



Security Council

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New York

Provisional

President: Mr. Alotaibi (Kuwait)

Members:

Belgium	Mr. Pecsteen de Buytswerve
China	Mr. Wu Haitao
Côte d'Ivoire	Mr. Adom
Dominican Republic	Mr. Singer Weisinger
Equatorial Guinea	Mrs. Mele Colifa
France	Mr. Delattre
Germany	Mr. Heusgen
Indonesia	Mr. Syihab
Peru	Mr. Meza-Cuadra
Poland	Mr. Lewicki
Russian Federation	Mr. Repkin
South Africa	Ms. Marais
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Clay
United States of America	Mr. Hunter

Agenda

The situation in Burundi

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The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Burundi

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

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Mr. Oscar Fernandez-Taranco, Assistant Secretary-General for Peacebuilding Support; Mr. Smail Chergui, African Union Commissioner for Peace and Security; and His Excellency Mr. Jürg Lauber, Permanent Representative of Switzerland to the United Nations, in his capacity as Chair of the Burundi configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission.

Mr. Chergui is joining today's meeting via video-conference from Montreal.

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

I now give the floor to Mr. Fernandez-Taranco.

Mr. Fernandez-Taranco: I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for this opportunity to brief the Security Council on the developments that have taken place in Burundi since February, when Special Envoy Michel Kafando last briefed members in the Chamber (see S/PV.8465). I will also share some details on his last visit to the East African subregion and to the African Union headquarters in Addis Ababa. I take this opportunity to acknowledge the important presence at this meeting of His Excellency Mr. Smail Chergui, African Union Commissioner for Peace and Security, His Excellency Mr. Albert Shingiro, Permanent Representative of Burundi, and His Excellency Mr. Jürg Lauber, Chair of the Burundi configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission.

The following are some notable developments in Burundi since February this year. The Government's attention is focused on the conduct of the 2020 general elections and it continues to mobilize its citizens to contribute towards their preparation. The National Independent Electoral Commission (CENI) continues

its efforts to sensitize the population on democratic values, in pursuit of peaceful and credible elections. The meeting of CENI, initially scheduled for 14 June to announce the calendar of the general elections, has been postponed. On 20 March, the Congrès national pour la liberté, of Agathon Rwaso, after great difficulty, was authorized to conduct its first ordinary congress, which enabled the political party to designate its national representatives. On 17 April, the electoral code was adopted by a large majority of the National Assembly and unanimously endorsed by the Senate on 24 April. Some opposition members denounced the process surrounding the adoption of the electoral code. In their view, the process lacked the widespread consultation and consensus that is required for the legal framework for the organization and conduct of the elections in 2020.

Against the backdrop of those developments, the human rights situation remains worrying in view of many violations of fundamental civic and political freedoms, as reported by political actors, some media and civil society organizations. Increases in unemployment and the rise in prices of basic commodities and services have negatively affected economic and sociocultural rights.

The humanitarian situation has remained largely unchanged since the most recent briefing of Special Envoy Kafando. Despite relatively satisfactory agricultural production this year, nearly 1.8 million people remain at risk of food insecurity due to recurrent and devastating climatic hazards.

As of 30 April, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees estimated the number of refugees hosted in the subregion to be approximately 352,000. We encourage the Government of Burundi to work closely with its partners to ensure that assistance reaches those most in need in a timely manner. We also encourage international partners to increase their contributions, as the humanitarian response plan, requiring \$106.4 million, is currently only 24 per cent funded, while the regional refugee response plan, requiring \$296 million, is only 17 per cent funded.

Council members will recall that the 20th Ordinary Summit of Heads of State of the East African Community (EAC), held on 1 February in Arusha, renewed the mandate of the mediator, President Yoweri Museveni of Uganda. The Summit also received the final report of the facilitator, former President Benjamin Mkapa of the

United Republic of Tanzania. The report is a synthesis of the five sessions of the inter-Burundian dialogue as well as the facilitator's road map to support Burundi ahead of the 2020 general elections. The Summit agreed to continue to consult on the way forward.

In that context, from 10 to 22 May, Special Envoy Kafando travelled to the African Union headquarters and to the countries of the East African subregion to consult with regional leaders. In Addis Ababa, Special Envoy Kafando held consultations with His Excellency Moussa Faki Mahamat, Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union, and His Excellency Mr. Smaïl Chergui, African Union Commissioner for Peace and Security. In Dar es Salaam, Special Envoy Kafando held separate engagements with the former facilitator of the inter-Burundian dialogue, former President Benjamin Mkapa, before meeting with His Excellency Mr. Palamagamba Kabudi, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the United Republic of Tanzania. On 16 May, Special Envoy Kafando was received by His Excellency John Pombe Magufuli, President of the United Republic of Tanzania.

The Special Envoy then travelled to Bujumbura but did not meet with the Burundian authorities due to their busy schedules. Nevertheless, he used the opportunity to meet with some ambassadors accredited to Burundi as well as the United Nations country team. In Kigali, the Special Envoy met with Mr. Richard Sezibera, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Rwanda, on 21 May.

During his interactions at the African Union and in the subregion, with a view to stimulating discussions, including on the United Nations continued partnership with the EAC and the African Union in our collective efforts to support Burundi, Special Envoy Kafando suggested three possible courses of action for the consideration of stakeholders. Those were: first, the possibility of convening a meeting of the guarantors of the Arusha Agreement, with a view to reaffirming its centrality to Burundi's political stability; secondly, support to the African Union and the subregion in the context of the elections in the subregion; and thirdly, the continuation of the joint technical working group, which comprises the EAC, the African Union and the United Nations, in support of region-led efforts on Burundi.

Throughout those consultations, the Special Envoy's interlocutors underscored the need to respect the sovereignty of Burundi. They also stressed the

importance of continued cooperation among the United Nations, the East African Community and the African Union in support of the country, especially in the context of the upcoming 2020 elections. They thanked the Special Envoy for the opportunity to reflect on his suggestion to them. In that regard, Special Envoy Kafando will return to the region to engage with the mediator on how best the African Union and the United Nations can support regional efforts.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank the interlocutors of the Special Envoy for their constructive engagement. The Secretariat encourages leaders of the region to continue consultations with the Special Envoy, especially during his upcoming trip to the region. Once the consultations of the Special Envoy are duly concluded, the outcomes will be the basis upon which the Secretary-General could define and recommend the way forward to the Security Council, including options in support of the EAC-led and African Union-endorsed inter-Burundian dialogue ahead of 2020 elections, as indicated in his latest report to the Council (S/2018/1028).

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank Mr. Fernandez-Taranco for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Chergui.

Mr. Chergui (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, allow me to congratulate you, Mr. President, as well as the brotherly State of Kuwait, for all that you have been doing to restore and maintain peace and security around the world. I also thank you for the invitation to address the Security Council and participate in this afternoon's meeting to provide the Council with an update on the situation in Burundi.

(*spoke in French*)

The African Union remains committed to restoring peace and security in Burundi. Since the crisis broke out in 2015, the African Union has been firmly convinced that only an inclusive inter-Burundian dialogue can lead to a lasting solution to the political crisis. It is with that understanding that the African Union has stood staunchly behind the mediation efforts of the East African Community, led by His Excellency Mr. Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, President of Uganda, and the facilitator of the inter-Burundian political dialogue, Mr. Benjamin Mkapa, former President of Tanzania. I would like to publicly thank both of them today for all they have done to support the Burundian parties in

finding a consensus-based and peaceful solution to the situation that prevails in their country and to agree on a road map for the holding of credible elections in 2020.

Nevertheless, despite the mediation efforts, the inter-Burundian dialogue, the fifth round of which took place in October 2018 and was considered a failure, has not made any progress. Faced with that situation, Mr. Moussa Faki Mahamat, Chairperson of the African Union Commission, sent a letter to President Museveni and the leaders of the region, who act as guarantors of the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement, in which he expressed his regret and serious concern at the ongoing deadlock in the inclusive dialogue, which was jeopardizing the gains under the Arusha Agreement. The Chairperson underscored the historic responsibility borne by the guarantors of the Arusha Agreement at this critical juncture in the history of Burundi and encouraged them to redouble their efforts to encourage the Burundian parties to overcome the challenges and safeguard the gains achieved in terms of security and reconciliation.

There is no alternative: the inclusive inter-Burundian dialogue must resume as quickly as possible, as it is undoubtedly the only way to promote and strengthen national cohesion and thereby make it possible to re-establish an enhanced climate of trust and pave the way for renewal in Burundi.

With regard to the presidential elections, there is a pressing need to speed up the putting in place of conditions that would favour the holding of free and transparent elections in a peaceful climate, leading to a brighter future for the Burundian people. In other words, the elections in 2020 should not be a source of further division among the people of Burundi.

As Council members are aware, at the Nouakchott summit in July 2018, the Heads of State and of Government of the African Union welcomed the announcement by President Pierre Nkurunziza that he would not seek re-election in 2020. They also called upon the African Union Commission to support the Burundian Government and all political parties to help them to work together to ensure that the upcoming elections take place smoothly.

