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Seventy-sixth year

8857th meeting

Tuesday, 14 September 2021, 10.20 a.m.

New York

Provisional

<i>President:</i>	Ms. Byrne Nason	(Ireland)
<i>Members:</i>	China	Mr. Dai Bing
	Estonia	Mr. Jürgenson
	France	Mrs. Broadhurst Estival
	India	Mr. Tirumurti
	Kenya	Mr. Kiboino
	Mexico	Mr. De la Fuente Ramírez
	Niger	Mr. Aougi
	Norway	Ms. Juul
	Russian Federation	Ms. Evstigneeva
	Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	Ms. DeShong
	Tunisia	Mr. Ladeb
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Kariuki
	United States of America	Mr. Mills
	Viet Nam	Mr. Pham

Agenda

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

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in the Sudan and the activities of the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in Sudan (S/2021/766)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

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

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in the Sudan and the activities of the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan (S/2021/766)

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 the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Mr. Volker Perthes, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Sudan and Head of the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in Sudan; and Ms. Hala Alkarib, Regional Director of the Strategic Initiative for Women in the Horn of Africa.

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/2021/766, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in the Sudan and the activities of the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan.

I now give the floor to Mr. Perthes.

Mr. Perthes: It is a pleasure to brief the Security Council again on the situation in the Sudan. Since my most recent briefing, in May (see S/2021/495), there has been some progress in the Sudan's transition, as well as continued setbacks and challenges. The violence in Darfur and the east of the country, the absence of justice and accountability and the difficult economic situation have continued to inflict hardship and suffering on the Sudanese population. The transitional Government has taken measures in an attempt to address those challenges and renew trust in the political transition.

In June, Prime Minister Hamdok launched a political initiative entitled "The National Crisis and Transition Issues — The Way Forward." In August, he established a follow-up mechanism, a form of Sudan-

Sudan dialogue, to reinvigorate and shape national consensus around key transitional objectives, including the reform of the military and security sector, the economy, justice and peace. The initiative enjoys broad support among the forces backing the transition and, if implemented, it can address expectations of the Sudanese people.

Just last week, the Forces for Freedom and Change — the ruling coalition in the transitional Government — agreed on a reformed and more inclusive structure. That is a welcome development that I hope will also lead to a swift formation of the Transitional Legislative Council with, as agreed in the Constitutional Document, at least 40 per cent women's participation.

There is also growing momentum to move forward on the preparations for constitution-making and elections. The Government has produced a draft law on the constitution-making process, which will now be subject to public consultations. The United Nations is providing technical support to the process, as well as on the drafting of the law on the national electoral commission. In line with the Prime Minister's initiative and the Juba Peace Agreement, I continue to encourage an inclusive dialogue on a road map for military and security sector reform. The United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan (UNITAMS) stands ready to provide technical support at the request of the Sudanese.

The Sudan's continued economic reforms allowed it, on 29 June, to reach the so-called decision point of the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative, thereby becoming eligible for debt relief. That is very important, as it will unlock critical financial resources to strengthen the Sudan's economy and improve social conditions. The Sudan must ensure that the most vulnerable segments of Sudanese society are protected.

I also commend the launch of the Sudanese Partnership Forum under Prime Minister Hamdok's leadership on 9 September, which should facilitate the coordination and alignment of development and humanitarian assistance between the State of the Sudan and its donors. Humanitarian organizations in the Sudan are advocating for timely and flexible funding, as humanitarian needs, largely driven by the economic crisis and increased intercommunal conflict, continue to rise. Between January and August this year, approximately 418,000 people were newly displaced as a result of conflicts and armed attacks across the Sudan,

mainly in Darfur, parts of Kordofan and the Blue Nile states. That is approximately six times as many newly displaced persons as in the same period last year.

On the regional front, I remain concerned about the impact of the conflict in Ethiopia on the Sudan, including the flow of refugees from Ethiopia to the Sudan, which the Sudan is dealing with in a very constructive way. Moreover, the tensions between the Sudan and Ethiopia over the Fashaqah border, as well as the stalemate over the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam, are persisting. I continue to urge all stakeholders to avoid further unnecessary escalation.

Following the Council's adoption of resolution 2579 (2021), UNITAMS has moved to refocus its efforts on the priority areas identified by the Council, including peace talks, ceasefire monitoring and support to the National Plan for the Protection of Civilians. In June, working closely with the mediator, South Sudan, UNITAMS facilitated negotiations between the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North Al-Hilu faction and the Government. Both sides made significant progress on key elements, yet they were unable to reach an agreement on a framework. We continue to engage both parties to advance the process and look forward to a return to talks in the near future.

In that context, alongside UN-Women and the United Nations Development Programme, UNITAMS facilitated the establishment of a gender working group to mainstream gender into the peace talks, including a women observers group inside the negotiation chamber.

In resolution 2579 (2021), the Council emphasized ceasefire monitoring in Darfur as a priority area for UNITAMS support to the Sudan. That is in line with the Juba Peace Agreement. On 30 June, the Chairperson of the Sovereign Council, Lieutenant General Abdel Fattah Al-Burhan, issued a series of decrees by which the Permanent Ceasefire Committee for Darfur and sectoral committees for the five states of Darfur were established. According to those decrees and in line with the Juba Peace Agreement, UNITAMS will serve as the Chair of those committees.

We have consequently begun to operationalize the Permanent Ceasefire Committee, starting with technical consultations on 5 and 6 September in Khartoum, which brought together all members of the Ceasefire Committee from the military, the armed groups and other key stakeholders to discuss concrete modalities for implementing a meaningful ceasefire

mechanism. Preparatory meetings were also held with the signatories to the Juba Peace Agreement, civil society, women's groups and the United Nations country team. Women's participation in the implementation of security arrangements remains a key concern and one of the conditions for the legitimacy and effectiveness of any ceasefire arrangement.

By chairing the Committee, UNITAMS will follow the provisions of the Juba Peace Agreement. The signatory parties will have to extend the necessary commitment so that the Committee can effectively fulfil its mandate. The parties — most Government and armed groups — have clearly conveyed to UNITAMS that they expect logistical and financial support from the international community for the implementation of the security arrangements. Indeed, if Member States want security to be stabilized in Darfur, they should not shy away from making resources available for, among other things, the training and support of the planned joint security keeping forces, the police and the demobilization and reintegration of fighters. However, the Sudan also needs to assume its own responsibility and begin implementing the security arrangements and reforms to gain such international support.

The expectations of the Permanent Ceasefire Committee are high and partially misplaced, particularly concerning the protection of civilians. While the Committee can contribute positively to stability in Darfur, its role and mandate remain distinct. The Permanent Ceasefire Committee is about monitoring, reporting and trying to mediate and reconcile the parties, but it is not about physical protection. The recent resurgence in intercommunal violence in Darfur therefore demonstrates the urgency of supporting the Sudanese police and of deploying the joint security keeping forces. The Ceasefire Committee is not, and cannot be, a substitute for those forces and their protection mandate.

I was encouraged that, on 5 September, the Sudanese Government convened the first high-level meeting of the Sudan's international partners with the national mechanism for the protection of civilians. Challenges, advances and needs in implementing the national plan were clearly expressed. On the same basis, our UNITAMS Police Advisory Unit then convened a joint workshop with the Sudanese Police Force to identify the needs and strengthen the capacities of the police for the protection of civilians, community policing

and other tasks, as well as to garner support from the international community.

