



Security Council

Seventy-fourth year

8584th meeting
 Wednesday, 24 July 2019, 10 a.m.
 New York

Provisional

President: Mr. Meza-Cuadra (Peru)

Members:

Belgium	Mr. Pecsteen de Buytswerve
China	Mr. Wu Haitao
Côte d'Ivoire	Mr. Ipo
Dominican Republic	Mr. Singer Weisinger
Equatorial Guinea	Mrs. Mele Colifa
France	Mr. De Rivière
Germany	Mr. Heusgen
Indonesia	Mr. Djani
Kuwait	Mr. Alotaibi
Poland	Ms. Wronecka
Russian Federation	Mr. Polyanskiy
South Africa	Mr. Mabhongo
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Hickey
United States of America	Ms. Norman-Chalet

Agenda

The situation concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Organization
 Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (S/2019/575)

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

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (S/2019/575)

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

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Ms. Leila Zerrougui, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, to participate in this meeting.

Ms. Zerrougui is joining the meeting via video-conference from Kinshasa.

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

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2019/575, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

At this meeting, the Security Council will hear briefings by Ms. Zerrougui and Ambassador Mansour Alotaibi, Permanent Representative of Kuwait, in his capacity as Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1533 (2004) concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

I now give the floor to Ms. Zerrougui.

Ms. Zerrougui (*spoke in French*): I welcome the opportunity to speak to the Council about the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and to brief you on the progress made in the post-electoral transition process and the main challenges we continue to face.

More than six months after the December 2018 elections, it is a good moment to review the progress made and examine the political situation in the country.

I believe that an impartial analysis of the current environment gives rise to both satisfaction and concern.

I would like to reiterate the message of hope and optimism that I have consistently brought to the Council. President Tshisekedi has clearly expressed his intention to initiate bold reforms, which, if fully implemented, should lead to strengthening Congolese institutions and improving the living conditions of the Congolese people.

We have also noted a gradual improvement in relations between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and its neighbours since the inauguration of President Tshisekedi. In keeping with his determination to transform the Great Lakes region into a haven of peace and development through the promotion of good neighbourly relations and regional economic integration, the Head of State is actively engaged in diplomatic initiatives with the countries of the region to achieve that goal.

I will continue to work closely in that regard with the Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region and with relevant regional organizations to support the Congolese authorities in implementing the commitments contained in the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region.

Although the Prime Minister was appointed on 20 May, we are still awaiting the formation of a new Government. Painstaking negotiations on that subject are continuing between the two platforms of the ruling coalition — the *Cap pour le changement* of President Tshisekedi and the *Front commun pour le Congo* of former President Joseph Kabila.

We understand that the process is unprecedented for the country. Nevertheless, I call on stakeholders to overcome their differences so that they can quickly meet the expectations of the Congolese people. The absence of an operational Government is detrimental to the establishment of strong relationships with partners and the implementation of important governance and institutional reforms that could contribute to the consolidation of a transitional process that remains fragile.

In recent months, I have met with key stakeholders in the process and urged them to preserve the gains made during the elections and the peaceful transfer of power and to make the necessary concessions to finalize the composition of the Government. I would

also like to point out that we have seen constructive approaches at the local level, with significant initiatives to promote stability and development being taken by some governors.

(spoke in English)

In the context of the eventual exit of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), the Mission has closed a number of field offices in areas where there is no longer a serious threat of armed conflict. That will permit us to concentrate our resources on providing support to the strengthening of State institutions and to the protection of civilians in areas where conflict and activities of armed groups continue to have a devastating impact on civilians.

The report (S/2019/575) before the Council provides a detailed account of the security situation. Over the course of the past weeks, however, the level of violence has increased in several areas in the eastern part of the country. I am concerned in that regard with the current situation in Ituri province, where spoilers are seeking to exploit ethnic tensions in order to instigate intercommunal violence. In addition, attacks by the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) continue to exact an intolerable toll on civilians. Armed groups in Masisi, including the Nduma défense du Congo-Rénové (NDC-R) of Guidon Shimiray Mwissa, are responsible for atrocities, notably conflict-related sexual violence, committed against the population.

Violence continues to be the main cause of humanitarian needs in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. As a result, the country is currently facing simultaneous emergency situations, including mass displacement and protection threats.

In Ituri, more than 350,000 people have been displaced in Djugu, Mahagi and Irumu territories following renewed violence. The deterioration of the security situation is interrupting the return process that had been gradually under way since 2018, causing new displacements towards Bunia and forcing the humanitarian community to reorient its assistance to the most vulnerable populations. Important gaps remain. To date, 733,000 people are in need of assistance in Ituri province.

In South Kivu, the surge of intercommunal violence and armed group activity has displaced up to 180,000 people, while the Ebola epidemic remains

an ever-increasing concern and has claimed the lives of more than 1,700 people to date. Recent isolated cases, both in Goma and across the border in Uganda, have heightened concerns about its spread outside the Beni and Butembo areas, leading the World Health Organization to declare the epidemic a public health emergency of international concern.

I take this opportunity to underline that the problems faced in eradicating that disease are not only epidemiological in nature; they are linked as well to a variety of political and social factors, including the activities of armed groups such as the ADF and Mai Mai, along with continuing high levels of community distrust of the response to the epidemic. That confluence of factors has resulted in a deadly environment for the people working to counter Ebola, to the point that some of them have been specifically threatened and killed by armed groups.

I would like to thank countries and donors for their generosity, which has helped to fund the Ebola response, and I call on everyone to generously support the fourth strategic response plan for the Ebola virus disease, which was just presented to member States in Geneva last week. I would also like to underline the serious need for financing the response to other epidemiological and humanitarian crises that the Democratic Republic of the Congo is facing. The measles outbreak, for example, has already claimed the lives of more than 2,000 people since the beginning of this year, even more than Ebola.

In response to those challenges, we are leading a One United Nations approach that combines a number of different tools. At both the national and provincial levels, we are engaging with a variety of stakeholders to defuse social and political tensions. Our military and police components continue to provide support to the Congolese security forces in efforts to secure the affected areas and adequately respond to the activities of armed groups. The Mission is supporting the Congolese authorities in executing an arrest warrant against NDC-R leader Guidon and strengthening the performance of Congolese justice to fight impunity.

For their part, United Nations agencies are working under the coordination of my Deputy, who serves as the Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator, to provide an effective response to the humanitarian crisis. MONUSCO is also providing political and logistical support to the newly appointed United Nations Ebola Emergency Response Coordinator.

I would also like to draw the Council's attention to the opportunity presented by the increasing number of armed combatants who have expressed their willingness to lay down their weapons since President Tshisekedi's assumption of office. The groups in question include the Kamuina Nsapu in the Kasais, as well as Mai Mai and Twa militia in South Kivu and Tanganyika. MONUSCO is working closely with the Congolese authorities to support their response to that opportunity, including by helping to mobilize funds from the World Bank and the Peacebuilding Fund.

In the context of my good offices, I have placed a priority on encouraging the authorities to adopt a community integration approach for ex-combatants, advising against any broad-based plan to integrate them into the security forces. The broad integration of ex-combatants into the army and police forces in previous years has resulted only in the degradation of their capacities, the hijacking of security policy by parallel networks and the incentivizing of the creation of illegal armed groups.

There is still a great deal of work that lies before us as we continue the process of charting MONUSCO's future drawdown and exit. I believe that the independent strategic review, which recently completed its information-gathering mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the region, will later this year present a report to the Council that outlines clearly the challenges that remain in that regard.

In the face of those issues, MONUSCO is making the best use of the funds made available to the Mission, even though our budgetary challenges are stretching our resources to the limit.

I thank the Council for its support, while underscoring that the continued support of the Council and Member States for MONUSCO will be critical to the ultimate success of the Mission and its ability to exit the Democratic Republic of the Congo under the appropriate conditions.

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

I now give the floor to Ambassador Alotaibi.

Mr. Alotaibi (Kuwait): I have the honour to deliver a statement in my capacity as Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1533 (2004) concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In my briefing this morning, it is my intention

to provide an overview of the work of the Committee since my last statement to this Chamber on the topic, on 26 July 2018 (see S/PV.8318).

Since my last briefing to the Council, the Committee has held a total of seven meetings. In 2018, during the briefing to Member States held on 26 July, the Committee heard a briefing via video-teleconference by the Coordinator of the Group of Experts on the Group's final report (S/2018/531). During the informal consultations held on 31 August, the Committee was briefed by and exchanged views with the Group of Experts in connection with the Group's programme of work pursuant to the new mandate set forth for it in resolution 2424 (2018). During the informal consultations held on 6 December, the Committee was briefed by the Coordinator of the Group of Experts on the Group's midterm report and discussed the recommendations contained therein.

