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Seventy-sixth year

Provisional

8925th meeting

Friday, 10 December 2021, 10.15 a.m.

New York

President: Mr. Ousman..... (Niger)

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| <i>Members:</i> | China | Mr. Dai Bing |
| | Estonia | Mr. Jürgenson |
| | France | Mrs. Broadhurst Estival |
| | India | Mr. Tirumurti |
| | Ireland | Ms. Byrne Nason |
| | Kenya | Mr. Kimani |
| | Mexico | Mr. Gómez Robledo Verduzco |
| | 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/2021/1008)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.15 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/2021/1008)

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

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Volker Perthes, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Sudan and Head of the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan, to participate in this meeting.

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

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2021/1008, 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: I am grateful for the opportunity to brief the Security Council again on the situation in the Sudan.

In the past six weeks, the Sudan's political transition has been undergoing its greatest crisis to date. That crisis is not over yet, but discussions on a way forward have begun.

The military takeover of 25 October and the arrests of Prime Minister Hamdok, senior officials and political activists triggered widespread protests and condemnation. At least 44 people were killed, and hundreds have been injured as a result of the excessive use of force by security forces. That has deepened the crisis and mobilized the so-called "street", which continues to organize regular mass demonstrations.

Against that backdrop, I cautiously welcomed the 21 November political agreement between Prime Minister Hamdok and Lieutenant General Al-Burhan, which was reached after weeks of domestic and international efforts to find a way out of the crisis. The agreement is far from perfect, but it can help to avoid further bloodshed and provide a step towards comprehensive dialogue and a return to constitutional order.

The agreement faces significant opposition from a large segment of Sudanese stakeholders, including parties and associations within the Forces for Freedom and Change, resistance committees, civil society organizations and women's groups. I met with those and other stakeholders. Many feel betrayed by the coup, and they now reject any negotiations or partnership with the military.

The resistance committees, in particular, are determined to continue their protests to reclaim the revolution and push for civilian rule. While the overwhelming majority of protesters remain peaceful, small groups who are using violence have recently appeared.

The military takeover has exposed and deepened the mistrust between the military and civilian components and within the civilian component itself. The 21 November agreement has not led to a rebuilding of lost trust. Forthcoming decisions on the formation of the Government, high-level appointments and the establishment of transitional institutions will test the will and the ability of the stakeholders to seek a common way out of the crisis. In my recent meetings with Lieutenant General Al-Burhan and the Prime Minister, I urged that unilateral decisions made in the aftermath of the coup that go against the Constitutional Document be reversed or addressed in ways that rebuild trust among the Sudanese. That includes unilateral appointments by the military leadership.

Among other things, the 21 November agreement stipulates the formulation of a political declaration, which would likely entail constitutional amendments. There are ongoing attempts within and around some political parties and movements to reach an inclusive agreement. Other political forces are open to dialogue, but not on the basis of the 21 November agreement. A lack of inclusivity and consensus could cause further fragmentation. Similarly, while the proposed formation of a technocratic Cabinet could be a step

towards advancing the transition, it can also create a constitutional challenge if not based on consultations with the Forces for Freedom and Change. Those and other decisions are being discussed against the backdrop of the ongoing state of emergency that Lieutenant General Al-Burhan declared on 25 October.

Addressing those and other fundamental issues will require dialogue and, eventually, consensus. We have made clear that the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan (UNITAMS) is prepared to facilitate an inclusive dialogue, both to address unresolved issues for the transitional period and to deal with broader constitutional questions as part of the constitution-making process. I have been undertaking extensive consultations to determine the scope and modalities of our engagement.

The Sudan's military and political leaders will primarily have to rebuild trust with their own domestic public, particularly with the young generation. Immediate confidence-building measures and a visible commitment to bringing the country back onto a democratic transition path will be key. Similarly, Sudanese authorities will need to take demonstrable steps to regain financial, economic and political support from the international community. Progress in this respect can be measured against a small number of clear and generally acceptable short- and medium-term indicators.

For the immediate term, the main indicator has been the release of all political detainees, cessation of arbitrary arrests and the guarantee of the right to peaceful protest and assembly. Almost all civilians arrested since the coup have now been released, which is a welcome step. Temporary arbitrary arrests are reportedly continuing, particularly during ongoing demonstrations.

Both military and civilian leaders have promised to investigate the use of deadly violence against demonstrators. Accountability for human rights violations perpetrated since 25 October will therefore be seen as a critical indicator for progress and could help to rebuild confidence. Three important short-term indicators will be, first, the ability of the Prime Minister to freely form his technocratic Cabinet according to the provisions of the constitutional document, secondly, the lifting of the state of emergency, and, thirdly, the restoration of the freedom of the press.

Over the next few months, the main indicator for a return to a democratic transition path will be

the restoration of political space. This is particularly important in the light of the professed goal by political and military leaders to hold free and fair elections, possibly even earlier than originally planned. The authorities will need to ensure an atmosphere conducive to credible elections, which the United Nations and other international actors can then support. Indicators for such a conducive atmosphere will include the establishment of an independent electoral commission, the adoption of an inclusive political parties law, the freedom of political parties and movements to organize, campaign and enjoy access to the media, and the guarantee of human rights.

Recent events have also underlined the lack of functioning justice institutions and the gap they leave in addressing and preventing serious human rights violations. Moreover, the Transitional Legislative Council — with 40 per cent women, as stipulated in the Constitutional Declaration — has yet to be formed. I continue to call upon the Sudanese authorities to guarantee the meaningful participation of women in the political process and the yet-to-be-formed Government as well as all efforts aimed at bringing an end to the current crisis. My team and I regularly meet with women's groups from across the Sudan to hear their political and security concerns. Their message is clear: there can be no going back on the hard-earned gains on women's rights, and they are asking for the international community's support in this regard.

We — UNITAMS — will be closely following all the foregoing critical indicators and report on them.

Outside of Khartoum, the security situation remains fragile. I am deeply concerned at the resurgence of intercommunal conflicts and armed banditry in Darfur, Blue Nile and the Kordofans. The United Nations has received reports of a significant rise in the killing of civilians, destruction of property and displacements, and sexual violence against women and girls. In Darfur this year, about eight times as many people have been displaced than were displaced last year. The persistent insecurity in Darfur underscores the need to prioritize the protection of civilians and swiftly implement the provisions of the Juba Peace Agreement. The formation and deployment of the joint security-keeping force and operationalization of the National Plan for Protection of Civilians should be undertaken without delay. The situation in the east will also remain unstable if a political solution is not found soon. It is important for Sudanese authorities to fulfil their primary

responsibility to protect civilians across its territories irrespective of the political crisis.