UNITAMS has continued its efforts to maximize its impact in the priority areas through refocused Mission capacities. We have also accelerated our recruitment and deployment efforts and intensified cooperation with the United Nations country team. However, UNITAMS has also identified several critical gaps where the Mission will require additional capacity to provide scalable support, as expected by the Council. That applies in particular to the task of ceasefire monitoring in Darfur. For now, we have deployed a multidisciplinary advance team to support the operationalization of the Ceasefire Committee. We are recommending to the Secretary-General the establishment of an initial operational capability to allow UNITAMS to fulfil its roles as the Chair of the Permanent Ceasefire Committee, secretariat and Chair of the sectoral and area committees across Darfur's five states.

The concept for that deployment will be light and mobile, with a focus on facilitation and advisory functions and the capacity to deploy small teams to react to ceasefire violations when requested by the parties. It will not include an active United Nations field monitoring role, recognizing that such responsibility is primarily a function for the Sudanese parties.

Other priorities where we need additional resources pertain to my good offices function, where the need to deliver simultaneously on support for the peace talks and key transitional activities is straining our capacity. Moreover, we need to address gaps in the Mission's field network in critical hotspots, including in support of the Sudanese Police Force and with regard to critical operational and security enablers.

By filling critical gaps in what remains a modestly sized mission, I hope we can effectively respond to the evolving needs of the transition in the Sudan. The Sudan's challenges are immense, and the United Nations remains fully committed to supporting the State and society in addressing those challenges and realizing the aspirations of the Sudanese people for a peaceful, stable and democratic Sudan. We count on the robust backing of the Council as we navigate the path forward.

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

I now give the floor to Ms. Alkarib.

Ms. Alkarib: My name is Hala Alkarib, and I am the Regional Director of the Strategic Initiative for Women in the Horn of Africa, a feminist organization that advocates for the rights of grass-roots women across the Sudan, including in Darfur.

The Sudan today stands on the verge of mounting crises. The removal of Omer Al-Bashir's regime in 2019 revealed a rotten structure that must be urgently transformed. While there are frameworks for reform, their slow implementation is contributing to ongoing violence and is impacting the Sudan's already fragile economy, governance system and public institutions.

As was the case before the revolution, women are disproportionately affected by the ongoing violence, deterioration of services and slow pace of reform. The economic recession and the worst food crisis in the Sudan's history are pushing families to desperation. That is especially true for women who are mostly confined to informal labour, where they also face violence. Women in conflict-affected areas such as Darfur, Blue Nile, Nuba Mountains and Kordofan suffer from ethnic marginalization and poverty due to the previous regime's discriminatory policies. Furthermore, they remain at risk of rape, displacement and death due to ongoing conflict. The coronavirus disease pandemic is exacerbating all those challenges for women, especially gender-based violence.

Despite women leading the revolution, we have been shut out from equally and meaningfully participating in every step of the transition. Our calls to end sexual violence, ensure just family laws and enable equal access to resources, education and employment continue to be ignored. Instead, disrespect for women's rights has encouraged those who seek to violate them. Earlier this year, a group of men attacked women in the streets of Khartoum for lack of modesty. Such occurrences have generated a real fear for safety and are pushing women out of public life; they are also making an inclusive and democratic transformation in the Sudan more difficult.

This is the Sudan today — where women wonder if they are better off than they were under Al-Bashir's oppressive regime. I would like to highlight three areas for the Security Council that must be urgently addressed.

The first is the need to ensure women's full, equal and meaningful participation and leadership throughout the transitional Government bodies and in the ongoing peace processes. Despite the 40 per cent

quota demanded in the Constitutional Declaration, women are still fighting for representation. Only one woman sits on the Sovereign Council. Women serve as only four of 26 ministers in the Cabinet and two of 18 state governors. In addition, in Darfur and elsewhere, officials from the former regime dominate the local authorities and executive administrations, conveying little hope that reform is on the way. How can we take the transitional Government's commitments seriously when women are so poorly represented politically and perpetrators of violence remain in positions of authority?

Women continue to advocate for representation in the country's peace processes. Yet the modern history of the Sudan is littered with peace agreements that have failed because they excluded women. We must learn from our mistakes or else risk making them again. Women must be given the space to speak to the impact of war on their communities and to share their vision for the Sudan's future.

The second is the need to urgently reform the legal system to ensure protection for women's rights, including the prevention of gender-based violence. That is critical to enable women to fully participate in public life. The transitional Government's efforts to enact legal reform have so far failed to adequately tackle systemic discrimination against women and girls in the Sudan. For example, the Sudan's Criminal Act and the Personal Status Law both continue to protect perpetrators of violence against women and girls. That includes permitting child marriage for girls as young as 10 years old and empowering male guardians to control women's right to marriage, divorce, custody and citizenship.

Furthermore, women continue to be arrested for so-called morality transgressions, despite the repeal of the Sudan's Public Order Law. The punishments are brutal, including imprisonment and, in certain cases, execution. Other inhumane forms of punishment and torture, such as amputation and crucifixion, are still practiced under Sudanese law. Women and girls who are poor, internally displaced, refugees or live in areas of armed conflict are the most vulnerable to those punishments. Such laws and practices fly in the face of the Sudan's international and regional obligations to uphold human rights law.

Thirdly, the transitional Government of the Sudan must ensure that inclusive and gender-sensitive security

sector reform be urgently operationalized. Since the transitional Government came into power, extrajudicial killings and the rape of civilians have continued to occur in Darfur, as well as in Kassala and Port Sudan in the east. The uncontrolled presence of armed militias in civilian areas in Darfur and other parts of the country has led to an increase in sexual violence, which is perpetrated with impunity. Such concerning trends not only compromise the Sudan's chances of achieving a peaceful transition, but risk the country slipping back into chaos.

I welcome the National Plan for the Protection of Civilians as a framework for mitigating the ongoing violence. However, I am concerned that only the political elite will be involved in its execution. The United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan (UNITAMS) must ensure that the design and implementation of the Plan's activities include women as leaders and active participants. UNITAMS must support the transitional Government to work with existing platforms, such as Darfur women's protection networks and women's civil society organizations, which have intimate knowledge of good practice interventions grounded in decades of experience.

Critically, women's rights must be central to enacting any and all security sector and legal reforms if we are to achieve meaningful change. The transitional Government plays an important role in that regard and must set a precedent for the nation by calling for investigations into crimes and ensuring justice. That is particularly important in Darfur, where just last week a 17-year-old girl was gang raped by seven men. That also holds true for the Khartoum massacre on 3 June 2019, where over 100 peaceful protesters were killed and at least 70 women protesters were raped.

I would like to remind the Security Council that the Sudan is currently under the control of a hybrid Government of Sudanese civilians, politicians and military, whose mandate was given to them by millions of Sudanese people who took to the streets in 2019. The legitimacy the Government holds will be erased if it fails to build the foundation needed for a new inclusive, democratically elected Government in 2024.

In conclusion, I urge the Security Council to call on all parties to fulfil their obligations and commitments under the Constitutional Declaration, the Juba Peace Agreement and the National Plan for the Protection of

Civilians and to continue to use all available tools to ensure accountability and compliance.

I call for the full, equal and meaningful participation and leadership of diverse women, youth and civil society at all stages of peace and political processes.

I demand that the transitional Government realize the 40 per cent women quota for the Transitional Legislative Council in line with the Constitutional Declaration, and apply the quota to broader Government bodies, as well as the upcoming election laws. Furthermore, I call on the transitional Government to fulfil its intention, articulated by the Council of Ministers, to ratify the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and ensure the harmonization of domestic laws with the Convention without delay, in order to ensure the protection and promotion of the full scope of women's rights in the Sudan.