To date, in 2019, the Committee has met on four occasions. A briefing for all Member States was convened on 1 February, in which the Committee heard a presentation by the Coordinator of the Group of Experts on the Group's midterm report. During the informal consultations held on 25 March, the Committee was briefed by the former Coordinator of the Group of Experts on the illegal exploitation of natural resources in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

During the informal consultations held on 24 May, the Committee was briefed by the Acting Coordinator of the Group of Experts on the Group's final report and discussed the recommendations contained therein. During the informal consultations held recently, on 8 July, I provided the Committee with a brief overview of my visit to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Uganda and the United Arab Emirates, which took place from 27 April to 6 May, in which I presented the report of the visit.

Since my last briefing to the Security Council, my delegation also hosted six "informal informal" meetings at the Permanent Mission of Kuwait with the senior official of the Democratic Republic of the Congo follow-on mechanism, Mr. Robert Petit, in the course of his periodic visits to New York. The Committee continues to support Mr. Petit and his team of technical experts as they provide assistance to the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo in its investigations into the March 2017 murders of two former members of the Group of Experts, Zaida Catalán

and Michael Sharp. Prior to my visit to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Uganda and the United Arab Emirates, I also convened two “informal informal” meetings in April.

Allow me to provide the Council with several brief remarks on my recent visit to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Uganda and the United Arab Emirates, including some personal comments and observations. As previously mentioned, the report of my visit was discussed with the Committee on 8 July.

At the outset, I wish to reiterate the Committee’s appreciation to the authorities of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Uganda and the United Arab Emirates for having made notable efforts as hosts of the visit. In this regard, it is unfortunate that my delegation was unable to hold meetings in Dar es Salaam, as originally envisaged.

With regard to the visit to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, several interlocutors expressed the view that the sanctions list should be updated and reorganized in a way that clearly identifies current spoilers of the political transition and those currently committing grave human rights violations. To this end, in its adoption of resolution 2478 (2019) on 26 June, the Security Council requested that the Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo provide updated information on the sanctioned individuals and entities. Additionally, during the visit, I noted that there was interest among some Committee members and the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) to list individuals based on the designation criteria listed in sub-paragraph (e) of paragraph 7 of resolution 2293 (2016). However, there were some Committee members who did not deem it necessary. During my visit, there was also a clear difference between the rhetoric that the Chair’s delegation encountered during the meeting with the Congolese Government, which primarily featured the outgoing Democratic Republic of the Congo authorities, on the one hand, and the incoming President’s positive public statements on the work of MONUSCO and the international community in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, on the other.

I intend to capitalize on the momentum of the visit back here in New York. I believe that this mission served as an excellent forum to follow up with the relevant States, continue to build channels of communication and promote better understanding of the Sanctions

Committee’s work. To this end, on 25 June, I sent letters to the Permanent Representatives of Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania on the visit, and, on 5 July, letters were sent to the Permanent Representatives of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the United Arab Emirates. On 9 August, the Committee plans to hold a briefing for all Member States in connection with the final report of the Group of Experts (S/2019/469), as well as my recent visit.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Ambassador Alotaibi for his briefing.

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

Mr. De Rivi re (France) (*spoke in French*): I warmly thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Ms. Leila Zerrougui, and my Kuwaiti colleague, Mr. Mansour Alotaibi, for their very informative briefings.

As we noted prior to the last meeting of the Security Council on the Democratic Republic of the Congo (see S/PV.8563), the Democratic Republic of the Congo has been enjoying an atmosphere of optimism since the 30 December elections. President Tshilombo Tshisekedi has pledged his willingness to respond to the desire for change expressed by the Congolese during the elections, and several measures have been taken to satisfy this desire. Several opponents have returned to the country, prisoners of conscience have been released and the country is experiencing a certain opening of the political space.

On the security front, President Tshilombo Tshisekedi has committed to working to put an end to the conflicts affecting the country, particularly in the east, and the intercommunal clashes that have affected some regions recently. Several rebel groups have announced that they want to lay down their arms and return to civilian life. France is encouraged by such developments and hopes that the path mapped out in recent months will continue, both in terms of civil liberties and national reconciliation.

Attending to the combatants wishing to demobilize is a pressing need so as to prevent them from being tempted to return to the bush and renounce civilian life. The Security Council has mandated the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) to assist the Congolese authorities in this regard, but

the Mission will not be able to do so without their determined leadership.

New steps must be taken very soon in the country's institutional sphere to confirm the path upon which it has embarked. I am thinking, in particular, of the Government, the formation of which will facilitate a re-engagement of partners and the holding in 2020 of the first local elections in the history of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. At the regional level, President Tshilombo Tshisekedi has undertaken commendable initiatives to revive the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the region. Meetings of the Heads of State from the Great Lakes in recent months have been positive. France encourages the countries of the region to respond to this call and mobilize to fully implement the Framework as they approach the next follow-up summit, scheduled to be held in Kinshasa in the fall.

But the situation is not yet normalized. Several challenges remain to be addressed. First, in the east, the predatory action of armed groups persists, financed by the illegal exploitation of natural resources. Efforts have been made with the support of MONUSCO, which is positive.

The announcement of the rotation of troops of the Congolese armed forces, some of whom have remained far too long at the front, is very encouraging, and I hope that this will materialize soon. The sustained professionalization of the army and the police is crucial. However, military involvement will always be insufficient without political dialogue, at both the provincial and national levels, to convince the armed groups to disarm. The restoration of the State and the development of these regions will be essential for a lasting return of peace. France therefore calls on the Democratic Republic of the Congo and on all the countries in the region to act in a concerted and determined manner to put an end to these conflicts.

Women and children are the first victims of the atrocities committed by these armed groups. France is determined to protect them, which is why President Macron has mobilized the Group of Seven to support the foundations of Dr. Mukwege and Nadia Murad for the benefit of victims of sexual abuse in conflict.

Coordinated regional action is also needed to drain the finances of armed groups and put an end to their trafficking. The work of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1533

(2004) concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo has demonstrated that we need to tackle them firmly and collectively if we want to stop their abuses. The region will receive unparalleled benefit from the formalization of the mining sector, trade, economic advantages and peace. After all, Europe was built after the Second World War on regional collaboration in the mining sector. Natural resources can be a factor of peace when the political will is there.

The Ebola epidemic continues in the east of the country and must be controlled. I wish to commend the exemplary commitment of the Congolese authorities, the World Health Organization and humanitarian actors in the fight against this epidemic, as well as the support provided by MONUSCO. France welcomes the appointment of Mr. David Gressly as the United Nations Emergency Ebola Response Coordinator. We all know his qualities as we have seen his work in the past within MONUSCO. Once again, on behalf of France, I would like to strongly condemn the attacks on humanitarian personnel who come to the aid of the sick and who must continue to receive our full support.

The humanitarian situation remains very worrying. The tensions in Ituri and in the Kivus, in particular, have provoked the displacement of people. There is no funding to support these displaced persons. France calls on the partners of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to rally to provide the necessary resources.

In all the aforementioned areas, France will continue to stand alongside the Democratic Republic of the Congo. During his visit on 20 May, our Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Jean-Yves Le Drian, announced the relaunch of a long-term partnership between France and the Democratic Republic of the Congo with a pledge of €300 million euros over five years in three priority areas. The first is education, with the increase of our aide to training schools. The next priority area is health, wherein we will continue our cooperation with referral hospitals and do more in the fight against Ebola. Accordingly, Professor Yves Lévy has been appointed French special envoy in charge of the fight against the epidemic. The final priority area is stabilization assistance via the training of senior executives and our support for security sector reform.

I would like to conclude by commending the exemplary action of Ms. Zerrougui and her entire team at MONUSCO. The Council mandated MONUSCO to protect civilians and support the Government in

the fight against armed groups. With the determined involvement of the Congolese authorities and those of its neighbours within the framework of an approach that combines military pressure, if necessary, and dialogue, it is possible to normalize the situation throughout the country. France's stands ready to lend its support to achieve this objective.

Ms. Norman-Chalet (United States): I thank Special Representative Zerrougui for her briefing and for the continued efforts of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) to support peace in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, protect civilians and secure access for public health organizations responding to the Ebola outbreak. We deeply appreciate the Mission's efforts. I also wish to thank Ambassador Alotaibi for his update on his work as Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1533 (2004) concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The United States is extremely troubled by the recent clashes across the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, including violence in the provinces of Ituri, South Kivu and North Kivu, which left hundreds dead and displaced hundreds of thousands, as Ms. Zerrougui just highlighted. The United States commends President Tshilombo Tshisekedi's efforts to stem this violence by dispatching senior officials to negotiate peace in South Kivu, launching community dialogue initiatives and ordering a military offensive in Ituri, all of which have helped address the violence.