In the aftermath of the coup, the decision by donors to pause international development assistance is having a significant impact on the livelihoods of the Sudanese people and risks rolling back the hard-won achievements of the past two years. Humanitarian activities are ongoing, although some humanitarian services that are provided through Government mechanisms, such as health-related services, have been disrupted. United Nations development activities remain heavily affected, thereby deepening vulnerability and humanitarian needs. One of the key programmes affected is the family support programme, which was expected to provide cash transfers to over 11 million vulnerable Sudanese.

Sudanese authorities must of course demonstrate their commitment to returning to a credible constitutional order in order to regain the trust of the international community with a view to resuming international financial assistance. At the same time, I would like to urge Council members and the broader international community to take a balanced approach — not to pause aid for too long and to consider the speedy resumption of funding in some areas, particularly support for health services and livelihoods, so as to ensure that the Sudanese people do not continue to bear the brunt of the political crisis.

I thank the Council for its sustained support of UNITAMS, which continues to discharge its mandate in the context of the challenges facing the Sudan. The main areas of the Mission's effort remain relevant and, in some cases, have been accelerated. In addition to redoubling our good-offices efforts, the work of UNITAMS on human rights and its support for the protection of civilians are even more critical in this volatile period and will be strengthened. The Darfur permanent ceasefire mechanism, which is chaired by UNITAMS, has been active throughout this period, with the support, by the way, of both the military component and the armed groups that have signed onto the Juba Peace Agreement.

The United Nations in the Sudan also stands ready to support a credible and inclusive constitutional process and elections once a road map for these processes is agreed. Organizing an election in the Sudan will be a complex undertaking, and the United Nations looks forward to cooperation and collaboration with international partners. I wish to underline the

importance of continued support for the Mission and full realization of its field network in order to enable our efforts across conflict-affected areas of the country.

The Sudanese men and women's unwavering commitment to realizing civilian-led democratic governance cannot be overlooked. They have sacrificed immensely to realize their aspirations of freedom, peace and justice enshrined in a civilian-led democratic State. They have remained — and seem to remain — steadfast in their resolve. I would like to take this opportunity to reiterate the continued commitment of UNITAMS to supporting the Sudanese people to realize these aspirations and to thank the Security Council for its support in our endeavours.

The President (*speak in French*): I thank Mr. Perthes for his 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 for his briefing and all his and his team's work in difficult circumstances over the three-month period since we previously met (see S/PV.8857). I would also like to thank Ambassador Jürgenson for his tireless service as Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1591 (2005), concerning the Sudan.

I will focus my intervention on three issues — the coup and the 21 November political agreement, the human rights situation and the Juba Peace Agreement and the situation in Darfur.

The military coup on 25 October, which we condemn in the strongest possible terms, jeopardized the hard-won progress made by the civilian-led Government since the 2019 revolution. Regional organizations and the Council expressed their serious concern about the event. We recognize the 21 November political agreement as an important first step towards restoring the democratic transition. All parties must take a genuinely inclusive and consultative approach to delivering the democratic transition. We encourage the prompt formation of a cabinet, the Transitional Legislative Council and other governance institutions as part of setting out plans for inclusive and credible elections.

We also reiterate our call for the immediate release of all detainees held since 25 October. Such steps are a vital part of rebuilding trust and confidence

with the Sudanese public and the international community after the coup. The United Kingdom commends the continued efforts of the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan (UNITAMS) to support dialogue and the transition process in challenging circumstances. We welcome the Mission's efforts to strengthen relationships with civil society to build public support for the transition.

The deterioration of the human rights situation since the coup is deeply concerning. It is essential that freedoms of expression and assembly be protected and that people can protest without fear of violence. We condemn the loss of at least 43 lives — probably many more — and welcome the Sudanese authorities' commitment to investigate the deaths of protesters since 25 October.

The United Kingdom also welcomes the Human Rights Council's appointment of Adama Dieng as the Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in the Sudan and urges the Sudan to engage with him in that work. We also urge the Sudan to establish an effective and independent national human rights commission in support of restoring the democratic transition by working closely with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

Thirdly, we welcome the establishment of the Joint High Military Committee for Security Arrangements and the Permanent Ceasefire Committee in Darfur, which UNITAMS chairs, as important steps towards implementing the security provisions of the Juba Peace Agreement. It is, however, regrettable that the coup has further delayed progress on the implementation of the Agreement. We urge all parties to engage in an inclusive dialogue to rebuild trust among members of the eastern track of the Agreement and non-signatory armed groups.

Resurgent intercommunal violence in Darfur and other parts of the country is deeply concerning. The United Kingdom deeply regrets the loss of life and stresses the need for the underlying causes of such violence to be addressed. We reiterate our call for swift implementation of the National Plan for the Protection of Civilians, particularly through the deployment of the joint security keeping force and related provisions in the Juba Peace Agreement.

Lastly, I would like to reiterate our solidarity with the people of the Sudan and assure them of the United Kingdom's support in their demands for freedom, peace

and justice. The hard-won gains achieved since the 2019 revolution must be protected. We urge the Council and international partners to continue to shine a spotlight on the Sudan and press for progress.

Mr. Jürgenson (Estonia): I thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Perthes for his insightful briefing. I also welcome the participation in this meeting of the representative of the Sudan.

When Estonia joined the Security Council almost two years ago, the Sudan was in a very different, hopeful place. Throughout our membership, we saw the Sudan slowly but steadily make progress towards the goals of the revolution. Unfortunately, all that progress was put in jeopardy when the military decided to seize power.

Estonia condemns in the strongest terms the military coup of 25 October, which seriously threatens the democratic, peace and economic gains that the Sudan has made in recent years. Therefore, it is important to restore the democratic transition without delay before more harm is done. It is important to win back the trust of Sudanese people.

The signing of the 21 November political agreement was a step in the right direction. However, more needs to be done. We call on all stakeholders to immediately and fully implement the political agreement and continue a meaningful and inclusive dialogue, which would facilitate national reconciliation. In order for that to happen, the use of excessive force against peaceful protesters must stop. Thorough investigations need to be conducted into the deaths and injuries resulting from the excessive and disproportionate use of force by military and security forces.

Estonia also calls for the release of all people who have been arbitrarily arrested for political reasons since 25 October. In order to respond to the aspirations of Sudanese people, the prompt formation of a civilian cabinet, the Transitional Legislative Council and other transitional governance and oversight institutions should also remain a priority. We call for the early publication of a credible timetable for elections.

We are concerned about the impact of political instability on the situation in Darfur, where attacks against civilians have increased. Efforts must be redoubled to ensure the safety of civilians, including women and children. Estonia calls for the swift operationalization of the National Plan for the Protection of Civilians. We also urge all parties to the Juba Peace

Agreement to accelerate its implementation. Making progress in those areas will be critical to building a better future.

In conclusion, Estonia hopes that, despite the recent setbacks, the Sudan will be able to continue its path to achieve full democracy as envisioned by the revolution of 2019. 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 democratic transition, peace, human rights and civilian protection. I reiterate Estonia's full support for the Sudanese people to achieve democracy, peace and prosperity.

