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Special report of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission and the Secretary-General of the United Nations on the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur

I. Introduction

1. The Security Council, in its resolution [2479 \(2019\)](#) of 27 June 2019, requested the Chairperson of the African Union Commission and the Secretary-General of the United Nations to provide a special report no later than 30 September 2019, presenting an assessment of the situation on the ground in Darfur, recommendations on the appropriate course of action regarding the drawdown of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) and a joint African Union-United Nations political strategy detailing options for a follow-on mechanism to UNAMID. The first part of the present report provides an overall assessment of the situation in Darfur and ways to proceed with the drawdown of UNAMID, while the second part presents the outcome of the preliminary consultations with the new transitional authorities of the Republic of the Sudan, established in early September 2019.

II. Assessment of the situation and drawdown of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur

A. Context analysis

1. Political situation

Political developments in the Sudan

2. Since the submission of the previous special report ([S/2019/445](#)) of 30 May 2019 to the Security Council, and as noted in the joint briefing by the United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations, Jean-Pierre Lacroix, and the African Union Commissioner for Peace and Security, Smaïl Chergui, to the Security Council on 25 August 2019, important developments have taken place in the Sudan with a direct impact on the governance structures that had prevailed for the last 30 years and the country has entered a period of political transition. Most notably, the Transitional Military Council and the Forces for Freedom and Change, with the mediation support of the African Union and the Government of Ethiopia, signed a Constitutional Declaration on 17 August agreeing on transitional arrangements for the forthcoming



39 months. On 21 August, the Sovereign Council was sworn in, comprising five military personnel and six civilians, including two women. The Chairman of the Transitional Military Council, Lieutenant General Abdell-Fattah al-Burhan, assumed the presidency of the Council, which he will hold for the first 21 months, and the Transitional Military Council was formally dissolved. A civilian member of the Council will take over the leadership for the remaining 18 months. On the same day, Abdalla Hamdok, a former United Nations senior official, was sworn in as the Prime Minister of the transitional Government, and the new 18-member Cabinet, including four women, was sworn in on 8 September.

3. The establishment of the transitional institutions was widely welcomed by the Sudanese people, however, some members of the Forces for Freedom and Change, namely the Sudanese Communist Party and the Sudanese Revolutionary Front (SRF), composed of the Sudan Liberation Army-Minni Minawi (SLA-MM), the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM-Gibril), the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N) Malik Agar faction and other Sudanese armed movements, claimed that the Constitutional Declaration does not adequately reflect their positions as it does not give sufficient attention to ending the conflicts in the Sudan. Other political actors outside the Forces for Freedom and Change, such as the Popular Congress Party, have expressed their strong opposition to the transitional Government. The leader of the Sudan Liberation Army-Abdul Wahid (SLA-AW), Abdul Wahid al-Nur, continues to reject the transition process, including the establishment of the new Government.

4. It is of significance that the African Union Peace and Security Council, on 6 September 2019, decided to lift the suspension of the participation of the Sudan in the activities of the African Union and "called on the countries concerned to lift all economic and financial sanctions on the Sudan, including removing the Sudan from the list of countries sponsoring terrorism (...)" (PSC/PR/COMM.(DCCCLXXV)) Similar calls were echoed by us in different forums.

Darfur peace process

5. The recent political developments have opened the way to a new approach and new opportunities for the Darfur peace process. The Constitutional Declaration, which governs the transition period, envisages the completion of a fair and comprehensive peace in the Sudan no later than six months from its signing, and addresses the root causes of the conflict and its effects. To that end, the Declaration provides for the establishment of a peace commission, taking into account United Nations Security Council resolution [1325 \(2000\)](#) and the relevant African Union resolutions related to the participation of women at all levels of peace processes. Furthermore, it defines the issues to be addressed in the peace negotiations, including security arrangements, voluntary return and durable solutions for the issues of displaced persons and refugees, issues of marginalization, justice and reconciliation, the issue of land, and the fair distribution of power and wealth. Lastly, it stipulates that past peace agreements signed between the Government of the Sudan and the armed movements will be revisited to address possible shortcomings.

6. Encouraging developments took place after the establishment of the new transitional institutions. On 11 September, the Sovereign Council, the Sudanese Revolutionary Front (SRF), SPLM-North of Abdel Aziz al-Hilu, the Beja Congress and the Sudan Liberation Forces Alliance of Tahir Hajar signed, under the auspices of the President of South Sudan, Salva Kiir, the Juba Declaration for Confidence-building Procedures and the Preparation for Negotiation, which constitutes a road map and trust-building agreement. The parties agreed on a ceasefire, the opening of humanitarian corridors, the release of war prisoners, ending the travel bans for the leaders of the movements, the establishment of a preparatory committee for peace negotiations and to postpone the establishment of the transitional legislative assembly

and the appointment of governors of the states until the peace agreement is reached. The parties also agreed that there would be tracks to address the specificity of war-affected regions in Darfur, the Two Areas, East and North Sudan. They agreed to start the peace negotiations on 14 October 2019 with the objective of signing a peace agreement by 14 December 2019.

