Security Council

Provisional

Seventy-sixth year

8838th meeting

Wednesday, 18 August 2021, 10.10 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Jaishankar	(India)

Members:	China	Mr. Dai Bing
	Estonia	Ms. Liimets
	France	Mrs. Broadhurst Estival
	Ireland	Ms. Byrne Nason
	Kenya	Mr. Kimani
	Mexico	Mrs. Buenrostro Massieu
	Niger	Mr. Aougi
	Norway	Mr. Kvalheim
	Russian Federation	Mr. Nebenzia
	Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	Ms. King
	Tunisia	Mr. Ladeb
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Kariuki
	United States of America	Mrs. Thomas-Greenfield
	Viet Nam	Mr. Dang

Agenda

United Nations peacekeeping operations

Protecting the protectors: technology and peacekeeping

Letter dated 26 July 2021 from the Permanent Representative of India to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2021/681)

In accordance with the procedure set out in the letter by the President of the Security Council addressed to Permanent Representatives of Security Council members dated 7 May 2020 (S/2020/372), which was agreed in light of the extraordinary circumstances caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, this official record of the Security Council will be supplemented by a compilation of annexes (S/2021/732) containing the statements submitted by interested non-members of the Council.

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

United Nations peacekeeping operations

Protecting the protectors: technology and peacekeeping

Letter dated 26 July 2021 from the Permanent Representative of India to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2021/681)

The President: 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/2021/681, which contains the text of a letter dated 26 July 2021 from the Permanent Representative of India addressed to the Secretary-General, transmitting a concept note on the item under consideration.

The Council has before it the text of a statement by the President on behalf of the Council on the subject of today's meeting. I thank the Council members for their valuable contributions to this statement.

In accordance with the understanding reached among the members of the Council, I shall take it that the members of the Security Council agree to the statement, which will be issued as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/PRST/2021/17.

I now wish to warmly welcome the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. António Guterres, and give him the floor.

The Secretary-General: I thank the Government of India for convening today's open debate on technology and peacekeeping.

Over recent decades, conflicts have become more intractable and protracted. Actors have multiplied and diversified, the tools of warfare are increasingly sophisticated, and the growing internationalization of civil wars has made their resolution even more complex. The devastating effects of the climate crisis on the lands and resources of peoples around the world, combined with growing socioeconomic vulnerabilities, are converging with and fuelling conflicts, causing further suffering. These shifts in conflict are accompanied by a broader societal transformation propelled by new technology.

Digital technology in particular represents one of the greatest opportunities, but also one of the greatest challenges, of our time. As I stress in my road map for digital cooperation, the international community must come together better to govern the digital space for good, while addressing its many challenges, and the good is plain to see.

Digital technologies play a central role in connecting communities, advancing health care and education, and enabling mobilization and change. Digital technologies have allowed parts of the global economy and communities connected to the Internet to continue functioning during the coronavirus disease pandemic. And in the realm of peacekeeping, tools reliant on digital technologies, such as long-range cameras, unmanned aerial vehicles and ground surveillance radars, help peacekeepers protect civilians and themselves.

New technologies have great potential if managed responsibly to enable safer, harm-free and more effective operations. But new technologies also pose unfamiliar and profound threats, as seen most clearly in the online proliferation of violent extremist ideologies, increasingly prevalent cyberattacks and deadly vaccine misinformation.

Emerging technologies are also blurring the lines between war and peace. States and non-State actors are carrying out malicious acts that fall below commonly understood thresholds for the use of force, yet may still have a devastating impact. Anonymous actors are able to target such critical infrastructure as power stations, hospitals, Government facilities and the information technology systems crucial to running our societies.

The clandestine use of these technologies risk unintended escalation, including full blown conflicts. Technology advances are also modifying the ways in which conventional weapons are being used. More accurate long-range rockets and missiles are allowing both States and non-State armed groups to carry out targeted strikes at great distances, including against populated areas.

We are also seeing the increased use of autonomous weapons systems. On this rapidly emerging issue, Governments must work together to ensure that sufficient human control and judgment is retained in the use of force.

In short, new technologies are changing the scale and speed of attack, as well as the character and nature of violence and destruction in war, with an indelible impact on civilian populations. These developments create new and urgent challenges for peace operations, which are experiencing these challenges first hand.

The United Nations has adapted and innovated throughout its 75 years. The concept of peacekeeping is itself the product of the art of the possible. But United Nations peacekeeping was conceived in an analog world. It is now essential that it fully embrace the digital world in which we live to improve the Organization's agility, foresight and responsiveness to conflicts and to be able to address the challenges of today and tomorrow.

A shift in peacekeeping culture and a systemic change are required for this to happen. That is why we have developed a strategy for the digital transformation of United Nations peacekeeping operations. This strategy seeks to use the opportunities offered by digital technologies to peacekeeping missions to mitigate the risks they pose and promote their responsible use. The strategy takes forward the vision of my second term, a renewed United Nations that is nimble, dynamic and evolving to anticipate and address complex issues.

Digital transformation in peacekeeping will contribute to one of the central objectives of the Action for Peacekeeping Plus initiative, which is to further data-driven and technology-enabled peacekeeping. It will be one of the most complex undertakings for United Nations peacekeeping in the coming years. But the need is critical, and the benefits will be profound.

The digital transformation strategy for United Nations peacekeeping focuses on four objectives. First, we must drive technology innovation at Headquarters and in the field. Secondly, we must maximize the potential of current and new technologies to augment the capacity of missions to carry out their mandates effectively. That includes transforming information-gathering and early-warning capabilities to better protect civilians. It is essential that troop- and police-contributors in front-line roles have access to the most up-to-date technology.

Thirdly, peace operations should be able to detect, analyse and address threats against civilians, peacekeepers and humanitarian and political missions in a timely and integrated manner.

Fourthly, we must ensure the responsible use of digital technologies by peace operations by developing clear principles and undertaking human rights due diligence wherever there is a potential for harm.

The digital transformation is already permeating our peacekeeping operations. The Unite Aware platform promises an integrated approach to situational awareness that could be used across the civilian, military and police components. The United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali is using machine learning to analyse radio data to detect hate speech, serving as an automated early-warning system for unrest. A social media monitoring tool used by the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo relies on artificial intelligence to identify perceptions of the Mission to improve service. The Smart Camp initiative will offer more integrated, efficient and greener peace operations.

However, in order to achieve the vision of the digital transformation strategy over the coming three years, we need the active engagement and support of Member States. We are looking for assistance in capacity-building and training, equipment provision and financial contributions. The upcoming United Nations Peacekeeping Ministerial Conference in the Republic of Korea can further the digital transformation process, and the Partnership for Technology in Peacekeeping initiative provides another such opportunity. Ultimately, bringing about culture change and transformation that will have a real impact on the ground will require engagement not only from State actors but also civil society, the technology sector and academia.

Together, we can rise to the challenge of the digital transformation of United Nations peacekeeping, and I thank the Security Council for its engagement and support.

The President: I thank the Secretary-General for his briefing.

I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the Minister for External Affairs of India.

Let me begin by thanking the Secretary-General, Mr. António Guterres, for his briefing.

