



Security Council

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Letter dated 28 April 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council

I have the honour to enclose herewith a copy of the briefings provided by Mr. Jean-Pierre Lacroix, Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations, and Ms. Rosemary DiCarlo, Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, as well as the statements delivered by the representatives of Belgium, China, the Dominican Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, Indonesia, the Russian Federation, South Africa (on behalf of the three African members of the Security Council — Niger, South Africa and Tunisia — as well as Saint Vincent and the Grenadines), the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America and Viet Nam, in connection with the video-teleconference convened on Friday, 24 April 2020. A statement was also delivered by the representative of the Sudan.

In accordance with the procedure set out in the letter dated 2 April by the President of the Security Council addressed to Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council (S/2020/273), which was agreed in the light of the extraordinary circumstances caused by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, this briefing and these statements will be issued as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) José **Singer Weisinger**
President of the Security Council



Annex I**Statement by Mr. Jean-Pierre Lacroix, Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations**

I thank you, Sir, for this opportunity to brief the Security Council today, in line with resolution 2495 (2019), of 31 October 2019.

We are meeting in exceptional circumstances, as the world continues to fight the global coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. The spread of the virus has not spared the Sudanese people and has already impacted the peace process, as well as our activities in Darfur. Under these dire circumstances, I want to begin by assuring you that the United Nations is fully mobilized to continue to provide support to the Sudanese people.

Since my last briefing on the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) in October 2019 (see S/PV.8654), the Sudanese authorities and people have pushed ahead with the implementation of their democratic transition. Over the past months, the authorities have made progress on increasing women's participation in decision-making, as well as with regard to accountability and on political reforms, in accordance with the Constitutional Declaration signed on 17 August 2019.

However, this major change in the trajectory of the Sudan remains fragile and continues to be resisted by some, as illustrated by the outrageous attack on the convoy of Prime Minister Abdallah Hamdok on 9 March. In this regard, I would like to express my sympathy to the Prime Minister and reiterate the Secretary-General's condemnation of this attack and his solidarity and the unwavering support of the United Nations to the Sudan.

There has been some progress in the peace talks taking place in Juba between the transitional authorities and Sudanese armed groups under the auspices of South Sudanese President Salva Kiir Mayardit. Due to the measures related to COVID-19, the talks have been taking place indirectly and have moved online since the beginning of April. Final agreements have been signed on the central, northern and eastern tracks of the negotiations. On the Blue Nile and South Kordofan track, an agreement was signed between the Government and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North/Malik Agar faction. However, no agreement has been reached with the faction of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North led by Abdelaziz Al-Hilu due to the lack of an agreement on the issues of secularism and self-determination.

On the Darfur track, a framework agreement has been signed by the Government and some of the armed groups, but a final deal has yet to be reached and the talks have been extended again until 9 May. Unfortunately, the Sudan Liberation Army/Abdul Wahid faction has remained outside of the process, hampering efforts to address the concerns of his supporters in Darfur. Nevertheless, following the Secretary-General's appeal for a global ceasefire, the Sudan Liberation Army/Abdul Wahid faction has agreed to a de facto ceasefire, while raising concerns about the security and humanitarian conditions in Darfur, particularly in the Jebel Marra region. The Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North/Abdelaziz Al-Hilu faction has also responded to the call and declared an extension of the unilateral cessation of hostilities, except for self-defence purposes, to parts of the Two Areas under their control for an additional three months. I encourage all actors to uphold the cessation of hostilities, and reiterate our call for all armed groups to come to the negotiating table and contribute to paving the way towards peace in the Sudan.

UNAMID has provided support to the secretariat of the talks in Juba and has endeavoured to increase the participation of civil society from Darfur in the process.

Representatives of internally displaced persons, civil society and women's groups have been able to participate in the talks in Juba and convey their concerns, requests and proposed solutions. Their participation made the talks more inclusive, which is a critical element to ensuring sustainable peace.

The general situation in Darfur has remained largely unchanged since our last report. However, there were worrying developments in West Darfur in late 2019 and early 2020, when intercommunal clashes left around 65 people dead. These events also left over 46,000 people internally displaced, while an additional 11,000 people fled to Chad as refugees. These developments have illustrated the continued security challenges in Darfur, as well as the weakness of rule of law institutions in the area. Reports that elements of Sudanese security participated in this violence are particularly worrying.