Against that backdrop, I led a listening mission to Burundi from 5 to 7 November 2018 to explore the best ways by which the African Union could assist Burundi, especially in preparing for the elections scheduled for 2020. In that regard, we welcome the measures adopted

by the Burundian Government to begin preparing for the elections, in particular the establishment, on 31 August 2018, of the Independent National Electoral Commission, in line with the Burundian electoral code. I think it is also worth noting that the opposition parties have complained of arbitrary arrests of their members and of steps being taken to hinder their political activities on the ground. Burundi is in need of measures to be taken to ensure calm and, as 2020 approaches, to ensure that the political climate does not become too fragile and that we can guarantee inclusivity, which will be so essential for the smooth holding of elections. It is crucial that speedy progress be made in those areas, as Burundi faces other new challenges.

In terms of governance, despite a notable decrease in the levels of violence, in particular in the capital, Bujumbura, we are still receiving reports of ongoing cases of human rights violations in the country's provinces.

On the humanitarian front, the plight of refugees and internally displaced persons remains a source of concern. The voluntary repatriation organized for Burundian refugees currently abroad in the subregion and other countries of the continent continues. The number of refugees repatriated from Tanzania and Uganda in 2017 stood at 13,176. It had dropped to 9,825 by April 2019. It is worth recalling that the majority of those repatriated between September 2017 and April 2019 entered the country from Tanzania, with a smaller number coming from Uganda, and are residing in all 18 provinces the country.

The situation on the economic front remains precarious, while combating poverty as part of the national development plan requires urgent attention.

We reiterate our determination to continue to support all efforts aimed at finding a lasting and consensus-based solution to the situation at this critical juncture, so as to assist Burundi in organizing free and transparent elections. It is in that context that the Peace and Security Council called upon the African Union Commission, jointly with the East African Commission and in coordination with the United Nations and all the relevant partners, to agree to additional efforts that could further support Burundi in the search for lasting peace and security and increased reconciliation, in particular through peaceful, inclusive and credible elections in 2020. We are exploring the possibility of

reconvening the group of guarantor countries under the 2005 Arusha Agreement.

It would be remiss of me to conclude without paying tribute to President Michel Kafando for his commitment and close cooperation with the African Union.

At the very beginning of the year, we looked on with admiration at the peaceful transfer of power in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The people of Burundi also have the absolute right to hope for the same and to consolidate stability in that region of the continent, which has been so sorely tested.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank Mr. Chergui for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Lauber.

Mr. Lauber (Switzerland): I have the honour to inform the Security Council today about my recent trip to Burundi, which I undertook in my capacity as Chair of the Burundi configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) from 5 to 10 May. As per established practice, this statement has been approved by the 54 members of the PBC configuration, including Burundi, the country concerned.

In line with the priorities identified together with the members of the configuration, I focused on the following issues during my recent visit: first, the political situation and possibilities for supporting Burundi on the path towards free, fair, inclusive and peaceful elections in 2020; secondly, the socioeconomic dimension and engagement between Burundi and international partners around the priorities identified in Burundi's national development plan for 2018-2027; thirdly, national reconciliation and local-level conflict-resolution initiatives; and, fourthly, the immediate and longer-term needs of the Burundian people, including with regard to the voluntary return and sustainable reintegration of refugees.

In Bujumbura, I met with His Excellency Mr. Ezéchiel Nibigira, Minister for Foreign Affairs; Mr. Martin Nivyabandi, Minister for Human Rights, Social Affairs and Gender; the Permanent Secretaries of the Ministries of Finance and Defence, as well as the Assistant to the Minister for Public Security. I also met with Lieutenant General Silas Ntigurirwa, Permanent Secretary of the National Security Council; Mr. Pascal Nyabenda, President of the National Assembly, who was accompanied by the two Deputy Speakers, the Right Honourable Agathon Rwaswa and the Right

Honourable Jocky Chantal Nkurunziza. In addition, I met with the Mr. Edouard Nduwimana, Ombudsman; representatives of the opposition parties; representatives of the Office of the Special Envoy of the United Nations and His Excellency Mr. Michel Kafando, the Special Envoy. Finally, I met with Mr. Huang Xia, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region; Mr. Basile Ikouebe, Special Representative of the African Union for the Great Lakes Region; representatives of the private sector, civil society and the diplomatic community; bilateral and multilateral donors; and, of course, the United Nations country team. I want to thank Ambassador Albert Shingiro, Permanent Representative of Burundi, and United Nations Resident Coordinator Garry Conille, and their teams for their efforts to organize my programme.

My visit to Burundi confirmed the impression that the upcoming elections in 2020 are already attracting considerable attention. I therefore considered it important to hear the views of a wide range of interlocutors on the electoral process, given its implications for peacebuilding.

The authorities informed me that all instruments and processes required for a successful holding of elections are in place and that Burundi will finance the elections with its own resources. The electoral code was adopted by the members of the National Assembly, including the leader of the new opposition party Congrès national pour la liberté, Agathon Rwaswa, by 105 of 108 votes. The authorities reiterated that His Excellency President Pierre Nkurunziza would not stand as a candidate in the elections. With regard to preparations for the peaceful conduct of the elections, the need for technical support was mentioned — for instance, in the areas of police training and security sector reform. I was informed that the Independent National Electoral Commission would invite observers to the elections from international and regional organizations.

The interlocutors I met from some of the opposition parties reiterated their intention to participate in the 2020 elections. They highlighted the advanced state of preparations for the elections and underscored the need for an inclusive process. A number of interlocutors voiced concerns over difficulties encountered by members of the opposition parties to gather freely. Some interlocutors expressed concerns over recent measures against two foreign media outlets that allegedly violated national regulations, according to the national authorities.

During my stay in Bujumbura, the authorities confirmed that the security situation in the country was calm and stable. They highlighted that the situation in the country did not pose a threat to international peace and security. No security incidents were reported during my visit, and the streets of Bujumbura were busy with people and activity. However, a number of interlocutors voiced concerns about alleged violent incidents and human rights violations that were not being properly investigated and prosecuted.

The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in Bujumbura was closed at the end of February at the request of the authorities. The Minister for Human Rights, Social Affairs and Gender confirmed Burundi's readiness to engage with international human rights bodies on technical cooperation and highlighted the ongoing work on the implementation of the recommendations from the Universal Periodic Review of Burundi in the Human Rights Council. The Independent National Commission on Human Rights, under new leadership since April, expressed its readiness to cooperate with relevant partners in order to promote and protect the full spectrum of human rights in Burundi.

My visit to Burundi also provided an opportunity to follow up on the socioeconomic dialogue with the Government and Burundi's international partners, which has been a priority for the configuration over the past years. The authorities expressed their satisfaction with the successful outcome of the high-level side event on nutrition organized by the Ministry of Finance, with bilateral and multilateral partners, on the margins of the spring meetings of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund in Washington, D.C., in April. With regard to the implementation of Burundi's national development plan for the period 2018-2027, the authorities expressed the intention of mobilizing external resources to complement internal funds and indicated that preparations were under way for a substantive dialogue with bilateral and multilateral partners regarding the development plan.

A field trip to a project supported by the Peacebuilding Fund, which is jointly implemented by UN-Women, the International Organization for Migration and the United Nations Development Programme, highlighted the important work carried out by a group of women mediators to mitigate tensions and resolve conflicts at the community level. The powerful testimonies shared by the women showed

the importance of supporting mediation efforts with income-generating activities in order to strengthen resilience and empower women to take on their role in the consolidation of peace and to participate fully in the political sphere.

As compared to the previous year, some improvement was noted with regard to meeting the immediate and longer-term needs of the population. However, important funding requirements persist, including for the humanitarian response plan. A concern expressed by some interlocutors was the need to ensure that the implementation of programmes and projects would not suffer delays as the Administration's focus turns increasingly to the elections. The important role of non-governmental organizations in the delivery of assistance was highlighted, as was the need to enable them to operate freely, in line with relevant national legislation and international standards.

I also had an opportunity to follow up with Government representatives and with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) on the return of refugees to Burundi from neighbouring countries. UNHCR is assisting refugees in Burundi, as well as people who voluntarily repatriate to Burundi, primarily from Tanzania. Protection and assistance for refugees and the sustainable reintegration of internally displaced persons and those who choose to return remain a core concern. Funding requirements continue to be acute in those areas.

Based on the experience of my recent visit, my conclusions and recommendations are as follows.

First, free, fair, inclusive and peaceful elections in 2020, the results of which would enjoy high legitimacy both domestically and internationally, are crucial to ensure favourable conditions for lasting peace and stability, as well as for continued partnership and cooperation around Burundi's development priorities. I encourage the Government of Burundi, political parties and other stakeholders, with the support of the member States of the subregion and while building on previous efforts, to create the conditions that support that outcome. I furthermore encourage the Government of Burundi and international partners to rapidly identify what forms of assistance are desirable and feasible with a view to supporting the preparation and conduct of the 2020 elections.

Secondly, the electoral period should not lead to a slowdown in the socioeconomic development

of the country. I encourage the Government and its international partners to pursue a substantive dialogue on the implementation of the national development plan and build on the successful partnership that was formed around the event on nutrition held in Washington, D.C. I also encourage bilateral and multilateral partners and the Government of Burundi to continue their dialogue with a view to creating conducive conditions for the resumption of suspended assistance.