7. As the Sudanese parties have taken the lead in the peace negotiations, the international community is called upon to support the process. More specifically, the parties requested that the Juba Declaration be presented to the African Union Peace and Security Council for it to issue a new mandate on the Sudan peace negotiations and, subsequently, for the United Nations Security Council to endorse it. The parties further agreed that regional partners, led by the African Union, and the international community, led by the Troika (Norway, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America), were essential and should be involved in the peacemaking and peacebuilding efforts.

2. Security situation

8. The overall security situation in Darfur remained volatile, but largely unchanged from the previous report (S/2019/445). Partly because of the shift of attention of the authorities to security in Khartoum and gaps in the effective functioning of institutions in Darfur states, incidents of criminality increased, in particular in camps for internally displaced persons, and the number of farm destructions and unlawful occupation of land in various parts of Darfur was higher in comparison with the same period last year. At the same time, incidents of civil unrest decreased during the reporting period, with 22 cases of civil unrest resulting in 60 people injured and no fatalities, in contrast with the previous period, from 11 April to 27 June, which witnessed 109 cases of civil unrest, resulting in 34 fatalities and 201 people injured.

Fighting between the Government of the Sudan forces and armed movements

9. Intermittent armed clashes between the Government forces and the Sudan Liberation Army-Abdul Wahid (SLA-AW) continued in the Jebel Marra, with the movement targeting the Sudan Armed Forces positions around Golo. SLA-AW abducted local civilians and staff of international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) for ransom, robbed commercial trucks and looted property of local medical and humanitarian organizations. Meanwhile, in the Daya area, east of Golo, the infighting between the two SLA-AW factions of commanders Salih Borsa and Mubarak Aldouk continued as a result of the latter's attempt to negotiate a surrender with the authorities.

Intercommunal conflict

10. With the onset of the rainy season, and with it the farming season, increased incidents of land occupation and tensions between farmers and pastoralists have been recorded in various parts of Darfur, with pastoralists adopting a more aggressive posture during the current farming season. In the Nertiti area of Central Darfur, disputes between internally displaced farmers, mostly Fur, and the Nawaiba/Northern Rizeigat pastoralists continued over access to farmlands and the harassment of women. In Shangil Tobaya, North Darfur, similar incidents occurred between Northern Rizeigat pastoralists and internally displaced farmers, mainly Fur and Tunjur, while in Kabkabiyah, North Darfur, there were reports of reoccupation of farmlands by pastoralists at the start of the farming season. Overall, the number of armed attacks by pastoralists against farmers and the related fatalities increased in 2019, North Darfur recorded 73 incidents with six victims, compared with 64 incidents with seven victims in 2018, and Central Darfur reported 71 attacks and 27 fatalities, compared with 70 incidents with 21 fatalities during the entire year in 2018.

11. Although conflicts over land use between farming and pastoralist communities recur during the farming season (May–October), the security vacuum and gaps in the effective functioning of civilian authority in the Darfur region, since the beginning of the national protests, have contributed to an increase of land-related incidents. During the current farming season, UNAMID has recorded 52 land-related incidents with 33 fatalities, compared with 40 incidents with 13 fatalities during the same period of the previous year. This figure covers part of the 2019 farming season and includes limited information from West, East and South Darfur states, where UNAMID closed its operations.

3. Humanitarian situation

12. The humanitarian situation continues along the trends identified in the previous special report (S/2019/445). In the meantime, additional displacements took place during the reporting period. On 6 June, intercommunal fighting in East Darfur, between the Tama and Rizeigat tribes, resulted in the displacement of some 1,300 people from the Hijilij village east of Ed Daein. On 9 June, in Central Darfur, about 900 people in Dulayq village, Wadi Salih locality, were displaced and 13 people were killed as a result of inter-tribal conflict. In addition, an estimated 2,300 people, mostly women and children, were displaced from various villages (Hillat Ahmed, Krakola, Aro, Faradolow, Targay and Omu) in North Jebel Marra to Sabanga as a result of fighting during the reporting period between security forces and SLA-AW in the area. Humanitarian partners assisted the displaced with non-food items, shelter, food assistance and health services.

13. As a result of heavy rains in July and August, an estimated 25,315 people were affected by flooding in parts of Darfur, which damaged and destroyed over 5,000 houses. The hardest hit state was North Darfur, where more than 11,000 people were affected. Humanitarian partners delivered emergency shelter and non-food items, water, sanitation and hygiene services and food, provided health services and vector control and drained stagnant water.

14. As at the end of August 2019, the peak of the lean season, more than 1.8 million people were facing phase 3 (crisis) or phase 4 (emergency) levels of food insecurity across Central East, North, and South Darfur, according to the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification data. This represents 17 to 24 per cent of the population in these states, compared with 14 per cent for the whole of the Sudan.