At the same time, civil unrest has continued throughout Darfur. The current harvest season has also witnessed a sharp increase in attacks against farmers by pastoralists. Meanwhile, human rights abuses, some committed by uniformed personnel, remain prevalent. These challenges underline the persistence of some of the conflict drivers in Darfur, which may go beyond the scope of the peace process and will require a heavy investment in peacebuilding.

In response to the spread of COVID-19, on 16 March the Sudanese authorities announced the closure of all airports, seaports and land crossings until further notice and declared a public health emergency. On 12 April, they also announced a ban on all passenger road transport between cities and states. These closures, coupled with the suspension of all peacekeeping rotations, have had a severe impact on the movement of UNAMID personnel and the ability of the Mission to implement its mandate, including as a result of the reduction in interactions with the populations, community outreach and capacity-building activities. The Mission immediately developed a contingency plan and adopted preventive and mitigation measures by implementing social distancing and remote working arrangements, as well as establishing quarantine areas for uniformed personnel in all team sites. It has also worked with local authorities to increase their preparedness to respond to the spread of the virus to Darfur. Some resources from the State liaison functions are now being used to support the implementation of the national response plan to COVID-19 in Darfur hotspots.

The report of the Secretary-General before the Council (S/2020/202) outlines a drawdown and liquidation plan that envisages a sequenced closure of 14 UNAMID bases, the repatriation of 6,550 uniformed personnel and a significant reduction of civilian personnel until the end of the current mandate. That was already an ambitious time frame, but it has become unrealistic in the current circumstances. The pause in the drawdown until the end of May, the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak and the suspension of all peacekeeping rotations until 30 June, coupled with the onset of the rainy season in June, have rendered impractical an effective exit of our personnel by 31 October 2020.

First, the measures in effect in the Sudan and elsewhere to combat the pandemic will affect the Mission's capacity to operate smoothly and safely. Travel restrictions, mandatory quarantine and limited shipping options have already started impacting the Mission, making it increasingly difficult to conduct even basic logistical operations. While all operational units could cease operations gradually before 31 October so as to ensure the timely closure of the team sites, including in high-profile areas, it will be necessary to extend the drawdown period for several months beyond the end of the Mission's current mandate.

Further, the rainy season, lasting from June to October, renders large areas inaccessible, particularly for the types of heavy transportation equipment required to move the troops and their equipment. In view of the infrastructure limitations, the number of personnel, as well as the nature and volume of assets to repatriate or transfer, the drawdown period will need to be extended into the dry season to allow for unimpeded, safe and continuous movement among UNAMID camps, as well as between Darfur and Port Sudan.

In all drawdown scenarios, it is important to note that the Mission's capacity to fulfil its mandated tasks, including the physical protection of civilians, will gradually decrease as operations through different camps are discontinued and formed units deployed to these locations are repatriated. For the subsequent liquidation phase, it is recommended to maintain a uniformed presence in El Fasher to ensure the protection of the logistical hub until the completion of activities.

The requirements for a responsible drawdown, combined with the need to preserve operational efficiency and cost-effectiveness, will require close coordination between the drawdown of UNAMID and the establishment of a follow-on presence. The structure, mandate and establishment of a timeline of the new presence, once decided by the Council, will significantly impact the sequencing and overall timeline of UNAMID's drawdown. It will define the number of locations to close or hand over, the number of units and equipment to repatriate and the assets to dispose of or hand over to the follow-on presence.

The drawdown process must be managed carefully, taking into account the ongoing threats to civilians in several areas of Darfur and the level of anxiety among the most vulnerable populations over UNAMID's exit. Indeed, the Mission's drawdown should not signal that there are no more concerns related to the protection of civilians in Darfur. Conflict drivers persist and some of the largest camps for internally displaced persons remain extremely volatile. The risks of sexual or gender-based violence and of grave violations against children remain acute. It is critical that the departure of UNAMID be accompanied by alternative local and national protection efforts in order to build trust among local populations and internally displaced persons. In that regard, we encourage the Sudanese authorities to engage in such efforts immediately. UNAMID is ready to assist. It is also critical to make progress on the Darfur track of the peace process and that the population of Darfur see peace dividends.

