



Security Council

Seventy-fourth year

8621st meeting

Wednesday, 18 September 2019, 10 a.m.

New York

Provisional

President: Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation)

Members:

Belgium	Mr. Pecsteen de Buytswerve
China	Mr. Yao Shaojun
Côte d'Ivoire	Mr. Ipo
Dominican Republic	Mr. Singer Weisinger
Equatorial Guinea	Mrs. Mele Colifa
France	Mrs. Gueguen
Germany	Mr. Heusgen
Indonesia	Mr. Syihab
Kuwait	Mr. Almunayekh
Peru	Mr. Meza-Cuadra
Poland	Ms. Wronecka
South Africa	Mr. Matjila
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Allen
United States of America	Mrs. Craft

Agenda

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

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in South Sudan (S/2019/722)

Report of the Secretary-General on future planning for the protection of civilians sites in South Sudan (S/2019/741)

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

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

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

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in South Sudan (S/2019/722)

Report of the Secretary-General on future planning for the protection of civilians sites in South Sudan (S/2019/741)

The President (*spoke in Russian*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of South Sudan to take part in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. David Shearer, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan, to participate in this meeting.

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/2019/722, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in South Sudan, and document S/2019/741, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on future planning for the protection of civilian sites in South Sudan.

I now give the floor to Mr. Shearer.

Mr. Shearer: Just six days ago, we marked the first anniversary of the signing of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan. At the official ceremony last year, I witnessed much jubilation and hope that the agreement signalled an end to war and the beginning of a new era of peace. The citizens of South Sudan had high expectations. Over the past year, their political leaders have met some, but certainly not all of those expectations.

The recent visit of Mr. Riek Machar to Juba, at the invitation of President Salva Kiir, was an important development. The face-to-face meetings — which many of us believe are fundamental to moving forward — provided an opportunity to discuss critical unresolved parts of the peace agreement.

Publicly, the demeanour of the two men appeared conciliatory and they reportedly spent several hours in formal and informal discussions. Those meetings need to continue. Importantly, they recommitted to forming the transitional Government — a positive step because it maintains the momentum of peace and bolsters confidence among the people of South Sudan. The challenge remains, of course, to show tangible results. Three areas, in particular, require progress.

The first is the unification of security forces. Of the 35 cantonment sites planned, 23 are now occupied by opposition forces and 10 by the Government. Troop registration has begun. Food, water and other resources are beginning to be delivered. However, many sites lack amenities and protection risks may arise in nearby villages if those shortfalls continue. More fundamental differences also persist. The opposition foresees a newly constituted security sector, whereas the Government presumes that opposition troops will be subsumed into existing forces. A strategy for a unified security sector is therefore required. The United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) has contracted an experienced retired general from the region to help parties determine the future security policy, including the size and shape of forces.

Secondly, the Independent Boundaries Commission was unable to reach consensus on the number of states and boundaries. Resolution via a referendum, we believe, is implausible given the expense and time required. Instead, political consensus is needed. The Kiir-Machar dialogue last week called for a committee to address that sensitive issue, and we hope that is able to be resolved.

Thirdly, the agreement provides for five vice-presidents, each leading a cluster of cabinet portfolios. Two months out from a transitional Government, these still need to be determined. Finally, I should mention that the non-signatories to the agreement need to move from violent opposition, in which they have been involved, to constructive participation.

One year on, peace is beginning to pay dividends for the citizens of South Sudan. First, and critically, the ceasefire largely continues to hold. Political violence and subsequent displacement have decreased markedly. Opposition members are continuing to move and work in Juba, alongside their Government counterparts, to implement key parts of the peace agreement. There have been more than 130 different rapprochements

across the country at the grass-roots level, which demonstrates confidence and commitment.

The latest Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) report — a UNICEF, World Food Programme and Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) report that measures food security — documents a slight improvement in food security. There are now 5 per cent fewer people facing crisis or acute food insecurity compared with last year. This, the report notes importantly, is directly attributable to peace.

The fact that displaced families and refugees are returning home means that more crops are being planted, and improved security has enhanced access to markets and to humanitarian access. According to the FAO, cereal production has increased by 150,000 metric tons in one year, an indication of what peace can provide.

Still, 6.3 million people — or 54 per cent of the population — remain food-insecure and have limited access to health care. We have also noted that child malnutrition has in the short term, we think, increased.

But we are seeing a change. The IPC severity map is, at least, becoming more orange and yellow rather than red. Humanitarian access has improved. Incidents are down 30 per cent from last year, and humanitarians are becoming more emboldened to reach out to remote areas.

However, administrative impediments are still too frequent. UNMISS has been blocked by the Government from accessing areas where civilians and convoys require protection, with 124 violations of the status-of-forces agreement lodged just this year.

The relative calm has enabled more displaced people to return home. The International Organization for Migration has registered 594,000 returnees since the peace agreement was signed. During the same period, 17,000 people left UNMISS protection-of-civilians sites, while 180,000 remain.

At the Council's request, as mentioned by the President, we have reported back on future planning for the protection-of-civilians sites, detailing the challenges of prolonged displacement and the impediments to safe, voluntary and dignified return. These impediments include the lack of health-care and educational services in return areas; obviously, perceptions of security; and concern about the fragility of the peace process.

The report's findings drew from wide consultations right across the community in Juba. It has enabled a shared understanding of challenges and is forming the basis of actions going forward, which are already being developed.

To reflect the changing security environment, UNMISS peacekeepers are rebalancing their deployment, moving away from static type of deployment protection at protection-of-civilians sites to increase confidence-building patrols in areas to which people will be returning.

However, the Government must take the lead in creating a safe environment and support communities so displaced refugees and others can come back with confidence and be safe when they come back. I should recall here that a South Sudan that is truly at peace will no longer need United Nations protection sites.

The formation of the transitional Government provides an opportunity to lift our gaze from immediate challenges and look over the horizon towards the elections that are expected at the end of the three-year transition. Elections give the opportunity to resolve differences through democratic rather than violent means and to make a fundamental shift from deals done between elites to a duty to deliver policies by a Government that is elected by its people.

Holding free and fair elections is not just about preparing logistically but will require the creation of a political space where parties can form, discuss policies and campaign freely. I say this because there is mounting resentment among South Sudanese towards elites amassing wealth while the people themselves remain some of the poorest in the world.

The Government's budget this year is 46 per cent higher than last year, but with no indication of how a \$496 million financing gap will be funded. There is little transparency about where oil revenue is being spent. The Ministry of Finance reduced health-care spending by 16 per cent this year, handing almost the entire burden of health care to external donors, and reports of Government expenditure have not been received since the first quarter of 2017-2018. Meanwhile, the salaries of civil servants, including teachers, health workers and police officers, are often months late.