15. The operating environment presented challenges for aid workers in areas under the control of SLA-AW, who denied access to Central Jebel Marra, namely to Tarbi, Kero and Jokosti villages. On 3 July, alleged SLA-AW elements abducted four national staff of an international NGO in Karonga (4 km east of Golo temporary operating base) and released them on 4 July. On the same day, three suspected SLA-AW elements looted assorted medicine and medical equipment from a clinic run by an international NGO at Bar Arie, in Golo. On 29 July, two local staff members of an international NGO and one local community leader were also abducted by alleged SLA-AW elements at Tarbi village, in Golo. The staff members were later released.

4. Human rights situation

16. Human rights violations and abuses continued the trends presented in our previous special report (S/2019/445). UNAMID documented 16 incidents of sexual gender-based violence affecting 17 individuals, including 7 minors. In three separate incidents, involving the rape of four minors, perpetrators were arrested and are in the process of being prosecuted. In July and August, 40 cases of human rights violations and abuses were reported, involving 255 victims, including 9 minors and 38 women, compared with 33 cases involving 182 victims registered between April to June. Of

the 40 cases documented, 85 per cent were allegedly perpetrated by armed men described as nomads. The documented cases may not reflect the actual number of incidents, owing to underreporting for fear of reprisals, access restrictions to survivors in areas of affected population, as well as absence of police stations and medical facilities in remote areas.

17. While armed conflict between Government forces and armed opposition movements has subsided, some of the major grievances underlying the Darfur crisis, including intercommunal conflicts, remain fundamentally unaddressed. Moreover, the recent political crisis in the Sudan has contributed to fuel tensions between internally displaced persons and nomad communities, partly prompted by the political vacuum and weakened governance and rule of law institutions. Consequently, violent clashes and retaliatory attacks have occurred in farmlands and camps for internally displaced persons, in particular in Central, South and North Darfur states.

18. The majority of the grave violations committed against children during the reporting period occurred in the context of infighting between SLA-AW factions in the Jebel Marra. Within the framework of the Security Council-mandated monitoring and reporting mechanism on grave violations against children in situations of armed conflict, during the period between June and September 2019, UNAMID verified 87 grave violations affecting 84 children (including 35 girls), of which 35 were cases of killing and maiming, 15 of recruitment and use, 26 sexual violence, 8 abductions and 3 attacks against schools (1) and hospitals (2). The perpetrators of grave violations were mostly identified as SLA-AW, members of the Rapid Support Forces, armed nomads and unidentified armed men. Children living in camps for internally displaced persons remained vulnerable to violations, including sexual violence by unknown armed men, while carrying out livelihood activities. The threat of remnants of war also remained a concern, in particular in the Jebel Marra area, and notably affecting children.

19. Conflict-related sexual violence, primarily alleged to be perpetrated by armed nomads and other militia groups, continued to be reported in the greater Jebel Marra area, including Golo, Kas, Nertiti, Kabkabiyah and other parts of Darfur.

20. An important benchmark was achieved with the milestone agreement to open a United Nations Human Rights office in the Sudan, signed by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet, and the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Sudan, Asma Mohamed Abdalla, on 25 September 2019 in New York. The United Nations Human Rights offices in Khartoum, Darfur, Blue Nile, South Kordofan and Eastern Sudan will support the transition in four areas, namely: (a) combating inequality and supporting the development of policies that will help provide for basic economic and social rights and the empowerment and participation of women; (b) legal and institutional reform, to help the Government bring domestic legislation into conformity with its international human rights obligations and develop strong institutions for the protection of human rights; (c) transitional justice, to support accountability and reconciliation, with the meaningful participation of victims in these processes; and (d) strengthening the opening of democratic and civic space, including through stronger participation of women and minorities.

B. Implementation of Security Council resolutions [2429 \(2018\)](#) and [2479 \(2019\)](#), and African Union Peace and Security Council communiqués of 11 June 2018 and 13 June 2019

21. In accordance with the African Union Peace and Security Council communiqué of 13 June 2019 (PSC/PR/COMM.(DCCCXLVI)) and United Nations Security Council resolution [2479 \(2019\)](#) of 27 June 2019, UNAMID engaged the Sudanese

authorities on the suspension of decree 102 of 13 May 2019, by which the latter decided that all closed UNAMID team sites and camps be handed over to the Rapid Support Forces. Accordingly, the Transitional Military Council rescinded the above-mentioned decision by issuing decrees 202 and 203 of 23 June 2019, assuring UNAMID that all mission team sites and camps would be handed over to the (Darfur) states to be used for health, education and other services.