Our focus with the follow-on presence in Darfur will be to preserve and consolidate the gains made over the years. In that regard, the new mission would build on the peacebuilding work that UNAMID and the United Nations country team have conducted in the framework of the State liaison functions and reinforce it. The advisory and support role they provide to local authorities and security services could also be reinforced by deploying additional police and military advisers in support of local security committees.

The Sudan has entered a new phase of its history. In that regard, it is critical that we create a configuration that would enable us to respond to the needs of the Sudanese people. Ms. Rosemary DiCarlo, Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, Mr. Nicholas Haysom, Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on the Sudan, and I are working on the development of concepts and plans for a possible future United Nations presence in the Sudan, on the basis of our discussions with the Sudanese authorities and the guiding principles in the special report submitted on 12 March on the establishment of a follow-on presence with a Sudan-wide mandate. Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo will brief Council members on the planning process for a possible follow-on presence in the Sudan.

Our objective is to achieve a smooth transition to a future United Nations mission that can help the Organization better support the Sudanese people. To that end, making sure that the potential mandates of a follow-on presence has the full support of the Sudanese authorities will be a critical element of the planning process. Their consent is a key aspect of the partnership we envisage with them for the future. Ensuring that all the objectives and mandates of the potential future mission are clearly defined and adequately resourced will also be another crucial aspect of the planning process, as only then would we be able to address the expectations of the Sudanese authorities and the people of the Sudan.

Prime Minister Hamdok has asked the United Nations to support the Sudan in this transition and we are ready to do our part. I hope we can count on the Council's support in this critical phase in the Sudan's history.

Annex II

Statement by Ms. Rosemary DiCarlo, Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs

I am grateful for the opportunity to brief the Security Council on the way forward for the United Nations engagement in the Sudan.

Six months after the establishment of the transition, the Sudan continues to face significant challenges. Its political fragility has been brought into focus with recent protests by elements affiliated with the former regime, as well as by security incidents like the mid-January protest of former intelligence operatives, which led to violent confrontations in Khartoum. Under-Secretary-General Lacroix has already mentioned the assassination attempt against Prime Minister Hamdok.

The humanitarian situation in the country remains worrisome. The number of people who need humanitarian assistance across the Sudan increased from about 8 million to 9.3 million at the end of 2019. Needs are largely driven by a deepening economic crisis.

Structural flaws in the Sudan's economy have driven up the rate of inflation and have hampered its ability to import needed commodities. That has directly affected the Sudan's population, with people facing long lines for bread and petrol due to shortages of wheat and fuel. Last week, Prime Minister Hamdok warned that the transition could collapse without quick economic support.

With the risk of a wider spread of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) in the Sudan, the economic challenges could worsen. The Secretary-General has encouraged the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund to show flexibility in granting the Sudan exceptional access to financial instruments established to assist developing countries respond to the challenges of COVID-19.

The situation in the Sudan is clearly dire, and the need for support is real and urgent. Prime Minister Hamdok has written twice to the Secretary-General to ask for the establishment of a political and peacebuilding mission that would support Sudanese efforts to overcome specific challenges. When I visited Khartoum in February, the Prime Minister and key stakeholders in the country, including civil-society groups, conveyed a similar request to me.

As a response to those requests, Mr. Nicholas Haysom, the Special Adviser of the Secretary-General for the Sudan and South Sudan, was deployed to Khartoum in early March and has been working tirelessly to provide political support and to advocate with major international partners the need to generate as much assistance as possible for the Sudan as soon as possible.

In parallel, we have been working on planning the future mission. In the special report submitted on 12 March to the Security Council (S/2020/202), the Secretary-General and the Chairperson of the African Union Commission recommend the establishment of a follow-on presence with a Sudan-wide mandate. The mission's objective would be to support the Sudan in successfully completing its transition. It would provide an effective response to the support needs outlined by Prime Minister Hamdok in his two letters to the Secretary-General. These include, first, supporting the achievement of the political benchmarks contained in the Constitutional Declaration; secondly, supporting the implementation of peace agreements in the conflict-affected areas; thirdly, supporting nationally led peacebuilding and the strengthening of human rights and rule-of-law institutions; and, fourthly, facilitating international support for economic reforms setting the Sudan on a path to sustainable development.