I call for accountability for all violations of human rights, including gender-based violence, that occurred before, during and after the revolution, on which there has been little to no progress.

The President: I thank Ms. Alkarib for her briefing.

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

Mr. Kariuki (United Kingdom): Let me begin by thanking Special Representative of the Secretary-General Perthes, Ms. Hala Alkarib and Ambassador Jürgenson for their briefings. I would like to make three key points in response to what we have heard today.

First, I would like to join Mr. Perthes in recognizing and commending the significant and continued progress towards a more peaceful, prosperous and democratic Sudan. We welcome Prime Minister Hamdok's initiative of 22 June and encourage the buy-in of all parts of the Government. We also commend the deepening cooperation between the Government and the International Criminal Court, particularly the recent visit of the Chief Prosecutor and the decision of the Sudanese Cabinet to transfer indictees to The Hague.

Secondly, I want to acknowledge that, despite that progress, significant challenges remain. Commitments are welcome, but they need to translate swiftly into concrete actions that improve the lives of Sudanese civilians. Increased intercommunal clashes, particularly in Darfur, are concerning. The plight of over 300,000

civilians displaced so far this year demonstrates the urgency of tackling intercommunal violence.

Ms. Alkarib has just given us a powerful account of the plight of women in the Sudan. We urge the Government to expedite the implementation of its National Plan for the Protection of Civilians and other efforts to prevent and reduce violence at the community level, including violence against women and girls. In that regard, we welcome the Sudanese Police Force's engagement with the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan (UNITAMS) and the formulation of a One United Nations protection of civilians strategy to support the Government's efforts.

We also urge the Government to build on the initial progress made in implementing the Juba Peace Agreement. We echo the Secretary-General's call for the timely formation of the monitoring and evaluation mechanism and urge the swift establishment of the peace commission.

In July, the Special Envoy of the United Kingdom and his United States and Norwegian counterparts joined Mr. Perthes to visit areas under the control of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLM/N) Abdelaziz Al-Hilu faction in support of peace talks. We welcome the talks between the Government and the SPLM/N Al-Hilu faction and continue to call for their swift resumption. We commend the role of UNITAMS in facilitating those talks, in particular efforts to strengthen women's meaningful participation and inclusion. I reiterate our call for those who remain outside the peace process to engage in it swiftly and without preconditions.

Thirdly, it is clear that, for the Government of the Sudan's efforts to be sustainable, they must be underpinned by a significant investment in peacebuilding. That is why the United Kingdom has provided early contributions to the Sudan peace fund. We commend the peacebuilding support already being provided to the Sudan by UNITAMS and the United Nations country team. In order to inform our future deliberations, we encourage Mr. Perthes to share findings of the Mission's State-level peacebuilding assessments with the Security Council. A joined-up approach across the United Nations system in conducting those assessments and in delivering its support to the Sudan will be crucial to maximize resources and impact.

In conclusion, the United Kingdom encourages continued partnership between the Government, UNITAMS, international partners and all stakeholders for the success of the Sudan's transition.

Mrs. Broadhurst Estival (France) (*spoke in French*): I also thank Special Representative Volker Perthes and Hala Alkarib for their briefings.

For my part, I would like to stress three points. France reiterates its full support for the democratic transition in the Sudan. We welcome the Government's economic reforms, which have made it possible to begin the process of debt relief. We take note of the initiative launched by the Prime Minister, which is called "the way forward", aimed at consolidating the Government's reform agenda. In this regard, we encourage consultation between the different components of the transition, the inclusion of civil society and the strengthening of the participation of women and youth. Progress has also been made with the ratification of important conventions on the protection of human rights and strengthened cooperation with the International Criminal Court and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

These efforts must continue, including the establishment of key transitional institutions, most notably the Transitional Legislative Council, with at least 40 per cent representation of women. We also call for further institution-building in the judicial field and in the fight against corruption.

France also remains concerned about the fragility in Darfur and in the east of the country. We call for the rapid implementation of the National Plan for the Protection of Civilians and the acceleration of the deployment of the joint force in Darfur, which were provided for in the Juba Peace Agreement. The protection of civilians, including humanitarian workers, and the guarantee of humanitarian access remain high priorities.

The inclusion of members of the parties is also essential. We call for settling the outstanding issues in the context of talks between the Government and Abdelaziz Al-Hilu. We also encourage Abdul Wahid Al-Nur's movement to join the peace process. We also welcome the Government's efforts aimed at engaging in dialogue in the east of the country in order to ease tensions in that region.

We are encouraged by the operationalization of the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance

Mission in the Sudan (UNITAMS) and the cooperation established between the Mission and the Sudanese authorities. In this regard, I commend the work of the Special Representative, UNITAMS and the entire United Nations country team, especially their efforts to facilitate peace talks and in supporting the implementation of the mechanisms provided for in the Juba Peace Agreement, as well as in supporting the participation of women in the peace process. The strengthening of police and judicial capacities and the fight against the risk posed by mines are also very important aspects of their involvement. France attaches particular importance to UNITAMS technical assistance for the protection of civilians, in particular women and children.

Finally, France is also attentive to regional challenges that could jeopardize the success of the transition. The crisis in Tigray and the arrival of Ethiopian refugees are one of the main destabilizing factors for the Sudanese economy. We are committed, bilaterally and on a European basis, to assist Khartoum in responding to this emergency. We also support the mediation efforts of the African Union and encourage the countries of the region to resume talks to resolve the Al-Fashaqah and Renaissance Dam disputes.

Mr. Dai Bing (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Volker Perthes, for his briefing, and I welcome the presence of the representative of the Sudan at today's meeting. I also listened carefully to Ms. Alkarib's briefing.

Positive progress has been made in the Sudan's political process. This is inextricably attributable to the joint efforts of the Sudanese authorities and other stakeholders. We need to build on this encouraging momentum and keep injecting fresh impetus into the Sudan's peace process and development. In this context, I would like to make the following points.

First, we must take a multipronged approach to advance the political process. The Sudanese Government has invested a deal of effort in the implementation of the Juba Peace Agreement. What they have achieved is plainly visible to all. China commends the framework of comprehensive political settlement proposed by the Sudanese authorities, which is conducive to easing the tensions between the parties and promoting the implementation of the Peace Agreement.

We hope the Sudan will make fresh headway in, inter alia, forming the Transitional Legislative Council and preparing for general elections. China supports the Government in carrying on peace talks with the non-signatories to the Peace Agreement and urges the latter to join the peace process as soon as possible.

China is pleased to see that the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan (UNITAMS) has been bolstering its configuration and enhancing its capacity for mandate implementation. UNITAMS should, as it has been mandated to do, closely align its activities with the strategic priorities of the Sudan and improve the relevance and effectiveness of its work on an ongoing basis.

Secondly, efforts must be ramped up to keep Darfur stable. The situation in Darfur has markedly improved over the last few years. Following the exit of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur, the Sovereignty Council in the Sudan and the Transitional Government have launched a raft of initiatives including establishing multiple mechanisms, such as the Joint High Military Committee for Security Arrangements, the Permanent Ceasefire Committee and sectoral and area committees, to implement the security arrangements under the Peace Agreement more quickly. Recently, precipitated by such factors as the coronavirus disease and natural disasters, sporadic security incidents and intercommunal clashes have occurred in Darfur. The international community should lend strong support to help the Sudan enhance its security capacity-building to better protect civilians in Darfur.