Thirdly, I encourage Member States, United Nations partners and Burundi to work together to create a conducive environment for the full realization of all human rights, including by exploring opportunities for further engagement and support at all levels.

Fourthly, initiatives to promote reconciliation and dialogue among all stakeholders, including at the community level, play a crucial role in reducing tensions during the electoral period, strengthening resilience beyond the elections and helping to preserve the gains achieved through the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement. Building on insights gained from programmes such as the women mediators' network to support local-level initiatives, in particular with regard to the empowerment of women and youth, should be continued and even expanded.

Fifthly, the orderly and voluntary return of Burundian refugees remains a key issue, which requires additional funding in order to enable the voluntary and dignified return of refugees and support their sustainable reintegration. UNHCR and its partners engaged in that important effort should be given adequate resources, accompaniment and support by the international community.

A written report of my visit has been shared with the members of the Burundi configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission and discussed at the latest meeting of the configuration, just two days ago.

In conclusion, I would like to thank the members of the Security Council for their continuous support to the configuration and for their interest.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank Mr. Lauber for his briefing.

I would like to draw the attention of speakers to paragraph 22 of presidential note S/2017/507, which encourages all participants in Council meetings to deliver their statements in five minutes or less, in line

with the Security Council's commitment to making more effective use of open meetings.

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

Mr. Delattre (France) (*spoke in French*): I would like to begin by warmly thanking Assistant Secretary-General Oscar Fernandez-Taranco, African Union Commissioner Smail Chergui and Ambassador Jürg Lauber for their important briefings.

I shall be brief, in keeping with the President's request so that we have enough time for consultations. I would like to highlight three points: Burundi remains at a crossroads one year out from the elections; the region's mobilization is crucial; and the United Nations must remain fully committed to supporting regional efforts.

First, Burundi will be able to restore stability only through the holding of free and inclusive elections in 2020, as has been mentioned. The elections are in one year's time, which is practically tomorrow. It is crucial that Burundi move forward and ensure that those deadlines are prepared for in the best possible way. We welcome President Nkurunziza's commitment not to stand for re-election and the recognition of the main opposition party in February. Further action is needed, including ensuring free access to Burundian territory for all parties and respecting the rights of opponents. France calls on the Burundian authorities to fully respect their international human rights commitments and will continue to monitor the humanitarian and human rights situation with great attention.

Secondly, the mobilization of the region is crucial. The statement delivered by the Commissioner for Peace and Security of the African Union before the Council is especially welcome. I would like to commend the African Union's efforts and encourage it to continue its commitment in that direction, with a view to supporting Burundi and the efforts of the East African Community (EAC). Through the mediation entrusted to the EAC, the States of the region have supported the quest for a lasting solution to the political crisis that broke out in 2015. In that regard, I welcome the commitment of the mediator, President Museveni, and the contribution of the facilitator, former President Mkapa. The Presidents of Kenya and Tanzania were invited by their peers to also contribute to the process. Today it is important to assess the work being done in the region. Let us therefore all remain engaged — the Community of East African States, the African Union and the guarantors of the

Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement — in order to support Burundi on its path towards stabilization.

Thirdly, it is important in that regard for the United Nations to remain fully committed to supporting regional efforts. One year prior to the elections, given that certain balances envisioned in the Arusha Agreement are being reconsidered and that concerns are being raised by the presence of hotbeds of tension in the region, the Security Council cannot become disengaged on the situation in Burundi. Moreover, the work of Mr. Kafando and his teams is more necessary than ever. It enables support for the mediation efforts of the Community of East African States and to work with all stakeholders to develop confidence-building measures in order to create a climate conducive to political dialogue and facilitate an inclusive reconciliation process. I thank Mr. Kafando for his efforts and encourage him to continue his consultations, in order to quickly present options on the role that the United Nations could play in support of regional efforts to move towards the normalization of the situation in Burundi.

Ms. Marais (South Africa): We thank Mr. Oscar Fernandez-Taranco, Assistant Secretary-General for Peacebuilding Support, and Ambassador Jürg Lauber, Chair of the Burundi configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission, for their insightful briefings on the evolving situation in Burundi and their unwavering commitment to the process. We would also like to thank Ambassador Smail Chergui, African Union Commissioner for Peace and Security, for his briefing in that regard.

South Africa fully supports the continued facilitation process led by the East African Community (EAC) in the spirit of the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement, with the support of the African Union and the United Nations. We welcome the designation of President Yoweri Museveni of Uganda as the mediator of the process, with the support of President Uhuru Kenyatta of Kenya and President John Magufuli of Tanzania. In this regard, the work of former President Benjamin Mkapa of Tanzania was invaluable. We also acknowledge the critical role played by the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, former President Michel Kafando, as well as the Burundi configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission under the able leadership of Ambassador Jürg Lauber.

At this juncture, however, South Africa considers it prudent to highlight the need for the Council to continuously coordinate the Council's positions with those of the African Union (AU) Peace and Security Council when dealing with African issues. Africa has very clearly defined regional organizations, which deal systematically with issues related to African peace and security. In the case of Burundi, the EAC is charged with the responsibility of overseeing the Burundi process. South Africa had hoped that there would be greater appreciation for allowing the processes of the region to run its course, which would then enrich discussions in the Security Council. Allowing for regional processes to unfold is a key factor in Africa owning the solutions to its own problems and achieving enduring peace. We therefore look to the direction of the leadership of the East African Community and the African Union to chart the course on Burundi with the assistance of, and in coordination with, the United Nations.

South Africa maintains that it is only through an inclusive dialogue that we can address any political impasse in Burundi. This requires the international community to lend support to the initiatives of the EAC. In this vein, we also call on the Government of Burundi to create a conducive environment that facilitates dialogue with the key stakeholders of the East African Community-led process. As a guarantor of the Arusha Agreement, and as part of Mandela's legacy, South Africa always stands ready to support the Government and the people of Burundi as they democratize their country, opening more political space for all political parties and allowing the media to play its role in informing society and spreading tolerance.

With regard to the political developments in Burundi, we continue to be encouraged by the stable security situation in the country. We congratulate the Government of Burundi on initiating a number of preparatory process for the elections, especially the establishment of an Independent National Electoral Commission, which is now fully operational. We welcome the adoption of the Burundian electoral code and their commitment to the 2018 Kayanza road map, which lays the foundation for peaceful elections in 2020. We commend the decision by the Government of Burundi to finance the elections with their national budget and we encourage Burundi to work closely with the East African Community and the African Union to create an environment conducive to free, fair, peaceful,

democratic and inclusive elections in the spirit of the Arusha Agreement.

South Africa also welcomes President Pierre Nkurunziza's commitment to not stand as a candidate for the presidential election in 2020 and we look forward to the Government and political parties working together to hold inclusive and peaceful elections. Burundians must be the beneficiaries of democratic elections that can deliver democracy and development with the assistance of the region. All parties must be permitted to canvass for support countrywide, without hindrance. There should be no no-go areas for any political party or politician.

South Africa commends Burundi's contribution to international peace and security through its deployment of more than 6,000 Burundian men and women in various peacekeeping operations, mostly in the Central African Republic and Somalia, making Burundi one of the top troop-contributing countries.

We call on the international community to support Burundi in strengthening their peacekeeping capacity, as it is of critical institutional value to the county. As a member of the African Union Peace and Security Council, Burundi is congratulated on remaining committed to the promotion of peace and security by contributing to silencing the guns in Africa by 2020.

South Africa is gravely concerned about the dire humanitarian situation in Burundi. We urge the Security Council and the international community to do more to alleviate the socioeconomic challenges and humanitarian situation facing the people of Burundi. We call on its partners to support the implementation of the ten-year national development plan for the benefit of the Burundian people. In this vein, we reiterate the call by the AU during its thirty-second Summit for the European Union to lift the unilateral sanctions imposed against the Republic of Burundi.

We are encouraged by the ongoing voluntary repatriation movement of Burundian refugees, which saw 67,710 refugees voluntarily repatriated to Burundi, mainly from Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, between August 2017 and May 2019. The increased return of refugees is a manifestation of the return to peace and stability in the country. We urge the international community to support these efforts and call on them to provide assistance for the repatriation and reintegration of returnees.

Finally, we appeal to the Security Council and the international community to support the Government and the EAC mediation process to lay the foundation for an environment that is conducive to the holding of democratic elections and to support a peaceful transfer of power, in order to ensure peace and stability beyond 2020.

Mr. Pecsteen de Buytswerve (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): I would like to begin by thanking Mr. Oscar Fernandez-Taranco, Commissioner Smaïl Chergui and Ambassador Jürg Lauber for their briefings.

On Wednesday, my delegation had the opportunity to address the Peacebuilding Commission regarding our concerns about the human rights situation and the socioeconomic situation in Burundi, as well as our readiness to engage in dialogue with the Burundian authorities.