Since deploying for the first time in 1948, United Nations peacekeeping missions continue to operate in a variety of challenging settings. That could involve armed groups, non-State actors or terrorists. Because

the nature of peacekeeping missions and their attendant threats have become more complex, it is vital that our capabilities to secure peacekeepers keep pace. We owe it to them to ensure that our protective efforts meet the highest standards.

Twenty-first-century peacekeeping must be anchored in a strong ecosystem of technology and innovation that can facilitate United Nations peacekeeping operations in implementing their mandates in complex environments. After all, it helps them to adapt to changing conflict dynamics and take advantage of increased efficiencies. That is also in line with the Strategy for the Digital Transformation of UN Peacekeeping, which seeks to advance the use of technology across the Action for Peacekeeping themes, including performance, safety and security, politics, protection and peacebuilding.

Limited resources make the execution of peacekeeping mandates difficult even otherwise. When such mandates are expanded in an ad hoc fashion, the challenge becomes more complex. In recent years, peacekeepers have experienced a greater level of asymmetric threats, ranging from landmines to improvised explosive devices. We cannot remain indifferent to that prospect. To execute their mandates, peacekeeping missions must be able to move fast to acquire and validate information from a wide range of openly available sources to enhance situational awareness, augment security, aid operational planning and support decision-making. United Nations peacekeeping simply cannot afford to cede the information advantage to those actors determined to undermine prospects for peace by using modern technology to aid their violent cause. Let me therefore propose a four-point framework that would lay out a possible architecture for securing United Nations peacekeepers to meet contemporary threats.

First, we must focus on operationally proven, cost-effective, widely available, reliable and field-serviceable technologies. Those must also prioritize mobility, both in the sense of the agile manoeuvrability of mission assets and in the sense of the use of mobile digital or information-technology platforms. Where deployed, technologies should be environment-friendly through the use of renewables and fuel efficiency and the use of environmentally friendly construction materials.

Secondly, we need a sound information and intelligence foundation. Only that will ensure early warning and mobilizing a coherent and early response. A reliable, high-fidelity means to collect, use, process and share information and data will create advantages from the very start for peacekeeping missions. The precise positioning and overhead visualization of mission environments are critically important to providing intelligence and to enhancing the safety and security of mission personnel. It therefore gives me great pleasure to announce that India is supporting the United Nations in the roll-out of the Unite Aware platform across select peacekeeping missions. That initiative is based on the expectation that an entire peacekeeping operation can be visualized, coordinated and monitored on a real-time basis. We should ensure that any attack on a peacekeeper or a civilian is predictable, preventable or responded to immediately.

Thirdly, we must contribute to ensuring that technological improvements are continuous and are available on the ground in the gear that peacekeepers carry and the weapons and tools that they use to enhance their mobility, performance, endurance, range and load-carrying capabilities, while guaranteeing their safety and security. That also includes the strengthening of communication within missions and enhancing the overall capacity to take informed decisions at a tactical or operational level.

Fourthly, the consistent training and capacity-building of peacekeepers in the area of technology needs attention and investment. It is with that in mind that India is committed to long-term engagement with the United Nations C4ISR Academy for Peace Operations in Entebbe, Uganda, to meet the training needs, link it with the available technological capability and shape future requirements. I am pleased to announce that we have signed a memorandum of understanding between the Government of India and the United Nations in support of the Partnership for Technology in Peacekeeping initiative and the United Nations C4ISR Academy for Peace Operations. We would welcome other Member States taking an active interest in that evolving paradigm. Political will, strengthened partnerships and shifts in organizational culture are required to take it forward.

Maximum transparency should remain a principle of the use of peacekeeping technology, in particular when used to enable information-gathering and -sharing. Peacekeeping requires continuous review, adaptation and transparent engagement with all stakeholders, as

well as strong procedural safeguards and effective oversight mechanisms.

Peacekeeping continues to play a crucial role in India's vision of ensuring international peace and security. Providing greater clarity, direction and professionalism in our United Nations peacekeeping operations is at the heart of the vision.

India has been a pioneer in United Nations peacekeeping, deploying more than a quarter of a million troops over the years in as many as 49 United Nations peacekeeping missions. Serving under the Blue Flag, over the years 174 gallant Indian soldiers have made the supreme sacrifice, the largest number among troop-contributing countries. In keeping with this tradition, today we have more than 5,000 personnel deployed across nine missions.

As a reflection of our deep commitment to protecting the protectors, the Government of India provided 200,000 doses of coronavirus disease vaccines for United Nations peacekeeping personnel worldwide in March this year. We are pleased that, as the outcomes of our discussions, today the Security Council adopted resolution 2589 (2021), on accountability of crimes against United Nations peacekeepers, as well as presidential statement S/PRST/2021/17, on technology for peacekeeping, the first such Security Council document on this topic. It is the Council that sends peacekeepers across continents to keep the peace and implement the mandate that it decides. It is therefore the duty of this organ to also ensure that we provide them with the means to implement that mandate.

We have shown today, both in the roll-out of the Unite Aware platform, as well as the actionable elements of training incorporated in the memorandum of understanding, that India believes in walking the talk when it comes to the safety and security of United Nations peacekeepers. We hope that, in our discussions today, we get an equally strong reaffirmation of the intent of the United Nations.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Estonia.

Ms. Liimets (Estonia): At the outset, allow me to thank India for convening this high-level open debate and leading the negotiations on the corresponding presidential statement (S/PRST/2021/17). I would also like to congratulate India on the successful adoption of the resolution on protecting peacekeepers (resolution 2589 (2021)). In addition, I thank the Secretary-General for his insightful intervention.

As was already highlighted, the integration of relevant existing and new technologies into peacekeeping missions can enhance mandate implementation, including the protection of civilians. It can also strengthen the safety and security of peacekeepers, which is urgently needed given the high number of peacekeeping fatalities. In short, peacekeeping missions simply cannot afford to lag behind in the use of modern technologies.

Estonia believes that special focus should be given to gender-responsive technologies that are driven by the practical needs of end users. The use of environmentally responsible solutions, including renewable energy, in United Nations peacekeeping operations is equally important.

There are practical steps that need to be taken in order to support better use of innovations in ongoing peacekeeping missions. In that regard, I would like to highlight three observations.

First, it is crucial that we become better at tapping into our collective knowledge regarding new technologies and best practices. On that note, I would like to commend the Secretary-General for his ongoing initiatives, including the Unite Aware platform, that seek to connect the technological and innovative capacities of Member States with the specific needs of peacekeeping missions. Estonia encourages further cooperation in that area.

Secondly, all knowledge of new technologies and best practices is of little use unless they are actually integrated into peacekeeping missions. Therefore, it is crucial to ensure that the necessary political, legal and financial frameworks be in place in order to allow innovations to be adopted swiftly. Estonia also welcomes the development of the strategy for the digital transformation of United Nations peacekeeping. We look forward to its release and subsequent implementation.

Thirdly, we must also become better at carrying out regular reviews to ensure that the technologies used in peacekeeping missions are indeed the best ones out there. Peacekeeping missions take place in a constantly changing environment; and technology is evolving quickly. Peacekeeping missions therefore need to develop continuously to keep up with those changes.