22. In view of the above, and in line with Security Council resolution [2429 \(2018\)](#), UNAMID developed a sequenced plan for the immediate resumption of the closure and handover of the remaining team sites once a decision is taken by the Security Council to that effect. The sequencing of the closure process is broadly in line with option two of the drawdown proposed in the previous special report ([S/2019/445](#)) and is guided by four parameters, namely: (a) protection of civilians as the core of the mission's mandate; (b) the security of personnel and assets of UNAMID; (c) logistical requirements during the drawdown; and (d) flexibility of relocating troops to provide protection to locations that have ceased operations.

23. The above process, in line with the African Union Peace and Security Council communiqué of 13 June 2019 (PSC/PR/COMM. (DCCCXLVI)), envisages the closure of the Nyala "super camp", the handover of which was suspended in June 2019 as a result of decree 102 of the Transitional Military Council, and all of the operation's current 13 team sites, in line with the timelines provided for in Security Council resolution [2429 \(2018\)](#). The drawdown and closure are foreseen to be conducted in two phases, phase one would include: Nyala "super camp", Khor Abeche, Shangil Tobaya, Menawashei, Saraf Omra, Tawilah, Sortony and Kutum. Phase two would include: Kas, Nertiti, Kalma, Golo, Zalingei and Kabkabiyah. This plan would ensure the handover of the team sites to civilian end-users and provide for a reserve capacity of up to one battalion to intervene in extremis situations, as highlighted in the previous special report ([S/2019/445](#)).

24. Following a four-month pause, in line with Security Council resolution [2479 \(2019\)](#), of 27 June 2019, plans to resume the overall drawdown are in place, pending a decision of the Security Council in October. These plans would need, however, to be periodically considered against the backdrop of the political developments in the wider Sudan, and the expectations of the Sudanese authorities.

Performance of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur

25. Since 2017, UNAMID has maintained a mechanism for monitoring, evaluating and reporting on the performance of military and police units. To date, 35 evaluations have been conducted, covering mandate comprehension and support, command and control, training and discipline, sustainment and health, and the willingness and ability of the units to implement assigned tasks related to the protection of civilians. During the reporting period, UNAMID submitted evaluations for 3 units out of a total of 11 military units deployed in the mission, including a level II hospital, an engineering company and a utility aviation unit. All three were found to be above average, while the performance of one unit was deemed to be excellent across all categories, with an effective use of technology. Despite the good rating, some issues were identified, including expired ammunition. Mission leadership visited regularly to make mid-course corrections, as necessary, and periodic training was conducted to refresh troops' and police officers' knowledge and sharpen their basic skills.

C. Implementation of the transition through the State liaison functions

26. Despite challenges, the implementation of the UNAMID transition has continued, in line with Security Council resolution [2429 \(2018\)](#) Joint programmatic activities with the United Nations country team have been undertaken within the framework of the State liaison functions in four Darfur states (North, West, South and East), along three key areas: (a) rule of law; (b) durable solutions, resilience and livelihoods; and (c) human rights. The implementation rate of phase one, January–June 2019, which was allocated a budget of \$15 million, stood at 80 per cent at the end of June 2019, despite the impact of the political changes in the Sudan on the operating environment in Darfur, as well as cash and fuel shortages and high inflation. State liaison functions rule of law activities have been extended to Kas and Kabkabiyah, while the extension of the State liaison functions to the greater Jebel Marra is planned to start in January 2020. Security concerns and the limited presence of the United Nations country team in the greater Jebel Marra continue to challenge the expansion process in the area.

27. For phase two, from 1 July to 31 December 2019, UNAMID allocated \$17.2 million for State liaison functions activities out of a total of \$19.7 million for its programmatic funding. As at September 2019, 9 of 10 memorandums of understanding had been signed with United Nations agencies, funds and programmes. While most of the projects for the second half of 2019 build on activities that were already implemented during the first phase, livelihood support for return areas has received an additional \$3.3 million to foster confidence between internally displaced persons and host communities. Adjustments in programming were made as a result of the evolving political and rule of law situation in the country, with increased focus on service delivery and capacity-building activities with direct impact on communities, while infrastructure support has been reduced.

28. The assumption presented in the previous special report ([S/2019/445](#)) to leverage the State liaison functions towards addressing critical conflict drivers, and preventing a relapse into conflict, jointly with the United Nations country team and the Sudanese authorities is substantiated by results to date. The State liaison functions have contributed to enhancing the United Nations country team's presence and operations in Darfur, for example in East Darfur, where nine agencies, funds and programmes are currently operating, compared with five prior to January 2019. In the area of the rule of law, eight rural courts were constructed, and 240 rural court judges were trained in mediation and adjudication of intercommunal disputes, including in Kilkil, East Darfur and Anka, North Darfur. The State liaison functions also focused on capacity-building for more than 1,000 civil society representatives, law enforcement officers, judges, prosecutors, prison officials and other professionals. The expansion of the rural courts and the capacity-building of the judges and prosecutors have improved the overall performance of the justice system in the above states and contributed to enhanced human rights. Regarding durable solutions, in the areas of Buram and Graidia, South Darfur state, projects targeting the use of water resources and services have reduced tensions between nomadic and other communities. In Labado, Muhajiriyah and Abu Karinka, East Darfur, the focus of the State liaison functions is on reintegration projects and the improvement of livelihood opportunities, health services and access to markets.