Criminality remains a serious problem, with random attacks on civilians, most commonly by unpaid soldiers and former combatants. The United Nations is

also providing technical assistance to reform and rebuild the justice system, not just to tackle criminal acts but to address the more pervasive issue of impunity. Mobile courts staffed by South Sudanese judiciary personnel, which have done an excellent job, have expanded beyond Bentiu and Malakal. In the next few weeks they will try hundreds of serious cases, including many cases of sexual and gender-based violence.

The bottom line is simply this. While the situation for many South Sudanese citizens remains bleak, the last year of peace has kickstarted a transformative process that is improving people's lives. This could not have happened without the ceasefire or the confidence generated by the peace process. The country's leaders and international peace partners deserve credit for this.

Across the country I have personally witnessed former enemies once committed to killing each other sitting amicably across the table planning a future together. If South Sudan's leaders ever needed inspiration to reconcile and work in the country's best interests, they can find it under trees and in the tukuls where communities are coming together to build peace.

I promise the Council that UNMISS is working alongside them to lay strong foundations so that peace can be sustained. As always, our efforts are in partnership with the laudable efforts of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development and the African Union.

The peace process remains precarious, but progress is being made. Maintaining momentum is the absolute key, and that depends very much on the continuing goodwill of the parties as well as the collective and unrelenting focus of international friends to support the formation of a transitional Government.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank Mr. Shearer for his briefing.

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

Mrs. Craft (United States of America): I thank Special Representative Shearer for his informative briefing.

One year ago, South Sudan's leaders signed the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan. Since then, the parties have taken some meaningful steps towards lasting peace. Political

violence has decreased, and local reconciliation efforts have gained traction.

The decisions of President Salva Kiir and opposition leader Riek Machar to meet in Juba are also welcome developments. However, to build confidence in the peace process, engagement focused on tangible outcomes is still needed. Unfortunately, the peace process in South Sudan has focused too much on dialogue between political elites and too little on the suffering of the people of South Sudan. Seven million people face food insecurity; 185,000 seek refuge in protection-of-civilians sites, and more than 4 million are afraid to return to their homes.

While these numbers are shocking, they cannot describe what it must be like to see another harvest come and go without enough food to feed your family. These statistics fail to capture the struggle of moving from camp to camp fleeing outbreaks of violence, only finally to return home and find your house burned to the ground. Meanwhile, the Government and other parties impede the flow of humanitarian assistance, and opposition recruitment has been reported at protection-of-civilians sites. These practices must stop immediately.

The Government of South Sudan and other parties continue to conduct military operations, particularly in the Equatorias, that brutalize their own people. We call on the South Sudanese parties that have not signed the Revitalized Agreement to renounce violence and seek political resolution. We call on those who have signed the agreement to engage with such parties in a non-violent manner. Despite ongoing activity that contradicts the letter and the spirit of the Revitalized Agreement, the United States believes there is still time for the parties to move closer to peace before November's political deadline. To that end, we call on South Sudan's leaders to agree to terms for security arrangements and to resolve the critical issue of the number and boundaries of states in South Sudan. We also urge them to formally establish the hybrid court, in partnership with the African Union, whose role in the peace process, along with the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), we support.

The people of South Sudan and key stakeholders have stressed that durable peace is possible if women play a central role in the peace process. We urge South Sudan's leaders to recommit themselves to ensuring a

full and meaningful role for women in the mechanism of the peace agreement and the transitional Government.

We endorse the call by the IGAD Council of Ministers, on 21 August, for an ordinary summit in September. We expect that such a summit would address outstanding issues, including Mr. Machar's freedom of movement and the appointment of a permanent chairperson for the reconstituted Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission. We also encourage all relevant parties to continue seeking a sustainable path forward for the protection of civilian sites, as well as for the safe, voluntary and dignified return of internally displaced persons.

As a final word, I am pleased to share that, in partnership with South Africa, the United States plans to lead a Security Council visit to Juba in the near future. I encourage all of my colleagues on the Council to participate in the visit so that we can use the opportunity to personally convey our joint desire to see South Sudan usher in a new era of peace and stability. Likewise, the visit will give South Sudan's leaders the chance to demonstrate to us that they have built the foundation necessary to establish a credible, inclusive and accountable transitional Government.

Mrs. Gueguen (France) (*spoke in French*): I, too, would like to thank Mr. Shearer, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for South Sudan, for his intervention. I shall comment on three points.

First, on the peace process, the current priority is to form a transitional Government of national unity by 12 November. France welcomes Riek Machar's visit to Juba last week. It is an important step that has strengthened trust between him and Salva Kiir. We encourage them to repeat such in-person meetings as often as possible. Time is running out. The end of the pretransition period is looming, in two months' time, and a further postponement would be unacceptable. The top priority must be the formation of the Government of national unity, but, in parallel, it is important, as the Special Representative has stressed, to make progress on the delineation of internal borders and on security arrangements.

France welcomes the efforts of the countries of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development to support the peace process. Indeed, the subregion's investment is absolutely essential to helping the parties to move forward, and we encourage them to continue in this direction. It is also necessary to respect the quotas

for women provided for in the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan and to allow them to participate actively and meaningfully in the peace process, at all levels and on all issues. The visit to Juba by the Security Council next month will be an opportunity to repeat those messages.

Secondly, the humanitarian situation remains alarming and can be improved in the long term only through the creation of lasting peace. While the increase in the number of voluntary returns is encouraging and directly linked to recent political progress, intercommunity violence continues to drive people into exile. These forced displacements, it should be recalled, take place in a context of extreme poverty, characterized by particularly high food insecurity. All parties must ensure safe and unhindered humanitarian access throughout the country in order for growing humanitarian needs to be met. Naturally, this involves protecting humanitarian personnel, medical personnel and civilian and humanitarian infrastructure and equipment. It is an obligation on which we must not compromise.

The fight against sexual violence must also remain a priority. We commend the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, Ms. Pramila Patten, on her work in the field. As a result of those efforts, the Sudan People's Liberation Movement in Opposition has adopted an action plan to combat sexual violence in its ranks. France is also concerned about the human rights violations reported by the commission mandated by the Human Rights Council.

France reiterates its commitment to the fight against impunity and the importance of prosecuting and bringing to justice perpetrators of violations. Accordingly, we call on all parties to establish the hybrid court for South Sudan, with the support of the African Union. The Security Council also has a role to play and must systematically use sanctions to punish and coerce those who commit such crimes.

Thirdly, France is committed to ensuring that the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) pursues its efforts to protect civilians, in particular women and children, as that must remain the first priority of the mission. France commends the Mission's efforts to ensure the proper functioning of protection of civilian sites, whose opening in 2013 has undeniably

saved thousands of human lives. But it is also essential to protect all South Sudanese who need it, wherever they are in the country. France supports the Mission's new, more robust and mobile stance and the strengthening of early warning mechanisms. Those efforts must be continued in order to make areas of return safer.