Peacekeeping has often been referred to as the flagship enterprise of the United Nations. The Security Council must spare no effort in driving innovation that enables that flagship to continue to evolve with the changing realities. It is crucial for the millions of people whom peacekeeping serves and for the hundreds of thousands of people who serve in peacekeeping.

To conclude, I reiterate Estonia's full support for the responsible use of technology that would enhance the ability of peacekeepers to do their noble job more effectively.

The President: I now call on the Permanent Representative of the United States of America and member of President Biden's Cabinet.

Mrs. Thomas-Greenfield (United States of America): I thank you, Mr. President, for bringing this important issue before the Security Council. I also wish to thank the Secretary-General for his briefing.

Today's peacekeepers work day and night under some of the world's most severe circumstances to address threats to international peace and security. We thank them for their service. They deserve the most advanced, cutting-edge technology to help them do their difficult job better. The right technology helps keep peacekeepers safe, and it helps them keep the communities they serve safe too. It is therefore our duty to ensure that they have the technology and use it appropriately. After all, we all share the responsibility of ensuring the safety and security of peacekeepers as they, in turn, protect civilians.

It is a top priority of the Secretary-General's Action for Peacekeeping (A4P) initiative, and it is a top priority for us too. The A4P Plus initiative further emphasizes the need to ensure the well-being of peacekeeping personnel, including by providing reliable medical support for all peacekeepers. We therefore deeply appreciate the Secretariat's efforts to improve emergency medical care practices using technology. We have supported those priorities through our own capacity-building partnerships for years, working with troop-contributing countries and providing them with the technology and equipment they need to enhance their medical capabilities and save lives.

The right technology can also increase mission efficiency and effectiveness. Peacekeeping missions predominantly operate in areas with unreliable power, or without electricity grids altogether. Missions look for autonomous power supply options and rely heavily on diesel generators to overcome that challenge. In fact, more than 90 per cent of the total consumed electricity by peacekeeping missions is supplied by diesel generators. That diesel costs a great deal — a large share of total mission cost. It accounts for the majority of United Nations greenhouse-gas emissions, and it leaves missions vulnerable to supply chain disruptions. It is time to disrupt that reliance on diesel.

The United Nations environmental strategy for peace operations provides a framework for reducing the environmental footprint of United Nations field operations and for deploying missions that achieve maximum efficiency at a minimum cost. We are excited to see the vast improvements in data collection and analysis that phase 1 delivered, and we look forward to seeing the results of phase 2 efforts to reduce the reliance of our peacekeeping missions on fossil fuels and increase their use of renewable energy technologies.

We continue to seek innovative solutions to today's peacekeeping challenges and attempt to scale those solutions across missions. We must take a phased and gradual approach. Our troop- and police-contributing country (TCCs/PCCs) partners need time to develop, learn, deploy and sustain new capabilities. Procuring and sustaining new equipment requires additional training, different maintenance and spare parts, resources and patience. Contingent-owned equipment guidelines and reimbursement rates will also need to ensure TCCs/PCCs are compensated for their investments in technological solutions. Wherever we encounter capability gaps, we should work through the light coordination mechanism to share information and identify potential capacity-building partnerships to close those gaps.

Finally, we must work together to ensure that innovative technologies are used responsibly. Military intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance, including unmanned aircraft systems and camp security technologies, offer promising solutions to peacekeeping operations. However, they must be used in line with United Nations doctrine and policy. We need to give due respect for safeguarding information gathered in accordance with international human rights law and international humanitarian law. To those ends, we welcome the Secretary-General's efforts to launch a new digital transformation strategy for United Nations peacekeeping. We look forward to supporting its implementation.

We are eager to discuss all of this further, in particular how we can enhance peacekeeping medical capabilities, at the upcoming United Nations Peacekeeping Ministerial Conference. We welcome the fact that the Republic of Korea, as ministerial host, intends to focus on this theme.

Technology can be used as either a tool for good or a weapon for harm. It can take lives — or, more important, it can save lives. Together let us make sure that we deploy technology rightly and justly to protect the protectors and empower them to better serve so many of the world's most vulnerable people.

Mr. Ladeb (Tunisia) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I thank India for organizing this important meeting. We welcome Mr. Jaishankar, Minister of External Affairs of India, as President of the Security Council. I also thank His Excellency Secretary-General Antonio Guterres for his briefing and for his efforts in the area of technology and peacekeeping

With the continuation of conflicts and hotbeds of tension in many regions of the world and the accompanying challenges and threats to international peace and security, there is an urgent need for peacekeeping and peacebuilding operations undertaken by United Nations missions. Although such missions usually carry out their tasks in difficult and perilous conditions, recent years have witnessed the emergence of new challenges and difficulties related to the nature of the conflicts themselves, which have become more violent and complex owing to the development of weapons, as well as more geographically widespread and longer in duration, in addition to the multiplicity and overlap of the parties involved. Those conflicts have wide range of humanitarian and security effects, political, economic and social repercussions, in addition to other natural factors and health pandemics, climate change, the growing role of terrorist organizations, armed groups and organized crime activities, with their involvement in one way or another in existing conflicts and crises.

All of that has been reflected in peacekeeping and peacebuilding missions, which have multiple responsibilities and tasks and are increasingly operating in more hostile environments, facing greater risks and challenges at various levels, including providing the necessary protection for the staff, assets and headquarters of the missions, especially in the light of the significant increase in operations targeting them.

In the light of the increasing and diversification of traditional and emerging threats and serious challenges to international peace and security, and to the lives of millions in conflict areas, it is not possible to confront all this with traditional means that do not necessarily ensure that United Nations missions can carry out their tasks with the required efficiency. Therefore, it has become more urgent than ever for a new approach based on enabling the missions to use all effective and efficient means of confronting the challenges, at the forefront of which is the use of modern technologies, through the adoption of a clear strategy to include them in peacekeeping and peacebuilding operations.

In that context, missions need to develop means for their analytical and field work by using artificial intelligence applications to analyse information related to conflicts, as well as to adopt satellite mapping and GPS data to determine the areas of presence of displaced people and refugees, determine ways to reach them and identify their needs, in addition to documenting violations of human rights, monitoring the movements of the parties to the conflict, tracking armed groups and monitoring the smuggling of weapons and fighters through digital mapping and social media.

There is also the need to empower United Nations missions with modern technologies to enhance the security and protection of their personnel, such as by providing them with the means to detect improvised explosive devises as well as with technological means for crisis management and combating misinformation, especially in the context of the coronavirus disease pandemic and the dangers of terrorism. There is also the need to use drones to reach areas of conflict that are difficult to access or that pose a high degree of risk to the lives of peacekeepers.

The more difficult the mandates of the United Nations peace missions have become, the more the need for missions is emphasized, and the more important their role has become in providing protection, meeting the humanitarian needs of millions of civilians, maintaining ceasefires, supporting political settlement processes and consolidating the elements of security and stability. Missions represent hope for the people they serve and reflect the collective international will to maintain peace, security and stability. They therefore need support, assistance and modern technologies, especially since many parties involved in undermining international peace and security, such as terrorist organizations, use such technologies and rely heavily

on them in their subversive activities, financing, propaganda and recruitment operations.