29. To strengthen the coordination of the transition planning, UNAMID, in collaboration with the United Nations country team, has established, effective 1 September, the joint transition cell, replacing the existing interim transition mechanism. In Darfur, the joint transition cell will focus on field coordination, including information management and analysis, project management and the gradual

expansion of the State liaison functions further into the greater Jebel Marra. Strengthened coordination will ensure the links between the State liaison functions and parallel funding streams, including the Peacebuilding Fund and the Darfur Development Strategy.

III. African Union-United Nations political strategy and options for a follow-on mechanism to the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur

30. The previous special report (S/2019/445) made the case for a joint African Union-United Nations political strategy for the Darfur peace process to create momentum in the context of the exit of UNAMID, which was endorsed by Security Council resolution 2479 (2019) of 27 June 2019. Since then, with the signing of the Constitutional Declaration on 17 August and the establishment of the transitional authorities, the Sudanese parties have taken the lead towards achieving a comprehensive peace, and the international community is called upon to adopt a new support approach. The approach should be guided by the principles of the Constitutional Declaration, recognize the lead of the Sudanese institutions and people, including its women and youth, and ultimately contribute to rebuilding the social contract in the country. The following strategy aims to accompany the Sudanese-led processes during the remainder of the mandate of UNAMID, and to agree with the Sudanese authorities on the adequate follow-on mechanisms in support of the Government's priorities for ending conflict and achieving peace across the whole country.

A. Context

31. The current political developments and approach towards achieving a comprehensive peace in Darfur and the rest of the conflict areas in the Sudan should be considered against the backdrop of the long involvement and several initiatives by the international community in support of the Darfur peace process since 2004, which to date has not materialized in a final peace agreement. The changes culminated in an overhaul of the 30-year old governance system in the Sudan and have created an opportunity for achieving a comprehensive peace agreement, which has been prioritized by the transitional authorities in Khartoum.

1. International engagement

32. The political engagement of the United Nations and the African Union in response to the conflict in Darfur dates from its beginning and resulted in the deployment of the first ever hybrid peacekeeping operation in Darfur in 2007 and the appointment of the African Union High-level Panel on Darfur, led by the President of South Africa, Thabo Mbeki, one year later. The conclusions of the Panel's first comprehensive report, entitled "The quest for peace, justice and reconciliation", a decade ago, which defined the crisis in Darfur as a manifestation of the Sudan's inequitable distribution of wealth and power, and as the Sudan's crisis in Darfur, constitute the foundation of our common understanding and the rationale of our engagement to date.

33. Major international support went to the Darfur peace process in the past 15 years with mixed results. Despite the intensive engagement and investment made by the international community in the Abuja peace process, which led to the Darfur Peace Agreement in 2006, and the Doha process, which concluded with the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur in 2011, the outcome documents were rejected by most of the

Darfur movements. In March 2016, the African Union High-level Implementation Panel, which succeeded the African Union High-level Panel on Darfur, facilitated a road map between the Government of the Sudan and SLA-MM, JEM, SPLM-N and the National Umma Party to accelerate progress towards ending conflicts in Darfur and the Two Areas of Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile, but the parties did not undertake tangible steps towards its implementation.

34. Several regional initiatives have recently revived the dialogue with the armed groups and/or movements in the wake of the political events in the Sudan, which brought down the Government of the President of the Sudan, Omer Hassan Al-Bashir. Recent meetings between Darfur armed groups and the Transitional Military Council, or the Forces for Freedom and Change, facilitated by Chad, Egypt, Ethiopia, South Sudan and the United Arab Emirates brought the peace process to the forefront, while stressing its importance for the stability of the region.

2. National actors and framework of negotiations

35. There has been a realignment of national actors and the consolidation of groups and/or movements in the Sudan in preparation for the peace negotiations. In this context, the Sudanese Revolutionary Front, comprised of three Darfur armed groups – SLA-MM, JEM, SLA Transitional Council, and one group from the Two Areas, SPLM-N Malik Agar faction – has reorganized its structures under the leadership of Al-Hadi Idriss and has actively engaged with the Forces for Freedom and Change on their participation in the transition during meetings in Cairo and Addis Ababa in August. Three other groups, SPLM-N Abdelaziz Al-Hilu faction, the Beja Congress of Zeinab Kabbashi, and the Sudan Liberation Forces Alliance of Tahir Hajar, reorganized themselves in early August in the newly created Kush Alliance, calling for the “formulation of a new national project, based on the recognition of ethnic, culture and religious diversity” in the Sudan. In the meantime, SLA-AW continues to remain outside any negotiation framework.