In conclusion, on behalf of France, I would like to offer my sincere thanks to the United Nations teams and humanitarian actors who are conducting, often in difficult conditions, a vital mission in the service of the people of South Sudan.

Mr. Meza-Cuadra (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): We welcome the convening of this meeting and thank Mr. Shearer, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for South Sudan, for his valuable briefing.

A few months from the beginning of the transition period, we look forward to the implementation of important pending agreements, particularly with respect to the billeting and training of a unified army and to the number and borders of states, which will allow the revitalized transitional Government of national unity to finally come to fruition. In the same vein, we welcome the meeting, held last week in Juba between the President of South Sudan, Salva Kiir, and the Vice-President designate, Riek Machar. We consider that gesture to be an important show of political resolve that will provide the necessary impetus to tackle critical issues and enable the establishment of the transitional Government in November.

We note with satisfaction that the implementation of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan has resulted in a considerable decrease in political violence in most parts of the country. However, we regret that sporadic attacks by non-signatory groups continue in regions such as Central Equatoria, leading to a rise in internally displaced persons.

We must reiterate our concern at the high rates of crime, human rights violations and sexual violence in South Sudan. Horrifying incidents continue to be reported, as described in the latest report of the Secretary-General (S/2019/722). We hope that Riek Machar's endorsement of the action plan of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement in Opposition on conflict-related sexual violence will result in specific, effective measures that do not foster impunity for the perpetrators of such crimes but, rather, enable them to be held accountable for their actions.

We call on non-signatory groups to join the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan. The construction of a stable and secure nation is dependent on the entire population and on the support that the international community can provide to achieve lasting solutions that include the greater participation of women and youth in decision-making processes.

We regret that the humanitarian situation remains critical despite the abating conflict. According to the Secretary-General's report, the number of people without food has reached an all-time high, severely impacting the civilian population. Nevertheless, we note that the report of the Secretary-General on future planning for the protection of civilians sites in South Sudan (S/2019/741) highlights the growing willingness of populations to return to their homes. However, the report also points out that there are various barriers that delay return, such as the unpredictable peace process, the lack of security and the absence of basic services in places of origin. We hope that the Government and international partners can help facilitate the peaceful return of the population to their homes, including laying the groundwork for them to do so safely and voluntarily and enjoy access to basic services, such as water, sanitation and health services, allowing them to live a dignified life in their homes.

We support the reprioritization of the work of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), as suggested in the report on the protection of civilian sites. We believe that the UNMISS mandate must reflect the current situation, thereby allowing the Mission to deliver on its principal mandate, that is, the protection to civilians, through early warnings and greater mobility on the ground. We hope that coordinated action by the Mission together with humanitarian actors and development agencies will lead to lasting solutions.

In conclusion, I would like to highlight the work and efforts of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, the African Union and the United Nations, especially the valuable work of UNMISS, in South Sudan. We reiterate the importance of maintaining unity within the Security Council on the political support and follow-up needed to continue moving forward decisively in the South Sudanese peace process.

Mr. Ipo (Côte d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): My delegation congratulates Mr. David Shearer, Special

Representative of the Secretary-General for South Sudan and Head of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), for his comprehensive and informative briefing.

The hope engendered by the signing of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan seems to be fading owing to the uncertainties surround the peace process. While the Agreement helped significantly reduce political violence, facilitate the return of displaced persons and improve conditions for access to humanitarian assistance, it is now clear that the stalled political process, persistent ethnic violence and a still-alarming humanitarian situation have undermined the positive momentum generated by the Agreement. It is important to take urgent and concerted action to pull the country out of this ongoing crisis, which has serious repercussions on the civilian population, which wants nothing more than peace, stability and development.

My country believes that the international community should focus its efforts primarily on the political, humanitarian and security fronts. On the political front, the resumption of the peace process remains the leading challenge to be tackled. In that regard, my delegation welcomes the first meeting in two years in Juba on 9 and 10 September between President Salva Kiir and Vice-President Riek Machar, under the auspices of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development.

In that regard, Côte d'Ivoire commends the Ethiopian mediation for its efforts leading to the holding of the meeting, which my country hopes will catalyse the resolution of the pending issues, such as the formation of a Government of national unity, the cantonment of combatants and their reintegration into the army. The question of the status of Vice-President Riek Machar also requires special consideration.

Côte d'Ivoire believes that the Revitalized Agreement of September 2018 remains, for the time being, the appropriate framework for achieving a lasting political solution, which is why we encourage all stakeholders to engage meaningfully in the process to give peace a chance. In that context, it is undeniable that the support of the international community is urgently needed in terms of capacity-building and support for implementing the Revitalized Agreement, which suffers from a deficit of resources.

On the humanitarian front, deteriorating living conditions for displaced persons, persistent sexual and gender-based violence and impunity for such crimes remain matters of concern for my delegation. In addition, there is a lack of progress on the implementation of the transitional justice mechanisms.

At the heart of these challenges, unfortunately, is the crucial issue of the protection of civilians. In that regard, my country fully supports the recommendations of the report (S/2019/741) of the Secretary-General presented today, particularly with regard to the obligations incumbent on the South Sudanese authorities, the responsibilities of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan and those of various partners, to enhance the protection of civilians.

The protection of civilians must also encompass a strengthening of the rule of law, respect for human rights and the implementation of the principle of accountability for crimes committed. My country therefore urges the South Sudanese authorities to create conditions conducive to the safe, voluntary, secure and dignified return of displaced persons and refugees.

In addition, we are concerned at the persistence of ethnic violence and call for the necessary measures to be taken to ensure the physical security of displaced persons and refugees.

My delegation also welcomes the joint action taken by the signatories to the Revitalized Agreement for the establishment of the Humanitarian Coordination Committee under the auspices of the National Pre-Transitional Committee. The Committee remains a valuable mechanism for improving access to populations awaiting humanitarian aid and for protecting the rights of vulnerable people. In addition, Côte d'Ivoire welcomes the ratification by the Government of South Sudan of the Kampala Convention — the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa.

My country welcomes the excellent work of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan in providing assistance, strengthening its early-warning capabilities and protecting civilians. I assure the Special Representative of our full support and urge him to continue his engagement, in coordination with humanitarian agencies and development partners, towards harmonized action in the areas of peacebuilding and conflict resolution, security sector reform and strengthening of the rule of law.

In conclusion, Côte d'Ivoire reiterates its call on the South Sudanese parties to step up their engagement in the peace process, with the support of the international community.

Mr. Singer Weisinger (Dominican Republic) (*spoke in Spanish*): There were important developments for the process of implementing the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan during the period under review. We see as positive the recent meeting between President Kiir and Riek Machar, in which pending issues relating to the formation of the transitional Government were addressed. The commitment of both leaders to meet regularly and participate in mediation efforts with non-signatory rebel groups is an important step in building trust towards lasting peace.

