United States remains committed to supporting United Nations police and to helping it meet the challenges that lie ahead. We look forward to continuing to engage on these important topics at the United Nations police Light Coordination Mechanism meeting next week in Brindisi, Italy, and in the 2021 Peacekeeping Ministerial next week in Seoul.

Mr. Kariuki (United Kingdom): I thank you, Madam President, for this debate and for the focus that Mexico is putting on women and peace and security this month. I also thank Under-Secretary-General Lacroix for his briefing, and in particular Ms. Boughani and Ms. Lusala for their perspectives from their respective field locations, two of the most difficult environments for United Nations police (UNPOL) and peacekeepers.

Let me pay tribute to the men and women in United Nations police components around the world who protect and serve vulnerable communities. As our United States colleague just said, the recent incident in the Central African Republic at the start of this month, in which a police contingent from Egypt was attacked, is just a stark reminder of the difficult circumstances in which we deploy our peacekeepers and of their dedication and courage. Host States have a responsibility to observe status-of-forces agreements and to ensure the safety and security of peacekeepers serving within their borders. We urge the United Nations and the Government of the Central African Republic to share the results of their investigations with the Council and police-contributing countries as soon as they are finalized, so that the lessons can be learned.

United Nations police are often the first and the last to meet with the local population, including women and girls, in response to a crisis. Political solutions and long-term peace cannot be achieved without strong relations with those populations, founded on trust. That is why we welcome the focus of today's discussion on the contribution UNPOL can make to women and peace and security. The full, equal and meaningful participation of women in United Nations policing is not only a moral imperative, but also critical to mission effectiveness. By reflecting the local communities they serve, police can build trust and empower women and girls, and even inspire them to join their national

police services, paving the way to sustaining peace. We want to see more female officers across the full range of roles at all levels. The United Kingdom welcomes the steps taken by police contributors to meet the Secretary-General's Uniformed Gender Parity Strategy targets, and we continue to support the work of the Elsie Initiative, having contributed over \$6.3 million to it since 2019.

Police Week gives us an opportunity to look at the full range of United Nations policing challenges. Policing is a central cog of peacekeeping: it helps to establish a protective environment for civilians, restore security and justice and re-establish the rule of law in conflict-affected areas.

We owe it to our policing personnel to bring the same resolve to ensuring their safety and supporting their effectiveness as we do with their military counterparts. That includes addressing the outstanding recommendations from the 2016 external review of the United Nations Police Division and finalizing the strategic guidance framework and the roll-out of training courses.

As such, I would like to draw attention to three issues that we think are critical to delivering on the Secretary-General's Action for Peacekeeping agenda and Action for Peacekeeping Plus priorities.

First, police experts need to be at the top table in missions, treated as an essential part of integrated mission planning throughout the life of a mission — from inception to transition — drawing on relevant intelligence, reporting and data.

Secondly, recruitment needs to be fair, timely and merit-based, selecting the right skills, capabilities and expertise that particular missions need, and ensuring this is deployed appropriately by those missions.

Thirdly, police need to be fully integrated into United Nations systems, including the Peacekeeping Capability Readiness System, the Light Coordination Mechanism, the Integrated Peacekeeping Performance and Accountability Framework and the Comprehensive Planning and Performance Assessment System.

Finally, I would like to ask two specific questions to Mr. Lacroix.

First, what is the United Nations Police Division doing to support better coordination between civilian, military and police components, such as through

integrated operational planning and intra-mission dedicated coordination mechanisms?

Secondly, like others, we are concerned about allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse — nine in the past year against UNPOL personnel in peacekeeping mission. Nearly all cases are still pending an outcome by the United Nations and all cases are pending action by police contributing countries. What steps is UNPOL taking to tackle sexual exploitation and abuse, including in-mission awareness training and police leadership?

Ms. Heimerback (Norway): I would like to thank Mexico for its consistent focus on women, peace and security, including within the Security Council. I thank Under-Secretary-General Lacroix and the Police Commissioners for their thorough and informative briefings today.

Norway has been a police-contributing country since 1989. Our support to United Nations policing is consistent and comprehensive. It includes the deployment of highly qualified personnel, as well as financial contributions and policy input.