The protection of civilians is also an area of focus. We believe that it requires a comprehensive approach in order to be effective in the long term. Therefore, it will be an integral part of our peacebuilding efforts in the Sudan. It is crucial that we work closely with Sudanese authorities and that we assist them in discharging their protection responsibility.

Besides seeking an integration of the mission and the United Nations country team under a single leadership, we envisage a future United Nations presence that is lean, effective and innovative in employing and coordinating resources across the United Nations system. Gender equality and the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda will be a strong cross-cutting priority.

Given the urgent need to establish as soon as possible a presence on the ground to support the transition, Under-Secretary-General Lacroix and I have instructed a team of United Nations colleagues to lead a multi-disciplinary inter-agency planning exercise over the coming weeks. This team will develop a framework for the future United Nations presence in the Sudan, based on the guiding principles contained in the special report. We have also conveyed to the African Union Commissioner for Peace and Security an invitation for the African Union to join the planning exercise as a key partner.

As our team has been unable to travel to the Sudan because of restrictions imposed following the outbreak of COVID-19, we decided to launch the planning exercise of the future mission from New York, with members of the team convening in virtual format from their respective locations, including New York, Khartoum, Addis Ababa and elsewhere. The team is expected to physically deploy to the Sudan as soon as the situation allows in order to refine and validate the outcome of the planning exercise with key Sudanese stakeholders, including the transitional Government of the Sudan, civil-society organizations, political parties, women and youth groups.

We should do everything we can to support the transition and the Sudanese people in addressing the existing challenges. I trust that we all share this sense of urgency and collective responsibility to enable the success of the truly historic transition in the Sudan. The Secretary-General attaches utmost importance to this endeavour and looks forward to working closely with the Security Council to make that happen.

Annex III**Statement by Mrs. Karen Van Vlierberge, Deputy Permanent Representative of Belgium to the United Nations**

I wish first to thank the briefers.

The political situation in the Sudan has changed dramatically since the Council began to reflect on the future of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID). As the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic is not sparing the Sudan, we are reminded of the need to be a reliable partner to the Sudan in its pursuit of a successful political, economic and social transition. That very sense of partnership guides the European Union's support to the Sudan.

The past few months have shown undeniable positive developments. We welcome the efforts of the transitional Government, led by Prime Minister Hamdok, to restore peace nationwide. Yet important steps remain to be taken, with the additional challenge of dealing with the human and economic impact of COVID-19.

In Darfur, progress towards concluding talks justifies cautious optimism, but the serious security incidents and intercommunal violence show how fragile the progress is. As violence against internally displaced persons, women and children, in particular sexual violence, continues, the authorities' lack of capacity to fully protect civilians is laid bare.

We welcome the proposals contained in the special report regarding the follow-on United Nations presence after UNAMID's departure (S/2020/202). We also thank Prime Minister Hamdok for sharing his vision.

The areas for future cooperation between the transitional Government and the United Nations throughout the Sudan are many. They will include support for the transition in general as well as support for the peace process, the coordination of humanitarian aid, institutional capacity-building, the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process, the return of displaced persons and transitional justice.

The fragile situation in several areas of Darfur will continue so long as the root causes of conflict are not fully tackled; the follow-on mission will play an important role in addressing those root causes. It is our view, however, that its mandate must also include the protection of civilians, beyond mere advisory efforts and in cooperation with the Sudanese authorities.

Support for strengthening human rights and rule of law throughout the country will need to be at the core of the mission. Accountability is key to achieving and sustaining peace. In this regard, we commend the Government's commitment to transitional-justice processes and recent statements regarding cooperation with the International Criminal Court.

We have an opportunity to build lasting peace in Darfur. We fully support the Sudanese authorities in their efforts to end the existing conflicts and establish peace. We call on all parties, in particular the armed movements, to continue constructive negotiations.

Annex IV**Statement by Mr. Yao Shaojun, Minister Counsellor of China to the United Nations**

I would like to thank Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo and Under-Secretary-General Lacroix for their briefings. I welcome the presence of the Ambassador of the Sudan at this meeting.