In that context, we renew our support for the Secretary-General's Action for Peacekeeping initiative and for the digitization strategy for peacekeeping operations and all the efforts made by the Secretariat to improve working methods and protection for United Nations missions, in order to enhance their performance and ability to face challenges and effectively deal with risks and difficulties. In that regard, we also stress the importance of the contributions and efforts of Member States and the role of the Security Council in this field, in line with resolution 2518 (2020).

In conclusion, we commend the initiative of launching the Unite Aware platform to enhance the safety of peacekeepers using modern technology, and we support the presidential statement on the topic of today's meeting (S/PRST/2021/17). We also reiterate Tunisia's commitment to continue its active contribution to international peace and security efforts. That commitment is one of our most important priorities since our engagement in international peace missions began, in the 1960s.

Mr. Dai Bing (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I welcome Minister for External Affairs Jaishankar, who is presiding over today's open debate. I also thank Secretary-General Guterres for his briefing.

United Nations peacekeeping operations play a major role in maintaining international peace and security and promoting political processes, monitoring the implementation of ceasefires and protecting vulnerable groups. As the shape and nature of conflicts and disputes evolve, peacekeeping operations are faced with increasingly complex risks and challenges. The use of technologies of all kinds contributes to the capacity and efficiency of peacekeeping operations and helps reduce the safety risks to peacekeeping personnel.

China welcomes presidential statement S/PRST/2021/17, on peacekeeping and technology, which was just adopted by the Security Council, and supports the full use of technologies to continuously improve the capacities of peacekeeping operations to implement their mandates. China would like to make the following observations.

First, the use of new technologies must focus on improving the safety of peacekeeping personnel. Peacekeeping operations can fully use technological tools to improve information-gathering and analysis, early warning, emergency response, emergency relief and other capacities and reduce safety risks for peacekeepers. Improvised explosive devices (IEDs) have become a major cause of injuries and fatalities among peacekeeping personnel. When the Secretariat prepares the report of the independent strategic review of peacekeeping operations' responses to IEDs, as requested in presidential statement S/PRST/2021/11, adopted by the Council in May, it should fully consider ways to use technology to prevent and mitigate the threat of IEDs.

Secondly, the use of new technologies in peacekeeping operations should respect the sovereignty and will of host countries. While using technology of all kinds to conduct reconnaissance and surveillance, peacekeeping missions should conduct prior consultations with host countries to ensure that the relevant technology is used in full respect for their sovereignty, upholds the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, including non-interference in their internal affairs, and follows the guiding principles of peacekeeping. Peacekeeping missions should use the relevant technologies, based on needs on the ground and in accordance with Council mandates, while refraining from harming the national, public and information security of host countries. China proposed a global initiative on data security last year, which can serve as a reference for regulating the use of technology in peacekeeping, while enhancing data security.

Thirdly, the use of new technologies in peacekeeping operations needs the relevant support and guarantees to facilitate the effective use of new technological equipment in such operations. The list of contingent-owned equipment of troop- and police-contributing countries (TCCs/PCCs) should be updated in a timely manner. Cost effectiveness should also be taken fully into consideration to ensure proper planning. All Member States should pay their peacekeeping contributions in full and on time. Reimbursement for the equipment and personnel of TCCs and PCCs should be provided in a timely manner to ensure that peacekeeping operations can make full use of new technologies. To improve peacekeepers' capacities in using new technologies, the Security Council, TCCs, PCCs and the Secretariat should improve coordination, provide more tailored training for peacekeepers and compile lessons and best practices quickly.

China is the largest TCC for peacekeeping operations among the permanent members of the Council and attaches great importance to the use of technologies in the area of peacekeeping. We have responded positively to the tripartite cooperation mechanism championed by the United Nations and provide support on the use of new technologies to other TCCs and regional organizations in their peacekeeping operations.

The China-United Nations Peace and Development Trust Fund has implemented projects that use technologies to improve peacekeeping, camp security and operational capacities, such as projects to build smart camps and improve data-sharing. Resolution 2518 (2020), adopted last year by the Council, and presidential statement S/PRST/2021/11, adopted in May, include specific recommendations and requirements on the use of technologies to improve the safety of peacekeepers.

China stands ready to work with other Council members and the international community to contribute to the continuous improvement of peacekeeping operations and the safety of peacekeepers.

Mr. Kimani (Kenya): I thank His Excellency Mr. António Guterres for his insightful briefing on this important subject.

As our contribution to international peace and security, Kenya has participated in United Nations peacekeeping missions around the world for many years. Our peacekeeping story is similar to that of other troop- and police-contributing countries represented here. It is a story of continuing commitment to humankind, peace and political stability and to the prosperity of all peoples of the world.

The core mandate of the Security Council is to pursue and maintain international peace and security. That is driven most visibly by our peacekeepers, the gallant men and women who are deployed in increasingly deteriorating and complex political and security environments that are characterized by frequent targeted attacks, including through the use of landmines, explosive remnants of war and improvised explosive devices (IEDs). We salute them and honour the memory of those who have had to pay the ultimate price in the line of duty. We thank India for today's ceremony to remind us of the solemn duty we have to our peacekeepers.

Kenya is committed to working with the members of the Security Council and other stakeholders in championing the protection of peacekeepers. In that regard, we commend the Secretary-General for his Action for Peacekeeping Plus initiative, whose priorities include accountability to peacekeepers by ensuring their safety and security.

As the world is changing, so is the peacekeeping environment. One of the most revolutionary agents of change globally is the exponential advancement in technology. Its use has become an indispensable tool in all facets of life, including in peacekeeping. I support the statements that have been made noting that it is not only a challenge and a threat but also an opportunity. However, technology has emerged as a tool in the hands of terrorists and insurgents, who are increasingly using the most modern technologies, including drones and even elementary artificial intelligence, to plan and carry out their attacks. Those groups also employ Internet-based solutions and platforms for unfettered communication and the dissemination of information that endangers both peacekeepers and civilians.

Kenya welcomes the efforts by United Nations departments to enhance the use of technology for peacekeeping operations. We are particularly delighted by the launch of the Unite Aware platform and others aimed at enhancing the situational awareness of peacekeepers. I therefore thank India for partnering with the Department of Operational Support to ensure the success of the project.

Allow me to underscore six points that are pertinent to the employment of technology in the protection of peacekeepers.

First, we need technology to be fully integrated into mission mandates. The Security Council should ensure that approved personnel have the strength and equipment, including the requisite technological enablers with corresponding budget provisions. That technology should include counter-IED and explosive ordnance disposal equipment and the ability to exploit the electromagnetic spectrum for the benefit of peacekeeping missions. In addition, there should be a capability for the detection of inflammatory and violent speech on social media that endangers civilians in the theatre and peacekeepers alike. Social media companies should be pushed to respond to the needs of missions. There is much work under way with regard to pushing social media companies to be more responsive to hate or inflammatory speech online, and that should be extended to the areas where we dispatch peacekeepers.

Secondly, troop- and police-contributing countries should be encouraged to deploy with essential equipment, for which the United Nations should be ready to reimburse accordingly. Countries that have the means to support such operations gratis, through the Secretariat, are encouraged to do so.