We welcome the remarkable development of United Nations police (UNPOL), who now undertake a broader spectrum of duties, including capacity-building, operational support and strengthening policy and formal guidance. That reflects the increasingly complex security situations facing peace operations, including terrorism and transnational organized crime. Publications from the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate and INTERPOL have also acknowledged the nexus between international security threats and law enforcement matters, such as the fight against impunity.

An independent and well-functioning justice sector is fundamental to ensuring sustainable peace and good governance. That is also well reflected in the Sustainable Development Goals.

Norway advocates for robust police components. Mandates should draw on the full capabilities of the United Nations police to support the protection of civilians, including children, strengthen the rule of law, safeguard human rights and enhance the capacity of police and judicial institutions in the host State. Professionalizing the police and the judicial chain must also be emphasized in Security Council mandates. In that respect, we underline the importance of providing adequate resources and staffing to the Police Division

and the United Nations Office of Rule of Law and Security Institutions, especially as new, non-military challenges, demand a proactive and innovative approach.

Norway is among the world's most gender-balanced police services, and we support parity efforts in an international context through our funding of the programme led by the United Nations Police Division, which aims to increase the number of female United Nations police in a concrete and measurable way. Yet gender balance is not only about numbers, it is also about full, equal and meaningful participation.

In Norway we do not set out to recruit female police officers to UNPOL. We recruit the best and most competent police officers, regardless of gender. Our female participation is usually around fifty per cent of contingent commanders. That is thanks to a long-term national gender strategy that has resulted in a solid base of female police who can empower, build trust and be role models to women and girls in the field. We would also like to highlight the Police Division's implementation of the Secretary-General's Uniformed Gender Parity Strategy, an important tool where gender and competence go hand in hand.

We also welcome the fact that the specialized police teams have now become an established tool in United Nations policing. First deployed in 2010, we now see specialized police teams in most missions. We encourage the Department of Peace Operations and the Police Division to continue developing this model when reviewing the guidelines next year, including making use of new technological developments and ensuring that the Strategic Guidance Framework for International Police Peacekeeping reflects new challenges through innovation and new technical standards.

We would also like to see technology included as a cross-cutting theme — not only for the Seoul United Nations Peacekeeping Ministerial, but also in the general follow-up to the Secretary-General's Action for Peacekeeping initiative.

In conclusion, we strongly encourage the United Nations and all Member States to focus on the important role of the police in conflict and post-conflict settings, including through strong partnerships with regional and non-United Nations organizations, in particular the African Union and INTERPOL. This can ensure smooth transitions and help to establish sustainable solutions.

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

At the outset, I thank Under-Secretary-General Jean-Pierre Lacroix and Police Commissioners Violet Lusala and Patricia Boughani for their very helpful briefings.

Today's meeting is particularly important because the work of the police in United Nations peacekeeping missions is often little known and sometimes even overshadowed by the visibility of military components. I congratulate Ms. Sangya Malla, of Nepal, who was named United Nations Police Woman of the Year yesterday.

Today we will focus on the essential role that women play as part of United Nations police components. The statements delivered by the Police Commissioners today are a clear testimony of the role that women play on the ground in the communities in Abyei and Mali. Police components have undergone significant changes since their first deployment in 1960. Currently, around 11,000 police men and women from 88 countries participate in 12 United Nations peacekeeping operations and 100 additional police officers participate in special political missions.

After many years of experience, it is undeniable that policing has a key role to play in achieving and maintaining sustainable peace. The prevention and investigation of crime, the protection of persons and the maintenance of public order and security have become fundamental components for long-term stability.

Formed police units and individual police officers contribute to the development of national institutional capacities for the strengthening of the rule of law, including police, prosecutorial, judicial and penitentiary institutions. That role is further enhanced in special political missions, such as those in Latin America and the Caribbean, namely, the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia and the United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti.

The work of the police component is also central to transitions, supporting countries in their security responsibilities, as well as building trust in State institutions. The work of women police officers, as part of those components, is key in tasks such as the protection of civilians, the provision of essential services to women and children, the development and

strengthening of strategic alliances with civil society and the general implementation of the women and peace and security agenda. The elements set forth recently by the Security Council in resolution 2594 (2021), on transitions, specifically include a vision directly linked to the police components of the missions mandated by the Council.