Thirdly, it is imperative to identify the right priorities for economic development and national reconstruction. The Sudanese Government has been working hard to address its challenges, maintain macroeconomic stability and reform its economy. However, the country's economic woes remain dire, with acute shortages of water and electricity and the scarcity of daily necessities. In June this year, the International Monetary Fund announced that the Sudan had reached the decision point of the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative. The international community, especially developed countries, should effectively fulfil their debt-relief and debt-suspension commitments, support Sudan's development in infrastructure, agriculture and other key sectors, and help the country achieve universal education and poverty eradication to

eliminate the root causes of conflict, thereby laying a solid foundation for lasting peace in the Sudan.

In the same breath, I would like to underscore that resolution 2562 (2021) calls for clear and feasible key benchmarks for adjusting the sanctions measures in respect of the Sudan. The current situation in the Sudan, especially in Darfur, has improved significantly, and lifting these sanctions as soon as possible is consistent with the prevailing dynamics on the ground. The benchmarks set by the Security Council should be clear, realistic, feasible and in line with the realities of the Sudan. China is ready to play a constructive role to this end.

The Sudan is at a critical stage in its transition from peacekeeping to peacebuilding. At last week's Security Council open debate, Secretary-General Guterres noted that

“[p]eacekeeping missions can help put the country on the right track, but only national stakeholders can keep it there over the long term” (*S/PV.8851, p. 2*).

The Sudanese authorities should continue to play a leading role, and all stakeholders should remain united. China is ready to work with the rest of the international community to scale up our collective assistance and support for the Sudan in the interests of lasting peace and development in the country.

Mr. Ladeb (Tunisia): I have the honour to make this statement on behalf of the three African members of the Security Council — Kenya, the Niger and Tunisia — as well as Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (A3+1).

We thank the Secretary-General for his report highlighting the activities of the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan (UNITAMS) and recent developments in the country (S/2021/766). We also thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of UNITAMS, Mr. Volker Perthes, and Ms. Hala Alkarib for their briefings, and we welcome the participation of the representative of the Sudan in today's meeting.

The A3+1 welcomes the recent progress made by the Government of the Sudan in making progress on the political transition track despite acute economic and humanitarian challenges. While commending the commitment and efforts made by the Sudanese authorities to implement the Juba Peace Agreement, in particular, the formation of the Joint High Military Committee for Security Arrangements, the Darfur

Permanent Ceasefire Committee and related sectoral and area committees, we reiterate our call to all signatories to continue to implement the key provisions of the Juba Peace Agreement in order to consolidate the gains made thus far.

We also emphasize that the establishment of the remaining key transitional institutions is critical for advancing an inclusive and sustainable political transition. Peace in the Sudan will not be complete until all conflicts end. The A3+1 remains concerned about the sporadic intercommunal violence, as well as clashes between Government forces and certain non-signatory armed groups. The incidents attest to the need for continued efforts to address the root causes of the conflicts.

The A3+1 welcomes the progress made in the talks between the transitional Government and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N) Abdelaziz Al-Hilu faction and urges both parties to build on that initial progress and advance a constructive framework for addressing their remaining differences. We commend UNITAMS on its contribution to facilitating those talks, as part of its efforts to support the peace process and the implementation of the Juba Peace Agreement. The A3+1 also urges those who have not yet joined the peace process to do so without delay in order to give sustainable and inclusive peace a chance in the Sudan.

The A3+1 welcomes the Sudanese Government's commitment and efforts to provide for the full protection of civilians through the implementation of the National Plan for the Protection of Civilians as well as promotion of dialogue and reconciliation among the different ethnic communities. We welcome the Sudan's ratification of the 1984 Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment and its accession to the 2006 International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, on 9 September.

We also commend the steps taken by the transitional Government to improve its child protection legislation, including the Cabinet's decision that the Sudan would withdraw its reservations to the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child related to child marriage, the right of married pregnant girls to education and child rights to privacy.

The peace process in the Sudan faces serious challenges, particularly the lack of necessary financial

and technical resources needed for the implementation of the Juba Peace Agreement. In that regard, the A3+1 welcomes the establishment of the Sudan peace fund. While we thank Germany, Switzerland and the United Kingdom for their contributions, we call on all the Sudan's partners to support the initiative and facilitate its effective and efficient operationalization.

We encourage all parties to ensure gender equality in decision-making structures and call on international partners to support the Sudan in fulfilling its national women and peace and security agenda. In that regard, we commend the support provided by UNITAMS to the Sudanese authorities to strengthen women's participation and inclusion in the peace process, in cooperation with UN-Women and the United Nations Development Programme.

On the economic front, the A3+1 commends the efforts of the Sudanese authorities, including stringent economic reforms undertaken to pave the way for the country to begin receiving debt relief under the enhanced Highly Indebted Poor Countries Initiative, despite the difficulties related to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and the regional context. In that connection, the A3+1 encourages the transitional Government to continue its crucial economic reforms, with continued international support, to ease the heavy debt burden inherited from the past for a prosperous future for all Sudanese.

The already-dire humanitarian situation in the Sudan has been further aggravated by the economic crisis, food insecurity, COVID-19, the adverse effects of climate change, intercommunal violence and the prolonged displacement of populations, as well as the recent refugee crisis in the east. In that regard, we commend the Sudanese for hosting the refugees concerned and sharing resources with them. The difficult situation, which affects more than 13 million people, calls for us to show responsibility and solidarity with the Sudan, with a view to mitigating the impact of the humanitarian situation on the current peacebuilding dynamics in the country.

The A3+1 commends the progress made in the establishment of UNITAMS and accordingly welcomes the signing of the status-of-mission agreement on 4 July. We commend UNITAMS for the various support and training activities that it is undertaking within its mandate to assist the political transition, facilitate the implementation of the Juba Peace Agreement and

support Sudanese-led peacebuilding, the protection of civilians and the rule of law.

We call on UNITAMS to continue working closely with the transitional authorities to facilitate the expeditious implementation of the reform agenda and enhance its assistance in the mobilization of economic and development assistance and the coordination of humanitarian and peacebuilding support.

In conclusion, we hope that close cooperation with UNITAMS and the country team and strong support from the international community behind a unified Security Council will help the country address those challenges so that it can complete its historic transition and fulfil the Sudanese people's aspirations to achieve democracy, peace and prosperity.

Mr. Tirumurti (India): Let me begin by thanking Mr. Volker Perthes, Special Representative of the Secretary-General, for his detailed briefing on the activities of the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan (UNITAMS), centred around the Mission's four pillars. I also thank Ms. Hala Alkarib for her insights, and I welcome the representative of the Sudan to this meeting.

The progress made by the Sudanese authorities in the past three months has been reassuring, and we appreciate the initiatives taken. The implementation of the Juba Peace Agreement is on track with the appointment of Governors in North Darfur, West Darfur and the Blue Nile states. The talks between the transitional Government and the major non-signatory group — the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N) Abdelaziz Al-Hilu faction — have made progress, and the SPLM-N Abdelaziz Al-Hilu faction and the Sudanese Liberation Army have signed a political declaration.

The transitional authorities have announced initial measures to begin the implementation of the Juba Peace Agreement security arrangements, including the establishment of the Joint High Military Committee, the Permanent Ceasefire Committee and sectoral and area committees. The implementation of the National Plan for the Protection of Civilians has also seen forward movement. There has been support for the Prime Minister's national initiative on transitional challenges, announced on 22 June. Those developments reflect the continuing determination and commitment of the Sudanese leadership towards a democratic transition, and we take positive note of them.