Thirdly, with diverse forces coming together for peacekeeping operations, there can be significant interoperability challenges and duplication among units. It is therefore important to set standards that should be strictly adhered to by all missions. The possibility of sharing technology solutions and equipment across missions should also be explored. Such sharing would come with the added advantage of cost effectiveness and developing a common operating infrastructure on which future operations can seamlessly build.

Fourthly, we need to gain and maintain the trust of host nations by ensuring that the information collected using modern technology is utilized only to protect the United Nations mandate, its personnel and installations, as well as civilians. The Council should emphasize the responsible use of technology by avoiding unnecessary deployments and ensuring strict adherence to the principles of impartiality and neutrality.

Fifthly, while focusing on technology, we must be reminded that the basic foundations of armed conflict remain the same. Peacekeepers must therefore be properly grounded on the physical, moral and conceptual foundations of conflict in the environments in which they operate. Technology comes into the picture as an enabler of the mandate.

Finally, and this is an obvious appeal, which I think bears repeating, the most devastating technologies remain guns and the ammunition they use. We need to help missions assist countries in their disarmament efforts to prevent guns and ammunition from getting into the hands of illicit actors who are engaged in hostile operations when we dispatch peacekeepers.

Let me conclude by reiterating Kenya's commitment to the advancement of international peace and security through well-facilitated and well-equipped peacekeepers for sustainable stability and prosperity.

Mr. Kariuki (United Kingdom): I thank you, Mr. President, for convening today's debate. I would also like to thank the Secretary-General for his remarks on the subject.

Without peacekeepers, there is no peacekeeping. They are our most valuable asset for protecting civilians, championing the rule of law and ultimately paving the way to durable peace.

Yet, sadly, peacekeepers continue to pay the ultimate price as they conduct their vital work implementing the mandates we set. So far this year, 83 peacekeepers have lost their lives in the service of the United Nations. It is therefore fitting that this morning we pay tribute to their service. We must work collectively to ensure peacekeepers' safety and security, both for their protection and so that they are better empowered to deliver their mandates.

Technology and innovation supported by thorough training can enhance the safety and security of all United Nations personnel. That is why the United Kingdom is proud to partner with India in support of such initiatives as Unite Aware, which is a technology platform that improves peacekeepers' situational awareness and information analysis, which are vital elements in keeping them safe. Technologies such as these, alongside developments in peacekeeping intelligence, help protect our peacekeepers and support their ability to protect civilians. They contribute to the overall effectiveness of each mission. They provide real operational benefits.

We have seen this on the ground through the recent United Kingdom deployment to the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA). United Kingdom troops have gathered intelligence to support mission planning and improve mission performance. Recently, United Kingdom personnel led a cordon-and-search operation to seize weapons and equipment hidden by terrorists threatening local communities — the first for MINUSMA in some time.

But technology is, of course, only one part of the challenge of mitigating risks to peacekeepers. We must also ensure that all peacekeepers receive training in basic military skills and in skills specific to their tasks. Maintaining and improving the knowledge and skills of peacekeepers will have an invaluable impact on casualty reduction.

Comprehensive and mission-specific training is key to understanding and tackling threats. Peacekeepers with the right skills and training and the appropriate equipment are more able to effectively defend themselves against attack. Further, through

our partnerships with other countries that contribute personnel, the United Kingdom provides training in a range of vital areas, including counter-improvised-explosive-device training, peacekeeping intelligence and public-order management.

I would now like to highlight the benefits of technology for the environment, including within United Nations operations. Climate change remains the biggest collective challenge of our generation. To protect the generations of the future, we must look at all options to curb emissions. In 2020, United Nations peace operations accounted for 42 per cent of the United Nations system's carbon footprint. As we have already heard today, we must do better if we are to meet the Secretary-General's climate-action plan targets, and that starts with United Nations action.

For example, the overwhelming majority of MINUSMA's energy requirements are met through diesel. The mission anticipated using 55.8 million litres of fuel in the last financial year, which is a 13 per cent increase over the year before. It is therefore time to look at using such alternative renewable-energy sources as solar. The fact that Mali and many sub-Saharan African countries with large United Nations missions are already feeling the impacts of climate change should give us an even greater sense of urgency.

There is an opportunity in this context. Through the effective use of technology, peacekeeping, the safety and security of peacekeepers and the health of our planet can be improved. We should seize this opportunity together.

Mr. Aougi (Niger) (*spoke in French*): In recent years, United Nations peace operations have been taking place in difficult and dangerous terrain, in settings marked by frequent deadly terrorist attacks against peacekeepers, civilian populations and the armed forces of host countries. In this particular context, the use of technology in peacekeeping appears to be indispensable as a performance multiplier, especially with the constraints linked to the coronavirus pandemic. That is why I would like to thank India for having included this important topic on the Council's agenda. I also thank the Secretary-General for his briefing.

The importance of the digital transformation of peace operations is no longer in question, as is revealed by the increasing number of deaths and injuries in missions. This grim situation calls for a permanent adaptation of peacekeeper equipment, as hostile forces use sophisticated equipment to achieve their goals. Faced with the expansion of hostile forces regularly equipping themselves with new technologies that strengthen their capacity to cause harm, "the Blue Helmets cannot win today's fights with yesterday's technologies", as His Excellency Mr. Cho Hyun, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea, so rightly noted in the 17 June 2021 webinar on the United Nations strategy on the digital transformation of peacekeeping operations.

Given the realities on the ground that challenge the Secretariat, the Security Council, troop- and finances-contributing countries and all peacekeeping partners, the Niger strongly encourages the use of technology in these operations. Technology facilitates carrying operations out, which assists in the implementation of mandates in complex theatres and in responding to the events taking place there. In brief, technology improves the performance of missions, facilitates the rapid and effective implementation of stabilization actions, the safety and security of Blue Helmets, and the protection of civilians, without which the effective implementation of mandates would be incomplete.

The digital transformation of peacekeeping operations could facilitate a better knowledge of their environment and the situation on the ground, notably through rapidly obtaining information using sophisticated equipment. The use of new technological innovations has the potential to significantly improve the range, coverage and accuracy of observations in the field and help bridge the gap between mandates and capabilities. It will reduce crime in conflict settings and thereby increase the protection of civilians and the safety and security of peacekeepers. Accordingly, the use of new technologies can compensate for the lack of adequate resources that missions often experience, enabling them to be more active in the effective fulfilment of their mandates. However, the quest for performance must not overshadow the need to ensure that the use of new technologies respects international law and the privacy of local populations. The rules for these technologies' use must be clearly stated and defined in order to avoid pitfalls.

In conclusion, if we want to achieve the goal of the digital transformation of peacekeeping operations, we will necessarily have to develop better cooperation around this issue, so as to facilitate access to state-of-the-art equipment for all troop-contributing countries and avoid delays both in deployments and in the execution of missions. This vision could not be achieved

without supporting troop-contributing countries in strengthening their capacity to use new technologies to better respond to emergency situations.

Mrs. Broadhurst Estival (France) (*spoke in French*): I thank the President for convening today's extremely important debate. I thank the Secretary-General of the United Nations for his briefing.

I would like to address three points. First, the potential of technology must be further exploited for more effective peacekeeping. Missions are facing increasingly complex and volatile environments. France condemns the attacks by armed groups that have caused numerous civilian casualties in recent days in Mali, the Central African Republic or the Democratic Republic of Congo. The attackers' methods are evolving with the increasing use of improvised explosive devices and mines. Local armed forces and peacekeepers continue to be targeted. France pays tribute to all those who fell in the name of peace.