We are pleased to note that the situation in the Sudan and Darfur is generally stable. Sudan is at a critical stage of its transition. We welcome the positive developments in the Sudan peace process; the progress made has not come easily and is the result of common efforts. We commend the mediation efforts by South Sudan, the African Union and other regional partners. Meanwhile, we call upon the relevant parties in Darfur to take advantage of the window of opportunity for political progress and to respond to the Secretary-General's appeal for a global ceasefire. It is time to resolve disputes and differences through political dialogue and promote the peace process.

At the same time, we also need to watch closely the impacts of the coronavirus disease pandemic on the country and its people. Given the weak health and medical systems in the Sudan, we encourage the international community to provide assistance so that the Sudanese Government can strengthen national public health systems. I agree with the representatives of Indonesia and Russia that the unilateral sanctions on the Sudan should be lifted. International financial institutions should show flexibility with regard to the Sudan's debt and lend a helping hand. At this stage, China has donated plenty of medical supplies to the Sudan, including face masks, test kits and protection suits. We will continue to offer help in the future.

The African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) played an important role in the Sudan peace process. China appreciates the great efforts of UNAMID personnel and commends their contributions. Under these special circumstances, we do hope to enhance the safety and security of peacekeepers. Regarding the follow-up presence of UNAMID, the decision should be made based on Sudanese views and positions, taking full consideration of the situation on the ground. We take note of the proposals in the special report of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission and the Secretary-General (S/2020/202). Critical issues, including whether to establish a special political mission and what such a mission's specific mandate would be, should be addressed in a manner that fully respects the wishes of the host country and the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of the Sudan. The role of the African Union and other regional organizations should be also recognized.

China stands ready to work with the international community and to continue to play a constructive role in promoting peace and sustainable development in the Sudan.

Annex V**Statement by Mr. José Singer Weisinger, Special Envoy to the Security Council of the Dominican Republic**

First of all, let me take this opportunity to express my appreciation to Under-Secretaries-General DiCarlo and Lacroix for their informative briefing.

Let me start by highlighting the crucial processes taking place in the Sudan. It is clearer than ever that change is in the hands of Sudanese leaders and of the citizens who brought them to power, with the support of international actors. If this ongoing process guarantees a new political framework based on the rule of law, wide democratic participation, real accountability and the well-being of the Sudanese people, then it is highly unlikely that the transition could fail.

For that reason, it is critical that extreme caution be taken on the withdrawal of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID). It is necessary to avoid a relapse into violence and to follow a comprehensive withdrawal that guarantees long-term stability, aligned with the priorities of the Sudanese Government. In that regard, we would like to highlight the positive effects of the Juba negotiations on the peace process. We call on the parties to keep up the momentum in order to reach agreement on all outstanding issues.

It is concerning that violent clashes are still happening in areas like West Darfur, from which UNAMID has withdrawn. We cannot allow the Sudan to become the next Haiti. Although we understand that protection should be the responsibility of the Government of the Sudan, we also recognize the duty of the Security Council to ensure that that responsibility is fulfilled. This process constitutes an unprecedented challenge for the United Nations, especially the Security Council. Our decision will affect the lives of millions of people facing a dire situation that is worsened by imminent threats, such as the current outbreak of coronavirus disease, which is expected to cause even more severe hardship for an already vulnerable population. We face a difficult test and we must not fail.

Darfur requires a gradual withdrawal that prioritizes the protection of victims of past and ongoing violence and guarantees the safety of people at risk of violations, such as sexual assault and violence. Continuing cases of sexual violence by men described as armed civilians and members of Government security forces are our utmost concern. In that regard, on a positive note, we welcome the signing on 11 March of the framework of cooperation to address sexual violence in the Sudan by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict and the Government of the Sudan. In that same vein, we would like to recognize the efforts by the interim authorities to advance women's participation in the decision-making process.

To conclude, the reputation of the Council is without a doubt on the line. Let us build on the successes of UNAMID and establish a follow-on mission that not only supports a nationwide transition to rights-respecting civilian rule and peacebuilding but also recognizes the need to continue protecting the most vulnerable.

Annex VI**Statement by Mr. Sven Jürgenson, Permanent Representative of Estonia to the United Nations**

I thank Under-Secretaries-General Lacroix and DiCarlo for their joint briefing.