36. The transitional authorities have made important decisions and taken groundbreaking steps regarding the peace process. They have defined achieving a just and comprehensive peace as their first strategic priority, within a period not exceeding six months, and to this end have established the necessary institutional framework, including the formation of the peace commission as the leading institution in the preparation of the negotiations. The aim of the Constitutional Declaration is to “end the war by addressing the roots of the Sudanese problem and handling its effects”, while defining the parameters of work in this direction, including the implementation of United Nations Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), the issuance of a general amnesty for the armed movements, the implementation of transitional justice and accountability measures for crimes against humanity and war crimes, facilitation of the work of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in the Sudan and adherence to international standards for compensation and return of properties to displaced persons and refugees. The Declaration also defines the “essential issues for the peace negotiations”, often described as the conflict drivers in the Sudan, including the security arrangements, fair distribution of power and wealth, the system of governance, issues of land and tribal land (*hawakir*), equal citizenship and justice and reconciliation. Lastly, it stipulates that former peace agreements shall be reviewed to resolve imbalances, and that comprehensive peace agreements signed between the transitional authority and the armed movements shall be included in the Constitutional Declaration.

37. A landmark step towards the launching of the peace process was the signature, on 11 September 2019, of the Juba Declaration for Confidence-building Procedures and the Preparation for Negotiation between the transitional authorities and a coalition of 10 armed groups and alliances, under the auspices of the President of

South Sudan, Salva Kiir. The parties agreed on a series of specific measures – detailed in paragraph 6 above – leading to direct negotiations by mid-October 2019, with a view to signing a peace agreement by 14 December 2019, with the support of essential partners, namely the African Union, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, the United Nations, the European Union, the Troika and several bilateral partners.

B. Objectives and scope

38. The proposed African Union-United Nations joint strategy takes into account four important developments, namely (a) that Sudanese parties have taken the lead in the peace process; (b) that for the first time in the modern history of the Sudan, the process is expected to be widely inclusive of almost all armed groups and/or rebel movements in the Sudan; (c) that the parties are considering reframing the Darfur conflict in the wider Sudan context; and (d) that a new peace process has already started with direct negotiations, firm commitments and tight deadlines.

39. The overall objective of the joint strategy is to support the first priority of the Government, which Prime Minister Hamdok has stated as ending existing conflicts and achieving peace in the first six months of the transition. In collaboration with other external actors, the African Union-United Nations scope of engagement will be to support: (a) an inclusive peace process with armed groups in Darfur and the Two Areas, including compliance with United Nations Security Council resolution [1325 \(2000\)](#), and as per chapter 15 of the Constitutional Declaration; (b) peacebuilding processes within local communities; (c) regional and cross-border initiatives; and (d) the constitutional and electoral processes.

C. Approach and areas of support

40. The achievement of a fair and comprehensive peace requires a transformative approach and a whole-of-system (African Union and United Nations) support towards addressing the conflict drivers and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. The previous special reports of 1 June 2018 and of 30 May 2019 ([S/2018/530](#) and [S/2019/445](#)) point to the main drivers of conflict in Darfur, including security sector issues related to militia groups and the proliferation of small weapons, land issues and access to resources, governance and rule of law issues, human rights and protection, and the impact of climate change and environmental degradation. Most importantly, the Constitutional Declaration's approach to peace revolves around "addressing the roots of the Sudanese problem" (chap. 15, para. 67 (a), which it specifies in a comprehensive way as "the essential issues for peace negotiations" (chap. 15, para. 68).

41. Two dimensions of this transformative approach, as specifically acknowledged by the Constitutional Declaration, are key to ensuring a just and sustainable peace, namely gender equality and women and youth empowerment, and human rights. In the first dimension, in the context of the peace agreement, the United Nations and the African Union will: (a) support the transitional Government's commitment to ensuring women have a minimum of 40 per cent representation in the legislature; (b) support the establishment of national advisory commissions on women and youth at all levels; (c) strengthen the protection strategy for vulnerable populations with a particular consideration for internally displaced women in the Sudan; (d) facilitate the transitional Government's efforts to complete its agreement on the Framework of Cooperation between the United Nations Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict and the African Union Commission

Concerning the Prevention and Response to Conflict-related Sexual Violence in Africa. In the human rights dimension, the United Nations and the African Union will provide support in the areas agreed upon in the host country agreement detailed in paragraph 20 above. Building on the signing of the host country agreement between the Government of the Sudan and OHCHR, there is a need to begin operationalizing the country office quickly in order to build on the existing momentum.

42. As concluded in a system-wide consultation with the Sudanese transitional authorities from 7 to 9 September in Khartoum, the United Nations and the African Union could add value in supporting a comprehensive peace in the following ways: (a) the provision of expertise on the conclusion of the peace agreements, including through the inclusion of women and youth and gender perspectives in the negotiations, as well as mechanisms to support and monitor the implementation of the agreement; (b) addressing the root causes of the conflicts within the framework of the Sustainable Development Goals, enabling peacebuilding, including through social and economic confidence-building measures, paving the way for an inclusive constitution-making process; (c) the use of the good offices to facilitate interactions among national, regional and international stakeholders; (d) enabling the transitional Government's access to requisite platforms and resources including the Peacebuilding Commission, and funds, such as the Secretary-General's Peacebuilding Fund and the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund.