Within the operational framework, Mexico supports the fulfilment of the objectives of the Action for Peacekeeping initiative, which is also essential to ensure the full, equal and meaningful participation of women police officers in peace missions. In conjunction with the Uniformed Gender Parity Strategy, we have promoted women police officers' leadership and their increasing participation in decision-making. However, female police officers continue to face structural barriers to the optimal development of their careers, which also makes it difficult for them to ensure a balance between their personal and professional lives. We must therefore mainstream a gender approach in all aspects of the design and operation of United Nations police components.

Those components must be dynamic and flexible to meet the kind of challenges that arise, especially in increasingly complex environments, such as those resulting from the coronavirus disease pandemic, to ensure that the concerns and requirements of each of its members, including the diversity of policewomen, are addressed. Mexico therefore recognizes the need to promote effective gender-sensitive training and education programmes for police personnel soon to be deployed by taking into account the needs on the ground and the objectives of each mission.

We must strengthen partnerships with police-contributing countries and ensure the deployment of more women, while enhancing synergies with regional and subregional organizations and other actors, such as INTERPOL, in reviewing the functions of the police component in peace operations in order to ensure maximum effectiveness and efficiency in the field.

Finally, I would like to ask the briefers this morning how they believe they can advance the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda through their work, in particular with regard to the protection of women peacebuilders from local communities and women human rights defenders. What lessons have they

learned regarding setting up early-warning systems to prevent massive human rights violations?

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I give the floor to Mr. Lacroix to respond to the comments and questions raised.

Mr. Lacroix: I would like to thank all Security Council members for the support that they have expressed for United Nations police (UNPOL). I also take this opportunity to express our gratitude to all UNPOL personnel serving in the field and at Headquarters.

I want to concur with the speakers who highlighted the increasing importance of United Nations police in peacekeeping for a number of reasons. First, the kind of challenges facing our missions on the ground, particularly the emerging drivers of conflicts, such as organized crime, multilingual issues, the illegal exploitation of natural resources, increasingly call for a police response. Secondly, our operations deal with situations with a higher population density, either in urban areas or refugee or internally displaced persons camps. That also raises issues that should be better dealt with by United Nations police. Thirdly, we have an increasing role in capacity-building. Of course, the key capacity that we seek to build in host countries relates to the rule of law, justice, police and correction.

Regarding the question from the representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, who asked what kind of proposal we would have to enhance gender-sensitive policing in peacekeeping operation, there are a couple of points that need to be highlighted.

First, we should continue our efforts to increase the number of women in peacekeeping within United Nations police. As was mentioned by several speakers, that raises the question not only of resources — and we of course call on Member States, particularly police-contributing countries, to increase the number of female police officers that they can provide, including in formed police units — but also as to what more we can do to ensure that there is be a more welcoming environment in our peacekeeping missions, including by working on improving facilities.

The second point concerns the importance of continuing our efforts to involve more women in our work to resolve local conflicts and to protect civilians. The role of United Nations police, in particular female

officers, is extremely important in ensuring that we involve more local women in those efforts. A number of innovative practices are being implemented in several missions, resulting in female community liaison assistants, counting on local networks of women interacting with their association, all of which constitute best practices that I believe must be enhanced and applied in as many missions as is relevant.

Thirdly, it is also important to emphasize the importance of combating gender-based violence. That implies more efforts to sensitize our own police forces and personnel, as well as how we train local police and our emphasis on accountability, which also has to do with their training of the local judiciaries. The role that we play in building local police capacities and, through such efforts, putting an emphasis on building gender-sensitive local and national police capacities, with a focus on combating gender-based violence, is critically important.

The fourth aspect is clearly to keep enhancing and strengthening our efforts to fight sexual exploitation and abuse in peacekeeping. As members know, we recently had to make a difficult decision, concerning not the police but the military, with the repatriation of an entire contingent in one of our peacekeeping operations as a result of a very serious allegation. That was a stark reminder of the fact that we are far from solving problems of sexual exploitation and abuse. I believe that our efforts must be reinforced, and we are looking at ways in which that could be achieved.