Peacekeeping must therefore adapt its ways of working. For missions, the potential offered by technologies is threefold: to strengthen the protection of civilians; to enhance mission performance; and to contribute to protecting the protectors, the peacekeepers. By refining analysis and early-warning mechanisms, technologies make missions more responsive. By enabling economies of scale and rationalizing resources, they increase mission efficiency. By modernizing the defence of camps or equipping them with sustainable energy, which reduces the frequency of logistical convoys, they make the action of the Blue Helmets more secure.

Secondly, the technological tool must be adapted to the needs of the field and the peacekeepers. Technology is, of course, only a means to peacekeeping. Thought needs to be given to the appropriate level of technology to be implemented so that it meets specific operational needs. In that regard, the Unite Aware platform is an excellent example, allowing peacekeepers to stay informed in real time of developments on the ground.

Exploiting technology also means improving equipment and capabilities. I am thinking of the potential of drones, intelligent anti-rocket propelled grenade systems and tools to protect against cyberattacks. Naturally, that requires human and financial resources.

Mastering the new technologies requires prior appropriate training of peacekeepers, which is primarily the responsibility of troop-contributing countries. The information gathered by technology will be useful only if we are able to process it. Methods and best practices must be shared among contingents and operations. By way of an example, in Mali, lessons learned in detecting and combating improvised explosive devices would gain from being shared, to the advantage of our mission.

Finally, and this is my last point, technology must be used in a responsible manner to achieve political solutions. It must be used to implement mandates in full compliance with peacekeeping principles, international humanitarian law and the protection of human rights.

We must also promote the digital inclusion of all, especially women and young people. The potential of digital technology must be harnessed to create more early warning and rapid response networks, as is the case in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali. Technology cannot be used to achieve sustainable peace unless it is people-centred.

Finally, new technologies can be used more for environmental protection. I am thinking in particular of the deployment of energy-efficient equipment or the emission reductions made possible through digitization. We must progress in that direction.

Much remains to be done. The Strategy for the Digital Transformation of United Nations Peacekeeping, which has just been finalized, must maximize the potential of such technologies, in addition to the operations already carried out by the Blue Helmets, which must continue. It is also in line with the priorities of the Secretary-General's Action for Peacekeeping Plus initiative, which France fully supports. The potential of technologies will also be on the agenda of the Seoul Peacekeeping Ministerial Conference next December, where we will continue the discussions begun today and our commitments in the service of peace.

Mr. Dang (Viet Nam): I thank the Indian presidency for organizing this open debate and you, Mr. Minister, for presiding over our discussion today. We also thank the Secretary-General for his insightful and comprehensive briefing.

Over the years, peacekeeping has become one of the most important United Nations tools in the maintenance of peace and security. It has evolved to address complex situations and take up challenging mandates, facilitating

the cessation of armed conflicts, the implementation of ceasefires and political agreements, the protection of civilians and the delivery of humanitarian assistance.

However, peacekeepers are facing more and more challenges. Peacekeeping must therefore be equipped with the proper tools to enable our men and women in the field to effectively carry out their mandate and to protect them from the various threats. The differences that technology can make to peacekeeping have become increasingly evident. We see great potential in using technology as an enabler to enhance the safety and security of peacekeepers and the effectiveness of mandate implementation. Yet, at the same time, the application of technology should be driven by the practical needs of a concrete mission and task. Further possibilities could be realized through further research, training and the application of technology at the field level and at United Nations Headquarters. It should also be continuous — before, during and after deployment — to ensure sustainability and progressiveness.

Peacekeepers must be properly prepared and equipped and afforded the best protection, including through ensured assets, the ownership and use of technologies and participation opportunity in an equitable manner.

In that connection, we applaud the effort undertaken by troop- and police-contributing countries and the Secretariat to encourage the use of technology. We also take note of the recent adoption of the Strategy for the Digital Transformation of United Nations Peacekeeping, with the aim of harnessing the potential of digital technology and the better delivery of peacekeeping mandates.

However, we recognize the possible risks often associated with the use of technology, such as misinformation, disinformation, the irresponsible management and use of data, et cetera. Nevertheless, we should not shy away from exploring the significant possibilities offered by technology. Instead, its application should be carried out and managed in a careful manner in order to ensure its practicability, efficiency and confidentiality. The selection of technology should also align with the technology, capacity-building and training of each troop- and police-contributing country, as well as the specific contact of each peacekeeping mission.

Viet Nam wishes to reaffirm its support to United Nations peacekeeping, as well as efforts aimed at enhancing the safety and security of peacekeepers and mandate implementation. With that in mind, we encourage Member States to continue to engage in dialogue and cooperation, including through engagement with the Secretariat, the Security Council and other relevant United Nations forums in order to find effective measures for the use of existing and new technology in peacekeeping, while respecting the principles of peacekeeping, international law and the sovereignty of States. We look forward to further engaging with all partners in that regard.

Mr. Kvalheim (Norway): Let me therefore start by thanking India and you, Your Excellency, for arranging this debate and for presenting the presidential statement on how we can move forward on this important issue (S/PRST/2021/17). As technological advances continue at a breathtaking pace, it is most timely that the Security Council meets to discuss the role of technology for United Nations peacekeeping.

We need to make sure that peace operations are set up in the best way possible, including when it comes to the use of relevant technologies. Norway fully agrees with the focus given to technology as a cross-cutting issue in the preparations for the Seoul Peacekeeping Ministerial Conference. We are convinced that such a focus will help to ensure that further progress can be made in the current implementation phase of the Action for Peacekeeping Plus initiative.

Norway welcomes the Strategy for the Digital Transformation of United Nations Peacekeeping. As the Secretary-General himself emphasized, it is an important contribution to his vision statement in which he identified digital transformation as an imperative for the next five years. Norway fully concurs with the emphasis placed on the use of technology to enhance the safety and security of peacekeepers, and strengthening the capacity to protect civilians is a key Norwegian priority.

We will therefore provide funding to a project undertaken by the Department of Peace Operations that is using data and technology to enhance performance on the protection of civilians by United Nations operations. That includes the Situational Awareness Geospace Enterprise database and the Unite Aware platform.

Norway is a strong believer in the importance of making active use of technology to enhance political

processes. Political process is conducive to the establishment of a protective environment, to the benefit of peacekeepers and civilians alike. Equally importantly, an inclusive political process is vital in laying the groundwork for lasting peace. Digital technologies can play a key role in that regard through the facilitation of an analytical, gender-responsive, forward-looking understanding of conflict environments.

However, one cannot simply assume that the active use of digital and other technologies will change everything for the better. Norway therefore welcomes the guiding principles for the digital transformation strategy, which include a do-no-harm approach, inclusion and transparency, and sustainability and scalability. Those principles are equally relevant regarding the use of other technologies. In that regard, it is critical that the digital dignity of affected people be preserved by protecting their personal data.