We also welcome the decisions of several militias to lay down their arms since President Tshilombo Tshisekedi took office, and we urge Congolese officials to lead a demobilization, disarmament and reintegration (DDR) process. We encourage key officials to consider whether the DDR process should provide willing former fighters, such as those of the Force de résistance patriotique de l'Ituri militia, a path to transition into a peaceful and productive civilian life rather than simply absorbing them into the armed forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and risk perpetuating cycles of human rights violations and abuses. We encourage the Government to clarify confusion with regard to the DDR's focal point as well.

At the same time, we recognize that DDR is only one part of a larger political solution. The United States remains committed to fighting impunity and

supporting the rule of law, and we are encouraged by the ongoing trials of warlords, such as Sheka, and by the warrant issued for Guidon Shimiray Mwissa. We applaud MONUSCO's assistance with these efforts.

The flow of arms and the illicit trade in gold and other precious minerals enables the violence in the east to persist. We thank Ambassador Alotaibi for leading the recent trip of the Sanctions Committee to the region and the United Arab Emirates, during which we witnessed significant goodwill to help Congolese leaders tackle these challenges. However, we remain concerned that the Congolese generals under United States sanctions, such as General Gabriel Amisi Kumba, continue to participate in illicit gold trafficking. Removing these bad actors is critical to ending cycles of violence in the east.

Ending the Ebola outbreak also remains a top priority for the United States. The United States is the largest single country donor to the Ebola response, having contributed more than \$98 million to stop the spread of the disease. We urge existing and new donors to consider making contributions as well. We also welcome the World Health Organization's recent decision to designate the outbreak as a public health emergency of international concern and to release the public-health pillar of the fourth phase of the strategic response plan. We urge the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the United Nations to finalize and release the enabling-environment pillar as soon as possible so that donors can holistically assess priorities and resource requirements. The United States also encourages all partners to ensure that response efforts align with and enable clearly defined leadership and coordination, engage and empower Congolese actors and address the security, humanitarian and development needs of Ebola-affected communities.

Finally, it is important to raise the key concern that progress is slow on a number of issues, especially DDR and the Ebola response, which has been caused by the absence of a national Government owing primarily to the intransigence of political actors aligned with former President Kabila. It compromises all other progress to which the Congolese people aspire. We call upon those blocking the formation of a Government to adopt the flexibility required to seat a Cabinet and fulfil the hopes of the Congolese people for a better future.

We will continue to consider sanctions designations and visa restrictions for those who engage in or provide

support for acts that undermine the peace, stability and security of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In the light of the aforementioned challenges we welcome the strategic review of MONUSCO and look forward to receiving the report. We place great value on these reviews and other United Nations reports examining peacekeeping activities and performance. We appreciate that the Secretary-General's report to the Security Council (S/2019/575) included performance assessments as well as overall assessments of progress on mandated tasks and would urge the inclusion of even more details. MONUSCO cannot fulfil its mandates without high-performing troops, police and civilians committed to a clear set of standards and to the protection of civilians. We urge the Secretariat and MONUSCO to continue to implement the reforms outlined in resolution 2436 (2018), which will be essential to planning a troop drawdown.

Mr. Peesteen de Buytsverve (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): First of all, I wish to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and the Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1533 (2004) concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo for their briefings.

Today, I would like to focus my statement on three major points. First, we welcome the new positive momentum given by President Tshilombo Tshisekedi. Nevertheless, the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo continues to be complex. Belgium remains concerned about the security situation, especially in the two Kivus and Ituri. We strongly condemn the latest attacks on the Ebola standby teams in North Kivu. We are concerned about inter-ethnic violence in Ituri, which has already displaced more than 300,000 people, as the Special Representative informed us. We call on all parties to reduce tensions and show respect for the civilian population.

We also remain concerned about the humanitarian situation. In addition to the Ebola epidemic, there have already been more than 87,000 cases of measles since the beginning of the year, and cholera continues to exact a heavy toll. As the President stated, respect for human rights and the restoration of the rule of law remain crucial challenges. In this regard, it is troubling to note that the Forces armées de la République démocratique du Congo and the Congolese National Police were able to continue to commit human rights violations during the period covered by the latest report of the Secretary-General (S/2019/575). Security sector reform, which

involves the professionalization of the security forces, must remain a priority.

Secondly, the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) and the new sanctions regime continue, and must continue, to contribute to ensuring the protection of civilians and the restoration of peace and State authority throughout the country. By supporting the Congolese Government, MONUSCO continues to play a key role. Therefore, within the framework of the Mission's current independent strategic review, Belgium expects the development of benchmarks to clearly measure the capacity of the Congolese authorities to take over the various tasks currently being carried out by MONUSCO. The adequate protection of civilians and respect for human rights in all circumstances remain imperative.

Belgium also welcomes the renewal of the sanctions regime and the new mechanism for updating the sanctions list. While welcoming the positive cooperation between the Congolese authorities with the sanctions regime's Group of Experts and the commitment of President Tshilombo Tshisekedi to improve the human rights situation, we also hope that the forthcoming renewal of the sanctions regime can be used to make them more effective and better targeted.

Thirdly, as the future of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and that of the Great Lakes region remain closely linked, we call on all stakeholders to take advantage of the current positive momentum. After the recent quadripartite presidential summit held in Luanda and the latest initiatives to strengthen the National Oversight Mechanism of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the region and the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, we hope that this dynamic will prove to be sustainable and have tangible effects. Improved regional cooperation could have considerable benefits for the Congolese population, in the contexts of the struggle against the various armed groups, economic cooperation and the fight against the illegal exploitation of natural resources.

Ms. Wronecka (Poland): At the outset, let me thank Special Representative Leila Zerrougui and Ambassador Mansour Alotaibi for their comprehensive briefings.

I would like to focus my statement on three issues: the political process, security aspects and the socioeconomic situation.

First, with regard to the political process, Poland welcomes positive developments in the political transformation of the Democratic Republic of the Congo in recent months. We appreciate the progress achieved by President Tshilombo Tshisekedi, such as the opening of political space, the release of political detainees, the return of political actors and the upholding of fundamental rights, for example, freedom of speech. Poland supports the further stabilization and strengthening of State institutions in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

In that spirit, we emphasize that the immediate formation of the Government and the deployment of State institutions throughout the country are necessary for the full implementation of the essential reforms. Poland appreciates the constructive attitude presented by the majority of political actors in the Democratic Republic of the Congo so far, and we hope that this approach will be maintained. We also encourage the authorities to further enhance cooperation with civil society actors, in particular with women's representatives and young people.

Secondly, with regard to security aspects, despite efforts made so far, the activities of foreign and domestic armed groups, especially in the eastern part of the country, continue to have a serious impact on the security situation. We welcome the encouraging decisions by several armed groups to join the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) programme. Opportunities to neutralize the destructive activities of the groups, without military intervention, should not be missed. The DDR programme should therefore be at the centre of the stabilization of the security situation in the country.

At the same time, Poland is worried at the persistence of the risk of a further escalation of violence and ethnic tensions. The relevant State institutions are responsible for ensuring the security of its citizens. The fact that most human rights violations and acts of sexual abuse are committed by State agents continues to be one of the major problems. Therefore, the immediate reform of the security forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo so as to increase their professionalization should be considered a matter of priority. We once again emphasize the imperative need to hold accountable those accused of crimes against humanity, war crimes and other grave violations of international law.

The situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo should be seen in a wider regional context. We welcome all efforts to give new impetus to the National Oversight Mechanism of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the region. We encourage the signatories of this agreement to increase their engagement in order to overcome the causes of instability in the region.

Thirdly, with regard to the socioeconomic situation, political and security volatility has significantly hampered the humanitarian situation and development of the country. We encourage the authorities to attain critical momentum and implement reforms that are necessary preconditions for creating an attractive investment climate and economic growth. Accordingly, Poland welcomes the recent resumption of cooperation between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the International Monetary Fund.

We remain concerned about the persistent Ebola outbreak in the east of the country, especially in terms of the latest declaration by the World Health Organization, namely, that it is a public health emergency of international concern. We strongly condemn the continuous attacks on humanitarian workers and medical personnel, as well as hospitals and other medical facilities, and call on all parties on the ground to enable the safe delivery of humanitarian assistance for Ebola-affected areas. Let me reiterate our full appreciation for efforts of the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the United Nations and other international partners to combat the Ebola virus disease.

In conclusion, Poland praises the important work carried out by the United Nations Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO). We hope for the further constructive cooperation of the authorities with the Mission to consolidate the considerable achievements made to date. We encourage the Secretary-General to provide the Security Council with the comprehensive strategic review of the Mission, which will allow for a reliable and responsible decision to be taken concerning the future engagement of the United Nations on the ground.