43. In the interim, and during the next six months, the African Union and United Nations support for an inclusive peace process could focus on supporting the national peace commission and establishing local community platforms across Darfur as a first step. Thereafter, there would be the preparation and implementation of related programming for agreed security arrangements, notably the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of armed groups and their constituencies, as well as the safe, dignified and voluntary return, resettlement and reintegration of internally displaced populations in line with the durable solutions principles. In the third phase of the transition period, the African Union and the United Nations would support the constitution-making and electoral processes.

D. The way forward

44. The positive shift in the Sudan's political scene and the pace of the developments on the ground require a two-pronged approach, first, a possible reframing of the UNAMID mandate and posture in support of ongoing efforts to achieve a comprehensive peace; and second, defining some broad parameters for the Security Council's consideration, to guide the engagement with the Sudanese transitional authorities in finalizing options for a follow-on mechanism to UNAMID, once the Mission closes down.

1. Reframing the mandate of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur

45. In support of the Government's strategic priorities to achieve a comprehensive peace in the first six months of the transition, as per the Constitutional Declaration of 17 August 2019 and the Juba Declaration of 11 September 2019, the priorities of UNAMID for the period starting on 1 November 2019 could be revisited, and the following drawdown plan could be considered by the United Nations Security Council and the African Union Peace and Security Council:

(a) The first option would consist of a geographical realignment, in line with the African Union Peace and Security Council communiqué of 13 June 2019 (PSC/PR/COMM.(DCCCXLVI)) and would follow the mission's plans presented in

paragraph 23 above (phase one). In that context, UNAMID would maintain the same ceiling of uniformed and civilian personnel for an initial period of six months, while consolidating its geographical footprint from the current 13 locations to 5 or 6 locations in Central Jebel Marra, where armed elements are still active. Under a second option, UNAMID would proceed with its drawdown as outlined in paragraph 23 above, with a view to completing the drawdown by the end of June 2020.

(b) During this period, the mission's mandate will focus on support for (a) the peace process, (b) the tasks related to the implementation of the peace agreement, expected to be signed in December 2019, (c) the Peace Commission, and (d) the strengthening of the State liaison functions and their expansion in the Jebel Marra. To that end, adequate resources should be made available from within the current mission's budget in line with these immediate priorities.

(c) The closed team sites should be handed over to the transitional authorities for civilian-end purposes, in line with United Nations rules and regulations, and in accordance with the sequenced handover plan developed by UNAMID and the Government, described in paragraph 24 above.

2. Parameters for a follow-on mechanism to the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur

46. After consultations with the Sudanese authorities in Khartoum and New York in recent weeks by both African Union and United Nations officials, and in view of the Government requiring more time to formulate its needs for a follow-on mechanism to UNAMID, the following broad parameters are proposed for the Security Council's consideration as guiding principles for future engagement: (a) national ownership and support for this presence is a pre-requisite to its success, this mechanism will be in line with the principles of the Constitutional Declaration and the priorities of the Government; (b) in line with the Declaration of Shared Commitments on United Nations Peacekeeping Operations, the mandate should be clear, focused, sequenced, prioritized and achievable; (c) the nature of issues to be addressed and the security conditions do not require the presence of a military force component; (d) the assistance could be accommodated within Chapter VI or VIII of the Charter of the United Nations; (e) the deployment timeline should not exceed the transition period; and (f) the mechanism should have a light presence and geographical footprint. These parameters were broadly endorsed by the 27th meeting of the Tripartite Coordination Mechanism between the African Union, the United Nations and the Government of the Sudan, held on 7 October 2019 in Khartoum, which also established a joint task force that should finalize options for a possible follow-on presence to be presented in the December 2019 progress report addressed to both the African Union Peace and Security Council and the Security Council. That report would also consider further drawdown and exit plans of UNAMID in accordance with future decisions of the Security Council.

E. Financial aspects

47. In its resolution [73/278 B](#) and decision 73/355 of 3 July 2019, the General Assembly authorized the Secretary-General to enter into commitments for the UNAMID in an amount not exceeding \$258 million for the period from 1 July to 31 December 2019. As at 1 October 2019, unpaid assessed contributions to the Special Account for UNAMID amounted to \$202 million. Total outstanding assessed contributions for all peacekeeping operations at that date amounted to \$3,798.9 million. Reimbursement of troop and formed police costs has been made for the period up to 31 July 2019, while reimbursement of the costs of contingent-owned

equipment has been made for the period up to 31 March 2019, in accordance with the quarterly payment schedule.