We hope that the mid-November date set for the formation of the Government will be honoured, and we urge the parties to resolve the critical matters still pending, including the delimitation of states and the cantonment and redeployment of combatants. In that regard, we welcome the initiatives of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development and international actors, which have allowed the peace agreement to survive and created opportunities for dialogue to make progress on pending issues.

Unfortunately, this very situation continues to be threatened by unresolved cycles of violence, access restraints on humanitarian personnel and the staff of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), as well as delays in the granting of visas. The parties to the conflict must allow unhindered access to humanitarian personnel, and the Government must expedite the visa-issuance process.

We are concerned at the seriousness of the humanitarian situation. The number of people facing food shortages is higher than ever: 54 per cent of the population is in a situation of severe food insecurity and an estimated 1.3 million children will experience acute malnutrition by 2020. This insecurity is exacerbated by the effects of climate change and floods in some areas of the country. It is crucial that we reduce violence and improve agricultural activities, which would allow displaced people to return to their livelihoods.

Beyond the political and humanitarian crisis, we are concerned about the vulnerability of the civilian population, especially children and women. Continuous reports of sexual violence by the parties to the conflict

are unacceptable, as are those of the recruitment and use of children. We call on the Government to establish a process to hold perpetrators responsible, and we advocate that comprehensive services be provided to survivors of sexual violence. We also call for the setting up of mobile courts and the deployment of prosecutors in areas with insufficient prosecution capacity to continue.

In that regard, we commend Riek Machar's endorsement of the action plan on conflict-related sexual violence, which envisages that concrete measures be implemented, as well as his orders to his commanders to form committees to investigate acts of sexual violence and to release girls and women held against their will. We hope that those orders will be implemented and replicated in other parts of the country.

It is imperative that the momentum be used to strengthen political will and that reconciliation and peacebuilding efforts be stepped up, with the participation of women and young people.

Finally, we would like to reiterate our support and appreciation to UNMISS personnel and to the agencies present on the ground for their efforts to achieve the peace that the people of South Sudan so desire. It is a long road. Crucial issues remain to be resolved, for which the commitment of the political leaders and the support of the international community are necessary.

Mr. Syihab (Indonesia): Let me join others in expressing my appreciation to Mr. David Shearer, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for South Sudan, for his very comprehensive briefing. We thank the Secretary-General for his reports on the situation in South Sudan (S/2019/722) and on future planning for protection of civilian sites therein (S/2019/741). My statement today will focus on three key issues, namely, the political, security and humanitarian situations.

On the first issue, my delegation welcomes last week's meeting in Juba between President Salva Kiir Mayardit and Mr. Riek Machar and their commitment to ensuring the timely formation of the revitalized Transitional Government of National Unity. The long-awaited meeting was a significant step in the right direction, especially as progress in implementing critical provisions of the revitalized Agreement was rather limited. As we approach the end of the extension of the pre-transitional period, my delegation wishes to recall that the revitalized Agreement is the only option right now. We must make it work. To borrow

the language of the Special Envoy for South Sudan of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the remaining critical tasks of the Agreement can be completed only with unity and compromise. All parties must hold regular face-to-face dialogues in order to maintain the positive momentum, reestablish confidence and resolve outstanding issues, including transitional security arrangements and the resolution of boundary issues. We reiterate our call for the timely and transparent disbursement of funds pledged for the implementation of the Agreement. Indonesia fully endorses the provision of technical assistance by the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) to support the implementation of the Agreement.

Secondly, we are encouraged by the fact that the permanent ceasefire is holding across the country and political violence has decreased. Confidence and trust-building continue at the subnational level, much of which was facilitated by UNMISS. However, we regret that sporadic clashes involving non-signatories to the Agreement continue to take innocent lives in Central Equatoria region. The importance of IGAD's continued efforts to bring non-signatories into the peace process cannot be overstated.

Indonesia stresses the imperative of the full protection of civilians and observance of international humanitarian law. Accountability for human rights violations must be upheld. Impunity will only prolong the conflict cycle, thereby jeopardizing the credibility of the peace process. That is not what we want at this crucial stage of the peace process.

We commend the role of UNMISS to promote the rule of law and capacity-building and to strengthen the judicial presence in the country. Repeated access restrictions against UNMISS potentially impede its ability to implement its mandates, including to protect civilians and to investigate human rights violations.

Thirdly, our collective efforts should always be aimed at saving human lives. My delegation feels compelled to bring to the Council's attention the dire humanitarian situation affecting people in South Sudan. It is estimated that 6.96 million people are severely food insecure, of whom 20,000 will likely be in catastrophe. A durable solution is desperately needed for the 1.83 million internally displaced persons and 2.3 million refugees.

The country is also struggling to acquire the funding needed to meet the Ebola virus preparedness target.

As of now, only 45 per cent of the 2019 humanitarian response plan has been funded. The international community needs to contribute more.

The operating environment for humanitarian actors in South Sudan continues to be challenging and dangerous. All sides must provide humanitarian actors with the necessary space for the delivery of humanitarian assistance.

Ms. Wronecka (Poland): At the outset, I would like to thank Special Representative David Shearer for his, as always, very informative briefing.

Poland welcomes last week's meeting between President Salva Kiir Mayardit and Mr. Riek Machar in Juba, which we see as a step in the right direction. We would like to encourage the political leaders to continue to meet regularly so as to take the peace process forward. We also welcome all confidence-building efforts and peacebuilding initiatives that have been taking place at the subnational level.

We continue to believe that the implementation of the provisions of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan is crucial to the durable peace and long-term stability of the country. Two months before the end of the extended pre-transitional period, we see the urgent need for the parties to accelerate the pace of implementation of the Agreement, in particular with regard to security arrangements and the number of states and their boundaries.

We call on all the signatories to work together in a spirit of goodwill and compromise and to spare no efforts in stepping up preparations for the successful transition and the formation of the transitional Government in November.

Poland praises the regional efforts to build durable peace in South Sudan and believes that the Intergovernmental Authority on Development and its member States, as well as the African Union, continue to play a critical role in terms of enforcement and monitoring of the implementation of the Agreement. We believe that the Security Council should stand ready to support those efforts. We therefore welcome the upcoming Security Council visit to Addis Ababa and Juba, which should also serve that purpose. It is our strong belief that only the collective and unified approach of the international community can help to maintain the positive momentum in the peace process.

Poland welcomes the fact that the permanent ceasefire continues to be largely respected across South Sudan. At the same time, we remain deeply concerned about the persisting humanitarian crisis and the levels of intercommunal violence, as well as the serious human rights violations and abuses perpetrated by Government forces and opposition armed groups. We call on the authorities of South Sudan to do their utmost to bring the perpetrators to justice and to fulfil their obligations with regard to the protection of civilians.