Today, I would like to underscore, first and foremost, the importance of the 2020 elections. If we want to prevent any subsequent disputes, the electoral process must be sufficiently transparent and inclusive. This requires a consensual road map where the principal stakeholders can agree on the preparations and modalities of the elections, as well as the conditions necessary to guarantee peaceful elections.

In that regard, I would like to make a triple appeal to all Burundian actors, as the requirements for credible elections are, indeed, threefold: first, the political and media space must not be closed off ahead of the elections; secondly, the elections must not be boycotted; and thirdly, they must be able to be independently observed.

Inclusivity also implies the participation of the many peaceful political actors that have been exiled in recent years. Respect for the letter and the spirit of the Arusha Agreement is, of course, a prerequisite for any solution. If these conditions are met, I think it is important to reflect on the support we can provide throughout this process, both at the bilateral level and at the level of the United Nations system. In that context, Belgium welcomes the adoption of a new electoral code with wider political support, as well as the recent announcement by the Independent National Electoral Commission that it will invite international and regional observers to attend the 2020 electoral process.

Belgium is convinced that as the 2020 elections approach, an opportunity is arising to find a lasting

solution to some of the causes and consequences of the 2015 crisis, which are unfortunately still relevant today. We salute Uganda, which, through President Museveni, plays a key role as mediator. We are confident that Uganda will be able to take over the recommendations of former facilitator President Mkapa, with a view to bringing them to fruition. We welcome the commitment of the Kenyan and Tanzanian Presidents. In addition, the regional repercussions of the situation in Burundi, as reported by the Group of Experts, further highlight the need for high-level regional engagement.

The African Union continues to play an important role in this matter. We believe that in terms of mediation, the activities of the African Union as well as the guarantors of the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement for Burundi could complement and strengthen the initiatives currently being undertaken by the East African Community.

In parallel, the United Nations and the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Burundi must continue to support the efforts of the subregion and the region. The United Nations remains a partner of Burundi and must make every effort to help it to solve its political and socioeconomic difficulties, which must involve full cooperation and mutual respect. Belgium commends the continued commitment and substantial work undertaken by the Mr. Kafando, Special Envoy for Burundi. His mandate is absolutely essential to direct and coordinate the political support of the United Nations. We are now awaiting the proposals of the Secretary-General regarding the possible roles of the United Nations in Burundi, after consulting key partners. In the meantime, the Council must continue to contribute to this discussion.

Mr. Adom (Côte d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): I would like to begin by congratulating Mr. Oscar Fernandez-Taranco, Assistant Secretary-General for Peacebuilding Support, for the high quality of his briefing on developments in Burundi. I also welcome Mr. Jürg Lauber, Chair of the Burundi configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission.

I also welcome the participation in this meeting of Mr. Smaïl Chergui, Commissioner for Peace and Security of the African Union, whose useful insight gives us perspective on the tireless efforts made by that pan-African institution to promote lasting peace and stability in Burundi. I would also like to welcome

the presence among us of my brother and friend, Albert Shingiro, Permanent Representative of Burundi.

Côte d'Ivoire notes with great interest the generally stable sociopolitical environment in Burundi. We welcome the good offices of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, as well as the determination of the Heads of State and Government of the East African Community to continue direct consultations with all Burundian parties, as reaffirmed at their summit held on 1 February in Arusha.

My country remains convinced that only the establishment of an inclusive inter-Burundian dialogue in the spirit of the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement for Burundi, and supported by the international community, including the United Nations and the African Union, will enable the brotherly country of Burundi to face the many challenges that are waiting to be overcome. Consequently, Côte d'Ivoire calls for the resumption of a bold dialogue between all active Burundian forces, in order to create a peaceful environment, which is indispensable for the holding of transparent, free, inclusive and peaceful elections in 2020.

The resolution of the humanitarian issue, as well as the return of refugees and internally displaced persons must, as much as the political and security challenges, remain at the heart of the concerns of the international community. In that context, the Humanitarian Response Plan for Burundi deserves our full support in order to facilitate the return of internally displaced persons to their region of origin as well as that of refugees, estimated at 352,000 by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

Côte d'Ivoire reiterates its call for dialogue between the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Burundian authorities, in order to dispel the clouds of misunderstanding and mistrust, and to address, together, concerns relating to the closure on 28 February of the field office of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in Burundi. Côte d'Ivoire also hopes for continued constructive cooperation between Burundi and the Peacebuilding Commission to forge a shared vision of current challenges and solutions for economic and social development in Burundi. The initiatives of the East African Community aimed at relaunching the inter-Burundian political dialogue must be fully supported by the United Nations and the African

Union. It seems to us that in that respect, the East African Community has a significant comparative advantage.

I would like to conclude by renewing my country's support for the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Burundi, Mr. Michel Kafando; Mr. Smaïl Chergui; and the Chair of the Burundi configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission, Ambassador Jürg Lauber. My delegation encourages them to persevere in their mediation efforts and good offices for peace and stability, in close cooperation with the Burundian authorities and the authorities of the East African subregion.

Mr. Singer Weisinger (Dominican Republic) (*spoke in Spanish*): We thank Mr. Oscar Fernández-Taranco, Mr. Chergui and Mr. Lauber for their valuable briefings.

The Dominican Republic notes that the security situation in Burundi has remained stable despite an atmosphere of tension between the Government and the opposition. We are concerned about the tense relations that persist between Burundi and the East African Community, and which have affected the inter-Burundian dialogue. We understand that dialogue is the most important tool to achieve the smooth unfolding of the electoral process, scheduled for next year.

Therefore, we urge the Government of Burundi to fulfil its commitment to end the political crisis. We call on the East African Community to extend its good offices to the situation. In that regard, we reiterate that it is essential to guarantee the protection of all civilians, including journalists and human rights defenders, guaranteeing their safety and free movement in the exercise of their functions in Burundi. Therefore, we regret the closure of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in Burundi.

Women and girls continue to be reported as the main victims of cruelly perpetrated acts of sexual and gender-based violence. They also continue to be victims of ethnic or political hate speech. They are also the most affected among refugees, and the lack of access to education impacts their opportunities to develop skills, resulting in increased vulnerability to exploitation and abuse. Therefore, we advocate that the return of the refugees take place through transparent refugee status determination procedures.

In addition, we are pleased that the Chair of the Burundi configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission visited Burundi from 5 to 10 May to learn first-hand about the impact of the support of the Peacebuilding Fund in Burundi through the joint project launched in October 2018 by UN-Women, the United Nations Development Programme and the International Organization for Migration to strengthen local mechanisms for conflict prevention and resolution in Burundi. It is also very positive that he met with the network of women mediators in the country.

In that context, we highlight the role of the network in enabling women to be part of the dialogue in their communities and to play a role in peacebuilding. However, we also recognize the challenges facing them, such as developing capacities through an exchange of experiences with other women who work in conflict resolution in other countries, as well as communication and transport barriers, in facilitating dialogue in communities and raising awareness among other women with regard to peacebuilding. It is therefore vital that women have the necessary financial support to further develop their activities.

In a spirit of fraternity and solidarity with the Burundian people, with whom we recently established diplomatic relations, the Dominican Republic calls on the authorities to implement and respect international standards to ensure and protect freedom of expression, freedom of the press and access to information. We believe it important that the recent measures impeding the freedoms of expression and the press through media and social networks be reconsidered and brought into line with the demands of today's society.

We are also extremely concerned about reports of persecution of religious minorities. We therefore urge the State to fulfil its obligation to support, respect and guarantee religious freedom and non-discrimination on the basis of religion and to promote recognition of the importance of the inclusion of minorities in social and public life. The exodus of those communities from their homeland has triggered a series of tragic events that violate the rights to freedom of movement, education and food, among others, not only of adults but also of children. In addition, the State must guarantee the safe return of those who, owing to the terrible situation, have sought refuge.

With a view to promoting State cooperation with international bodies and non-profit organizations that

are working to improve the situation in Burundi, the Dominican Republic urges the Burundian authorities to cooperate with the International Criminal Court, which is currently undertaking preliminary examinations of cases of killings, imprisonment, enforced disappearances, torture, gender-based and sexual crimes and violence against civilians and human rights activists.

Finally, we underline the need to cooperate with humanitarian actors, whose main objective is to bring relief to a population affected by the difficult humanitarian and human rights situation. Those actors have been restricted in carrying out their work, to the extent of having to leave the country, while others have become victims of arbitrary arrests.

Mrs. Mele Colifa (Equatorial Guinea) (*spoke in Spanish*): We thank Mr. Oscar Fernandez-Taranco, Assistant Secretary-General for Peacebuilding Support, Mr. Smaïl Chergui, African Union Commissioner for Peace and Security, and Ambassador Jürg Lauber, Chair of the Burundi configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission, for their briefings updating us on the situation in Burundi.

We appreciate the efforts and work of Mr. Benjamin Mkapa, facilitator of the inter-Burundian dialogue, whose final report was presented at the East African Community regional summit, which coincided with the end of his term of office. We hope that that work will be continued by His Excellency Mr. Yoweri Museveni, President of Uganda, current Chair of the East African Community, so as to maintain support for the inclusive inter-Burundian dialogue in the run-up to the next elections, which are scheduled for 2020.

