



Security Council

Seventy-fourth year

8643rd meeting

Thursday, 17 October 2019, 3 p.m.

New York

Provisional

President: Mr. Matjila (South Africa)

Members:

Belgium	Mrs. Van Vlierberge
China	Mr. Yao Shaojun
Côte d'Ivoire	Mr. Bieke
Dominican Republic	Ms. Morrison González
Equatorial Guinea	Mrs. Mele Colifa
France	Mrs. Gueguen
Germany	Mr. Schulz
Indonesia	Mr. Soemirat
Kuwait	Mr. Alotaibi
Peru	Mr. Ugarelli
Poland	Ms. Wronecka
Russian Federation	Mr. Repkin
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Allen
United States of America	Mr. Cohen

Agenda

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

Special Report of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission and the Secretary-General of the United Nations on the African Union — United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (S/2019/816)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

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

Special Report of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission and the Secretary-General of the United Nations on the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (S/2019/816)

The President: In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of the Sudan to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Jean-Pierre Lacroix, Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations, 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/2019/816, which contains the special report of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission and the Secretary-General of the United Nations on the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur.

I now give the floor to Mr. Lacroix.

Mr. Lacroix: I thank you, Mr. President, for this opportunity to brief the Security Council, in line with resolution 2479 (2019).

I have just returned from the Sudan, where I travelled from 7 to 10 October with Mr. Smaïl Chergui, African Union (AU) Commissioner for Peace and Security. During our visit, we met with Mr. Abdalla Hamdok, Prime Minister of the Sudan, General Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo, Vice-Chair of the Sovereign Council, as well as the diplomatic community and senior officials at central and local Government levels, including the Acting Wali of Northern Darfur, during a one-day field trip to El Fasher. During our visit, we also held on 7 October the 27th meeting of the Tripartite Coordination Mechanism on the United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID), together with senior representatives of the Sudanese Foreign Ministry. On

10 October in Addis Ababa, we also briefed the African Union Peace and Security Council. I will share my impressions from that joint visit in a moment.

Since my most recent briefing on the situation in Darfur on 26 August (see S/PV.8603), remarkable developments have taken place in the Sudan. On 8 September, a new Cabinet led by Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok was sworn in. Four members of the new Cabinet are women, including the Minister for Foreign Affairs. Prime Minister Hamdok rapidly articulated the priorities of his Cabinet, which are focused primarily on achieving lasting and comprehensive peace across the Sudan and the urgently needed economic recovery. He articulated those same priorities during his remarks at the high-level event on the Sudan on 27 September in New York, which he co-chaired with the Secretary-General and the Chairperson of the AU Commission.

Consistent with the priorities set out in the Constitutional Declaration signed on 17 August, including the one related to the urgent need to end conflicts across the Sudan, on 11 September the Sovereign Council and a number of armed groups, including several Darfuri groups, signed, under the auspices of President Salva Kiir Mayardit of South Sudan, the Juba Declaration for Confidence-building Procedures and the Preparation for Negotiation. The Declaration constitutes a road map and trust-building agreement for the peace process, under which the parties have agreed on, among other measures, a ceasefire, the opening of humanitarian corridors, the release of war prisoners, the end of travel bans for the movements' leaders, and the establishment of a preparatory committee for peace negotiations. As Council members are aware, negotiations began on 14 October in Juba, with the objective of reaching a peace agreement by 14 December. It should be noted that, for the first time in the modern history of the Sudan, this process is expected to be widely inclusive of almost all armed groups.

On 16 October, negotiations were suspended for 24 hours after the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North, led by Abdel Aziz Al-Hilu, suspended its participation, accusing the Government of violating the cessation of hostilities in Khor Waral, in South Kordofan. The authorities have indicated that the clashes involved herders and merchants, and condemned these incidents. The Head of the Sovereign Council, General Al-Burhan, also issued a decree announcing a nationwide ceasefire on the same day.

While the effects of these talks on the ground are yet to be seen, the overall security situation in Darfur has remained largely unchanged since my last briefing, despite several incidents detailed in the report before the Council (S/2019/816). However, the Mission has noted that the gradual shift of the attention of the authorities to the security challenges in Khartoum has contributed to leaving some gaps in the effective functioning of security institutions across the Darfur states, where incidents of criminality have increased. This has been the case particularly in camps for internally displaced persons (IDPs), and the number of incidents of farm destruction and unlawful occupation of land in various parts of Darfur was reported to be higher than during the same period last year. Meanwhile, intermittent armed clashes between Government forces and the Sudan Liberation Army-Abdul Wahid (SLA-AW) continued in the Jebel Marra area, with the movement targeting Sudan Armed Forces positions around Golo.

The humanitarian situation continued to be characterized by the trends identified in our special report of 30 May (S/2019/445). Since then, more people have been displaced as a result of intercommunal conflict and of fighting between security forces and the SLA-AW. As of the end of August, the peak of the lean season, more than 1.8 million people were facing phase 3 or phase 4 levels of food insecurity across Central, East, North and South Darfur. This represents 17 to 24 per cent of the population, depending on the state, compared to an average of 14 per cent for the whole of the Sudan. Meanwhile, the overall humanitarian situation in the Sudan is getting worse as the economic crisis compounds the impact of conflict, political instability, natural hazards and disease outbreaks. Over 8 million people are estimated to need humanitarian assistance or protection.

The Mission has continued to implement its mandate, including on the protection of civilians. Despite challenges, UNAMID's transition-related activities have also continued, with joint programmatic activities with the United Nations country team undertaken within the framework of the State liaison functions in four Darfur states. The State liaison functions have contributed to enhancing the United Nations country team's presence and operations in Darfur, for example in East Darfur, where nine agencies, funds and programmes are currently operating, compared to five prior to January 2019. The extension of the State liaison functions to the greater Jebel Marra area is planned

to begin in January 2020, although security concerns and the limited presence of the United Nations country team in that area continue to challenge the expansion process there.

Let me now say a few words on the visit we just concluded with Commissioner Chergui, which gave us a timely opportunity to review progress made in the transition from peacekeeping to peacebuilding in Darfur, in the light of the most recent developments and ahead of the envisioned closure of UNAMID. We were able to discuss with Sudanese counterparts the challenges facing Government institutions in taking over key responsibilities entrusted heretofore to UNAMID, including for the protection of civilians and security. It was also a chance to discuss the prospects for longer-term engagement by the AU and the United Nations following UNAMID's departure.