Lastly, I would like to take this opportunity to express our thanks to Special Representative of the Secretary-General Leila Zerrougui and the whole MONUSCO team for their tireless efforts to support stability in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Mr. Ipo (Côte d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, my delegation congratulates Ms. Leila Zerrougui, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), as well as Ambassador Mansour Alotaibi, in his capacity as Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1533 (2004) concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo, for their detailed briefings on the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Côte d'Ivoire welcomes the positive developments in the sociopolitical situation in the country, marked by the gradual establishment of institutions following the most recent elections held for Parliament and the provincial Governments and the appointment of the Prime Minister. In addition, the return to the country of several opposition members clearly reflects the desire of the new authorities to open up the political space. My country also notes with great interest the new impetus given by the Congolese Government to the National Oversight Mechanism of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region. It particularly appreciates the emphasis on justice sector reform, the fight against impunity and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR), which are essential pillars of peacebuilding. Côte d'Ivoire urges the Congolese authorities to maintain that momentum through the careful formation of the new Government in order to implement the sectoral reforms necessary to meet the pressing needs of the Congolese people.

Persistent intercommunity violence and attacks by armed groups on civilians and humanitarian personnel involved in the fight against the Ebola epidemic in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo remain a major concern for my delegation. It deplors the two attacks perpetrated on 23 July by Ugandan militias of the Allied Democratic Forces in Beni, in the east of the country, which resulted in the death of 12 civilians, including two children.

My delegation therefore urges the Congolese authorities to further strengthen the DDR process for the benefit of the ex-combatants of armed groups operating in Tanganyika province and to encourage all other armed groups to abandon violence once and for all by firmly joining the process. Similarly, my country calls on international partners to support the DDR programme and the efforts of the authorities and

MONUSCO to restore peace and stability in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Instability in the east of the country continues to have a negative impact on the humanitarian and health situations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Indeed, according to the estimates of humanitarian organizations, some 13 million people, including refugees from neighbouring countries, are in need of protection and humanitarian assistance, while the resources mobilized to respond to the crisis are well below expectations.

With regard to the health situation, the persistence of the Ebola epidemic in the east of the country remains a matter of particular concern and highlights the need for diligent and appropriate measures. My country therefore welcomes the commitment of the Congolese authorities, the World Health Organization and MONUSCO to combatting the epidemic and urges them to step up their efforts to eradicate the disease. In that regard, my delegation strongly encourages humanitarian organizations, donors and all other partners of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to increase their assistance in order to provide an urgent response to the needs of those affected.

In conclusion, Côte d'Ivoire reaffirms its support for the Congolese authorities, Ms. Zerrougui and her entire team, and reiterates its call on the international community to maintain its support for the Democratic Republic of the Congo with a view to stabilizing and consolidating peace.

Mr. Heusgen (Germany): I would like to add my voice to those who have thanked Ms. Zerrougui and Ambassador Alotaibi for their work. I would like to underline Ms. Zerrougui's personal engagement on the issue. We really appreciate it. I thank both of them very much for their briefings and for the written report (S/2019/575). I subscribe to what was said by those who spoke earlier, in particular the representatives of France, Belgium, Poland. I can therefore be brief.

I share Ms. Zerrougui's positive take on President Tshisekedi. She quoted his vision of establishing a haven for peace and development in the region. I note that some members, including my French colleague, talked about the climate of optimism and the opening up of the political space. That is certainly the case, but we are not yet in heaven. Many challenges that have already been mentioned remain, such as the formation of the Government. I can understand that the former

President, Mr. Kabila, clings to power but he has to let go. He has to understand that. People must tell him that so that the Government can finally be formed.

As was said earlier, the justice system has to be established in order to effectively fight impunity. The increased violence in the east is a concern. There are too many spoilers, in addition to displacement and the continuation of sexual violence against children and women, who are most affected by the conflict. The attack on humanitarian workers, in particular during an Ebola outbreak, is unacceptable. Ms. Zerrougui said that it has health and political dimensions. Therefore, it would be really good if we could have a special Council meeting to address the Ebola crisis.

With regard to the response, I can only subscribe to what Ms. Zerrougui said about the One United Nations approach, at both the national and the regional levels. Neighbouring countries also need to play on the same team, as was also implied in Mr. Alotaibi's briefing, with regard to the need for regional players to play ball and be involved.

Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration is also important and some success has been had in that area, but more is needed. Efforts must also include the cooperation of civil society. Young people must also be involved. It is unfortunate that for health reasons we do not have a civil society briefer with us today.

The United Nations Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) remains key. We appreciate its redirection through the One United Nations method and strategy. We look forward to the independent review team's recommendations with regard to how best to address the challenges and how MONUSCO can have a real impact. We look forward to receiving that report.

Mr. Wu Haitao (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China thanks Special Representative of the Secretary-General Leila Zerrougui and Ambassador Mansour Alotaibi, Permanent Representative of Kuwait and Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1533 (2004) concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo, for their briefings.

At present, the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is stable overall. National and provisional legislative and executive institutions have generally been established and the country's economy has enjoyed steady development. President Tshisekedi

has paid visits to countries of the region to improve the security situation in the east by strengthening regional cooperation. Those positive developments demonstrate that the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo has the ability and the will to keep the country stable and that the work of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) is effective.

Meanwhile, the Democratic Republic of the Congo continues to face challenges and the security situation in the eastern part of the country remains grim. The Ebola outbreak has deteriorated and has been declared a public health emergency of international concern, with a greater risk of spillover. China calls on the international community to increase its input to help the Democratic Republic of the Congo overcome its challenges in the security, humanitarian, development and other spheres.

First, it is necessary to assist the Democratic Republic of the Congo with its security capacity-building. Peace and stability are the necessary foundations to guarantee that the Democratic Republic of the Congo can advance its political process and realize economic and social development. The Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo bears the primary responsibility for safeguarding its national security and stability. The international community should respect the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, fully respect the leadership of the Government in handling its own affairs and, on that basis, help the Democratic Republic of the Congo to strengthen its security capacity-building. All international partners should help to push the armed groups in the country to give up the military option and find solutions through dialogue and consultation.

Secondly, regional and subregional organizations — such as the African Union, the Southern African Development Community, the Economic Community of Central African States and the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region — should continue to play their roles as the main channels of mediation to facilitate greater interaction, dialogue and consultation between the parties and the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The United Nations should play a coordinating role to form synergies at the international level so as to effectively implement the Peace, Security and

Cooperation Framework between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Great Lakes region.

Thirdly, there is a need to help the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo bring the Ebola outbreaks under control as soon as possible. The World Health Organization (WHO) has declared the Ebola outbreak in the Democratic Republic of the Congo a public health emergency of international concern. The top priority is to step up assistance according to the needs of the Government and, at the same time, lend strong support to the work of the WHO and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. United Nations agencies should improve coordination among themselves and work in synergy.

Fourthly, economic support should continue to be provided to the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. International partners should focus on increasing investment in education, health care, infrastructure and other sectors to help the Democratic Republic of the Congo to increase employment opportunities, improve people's livelihoods, restore socioeconomic development and tackle the root causes of the conflict. It is hoped that the United Nations Development Programme and other agencies, as well as the Peacebuilding Commission, will play a more visible role.

China welcomes Ambassador Alotaibi's recent visit to the countries of the region. We believe that this will help to better inform members of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1533 (2004) concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo about the situation on the ground and to strengthen the Committee's cooperation with the Democratic Republic of the Congo and other countries of the region. Sanctions are not an end but a means to an end. We hope that the Panel of Experts will continue to work strictly within the parameters of its mandate, supporting the efforts of the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo in strengthening weapons management and eliminating the threat of armed groups.

Since last year, China has been providing emergency humanitarian assistance for the prevention and control of Ebola in the Democratic Republic of the Congo through bilateral and multilateral channels and has sent groups of experts to the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Uganda to support their anti-epidemic efforts. China will continue to maintain close communication with the WHO, the Democratic

Republic of the Congo and other African countries. We will continue to provide all necessary assistance to the best of our ability for the prevention and control of Ebola, in accordance with the dynamics of the disease on the ground and the needs of African countries.

MONUSCO has played a vital role in maintaining peace, security and stability in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and responding to Ebola outbreaks. China hopes that MONUSCO will continue to increase coordination and communication with the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and actively fulfil its mandated functions. The international community must continue to lend active support to the work of the Mission. China firmly supports the peace process in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and actively participates in the United Nations peacekeeping operations in the country. We have contributed military officers, military experts, engineering units and medical units to MONUSCO.