As we have often said, we believe and are convinced that respect for the constitutional order of each country defines and upholds what constitutes modern States today and therefore guarantees their stability and plurality. We appreciate the efforts made by the stakeholders involved in the inter-Burundian dialogue, which led to the signing of the Kayanza road map for the 2020 general elections and the appointment of the new members of the National Independent Electoral Commission. We encourage the Government and all those involved to continue promoting inter-Burundian dialogue with a view to the Burundians themselves taking ownership of the process and the holding of transparent, peaceful and inclusive elections.

In that context, we must acknowledge that today in Burundi there is a return to normalcy after the attempts at destabilization that followed the 2015 elections. Today Burundi has democratically elected institutions across the nation. They will be renewed in the same way in the 2020 elections, the preparations for which are taking place in a peaceful and calm atmosphere. We should at this point express our satisfaction at the strong political will the Government of Burundi has shown by fully financing the electoral process that will culminate in the 2020 elections, thereby demonstrating its desire to take ownership of the electoral process.

Our delegation therefore congratulates the Burundian Government on its very high level of political will to bring about and entrench the calm and political stability that prevail in that brotherly country of Central Africa today. Our delegation is not the only one to express such congratulations to the Burundian Government. The 32nd Summit of Heads of State and Government of the African Union, held in Addis Ababa at the beginning of the year, praised the efforts of the Government of Burundi to prepare for free, democratic and peaceful elections in 2020 by setting up appropriate mechanisms in accordance with the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement of 2000.

The Republic of Equatorial Guinea expresses its appreciation for the spirit of reconciliation and tolerance that currently prevails in Burundi following the return from exile of five political leaders, including former President Sylvestre Ntibantunganya and former Second Vice-President Alice Nzomukunda, among others, at the invitation of the authorities and with guarantees for their security and protection of their land, and the recognition of the Congrès national pour la liberté, a new opposition party led by Agathon Rwasa.

Those facts, along with the release last year of more than 3,000 prisoners, including insurgents who took part in the violent demonstrations of 2015, the contribution by Burundi of more than 6,000 troops to peacekeeping missions and the return of 210,000 refugees from 2016 to date, together represent real and tangible demonstrations of the very positive development of the situation in this Central African nation.

The Republic of Equatorial Guinea is greatly encouraged by that very positive development in the situation in Burundi. The peace and calm that prevail in the country today should lead the Security Council to seriously consider removing Burundi from its agenda

and allocating the United Nations resources currently allotted to that situation to other countries facing major crises that need greater United Nations support.

Equatorial Guinea aligns itself with the efforts of the international community in the search for a peaceful end to conflicts and its commitment to the construction and consolidation of stable, peaceful and prosperous societies that prioritize the national interest and the internal coexistence of just, transparent and inclusive sociopolitical and cultural institutions. To that end, any attempt to build peace, restore international legitimacy and champion the negotiated and peaceful end of conflicts will always enjoy the total support of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea.

The election of Burundi as a member of the African Union Peace and Security Council at the thirty-second Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union, held on 10 February in Addis Ababa, was a true reflection of the current situation in the country. We therefore reiterate once again the need for the Security Council to remove Burundi from its agenda, since the current situation in the country no longer represents any threat to international peace and security.

The launch and implementation of the national development plan for Burundi are critical to the development of Burundi in the framework of the goals of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the African Union's Agenda 2063. We believe that if we are to achieve the Africa we want by 2063, we must join forces to facilitate mechanisms to relieve States of the obstacles to their development.

To conclude, the international community must continue resolutely to support the Government and the other parties directly involved in the promotion of confidence-building measures so as to ensure an environment conducive to peaceful elections; commitment to the Constitution and the road map to the peaceful transfer of power in an atmosphere of peace and national concord; and, above all, support for the Government in the reintegration of refugees, who are returning to the country voluntarily and en masse. It is therefore important that the Government of Burundi step up its collaboration with the international community and the African Union in particular.

Mr. Clay (United Kingdom): I should like to begin by thanking all of our briefers this afternoon.

The United Kingdom shares the ambition expressed by other speakers today for inclusive, peaceful and fair elections next year and an end to the humanitarian, human rights and political crisis in Burundi. However, since our last meeting on this item (S/PV.8465), there has been no progress in securing a solution to the political crisis that could enjoy the support of all Burundian parties ahead of the elections. We regret in particular the lack of progress in the inter-Burundian dialogue set out by African Union Commissioner Chergui today. If the political situation is not resolved, there remains a real risk of violence, an increase in human rights violations and an escalating humanitarian crisis, which threatens peace and stability within Burundi and the region.

We have seen before, through the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement, that it is possible to find a solution through unified and effective leadership from both the region and Burundi. We therefore call on the region, especially the East African Community, the African Union and Burundi, to demonstrate leadership again, with the support of the Special Envoy for Burundi. We underline the United Kingdom's support for the efforts of Special Envoy Kafando and emphasize that any solution must be in line with the spirit of the Arusha Agreement. The United Kingdom remains ready to review its approach to Burundi, including its support for measures taken through the European Union once tangible steps have been taken to improve the current political and human rights situation.

Next year's elections in Burundi represent a critical juncture for its political development. There is an opportunity for a democratic transition of power in Burundi for the first time in 14 years. We take note of the administrative preparations that have been made, as outlined by Assistant Secretary-General Fernandez-Taranco this afternoon, but we remain concerned by wider restrictions on the political freedoms that are essential to the conduct of free and fair elections.

In particular, since the last Security Council briefing in February, the Government of Burundi has made the disappointing decision to revoke the BBC's operating license. Concerning comments have also been made by officials within the National Independent Electoral Commission, proposing restrictions on the Burundian media. We call on the Government of Burundi to engage with the BBC to reinstate its operating license and to commit to enabling an independent media environment within Burundi.

Finally, I would like to underline the United Kingdom's concern about the humanitarian situation in Burundi and stress the importance of maintaining international support for humanitarian efforts. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs estimates that 1.8 million Burundians — some 15 per cent of the population — will need humanitarian assistance in 2019. As of 31 March, some 125,000 Burundians remained internally displaced. I would like to particularly draw attention to the fragile situation faced by refugees and pay tribute to the work of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, which is assisting 350,000 refugees through the Burundian refugee response plan.

In conclusion, with elections next year taking place amid this fragile political and humanitarian situation, it is vital that the Security Council remain seized of this issue and engage to support efforts to find a solution and build stability in Burundi.

Mr. Hunter (United States of America): I thank all of the briefers for their remarks today. We particularly welcome African Union Commissioner Chergui's perspective and vision for possible ways forward, which he outlined this afternoon.

The United States has been disappointed by the lack of progress since the twentieth ordinary Summit of Heads of State of the East African Community (EAC), on 1 February. It does not appear that any steps have been taken by regional leadership since the Council's last meeting on Burundi in February (S/PV.8465), even though Burundians continue to flee the country under political pressure.

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees reports that, although 8,253 Burundian refugees were assisted in returning voluntarily from January to April, during that same time period another 2,569 people fled Burundi for the first time. With this continuing displacement in mind, we call upon the EAC to reinvigorate talks. It is important that all parties commit to the EAC-led process and reach an agreement ahead of the 2020 elections.

Civic and political space is critical to free and fair elections. Unfortunately, continued reports of human rights violations cast a shadow over Burundi and its electoral preparations. Extrajudicial arrests, beatings, intimidation and kidnappings, especially by the Imbonerakure ruling party youth wing, pose a grave threat to the country's peace and security.

A free press is indispensable to democracy. We urge the Burundian Government to respect freedom of expression and to allow journalists to operate independently without fear of violence or a forcible shutdown because of their reporting. We also urge the Government of Burundi to address persistent and reliable reports of illicit arms transfers, combatant recruitment and armed group activity in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo that are tied to Burundi. Now is the time for all of the parties to the 2013 Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region to live up to their commitments of non-interference in the internal affairs of neighbouring countries and to deny support or safe harbour to armed groups.

The Great Lakes region has a chance to transform into an interconnected hub of peace and prosperity. By resolving its domestic political crisis and strengthening its respect for human rights, Burundi could play a central role in that effort.

Finally, we note our continuing support for resolution 2303 (2016), in which the Council requested that the Secretary-General report on the situation in Burundi every three months. We are concerned by the United Nations failure to submit timely reports as requested by the Council.

Mr. Wu Haitao (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China thanks Assistant Secretary-General Fernandez-Taranco, African Union Commissioner Chergui and Ambassador Lauber for their briefings. China welcomes Ambassador Lauber's recent visit to Burundi, which will contribute to enhancing mutual understanding and cooperation between Burundi and the United Nations and the international community as a whole.

In recent years, the political and security situation in Burundi has remained stable and the Government has been making efforts to implement the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement in order to promote reconciliation among the country's various ethnic groups and maintain domestic stability. It has formulated a 10-year development plan for the period from 2018 to 2027, and has been actively cooperating at the international level on the economic and social fronts. In the past four years, more than 60,000 Burundian refugees have voluntarily returned home from neighbouring countries, in a demonstration of the continued improvement in Burundi's situation and the strong aspirations of its Government and people for

peace and development. However, peace, stability and development in Burundi cannot be achieved without the support and assistance of the international community.