Let me conclude by thanking the United Nations Mission in South Sudan for its tireless efforts to bring durable peace and stability to South Sudan.

Mr. Heusgen (Germany): I will be brief because I think that all the most important points have already been made.

To summarize what David Shearer said, we must move from talk to action and ensure that what he said with regard to the security forces, unification and boundaries be finally implemented and that, most important, the date of 12 November be respected for the formation of the transitional Government.

There is a certain momentum, which we have to preserve, and it is very important that the international community continue to support that. I think it is very good that we now have some stability in the Sudan, which certainly helps. We need the African Union, we need the Intergovernmental Authority on Development and we as a Security Council need to speak with one voice on these matters and give support. It is very timely that in October we will have the funds to travel to the region and South Sudan just before the critical date.

I also think that it is very good what was said with regard to the more flexible work of the United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan — that it is not remaining stationary but going out with greater robustness to fulfil the actual mandate of protecting the civilian population and providing greater prevention. What is unacceptable, as Mr. Shearer mentioned at the margins of his statement, is that there are still severe violations of the status of forces agreement. That is something that we have to look at and, like the South Sudanese Government, we will have to respond.

Mr. Shearer mentioned some improvement on the situation on the ground, but overall it is still very bad: there are 1.8 million internally displaced persons, 2.3 million have fled the country, the security situation

is still not where it should be, children are suffering. I am also worried about the high level of violence against civilians and sexual and gender-based violence. In that regard, I can only echo — the representative of the Dominican Republic stole my speaking points with regard to this point — what he and the representative of France said, namely, that violence against women is unacceptable and perpetrators have to be brought to justice. It is very good that they have their mobile tribunals, but we have to go beyond them. There cannot be impunity for perpetrators.

I would also like to pick up on what the representatives of the Dominican Republic and Peru said with regard to the participation of women. This is still a situation where it is men — Kiir and Machar — talking to each other. In the peace agreement there is the 35 per cent quota for women, which should be implemented. In all the Committees and all the talks women should be participating. I count on Mr. Shearer on raising the level of participation.

Let me conclude on a positive note. Mr. Shearer mentioned many examples of people who had been fighting each other but are now sitting together. That is something to build upon.

Mr. Pecsteen de Buytswerve (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): I thank Special Representative David Shearer for his briefing and for his exceptional work under particularly difficult conditions.

Last week's meeting in Juba between President Kiir and Riek Machar is an important step in the right direction, a step that was long overdue. Trust between political leaders is essential for a successful peace process. We also note as a positive development that political violence has decreased even though intercommunity violence, sexual violence and crime persist.

We must now build on that positive momentum. There are only two months left before the end of the extended pre-transition period. All stakeholders must therefore make rapid progress on a number of key issues. I would mention in particular the establishment of security arrangements, the status of Juba, including the issue of the VIP protection force, the finalization of internal boundaries, the development of a road map for the implementation of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan and the full release of implementation funds announced by the Government. Finally, the signatory

parties must form a transitional Government by 12 November, as agreed in the agreement and publicly reconfirmed by President Kiir and Mr. Machar last week. As for the non-signatory parties, we urge them to join the Revitalized Agreement. The commitment, monitoring and support of the States of the region are essential to ensure the implementation of the Revitalized Agreement.

The protection of civilians remains a daunting challenge. Human rights abuses continue and sexual violence continues, unfortunately affecting entire communities. The protection of civilians and the provision of services to the population are primarily the responsibility of the authorities. We call on all parties in South Sudan to address key protection risks, extend the rule of law and invest essential funds in the setting up of services throughout the country.

Humanitarian access remains essential for the South Sudanese people. As suggested by the Secretary-General in his report (S/2019/741), we encourage the United Nations Mission in South Sudan to continue to adopt a more mobile and robust approach and to strengthen its early-warning and monitoring capabilities, while continuing to ensure security in and around civilian-protection sites. Any return of displaced persons must be voluntary, safe, dignified and well informed.

No lasting solution to the conflict in South Sudan can be found without urgently and effectively addressing the many abuses. We call on the Government to end the culture of impunity, thoroughly investigate all cases of sexual violence and other abuses and bring those responsible for those crimes to justice. We call for the establishment of transitional justice mechanisms, including the Hybrid Court.

This conflict is the main factor behind the humanitarian crisis and violence in South Sudan, a crisis that is completely human-caused. The Revitalized Agreement represents the window of opportunity for lasting peace in South Sudan. Let us not lose this opportunity.

Mr. Matjila (South Africa): We join other delegations in thanking you, Mr. President, for convening today's meeting. We also express our heartfelt gratitude to Special Representative David Shearer for his briefing, which was, as usual, comprehensive. We thank him and his team from the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) for their tireless

work in peacemaking in South Sudan. We further welcome the report (S/2019/722) of the Secretary-General on UNMISS and on the protection of civilians and its recommendations (S/2019/741). We also want to welcome our friend and colleague the Permanent Representative of South Sudan. We look forward to his statement to the Council, which he will make in a few minutes' time.

The decades of instability, conflict and underdevelopment will continue to require our collective and steadfast commitment to ensuring that we put South Sudan on a trajectory of peace and prosperity. I would like to limit my statement three issues: the political process, the security situation and the humanitarian situation in South Sudan.

With regard to the political situation, South Africa welcomes the recent face-to-face meetings between President Salva Kiir and Mr. Riek Machar as a step in the right direction. It was a much-anticipated meeting, as there is a clear realization that it will help in unlocking the political impasse that has stalled the implementation of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan. South Africa would like to thank the new authorities in Khartoum for assisting their family in the south to meet and talk. We also want to thank the Prime Minister of Ethiopia for his ongoing tireless efforts to further peace and stability in the Horn of Africa.

The road ahead has been charted. The implementation of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan is key in addressing a number of challenges that the people of South Sudan continue to grapple with, including instability, security and humanitarian and human rights crises. We have to address the root causes that led to the conflict. Otherwise we will continue to deal with the perennial symptomatic features, which include humanitarian challenges and conflict-related sexual violence.

There are many grass-roots peace initiatives throughout the country have been taken in earnest, because the people of South Sudan are yearning for peace. The leadership of South Sudan needs to redouble its efforts and join with the people through action in the form of the implementation of the Revitalized Peace Agreement.

The inclusion of women and their meaningful participation in the peace process remains an integral

part of ensuring that all citizens' aspirations are addressed. We are encouraged by the work already being undertaken by women-led civil society organizations to contribute to the peace process and rebuild the country. By appointing a woman Foreign Minister, President Kiir has acknowledged the capacity and capability of South Sudanese women. We congratulate the Government for taking that step.