To move forward, we need to ensure that discussions on the use of technology are integrated into all aspects of the peacekeeping planning process. Moreover, the use of the various technologies should continuously be evaluated and adapted as missions progress and lessons are learned. We also need to engage in partnership and cooperation, not only within the United Nations and among Member States, but also with those who develop new technologies, such as think tanks, the private sector, academia and non-governmental organizations.

The questions we should ask include the following. Which technologies have the greatest potential to enhance the implementation of peacekeeping mandates? What are the main obstacles regarding the use of new technologies in United Nations peace operations? What risks do their use pose? How can we strengthen protection, safeguard against those risks and ensure that their use is in accordance with international law, including obligations under international human rights law and international humanitarian law?

In conclusion, peacekeeping operations are one of the world community's most effective tools for the promotion and maintenance of international peace and security. It is our responsibility to enable them to optimize their effectiveness and ensure that they can deliver on their mandated task.

Ms. King (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines): Saint Vincent and the Grenadines welcomes today's discussion and we thank the Secretary-General for his remarks.

Peacekeepers are deployed under the most hostile conditions, where they face immense threats to their own security, as well as that of the communities they are mandated to protect. Against that backdrop, we must redouble our efforts to keep them safe as we honour them for their selfless commitments and sacrifices. To that end, we commend today's adoption of the presidential statement on peacekeeping and technology (S/PRST/2021/17) and congratulate the Republic of India on its leadership on this important issue.

A wide array of health, socioeconomic, political, security and environmental hazards threaten stability in conflict-affected countries. Those interconnecting challenges — which include the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, the climate crisis and asymmetric threats posed by terrorists, armed groups and organized criminals — undermine the effectiveness of peace operations and place at risk the lives of their uniformed and civilian personnel.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines condemns in the strongest terms recent hostilities that targeted peacekeepers in northern Mali and aggressions against the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan compound. Those incidents provide a striking reminder that all attacks against United Nations personnel and infrastructure, wheresoever and by whomsoever committed, must be promptly investigated and those found responsible held to account. Under no circumstance should impunity for attacks against peacekeepers be tolerated.

It is widely accepted that innovative technologies serve as force multipliers in mission settings by improving surveillance through information gathering and peacekeeping intelligence; by increasing situational awareness and strengthening force protection; by enhancing strategic communications, including capacities for monitoring and countering disinformation, misinformation and hate speech; and by supporting decision-making and mandate delivery at the strategic, operational and tactical levels.

We must strive to ensure that those competencies are made widely available to each peacekeeping operation. In that regard, it is crucial that all stakeholders, including troop- and police-contributing countries, Member States and the Secretariat work closely together to provide each mission with adequate resources as well as clear, focused and actionable mandates to ensure that peacekeepers are able to discharge their duties safely

and efficiently. Enhanced triangular cooperation is essential to implementing resolutions 2436 (2018) and 2518 (2020), as well as other relevant outcomes that address peacekeeping performance and bolster the safety and security of peacekeepers.

It is imperative that modern technologies that assist with explosive ordnance detection, management and disposal be made available to all mission settings whenever possible and transferred to host countries that grapple with the residual risks of improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and other remnants of war. IEDs have claimed the lives of far too many uniformed and civilian personnel. It is also crucial that peacekeepers be provided with safe and effective COVID-19 vaccines to protect them and the host communities in which they are deployed.

To conclude, my delegation commends all efforts to modernize peacekeeping through measures such as the Secretary-General's Action for Peacekeeping initiative and the Strategy for the Digital Transformation of United Nations Peacekeeping. We also welcome all efforts to increase the use of renewable energy technology in United Nations peacekeeping missions. Those technologies improve climate compliance, enhance mission efficiency and bolster the safety and security of United Nations personnel.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines encourages the further integration of modern technology into peacekeeping and emphasizes that those technologies must always be reliable, gender-responsive and environmentally friendly, while meeting the practical requirements of peacekeepers in the field. They must also, in every circumstance, fulfil the national needs and priorities of the host countries in which they are deployed.

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We welcome your personal participation, Sir, in today's events. We highly appreciate your country's contribution to United Nations peacekeeping efforts. India is not only one of the biggest troop contributors to peacekeeping operations, but also actively participates in discussions at the United Nations aimed at improving the performance of peacekeepers and their working conditions. It therefore comes as no surprise that those issues have taken centre stage during India's presidency of the Council.

We are grateful to you, Sir, for raising such important issues as ensuring the safety and security

of Blue Helmets and the use of new technologies in peacekeeping. We supported the initiative to prepare the two respective documents and value the work done by your country's delegation. As a result, we have before us genuinely balanced documents that take into account the interests of all Council members. For that reason, Russia co-sponsored resolution 2589 (2021), on accountability for crimes committed against peacekeepers.

The Blue Helmets do their noble duty in extremely complex and dangerous circumstances, risking their lives on a daily basis, and their contribution to the business of peace is invaluable. Therefore, crimes committed against peacekeepers, the investigation of such crimes and accountability for those responsible require our special attention. We need to create mechanisms that allow us to ensure the administration of justice in a swift and unprejudiced way in all such cases.

In that regard, of particular importance is cooperation from the host country, troop- and police-contributing countries and the Secretariat, which all need to work in harmony and good faith and with the necessary level of transparency. It is our view that the resolution adopted today has removed some of the existing gaps in that area.

As for the need to equip peacekeepers with modern equipment, that is undeniable. We live in a rapidly changing world, owing to technology, and, of course, new technologies in peacekeeping are a critical issue, many aspects of which have yet to be discussed by Member States with a view to developing shared approaches. The Secretariat should closely follow such discussions and incorporate their results into its work. At this stage, Member States have decided that the use of new technologies by the Blue Helmets and other United Nations personnel must be aimed at ensuring the safety and security of civilians and peacekeepers themselves.

The future lies in cutting-edge technology, but where there is opportunity, there is also risk. The introduction and use of information and digital technologies by peacekeepers must not undermine the sovereignty of the host State or its neighbours, or violate the privacy of its citizens. The issue is particularly sensitive with regard to the United Nations — an organization with a unique reputation for justice and impartiality, and whose main task is to selflessly help those most in need.

We thank the Secretary-General for the assessments that he made in his briefing. Against the backdrop of adapting the United Nations system to new challenges and the diversification of international mechanisms and instruments for the prevention and resolution of crises, United Nations peacekeeping will undoubtedly remain one of the most effective instruments for resolving conflicts and providing assistance in State-building at the initial post-crisis stage.

At the same time, there are often situations in which peacekeeping operations have been deployed for decades without any guarantee of tangible progress in resolving or eradicating the root causes of conflict. We must therefore reflect on the effectiveness of mandates and the appropriateness of expanding them to the detriment of the responsibility of States for their own internal political processes. An equally important role is played by the quality of interactions with the authorities of the host country.

In this context, we are convinced that the effectiveness of peacekeeping efforts does not always depend on technological equipment, gender representation or the number of advisers on all kinds of issues that are not core to the peacekeeping activity. It should not be forgotten that overcoming political tensions is the alpha and omega of United Nations effectiveness and its peacekeeping operations.

The history of conflicts in various regions of the world has demonstrated that quality and painstaking political and mediation efforts, together with respect for the sovereignty of States, help eradicate the root causes of conflicts, rather than merely treat the symptoms. Facilitating a political settlement must be the top priority in peacekeeping. Otherwise, although there may be a temporary remission, crises run the risk of returning.