China believes that the international community should prioritize its efforts in two areas. It must first show genuine respect for Burundi's ownership and leadership and create an external environment conducive to ensuring the country's peace and stability. At the end of last year, the Burundian Government kick-started preparations for the 2020 elections. Through consultations with various political parties in the country it has formulated a road map for the elections, established the Independent National Electoral Commission and committed to raising all the necessary funding for the elections, in a full demonstration of the ability and resolve of the Burundian Government and people to take care of their own problems.

Since elections are the internal affairs of any country, it is important to ensure that the international community fully respects Burundi's ownership and leadership of its elections and provides assistance in accordance with the Government's needs. The Burundian Government has said many times that its situation does not pose a threat to regional peace and security and that the Burundi issue should not remain on the Council's agenda. The Council should pay serious heed to Burundi's views and make timely and appropriate adjustments in the light of the latest developments.

Secondly, in order to continue scaling up their humanitarian and socioeconomic assistance to Burundi, we hope that the international community and international partners will deliver on their commitments in a timely manner, support the continuing return of Burundian refugees and help the country with its socioeconomic recovery. The relevant international organizations and agencies should resume their economic cooperation with Burundi as well as their development assistance. China appreciates and supports the efforts of the Peacebuilding Commission and the United Nations country team in providing continued and constructive assistance to Burundi. As an active supporter of Burundi's political process and national reconstruction, China has been doing what it can to render assistance in many sectors, including agriculture, education and infrastructure development. We stand ready to continue to contribute to peace, stability and sustainable development in Burundi.

Mr. Meza-Cuadra (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): We welcome the convening of this meeting and the complementary presentations of our briefers, Mr. Fernandez-Taranco, Mr. Chergui and Ambassador Lauber.

Peru takes note of the recent developments with regard to preparations for general elections in Burundi, which include the adoption of an electoral code and President Nkurunziza's important announcement that he will not stand for election. We hope that those actions will be followed by others that can ensure an inclusive, credible and transparent process, in line with the Kayanza road map, and that it will translate into an effective consolidation of the rule of law and democratic institutions in the country. It will be particularly important to promote and guarantee the free and full participation of all forces in Burundi's political life. The success of those efforts will depend to a great extent on the support of the international community and especially on follow-up and support from the African Union and the East African Community, which have a central responsibility in these processes. We also consider it essential to simultaneously and urgently intensify efforts to revitalize the inter-Burundian dialogue as an ideal platform for making political commitments that will help advance sustainable peace.

Additionally, in keeping with the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement, we stress the importance of the national reconciliation process, particularly the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, as the body responsible for laying the foundations that will enable the Burundian people to once again trust their institutions. It will also be critical to avoid new escalations of cross-border violence that jeopardize the stability and security of the country and the region, and we welcome the progress made at the community level in conflict resolution, particularly the participation as mediators of women's groups, who, together with young people, are being called on to participate more actively in the country's political processes.

Peru notes with concern the continuing reports of human rights violations in Burundi and stresses how important it is that such reports are duly investigated and those responsible prosecuted and punished. We also urge the Government of Burundi to strengthen its cooperation with the various United Nations human rights protection mechanisms and with independent civil-society organizations.

We also emphasize how urgent it is to address the humanitarian situation at the same time, particularly where the thousands of refugees and internally displaced persons are concerned. That means ensuring the availability of financial resources and above all the political will needed to enable them to return safely and with dignity, with a view to their reintegration into the country under internationally accepted parameters. We emphasize the importance of implementing the 2019-2020 Burundi regional refugee response plan and ensuring the valuable support of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

The implementation of Burundi's national development plan for the period from 2018 to 2027 and the 2019-2023 United Nations Development Assistance Framework are also critical as relevant instruments that could contribute to Burundi's political stability and socioeconomic development of Burundi in the medium- and long-term.

In conclusion, I want to reaffirm Peru's commitment to achieving sustainable peace in Burundi, thereby contributing to regional stability and supporting the important work of Special Envoy Michel Kafando towards our shared objective.

Mr. Repkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We thank Assistant Secretary-General Oscar Fernandez-Taranco, Mr. Smail Chergui, African Union Commissioner for Peace and Security, and Mr. Jürg Lauber, Chair of the Burundi configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission and Permanent Representative of Switzerland, for their comprehensive briefings.

To be frank, we do not quite understand the motives that led our colleagues on the Security Council to insist on holding today's meeting. We all know that it has happily been a long time since the international community received any alarming news from Burundi. From diplomats in Bujumbura we know that the situation there is calm and that the trend is towards normalization. We want to point to the stable security situation, the significant reduction in violence, including the attacks on civilian infrastructure by the radical opposition. Refugees from neighbouring countries are returning to Burundi, and the speed of that process depends entirely on the availability of resources for settling them.

We want to once again remind the Council of a key event in the inter-Burundian settlement that took place a year ago. The constitutional referendum was

conducted in a calm environment with the participation of an overwhelming majority of Burundi's population. We note that the constitutional reform was supported by a majority of voters — more than 73 per cent — and the referendum itself was preceded by a democratic and transparent information campaign.

We once again call for respect for Burundi's sovereignty. The Russian Federation is categorically opposed to any interference in the country's internal affairs, including in the context of the parliamentary and presidential elections scheduled for 2020. As we know, the people of Burundi are already actively preparing for the elections. More specifically, plans are already in place to finance the elections from the national budget. The Independent National Electoral Commission is functioning, and the Parliament has enacted changes to the electoral code by an overwhelming majority. It is also important that there is ongoing dialogue among the country's political forces, as evidenced by the adoption of the Kayanza road map by a majority of the political parties. We urge the authorities and the opposition to refrain from mutually negative rhetoric and to focus on preparing for elections. The initial reason for the dispute among Burundi's political forces is long gone. President Nkurunziza has made repeated promises that he will not run in the upcoming elections.

We believe that at the moment Burundi's national Government is in particular need of support on the socioeconomic front. In that regard, we welcome Bujumbura's adoption of a national development plan for the period from 2018 to 2027. We believe that further progress in that area could be facilitated by lifting the economic sanctions on Burundi, in full concurrence with the decisions of the African Union Summits held in Nouakchott in July 2018 and Addis Ababa in February of this year.

In general, we firmly believe that the situation in Burundi does not pose a threat to international peace and security. The Security Council's continued attention to it has long been counterproductive, and our discussions have done nothing but help the unreconciled opposition make the country's internal political processes more difficult. It is essential that we take Burundi off the Council's already overburdened agenda.

Mr. Heusgen (Germany): With regard to what you said at the beginning about everyone speaking for no more than five minutes, Mr. President, I would not mind if you brought back the hourglass to help us with that.

Unlike my Russian colleague, I believe that it is very timely that this issue is back on the agenda, because we believe that it still represents a threat to peace and security. Burundi's domestic political crisis is unresolved, its security situation is volatile and there are tensions in neighbouring areas. I know that our friend the Ambassador of Burundi, who believes that the issue should not be discussed here, also shares that reluctance to include it on our agenda. But first of all, as we have heard today, a number of crises, both domestic and regional, continue. We also heard very clearly how everyone in the region and from the United Nations is ready to help. It was very encouraging to hear what the East African Community, the African Union, the United Nations, the Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Fund are doing.

That international engagement is absolutely essential to achieving what the country needs, which is free, fair and transparent elections and the promotion of the reconciliation process and socioeconomic development. We heard the figures on the number of refugees, as well as the implications of climate change. The refugees must be reintegrated and the participation of women and young people promoted. In that regard, I appeal to the Ambassador of Burundi to accept that support. At the same time, I also encourage those in the neighbouring region, including the East African Community and the guarantors of the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement, to continue their engagement and see to it that progress is made.

The fact that former President Kafando was not received during his last visit to Burundi is very sad. I listened to my colleague from South Africa who clearly said that President Kafando is doing critical work there. I therefore once again urge Burundi to continue to prepare for the elections. It is very good that initial steps have been taken in that regard, but we are also hearing reports that opposition politicians are being arrested. And according to Burundian law, political actors living in exile are not allowed to run for election. We further appeal for independent media — not just the BBC but others as well — to be allowed to report freely.

With regard to human rights, I listened to our briefers who talked about the worrying human rights situation, where they say there are threats to civil society and civil freedoms. I therefore appeal to the Ambassador to do everything to allow the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights back into Bujumbura.

On the socioeconomic front, I also want to support what Ambassador Lauber said about the importance of supporting the national development plan. The Peacebuilding Fund is ready to do that. Again, I think the international community wants to support Burundi. We are not its enemy but rather its supporter. We want it to go in the right direction, and for that it needs elections, socioeconomic development, respect for human rights and plurality.

Mr. Syihab (Indonesia): At the outset, I would like to thank all the briefers for their informative and comprehensive briefings telling us that the situation in Burundi remains relatively calm, which is a good sign. We also noted that reports for the past year have indicated relative peace. We hope that will continue.