During our meeting, Prime Minister Hamdok made a strong request for a well-sequenced transition from peacekeeping to peacebuilding in Darfur, aligned with the Government's priorities and time frame, that would take the ongoing talks into consideration in defining the next steps. The Prime Minister indicated that this request was based on the concerns expressed by the armed groups during their consultations with the Government of the Sudan that led to the adoption of the Juba Declaration on 11 September. In this context, Members of the Security Council will recall that among the streamlined benchmarks developed by the joint United Nations-AU strategic review of UNAMID earlier this year and presented in the 30 May joint report of the African Union Commission and the Secretary-General (S/2019/445), a specific reference was made to the importance of resuming peace talks with a view to reaching comprehensive peace across Darfur so as to create the conditions for a successful exit strategy for UNAMID.

During our meetings, Government officials also insisted on the need for the international community to unequivocally support the new momentum for peace in Darfur and the Two Areas, initiated with the ongoing talks in Juba. In this context, our interlocutors deplored the fact that, despite Prime Minister Hamdok's initiative to meet with Abdul Wahid Al-Nur of the SLA-AW in Paris on 30 September, the latter has continued to reject the transition process and the new Government and is yet to join the peace talks process. In our view, every effort should be made to impress upon all concerned

groups the imperative of seizing the momentum for peace.

Looking ahead, the Government has requested more time to formulate its needs for a possible follow-on mechanism to UNAMID, making us unable to respond to the Council's request for options at this time. However, during the 27th meeting of the Tripartite Coordination Mechanism on UNMAMID, in Khartoum on 7 October, we established a joint task force that should finalize options for a possible follow-on presence to be presented in the December 2019 progress report to be submitted to the two Councils. It should be noted that, in our consultations with Sudanese authorities, we have emphasized the importance for any follow-on presence to be guided by the priorities set out by the Government in order to ensure full ownership of this possible future partnership for peacebuilding in the Sudan. Consistent with the political strategy outlined in the report before the Council, we stressed during our meetings in Khartoum the readiness of the AU and the United Nations to actively support the ongoing talks with a view to ensuring that the peace process remains inclusive of all armed groups in Darfur and the Two Areas.

In resolution 2479 (2019), the Security Council requests the AU Commission Chairperson and the Secretary-General to provide recommendations on the appropriate course of action regarding the drawdown of UNAMID. In the light of the recent developments on the ground, the report contains two options for the Security Council's consideration. In the first, consistent with the AU Peace and Security Council communiqué of 13 June, we are proposing to undertake a geographical realignment of UNAMID's footprint from the 13 locations currently remaining down to five team sites, mainly located in central Jebel Marra, where armed elements are still active. This option takes into account the conflict trends of the past year, as presented in the 30 May report, and prioritizes those sites that had seen no major security incidents during the reporting period. Accordingly, and for an initial period of six months, which coincides with the anticipated duration of the talks, UNAMID would retain the same ceiling of uniformed personnel. As mentioned in the special report of May, while the military component would be consolidated into fewer sites, the Mission would maintain an appropriate reserve capacity to intervene in extremis situations in locations from which UNAMID has withdrawn, such as when the physical

protection of civilians is required. Under the second option, UNAMID would proceed with its drawdown, as outlined in our previous report, with a view to completing the drawdown by end of June 2020.

For both options, we agreed with the Government during the recent tripartite meeting that closed team sites would be handed over to the transitional authorities, in line with United Nations rules and regulations for civilian-end purposes and in accordance with the sequenced handover plan already developed by UNAMID and the Government. The United Nations would also maintain a presence in vacated areas through the State liaison functions that would be established to bring together UNAMID, the United Nations country team and Sudanese Government institutions in support of the rule of law, human rights and durable solutions for IDPs and local communities.

I should note, however, that based on our interactions with many stakeholders on the ground and our consultations last week with the African Union Peace and Security Council, our recommendation would be to adopt an approach that would align the next phase of the transition from peacekeeping to peacebuilding in Darfur with the pace of the peace talks in Juba, and therefore the first option would be more consistent with this approach. That is also in line with the AU Peace and Security Council communiqué of 10 October, which stresses the need for the withdrawal of the Mission to take into account the progress made in the peace process.

In the months ahead, our strategy to support the Government's efforts to achieve a comprehensive peace would also require adjusting UNAMID's priorities to focus on support for the peace process, the tasks related to the implementation of the peace agreement, the Peace Commission and the strengthening of the State liaison functions and their expansion in Jebel Marra.

I would like to conclude by echoing a key message that we have repeatedly heard during our visit. Effective peace consolidation in Darfur and the wider Sudan cannot be achieved without tangible progress on the economic recovery front. However, from all accounts, resource mobilization remains a major challenge that bears the potential to unravel the positive gains made thus far by the Sudanese leadership and the people on the path to political and economic stability. In that regard, the Secretary-General has made a strong call for the lifting of all economic and financial sanctions

on the Sudan and for the removal of the Sudan from the list of countries sponsoring terrorism. The United Nations system is actively engaged with partners of the Sudan in forging a path towards alleviating some of the most pressing economic challenges facing the country.

The Sudan is at a historic crossroads. We have a unique opportunity to support the authorities in ending the conflicts that have plagued the country for years. We are committed to doing everything that we can to accompany the Government, according to its vision and its pace, to build an inclusive and lasting peace in Darfur and the wider Sudan. I hope that we can count on the Council's support in that critical endeavour.

The President: I thank Mr. Lacroix for his briefing.

I think that the Council members saw empty glasses in front of them when they came in, unlike this morning. There will be water in the glasses very soon once things normalize.

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

Mr. Allen (United Kingdom): I assume you, Mr. President, are sharing your water with all the members of the Security Council who need it.

I thank Under-Secretary-General Lacroix for his briefing. I also welcome the Ambassador of the Sudan here. The Under-Secretary-General talked about some of the remarkable changes that have happened since the Council last met on the Sudan (S/PV.8603). I would add one to those, which was the sight of and opportunity to hear Prime Minister Hamdok during the General Assembly's high-level week. I think that he made a huge impression on all of those of us who met him and listened to what he had to say. If a better illustration of the change that has taken place in the Sudan over the past few months were ever wanted, it was that for me. I again congratulate and salute the people of the Sudan for the courage that they have shown in choosing the path that they are now on. I am sure that it will not always be a straightforward path, but we and others are there supporting them.

As Under-Secretary-General Lacroix set out, we continue to see positive developments in the Sudan as a civilian Government takes forward the implementation of the Constitutional Declaration. Like him, I would like to welcome the appointment of women to key positions within the new Government and also the milestone

agreement to open an Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in the Sudan.

But as we were enjoined, we must all support unequivocally the new momentum behind the peace talks, in Mr. Lacroix's words. From the United Kingdom's perspective, the start of those peace talks between the Government and the armed movements — the work done in Juba — is of particular importance to note. We therefore encourage all sides, in particular the armed movements, to engage constructively, immediately and without preconditions so that a comprehensive, fair and inclusive peace agreement can finally be achieved. I would also like to say how much we welcome the decision to remove bureaucratic impediments imposed on humanitarian actors and hope that this decision will be implemented fully to enable much-needed, unfettered humanitarian access throughout Darfur and wherever it is needed in the Sudan.