At the same time, we also note the delays in the establishment of important transitional institutions. We hope that they will be resolved soon, while also adhering to the criteria concerning the representation for women in the Transitional Legislative Council. We underline the need for an inclusive transition fully involving women in peacebuilding and progress.

On the economic front, the Sudan has made important strides in its macroeconomic agenda and has continued to implement economic reforms. Those steps have helped the Sudan reach the decision point for the Highly Indebted Poor Countries Initiative and unlock debt relief and funds for socioeconomic programmes. We welcome the financial assistance extended by the Sudan's international partners, as well as the establishment of the Sudan peace fund to support peacebuilding activities. All those positive steps will ensure the emergence of meaningful opportunities in development areas in the Sudan.

On the security front, the transitional Government has continued to make efforts to provide the protection of civilians in Darfur through the deployment of joint Government forces to de-escalate violence and calm tensions. Those are positive developments that reflect the broadening of governance structures and the sustained commitment of the authorities to implement the National Plan for the Protection of Civilians. The transitional Government has also taken steps to improve child protection legislation.

It is matter of concern that intercommunal clashes have continued to be the main source of insecurity. There have been reports of incidents of criminality, targeting the United Nations and its personnel, during the reporting period. We encourage the transitional Government to take measures to ensure the safety and security of United Nations personnel and its premises, in line with the new status-of-mission agreement, signed on 4 July. We also encourage the implementation of assurances and guarantees given with regard to the protection of civilians and that humanitarian concerns be urgently addressed.

With respect to the drawdown of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID), we take note of the high level of coordination between the Sudanese Joint Task Force and UNAMID, and the commitment to facilitating the administration process. We hope that, at the central and state levels alike, all efforts will continue to be made

by the Sudanese authorities to make the drawdown and liquidation an example of effective collaboration between the United Nations and the Sudan. The full operationalization of UNITAMS and close engagement with the transitional authorities will be a determining factor in expediting the transitional phase and moving towards the drafting of the Constitution and preparations for elections.

Over the years, India has assisted the Sudan with several projects under concessional lines of credit, capacity-building and humanitarian assistance, by supplying food and lifesaving drugs.

In conclusion, as the Sudan makes confident strides towards a brighter future, India remains committed to supporting Sudan and its people in this political transition.

Mr. Mills (United States of America): I thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Perthes for his comprehensive briefing. Let me give a special thanks to Ms. Alkarib for her powerful statement. At a time when we hear often competing statements about the situation in the Sudan, it is good to have a voice that gives us some ground truth about the realities facing the female half of the Sudanese population. I therefore thank her very much.

Let me reiterate that the United States fully supports the mandate of the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in Sudan (UNITAMS) to assist in the Sudan's democratic transition, the protection of civilians and the implementation of the Juba Peace Agreement. However, we share the Secretary-General's concern about the heightened risk to civilians, amid continued intercommunal clashes and the resumption of violence. The root causes of violence in Darfur persist, with many areas continuing to suffer intercommunal conflict, abuse of human rights and large-scale population displacements.

Sudanese authorities have the primary responsibility to protect civilians. The United States therefore welcomes, as others have done, the National Plan for the Protections of Civilians. We continue to urge its full implementation, particularly in developing community policing initiatives for displaced persons in Darfur. Sudanese leaders must enable the full vetting of Darfur's new joint security force, so that all stakeholders may have confidence in its troops. UNITAMS is there to assist in building trust between the Darfuris and the joint force.

In addition to protecting civilians, the Government must hold accountable those responsible for perpetrating human rights abuses and violations. The United States welcomes the Government's initiative to enhance the implementation of the Juba Agreement and advance reforms that address the root causes of violence in Darfur, including provisions on transitional justice and land reform. However, we note that Sudanese authorities have yet to stand up the transitional legislative council or make progress in meeting other key benchmarks, such as the constitutional drafting process, on which we welcome the technical assistance of UNITAMS.

Moving now to the liquidation of UNAMID, the United States remains concerned about potential security risks to United Nations personnel and the disposition of assets at UNAMID's former logistics base at El Fasher. We strongly encourage the United Nations to continue to use its good offices with leaders in Darfur to ensure that the liquidation of UNAMID concludes without threat or interruption. We again note that Sudanese authorities have the responsibility to protect the former UNAMID team sites to prevent further violence and looting. Those unit assets were donated to the people of the Sudan, who continue to face severe economic hardship, daily interruptions of water and electricity and acute shortages of fuel and medical supplies.

Let me end by saying that the United States remains strongly committed to the people of the Sudan and to working closely with the transition Government, our fellow members of the Council and all stakeholders to support the Sudan's path forward.

Ms. Juul (Norway): I thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Perthes for his comprehensive briefing today. I also give a special thanks to Hala Alkarib for being with us and sharing her insights and experiences. Sudanese women made the revolution, and their full, equal and meaningful participation is key to the success of the transition towards a democratic Sudan.

Norway is encouraged to see the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in Sudan (UNITAMS) scaling up its country presence and enabling increased cooperation with the Government of the Sudan at all levels. The Government's efforts to facilitate, advise and coordinate with the United Nations are much appreciated. We also welcome the commitment to humanitarian reform and the fact that the preparations for electoral commissions and

Constitution-making are under way. Strengthening the capacity of authorities and Government bodies, at all levels, will help maximize the impact of international support and funding. Including women in decision-making is an efficient way of strengthening both capacity and legitimacy.

We commend the Government and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North Al-Hilu faction for their efforts towards a future peace agreement. Together with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Troika colleagues, Norway will continue to support that process. I would also like to note the key efforts of UNITAMS, UN-Women, and the United Nations Development Programme in promoting women observers and gender perspectives. We acknowledge the Government's first step in implementing the National Plan for the Protection of Civilians.

The training of 500 women police on the issue of internally displaced persons (IDPs), the establishment of 50 gender desks and 18 family-child protection units in the states are only some of the examples of progress on protection and security sector reform. The constructive engagement between UNITAMS and the Government of the Sudan on the mechanism on children in armed conflict is another.

Norway looks forward to co-hosting a side event, in support of the Sudan's transition, with the Secretary-General on 30 September, both to highlight those positive developments and results achieved, almost halfway into the transitional period, and engage partners towards further support of a peaceful and democratic Sudan.

As much as we welcome the progress made, significant challenges remain. Some 9.8 million people are severely food insecure and the situation for many IDPs, especially in Darfur, is worsening. In some areas, we see intercommunal conflicts and armed attacks on the rise. Conflict-related sexual violence continues. The recent flooding and outbreaks of diseases are another worry. The delays in implementing the Juba Peace Agreement and the National Plan for the Protection of Civilians are also leaving the population vulnerable.

It is the Government's responsibility to implement the security arrangements in the Peace Agreement, in collaboration with peace partners. The rapid formation of the Agreement's monitoring and evaluation mechanism is now critical.

We understand that the establishment of the joint protection force in Darfur is under way. We urge the inclusion of a significant percentage of women in the security, military and police forces — building on their experiences as peacebuilders, peacekeepers and community leaders.

Finally, the situation in the Horn of Africa is fragile. We thank the Sudan for its hospitality in receiving and hosting Ethiopian refugees and keeping the border open. We welcome Prime Minister Hamdok's efforts as Chair of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development to find a political solution to the conflict in Ethiopia, as well as in South Sudan.

The Sudan is, in many ways, a beacon of hope in an increasingly troubled region. We, as international partners, must offer our support to the Government as it works towards irreversible progress for the Sudan's women, men, girls and boys.