Mr. Ladeb (Tunisia): I have the honour to deliver 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 are grateful to the Secretary-General for his report (S/2021/1008) highlighting the activities of the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan (UNITAMS) and the recent developments in the country.

We also thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Sudan and Head of UNITAMS, Mr. Volker Perthes, for his comprehensive briefing. We welcome the participation in this meeting of the representative of the Sudan.

Our briefing today takes place a few days before the third anniversary of the December 2019 revolution in the Sudan, which ended decades of dictatorship and initiated a democratic transition to lead to the holding of free elections in 2023. It takes place against the backdrop of the recent developments, which saw the democratic transition interrupted on 25 October but resumed on 21 November following the political agreement between Lieutenant General Abdel Fattah Al-Burhan and Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok.

The A3+1 welcomes that political agreement and the commitments contained therein, which represent an important step towards resolving the constitutional and political crisis in the Sudan and a return to constitutional order, as set out in the Constitutional Document and the Juba Peace Agreement. We remain convinced that succeeding in the political transition and responding to the Sudanese aspirations for democracy, freedom and justice remain the only viable way to preserve

and consolidate the unity of the Sudan and ensure a peaceful and prosperous future for its population.

In that regard, we encourage all transition partners to continue engaging in dialogue and making timely efforts to effectively address unresolved issues and to fully and swiftly implement the political agreement in a climate of peace and national reconciliation.

The A3+1 reiterates its full support for the United Nations, UNITAMS, the African Union, the League of Arab States and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development for their good offices and mediation efforts to facilitate dialogue and support the democratic transition in the Sudan.

We welcome the release of political detainees and the commitment to investigate deaths and injuries among protesters during the incidents that have taken place since 25 October. We emphasize the importance of ensuring transparency, accountability and justice and call for full respect for human rights, including the rights to life and the freedoms of expression and peaceful assembly. We also express our deep condolences to the families of the victims and wish those who were injured a full recovery.

While welcoming those steps, we recognize that many challenges lie ahead. We strongly believe that those political, security, economic and humanitarian challenges highlight the need to see all Sudanese stakeholders show wisdom and prioritize national interests in order to consolidate the gains made since 2018 and avoid the derailing of the peace process.

The A3+1 encourages all parties to accelerate the implementation of the Juba Peace Agreement in order to consolidate trust and confidence among the non-signatory armed groups and avoid the risk of setting the country back on a path of violence. In that regard, we encourage the resumption of talks with the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North Abdelaziz Al-Hilu faction and urge both parties to build on initial progress and advance a constructive framework for addressing their remaining differences.

We commend UNITAMS for its contribution to facilitate those talks as part of its efforts to support the peace process and the implementation of the Juba Peace Agreement. We also urge those that have not yet joined the peace process to do so to give sustainable and inclusive peace in the Sudan a chance.

The A3+1 remains concerned by sporadic intercommunal violence. Those incidents attest to the need for continued efforts to address the root causes of the conflicts. The establishment of the Joint High Military Committee for Security Arrangements and the Permanent Ceasefire Committee in Darfur constitute significant steps towards the implementation of the security arrangements stipulated in the Juba Peace Agreement. In that regard, we call on the Sudan's partners to provide the Committee with adequate, timely and sustainable logistical and financial support to fulfil its critical task.

The A3+1 welcomes the Sudanese Government's efforts to provide protection to civilians through the implementation of its National Plan for the Protection of Civilians, as well as the promotion of dialogue and reconciliation among the different ethnic communities. We also encourage all parties to ensure gender equality in decision-making structures and the rightful participation of women in mediation efforts to resolve the current political crisis. 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.

On the economic front, the Sudan is facing huge challenges to mitigate the impact of economic reforms and the burden of external debt. The A3+1 calls on the international community to renew its commitment in solidarity with the Sudan and not shy away from the commitments made at the Paris conference on the Sudan held in May. Economic recovery remains a key component of the transition process that will propel the realization of peace in the country as it prepares for regular and free elections based on a democratic consensus. Such elections represent the only path towards putting a definitive end to institutional turmoil in the country and ensuring its sustainable development.

The already dire humanitarian situation in the Sudan has been further aggravated by the economic crisis, food insecurity, the increase in cases of the coronavirus disease — with only 3 per cent of the population of 47 million fully vaccinated — the adverse effects of climate change, intercommunal violence, the prolonged displacement of populations, the recent refugee crisis in eastern areas and heavy rains.

Despite the complicated regional context and the latest developments in the country, the Sudan continues to host hundreds of thousands of refugees and share

its resources with them. That difficult situation, which affects more than 10 million people, calls on us to demonstrate our 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 reiterates its support for UNITAMS in the implementation of its mandate. In that regard, we commend the various support and training activities undertaken within its mandate to assist the political transition, facilitate the implementation of the Juba Peace Agreement and support the Sudanese-led efforts in peacebuilding, the protection of civilians and restoring the rule of law. Our special thanks go to Mr. Perthes for his mediation efforts aimed at reaching a negotiated political settlement.

In conclusion, the A3+1 reiterates its position rejecting all acts that may jeopardize the stability and unity of the Sudan. It reaffirms its solidarity with the people of the Sudan and its full support for a peaceful transition to democracy, paving the way for a prosperous and peaceful future, not only in the Sudan but throughout the entire region. We hope that close cooperation with UNITAMS and the country team, as well as strong support from the international community behind a unified Security Council, will help the Sudan to address those challenges.

Ms. Juul (Norway): I would like to thank Special Representative Perthes for his very valuable briefing and all the good and important work he and his team are doing on the ground. I also thank the Permanent Representative of Estonia for the report of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1591 (2005), concerning the Sudan. We also welcome the participation in this meeting of the representative of the Sudan.

Less than three months ago, Norway co-hosted a high-level event at the General Assembly to support the Sudan's democratic transition. We said then that the Sudan was back and that there could be no return to the past. It is therefore with deep concern that we have now seen the exact opposite.

On 25 October, military leaders set aside the Constitutional Declaration, introduced a state of emergency and dissolved the civilian component of the transitional Government. Next came the arbitrary arrest and detention of political opposition leaders, members of civil society, lawyers, journalists and

peaceful protesters. As we heard from the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, more than 40 people were killed.

We continue to hold the security forces responsible for protecting civilians and respecting human rights, including the freedom of expression and the right to peaceful assembly. The unlawful detention of people for their political beliefs and hindering access to hospitals are unacceptable. We repeat that all remaining political detainees across the country must be released and that deaths and injuries must be investigated independently and transparently. While the Sudan is going through a difficult period, we strongly believe that it is not too late to get the transition back on track. That should be our common purpose.