China stands ready to join the rest of the international community to continue contributing to the early realization of peace, stability and development in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Mr. Mabhongo (South Africa): At the outset, we wish to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Ms. Leila Zerrougui, for her briefing on the activities of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO). South Africa recognizes the important role that MONUSCO plays in addressing the perennial instability in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo and the protection of civilians.

We also thank Ambassador Alotaibi for his statement on the work of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1533 (2004) concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

We welcome the Secretary-General's acknowledgment of the positive steps taken by President Félix Tshisekedi towards the launch of the reform agenda. This includes the opening of political space, the release of political detainees and progress with regard to freedom of speech.

On the security front, South Africa notes the relative stability in the western provinces. However, we acknowledge and are concerned by continued instability in parts of the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, in particular the Kivus and Ituri provinces.

In this regard, we welcome the vital role played by MONUSCO in collaboration with the Democratic Republic of the Congo authorities in securing these regions. South Africa reiterates the need for continued support for MONUSCO's efforts in stabilizing the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo and the need for the establishment of an effective disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process, in addition to financial support, as requested by the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Despite continued instability in the east of the country, a positive trend has been observed in President Tshisekedi redefining his strategic approach to conflict resolution and peacebuilding in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the region. This is reflected in the trust- and confidence-building initiatives with neighbouring countries and his reinforced personal commitment to the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region through the appointment of a Coordinator for the National Oversight Mechanism to oversee the Framework's national implementation.

It is South Africa's belief that the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework remains a fundamental agreement with the potential to unlock stability, peace and economic development in the region. In this respect, we encourage all parties to abide by their commitments set out in the Framework, including at the national, regional and international levels. We commend President Tshisekedi's outreach efforts in the region, which could contribute to the stabilization of the security situation. We reiterate our continued role in promoting peace and stability in the Democratic Republic of the Congo as a guarantor of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework.

South Africa supports the Southern African Development Community's continued commitment to assisting the Democratic Republic of the Congo in achieving sustainable peace, security and stability. We are encouraged by the cooperation between the African Union (AU) and the United Nations in undertaking to continue engagement in support of the consolidation of stability and democratic governance in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

We express our concern with regard to the humanitarian situation in parts of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and are especially concerned by the Ebola virus outbreak, which has been declared

a public health emergency of international concern by the World Health Organization. Furthermore, we are concerned by and condemn the attacks by armed groups on Ebola treatment centres and staff. We would like to take this opportunity to commend the efforts undertaken by MONUSCO and other United Nations agencies in the fight against the Ebola virus outbreak. Furthermore, we welcome the AU's response in strengthening capacities to combat the disease. It is important for the international community to support all efforts to bring the situation under control.

Allow me to reiterate our position with regard to the sanctions regime. South Africa continues to assert that any sanctions regime should supplement peace efforts. Furthermore, sanctions should neither be politicized nor hinder the provision of humanitarian assistance and should not affect ordinary citizens.

In conclusion, we are of the firm view that it is imperative for the international community, working through the AU, the United Nations and regional partners, to continue to maintain solidarity with the people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and to provide the necessary political, financial and other support in an effort to ensure that there is no reversal of the gains made thus far.

Mr. Alotaibi (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the Head of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), Ms. Leila Zerrougui, for her valuable briefing.

In my statement, I would like to address three issues: first, the political situation; secondly, the security situation; and thirdly, the humanitarian situation.

With regard to the political situation, we welcome the positive steps taken by President Tshisekedi since he took office. We commend his visits to Kenya, Angola, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, Tanzania, Gabon and Equatorial Guinea to enhance cooperation with the countries of the region and to discuss stability, security and peace. We also welcome the steps taken by the President to open the political space by releasing political detainees and guaranteeing freedom of speech. Those positive steps reflect his commitment to creating an environment conducive to development and reform.

We also welcome the fact that the President has activated the National Oversight Mechanism of the

Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region. We commend him for focusing on reforming the justice sector, fighting impunity and supporting disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes, and we welcome the meeting held on 5 and 6 June in Kinshasa at the initiative of the National Oversight Mechanism, with the participation of the heads of intelligence and security services of Uganda, Tanzania, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda. That meeting led to the adoption of a number of recommendations to follow a comprehensive approach to combat the capabilities of armed groups in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo.

We welcome the support provided at this very important juncture by regional organizations such as the African Union, the Economic Community of Central African States, the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region and the Southern African Development Community, as well as all international partners of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We hope that the support will continue throughout the upcoming phase.

We call on all Congolese parties to give priority to the public good and to support the Congolese Government and the positive steps taken by the President. We call on them to refrain from all acts of violence and to move on to a new phase of reconstruction and development in order to consolidate the gains achieved thus far.

As for the security situation, it has generally improved in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. However, violence and armed conflict are still ongoing and are cause for concern in some parts of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, especially in the east, in North Kivu province, which is now seeing armed escalation that is directly affecting the lives of unarmed civilians and putting them in harm's way.

In addition, we are witnessing deliberate killings, kidnappings and attacks on positions of Government military forces and Ebola response centres. We call on all parties that commit violent acts to refrain from doing so in order to protect the lives of civilians and achieve stability and security. We commend MONUSCO and its personnel for their efforts to combat those armed groups and ensure the protection of Congolese civilians.

With regard to the humanitarian situation, it unfortunately remains dire in some areas as a result of ongoing conflict among armed groups. Approximately

12 million people are still in need of urgent humanitarian assistance and approximately 13 million suffer from food insecurity.

Chronic diseases, such as cholera and measles, still persist in some parts of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in addition, of course, to the spread of Ebola in North Kivu and Ituri provinces. We commend the efforts of the Congolese Ministry of Health, in coordination with the United Nations and the World Health Organization, to fight Ebola and we call on all armed groups to halt active violence in the areas affected by Ebola. They must end such attacks, especially those on health workers and facilities. We hope to be able to eradicate Ebola once and for all in the not-too-distant future.

In closing, we would like to express our deepest gratitude to Ms. Leila Zerrougui, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of MONUSCO. We also thank all Mission personnel for their tremendous efforts and for their continued support to the Government and the people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Mrs. Mele Colifa (Equatorial Guinea) (*spoke in Spanish*): We welcome the latest report of the Secretary-General (S/2019/575), which outlines the main recent developments in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the progress made by the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) in fulfilling its mandate. We appreciate and commend the work of Special Representative of the Secretary-General Leila Zerrougui and all MONUSCO staff.

The Republic of Equatorial Guinea urges the Government and all the political actors of the Democratic Republic of Congo to continue to take advantage of this historic juncture of the peaceful transfer of power and the activation of the political structures arising from the elections. We are confident that these actions will help to strengthen national sovereignty and consolidate democracy, peace, stability and socioeconomic progress in the country.

We welcome the post-electoral gains, the installation of national and provincial legislative and executive institutions and the return of opposition leaders, which reflects the opening of the political space. We encourage the Government and all actors involved to pursue negotiations for the establishment of

a Government and functioning institutions to meet the challenges currently facing the country.

Since his accession to the highest office of State, President Tshisekedi has committed to working to consolidate peace, the rule of law, democracy and socioeconomic development, and to address the scourge of armed groups. In addition, after assuming his responsibilities as Head of State, he has initiated significant reforms in the security sector that have strengthened good relations throughout the region, which has resulted in his various visits to Kenya, Angola, Uganda and Rwanda, with the aim of consolidating stability in the country, creating the necessary conditions for its development and maintaining an atmosphere of peace and post-electoral harmony.

However, we remain concerned about the destabilizing activities of armed groups and the ongoing intercommunal conflicts, which has resulted in more than 13 million people still in need of humanitarian assistance and protection, 4 million internally displaced persons and 540,000 refugees from neighbouring countries who remain exposed to malnutrition, cholera, measles and Ebola. We are extremely worried by the deteriorating Ebola situation in the country and we call on the international community to prioritize this public health emergency of international concern. In that connection, it must provide sufficient funds for updating the three-year humanitarian response plan that ended in mid-January.

We condemn the frequent attacks on humanitarian personnel, their means of transport and their equipment. Such attacks are considered violations of international humanitarian law. All parties to armed conflict must ensure and facilitate full, safe, immediate and unhindered access for humanitarian and medical personnel, their equipment, transport and supplies and the timely delivery of medical assistance to affected areas and populations in need.

The Republic of Equatorial Guinea welcomes President Tshisekedi's focus on justice reform, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, and the fight against impunity, as well as his promotion of the National Oversight Mechanism of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region.

We believe that the only way out for armed groups is for them to lay down their weapons and surrender. For its part, the Government must continue to strengthen

the processes of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of former combatants and persons associated with armed groups.

We call on the States members of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, the African Union, the International Organization of la Francophonie, the Southern African Development Community and international partners to continue to resolutely support the Democratic Republic of Congo in order to promote stability and democratic governance. We also encourage the Congolese authorities and their regional partners to take the steps necessary to strengthen cooperation and good-neighbourly relations among the countries of the Great Lakes region, including in the fight against armed groups and the search for economic integration.