Turning to the situation on the ground, notwithstanding the positive elements that we have learned about today, we cannot ignore the fact that the security, humanitarian and human rights situations in Darfur remain volatile. We remain concerned about the gaps that Mr. Lacroix mentioned, namely, the increase in intercommunal conflict and criminality, continued civilian displacement and human rights violations and abuses, all of which are documented in the special report of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission and the Secretary-General of the United Nations (S/2019/816). The Council, the United Nations, the African Union and, most critically of all, the Government of the Sudan will need to seriously consider how to address those continued challenges in order to prevent them from undermining the transition to peacebuilding.

With respect to the mandate of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID), let me first say that the United Kingdom remains absolutely committed to ensuring a transition from peacekeeping to peacebuilding, and that it is successful and responsible. As I have already said, we are extremely optimistic about that and the opportunities presented by the new civilian Government and the prospects for a comprehensive peace agreement in not only Darfur but also other areas.

It is a complex situation, and the root causes remain unresolved. I think that we will take into consultations a more detailed conversation on UNAMID's mandate,

but let me just say here that the United Kingdom will be guided by the emphasis that the Government of the Sudan has placed on the importance of not creating a security vacuum during the ongoing peace efforts. I note the communiqué of the African Union in that context. We certainly believe that withdrawing UNAMID at this critical time would create such a vacuum and remove a key part of international support to the peace process.

On the follow-on side that the Under-Secretary-General also touched on, I think that it is really important, as he said, that the priorities for the follow-on are aligned with those of the Government, and we think that it is important to ensure ongoing support to Darfur. We will want to give the Government time to consider the options that it wants for future international support and cooperation.

Let me finish by simply welcoming the commitment — as I believe everyone already has and the United Kingdom certainly has — made by the United Nations and the African Union to engaging actively with the Government in the coming months on options for a follow-on presence. We look forward to receiving them, I believe it was said in December, and to making progress on the transition from peacekeeping to peacebuilding. All of us support the people and Government of the Sudan at this time.

Mr. Schulz (Germany): Let me first of all thank Under-Secretary-General Jean-Pierre Lacroix and extend a special welcome to the Ambassador of the Sudan. Needless to say, we will listen very carefully to how the Government of the Sudan wants to take forward the issue under discussion today.

Like many among us, the German delegation was extremely impressed with the way the Sudanese delegation, led by Prime Minister Hamdok, articulated its vision for a new Sudan during the high-level week. Our German Foreign Minister, Mr. Heiko Maas, expressed that during the high-level meeting on the Sudan when he offered Germany's full and concrete support for the transitional Government and the people of the Sudan. I think that the Security Council must ask itself the exact question of how we can best support the Sudanese vision for peace. How can we help implement the priority that the transitional Government attaches to ending the conflicts in the country, as clearly stated in the constitutional agreement and so convincingly articulated by Prime Minister Hamdok here in New York?

One important tool of the Council is the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) and it is clear to us as co-penholder that we as the Council members should live up to our responsibility by working towards two goals with regard to UNAMID.

First, in the short term, we must provide the best stabilization efforts in Darfur and ensure immediate expert support to the ongoing peace talks. We need to secure UNAMID's investment in peace and stability in Darfur — an investment that is needed more urgently than ever at this decisive time for the future of the Sudan. As we just heard from Under-Secretary-General Jean-Pierre Lacroix, that is an aspect that was also recently emphasized by Prime Minister Hamdok during the recent United Nations-African Union visit to the Sudan.

Secondly, in the medium term we should provide a tailored, joint United Nations-African Union support package that helps the Government achieve lasting peace in Darfur and beyond. That is why we think that we should not jeopardize UNAMID's ability to support the peace process by directing the mission to focus on completing its drawdown. Continuing UNAMID for a further period of time, as suggested as one option in the report of the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Chairperson of the African Union Commission (S/2019/816), would indeed, in our view, be the prudent way forward. That would respond to the continued need for stabilization in Darfur and preserve the international engagement at such a crucial time, while peace talks are being held, and would enable uninterrupted, continuous support to the ongoing mediation by the Joint Special Representative and his team.

If we take our commitments to improve peacekeeping seriously, we should not wind up a peacekeeping mission at precisely the moment when peace talks have just been revitalized, even more so because they have the potential of ending a decades-old conflict. Taking a disruptive decision against UNAMID now would turn our joint commitment to the primacy of politics on its head.

At the same time, we think that the Council should encourage the United Nations and the African Union to continue their conversation with the Sudanese Government about a follow-on mission to UNAMID. Such a mission should, in our view, reflect the priority

that the Government attaches to peacebuilding, reconciliation and tackling the root causes of conflict.

Mrs. Gueguen (France) (*spoke in French*): I, too, would like to thank most warmly the Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations, Mr. Jean-Pierre Lacroix, for his briefing on the significant developments in the Sudan over the past weeks. I also welcome the Ambassador of the Sudan and his delegation, which represents the new face of the Sudan, which we support.

That leads me to the first point I wanted to make here: that it is clear that we must support the Sudanese transition. We hope that the transition will be a success and make it possible to meet the legitimate aspirations of the people of the Sudan. The transition will succeed if it can deliver on the two priorities set by Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok — bringing about peace and relaunching the economy. We must do our utmost to assist the Government of the Sudan in succeeding in these two areas.

The President of France assured Mr. Hamdok, who visited France at the end of last month, that we stand determined to support the Sudan at this critical juncture of its history. France will therefore provide economic support of €60 million for the transition period. We also wish to accelerate the tackling of Sudan's external debt and welcome the fact that the donors' conference will be held in France. Finally, it is vital that the Sudan be removed from the list of State sponsors of terrorism.

We call upon all rebel groups to participate in the discussions that began in Juba some three days ago, on 14 October. It was in that spirit that we facilitated a meeting between the Sudanese Prime Minister and Abdul Wahid Al-Nur in Paris on 29 September.

Finally, we welcome the signing by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the authorities of the Sudan of an agreement paving the way for the opening of several offices in the Sudan, including in Darfur. This is a crucial step for the strengthening of the rule of law in the Sudan, and we support the efforts of the Sudanese authorities in the promotion of human rights, access to justice and the fight against impunity. We call on them in that respect to start a new chapter in the relationship with the International Criminal Court and to cooperate with its Prosecutor, Ms. Fatou Bensouda.

Against that backdrop, the second point I wish to make today is that in order to better support the peace

process in the Sudan, and, as my colleagues from the United Kingdom and Germany have just noted, we should not be hasty in withdrawing the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID).