We encourage everyone to learn from the lessons of the recent past. Political processes are more likely to succeed when decision-makers bring different perspectives to the table. In this next phase, we expect to see more direct participation of the Sudanese women and youth in political talks. The United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan (UNITAMS) can play an important role in facilitating an inclusive dialogue.

The political arrangement between Prime Minister Hamdok and Chairperson Al-Burhan was an important first step. The swift appointment of a new Government is now needed to move towards the next phase, and it is also essential for re-engagement with the international community. In addition, unfettered humanitarian access remains a priority and a guiding principle. Displaced people and other civilians, including children, remain at extreme risk. The recent violent attacks in Darfur, with scores of people killed and thousands displaced, are cause for major concern.

It is critical that the protection of civilians be meaningfully pursued and that the National Plan for the Protection of Civilians be updated to reflect the realities faced by the population. National authorities bear the primary responsibility for the protection of civilians and preventing conflict across the country. UNITAMS has an important supporting role in preventing conflict and protecting civilians, in line with its mandate.

The current political crisis in the Sudan is adding to an already dangerously unstable situation in the Horn of Africa. Particularly worrisome are reports of renewed clashes in the contested border areas between the Sudan and Ethiopia. We strongly encourage both

countries to show the utmost restraint. Preventing further armed conflict and the proliferation of non-State armed actors must be the highest priority for all. We welcome the work of the United Nations to facilitate dialogue, and we encourage the African Union and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development to step up their efforts, including by extending their good offices to support a process that can bring the Sudan's transition back on track.

We call on all parties to redouble their efforts to address unresolved issues, and to do so in an inclusive manner in order to rebuild trust and meet the aspirations of the Sudanese people.

Mr. Tirumurti (India): Let me begin by thanking Special Representative of the Secretary-General Volker Perthes for his detailed briefing on the activities of the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan (UNITAMS). I thank Ambassador Jürgenson of Estonia for his briefing as Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1591 (2005), concerning the Sudan. I also welcome the representative of the Sudan to our meeting.

The recent developments in the Sudan have reminded us of the inherent challenges in the democratic transition that began nearly three years ago. However, the 21 November agreement between the Chairperson of the reconstituted Sovereign Council and the Prime Minister have raised hopes again. It is reassuring that the 2019 Constitutional Document continues to be the basis of the transitional period. We hope that the Sudanese leadership will consolidate the positive gains made and advance further towards the holding of elections by July 2023. We also look forward to more inclusive dialogue among all stakeholders in order to advance the transition.

In that regard, it is important that all parties remain strongly committed to the ongoing transition. Any effort to undermine it, such as the action of 25 October, will jeopardize the progress made on the political and socioeconomic fronts. We also underscore the importance of the comprehensive implementation of the Juba Peace Agreement. We welcome the establishment of the Joint High Military Committee for Security Arrangements and the Permanent Ceasefire Committee for Darfur. We also underscore the importance of the early establishment of the Transitional Legislative Council, the Supreme Judicial Council and the Supreme Council of the Public Prosecution to the transition

process. We encourage the Sudanese leadership to expeditiously resolve issues concerning that.

On the economic front, recent developments have forced the international community to revisit the positive decisions taken to support the economic recovery of the Sudan. Now that the transition process is back on track, we hope that the international community and the partners of the Sudan will reconsider those decisions. The Sudan needs our collective support.

On the security front, the Sudanese authorities have continued to make efforts to provide physical protection in Darfur through the deployment of joint Government forces to de-escalate violence and calm tensions. These are positive developments that reflect a broadening of governance structures and the sustained commitment of the authorities to implement the National Plan for the Protection of Civilians. In that regard, we would like to make special mention of the noteworthy steps taken to improve child protection legislation. We would also urge all parties to remain focused on fighting the scourge of terrorism in the Sudan as well as in the Horn of Africa.

The support of UNITAMS to the Sudan will be critical in the coming months, particularly with regard to the political transition, the implementation of the Juba Peace Agreement and peacebuilding efforts. We expect UNITAMS to focus on the implementation of its core mandates, in close partnership with the African Union and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development.

India has long-standing relations with the Sudan and its people. Over the years, India has assisted the Sudan through several projects, including through concessional lines of credit, capacity-building and humanitarian assistance. We wish to see the Sudan emerge as a peaceful and stable country in the coming years. India will continue to support the Sudan and its people in these critical times.

Mr. Gómez Robledo Verduzco (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Special Representative Volker Perthes for his briefing, and especially for his good offices over the past few months. Mexico also thanks the Permanent Representative of Estonia for his contribution to the Sudan in his capacity as Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1591 (2005), concerning the Sudan. My delegation greatly appreciates the information they shared today and their stewardship at such a volatile juncture. I would

also like to welcome the representative of the Sudan to today's meeting.

The past quarter offers a glimpse of the fragile political balance in the Sudan and of the need, today more than ever, for the parties to endorse and sustain their commitment and efforts towards dialogue. The response of the Sudanese people to the October coup has been unequivocal — overwhelmingly in support of a civilian-led transitional Government that guarantees the promotion and protection of the rights of all Sudanese people and ensures that the Sudan remains on a democratic path.

Mexico therefore views the 21 November political agreement as a first step towards the full restoration of constitutional order and a transitional Government. But it is critical that the transition continue to be guided by the Constitutional Document and the Juba Peace Agreement. In other words, the November political agreement is not enough on its own.

I would like to stress the importance of the Security Council following up on several issues in a timely manner.

First, I reiterate that the full implementation of the 21 November agreement must be inclusive, effective and aimed at fostering an atmosphere of peace and national reconciliation. In addition, the conduct of the Constitutional Conference to discuss the modification of the Constitutional Document must be a transparent, peaceful and democratic process, with the full participation of women.

Secondly, the re-establishment of the transitional Government, including the formation of a civilian Government composed of independent national experts, must reflect the plurality of voices in the Sudan and invariably include the participation of women. The partnership between the civilian and military branches should be seen only as a temporary source of stability until the peaceful transfer of power to a democratically elected civilian-led Government takes place. In that regard, the attention given to the organization of the elections will be crucial.

Thirdly, the commitment of the Sudan's authorities to release all political prisoners must also include those detained after the military coup of 25 October, including journalists, activists and human rights defenders. It is a priority to conduct the relevant investigations on the disproportionate use of force, alleged human rights

violations, as well as the deaths and other incidents that occurred in the context of the demonstrations. Accountability, transparency and strengthening the rule of law are principles on which the Sudan's democratic transition must continue to be built.

Fourthly, we must stress that there are still four cases in which the handover of the accused to the International Criminal Court is still pending. Mexico calls for the authorities to hand over Mr. Al-Bashir, Mr. Hussein and Mr. Harun, who are already detained, as a matter of priority and in line with the commitment to cooperate with the Court expressed by the authorities of the Sudan.