As we look forward to the 2020 elections, we welcome the initiative to assume national ownership and financial responsibility for them. We note that there is still work to be done, and urge the Government of Burundi to work with the United Nations mechanisms in the region. We concur with Mr. Chergui that the 2020 elections should be represent an impetus for unity in Burundi. On that basis, I will make three pertinent points today.

First, regional and subregional organizations should be given adequate space to support Burundi. We welcome the efforts of the African Union and the East African Community (EAC), and note the final report on the EAC-led inter-Burundian dialogue process held at the Summit in Arusha earlier this year. In that regard, Indonesia acknowledges the efforts of the mediator, President Yoweri Museveni of Uganda, and the facilitator, former President Benjamin Mkapa of the United Republic of Tanzania, as well as the work of the Special Envoy, former President Michel Kafando, and the Burundi configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC).

Secondly, Indonesia calls for increasing humanitarian assistance to Burundi. We note with caution that according to the report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, refugee returns to Burundi will peak in 2019 at more than 100,000 returnees, compared to 58,262 returnees in 2018. The month of May was the peak of the return last year. We learned that innovative cross-border projects supported by the Peacebuilding Fund have improved coexistence among returnees, refugees and host communities in targeted areas. Yet it is heartbreaking

to hear that the Burundi regional refugee response plan is among the lowest funded appeals in the world. I urge countries to continue their support and deliver on their commitments to Burundi.

Thirdly, we must ensure that there will be no relapses in Burundi even beyond 2020. The role of the Peacebuilding Commission is indeed crucial in that regard, and we therefore welcome the PBC's recommendations, which Ambassador Lauber elaborated on and which include encouraging Burundi to identify the kinds of assistance it needs in preparing for the 2020 elections, fostering bilateral and multilateral partners in order to create conditions conducive to resuming suspended assistance, including the return of refugees, and promoting reconciliation and dialogue among all stakeholders in order to reduce tensions. In that regard, the PBC will definitely have a more important role to play in Burundi in the future. The Security Council should be able to support the PBC's role from a distance and help the work of peacebuilding in Burundi to take place. In providing that space, we will certainly strengthen and contribute to our collective work in Burundi, the objective of which is to prevent a relapse into conflict.

Indonesia reiterates our full support for the work of the PBC and encourages partners and donors to continue their commitments to the Peacebuilding Fund. Peace is a luxury that is hard to obtain and even more difficult to maintain. Indonesia looks forward to working together with Burundi as partners and to sharing our own experience.

Mr. Lewicki (Poland): First of all, allow me to thank Assistant Secretary-General Fernandez-Taranco, Ambassador Lauber of Switzerland and African Union Commissioner Chergui for their very valuable contributions to our discussion.

We agree with the other delegations that have stressed that it is fully justified for the Council to discuss the situation in Burundi, particularly in the context of preparations for elections to be held in 2020 and therefore Burundi's crucial importance in terms of peace and security in the region. Let me underscore that we are here in the Council in order to assist Burundi in strengthening peace and stability in its territory and improving the well-being of its people.

As has been highlighted by many delegations, including the delegation of South Africa, regional and subregional organizations continue to play an essential

role in dealing with the challenges faced by the Burundian people. In that context, Poland commends all efforts made thus far by the East African Community to enable the inclusive Burundian dialogue. We also further encourage all regional partners, including the African Union, to engage in the mediation process, which could lead to a widely accepted road map, setting the path towards credible elections in 2020.

Several delegations have also raised the important issue of the human rights situation in Burundi. Again, let me reiterate that we see human rights as one of the pillars of the United Nations system. Human rights are strictly interlinked with peace and security and development and therefore should be treated in a comprehensive manner. That is why we call on the authorities of Burundi to resume cooperating with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and all mechanisms of the Human Rights Council. We also urge the authorities of Burundi to fully cooperate with the Commission of Inquiry on Burundi established by the Human Rights Council.

Let me also add that the Burundi authorities are obliged to respect and promote human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the freedoms of expression and assembly, as provided for in the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and other relevant international and regional instruments to which Burundi is a party. This is not a matter of values or choice; it is simply a legal obligation, as once a State is party to a legal instrument it is obliged to implement its provisions.

We are also concerned about the humanitarian situation in Burundi. As we have just heard from Assistant Secretary-General Fernandez-Taranco, almost 2 million people are at risk of food insecurity, which is very troubling information to us.

The political impasse continues to hamper the humanitarian situation and development in the country. In this context, we commend the efforts of the Burundi configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission and its Chair, Ambassador Lauber, to bring about a sustainable improvement to Burundian society and the lives of its people.

We urge the Burundi authorities to improve good governance, as without good governance and strong, reliable institutions it is extremely challenging to advance development and implement all human rights, including economic and social rights. We also urge them

to ensure media freedom and to open up democratic space ahead of the elections scheduled for 2020.

In conclusion, allow me to stress that inclusive dialogue among all parties involved is the only possible way to find a lasting solution to the political crisis. It is crucial to address the current challenges on a sustainable basis and enable the elections to be held in 2020 in satisfactory conditions. Burundian society, horribly affected by many years of conflict, deserves to voice its preferences on its national leadership in free, fully inclusive and fair elections, in the letter and spirit of the Arusha Agreement.

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

At the outset, we thank Mr. Fernandez-Taranco, Mr. Smaïl Chergui and Ambassador Jürg Lauber for their briefings.

Ever since the constitutional referendum was held on 17 May 2018, with the participation of most Burundian political parties, the situation has been relatively calm in comparison with the outbreak of the crisis in 2015. We hope that this calm situation will continue until the presidential elections take place in 2020. We hope that the elections will include all groups of the Burundian population and enjoy the participation of all political parties, as well as being free, fair, transparent and credible. We also hope that freedom of expression will be guaranteed, along with the participation of stakeholders from civil society, including youth, women and representatives of regional and international organizations.

I would like to pay tribute to the Government of Burundi for its efforts to advance the political process, such as the adoption of a road map before the elections, the creation of the National Independent Electoral Commission and the decision to fully fund the 2020 elections through the national budget.

President Nkurunziza's announcement that he will not be standing for re-election in the upcoming elections is an important guarantee that the Government of Burundi is serious about holding these elections next year and transferring power to a new President. In this context, we would also like to commend the efforts of the African Union and the East African Community to achieve a peaceful settlement of the political and security situations in the Republic of Burundi through

an inclusive dialogue based on the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement.

We also hope that the States members of the East African Community will play a more active role and engage with the Government of Burundi, as well as with international and regional organizations such as the United Nations, the African Union and the European Union, to achieve the desired stability in Burundi. Dialogue with neighbouring countries and international and regional organizations is one of the most important components of a lasting solution in Burundi.

The security situation in Burundi has been generally calm of late and improving despite certain acts of violence and the continued activities of armed groups. In that regard, we hope that the security situation will continue to improve as it has been since the beginning of the year. We also hope that the Government of Burundi will seize this opportunity of improvement and relative stability to intensify efforts to convene the national dialogue, bring all political parties to the negotiating table and reach an agreement in order to ensure safe and non-violent elections in 2020.

With regard to the humanitarian situation, the human rights situation and the return of refugees, there have been some improvements in comparison with 2017. There has been a decrease in the percentage of the population exposed to food insecurity. However, that remains a concern, especially in the context of continued human rights violations, acts of violence and enforced disappearances. Those are all violations of the principles of human rights and international humanitarian law. We call for them to stop and for their perpetrators to be held accountable and be brought to justice.

With regard to the gradual return of refugees, following the tripartite agreement signed among Tanzania, Burundi and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, I would like to underscore the need to intensify efforts and activities on the part of the Burundian Government to ensure the economic and social reintegration of the refugees and provide them with the necessary guarantees once they return to their homes.

On the development and socioeconomic situations, I would like to stress that development and reform efforts are key factors for any Government that wishes to promote the well-being of its society and ensure a safe future. The adoption by the Government of Burundi, on

22 August 2018, of a 10-year national development plan that includes goals linked to sustainable development principles and a focus on Burundi's rural areas is a step in the right direction towards reform, improving the livelihoods and economic conditions of Burundi's population and achieving mutual benefit for all social groups. We therefore hope that the development plan will lead to significant progress in the country's economy and help contribute to stability in the security, political and humanitarian situations.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I give the floor to the representative of Burundi.

Mr. Shingiro (Burundi) (*spoke in French*): As this is the first time I take the floor under your presidency, Sir, I would like to express our warmest congratulations to you personally and to your country, Kuwait, on your well-deserved accession to the presidency of the Security Council for the month of June. Knowing your commitment to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the rule of law at the international level, I am particularly pleased to see you presiding over the Council for the second time during your two-year term. Let me also thank my colleague Mr. Jürg Lauber, Chair of the Burundi configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission for his constructive contribution to this debate following his visit to Burundi from 6 to 10 May. I would also like to thank the African Union Commissioner for Peace and Security, my dear friend and brother Mr. Smaïl Chergui, for his contribution to this briefing via video-conference from African Union headquarters in Addis Ababa, although some of his remarks departed dangerously from the decision made by the Heads of State and Government of the African Union at their summit on 10 and 11 February.