France takes note of the call made by the Sudanese authorities to avoid creating a security vacuum in Darfur during the peace negotiations. They also called upon international partners to support the peace process and the implementation of the agreement. In that context, we believe that the recommendation of the Secretary-General and the Chairperson of the African Union Commission to maintain the same ceiling of UNAMID personnel for a period of six months is entirely justified. The drawdown of UNAMID right in the middle of negotiations would risk derailing the peace process.

We also support the recommendation to reframe the UNAMID mandate in support of the peace process and State liaison functions. However, the protection of civilians and support for the delivery of humanitarian aid must also remain mission priorities for UNAMID right up to the end of its mandate.

My third and final point concerns our support for the creation of an ambitious follow-on mechanism in the wake of UNAMID's departure. We must continue to support and consolidate peace in Darfur after the departure of the Blue Helmets, as we have done in other countries. We understand that the Sudanese authorities need more time to determine their expectations concerning such a follow-on mechanism and hope that the tripartite structure will be able to make more specific recommendations to the Security Council in December, as has been announced.

We also welcome the recommendations of the Secretary-General and the Chairperson of the African Union Commission concerning the United Nations-African Union political strategy in the Sudan. We, too, believe that the United Nations and the African Union should support the negotiation process and the implementation of the agreement, particularly the security arrangements and the quest for safe, dignified and sustainable solutions for displaced persons and refugees.

Finally, the support of the United Nations and the African Union for the drafting of a new constitution and in the preparations for elections will be very important.

Mr. Cohen (United States of America): I thank Under-Secretary-General Lacroix for his briefing.

We commend the people of the Sudan for their continued efforts to seek political solutions to their governance challenges and for putting in place a civilian-led transitional Government. This is not easy work, but it is the right work. We also recognize the important role that the United Nations, the African Union, Ethiopia and other international partners have played in supporting a stable transition in the Sudan.

The recent transitional agreement provides a foundation for civilian and democratic rule in a clear path to timely elections. These commitments are all to the good, and we hope that they will be fully honoured. Additionally, we welcome Prime Minister Hamdok's focus on including women in all structures of power in the new Government. We encourage the Prime Minister to ensure the full, effective and meaningful participation of women during all stages of the Sudan's political transition. We are also encouraged by the establishment of an independent national committee to conduct a thorough investigation into the violent 3 June crackdown on peaceful protesters in Khartoum.

However, despite the hope that the international community has for the transitional Government, we are deeply concerned by accounts in the Secretary-General's report (S/2019/816) of increased criminality, internal displacement and kidnappings, including of non-governmental organization workers in Darfur. These incidents disrupt progress toward peace and diminish hope among the Sudanese people that they might be able to go about their daily lives without fear.

We were especially disheartened to read in the report of continued violations against children. The report mentions 84 children who were affected by "grave violations" in just four months, of whom 35 were killed and/or maimed. This is deplorable. As we all know, the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) plays a critical role in verifying these kinds of human rights abuses in Darfur. So if these atrocities occur with UNAMID present, what will happen when it is gone?

That is why, given UNAMID's impending mandate expiration, at the end of October, it is of such great importance that the transitional Government quickly inform the Secretary-General of its priorities for the mandate's extension. It is also of great importance that Government forces stop using UNAMID team sites.

We strongly urge the Rapid Support Forces to turn over all previous UNAMID team sites to community-based institutions.

Furthermore, after reading the report, my Government even more strongly urges the incorporation of gender-sensitive conflict-analysis and conflict-mitigation approaches in the peace process, the UNAMID mission and any potential follow-on mechanism.

Finally, we call on all parties to ensure unhindered humanitarian access to vulnerable populations as well as respect for international humanitarian law. We encourage the transitional Government to work with United Nations partners, humanitarian actors and affected communities to devise durable solutions for displaced Sudanese.

Although we are concerned that it has not been strictly adhered to, there is a viable path to lasting peace in the Sudan. So long as all parties remain committed to doing the right thing, we are hopeful that they can arrive at a safer, better destination.

Ms. Wronecka (Poland): I would like to thank Under-Secretary-General Lacroix for his very informative briefing, and I welcome the presence of the Ambassador of the Sudan here today.

At the outset, I would like to commend the Sudanese transitional authorities' ongoing efforts and commitment to addressing the multiple challenges facing the country. We continue to believe that the political changes in the Sudan provide a unique and historic opportunity to implement a real and inclusive transition under a civilian leadership and to address the Sudanese people's aspirations to peace and prosperity. We see that the new political dynamic in the Sudan is already bringing momentum back to the peace process in Darfur. In that context, we welcomed the signing of the Juba Declaration for Confidence-building Procedures and the Preparation for Negotiation, which creates the necessary framework for addressing the remaining drivers of conflict in Darfur, and we commend the leadership role that the transitional authorities have taken in reaching out to all the armed groups. We call on all the Darfuri armed opposition groups and movements to engage in the negotiations with the new Sudanese authorities and seize the opportunity to take part in bringing positive change and comprehensive peace to Darfur.

Despite those positive developments, many challenges still remain in Darfur. The humanitarian and human rights situations continue to be of concern with regard to the obstruction of the delivery of humanitarian assistance to internally displaced persons and the persistence of violence against civilians, including sexual violence. The security situation remains stable yet vulnerable, with incidents between the security forces, armed movements and civilians, intercommunal tensions and rising levels of criminality. Due to the lack of effective State institutions and good governance, the perpetrators of crimes and violations enjoy impunity. The situation in Darfur is closely linked to the ongoing political process in the Sudan. For that reason, as we approach the renewal of the mandate of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID), it is imperative that in our reflections on the mission's future we take into account developments in the nationwide political process as well as the peace process in Darfur.

Poland looks forward to discussions on the new draft resolution. We are willing to consider the options on UNAMID's way forward suggested in the latest special report of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission and the Secretary-General of the United Nations (S/2019/816), while making sure that the new mandate will allow the mission to support the peace process and the implementation of the peace agreement that is expected to be signed by the end of the year.

Mr. Yao Shaojun (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China thanks Under-Secretary-General Lacroix for his briefing. We also welcome the presence here today of the Permanent Representative of the Sudan.

At present, the situation in Darfur is generally stable, and the improvement on the humanitarian front continues. Thanks to the good offices of President Kiir of South Sudan, the transitional Government of the Sudan and the Sudan Revolutionary Front, along with other groups, launched formal negotiations on 14 October with a view to reaching a final peace agreement by 14 December. China welcomes those efforts and commends South Sudan for its active role and the Sudan for its efforts to relaunch the peace process. The current progress is the hard-won result of the efforts of all parties. The African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) has been performing its duties actively and effectively. The African Union and other regional and international partners have fully cooperated, thereby contributing to

the continued improvement of the situation in Darfur. The international community must further increase its efforts in Darfur, consolidate the results achieved so far and facilitate the reconstruction process. The peace process must be relaunched without delay. The relevant parties in Darfur must seize this window of opportunity in the political process in the Sudan, relaunch the peace process as soon as possible and use dialogue, consultations and other political means to resolve disputes and differences, while refraining from military action, with a view to achieving lasting peace in Darfur.