The developments in Khartoum should not, and must not, divert attention from the deplorable situation in Darfur. Since November, more than 10,000 people are reported to have been displaced by violence in Jebel Moon, west of Darfur, as well as to the north of that region. Of those, 2,000 people, mostly women and girls, have crossed the border into Chad seeking of refuge. Dozens are reported dead, entire villages burned, incidents of sexual violence and disappeared children. The tensions continue, and the risk of a spillover effect on the rest of the region is high.

While recognizing the actions of local authorities to address this situation, we urgently call for a hastening of efforts to reduce tensions, investigate incidents and prevent a resurgence of violence. We must also recall the need to expedite the full implementation of the National Plan for the Protection of Civilians, as civilian protection is the sole responsibility of the Sudan, despite the turbulent situation it is experiencing.

I conclude by expressing Mexico's full support for the work being done by the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in Sudan and underscore the importance of coordinating subregional, regional and international efforts to support the Sudan's democratic transition and the aspirations of the Sudanese people for a future that is inclusive and peaceful and in which there is full respect for human rights, whose declaration — the Universal Declaration of Human Rights — was adopted on this day in Paris and is celebrating another anniversary.

Ms. Byrne Nason (Ireland): I want to thank Special Representative Perthes for his briefing and for the valiant and tireless work we know he is doing in very complex circumstances. I also thank Sven Jürgenson for his report and his excellent stewardship over the

past two years. I am delighted to welcome our colleague from the Sudan with us this morning.

When we last came together in this Chamber to speak about the Sudan (see S/PV.8887), the Sudan's democratic transition had received a huge blow. Since then there has been a welcome step back from the brink, in particular as a result of the 21 November agreement between Prime Minister Hamdok and Lieutenant General Al-Burhan. Most civilian leaders — but not yet all — have been released, and the Prime Minister has been reinstalled. The reality, however, is that the agreement does not entirely reverse the steps taken since 25 October to dismantle the transitional framework and institutions.

In our view, the future of the transition — and indeed of stability in the Sudan — still very much hangs in the balance. And as Special Representative Perthes said himself this morning, the next steps will be crucial. We need to see a return to constitutional order as soon as possible. To get there, we now need to rebuild trust and create an enabling environment for a genuine political settlement. To achieve that, we see the following steps as critical in the short term.

First, the state of emergency should be lifted. Secondly, Prime Minister Hamdok should be allowed to freely exercise his powers as Prime Minister. Thirdly, we need to see the release of all political detainees and a halt to the campaign of arrests. Fourthly, there needs to be respect for human rights, an end to the communication blockade and full respect for the right to freedom of assembly and peaceful protest. And fifthly, the violence against civilians, which we have seen escalate across the Sudan since the coup, including against peaceful protesters — that is something we have to highlight — cannot continue. Accountability for this violence will be needed. Attacks by the security forces — for example, on hospitals, the wounded and on doctors — must cease.

Ultimately, we want to see a return to the constitutional order. The people of the Sudan themselves have made clear, time and again, their desire for an open and free political environment. To get there, we will need a broadening of the political consultation on the future of the transition and a truly inclusive political settlement. The voice of the people is at the heart of the transition. They should be fully heard in future negotiations.

Crucially, women should be involved at all levels, and in particular in high-level decision making. Women have been at the core of the transition in the Sudan, and they are vital to its eventual success. To repeat a phrase that I say often in this Chamber: they should be in the room and at the table.

In the longer term, we need to see decisive security sector reform, a framework for effective transitional justice and the holding of inclusive and democratic elections. That is in the Sudan's own interest and, certainly, it is in the interest of the people of the Sudan.

The current political violence is taking place in the context of a new wave of violence and mass displacement in Darfur, including very worrisome reports of dozens of people being killed in West Darfur just this week, and we are seeing rising humanitarian needs across the country. Promises made on the protection of civilians in Darfur cannot be forgotten. The National Plan for the Protection of Civilians should be implemented as a matter of the utmost urgency.

The Juba Peace Agreement remains vital to building peace and addressing the underlying causes of conflict in Darfur and throughout the Sudan. In our view, the undertaking of the parties to the agreement to extend full and unlimited cooperation to the International Criminal Court is particularly critical.

We have also recently seen reports of renewed border clashes in Al-Fashqaqah, with numerous deaths. At a delicate time for the region, the last thing we need is for an intensification of Ethiopia-Sudan tensions. Cool heads should now prevail for the benefit of the people of both the Sudan and Ethiopia, as well as for regional stability.

Ireland stands fully behind the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan and, most important, the Sudanese people, in the task of restoring the democratic transition in the Sudan. The Security Council should be ready to use the tools at our disposal to create the space needed to achieve that. We will continue to monitor progress in the coming months.

Mr. Pham (Viet Nam): I thank Special Representative Volker Perthes for his comprehensive briefing. I also thank Ambassador Sven Jürgenson, Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1591 (2005), concerning the Sudan, for his and his teams efforts during the past two

years. I welcome the participation of the representative of the Sudan in today's meeting.

Viet Nam continues to closely follow the developments in the Sudan. We welcome the recent efforts to promote stability in the country, in particular the agreement reached on 21 November, which restored the position of the Prime Minister and stipulated that the 2019 Constitutional Document would continue to form the basis of the transitional period. At the same time, we note that the situation in the Sudan in general, and in Darfur in particular, continues to face many challenges, such as economic and humanitarian difficulties, intercommunal violence, natural disasters and the coronavirus disease pandemic. In that regard, I wish to highlight the following points.

It is imperative that all Sudanese parties continue to exercise restraint and refrain from violence and any action that could further escalate tensions and jeopardize the peace process and the safety and security of the population. We urge the relevant parties in the Sudan to put in their best efforts to promote dialogue and national reconciliation in order to advance the transition process in line with the 2019 constitutional decree and the Juba Peace Agreement.

First, in that connection, we reiterate our strong support for the full, active and meaningful participation of women, as well as young people, in all stages of that process and other aspects of the society.

Secondly, we call on the relevant authorities of the Sudan to ensure the protection of civilians, as well as essential services for the civilian population, particularly vulnerable groups, such as women and children. At the same time. It is critical to maintain stability and security in Darfur and avoid any negative impact of the recent developments in the Sudan on the region. It is therefore critical to ensure the full implementation of the National Plan for Protection of Civilians and address the root causes of intercommunal violence in Darfur, including through reconciliation among the different groups, tribes and communities.

Thirdly, the international community should continue to support the Sudanese authorities in addressing the current humanitarian and socioeconomic challenges. More than 6 million people continue to be severely affected by food insecurity. Heavy rains and floods have affected the population in 14 out of the 18 states. In that regard, we hope that international partners

will continue to provide further humanitarian support to the people of the Sudan at this challenging time.