Mr. Jürgenson (Estonia): I join others in thanking the briefers for their insightful interventions. I also warmly welcome the participation of the representative of the Sudan in this meeting.

At the outset, I would like to commend the bravery and resilience of Sudanese women, without whom the Sudan would not be on the path towards its historic transition. It is clear that neither a sustainable peace nor a healthy democracy can be achieved without the meaningful participation of women. Therefore, we urge the transitional Government to redouble its efforts to make women's full, equal and meaningful participation — including in decision-making bodies — a reality.

Estonia welcomes the progress that the Sudan continues to make in its transition, including the economic reforms and the entry into force of laws on the anti-corruption, transitional justice and peace commissions. We also welcome the Prime Minister's initiative of 22 June, which is aimed at responding to the demands of the population.

However, we recognize that the transition is facing multiple challenges. For the transition to stay on course, as envisioned by the revolution and the Constitutional Declaration, the importance of institution-building cannot be overemphasized, as institutions form the backbone of any democracy. Therefore, we urge the transitional authorities to expedite the formation of key transitional institutions, including the Transitional

Legislative Council, with 40 per cent representation of women.

Estonia welcomes the efforts to implement the Juba Peace Agreement, including the establishment of the National High Committee and subcommittees. We also welcome the enhanced cooperation with the International Criminal Court. However, there is a clear need to accelerate the implementation of the Juba Peace Agreement in order to respond to the hopes of the population to live in peace. For that reason, we urge the transitional Government to prioritize the operationalization of the committees to help to address pressing security challenges. It is also important to continue efforts to encourage those parties that have not yet joined the Peace Agreement to do so urgently.

Despite the abovementioned progress, one persistent concern is the precarious security situation, particularly in some parts of Darfur, and the devastating consequences of intercommunal violence. We urge the transitional Government to accelerate the implementation of its National Plan for the Protection of Civilians and call for urgent deployment of the joint security forces. Efforts must be redoubled to ensure the safety of civilians, including women and children. Perpetrators of violence must be held accountable, as there will be no peace without justice.

To conclude, we welcome the progress that the Sudan has made while acknowledging that a long road lies ahead. However, the Sudan will not have to walk that path alone, as the international community stands firmly behind the Sudan's historic transition. We hope that the Sudan and the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan will continue to strengthen their cooperation with the purpose of making tangible progress, including in the areas of transition, peace and civilian protection. I reiterate Estonia's full support to the Sudanese people in achieving democracy, peace and prosperity.

Mr. De la Fuente Ramírez (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Special Representative Perthes for his briefing and express my appreciation in particular to Ms. Hala Alkarib, whose contribution is of great value to the Council. I also warmly welcome the presence of the representative of the Sudan at this meeting.

Two years after the revolution of 2019, Mexico acknowledges the efforts of the Government of the Sudan to move forward in its transitional phase. Many challenges remain and will require coordinated and

sustained action by all actors involved. The reforms being undertaken by the Government are an encouraging sign. We hope that the transition initiative announced on 22 June by Prime Minister Hamdok will offer new possibilities for the process. The initiative requires the commitment of and consensus-building among the civilian and military components of the transitional Government and must be based on an inclusive and transparent framework.

In that connection, the formation of institutions such as the legislative assembly, with at least 40 per cent women's participation, as well as other committees and commissions provided for in the Constitutional Document and the Juba Peace Agreement, are essential. Despite all of the above, it is clear that building a lasting peace in the Sudan requires that all armed groups that are not yet part of the peace process join and participate in the negotiations. The progress made in the discussions between the Government and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North Al-Hilu faction is positive, and we hope that the dialogue will soon resume.

Mexico also acknowledges the efforts of the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan (UNITAMS), UN-Women and the United Nations Development Programme to ensure the participation of a team of technical observers to promote a gender perspective in the framework of the dialogue process. The full, equal and meaningful participation of women is paramount for sustainable peace. To that end, it is essential to make headway in the approval of the commissions on women and gender equality and human rights. We also take note of the decree for the formation of a ministerial-level committee on resolution 1325 (2000) and encourage progress in the implementation of the national action plan on that resolution.

Mexico notes with concern the deteriorating security situation in Darfur and other areas of the country, as well as the increasing levels of intercommunal violence. Despite the formation of a Permanent Ceasefire Committee and the Joint High Military Committee for Security Arrangements, important security reforms are still pending. We urge the transitional Government to accelerate the implementation of the National Plan for the Protection of Civilians and to establish a joint security force in Darfur. We also urge Darfuri armed groups with a presence in neighbouring countries to withdraw immediately.

In that context, the widespread availability and proliferation of small arms and light weapons in Darfur continues to represent one of the main threats to security in the region. Among the commitments made by the Government in the National Plan for the Protections of Civilians and the Juba Peace Agreement is the collection and management of weapons. Progress in that area has been minimal and so we hope that the Sudanese Government will rely on UNITAMS on that front.

The rule of law is the backbone upon which the transition must be built. We welcome the Cabinet's adoption of a bill to ratify the Rome Statute, which is a major decision, and we urge the Sovereign Council to approve it at the earliest. The signing of the memorandum of understanding between the International Criminal Court's Office of the Prosecutor and the Ministry of Justice strengthens cooperation, and it is a priority for the authorities to take action to transfer to the Hague those individuals for whom arrest warrants have been issued so that they can be prosecuted. The ratification of the conventions against torture and enforced disappearances are also noteworthy and show significant progress towards accountability and the protection of human rights.

Mexico again urges the Sudan to consolidate progress in the implementation of the peace agreement and reiterates its support for UNITAMS in its important task of providing support and guidance in that regard.

Ms. Evstigneeva (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We thank Mr. Volker Perthes, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Sudan, for briefing us on developments in the Sudan. We listened carefully to the statement delivered by Ms. Hala Alkarib and welcome the Permanent Representative of the Sudan to this meeting.

The internal political situation in the Sudan remains complicated. It continues to be adversely affected by developments in Libya, the growing number of internally displaced persons and refugees from neighbouring African States and the spread of the coronavirus disease. The country is experiencing grave socioeconomic difficulties, which have been compounded by growing inflation and a decline in the national currency. We note the efforts of the Sudanese authorities to remedy the situation, including through the implementation of some difficult decisions. It is critical

to duly consider popular sentiment, as the population is the first to suffer from economic hardships.

In that regard, we trust that the activities of the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in Sudan (UNITAMS) will help to build Khartoum's capacity in such important areas as peacebuilding, socioeconomic reforms and the maintenance of domestic peace and law and order. In these circumstances, we attach great importance to maintaining balanced contacts with all Sudanese authorities and supporting their efforts to implement the 17 August 2019 Constitutional Declaration, aimed at ensuring domestic stabilization. We note the commitment of the Sudanese leadership to further normalizing the situation in Darfur.

The signing in October 2020 of the Juba Peace Agreement between the transitional Government of the Sudan and the Sudanese Revolutionary Front was a meaningful step towards achieving lasting stabilization in the country and solving many of its urgent problems. We note the measures taken by Khartoum to improve the situation and to implement the provisions of the agreement, including through the establishment of the relevant military committees.

We urgently call upon all armed groups that have not yet joined the peace process to do so now. It is regrettable that Abdul Wahid Al-Nur still refuses to engage in dialogue with Khartoum.

We look forward to the resumption of talks between the authorities and the Abdelaziz Al-Hilu faction of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North on the basis of the declaration of principles signed by the parties. We trust that UNITAMS will provide the necessary support for this process.