The reconstruction process must be speeded up. The international community must provide effective humanitarian and economic assistance, help to resolve issues such as the return and resettlement of displaced people and assist the Sudanese Government in achieving self-reliance in its economic development as soon as possible. The Sudanese Government must be supported in bearing the primary responsibility for security in Darfur. The international community can actively assist it by bolstering its capacity in security and governance and by supporting UNAMID's scheduled withdrawal, in accordance with the relevant Council resolutions, and the appropriate and smooth transfer of responsibility for Darfur's security to the Sudanese security forces.

China has consistently supported the peace process in Darfur. As a major contributor of troops to UNAMID, we have made an enormous contribution to peace and stability in Darfur over the years. China stands ready to work with the international community and to continue its constructive role in achieving peace, stability and development in Darfur.

Mr. Repkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We thank Under-Secretary-General Jean-Pierre Lacroix for the information he has provided on the state of affairs in Darfur and the activities of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) in the region. We welcome the presence of the Permanent Representative of the Sudan at today's briefing.

We agree with the conclusions of the special report of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission and the Secretary-General (S/2019/816) that the direction of events in Darfur has not significantly changed and, most importantly, that no negative trends have emerged on the security front. The isolated

clashes in Jebel Marra between Government forces and the Sudan Liberation Movement/Abdul Wahid, which continues to be the main spoiler of the peace process, does not change that assessment.

We also see some normalization on the humanitarian front, while the overall evolution of the situation in the areas that the Blue Helmets have already left gives no grounds for concern. We therefore believe it is essential to stay the course for the phased drawdown and withdrawal of UNAMID in accordance with the time frame established in resolution 2429 (2018). We hope that the dialogue with the Sudanese authorities will help to create the appropriate conditions and determine the parameters for the subsequent United Nations presence in Darfur.

The African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation, which was deployed 12 years ago, made it possible to tackle an acute phase of the crisis, and an analysis of its activities will be extremely important for future peacekeeping operations. However, the challenges now facing Darfur are of a peacebuilding rather than a peacekeeping nature. The time has come to focus on Darfur's restoration and economic development, and that is what should be the priority now. We want to point out that this was the unifying thread running through the statements made during the 27 September high-level event on Sudan held on the margins of the general debate of the General Assembly at its seventy fourth session. In addition to this, many speakers called for lifting all the sanctions on Khartoum. That would go a long way to simplifying the new authorities' job of reviving the country's economy. That appeal, which we support, is also in the special report.

In conclusion, we would like to underscore that we assume that the opinion of the Government in Khartoum, as the host party, should be decisive in every case, in accordance with the basic principles of peacekeeping. Moreover, given the complicated domestic political situation in the country, we call for understanding regarding possible delays in the Sudan's response to issues related to agreeing on the parameters of the mission that will succeed UNAMID.

Mrs. Van Vlierberge (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I would like to thank Under-Secretary-General Jean Pierre Lacroix for his thorough briefing. I also wish to join my colleagues in welcoming the presence of the Permanent Representative of the Sudan here among us today.

Recent months have been marked by positive and historic developments in the Sudan. The Sudanese people, particularly women and young people, have achieved unprecedented changes by demanding a peaceful, democratic and prosperous future. Belgium wishes the new Sudanese authorities every success in the crucial tasks that they will have to undertake, as set out in the Constitutional Declaration of 17 August. We welcome the priorities outlined/identified by Prime Minister Abdalla Adam Hamdok during his statement here in New York during the high-level week of the General Assembly (see A/74/PV.10). We particularly welcome the commitments to respect for the human rights and fundamental freedoms of the Sudanese people. In that context, we welcome the agreement signed by the authorities on establishing an office of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in the Sudan. We encourage the authorities to fully implement that agreement as soon as possible.

Belgium applauds the crucial mediation role played by the African Union and the region, particularly during the recent meetings in Juba, and the support provided by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, the United Nations and the entire international community. We encourage all those actors to continue to support the Sudan.

We have an unprecedented opportunity to build a lasting peace in Darfur. As mentioned by the Under-Secretary-General, Darfur remains a fragile region, where the root causes of the conflict, in particular access to land and the future of the displaced, have not yet been resolved. We fully support the first priority of the Sudanese authorities to bring an end to the existing conflicts and to restore peace within the first six months of the transition. In that context, the Juba Declaration of 11 September represents a significant milestone. We call on all parties, in particular the armed movements, to engage in constructive negotiations. This moment represents a unique opportunity to put an end to the many conflicts that have been tearing the country apart for too long.

With regard to Darfur, the conflict has had many humanitarian consequences. Civilians continue to suffer in clashes in Jebel Marra. The protection of civilians, including free and unhindered humanitarian access, must be ensured. I would also like to stress the importance of the fight against impunity in responding to violations against children and women.

Finally, the mandate of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) will be reviewed by the Council again before the end of the month. For Belgium, the UNAMID exit process cannot be separated from developments in the rest of the country. In that regard, we noted with interest the conclusions and recommendations contained in the joint United Nations-African Union report (S/2019/816) on the common political strategy for Darfur. A six-month renewal of UNAMID's mandate is required, without reducing its military and civilian personnel. With regard to the specific conditions for the transition and for a follow-up mechanism, Belgium calls for patience. Our country welcomes the establishment of the African Union-United Nations-Sudan joint task force, which will consider it and whose recommendations may enable the Council to take a more informed decision in the coming months.

The Sudan is experiencing a historic moment as a result of the courage and aspiration for freedom, peace and justice of its people. Significant challenges to sustainable peace remain. The Council must continue to support the country as it continues its transition.

Mrs. Mele Colifa (Equatorial Guinea) (*spoke in Spanish*): As always, we would like to thank Under-Secretary-General Lacroix for his presentation of the special report (S/2019/816) of the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Chairperson of the African Union Commission on the current situation in Darfur and the future of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID). I am delivering this statement on behalf of the three African countries on the Security Council: Côte d'Ivoire, South Africa and Equatorial Guinea.

We appreciate the ongoing assurances and specific measures by the Sudanese transitional authorities, led by Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok, with regard to implementing the Constitutional Declaration of 17 August and the agreement governing the 39-month transition period, which will help to bring about a just and comprehensive peace in the Sudan. To that end, we are convinced that the commitments to the confidence-building measures contained in the Juba Declaration represent the appropriate road map for achieving that goal.