Fourthly, we reaffirm our support for the efforts of the United Nations, including the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan (UNITAMS), and regional and international partners, especially the African Union and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, in promoting dialogue between the Sudanese parties and overcoming the current difficulties. We call on the authorities in the Sudan to continue to ensure the safety and security of UNITAMS personnel and to engage actively with the Mission and United Nations agencies in addressing the challenges in the country. We also call for efforts by the Sudan and countries of the region towards cooperation and friendship for common interests.

Finally, as this is probably the last time that Viet Nam will speak under this agenda item, we would like to reiterate our consistent position that sanctions should be a tool employed by the Council only in a temporary and case-by-case manner to facilitate the maintenance of international peace and security. Such measures and their implementation should not adversely affect the livelihoods of the people or the legitimate development of the country concerned. They should be subjected to review in accordance with developments on the ground and should be adjusted and lifted when conditions so warrant.

In conclusion, we would like to once again reaffirm our commitment to supporting the Sudanese people in their pursuit of sustainable peace, stability, development and prosperity.

Ms. Evstigneeva (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We thank Mr. Volker Perthes, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Sudan, for his briefing on the situation in the Sudan. We welcome the participation of the Charge d'affaires a.i. of the Sudan at this meeting.

We have taken note of the most recent quarterly report (S/2021/1008) on the Sudan and the activities of the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan (UNITAMS).

Russia is carefully following developments in the Sudan, which is going through a complex period in its current history. We are convinced that the existing differences in Sudanese society can, and should be, addressed only through dialogue with the participation of all major political forces in the country

in the interests of ensuring security and stability and achieving national accord.

We welcome the signing of a political agreement on 21 November, which was the outcome of intensive negotiations between the Sudan's military leaders and various civil groups and community and tribal leaders, with the effective mediation of a number of Arab and African countries and regional organizations. We believe the notion set out in the political declaration that a partnership between the Sudan's military leadership and civil society representatives is a guarantee of stability and security in the Sudan to be particularly important.

The agreements reached with the Sudanese leadership are a significant step towards resolving the acute internal crisis in that country. We trust that their implementation will help to stabilize the situation in the Sudan and create favourable conditions for further progress during the transition period.

We view positively the statement made by the Chairperson of the Sovereign Council of the Sudan, Lieutenant General Al-Burhan, declaring his intention to hold general elections in July 2023 and reiterating his commitment to the peace agreement between the transitional Government of the Sudan and a number of rebel groups signed in Juba on 3 October 2020.

We await the outcome of the ongoing consultations on the formation of a technocratic Government in the Sudan. We trust that the interests of the Sudan's provinces will also be taken into account.

We believe that UNITAMS should continue to provide the necessary assistance to the Sudanese leadership in a number of key areas, including resolving the Darfur issue, carrying out the relevant economic reforms, maintaining internal peace and the rule of law and working with donors in order to ensure sustained financial assistance to the country. In the current situation, depoliticized communication with all sides, free of blatant external interference, remains essential.

We cannot fail to express our regret regarding the terminology used in the Secretary-General's report, which could undermine trust between the United Nations and the authorities of the Sudan. We call on them to engage in a mutually respectful and constructive dialogue.

The Russian Federation cannot agree with the political pressure and blatant economic blackmail

applied against the Sudan. Attempts to undermine the Sudanese “street” risk further destabilizing the country. The external imposition of dubious socioeconomic solutions and universal democratizing templates on the Sudanese authorities, as well as the politicization of economic and financial assistance, has already divided Sudanese society. It has provoked instability and a new round of destabilizing trends.

We also believe that the special session of the Human Rights Council held on 5 November at the initiative of a number of Western countries to discuss the situation in the Sudan was untimely. We oppose establishing a mandate for a Special Rapporteur of the Human Rights Council on the Sudan.

Regarding the sanctions regime against the Sudan, we believe that any sanctions regime must be reviewed and adapted to the situation on the ground. We trust that concrete parameters for lifting the sanctions on the country will soon be drawn up.

In conclusion, we are convinced that the Sudanese can, and should, resolve their domestic problems and determine the course of their country’s sovereign development on the basis of their national interests. We believe that the main task of the Security Council and the international community is to support such efforts.

Mrs. Broadhurst Estival (France) (*spoke in French*): I would also like to begin by thanking Special Representative Volker Perthes for his briefing. I welcome the presence of the representative of the Sudan here among us.

I would like to highlight three points.

First, the Sudan’s institutions must be re-established and consolidated in order to move the transition in the country forward. France welcomed the reinstatement of Mr. Abdalla Adam Hamdok as Prime Minister. International support for the Sudan is based first and foremost on the foundation of a transition to civilian governance in line with the democratic aspirations of the Sudanese people. The military coup of 25 October undermined the gains of the transition. A new stage must now begin with the rapid formation of a civilian government, and efforts must resume to implement the provisions of the August 2019 Constitutional Document and prepare for free and transparent elections.

France reiterates its call for the immediate release of all political detainees arrested since 25 October 2021. Respect for the right of the Sudanese people to

peacefully express their opinions and for the freedom of the press is paramount. To shed light on the incidents that occurred during the recent demonstrations, France also encourages a rigorous, transparent and independent investigation, as provided for in the 21 November 2021 political agreement.

Secondly, efforts must resume to fully implement the Juba Agreement. Progress has been made with the establishment of the Joint High Military Committee for Security Arrangements and the Darfur Permanent Ceasefire Committee. Further progress is expected, including the operationalization of the independent commissions on corruption, peace and transitional justice. Appointments to vacant positions in the judiciary must also take place. And the full participation of women must be ensured, as they have played a historic role in promoting the civil transition.

France is concerned about the situation in Darfur, where intercommunal conflicts have resumed in recent weeks. The protection of civilians must be the priority, with the rapid implementation of the dedicated national plan and the acceleration of the deployment of the joint force. To meet the needs of the population, full, safe and unhindered humanitarian access must be guaranteed. France reiterates its call for the successful conclusion of peace negotiations between the Sudanese authorities and the Abdelaziz Al-Hilu and Abdel Wahid Al-Nur factions.

Thirdly, the support of the United Nations and international partners must continue to support the transition. France salutes the action of the United Nations in the extremely difficult conditions of the last few weeks. Assistance from the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan (UNITAMS) must continue, and its deployment in Darfur must be accelerated.

Progress has been made in mine action with the opening of a regional training centre in Omdurman, which has been supported by UNITAMS. In the fight against terrorism, the European Union will continue to provide support, as will the Office of Counter-Terrorism, which must continue.

Finally, the States of the region must create the conditions for a successful transition in the Sudan. The crisis in northern Ethiopia has led to the arrival of some 60,000 Ethiopian refugees in the Sudan. In close liaison with its partners, France supports the efforts led by the African Union High Representative for the Horn of

Africa, Mr. Obasanjo, to facilitate a political solution to the situation in Ethiopia. France also encourages the States concerned to resume discussions under the auspices of the African Union with a view to settling the disputes surrounding the Renaissance Dam.