In conclusion, we emphasize once again the great work for peace, security and stability being done by the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and the fact that the Mission has risen to the occasion and successfully carried out its work in accordance with its mandate in such a complex context.

Mr. Polyanskiy (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Head of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ms. Leila Zerrougui, and the Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1533 (2004) concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Permanent Representative of Kuwait, Mr. Mansour Alotaibi, for their briefings.

Today, we are witnessing important changes in the largest State in Central Africa. We welcome the efforts of the new leadership of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to promote political stabilization, including through dialogue with the opposition and the establishment of constructive relations with regional neighbours and international partners. We call on the Congolese to continue to work for peace and to take measures to prevent all forms of violence.

We remain seriously concerned about the situation in the eastern provinces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where the political and military situation remains complex and incursions by illegal armed groups and intercommunal clashes continue unabated. In addition to this is the outbreak of Ebola, which the

World Health Organization has classified as a public health emergency of international concern.

We have carefully read the Secretary-General's latest report on the work of United Nations peacekeepers in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (S/2019/575). In general, we share the assessments and recommendations contained in that document. We believe that the Mission should continue to support Kinshasa's efforts to normalize the situation in the post-electoral period. We believe it important to make the most of the constructive approach taken by the new President of the country, Félix Tshisekedi. At the same time, we would like to stress once again that the United Nations interference in the internal affairs of the Democratic Republic of the Congo would be unacceptable.

Russia, including as a member of the Group of Friends of the Great Lakes Region, intends to continue to support the peace process in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the stabilization of the region as a whole.

With regard to the work of our sanctions Committee, we believe that it is important to maintain the practice of considering different aspects of the Congolese sanctions regime in the meetings and to invite the representatives of Kinshasa to participate in the discussion. We welcome the visit of the Chair of the Committee to the region in late April and early May. We support the continuation of such contacts with regional actors in the future. It is necessary in this work to base ourselves on the recommendations of the final report of the Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo (see S/2019/469), as endorsed by the Committee.

In general, we call for a very careful approach to the sanctions regime. We should not forget that the main purpose of our work is to help the Congolese restore order and security in their country.

Mr. Singer Weisinger (Dominican Republic) (*spoke in Spanish*): We would like to thank Ms. Leila Zerrougui and Mr. Mansour Alotaibi for their briefings.

The Dominican Republic welcomes President Tshisekedi's decision to launch initiatives aimed at implementing the national emergency programme, opening political space and improving security conditions in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We hope that he will continue to act in that spirit.

Despite the relative stability, the security situation in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo remains worrisome. Attacks on civilians and the armed forces by Congolese and foreign armed groups continue to lead to a loss of lives and displacement. We urge the Congolese authorities to join efforts to neutralize armed groups and prosecute human rights violations without exception; to advance in the fight against corruption; and to promote the National Oversight Mechanism of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region. Greater attention should be paid to justice reform, the fight against impunity, and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration. We encourage the promotion of development zones that generate jobs for young people, provide greater opportunities for women's participation, secure the border and eliminate trafficking in natural resources and firearms.

We must continue to support the Congolese people in implementing their stability initiatives and provide resources to alleviate the worrisome humanitarian situation and create the material conditions for sustainable development.

We are concerned about the spread of Ebola. With more than 1,600 confirmed deaths, it is considered to be the second deadliest outbreak in history. The World Health Organization has declared it a global emergency. We urge the international community to support the efforts and plans of the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the World Health Organization and the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) to combat the outbreak and its spread and to provide the economic resources necessary to contain it.

In that regard, we condemn attacks on Ebola response personnel and health infrastructure and call for respect for international humanitarian law and access for response teams to evaluate the sick in affected areas. We also demand the strengthening of public awareness campaigns on the Ebola situation.

We commend the work done by MONUSCO in supporting measures taken by the Congolese authorities in the fight against impunity in cases of war crimes, crimes against humanity and other human rights violations. In addition, we deplore the persistence of cases of sexual violence against women and children.

We welcome the signing of the declarations and road maps by the commanders of six armed groups to put an end to the recruitment of child soldiers and other serious violations perpetrated against children. We hope that other groups will sign those declarations and implement them as soon as possible.

In conclusion, we are pleased that MONUSCO is focusing its resources on areas affected by armed groups that threaten civilians. We congratulate MONUSCO, all United Nations personnel in the field and all local, regional and international actors for their efforts and dedication in the search for lasting peace and political, social and economic stability for the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Progress, in cooperation with the countries of the Great Lakes region, especially in the fight against armed groups and the search for economic reintegration, provides an opportunity to ease tensions and to implement regional initiatives that will make it possible to address conflicts together and offer the Congolese and the subregion the progress and stability they so deserve.

Mr. Djani (Indonesia): Let me too join others in thanking the briefers: Special Representative of the Secretary-General Leila Zerrougui and my brotherly colleague Ambassador Mansour Alotaibi, Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1533 (2004) concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We welcome the 1533 Committee Chair's visit to the Democratic Republic of the Congo in May. We were a part of the visit, and we fully endorse the report of the Chair.

I have taken note of Ms. Zerrougui's briefing this morning and would like to take this opportunity to welcome the appointment of the new Prime Minister, Mr. Sylvestre Ilunga Ilunkamba. I hope that the Government will be appointed as soon as possible, because that is an important factor in paving the way for a transition and moving forward in developing the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

As of March, the Council has unanimously adopted resolution 2463 (2019) and resolution 2478 (2019) on the extension of the mandate of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) and the Democratic Republic of the Congo sanctions, respectively. We look forward to the independent strategic review of MONUSCO and urge that such a review be done in close consultation with related parties, including

the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the troop-contributing countries (TCCs) and police-contributing countries.

The Secretary General's report of 17 July (S/2019/575) provides food for thought for our discussion today. To that end, I will try to focus my comments on the following points.

First, we urge the international community to provide sustainable humanitarian assistance to the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We express our solidarity with our brothers and sisters who are affected by Ebola and commend the swift response of the World Health Organization (WHO) in leading the international effort through that crisis. In that regard, we welcome the WHO's recent declaration of an international emergency and support the work of the newly appointed Emergency Ebola Response Coordinator, Mr. David Gressly. It is critical, now more than ever, for the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and WHO to enjoy the support needed to prevent further outbreaks of Ebola. We are also concerned after hearing the report of Special Representative of the Secretary-General on the increasing number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and pressure on humanitarian actors.

Secondly, on the security situation, which is also related to the issue of IDPs, Indonesia is deeply concerned by the continued presence of armed groups in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. For far too long, the country has suffered from recurring cycles of conflict, persistent violence and the loss of innocent civilian lives. We are concerned that the illegal exploitation and trade of natural resources, which goes beyond the Great Lakes region, remains one of the funding sources for those armed groups. We have seen the report of the Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo on that matter (see S/2019/469) and will continue to monitor and support its work. We are also concerned over the increasing intercommunal violence.

Thirdly, we commend the critical work of MONUSCO in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, including its approach to the protection of civilians and the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes. We are encouraged to know that former combatants in the Democratic Republic of the Congo have begun disarming and returning to the community.

On our part, Indonesia is continuing to play its part in keeping the peace in the Democratic Republic of the

Congo as one of the largest TCCs to MONUSCO. We currently have 1,044 personnel, including 28 women peacekeepers, in the country and we hope to increase the number of women peacekeepers. Our contribution also includes an 850-person rapidly deployable battalion, which was deployed at the end of last year.

The Indonesian contingent, through its close community engagement, has facilitated since last year 31 weapon handovers, the reunification and certification of 1,803 former combatants and the mediation of communal conflicts, which is an important task. To that point, we favour the continuation of community engagement in peacekeeping as an important factor, particularly in addressing the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

In closing, we are here to save lives. Peace is a luxury that the Congolese have desired for far too long. Let us now work together to support the people and their new Government to ensure lasting peace in the country. I would also like to join others in appealing to the international community to continue to lend its support for the economic development of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Mr. Hickey (United Kingdom): I thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Zerrougui and Ambassador Alotaibi for their briefings today.

I will focus my intervention on three issues: the security, humanitarian and political situations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

First, the deterioration in the security situation in North Kivu and Ituri provinces is particularly concerning. Civilians continue to face killings and kidnappings in Beni territory. In the Petit Nord, citizens face illegal taxation, rape and killing from armed groups, like the Nduma défense du Congo-Rénové. Attacks against Ebola responders in North Kivu continue to undermine the response to the outbreak. The Government must do more to protect civilians and responders and to provide greater general stability, including by holding perpetrators to account in the courts and doing more to address the underlying drivers of conflict. We note with concern that armed groups in North Kivu are reported to have perpetrated over half of all documented cases of sexual violence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo during the reporting period.