The profound changes that we have seen in the country over the past year were achieved by paying a high price in terms of human lives. The sacrifices

made by many have brought about a historic window of opportunity to put the Sudanese on the path towards a lasting peace that will enable the country to develop and prosper by achieving the vision of a new Sudan that is in line with the pan-African aspirations enshrined in the Silencing the Guns by 2020 initiative.

The ongoing and constructive engagement of the international community is essential during and after this transition period. We reiterate the call on the relevant parties to immediately lift all economic and financial sanctions against the Sudan, including its removal from the list of countries sponsoring terrorism, in order to promote its economic activities and encourage foreign investment.

Like the Sudan itself, UNAMID has also reached a critical moment in its history. Over the years, there have been many initiatives by the international community to protect and ease the suffering of the local population since the widespread atrocities in Darfur began in 2004. To date, none of those plans has succeeded in bringing about peace. Yet now that UNAMID is preparing to leave and hand over the responsibility for ensuring the protection of civilians to the Sudanese authorities, we are closer than ever to restoring an acceptable standard of living in the region.

In considering this transition from a peacekeeping to a peacebuilding approach, decisions with far-reaching implications must be taken. Darfur does not exist in a vacuum. For that reason, when it comes to taking decisions, we must always bear in mind all stakeholders and issues that determine the context in which UNAMID operates. The main concern of the three African countries in that regard is shared by all, namely, that the course of action adopted should not jeopardize or reverse the progress that has already been made in Darfur.

The three African countries welcome the proposed joint African Union-United Nations follow-on mechanism to UNAMID. We look forward to a responsible withdrawal of the hybrid presence in Darfur and the ultimate end of the mission, including the handover of facilities, in line with resolution 2429 (2018). In that regard, we commend the realignment of the Sudanese authorities in relation to the future of UNAMID and the use of its facilities. The capacity of the Sudanese State and of the transitional Government to extend its authority over the entire territory is very

limited. Appropriate conditions must therefore be created before the closure of the mission.

We hereby wish to request that any measures mandated by the Council in relation to the drawdown, withdrawal and exit of UNAMID take into account the regional situation, the aspirations of the Sudanese people and the views of the authorities, particularly regarding the time of the closure.

As the report under consideration makes clear, the security situation in the Darfur region is fragile and volatile. There is a high risk of intercommunal violence, violent disputes and increased crime and illicit activity in a context where the humanitarian situation is already desperate owing to forced displacement and ongoing human rights violations, including conflict-related sexual violence.

To put it clearly and unequivocally, there can be no place for spoilers in the Sudanese peace process. Anyone who refuses to commit to an inclusive dialogue designed to reach a permanent and peaceful solution gives up all claims to legitimacy, and we should therefore consider punitive measures for those who obstruct the peace process. Côte d'Ivoire, South Africa and my country, Equatorial Guinea, affirm their condemnation of the Sudan Liberation Army-Abdul Wahid militia and urge Council members and the international community to do the same.

In conclusion, we reiterate our appreciation for the great work that UNAMID has done over the years to stabilize the situation in the Sudan. We also thank all United Nations and African Union staff and the Member States and international stakeholders that have helped to make this possible. We believe that the work done by the hybrid mission and the transition itself in the Sudan exemplify the fact that when the relevant actors' efforts are concerted and genuine, significant results can be achieved on the ground. We stand ready to engage constructively with all the parties on the future of UNAMID and the peace process in the Sudan.

Mr. Alotaibi (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, we would like to thank Mr. Lacroix for his briefing. The current delicate phase in the Sudan's history requires a concerted effort to respond to the aspirations of our brothers and sisters in that country to a bright future. We hope that our deliberations today will serve their interests.

I will focus today on three main points — the upcoming renewal of the mandate of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID), the mission's exit and national ownership. Regarding the mandate renewal, we emphasize once again our willingness to work with our colleagues inside and outside the Security Council to ensure that UNAMID's upcoming mandate is adapted to the developments on the ground. First, it must be clear and concise in stressing that the mission will definitely end. Secondly, it should align with the wishes and capacities of the Sudan as the host country. Thirdly, it should be precise regarding the mandate itself and the various areas of the mission's work, such as capacity-building, enhancing the rule of law, human rights and strengthening national ownership. Fourthly, it must promote a smooth transition process by consolidating cooperation and coordination with the United Nations country team in Darfur. Fifthly, it should pave the way for the post-exit phase.

At a previous Council meeting, we invited the armed groups to participate in a dialogue. We are pleased to note today that most of them did take part in the Juba dialogue in good faith and without preconditions, with a view to reaching a political solution and enhancing peace in Darfur and the whole of the Sudan. With regard to UNAMID's exit, the Juba dialogue creates a new opportunity for a comprehensive peace in the Sudan, especially in the Darfur, South Kordofan and Blue Nile regions. For that reason, the withdrawal should take account of opportunities for dialogue and agreements reached among the Sudanese parties. We will continue to follow the developments in Darfur after the mission's exit, especially with regard to issues related to the voluntary, safe and dignified return of displaced persons, land and the effects of climate change on sustainable development. We must appreciate all the sacrifices that have been made during the years that the mission has been deployed, and above all the lives that have been sacrificed in order to achieve peace and protect civilians. We hope that the future of Darfur and its people can be fully assured.

With regard to national ownership, we thank the brother country of the Sudan for its cooperation and look forward to seeing that continue for the remainder of the mission's existence, whatever its exit path may be. The Sudan's views must be considered at every stage in order to consolidate national ownership, support the country's capacities, meet the aspirations of its people

and ensure sovereignty. A comprehensive peace is possible if we work and agree together before we ask the Sudanese to do so. It will be easy to achieve peace if all Sudanese of different visions remain determined to build their nation, as we have witnessed in their historic consensus on the political agreement and the Constitutional Declaration.

In conclusion, we reiterate our firm position in support of the unity, sovereignty, stability and territorial integrity of the Sudan. The new Sudan needs all of our support, and the first thing we can do is to lift the sanctions on it and remove its name from the list of State sponsors of terrorism, as well as by ending the international sanctions whose review we have called for since last year. Then we will be talking about supporting the Sudan in both word and deed.

Ms. Morrison González (Dominican Republic) (*spoke in Spanish*): We thank Mr. Lacroix for the information he provided and acknowledge the presence of the Permanent Representative of the Sudan in the Chamber with us today.

We would first like to acknowledge the efforts of the transitional Government of the Sudan and the Forces for Freedom and Change for the commitment they have obtained to addressing the challenges facing the country. In that regard, we welcome the peace talks between the Sudanese Government and various armed movements in Juba, as well as the agreement among five factions of the armed movements to form a Sudanese alliance for change and the signing of the Juba Declaration for Confidence-building Procedures and the Preparation for Negotiation. Those initiatives for continued dialogue among the parties on core issues are crucial to building trust and developing strategies to address the root causes of the conflict. We urge the parties to negotiate in good faith, maintain momentum and make the necessary compromises in order to restore the confidence of the Sudanese people in their authorities.