Mr. Dai Bing (China) (*speak in Chinese*): I thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Perthes for his briefing and welcome the representative of the Sudan to our meeting today.

The Sudan is an important country in the African and Arab regions. Stability and prosperity in the Sudan serve the common interests of the international community. We must fully respect the Sudan's sovereignty and leadership, support the Sudan on its chosen development path, which suits its national conditions, and provide constructive assistance in accordance with its needs.

I would like to highlight the following three points.

First, the political transition in the Sudan has continued to make progress. The Chairperson of the Sudan's Sovereign Council, Lieutenant General Al-Burhan, and Prime Minister Hamdok signed and put into implementation the political agreement to restore the military-civilian power-sharing arrangement and gradually establish transitional institutions. They have stated that the elections will be held on time. The Sudan's political transition is back on the right track. China welcomes this development, which fully demonstrates that as long as the parties concerned put the interests of the country and its people first, stay committed to dialogue and consultation and make necessary compromises, a proper solution can be found.

China calls on all parties in the Sudan to continue to implement the Political Agreement to maintain the good momentum of political transition. All parties in the Sudan should make their demands within the constitutional and legal framework, avoid resorting to violence or causing casualties, and create conditions favourable to the political transition. The international community should adopt a neutral and balanced stance in the mediation process perceived from the Sudan's reality on the ground, respect the Sudan's choices and avoid imposing solutions from outside.

It needs to be pointed out that democracy can be realized in multiple ways. There are no fixed models, and neither should there be. The road to, and the form of, democracy each country chooses should be in line

with its national conditions and development realities and should be explored and developed by the country itself. It has been repeatedly proved by past practices that imposing the so-called democratic plan from outside is merely using democracy as a banner while taking the opportunity to interfere in the internal affairs of other countries. In effect, it is depriving the country concerned of its democracy and the betrayal of the democratic spirit. That is not true democracy.

Secondly, the economic reform measures adopted by the Sudanese authorities have achieved some results. However, the overall situation is still unsatisfactory. The inflation rate has exceeded 300 per cent. For a long time, issues concerning people's employment and livelihood have remained serious, and public dissatisfaction has grown. This is one of the root causes of the Sudan's turmoil. Without satisfying people's needs for food and shelter, it will be difficult to achieve stability and development. Under these circumstances, the suspension of debt relief and economic assistance by some financial institutions and countries has increased the Sudan's development burden and exacerbated the plight of the Sudanese people. China urges the international community to maintain its economic support and assistance to the Sudan, inject positive energy for the country to be able to overcome its difficulties.

At the eighth ministerial meeting of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, held recently, Chinese President Xi Jinping announced that we would provide 1 billion doses of vaccines to Africa, strive to reach \$300 billion total imports from Africa in the next three years, and work with Africa to implement nine programmes in such fields as health, poverty reduction, trade and investment. This will inject a new impetus into the development of African countries, including the Sudan.

Thirdly, the Sudan's security capacity-building still needs to be further strengthened to properly handle such issues as intercommunal conflicts and to better implement the National Plan for the Protection of Civilians. The Security Council must carefully study the impact of the arms embargo on the Sudan's security capacity-building and take effective measures to eliminate such impacts. Resolution 2562 (2021) requires that clear and feasible benchmarks for adjusting the Sudan's sanctions be established no later than 15 September 2021. Regrettably, the relevant process was not completed within the time frame set by the

Security Council. We hope that the actions requested by the Security Council in resolution 2562 (2021) can be implemented as soon as possible.

Mr. Mills (United States of America): I thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Perthes for his comprehensive briefing. Let me echo others in thanking him and his team for their committed work during a difficult time period in the Sudan. Let me also take a moment to thank Ambassador Jürgenson and the Estonian delegation for their work leading the Sudan Sanctions Committee these past two years. It is always good to see our good colleague, the Chargé d'affaires from the Sudanese Mission, in the Chamber today.

The United States fully supports the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan (UNITAMS) and its mandate to assist in the Sudan's democratic transition as laid out in the Constitutional Declaration and in the implementation of the Juba Peace Agreement. We too are encouraged by the 21 November agreement between Sudanese actors to reinstate Prime Minister Hamdok to office, but, as others have noted, this agreement is only a first step. We urge all parties to live up to their commitments made in the 21 November agreement and to renew their focus on completing the Sudan's transition to democracy by implementing the transitional tasks that are outlined in the 2019 Constitutional Declaration and the Juba Peace Agreement.

To provide political space for that to occur, the military must release all political detainees, lift the state of emergency and refrain from any and all violence against peaceful demonstrators. We continue to encourage an inclusive Sudanese process to implement the important transitional tasks, including creating the Transitional Legislative Council, judicial structures, electoral institutions and a constitutional convention.

We also continue to press for sustained humanitarian access to all conflict-affected and displaced populations to facilitate life-saving assistance. We must ensure the progress made since 2019 in reaching those in need. The United States remains committed to the people of the Sudan and helping them achieve a successful democratic transition. We look forward to close collaboration with our fellow members of the Council, UNITAMS, the African Union and other key stakeholders to achieve that objective.

Regrettably, intercommunal violence in Darfur, as we have heard, continues to persist, and clashes

between security forces and former armed opposition groups have increased in recent weeks, highlighting the urgent need to consolidate peace. Together with others, we condemn the recent killings and displacement in Darfur and elsewhere in the Sudan, and we are concerned about the heightened risk of violence for civilians amid such clashes.

Let me just add that, last February, the Council stated (see S/2021/136) its intention to establish benchmarks to guide us in reviewing sanctions measures on the Sudan. Although we were not able to reach agreement on the benchmarks by our self-imposed deadline, the United States has not given up on trying to establish such benchmarks, based on the recommendations of the Secretary-General and the continued evolution of the situation in the Sudan. We will continue to closely monitor the situation and discuss further action in response to developments in the Sudan.

The President (*speak in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of the Sudan.

Mr. Elbahi (Sudan) (*speak in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to sincerely thank Mr. Volker Perthes, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Sudan and Head of the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan (UNITAMS), for his comprehensive briefing before the Security Council today.

This briefing is being held as developments are being witnessed in the Sudanese political arena that are linked not only to the path of political transition leading towards democracy, freedom, peace and justice, but also to shaping the future of the Sudan in order to maintain our statehood and pave the way for governance that guarantees the values embodied in the slogans of the glorious December revolution.

To that end, actors in the Sudanese political arena from the military and civilian components must play their role in ensuring the success of the transition by operationalizing the mechanisms and methods guaranteed by the Constitutional Document and Juba Peace Agreement, as well as political tools and means to prevent any reversal of the gains made by the young men and women of the Sudan who have sacrificed their precious lives to create the bright future that they and our country deserve.