Mrs. Buenrostro Massieu (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): We welcome you, Sir, to the Security Council and acknowledge the presence of the Secretary-General and the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Estonia. Mexico is grateful for the convening of this open debate and the briefing by the Secretary-General.

The complexity of today's armed conflicts and their multidimensional nature demand truly comprehensive solutions. That is why the availability and effective use of technologies are imperative in the context of twenty-first century peacekeeping. In the context of rapid technological change, we have the potential to resolve operational and tactical challenges, including improving effective deployment, supporting mandate implementation and strengthening the security of personnel in the field and communities of the host country. They can also play a critical role in early-warning mechanisms, enabling us to prevent serious humanitarian crises, mass atrocities and other human rights violations.

We Member States must support United Nations efforts to strengthen technological capabilities that respond to needs on the ground. We urge the Department of Peace Operations and the Department of Field Support to strengthen engagement with Member States to identify challenges and opportunities. We also take note of the Strategy for the Digital Transformation of United Nations Peacekeeping, which is in line with the Secretary-General's road map for digital cooperation (A/74/821), in which we appreciate the collaborative work among various entities of the United Nations system. In that regard, I note the adoption yesterday by the General Assembly of resolution 75/316, on the impact of rapid technological change on the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and targets, submitted by my country, Mexico, in which the leadership role that the United Nations must assume in matters of technology, science and innovation is emphasized.

The lessons learned from the pandemic show us that remote information-sharing can also benefit from the involvement of other United Nations entities, funds and programmes, humanitarian actors in the field and civil society representatives. Those aspects must be considered in adjusting the mandates of peace operations, while taking into account the recommendations of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations, known as the C-34, and of troop- and personnel-contributing countries.

Mexico believes that the upcoming United Nations Peacekeeping Ministerial Conference, to be held in Seoul in December, will provide the opportunity to delve into the cross-cutting issues of technologies and the development of medical capabilities. My country also reiterates its support for the commitments of the Action for Peacekeeping Plus initiative with regard to the use of technology to improve the early detection of threats. We support the call for peacekeeping operations to be able to rely on new technologies providing them with timely, routine and emergency medical assistance. We also note that the use of social media as part of a concerted strategic information operation

can strengthen relationships between missions and the communities in which they operate.

As my country recognizes that constant training and capacity-building are essential to ensuring the security of peacekeepers, the Mexican Joint Training Centre for Peace Operations provides training that uses technological elements in the learning process, such as laboratories and simulators that replicate the complex conditions faced by deployed personnel. Mexico also supports technological innovations to reduce the environmental footprint of peace operations.

I will conclude by stressing that it is imperative for peacekeeping missions to periodically review their management and analysis practices, based on the use of technology, as a way to fulfil their mandate and respond to changing environments. We also urge the relevant entities of the United Nations system to maintain the dialogue and cooperation necessary to contribute to the digital transformation of peacekeeping, with a view to strengthening multilateralism. I also take this opportunity to extend my appreciation to the delegation of India for leading negotiations on the adoption of resolution 2589 (2021) and presidential statement S/PRST/2021/17 on the subject bringing us together today.

Ms. Byrne Nason (Ireland): I am delighted to welcome you among us in the Chamber, Mr. Minister. I want to thank India most sincerely for organizing this important discussion and welcome the adoption of presidential statement S/PRST/2021/17 on this issue.

Ireland shares with India a deep and long-standing commitment to peacekeeping. Indeed, Irish and Indian troops today proudly serve side by side in the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon and the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force in the noble service of humankind.

For all peacekeeping nations, the safety and security of our peacekeepers are paramount. When lives are lost, there can be no impunity for those responsible. For that reason, we also very much welcome the adoption today of resolution 2589 (2021), on addressing impunity for crimes against peacekeepers, which we are pleased to co-sponsor.

As others have said today, the risks our peacekeepers face are wide-ranging and constantly evolving — from improvised explosive devices to complex attacks to drone technology. Effectively addressing those threats

requires the consideration of the safety and security of peacekeepers throughout the mission cycle, from inception to transition. Indeed, we now know that the period of reconfiguration and transition of peacekeeping missions heightens the risk of threats to both peacekeepers and civilians. Ensuring that transitions are properly managed, coordinated and organized helps to significantly reduce those risks. That is a priority for Ireland on the Security Council and we look forward to hosting a ministerial-level meeting on that subject during our upcoming presidency in September.

We have learned through bitter experience that technologies can be used to destabilize or exacerbate conflict. However, we also know that technologies can also offer valuable assistance in equipping and resourcing peacekeepers in peacekeeping operations and in fulfilling mission mandates. How we harness and manage new technologies is crucial.

As pointed out, enhancing situational awareness and early-warning mechanisms in missions, which can improve decision-making for the protection of United Nations personnel and the protection of civilians, is essential. Technology can also play an important role as a force multiplier. It has the potential to offer United Nations peacekeepers greater situational awareness and improved data analysis, thereby improving the safety and security of missions, while also increasing their effectiveness. That is also true particularly with regard to the protection of civilians. The United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant is a good example of how innovative technologies can be used effectively. We therefore welcome the Strategy for the Digital Transformation of United Nations Peacekeeping, which supports the use of technology across the Action for Peacekeeping themes, including performance, safety and security, politics, protection and peacebuilding.

In order to maximize the opportunities of technology, peacekeeping missions need to be adequately resourced. Training must also be designed to leverage the capabilities of technology. While gaps can arise in the levels of equipment and training available to peacekeepers, it is imperative that, at a minimum, all troop-contributing countries have equal access to self-protection technologies that support their critical safety and security. That includes through improving situational awareness and early warning, including through artificial intelligence.

We recognize the particular importance of unarmed, unmanned aerial vehicles, while emphasizing that their use must always be in compliance with international law and respect the core principles and values of the United Nations.

It is clear that our much valued peacekeepers should not be playing catch-up when it comes to new technologies. Armed groups are becoming ever more innovative in their use of emerging technology. In response, we must share valuable insights and we need to be equally innovative in how we mitigate the threat. That includes examining how armed groups exploit the accessibility of information and technology. Here, effective export controls are crucial.

Recognizing the growing importance of technologies and their risks to international peace and security means that we must stay ahead of the curve through innovations in multilateral diplomacy and digital development to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. To do that, we need greater cooperation and engagement with regional organizations, the private sector and civil society in order to responsibly develop and use technologies.

We need to ensure, literally, that no one is left behind as technology advances. In particular, we need technology that is gender-transformative, not gender-blind. The correct use of technology to support peacekeepers can be an enabling factor in support of improving the proportion of women peacekeepers — an aim I know we all, around the table, share.

As a country with a long-standing record of contributing to peacekeeping missions, Ireland is committed to continuing to share its experience and help build capacity with others to develop and use critical technology to ensure the safety and security of our peacekeepers.

The President: Before closing, I would like to again thank all participants who joined us today. I would also like to thank the delegations of member States that have so far submitted written statements on the subject of today's discussion. We look forward to receiving more of them. Those received by the end of the day will form part of the compilation of written statements.

The meeting rose at 11.45 a.m.