As far as UNPOL is concerned, as was mentioned by our colleague from the United Kingdom, we currently have seven pending allegations for this year. They are pending because they are currently being investigated. Unfortunately, we have the same number as in 2020, which is not encouraging because we would have liked to see fewer allegations this year. However, some of the 2020 allegations were substantiated, while others were not. That is to say that the investigations of allegations this year of sexual exploitation and abuse regarding United Nations police are ongoing. But I will say that the United Nations Police Division is intensifying its efforts, together with other relevant departments, in particular the Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance and the Department of Operational Support, and of course the Victims' Rights Advocate, so that we step up our efforts, including on the question of sexual exploitation and abuse in United Nations police. I can say that now more than ever that

is our top priority, especially in the context of what I said earlier.

Finally, it is also important to recognize the role of women in UNPOL. The role played by the Woman Police Officer of the Year award is important in that regard. We are looking at ways to enhance our recognition of outstanding performance. We are currently in the process of working out several proposals. I want to join those who, as I did yesterday, congratulated Superintendent Sangya Malla, of Nepal, as the awardee for this year.

On the question posed by the representative of Ireland regarding which area of Action for Peacekeeping Plus (A4P+) would be particularly relevant to UNPOL's efforts, all of them are of course extremely relevant. I mentioned safety and security, performance, mindset, capacities, conduct and discipline, as well as the cross-cutting priority of A4P+, which is the women and peace and security agenda.

However, I would like to highlight but a few aspects. One of them is integration. One of the top priorities of the A4P+ initiative is the enhancement of our efforts related to integration within our missions and beyond, together with the other components of the United Nations system in the field and other non-United Nations partners. We currently have a tool for the improvement of integrated planning, that is, the Comprehensive Planning and Performance Assessment System, to ensure that, within missions, there is a shared understanding of the key priorities relevant to the mandate implementation.

We need to ensure that we fully roll out and make the best use of that instrument, but it is also important to enhance joint planning, the joint collection and processing of information, joint action, particularly in the area of the protection of civilians, and a joint presence, as too often, in the context of the protection of civilians, we tend to rely only on the military presence. I believe that we need to increase the joint presence of police, civilian and military components, especially in remote areas with protection-of-civilian challenges.

I would also highlight the importance of a more integrated and networked communication policy at the level of our missions.

Another aspect, which is also a top priority for the A4P+ initiative, concerns the relation with the host country. The relation of United Nations police with the

host countries is very specific in the sense that UNPOL does a lot in terms of building relevant, credible and strong rule of law-related national capacities.

That is absolutely the key condition to creating the context of withdrawal and the gradual drawdown of our peacekeeping operations. I believe it to be an important aspect that I would like to highlight. Of course, we need the support of the Council when we have issues with host countries. I am highlighting this aspect in the light of the recent and unacceptable incidents that some of our United Nations police personnel have been facing in the Central African Republic.

Lastly, I would like to highlight the fact that we need our police-contributing countries, and Member States in general, to provide us with the capacities we need. The next ministerial-level meeting on peacekeeping, to be held in the Republic of Korea, will be a very important opportunity for Member States to do that. We have circulated a list of expected pledges, which includes a number of pledges related to UNPOL. We certainly look forward to Member States doing their best to help us meet those needs.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Mr. Lacroix for the clarifications he has provided.

I now give the floor to Ms. Lusala so that she can also respond to the comments and questions raised.

Ms. Lusala: In response to the question posed by you, Madam President, with regard to how we feel as the Heads of police components concerning the protection of civilians, I will start by saying that, first, I will enhance the protection of civilians by conducting effective operations through intelligence-led policing to sustain work in relation with all stakeholders. In that case, by gathering intelligence, I will be able to head off criminal incidents before they happen.

The second point concerns reducing overcrowding in detention centres, especially at this point in time when we are faced by coronavirus disease, by implementing a dispute-resolution alternative mechanism with respect to our justice system. Another aspect involves the reduction of the human rights abuses of detainees, such as the release of minors and juveniles from prison.