The political transition in the Sudan has faced many challenges since the formation of the transitional Government over two years ago. Some of those

challenges have been linked to the complications of the heavy political legacy passed down since the independence of the Sudan, but they are also connected to the dynamics of the civilian-military partnership and the nature of the flexible formation of civilian forces participating in the transition, as well as the security challenges in the country, whether in Darfur, the eastern Sudan or certain areas in the South Kordofan region.

The measures taken by the Chair of the interim Sovereign Council on 25 October are among the challenges facing the delicate political transition in the Sudan. We can understand them only in the context of the internal political circumstances and the need to maintain the gains made by our country over the past two years, as well as the repercussions of the geopolitical situation in the Sudan and the unrest in the region, with all its repercussions on our country.

On 21 November, the Sudanese political leadership successfully overcame that challenge through national efforts, which have prioritized the greater interest of the country as its primary concern. The 14-point political declaration was signed by the Chair of the Sovereign Council and the Prime Minister. In that regard, I note that the final challenge of addressing the political transition in the Sudan has strengthened the conviction of both the civilian and military transition partners that they must ensure the success of the transition period leading to free and fair elections.

The Chairperson of the Sovereign Council has repeatedly stressed this same issue over the past few days, as set out in his letter to the Council dated 30 September, in which he says:

“As we have repeatedly emphasized, we are committed to overseeing and protecting the transition in the Sudan until we reach the goal of holding free and fair elections that genuinely reflect the will and aspirations of the Sudanese people. We will work to prevent any attempt, from any quarter, to hinder the transitional process. We will also continue to promote and defend democratic change until power is handed over to an elected civilian Government. We will work to build a free and stable Sudan at peace with itself, its neighbours and its regional and international environment, a Sudan whose people can enjoy freedom, justice and peace—all of which were demands of the December revolution. We need hardly state that we remain committed to the provisions of the Constitutional

Document agreed upon by the stakeholders in the transition.” (*S/2021/832, para. 1*)

The challenges I have just mentioned have led Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok to call for a comprehensive national initiative, entitled “The Road Ahead”, which includes seven themes: the economy, justice, security sector reform and peace, dismantling the legacy of the Al-Bashir regime and combating corruption, foreign policy, national sovereignty and security, and the formation of the Transitional Legislative Council. The initiative was welcomed by the Security Council.

The preamble of the political agreement signed on 21 November includes a few of the challenges confronting the transitional process in the Sudan. The preamble stresses that the crisis is mostly a political one that requires a degree of wisdom and the shouldering of national responsibilities. The two signatory parties pledge to work together to complete and adjust the path towards democracy in order to serve the higher interest of the Sudan, prevent any relapse into the unknown and insecurity, while successfully completing the transitional period, leading to an elected civilian Government. That will be achieved only through the unity of the political and revolutionary forces, our young men, girls and women, the resistance committees, nomads, internally displaced Sudanese persons and refugees.

The Prime Minister expressed the same at the signing of the agreement. He stressed that the signing had come about as a result of the dangerous situation in the country. He emphasized that the main challenge at this critical moment is to implement the political agreement and achieve a democratic transition and civilian rule. In that regard, it is my pleasure to say before the Council that practical steps have been taken to implement the provisions of the political agreement. Those who were detained have been released, while we continue to implement the Juba Peace Agreement. We have also appointed a Chief Justice and an Attorney General. All partners will continue to implement the provisions of the political agreement to ensure the success of the transitional process.

The international community has responded to the aspirations of the Sudanese people for freedom, peace and justice, which undoubtedly will ensure the success of the transitional process in the Sudan. I look forward to the continued support of the international community for that process. We will work with our partners during

the transitional period to reach the desired goals and implement the provisions of the Juba Peace Agreement, in particular the security arrangements that require international support, which will lead to achieving peace, security and stability in Darfur, which is facing security challenges that the relevant authorities are working to address radically through close cooperation with various partners inside and outside the country.

The positive engagement of our friends and international financial institutions is also necessary to alleviate the impact of the economic reforms and external debt burden and to address the economic structural defects that we have inherited. In that regard, it is necessary to continue to support social protection programmes in order to address some of the social situations and implement economic reforms so that their objectives can be achieved. The international community needs to provide all aspects of humanitarian assistance to the hundreds of thousands of refugees who have come to the Sudan from neighbouring countries in the region.

I would like to sincerely thank all the members of the Security Council for their support for my country during and after the glorious December revolution. I also thank our friends who continued to make efforts leading up to the signing of the 21 November political agreement. We call on the Council to continue to support the agreement, which represents an important step that has diffused much of the tension, as we heard earlier from Mr. Perthes, and to support the stability of the Sudan at this critical time.

The region does not need any more conflicts. I call for continued support to UNITAMS so that it can carry out its tasks and contribute to the success of the transitional process in the Sudan, leading to fair elections that will pave the way towards sustained civilian democratic rule and meet the aspirations of our people, who yearn for freedom and good democratic governance.

In conclusion, I emphasize that the partners in the transition period will pursue their efforts to ensure its success. In that regard, I reiterate that we will continue to work with the international community to overcome all challenges during the transitional process in the Sudan and achieve our desired goals. I recall the statement that the Secretary-General made at a press conference last week, in which he stressed the need for common sense to prevail and accept the 21 November political

agreement to ensure a peaceful transition towards democracy. I agree with the Secretary-General's assertion that questioning the solution set forth in the political agreement will have dangerous repercussions not only for the Sudan, but also the entire region.

I thank Council members for their statements, in which they mostly stressed the fact that the Council stands ready to ensure stability and development in the Sudan. I reiterate once again that the political agreement requires further support from the Council and its members, as the representatives of their respective countries and of the Council. The Sudan also needs constructive and realistic engagement that takes its current situation and political developments into account, along with the specificities of political practices throughout the region. The Council must take into consideration the regional political situation while taking realistic steps to ensure our success. We should not look for ideals; otherwise our efforts will go to waste.

That is what we expect from the Council. We once again thank everyone for their statements, whether they were critical or encouraging. We look forward to the Council playing a constructive role in ensuring the success of the transitional period in the Sudan, leading to the holding of free and fair elections and democratic governance commensurate with the aspirations of our great people, as expressed by the glorious December revolution.

I also welcome Mr. Volker Perthes and once again thank him for his comprehensive briefing, including his call on the Council to take a balanced stance and continue to provide economic assistance. He also stressed that UNITAMS will continue to engage constructively to guarantee the success of the transitional process in the Sudan. Regarding the political situations in some of the areas outside the capital, especially Darfur, I stress that the Government has taken practical measures and has deployed forces to end the unfortunate tribal fighting and maintain security and stability. The situation is now completely under control. We express our condolences for those who lost their lives and wish those who are injured quick recovery.

The President (*speak in French*): 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 11.50 a.m.