We welcome Khartoum's willingness to comprehensively address the root causes of conflicts and intercommunal disputes in various regions of the Sudan. The prompt implementation of the National Plan for the Protection of Civilians will certainly be an important step in that direction.

Peace is gradually being restored in Darfur. Sporadic intercommunal clashes in some states do not change the overall landscape. The coordinated response of the authorities to the incidents reaffirms Khartoum's commitment to promoting stabilization in a comprehensive manner.

We are satisfied with the Secretary-General's assessment that the drawdown of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur, which successfully carried out its tasks, is proceeding as planned and that there is close cooperation among representative of the United Nations, the African Union and the Sudan. We commend the efforts made by the leadership of the Secretariat in that regard.

Mr. Pham (Viet Nam): I thank Special Representative Perthes for his comprehensive briefings and Ms. Alkarib for her statement. I welcome the representative of the Sudan to today's meeting.

We commend the continued efforts of the Government of the Sudan in leading and implementing the country's transition, with the support from the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in Sudan (UNITAMS), in accordance with the principle of national ownership. While it is encouraging that the country has witnessed important progress in its transition from peacekeeping to peacebuilding, many challenges still remain.

In the light of the current situation, I wish to highlight several points.

First, it is imperative to further advance the transition process in line with the Juba Peace Agreement. The Sudanese parties should focus their efforts on finding ways and means to resolve their differences in order to implement the remaining provisions of the agreement. The establishment of the remaining key transitional institutions is equally important for advancing an inclusive and sustainable political transition. We reiterate our strong support for the full, active and meaningful participation of women and youth in all stages of the transition period and beyond. We call on the remaining armed groups in Darfur to join the peace talks as soon as possible and in good faith for the benefit of the Sudanese people and the peace and stability of the country. Furthermore, it is critical to continue to foster the collaboration between the United Nations, UNITAMS, the African Union, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, neighbouring countries and other international partners in supporting peace and development in the Sudan. We would also like to encourage the efforts of the Sudan and the countries of the region to promote cooperation and friendship based on common interests.

Secondly, we call on the Government of the Sudan to continue strengthening its primary responsibility

for the protection of civilians. It is critical to ensure the full implementation of the National Plan for the Protection of Civilians and to address the root causes of intercommunal violence in Darfur, including through reconciliation among different tribes and communities. More efforts should be focused on ensuring the protection of vulnerable groups, especially women and children. We commend the Government's efforts to improve its child protection legislation and call for the effective implementation of all protection frameworks, especially at the local level, with the strong support of the international community in the form of resources and capacity-building, as advocated by Special Representative Perthes. In addition, we commend the cooperation between the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) and the Government of the Sudan in ensuring the safe and orderly withdrawal of the Mission's personnel in recent months. We call on the Government to further facilitate UNAMID's liquidation process.

Thirdly, in order for the Sudan to effectively own the transition process and beyond, the international community must continue to support the Sudanese Government in addressing the coronavirus disease pandemic and the current socioeconomic challenges. It is concerning that there are a great many people in need of humanitarian assistance in the country. More than 9.8 million people are severely affected by food insecurity. Food prices in June had risen by almost three times compared to the same period last year. It is therefore critical that urgent efforts are made to provide food and basic services to the people in need, in particular vulnerable groups.

We commend the efforts of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank in providing initial debt relief for the Sudan and welcome the establishment of the Sudan peace fund. We call for further facilitation of the Sudan's access to international financial facilities, including through the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative, as the country's economy continues to face various challenges.

Fourthly, with regard to the issue of sanctions, it is necessary to establish clear and well-identified benchmarks and constantly review the measures in the light of the progress on the ground, in line with resolution 2562 (2021).

In conclusion, Viet Nam reaffirms its strong commitment to supporting the Sudan in this transitional

chapter towards long-term peace and stability. We commend the work of UNITAMS and reiterate our support for the Mission.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of Ireland.

I thank Special Representative Perthes for his briefing. I also want to welcome the representative of the Sudan here with us today, and of course I want to thank Ms. Hala Alkarib for her truly powerful testimony. Her work and her voice, alongside those of so many Sudanese women, have played a vital role in the Sudan's historic political transition.

The leadership of Sudanese women in bringing about peaceful change is one of the most emblematic examples of women, peace and security in action in recent years. This is what we mean when we speak about the transformative power of women's participation. The courage of women in standing up against oppression was powerful in ways that no gun, bullet or bomb could ever be.

In the Sudan, we saw, as we see so often in our work in the Security Council, that the cause of women's rights is the cause of peace and democracy. As Alaa Salah told the Security Council (see S/PV.8649), women in the Sudan spoke out against public order laws that restricted their rights and, in so doing, opposed a system built on quashing dissent.

Historic as it is, progress on the Sudan's transition is, as we have heard this morning, slow and uneven. Crucially, however, the power-sharing agreement at the centre continues to hold. I am also encouraged by the Prime Minister's new initiative to reinvigorate the process.

The success of this transition will ultimately be based on the transitional Government's ability to maintain the power-sharing agreement and strengthen Government institutions. As we have heard today, much more needs to be done across the reform agenda, from human rights to the security sector. It is critical that key democratic institutions, such as the Transitional Legislative Council, be established on an urgent basis.

The success of the Sudan's transition will depend, therefore, on broadening the political agreement and investing in the country's marginalized and conflict-affected areas. We simply cannot expect real buy-in if those at the peace table and in the new institutions do not represent the diversity of the people of the Sudan.

Women were at the forefront of the protests that lit the spark of change. They must also be at the forefront of the Government that will deliver that change. It is crucial that the Sudan meet its own commitments, on both the full, equal and meaningful, as well as the safe, participation of women.

The current representation of women in the transitional Government is far below the 40 per cent quota agreed. As Hala Alkarib said, only one woman sits on the Sovereign Council. I want to underline that this representation is a right, not a request. Youth should also be represented in such peacebuilding processes.

The Sudan's transition is taking place against a backdrop of a stark economic crisis. The commitment to implementing exceptionally difficult but necessary economic reforms is admirable. With the cost of many food commodities having doubled in one year, and 3 million children under five suffering from acute malnutrition, our support for the Sudan's response to humanitarian needs is vital.

We welcome the progress on implementing the Juba Peace Agreement, including the formation of key committees, such as the Darfur Permanent Ceasefire Committee. What is needed now is swift operationalization of the work of those bodies. Meanwhile, we continue to urge all remaining non-signatories to join the Juba Peace Agreement. I want to add that the support of the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan (UNITAMS) to women peacebuilders in this negotiation process has also been commendable.

Despite some progress, the security situation in many parts of the country remains deeply concerning, especially in Darfur. The full implementation of the Government's integrated National Plan for the Protection of Civilians is therefore a matter of real urgency. While we welcome the establishment of state-level protection-of-civilians committees and deployments of the joint protection force in some areas, addressing the root causes of insecurity is the only way to break the cycle of civilian harm.

Finally, as we heard earlier and graphically from Hala Alkarib, we are seeing alarming levels of sexual and gender-based violence across the Sudan, including evidence of targeting of politically active women, intended no doubt to silence their voices. In that regard, I welcome the Government's enhanced cooperation with the International Criminal Courts. Perpetrators

must be held accountable if we are to end impunity, and this is a vital step in that direction.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I give the floor to the representative of the Sudan.

Mr. Alhassein (Sudan) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to thank Mr. Volker Perthes, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and the Head of the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan (UNITAMS), for his briefing today.