The Heads of State articulated a four-point message at the summit. They first congratulated the Government of Burundi on its preparations for the 2020 elections. Secondly, the Heads of State and Government welcomed the statement by President Pierre Nkurunziza that he would not stand for the 2020 elections. Thirdly, they made an appeal for peaceful elections in Burundi. Fourthly, and finally, they called for the lifting of the sanctions weighing on Burundi. Those were the four substantive points of the decision made at the summit of the Heads of State and Government of the African Union in February, while Mr. Chergui's comments were connected to what was said at the summit that

took place in Nouakchott in 2018 — one year ago. I think the expert who prepared his statement used the content of the 2018 summit instead of the summit that took place three months ago. We are therefore of the view that the decision of the Heads of State made during the summit take precedence over other considerations and supersede what was said by the secretariat of the African Union. I wanted to make that distinction before continuing.

Lastly, I wish to thank the other members of the Council who make every effort to support compliance with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations in the Council's handling of the situation in Burundi.

Once again, we regret that a few countries continue to maintain the same stubborn positions that they have had for more than four years, instead of looking at the situation in Burundi objectively and with discernment. Some have gone further, forming a coalition of five and calling for an unnecessary meeting on Burundi last month, as if there were an emergency in the country (see S/PV.8538). What is surprising in all of that is that some of those countries that have been taking aim at us for four years without interruption are also having trouble. Some of them are experiencing major institutional crises. Others are experiencing an identity crisis. Still others are experiencing acute social crises, while others are experiencing all three. And yet they continue to worry about Burundi. That was just a brief side note.

Although this meeting was imposed on us, it is my pleasure to participate and give the Council an overview of the situation in my country since the previous Council meeting on Burundi on 19 February (see S/PV.8465). I hope this will be the last briefing on Burundi, which has rightfully requested over and over again to be removed from the Council's busy agenda.

As my colleague Ambassador Lauber said so well, who has first-hand information following his visit to Burundi last month, I can confirm that since 2017 the political and security situation in Burundi has been calm and stable and is fully under control. Preparations for the 2020 elections are at a very advanced stage, both in terms of organization and budget. National mechanisms for the preparation of elections are gradually being put in place, while calming measures to promote a climate conducive to the holding of peaceful elections next year are steadily increasing. Without being exhaustive, I would mention the following measures.

The Constitution of 7 June 2018 is already the primary fundamental legal framework for the organization of the 2020 elections. The Kayanza road map to peaceful elections in 2020 was adopted with broad support from the entire political class. The Independent National Electoral Commission (CENI) has already been established and is operational. The revised electoral code was adopted by the Burundian Parliament in April by deputies of the ruling party and the opponent Agathon Rwasa together in a climate of compromise and spirit of mutual exchange, and by a tally of 105 votes out of 108. The Council can see that the electoral code is consensual. The decision was also made to finance the entire electoral cycle with national resources.

The political space in the country was expanded with the approval of Mr. Rwasa's new opposition party, the *Congrès national pour la liberté*. Contrary to what is being said, that party continues to open new offices within the country without any interference. The decision of the President of the Republic to renounce voluntarily his constitutional right to run in the 2020 elections is a gesture of high political and democratic value that could serve as an example across the continent and elsewhere. The release earlier this year of more than 2,000 prisoners, including the young rioters and insurgents from 2015, is also part of this campaign to promote reconciliation and political tolerance before the major electoral event in 2020 and beyond.

Moreover, on the organizational aspect of the elections, at their summit in February the Heads of State and Government of the African Union congratulated the Government of Burundi for initiating the preparatory process for the 2020 elections, in particular the establishment of the Independent National Electoral Commission and of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. The summit also welcomed the statement by President Nkurunziza that he would not stand for the presidential elections in 2020, while also urging the Government and the political parties to work together for the smooth conduct of the forthcoming elections. On the same occasion, the Heads of State and Government of the African Union reiterated their request to the European Union to immediately lift the unilateral and immoral sanctions against Burundi and its people.

On the whole, the dialogue among political parties in Burundi with regard to the holding of elections in 2020 is taking place in a spirit of openness and political tolerance. We want to point out that almost all of the

decisions that have been taken in Burundi in that regard, including the Kayanza road map for peaceful elections in 2020, the establishment of the CENI, Parliament's adoption of the electoral code and the return to the country of several political leaders who fled in 2015, have been on a basis of consensus. Among them are former national Presidents and Vice-Presidents, parliamentarians and other senior Government officials who have now been reintegrated into their political and professional lives.

The foreign actors who apparently want to take the dialogue issue away from Burundi, despite the fact that facilitation ended on 1 February, have three objectives. The first is destabilizing Burundi on the eve of the 2020 elections. The second is encouraging the putschists of 2015, who are now on the run and sheltered, fed and protected by the same actors who have been attacking Burundi, diplomatically and politically, since 2015. The third is distracting Burundians' attention from the important things, which are the organization of the 2020 elections and the implementation of the national development plan. When the time comes, all of those outside actors will have to face up to their responsibility for the consequences of their interference in matters that come under Burundi's sovereignty. Burundians and the world are watching. For their part, as a matter of principle, the people of Burundi will remain opposed to any attempt at foreign interference at any time, anywhere and under any circumstances, whether by a State or a regional or international organization.

The security situation is generally excellent throughout Burundi. From north to south, west to east and in the centre, day and night, Burundian citizens are enjoying their civil and political rights in complete peace of mind. That positive assessment is shared by all the well-intentioned regional and international actors who have visited our country since 2017, most recently President Félix Tshilombo Tshisekedi, President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, who made a working visit today to meet with his Burundian counterpart President Pierre Nkurunziza to discuss issues of common bilateral, regional and international interest.

On the humanitarian front, we are pleased with the massive voluntary return of the Burundian refugees who fled the country in 2015. Besides the thousands who have returned on their own without assistance from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, between 1 August 2017 and 29 May of this year, 70,285 refugees have been voluntarily repatriated to Burundi,

primarily from Tanzania but also from Kenya, Uganda and the Central African Republic. Only a few days ago, on 11 June, just this week, 397 refugees returned to the country from neighbouring countries through Burundi's southern border. The massive voluntary return movement is clear evidence of the restoration of peace, tranquillity and stability in Burundi, despite the comments of various foreign actors, who continue to deliberately inflate the number of refugees still in exile in order to keep Burundi in a state of artificial crisis. Beyond our national efforts, the support of our partners in the reception and socioeconomic reintegration of the thousands of returning refugees remains essential, and the same applies to local host communities.

With respect to Burundi as an item on the Security Council's agenda, it is clear that we are on it for political reasons and external interests that have nothing to do with the welfare of the Burundian people. Our current political and security situation is no threat to international peace and security and does not justify arbitrarily keeping my country on the Council's agenda. The continued series of meetings on Burundi, which have nothing to do with the reality on the ground, is a destabilizing factor rather than one that promotes peace and tranquillity. Such unnecessary meetings indirectly encourage the 2015 putschists who fled the country and are being pursued by Burundian justice. We therefore reiterate our legitimate call for taking Burundi off the Security Council's agenda and allotting the precious time spent on Burundi to the world's many other hotspots. Burundi's place is with the United Nations agencies and programmes that address socioeconomic development, with a view to supporting our efforts to implement our national development plan and the Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

We repudiate the unjustified political and diplomatic aggression against Burundi and its people. Muscular diplomacy must give way to mutually beneficial and respectful cooperation. Such double standards and disproportionate, unfair pressure will not bring us to our knees, 57 years after the end of colonialism in our country, a nightmarish period in our history from which the Burundian people are still trying to awaken. Foreign actors must stop infantilizing the Burundian people, who are proud, dignified and very attached to their political independence and ubuntu values. They are mature enough to handle their own affairs without any foreign interference, whether near or far from our

borders. Any attempt to meddle in our domestic affairs uninvited will always bump up against our patriotic response, as it did during the regime-change conspiracy in 2015. We are aware that the 2015 plot is not yet dead and buried. There are some who seek to revive it in subtle ways that are less apparent and difficult to detect at first glance but that fortunately do not escape our vigilance.

In conclusion, my delegation would like to highlight two major projects that are now the focus of the Burundian people, the 2020 electoral process and the implementation of our national development plan. The principal one is the process of implementing the development plan, which covers a 10-year period from 2018 to 2027. The Government of Burundi has committed to redoubling its efforts to mobilize domestic resources to fund a majority of the priorities that have been identified. We also thank the United Nations country team in Burundi for its support and invite our partners to contribute to it if they wish. The second major project, which is very important to us right now, is the organization of the 2020 elections, which are an internal matter exclusively of national sovereignty. Support to this process can be provided only at the request of the Government of Burundi, in accordance with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations. Any attempt to create a new role or redefine an existing role in favour of the United Nations rather than Burundians in Burundi's elections would encroach on national sovereignty and be a flagrant violation of the Charter, which states in Article 2 that

“[n]othing contained in the present Charter shall authorize the United Nations to intervene in matters which are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any state or shall require the Members to submit such matters to settlement under the present Charter”.

I would like to end my statement with that quotation. I thank you once again, Mr. President, for convening today's meeting. I hope it will be the Council's last meeting on Burundi.

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

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

The meeting rose at 5.10 p.m.