As the Ambassador of Kuwait noted during his briefing, some members of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1533 (2004) concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo have expressed an interest in listing individuals, including based on the sexual violence designation criteria. In that regard, the United Kingdom encourages the Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo to provide the Committee with updated information on the sanctioned individuals and entities and also to provide statements of case, in relation to the sexual violence designation criteria.

It is particularly alarming that some elements of the Democratic Republic of the Congo armed forces are alleged to have colluded with the Nduma défense du Congo-Rénové, the largest perpetrator of attacks against civilians in North Kivu. The United Kingdom welcomes the issuing of a warrant for the arrest of Guidon Shimiray Mwissa, the leader of the Nduma défense du Congo-Rénové, who is also under United Nations sanctions. We look forward to the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo taking action against Mr. Guidon and investigating and holding to account any members of the Forces armées de la République démocratique du Congo found guilty of using armed groups as proxies.

In Ituri, we note with concern that renewed violence has caused the significant displacement of civilians and increased humanitarian needs. We also note that a hiatus in the political process to demobilize the armed group of the Forces de résistance patriotiques en Ituri has led it to increase its activity. We look forward to President Tshisekedi's support to enable the disarmament process of the Forces de résistance patriotiques en Ituri to move forward, including the signing of a peace agreement between the Government and that group.

Secondly, the humanitarian situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is dire and deeply concerning. More than one in ten Congolese are expected to be in need of protection and humanitarian assistance in 2019. The United Kingdom is at the forefront of the humanitarian response. In 2013, we provided \$124 million to humanitarian appeals, making the United Kingdom the second-largest humanitarian donor in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the largest contributor to the Democratic Republic of the Congo multi-donor humanitarian fund.

We echo the Secretary-General's call for donors and partners to provide the necessary support in order to close the humanitarian funding gap as quickly as possible. That is particularly relevant to the appeal for further funding to address the Ebola outbreak, where much more is needed, and we urge other countries, particularly those that have a presence and history in the region, to support the response with funding, technical expertise and political support.

Finally, let me say a brief word on the political situation. Despite some positive developments, which we have heard about today, attention must not drift from the ongoing electoral process in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in particular the local elections planned for late 2019 and 2020. In that regard, we call for the prompt appointment of a new, balanced, inclusive leadership of the Independent National Electoral Commission. The production of an electoral calendar for the upcoming local elections will also help efforts to ensure that they are credible, free and fair. By taking those steps, the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo would help to generate trust among the population in future electoral processes and strengthen democracy in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The United Kingdom recognizes some positive steps taken by President Tshisekedi since his election, including the release of several political detainees and efforts to promote regional collaboration. However, that is just the start. It is vital that when the new Government is finally formed, it makes concrete progress on President Tshisekedi's commitments to improving human rights, strengthening transparency and the rule of law, driving forward poverty reduction and tackling the Ebola outbreak. The United Kingdom therefore urges all Congolese parties to engage constructively to enable the swift formation of a Government — a Government that can deliver the change that the Congolese people clearly voted for.

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

I too thank Ms. Leila Zerrougui, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Mr. Mansour Alotaibi, Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1533 (2004) concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo, for their briefings.

I wish to begin my statement by welcoming the progress made by the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo in its efforts to consolidate the post-electoral transition process, which includes in particular the intensification of bilateral and regional cooperation and efforts to increase the opening of its political space. However, we remain concerned about the continuing deterioration of the security situation following the resurgence of outbreaks of inter-ethnic violence that have continued to cause fatalities and forced displacement and to undermine the stability of the country.

We are of the view that these sensitive circumstances make the non-military component of the work carried out by the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) even more relevant, especially as regards the promotion of dialogue between the various actors in the country. In that regard, we emphasize the importance of redoubling efforts leading to disarmament, demobilization and social reintegration of ex-combatants, since only a genuine reconciliation process will lay the foundation for sustainable peace in the country. We also welcome the implementation of joint missions between MONUSCO and the Congolese provincial authorities aimed at neutralizing the actions of armed groups in the east of the country, as well as the commitments reached to end the recruitment of children in that area.

The emphasis placed on the cessation of violence must in no way side-step the urgency of immediately and simultaneously addressing the delicate humanitarian situation looming over that country, which appears to be deteriorating on the ground. Around 13 million people face acute food insecurity, in addition to the serious ravages among the population caused by the outbreak of such diseases as cholera, measles and Ebola, the latter recently having been declared by the World Health Organization to be a global health emergency.

We stress that the fight against Ebola, due to its high level of incidence and its having crossed the country's borders, requires a comprehensive approach in which the central Government, local authorities, regional organizations and relevant United Nations entities work in tandem. In particular, we strongly condemn the acts of violence perpetrated against Ebola response teams deployed in the North Kivu region.

We commend the positive measures adopted to promote respect for the freedom of expression, as well as the release of 700 political prisoners. That notwithstanding, Peru expresses its deep concern about the deplorable health conditions and overcrowding that are still observed in various detention centres in the country.

We also welcome the timely implementation within MONUSCO of a comprehensive action plan to respond to the increase in sexual violence against women in conflict zones, the effective implementation of the zero-tolerance policy and efforts to include women in the political and conflict-resolution processes in the country.

We conclude by reaffirming our strong commitment to efforts aimed at surmounting the humanitarian crisis, allowing inclusive economic development and promoting full respect for human rights throughout the territory of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

I resume my functions as President of the Council.

I now give the floor to the representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Mr. Empole (Democratic Republic of the Congo) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, allow me to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of July and to tell you how much my delegation and I are honoured to see Peru, a friendly country, leading today's Council deliberations. I would like to thank you for giving me the opportunity to address the Council at this meeting, focused on the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, a subject of particular importance to us.

I also take this opportunity to express to Secretary-General António Guterres the gratitude of the people and the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo for the tireless efforts he has been undertaking since he assumed leadership of the Organization with a view to preserving the sovereignty and territorial integrity of my country and to guaranteeing it peace and stability.

I would also like to express the gratitude of the Congolese Government and people to all members of the Security Council for their commitment to the cause of my country and their sustained efforts to ensure the complete restoration of peace and stability throughout the country.

My delegation has taken note of the report of the Secretary-General (S/2019/575) on the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) and appreciates its content. I thank Ms. Leila Zerrougui, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Head of MONUSCO, who briefed us earlier. I also thank Mr. Mansour Ayyad Alotaibi for briefing us on the activities of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1533 (2004) concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Having read the report under consideration, I wish to make a few remarks and comments on some of the points raised therein. These are areas mainly relating to the political, security and social situation and to MONUSCO. Before I broach those areas, however, allow me to apologize on behalf of Mr. Ignace Gata Mavita Wa Lufuta, Permanent Representative of the Democratic Republic of Congo to the United Nations, who is unable to participate in this meeting as he is currently visiting Kinshasa.

In the aftermath of the elections of 30 December 2018 and the peaceful transfer of power, the political situation in the Democratic Republic of Congo remains dominated by the establishment of new institutions, the finalization of the electoral process and the implementation of the campaign promises made by the President of the Republic on the implementation of measures to ease political tensions.

Indeed, after Mr. Félix Antoine Tshilombo Tshisekedi took his oath as President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo on 24 January and following the approval of the mandates of the national deputies, it was necessary to proceed with the establishment of a new Government derived from the new legislature. It is in that context that I note the appointment by the President of the Republic on 20 May, in accordance with the Constitution of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, of His Excellency Mr. Sylvestre Ilunga Ilunkamba as Prime Minister. The latter is working to finalize the composition of his entire Government with a view to his inauguration by Parliament.

On another note, after the validation of the deputies' mandates by the respective provisional offices, the national and provincial assemblies proceeded to the elections of the members of their permanent bureaus. To date, all these assemblies have their definitive cabinets

in place and are functioning normally. It is in that context that it is important to mention the election of a woman, Ms. Jeanine Mabunda Lioko, to the presidency of the Permanent Bureau of the National Assembly.

With regard to elections, in accordance with its revised timetable, the Independent National Electoral Commission (CENI) organized senatorial elections in May. In accordance with the timetable published by the temporary Bureau of the Assembly, the election of the members of the permanent Bureau of the Senate is scheduled for Saturday, 27 July.

Finally, it should be noted that CENI has organized all the elections scheduled in its calendar. The elections of governors and vice governors in all provinces of the Republic, as well as the legislative elections in the provinces of Mai-Ndombe and South Kivu, which had been postponed for health and safety reasons, have all taken place. Elections at the local level have yet to take place. For its part, the Constitutional Court also closed its consideration of cases related to electoral disputes.