Another point concerns raising awareness and responding to prevent sexual and gender-based violence and conflict-related and sexual violence within the host community. Another issue involves encouraging the reporting of cases of sexual and gender-based violence

within the community, especially in areas where we do not have community protection committees or joint protection committees, as we do in the northern part of the country, such as those in Diffra. Another point concerns monitoring and supporting community protection committees and joint protection committees by building their capacities through training workshops and co-locating with respect to law enforcement, as community protection committees and joint protection committees are the only law enforcement entities on the ground with which we are collaborating with regard to their communities.

The next point involves enhancing gender-sensitivity capacities by encouraging women to embrace peace and security. That especially relates to women in community protection committees where we have established a gender desk at every community protection committee station. Another issue concerns enhancing United Nations police operational coverage in the area under my responsibility. As I mentioned earlier, we are currently operating at seven team sites, but I intend to open the eighth team site. It is already in place. I am just waiting for the weather conditions to improve so that I can deploy officers at that team site.

Concerning lessons learned from the establishment of the early-warning system, I would like to report that the early-warning system, as documented, has enhanced the effective response to, and the prevention of, sexual and gender-based violence and other elements of criminality within my area of responsibility. It has also enhanced collaboration and integration among the mission's components, the host community and other stakeholders, especially when it comes to the issues of cattle rustling, migration in my area of responsibility and issues of sexual and gender-based violence and conflict-related cases.

It has also enhanced a timely response to crime and incidents fuelling human rights violations. With the early-warning system and responses, we get information and react before the incident can happen.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Ms. Lusala for responding to the questions raised.

I now give the floor to Ms. Boughani so that she can also respond to the comments and questions raised.

Ms. Boughani (*spoke in French*): With regard to the question raised by the representative of China as to the areas in which we deliver our mandate, I have

chosen two areas to talk about. The first concerns community policing and its counterpart, the local security committee, which truly make up a body within which security stakeholders, as well as the local population, can meet and discuss their concerns relating to crime and gain an understanding of each other's issues. Community policing is obviously the best tool to build and reinforce trust between the local population and security forces.

The second main area consists of co-location, which goes beyond the subject of training. With co-location, we seek to promote national ownership. An individual police officer goes to a unit and shares in the work with the unit and can provide it with various kinds of advice on the daily work of the Malian security forces.

With regard to the question about difficulties and challenges, in my opinion, the main challenge is freedom of movement. Formed police units and individual police officers conduct patrols. However, in central Mali in particular, there are challenges to freedom of movement, and we cannot reach all areas. We are trying to meet that challenge with assessments and information-sharing, for example, on protecting the population. We conduct assessments within the civilian component, the police component and the military component to better understand the current challenges and how we can meet them. Freedom of movement is indeed a problem.

To address that issue, Malian security forces have been redeployed in northern and central Mali. Female units in the Malian security forces have also been redeployed. We therefore request the Security Council to encourage Mali to continue and step up deployment in the north and the centre of the country.

With regard to the question from the representative of Mexico on progress made by women in the area of safety and security, there is an eight-week predeployment training course for formed police units before they go on mission. There is induction training for individual police officers. We have set up ongoing training on safety and security. We also work closely with the United Nations Mine Action Service and the force on the issue of explosive ordnance disposal.

Concerning our response to sexual and gender-based violence in conflict and women in the force, in general, we developed an awareness-raising training course. It is a one-week training course on a specific issue. It might not always be focused on the issue of

sexual violence. It is awareness-raising training focused on three issues. All members of the Malian security forces systematically receive such training on human rights, sexual violence and election security. If none of those three issues is the focus of a particular training session, the session still seeks to raise awareness.

With regard to the early-warning system and lessons learned, a regular presence on the ground and building trust with the population are essential, as that allows us to gather information. When United Nations police receive information, it is immediately transmitted via an integrated system. Integration of that kind is essential within the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali, as it allows for immediate

information-sharing. Each component — military, civilian or police — has its strengths. For example, when there is intelligence about a potential attack, the force can respond. When intelligence is gathered, it is shared instantly among United Nations police, the force and the civilian component so that we can provide an immediate response.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Ms. Boughani for her responses and clarifications.

There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers.

The meeting rose at 12.05 p.m.