F. Observations and recommendations

48. We welcome the new political developments in the Sudan and congratulate the people of the Sudan and their leaders on their achievements, which set in motion a transition process that would lead the country towards a peaceful, democratic and prosperous future. Achieving the very important goals of the transition period will require continued political will, resilience and unity of purpose among the Sudanese people and all the country's political actors. We also acknowledge the important role played by the African Union and the Government of Ethiopia in supporting the aspirations of the Sudanese people through successful mediation efforts, underscoring the critical contribution of a regional approach in conflict prevention and resolution.

49. The Sudan is at a historic crossroads. The landmark political changes underway in the country have created a unique opportunity to end the decades-old conflicts and to fundamentally address the economic, social and governance challenges. In order to enable the Sudanese people to fully embrace this new momentum, we call upon the international community to do its utmost to support the transition process, lifting all economic and financial sanctions on the Sudan, and removing the Sudan from the list of countries sponsoring terrorism, as well as mobilizing financial support for development to ensure that the current political gains are durable. We also call upon the Security Council to consider reviewing the sanctions regime against the Sudan established in line with its resolution [1591 \(2005\)](#), including lifting the arms embargo. As we accompany Sudan in this critical transition, we must also keep a strong focus on the scale of humanitarian needs in the country, recognizing that economic recovery will take time.

50. The political changes in the Sudan present a real opportunity for a comprehensive, fair and inclusive peace agreement in Darfur. The signing of the Constitutional Declaration on 17 August, the establishment of the transitional Government and the adoption of the Juba Declaration on 11 September have created the necessary framework to address the remaining conflict drivers in Darfur and countrywide. We call upon the Government of the Sudan, the Darfur armed movements and all stakeholders, including the internally displaced populations, to seize the moment and engage in peace negotiations, in accordance with the Constitutional Declaration and the modalities and the time frame of the Juba Declaration. We commend the leadership role played by the transitional authorities in Khartoum, both the Sovereign Council and the Government, in reaching out to all of the armed groups, and applaud the role of the President of South Sudan in this process. We also commend the historic meeting between Prime Minister Hamdok and Abdul Wahid al-Nur of SLA-AW on 30 September. In response to the parties' request in their declaration of 11 September, the African Union and the United Nations will continue their joint efforts in supporting the forthcoming negotiations to achieve a comprehensive peace and to end conflicts in the Sudan.

51. The strategic outcome of the system-wide consultation with the Sudanese transitional authorities, held from 7 to 9 September in Khartoum, in particular its provisions related to the achievement of the peace process, to gender equality, and women and youth empowerment, and to human rights, constitute the basis of our involvement with the Sudanese Government and people in the transition years. In this context, we welcome the agreement on the opening of the OHCHR office in the Sudan. The support of the Security Council members towards the achievement of these objectives is crucial to our success.

52. The consolidation of UNAMID and its repositioning in the support of the peace process over the next six months are in line with the strategic priorities of the Government and the provisions of the Constitutional Declaration. In our interactions with the new authorities, they have emphasized the importance of not creating a vacuum during the ongoing peace efforts and of supporting the Peace Commission.

53. Once UNAMID accomplishes its tasks, several conflict drivers, identified by the Constitutional Declaration as “essential issues for peace negotiations”, require follow-up attention. Concretely, the implementation of the peace agreement, expected to be signed by 14 December 2019, will entail coordinated work and resources on the security arrangements, the voluntary return and durable solutions for internally displaced persons and refugees, the system of governance, issues of land and *hawakir*, transitional justice and reconciliation. Those issues require the attention of the African Union Peace and Security Council and the United Nations Security Council during the period of transition within an adequate framework, agreed upon with, and on the basis of orientation given by, the new authorities in Khartoum.

54. In the context of the realignment of Sudanese and international actors towards achieving a comprehensive peace, it is necessary to harmonize the work of existing initiatives and related entities, including the African Union High-level Implementation Panel and the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Horn of Africa, towards coordinated objectives and institutional arrangements, in support of Sudanese-led initiatives and institutions. This will be our joint priority in the weeks ahead.

55. The transition in Darfur constitutes a unique opportunity to demonstrate how the United Nations, the African Union, and many of their Member States, honour the commitments they made in the Declaration of Shared Commitments on United Nations Peacekeeping Operations of the Action for Peacekeeping initiative. Of relevance are the collective commitments to ensure inclusive and participatory approaches to building peace, as well as continued support for sustaining peace after UNAMID has withdrawn, including through support for the United Nations country team. The United Nations system is committed to ensuring greater coherence through integrated analysis and planning in managing this transition process. We have been working with the African Union, which endorsed the Declaration, in pursuit of our shared commitment to pursue complementary political objectives and integrated strategies.

56. In conclusion, we would like to express our gratitude to the African Union-United Nations Joint Special Representative for Darfur, Jeremiah Mamabolo, the mission leadership and all the personnel of UNAMID, the United Nations country team and humanitarian partners, who continue to work collaboratively on our common objectives.