With regard to the fulfilment of the President of the Republic's campaign promises on the implementation of political relaxation measures, it is fitting to point out that this issue is at the heart of the work of His Excellency Mr. Antoine Félix Tshisekedi Tshilombo. Upon his accession to his high office, the Head of State took important steps to relax the political environment, preserve human rights and open up democratic space. Those measures have made possible, in particular: first, the repatriation of opposition leaders and political exiles; secondly, the release of political opponents, including high-profile prisoners; thirdly, freedom to demonstrate for all political causes; fourthly, access to public media for all actors of every political strip; fifthly, the fight against impunity and corruption; and others.

With regard to security, it should be stressed that the continued presence of foreign and national armed groups in the eastern part of my country and the deleterious nature of their activities are a matter of great concern for the authorities of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. As the President of the Republic has stated,

“Restoring peace throughout the country is a priority, for what is at stake is the survival of hundreds of thousands of compatriots, the stability of established institutions, economic recovery and an environment of peace among all our neighbours.”

That means that, so long as that part of the country is unable to enjoy lasting peace, while negative forces remain active and its people, in particular women and children, continue to fall victim to every kind of violation and abuse that we have condemned over the past several years, the attention of the entire Republic will remain focused on that part of the country. That is why the Government stands ready and determined in its work, with the help of its army, to restore order, peace and security and pursue the struggle against and the eradication of those national and foreign armed groups.

As the report before us acknowledges, our army is working tirelessly to restore order and prevent insecurity. In that regard, it is necessary to note that the Head of State has launched large-scale military operations, such as those in Djugu and Mahagi. Those operations have enabled the recovery of several weapons and ammunition caches abandoned by criminal groups and the control of those territories by the Congolese administrative authorities. In order to build on those gains, at least 200 police officers from the Légion nationale d'intervention in Kinshasa have been deployed in Djugu territory in Ituri.

The mission of those elements of the Congolese National Police is to stabilize, pacify and build peace in all the villages conquered by the Forces armées de la République démocratique du Congo (FARDC) in Djugu territory, which has been under attack since mid-June by armed groups, resulting in the loss of life and large numbers of displaced persons. Thanks to those intensive military operations, the FARDC has noted several instances of surrender among the ranks of armed groups, in addition to those who have voluntarily surrendered.

The Government is currently consulting with MONUSCO to find the appropriate framework for dealing with those compatriots with a view to their reintegration into society. In that regard, the Government calls on armed groups that remain active to lay down their arms in order to benefit from the advantages of this new demobilization, disarmament and reintegration programme. It is incumbent upon me to reassure the Council that, for their part, the Congolese Government and its armed forces, which have made many sacrifices in combating negative forces, remain resolved to pursuing that noble mission, with the help of its partners, including MONUSCO, until the total eradication of those criminals is achieved, so that our

people can live in lasting peace while contributing to the development of their country.

The Great Lakes region must aspire to improve its well-being. Economic development can be achieved only when there is peace and harmony among people. Despite that progress, my country is curious as to how armed groups have managed to acquire such large quantities of heavy and sophisticated weapons when the Democratic Republic of the Congo has been living under an arms embargo for more than 10 years. My country therefore expresses its wish to see the Group of Experts shed light on the arms and ammunition supply chain to establish the responsibility of countries that are violating the arms embargo and further examine the link between those illegal weapons and ammunition supplies and the illicit trafficking of the country's natural resources.

My delegation welcomes the new dynamic in the Great Lakes region since the assumption of power by President Antoine Félix Tshisekedi Tshilombo. In addition to bilateral meetings with his counterparts of the region, it is also worth mentioning the summit meetings held in Kinshasa and Luanda on 31 May and 12 July, respectively, among the Heads of State of Angola, Uganda, Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The main purpose of those meetings was to shore up relations and the struggle against armed groups, while promoting peace in the Great Lakes region. The joint communiqués that endorsed those meetings reaffirmed the commitment of the Heads of State to restoring peace and State authority in the Great Lakes region, including in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, as well as economic development.

We remain convinced that the new regional dynamic will prioritize heightened security measures and border controls in order to effectively comply with the arms embargo on the Democratic Republic of the Congo and to counter illicit trafficking in natural resources, which is one of the major root causes of the conflict in the country.

With regard to MONUSCO, as everyone knows that United Nations force has been in the Democratic Republic of the Congo since 1999 — 20 years. Thanks to its presence on Congolese territory, much has been achieved and, at times, the worst has been avoided, in particular with regard to the protection of civilians, the struggle against armed groups, the defence of

human rights and the protection of the country's territorial integrity.

We take this opportunity to commend the work done by the Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The Congolese people and their Government express their gratitude to the United Nations, the troop-contributing countries and the peacekeepers for their efforts in the struggle to achieve peace and security in my country and their sacrifices, including the ultimate sacrifice of laying down their lives for the cause of the Congo.

Today, as the Government of my country is engaged in strategic dialogue with the independent Team of Experts, in accordance with resolution 2463 (2019), the Congolese people expect that the recommendations emanating from that dialogue will be responsible, preserve and not sacrifice the gains made during the past 20 years, prioritize the interests of the Congo and the Congolese people, and take into account the wishes of the Congolese people, whose most ardent desire is the total eradication of the negative forces and the various armed groups that plague the eastern part of the country.

However, regardless of the nature of those recommendations, it is essential to strengthen MONUSCO's operational effectiveness by focusing on the quality of its troops, which should be more specialized in tracking armed groups and able to handle asymmetric threats. Those troops will have to continue to work closely with the FARDC and be more agile, mobile and equipped with the right equipment for greater efficiency.

Moreover, with regard to the presence of armed men on mining sites, it should be recalled that the law does not allow the military to carry out mining activities. In addition, the justification for the presence of FARDC elements in mining areas, as has been mentioned several times, is that they provide security at those sites, which, regrettably, are generally located in conflict zones. The Government deploys security forces in mining areas to ensure the safety of all mining operators. If some of the elements deployed for security reasons neglect their duties and engage in mining activities, it is always a good idea to report them so that the authorities can punish them in accordance with the law.

With regard to social issues, the situation in the Democratic Republic of Congo remains dominated by the implementation of the President's 100-day

emergency programme and the fight against the Ebola virus disease. With regard to the implementation of the President's 100-day emergency programme, it is important to note that several projects launched to construct critical infrastructure are under way and regularly visited by the authorities in order to assess the effectiveness of the work being conducted and develop new recommendations and guidelines, if necessary.

Regarding the Ebola virus disease, let me inform the Council that this is the tenth time that the Democratic Republic of the Congo has faced such an epidemic. However, it is the first time the outbreak has occurred in a conflict area. It is also the first time that it has exceeded a six-month period and that such a large number of victims has been reported. The meeting that the Security Council intends to convene on the issue on 31 July will provide an opportunity to share important information on the subject with the most appropriate resource specialists. However, we would like to reassure the Council that our Head of State, Government and people as a whole, with the assistance of our partners, are determined to eradicate the Ebola epidemic, now declared a public health emergency of international concern by the World Health Organization, from the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

At the initiative of President Tshisekedi, who on 20 July took the response to the epidemic under his own supervision, the technical secretariat of the multisectoral Ebola response committee that has been set up will now be under the direction of an internationally renowned epidemiologist in the treatment of the disease. The technical secretariat and its team of experts are responsible for coordinating all activities in the implementation of the strategic response plan for the Ebola virus disease outbreak and for putting in place

every possible urgent, essential and innovative measure for the rapid control of the epidemic.

The Ebola virus disease in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is no longer simply a health issue, but a cross-cutting problem that requires the consideration of the following aspects, above and beyond assessing the quality of care and treatment scheme available to date at the Ebola treatment centres. First, with regard to the fight against insecurity and access to vulnerable people, it is important to secure the territories affected by the disease so as to enable response operations to proceed smoothly and for health and humanitarian workers to work without fear of being attacked by armed elements. Secondly, concerning strengthened preventive measures, mobilization officers in the various health zones and major centres in the affected provinces should raise awareness about how to prevent the spread of the epidemic. Thirdly, with regard to public support for the response efforts, communities must collaborate with response teams. Fourthly, a better coordination of actions in the field is needed. Fifthly, adequate funding is required to meet needs.

I would like to conclude by again thanking the United Nations and the Security Council for their commitment and efforts to promote peace in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Similarly, on behalf of the Congolese people and Government, I again thank Ms. Leila Zerrougui, Special Representative of the Secretary-General in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Head of MONUSCO. Lastly, on behalf of the Congolese people, I again thank MONUSCO peacekeepers and troop-contributing countries for their dedication and commitment to our country.

The meeting rose at 12.05 p.m.