South Africa appreciates the ongoing work by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, in conjunction with the African Union, to facilitate and mediate the peace process in South Sudan. It is important that the Council continue to support and complement those efforts.

On the security situation, we are encouraged that the cessation of hostilities continues to hold and has led to a significant reduction in security-related incidents, as Special Representative Shearer reported this morning. However, we remain concerned about ongoing violent incidents with opposition groups, as well as the intercommunal violence that is taking place. In that regard, we commend the work of UNMISS and the Ceasefire and Transitional Security Arrangements Monitoring Mechanism in their role to support the Revitalized Agreement, to be signed and, hopefully, implemented by 12 November.

On the humanitarian situation, the crisis unfolding and the magnitude of the number of people in distress, as highlighted in the Secretary-General's report, is totally reprehensible. Such human suffering is an indictment of us all, as humankind. We urge the international stakeholders to continue contributing to post-conflict reconstruction and development programmes and to support efforts to repatriate and resettle internally displaced persons and returning refugees in South Sudan — as they return in the thousands. South Africa will continue to offer South Sudan humanitarian assistance, especially as many communities return to their villages and towns.

Lastly, we would like to echo my colleagues from the United States and the public statements by most Council members in welcoming the forthcoming Security Council visit to South Sudan, led by South Africa and the United States. We hope that it will provide further impetus to the parties in the implementation, without delay, of all the provisions of the Revitalized Agreement.

Mr. Yao Shaojun (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China thanks Mr. Shearer, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan, for his briefing.

At present, the overall situation in South Sudan continues to improve. Violent conflicts have decreased sharply and the ceasefire has continued to hold in most areas. The implementation of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan has steadily moved ahead and progress has been made in establishing a unified national army and amending the Constitution. Thanks to the facilitation of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the Sudan and other countries, South Sudan President Kiir and opposition leader Machar met in Juba on 9 and 11 September, and the two sides reached important consensus on advancing the peace process and the forming of a new transitional Government on 12 November, as scheduled. That demonstrates the political will and determination of both sides to achieve peace and invigorate the implementation of the agreement. China appreciates and welcomes that development.

At the same time, there are still obstacles to the achievement of peace and stability in South Sudan. Certain opposition parties have yet to join the agreement, the humanitarian situation is grim and there are serious food shortages. We hope the international community will bolster its support for the peace process in the country, consolidate the existing positive momentum and provide assistance, as needed, by the country.

First, we must support the parties in South Sudan in accelerating the implementation of the agreement. Its effective implementation is the only way to resolve the conflict in South Sudan. We are less than two months away from the end of the pre-transition period — 12 November. China hopes that the parties to the conflict in South Sudan will seize this opportunity to unite as one in accelerating the implementation of the agreement and restoring peace and stability at an early date so that the people of South Sudan can enjoy the peace dividends as soon as possible. The international community should provide financial and material support to South Sudan for the implementation of the agreement and the formation of a unified army.

Secondly, we should continue to support countries of the region and regional organizations in their good offices. It has been shown that greater knowledge of

the situation on the ground can help them in their good offices. The international community should enhance coordination with the African Union, IGAD and other subregional organizations, as well as countries such as the Sudan. It should also support their mediation efforts and help the South Sudanese Government and the opposition to consolidate mutual trust, maintain dialogue and reach consensus as soon as possible on issues such as the number of states and border demarcations. Finally, it should urge the opposition parties that have not yet subscribed to the peace agreement to join the peace process soon.

Thirdly, humanitarian and economic assistance should be enhanced. As mentioned in the Secretary-General's report (S/2019/741), the current state of affairs in the protection of civilian sites is untenable. Those sites are not a durable solution to the problem of displacement. The international community should increase its assistance in the settlement of displaced persons and facilitate their early return to their homes. The number of people in South Sudan facing severe food shortages — 6.96 million — is the highest ever recorded. The country is also facing the risk of Ebola spreading from other countries. The international community should now focus on helping the country address the food shortages and improve its capacity to prevent the spread of Ebola, while increasing its investment in agriculture, energy, infrastructure, education, health care and other fields with a view to helping the country achieve national reconstruction and economic development.

China greatly appreciates the important contribution of United Nations Mission in South Sudan to the maintenance of peace and stability in South Sudan. We support the Mission's continued implementation of its mandate of supporting the implementation of the agreement and the protection of civilians, among other things. We hope the Mission will continue to strengthen communication and coordination with troop-contributing countries, promote the security and protection of peacekeepers and enhance their ability to cope with complex situations.

China has always strongly supported the peace process in South Sudan. Recently, in order to support South Sudan's efforts to implement the agreement, the Chinese Government decided to provide material assistance to the South Sudanese Government. The first batch, which is 1,500 tons of food, has arrived in South Sudan, and other in-kind assistance, such as

tents, blankets and medicine, are in the pipeline. China is willing to work with the international community by continuing to play a constructive role in achieving peace, stability and development in South Sudan.

Mr. Almunayekh (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to thank Mr. Shearer for his valuable and comprehensive briefing. I would also like to very briefly touch upon three main points — political developments, the mandate of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) and the humanitarian situation.

In relation to political developments, we welcome the meetings between President Salva Kiir and Mr. Riek Machar last week in Juba. We also welcome the declaration on working towards the completion of as many of the pre-transition steps as possible by 12 November, in accordance with the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan.

We also welcome the declaration on the reconfiguration of the Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Commission and the continuation of the ceasefire. In the meantime, we hope that the containment and unification of forces will avert the risks that usually accompany such processes. We also look forward to seizing the moment and optimizing the remainder of this sensitive and important phase. We call on all the non-signatory parties to rapidly join the peace process. Meanwhile, we welcome the positive signals sent by some with regard to holding consultations in this regard.

The progressive achievements being made need follow-up by national and regional parties, with the support of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, the African Union and the United Nations, taking into consideration the positive role played by South Sudan in supporting the transitional process. Transitional justice in the post-conflict phase is of paramount importance to ensuring reconciliation, accountability and the sustainability of peace.

In relation to the humanitarian situation, we welcome the relative increase in the number of returning refugees and displaced persons and hope that the international community will step up its support in order to alleviate the humanitarian burden borne by the people. That can be done by promoting humanitarian activities in South Sudan, especially in the areas of health care, education and housing, thereby creating

an environment conducive for voluntary, safe and dignified return.

Meanwhile, we emphasize resolution 2417 (2018), on hunger and conflict, which reiterates that hunger plays a key role in the resurgence of conflict. We welcome the progressive decrease in South Sudan of the number of people in protection of civilians sites of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), and reiterate that the protection of civilians remains the primary responsibility of the Government of South Sudan.