However, those political achievements should not detract from the reality of the crisis in the Sudan. Darfur continues to be plagued by unresolved intercommunal conflict and a serious humanitarian situation, with nearly 2 million people facing food insecurity and approximately 55 per cent of its arable land affected by drought. We are also concerned about the ongoing violations of human rights, mainly against children and women. Above all, we are alarmed by the acts of

conflict-related sexual violence. It is imperative that the judicial system be strengthened and perpetrators held accountable. In that regard, we welcome the opening of human rights offices in six cities in the Sudan and the appointment of Ms. Nemat Abdallah Khair as the first woman Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. These developments are vital elements in the promotion of the rule of law, the administration of justice and the empowerment of women. Women's voices must be heard, and women deserve to play an active role in the peace process. In a sign of what the future could look like, Sudan's new Cabinet also includes the country's first female Foreign Minister, Ms. Asma Mohamed Abdalla. Similarly, the achievement of 40 per cent representation of women in the legislature and the establishment of national advisory committees on women and youth at all levels give us hope.

The situation in Darfur is linked to the political process currently under way in the country. For that reason, it is vital that the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur exit process be considered in the context of those developments and that any post-exit presence be equipped with the capacity to monitor the ceasefire as well as disarmament and demobilization.

Finally, we would like to express our gratitude to the UNAMID personnel, through the Special Representative, and to all international stakeholders and humanitarian personnel for their continued efforts for the benefit of the Sudanese people.

Mr. Soemirat (Indonesia): Let me begin by thanking Under-Secretary-General Lacroix for his briefing. We also thank the Secretary-General and the Chairperson of the African Union Commission for their special report on the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) (S/2019/816), as requested by resolution 2479 (2019).

We have witnessed some encouraging developments since the Council last deliberated on the Sudan (see S/PV.8603), including the signing of the Juba Declaration between the transitional authorities and the coalition of armed groups, the agreement to open a United Nations human rights office in the Sudan and the commencement of peace talks in Juba a few days ago. In order for the peace talks to move forward, all parties must restrain themselves and refrain from actions that could undermine trust among them. Inclusive dialogue is the key to resolving any differences, and for that, the cessation of hostilities is a must.

I wish to focus on three important issues. First, we have consistently underlined the importance of the responsible drawdown of UNAMID, guided by a careful assessment of the situation on the ground, including on whether the current challenges still require UNAMID's continued presence. The drawdown of UNAMID must be done in a manner that preserves its gains and does not create a security vacuum. My delegation values the role of State liaison functions in enabling UNAMID, the United Nations country team and the Sudanese authorities to together address critical conflict drivers in Darfur through joint programmatic activities. Focusing the future mandate of UNAMID on supporting and strengthening the State liaison functions is something that the Council should positively consider. We take note of the options presented in the special report regarding the appropriate pace of UNAMID's drawdown and stand ready to discuss them with other Council members in a constructive manner.

That brings me to the second issue — the follow-up mechanism. My delegation cannot overemphasize the imperative of ample, timely and meaningful consultations with the Sudanese authorities in developing a follow-up mechanism for UNAMID. National ownership and support is a precondition for the implementation of a successful follow-up mechanism. The United Nations and the African Union must leverage their full strength, including the various tools at their disposal, and harmonize the work of existing initiatives.

The third issue we would like to highlight relates to international support. We must not lose sight of the fact that efforts to promote peace in the Sudan are taking place against a backdrop of persistent economic difficulties and a dire humanitarian situation. As a brotherly nation of the Sudan, Indonesia is heartened to see the outpouring of international support for the country, including during the General Assembly's high-level event on the Sudan last month. For current political gains to be sustainable, the Sudan needs mobilized financial assistance, investment and trade. We also call for the removal of the Sudan from the list of State sponsors of terrorism and the lifting of unilateral economic sanctions against the country, as we emphasized during the high-level event last month. The international community should do more to alleviate the humanitarian suffering of the Sudanese people, including internally displaced persons and those affected by food insecurity and the recent floods.

A peace process is never an easy venture. It is a long and arduous journey that requires the utmost care, political will, compromise and constant support. Indonesia stands ready to accompany the Sudan on this historic journey.

Mr. Ugarelli (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): We welcome the timely convening of this meeting and the valuable briefing delivered by Mr. Jean-Pierre Lacroix, Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations.

Peru welcomes the recent political developments that have been taking place in the Sudan. We hope that the recent political agreements reached — such as the agreement of 17 August on the establishment of a new civilian-led transitional Government, the Constitutional Declaration and the Juba Declaration for Confidence-building Procedures and the Preparation for Negotiation of 11 September — mark the beginning of a new era of peace in the history of the Sudan. We believe that for peace to be possible, the commitment of all Sudanese people will be necessary. In this regard, we value the efforts of the Sovereign Council and the Government aimed at bringing all armed groups that are not yet participating in the negotiations to the negotiating table. We wish to emphasize that until an inclusive agreement is reached, it will be very difficult to transition towards peace and the achievements made to date will not last long.

We are concerned about the security situation in Darfur. We note an increase in the levels of crime, particularly in internally displaced persons camps, the destruction of farmland and the illegal occupation of land, as a result of security gaps and the lack of effective civil authorities in Darfur. We regret that the violence in the Jebel Marra area continues to represent a challenge for the Government. The Sudan Liberation Army-Abdul Wahid faction (SLA-AW) continues to count civilians among its victims, including personnel from non-governmental organizations and humanitarian organizations. In the same vein, the special report (S/2019/816) indicates that, in general, the humanitarian and human rights situation has not changed in the period since the previous report. Intercommunal violence and clashes between the Government and the SLA/AW have caused numerous displacements and led to subsequent humanitarian repercussions.

We condemn the recurring violations and abuses of human rights. Incidents of sexual violence continue unabated against women and children, who are not safe

from these horrific actions, even within the camps for internally displaced persons. In this context, we wish to stress the importance of the agreement to open a United Nations human rights office in the Sudan, and we hope that its operationalization will succeed in curbing the human rights violations taking place in Darfur.

We commend the joint work being carried out by the United Nations and the African Union with the Sudanese authorities. The peace process in the Sudan will require the support of both organizations, as well as of the international community as a whole, in order to ensure that the people of the Sudan can address the root causes of the conflict and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. We support the prioritization of gender equality, the empowerment of women and youth as well as respect for human rights in the plans to carry out a peace process in the Sudan. We believe that the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) could contribute to this process through a renewed mandate that is tailored to current circumstances.