The transitional Government of the Sudan continues to make steady progress in the implementation of the tasks of the transition, as set forth in the Constitutional Document. The Government also continues to implement its policy aimed at ensuring a democratic transition, the rule of law and the promotion of human rights. We are also working to address the legacy of structural weakness in the Sudan's economy. The Sudanese leadership has reiterated many times that most of these programmes and policies seek to build a safe and stable Sudan, where everyone enjoys peace, prosperity, freedom and justice, as set forth in the slogans of the glorious December revolution.

To that end, the transitional Government is working during this critical phase of its political, constitutional, economic and social development to mobilize and engage national efforts in the development and implementation of comprehensive policies in line with the nature, needs and aspirations of that phase. This will enable us to overcome decades of obstacles and lay the foundation for a developed, democratic and human-centred State that strengthens democracy, the rule of law and the enjoyment of personal, economic and political freedoms.

Since our last briefing to the Security Council (see S/PV.8825), the Government of the Sudan has continued to complete the transitional structures of authority in the country. In that regard, we continue our consultation with different political powers and stakeholders to establish the Transitional Legislative Council. As part of the implementation of the provisions of the Juba Peace Agreement aimed at ensuring stability, as well as comprehensive and lasting peace and addressing the root causes of conflict in Darfur, we also appointed as governor of the Darfur region a leader of one of the signatories of the Juba Peace Agreement.

In addition, as part of implementing the Juba Peace Agreement, the Government has facilitated the work of the Permanent Ceasefire Committee headed by UNITAMS. The Committee began its work by holding a number of workshops in Darfur.

We would like to point out that the Government is committed to maintaining the ceasefire and silencing the guns, even with parties that are not signatories to the Juba Peace Agreement. This will build confidence among those parties to join the comprehensive and lasting peace process. In this regard, we stress that the Transitional Government is committed to achieving peace and to holding a dialogue with non-signatories to the Juba Peace Agreement. We are pursuing talks to create an enabling environment for the resumption of negotiations with the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North Al-Hilu faction, as well as the Sudan Liberation Movement/Army faction led by Abdul Wahid Al-Nur.

The State political leadership at the highest level has also welcomed anything that would bring about comprehensive peace across the country without preconditions except the national interest. We would like to point out that the transitional Government has great political will to implement the provisions of the Juba Peace Agreement on security arrangements and on a disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) programme, as well as to establish and deploy joint forces for the protection of civilians. All of this is designed to strengthen and enhance security in Darfur.

As for the implementation of the security arrangements protocol, the Government has set up the Joint High Military Committee for Security Arrangements, headed by the Minister of Defence and including as members the leaders of the signatory movements, so as to implement the agreements made in Juba. In addition, subcommittees are working on the ground to start the DDR programme. We would like to stress in this context that these tasks are difficult and that it will not be easy for the Government of the Sudan to accomplish them single-handedly and in the desired manner. We therefore call up the international community to share these burdens by providing the necessary financial and technical support, and we expect UNITAMS to play a role in this regard as well.

We are determined to continue to work to improve the security situation in Darfur through the implementation of the Juba Peace Agreement and

by collecting unlicensed weapons, achieving justice and accountability, implementing the National Plan for the Protection of Civilians with the participation of the signatories to the Juba Peace Agreement and bringing the y Abdul Wahid Al-Nur movement into the peace process.

Darfur is currently undergoing an important transition from peacekeeping to peacebuilding. This transition involves seeking the support of the international community for the transitional Government to extend security, peace and sustained stability across the region. Decades of mismanagement and bad governance led to extremely complicated political and economic situations in the Sudan. The Government has therefore sought appropriate solutions for these situations. In this regard, Prime Minister Hamdok has set forth a comprehensive national initiative that includes seven pillars: economy, justice, reform of the security sector, peace, dismantling the Al-Bashir regime, combating corruption, foreign policy, national sovereignty, and national security, as well as establishing the Transitional Legislative Council. The foundations of the comprehensive settlement in the aforementioned initiative include unification of the transitional bloc, including using an agreed timeline for implementation of programmes to reach the desired goals.

As for the economy, the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has exacerbated the delicate economic situation in the country. Despite this fact, the Government is sparing no effort in terms of economic reform to increase economic growth and attract investment. These reforms have affected the weakest segments of society. Accordingly, we have set up a social-protection programme called Thamarat to provide support for the most marginalized and poorest segments of Sudanese society. In this regard, we thank our international and regional partners for supporting this programme. We look forward to more support so that the Sudan will be able to bolster its promising economic capabilities.

As for the protection of civilians and the promotion of human rights and the rule of law, the Government of the Sudan is pursuing its efforts to introduce institutional and legal reforms that enhance the frameworks for the protection and promotion of human rights and justice. In this regard, the Sudan's Cabinet has approved the country's joining the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC); there remains only one more and final legislative step to join it.

In addition, the Sudanese authorities recently facilitated a successful visit by the new ICC Prosecutor. During the visit, a proposal was made for working with the ICC to achieve justice for the victims of the war in Darfur. Also in this regard, the Sudan has deposited its accession instruments for the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearances and the United Nations Convention against Torture. This step reaffirms that we are eager to meet our international commitments and cooperate with the international community towards the protection and promotion of human rights.

Furthermore, we have taken other legal and legislative steps to annul any laws that restrict freedoms, with a view to enhancing the role of women in society and protecting their rights. These new laws will also allow for free expression and the freedom of assembly in Sudanese society. It is worth saying that as we emphasized many times, the transitional Government is working seriously to improve the situation of women and guarantee their dignity. In this regard, we have joined the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and amended many laws that used to discriminate against women. I note that many elements of the briefing given by the representative of civil society, Ms. Alkarib, are not in line with the current situation in the Sudan or with the reports submitted by relevant entities.

As for humanitarian work, we express our appreciation to the United Nations and its humanitarian agencies, all international organizations and other donors for their generous support for our work in addressing the situation of internally displaced persons (IDPs), refugees and returnees to their homes through provision of food and health assistance. I would like to point out that the Government has lifted all restrictions and obstacles that hampered the delivery of humanitarian aid to those affected in conflict areas. In this regard, the State has addressed through its national plan the issue of improving the environment for humanitarian work and providing for its needs through adopting sustainable solutions for IDPs and improving their living conditions.

In this regard, we note that the Sudan has opened its borders to refugees from some neighbouring countries undergoing exceptional circumstances, namely, Ethiopia and South Sudan. The Sudan is currently hosting more refugees than any other country in Africa. Based on our values and our morals, the

Sudan continues to receive refugees from neighbouring countries and provide assistance to those in need.

Doing so is also part of our international commitments. Accordingly, we urge the international community to shoulder more responsibilities in terms of helping with the current burden being placed on the Sudan as we host waves of humanitarian refugees. As we are addressing waves of humanitarian refugees, this burden puts pressure on local governments and host communities, exacerbating an economic situation that is already deeply affected by the spread of COVID-19.

In conclusion, we reaffirm our commitment to fully cooperating with the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan in implementing its strategic objectives, as set forth in resolution 2579 (2021), with regard to supporting

the political transition, peace processes and the implementation of the Juba Peace Agreement, as well as working to build peace, protect civilians and promote the rule of law, particularly in the Darfur, South Kordofan and Blue Nile regions. That is in addition to mobilizing economic and development assistance, coordinating humanitarian assistance and peacebuilding assistance. We also underscore our full cooperation with the Secretariat on the completion of the UNAMID liquidation process.

The President: There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers. I will now adjourn the meeting so that the Council can continue its discussion on the subject in closed consultations.

The meeting rose at noon.