We reaffirm our condemnation of the recruitment of children and conflict-related sexual violence, regardless of who the perpetrators may be or their rationale. We welcome the intercommunal reconciliation process, which needs to be supported and emulated at all levels.

In relation to UNMISS, we appreciate its important role and commend its good offices, as well as its health, humanitarian and legal services, which contribute to the consolidation of peace by prioritizing political solutions. We also call for ensuring the freedom of movement of UNMISS and of humanitarian aid, pursuant to the status-of-forces agreement and the relevant Security Council resolutions.

In conclusion, South Sudan is at one of its most critical phases in its history — one that will have very serious repercussions for present and future generations if not addressed effectively and seriously. We hope that the vicious circle of war and destruction will come to an end, leading to security, stability and prosperity in the friendly South Sudan.

Mrs. Mele Colifa (Equatorial Guinea) (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me at the outset to express my gratitude to Mr. David Shearer for his efforts in promoting the peace process as part of his remit as well as for his outstanding briefing, which clearly illustrated the manner in which the situation in South Sudan has evolved.

The Government of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea welcomes the progress made in implementing the political and security tasks that have been achieved during the period covered by the report of the Secretary-General (S/2019/722) during the six-month extension of the pre-transition period. These include the submission of the report of the Independent Boundaries Commission, the drafting of key legislation, the planning of transition security measures, and the trips

made by President Salva Kiir and the signing of bilateral agreements with his counterparts in Kenya and in Uganda. All of these are important steps forward on the path towards the country's return to peace and stability.

We also believe that this period of transitional Government has been a successful stage in the peace process and therefore urge the parties to step up their efforts to achieve a general agreement on security and on the cantonment and unification of the security forces.

We would like to remind the parties to the conflict that the time has come for them to assume their responsibilities and demonstrate the political will that is necessary for the full and timely implementation of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan, as it has been made clear on other occasions that an inclusive political solution is the only way to achieve peace in South Sudan.

My country maintains the hope that the parties will make concrete and rapid progress in resolving the necessary transitional arrangements during the allotted period. We deplore the persistence of sporadic fighting between Government forces and the opposition, in particular in Central Equatoria, as well as among opposition groups. We also deplore the continued prevalence of sexual violence and violence against civilians, and we therefore urge the parties to spare no effort to bring to justice all those who are responsible for such atrocities.

We are also concerned about the humanitarian situation. The attacks against humanitarian workers and United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) personnel are unacceptable. That is why we would urge all the parties, in particular the Government, to ensure a more secure and propitious environment for personnel who are working tirelessly to provide assistance to the most vulnerable civilians in South Sudan.

Given the concerns that I have just set out, it should also be noted that some events there give us reason for hope, such as the recent visit by Mr. Riek Machar to Juba a few days ago to meet with President Salva Kiir. Direct contact between these two leaders gives rise to hope that the agreement could be implemented in its totality.

With this in mind, we are encouraged to know that during their meeting the two leaders reiterated their commitment to the agreement and to the formation of a transitional Government of unity during the month

of November. Following through on this commitment will be an important sign of real progress in the peace process in South Sudan.

The Republic of Equatorial Guinea appreciates the mediation and commitment of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development to United Nations personnel, UNMISS and non-governmental organizations for all their efforts to provide humanitarian assistance to the people and commends the African Union Commission on its active involvement in the collective efforts in favour of peace in South Sudan.

I wish to conclude my statement by appealing to the international community to back the efforts of regional and subregional organizations and neighbouring countries in order to support the political actors in general and in particular leaders Salva Kiir and Riek Machar, so that they can move forward resolutely and without setbacks to achieve a definitive peace in South Sudan.

Mr. Allen (United Kingdom): Let me, too, thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Shearer for his briefing.

As my colleague from Equatorial Guinea just said, we very, very much welcome the meeting that took place between President Kiir and Mr. Machar. This was a necessary step for the implementation of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan and for the formation of a transitional Government of national unity by the already extended deadline of 12 November. I commend both men and their teams for taking that crucial step forward, which gives us hope here in the Council. The November deadline is fast approaching, so I would urge, today, that both parties ensure that theirs was the first of many, forthcoming meetings going forward.

We have been discussing the conflict in South Sudan for some time now; it has taken a huge toll on civilians in that country. During the worst of the conflict, we saw atrocities carried out against civilians; we saw attacks on humanitarian workers and health clinics; we saw food and humanitarian assistance used as weapons of war. It was a grim conflict for the people of South Sudan. And yet, since the peace agreement, one of the most inspiring things that I have seen in the Council has been the response of the people of South Sudan to the peace. People came out in their hundreds and thousands to celebrate and welcome the decision made by their leaders. I really believe that the people

of South Sudan have set a genuine example in their country, in their region and for their own leaders of the importance of peace.

We are very grateful to Mr. Shearer and his team for their work in facilitating reconciliation efforts, including, of course, civilian-military dialogue and the peace conference between states but also, crucially, the subnational rapprochement between Government and opposition. I note from the Secretary-General's report on future planning for the protection of civilians sites (S/2019/741) that there have been at least 128 such subnational rapprochement initiatives between the Government and the opposition since the signing of the peace agreement in September 2018. Again, this is very much to be welcomed. It is not all about the big men meeting in choreographed ways in smoke-filled rooms. Community action and grassroots reconciliation are vital and should be encouraged by all of us in the Council, all in the region and all in South Sudan.

The United Kingdom does not yet believe that conditions in South Sudan are conducive to the safe, voluntary and dignified return of internally displaced persons and refugees. We need all parties to play their parts in establishing a secure environment for the people of South Sudan. Accountability will be a vital element of that. We urge the parties to the revitalized agreement to fulfil their commitments to establishing transitional justice institutions and to sign the memorandum of understanding with the African Union on the establishment of the hybrid court. Again, we have talked about that court in the Council for some time now; surely it is time to see it established.

Those institutions are desperately needed. We have heard from the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict that reports of sexual violence increased in 2018, in an environment, I am afraid to say, of near total impunity. The people of South Sudan need to see safety and security developing. They need to see credible action taken to end acts of sexual violence and ensure the protection of civilians. They need to see the demilitarization of towns and public buildings being taken forward. As such, all parties to the revitalized agreement need to allow United Nations Mission in South Sudan and humanitarian actors to carry out their work unimpeded.

Although the ceasefire has held, which is very much to be welcomed, a serious humanitarian crisis remains. Six and a half million people suffer food

insecurity; 1.7 million are on the edge of famine. The United Kingdom remains one of the largest donors in South Sudan; we have spent \$135 million dollars in this financial year. That is our national contribution; we give more through the European Union and development assistance. We remain committed to the people and the country. But all humanitarian actors must be able to play their part in helping the people of South Sudan rebuild their country.