We wish to highlight the responsibility of the Security Council in ensuring a successful drawdown of UNAMID that does not create a vacuum leading to tensions or new risk factors and that does not jeopardize the achievements made in the areas of protection, the rule of law, human rights and the realization of lasting solutions for internally displaced persons and communities throughout Darfur.

Finally, we encourage the African Union, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, the United Nations and international partners to provide the necessary support to the transitional Government of the Sudan in this vital phase for the country's future, as well as to continue to pool efforts so that the Sudan may achieve peace and reconciliation.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of the Sudan.

Mr. Siddig (Sudan) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to congratulate you, Mr. President, on assuming the presidency of the Security Council for this month. I thank the Secretary-General and the Chairperson of the African Union Commission for their special report (S/2019/816), which is before the Council today. I also thank Mr. Jean-Pierre Lacroix for his briefing and members of the Council for their statements and kind words addressed to my country and Government. Their words will encourage us to work towards the

achievement of our objectives and to fulfil the vision that motivated our glorious revolution.

We have examined the report before the Council today. We agree with much of its analysis on the history and nature of the conflict in Darfur in all its aspects, including the political, security, economic and social aspects. It can be said that the period under review in the report has seen a great transformation in my country, with the adoption of the Constitutional Declaration and the establishment of such civilian institutions as the Sovereign Council and the transitional Government. This transformation is a new start for the Sudan after the glorious December revolution and a major step towards fulfilling the aspirations of the proud Sudanese people for a democratic, free, just and peaceful Sudan.

The transitional Government has committed to addressing a number of priorities during the transitional period, which will end in December 2022. At the top of these priorities is the achievement of a comprehensive peace across the Sudan. Meetings have already begun between the representatives of the Government and the armed movements with a view to reaching an agreement on comprehensive peace. The Government of sisterly South Sudan has played a key role in launching the negotiations and hosted the first meeting on 11 September, which led to the signing of the Juba Declaration for Confidence-building Procedures and the Preparation for Negotiation. Negotiations began on 14 October in the capital of South Sudan and were attended by Lieutenant General Abdel-Fattah Al-Burhan, President of the Sovereign Council, the Vice-President and a number of other members of the Sovereign Council, leaders from countries of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development and all the signatories of the Juba Declaration. We hope to reach an agreement that will herald a new era of peace in the Sudan.

In our pursuit of comprehensive peace, on 30 September, in Paris, our Prime Minister, Mr. Abdalla Hamdok, met the leader of the Sudan Liberation Army-Abdul Wahid faction, Mr. Abdul Wahid Al-Nour. We wish to emphasize the importance of convincing Mr. Al-Nour to take part in the current negotiations. We call on countries with influence to take every possible measure to persuade him that dialogue and negotiations are the only path to getting demands met.

We strongly condemn the flagrant violations committed against children in areas in the Jebel Marra controlled by Mr. Al-Nour, which, as detailed in the special report, have been perpetrated by his forces. The representative of the United States has also made reference to these violations.

The special report details a number of options relating to the future of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID). We hope that any decision taken by the Council will contribute to peace and stability in Darfur and pave the way towards a transition to peacebuilding and the strengthening of stability in Darfur. As Council members are aware, the situation in Darfur today should not be seen through the lens of Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations, as it is no longer a matter of peacekeeping, but rather of peacebuilding, stability and development. Further, in order to enable law-enforcement agencies in Darfur to do their jobs, the Council must consider the recommendation set forth in paragraph 49 of the report, namely, to lift the sanctions imposed under resolution 1591 (2005).

We agree with paragraphs 38 and 39 of the joint report, on the objectives and scope of the priorities of the Government of the Sudan towards achieving comprehensive peace not just in Darfur, but throughout the country. The current negotiations in Juba will address the root causes of the conflict in the Sudan in order to end the era of infighting that has lasted too long in the country. Efforts to achieve comprehensive and lasting peace in the Sudan will be guided by the Constitutional Declaration of 17 August and the Juba Declaration of 11 September. Achieving peace entails commitments and obligations, as well as international and regional support. The peace process, which is set to be implemented by the end of this year, requires, above all, security arrangements, ceasefire monitoring, the end of hostilities and urgent humanitarian assistance.

In order to ensure a seamless and effective transition, there must be national ownership of any effort requiring the assistance of the United Nations, whether in Darfur or any other conflict area. Accordingly, the following priority areas, all of which require United Nations assistance, will be the subject of our focus.

First, the transitional Government's efforts aimed at achieving comprehensive peace are essential and need the Organization's support.

Secondly, to assist the Government in addressing the economic situation, the economic sanctions need to be lifted, and the Sudan needs to be removed from the list of State sponsors of terrorism. It is important to note that the Sudanese people have never taken part in any terrorist acts.

Thirdly, for the rule of law to take hold, there must be international support for our efforts to build the capacity of competent national institutions.

Fourthly, the human rights situation needs to be improved. In this regard, I would like to recall that last month the Sudan signed an agreement to establish a full-fledged Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in the Sudan, to which we pledge our full support.

Fifthly, support will be needed for sustainable solutions and quick-impact projects.

Sixthly, the transitional Government requires assistance in its efforts aimed at addressing the situation of internally displaced persons and in disarming, demobilizing and reintegrating former combatants, as well as in issues related to land, transitional justice and other aspects of peacebuilding.

The Sudan of today is totally unlike the Sudan the Security Council has come to know over the past three decades. It is a new country that seeks to join the international community as a peace-loving member that seeks international cooperation, is committed to international law and respects the basic rights of its citizens. As a first step in that direction, my Government has focused on women by appointing the first woman Chief Justice in the history of the Sudan and in the history of the region. We have also appointed a woman Foreign Minister for the first time in our history. The Government has shown its respect for religious and gender diversity by appointing a Christian woman to the Sovereign Council and four women Ministers. The number of women in the transitional legislative assembly will soon exceed 40 per cent; the women of the Sudan deserve this, and more.

Behind me today sit four young Sudanese women, who are among the six female diplomats who have joined the Sudanese delegation to the United Nations. Sudanese women have contributed significantly to the transition that has led to these changes. In the period following the conclusion of the peace process, the United Nations must appoint skilled and experienced

people to lead various United Nations agencies in the Sudan in working in close coordination with the Government of the Sudan, in line with the plans and projects of our Government and its priorities.

In conclusion, we applaud the unwavering and ongoing integrated efforts to bring a definitive end to all manifestations of conflict in my country so that the peace and development process in the Sudan may be completed. The Sudanese delegation wishes once again to express its gratitude to the Security Council, the Secretary-General, the Chairperson of the African Union Commission and UNAMID. We commend the

sacrifices made by peacekeepers over the years and thank the troop- and police-contributing countries. Finally, we reiterate the Sudan's readiness to cooperate with all regional and international partners to resolve all UNAMID-related issues until the mission's full and final withdrawal.

The President: 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 4.40 p.m.