There will be many more opportunities for dialogue between now and November. We urge the parties to continue to meet and the region to retain its focus on South Sudan, and very much hope that the Ministers of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development will be able to meet before November. As my colleague from the United States has said, the Council will have an important opportunity to engage with the parties in a visit to Juba in late October, co-led, I believe, by our South African presidency. I hope that we will have an opportunity at that time to meet with all the parties to the revitalized agreement. I hope we will be able to meet with representatives of women, youth and civil society. I hope we will be able to see grass-roots reconciliation happening. I know that the Church and other actors have been involved in reconciliation. I think this could be a great opportunity, as a Council, to give a timely boost to the efforts of the South Sudanese parties and people. And that is how it should be of course.

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

We are grateful to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for South Sudan, David Shearer, for the information he has provided on developments in South Sudan and on progress in the peace process in that African country. We commend the role played by the Blue Helmets at this pivotal time in South Sudanese history.

We would like to point out the notable progress in the implementation by the parties to the conflict in South Sudan of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan, of 12 September 2018. It is important that they have demonstrated their willingness to engage in dialogue and to overcome their differences by finding compromise solutions. In that regard, the significance of the three-day talks between President Salva Kiir and former First Vice-President Riek

Machar in Juba, facilitated by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and Khartoum, cannot be overemphasized. We are confident that the meeting will give new impetus to the South Sudanese reconciliation process.

The decision of the South Sudanese parties to the conflict to extend the pre-transition period to 12 November was difficult but justified. We sincerely hope that the parties to the revitalized agreement will make additional efforts to meet the agreed deadlines and form a transitional Government of national unity. As for the non-signatories, we call on them to join the State-building process as soon as possible.

We consider it important that regional actors to the South Sudan settlement maintain a united approach. We welcome the efforts of IGAD and Khartoum to closely accompany the peace process as it demonstrates once again the implementation, in practice, of the principle of African solutions to African problems. Furthermore, there is still potential for effective cooperation among the United Nations, the Security Council and regional organizations. We believe that this can only benefit the national reconciliation process.

We also note that the structures and mechanisms provided for in the revitalized agreement are functional. We are pleased that the level of armed violence is decreasing, as is the number of human rights violations in the country. An increasing number of refugees and internally displaced persons are returning to their places of permanent residence. We link this to the roll-out of confidence-building measures and to contact between the opposing parties on the ground.

We share the concern expressed in the Secretary-General's latest report (S/2019/722) about the diversion of peacekeeping forces to the protection of civilians sites. We believe that as we move forward on a political settlement, it will be possible to ensure that those South Sudanese who wish to return home enjoy the necessary security conditions and that the social contract is restored. We believe that only full and comprehensive implementation of the commitments undertaken by the parties will help to increase mutual trust and prevent the mistakes of the past from being repeated.

We are convinced that progress on the settlement in South Sudan was not facilitated by greater sanctions pressure on the country or by the imposition of an arms embargo. The most important element was the contribution of regional mediators. Moreover, at some

stage the embargo made it more difficult to implement regional security initiatives in support of the settlement process. We trust that the South Sudanese will soon agree on the entire range of issues, which will give us every reason to review the sanctions regime with the aim of adapting it to the realities on the ground.

I now resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

I now give the floor to the representative of South Sudan.

Mr. Malwal (South Sudan): My delegation would like to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your accession to the presidency for the month of September and looks forward to working closely with you during your tenure. We would also like to take this opportunity to welcome Ambassador Kelly Craft. Although she is not in the Chamber, I know that our words will be reported to her. We hope to have a more positive and productive working relationship with her and her staff in the months to come.

Moreover, Mr. President, with your permission I should like, through you, to thank the Ambassador of South Africa for his kind words of welcome to me and for highlighting the correct role of the women of South Sudan in the process. I am always truly dismayed when some members of the Council do not do their homework in reading up on the role of the women of South Sudan. The team of opposition leader Riek Machar in Juba — and I think Ambassador David Shearer will attest to what I will say later to Council members in their closed session — is led by Ms. Angelina Teny. She is a tough negotiator. The new Foreign Minister, Ms. Awut Deng Achuil, has always participated in the peace negotiations and is also a very tough negotiator. Thus, when some Council members claim that it is only men who are doing the talking, that is misleading information.

I therefore thank Ambassador Matjila for doing his homework. This is not just men talking. The requirement of 35 per cent female representation is set down in the Constitution of the Republic of South Sudan and is being implemented. I should like to repeat myself again — 35 per cent is better and far more progressive than what many countries represented in this Chamber are doing for their women.

The Government of the Republic of South Sudan acknowledges and welcomes the report of the

Secretary-General on South Sudan (S/2019/722) for the period 29 May to 27 August. In this regard, we would like to acknowledge the presence of Ambassador David Shearer, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for South Sudan. We appreciate his updated briefing on recent developments in South Sudan that are not included in the Secretary-General's report.

While we welcome this quarterly report, we would like to highlight two recent developments in South Sudan: the visits of Mr. Riek Machar and Mr. Abdalla Hamdok to Juba. The meeting between President Salva Kiir Mayardit and Mr. Riek Machar, as all members know, was long time in coming, especially after a gap of four months in the extended period. Mr. Machar's visit to Juba on 8 September was therefore welcomed with high expectations, as there are only two months left in the six-month extended period. President Salva Kiir Mayardit and Mr. Riek Machar held a series of discussions for two days concerning a wide range of ideas on how best to implement the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan. The most important outcome of the two-day discussion is that both sides agreed to form a transitional Government by 12 November.

In the Sudan, we are happy that the efforts of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development and the African Union, in which President Salva Kiir Mayardit played an important and positive role, succeeded in stabilizing the revolution in that country. The regional mediations in the Sudan, as we all know, resulted in the establishment of the Sovereign Council headed by Lieutenant General Abdel-Fattah Al-Burhan, and a hybrid civilian/military Executive Cabinet led by Mr. Abdalla Hamdok as Prime Minister of the Republic of the Sudan. On 12 and 13 September, South Sudan was honoured by the first visit of the new Prime Minister of the Sudan to Juba. During that visit, President Kiir and Prime Minister Hamdok discussed matters of security, border issues and economic cooperation that would ensure peace and prosperity in and between the two sisterly countries.

We have thought to highlight these two visits to Juba over the past few days because they both impact the peace implementation, new constructive relations and economic engagement between the Sudan and South Sudan. In the margins of the high-level General Assembly next week, our Head of Delegation and our new Foreign Minister will brief many Council members in further detail concerning these visits.

We would like to conclude by thanking those countries that have responded to our call for help with technical and material to meet the challenges of peace implementation in South Sudan. We would like to thank Japan, South Africa, China and Egypt for supplying material for cantonment. We also thank the countries that have decided to help with our humanitarian needs.

Their actions are all highly appreciated by the people of South Sudan.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers. I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 11.35 a.m.