Estonia fully supports the efforts of Prime Minister Hamdok and his Government to bring peace to the country, lead a successful transition to democracy and revive the economy. The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic is putting a serious strain on an already fragile situation. Therefore, it is all the more important that the Security Council do everything in its power to support the Sudan at this historic crossroads.

We welcome the positive response by the Government of the Sudan and the armed movements to the Secretary-General's call for a global ceasefire. Estonia commends the parties for finding alternative ways to continue the peace talks amid the COVID-19 pandemic. We encourage all sides to continue in good faith and hope they can reach a timely agreement.

We welcome the joint special report of the Chairman of the African Union Commission and the Secretary-General of the United Nations on the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) (S/2020/202), which lays out recommendations for the follow-on mechanism. Estonia also appreciates the Sudan's commitment to holding a dialogue with the Security Council on planning the follow-on mechanism. We are looking forward to the establishment of a new United Nations mission that supports the Sudan in bringing democracy, peace and prosperity to the country. It is important that the follow-on mechanism equally address the hopes of the Sudanese people as well as their concerns, including those related to the drawdown of UNAMID, such as widespread intercommunal conflict and sexual- and gender-based violence.

The violent clashes in Darfur, including the incident in El Geneina in January, underline the ongoing fragility of the situation. In that connection, it is crucial that we ensure sufficient protection-of-civilians capacity where necessary, based on a realistic risk assessment on the ground, not as a punitive measure but, on the contrary, as a way to help the Government successfully take full responsibility for security. Putting too much pressure on the Sudan at once has a high risk of endangering the progress already achieved. The cost of relapse into conflict is too high, not only for the Sudan but for the entire region.

Despite the COVID-19 pandemic and possible delays in drawdown schedules, we have to move on with replacing UNAMID with a new United Nations mission that is even better equipped to meet the current needs of the Sudan.

Estonia hopes that the Council will have the necessary unity of purpose to ensure the best possible support for the Sudan during its historic transition. There cannot be any cutting of corners on the political, security or humanitarian fronts. We owe it to the people of the Sudan.

Annex VII

Statement by Mrs. Anne Gueguen, Deputy Permanent Representative of France to the United Nations

[Original: English and French]

I would like to thank Under-Secretaries-General DiCarlo and Lacroix for their very informative and insightful briefings. Like other members of the Security Council, France strongly condemns the attack and assassination attempt on Sudanese Prime Minister Hamdok last month.

I will be brief and limit my remarks to expressing two concerns and two hopes.

My first concern is the impact of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) crisis on the Sudan. Prior to this moment, the Sudanese transition already had multiple challenges to deal with — a deep economic and humanitarian crisis, high expectations from the Sudanese people, the need for political and economic reforms and an ongoing peace process — so the COVID-19 pandemic is an additional challenge that requires strong support from the international community. France expresses its solidarity with the people and the Government of the Sudan in this regard. It is necessary that the Sudan have full access to international support mechanisms to deal with the pandemic and its consequences. I would add that I hope that the pandemic's negative impact on the activities and movements of the African Union-United Nations Mission Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) can be mitigated effectively.

My second concern is the protection of civilians in Darfur. As Council members are discussing how and when to close UNAMID and deploy a special political mission, there remain some 2 million internally displaced persons in the country and serious human rights violations continue to be reported. The peace process is ongoing and needs to address the main conflict drivers. The security sector and local institutions must be reformed and rebuilt. In this context, the protection of civilians in Darfur should remain one of the Council's key priorities in the Sudan.

However, the Sudan of today is different from that of yesterday. As the Sudanese people celebrate the first anniversary of the fall of Omar Al-Bashir this month, there is much to hope for. The first pillar of hope is the fact that the political transition has established a new relationship between Khartoum and the Sudan's international partners, one that is based on trust, dialogue and mutual commitment. We are determined to keep supporting the political transition in the Sudan, including the ongoing peace talks.

As Council members discuss the modalities and timing of the closure of UNAMID and the planning and establishment of a new mission, the dialogue with the Sudanese authorities is key. We have taken note of the letters sent by Prime Minister Hamdok and propose to continue engaging the Sudanese authorities in this respect, including on how to address the protection of civilians in a post-UNAMID Darfur.

The second topic that is a reason for optimism is the mobilization of the African Union (AU) in the Sudan, which France fully supports. Last year, the AU's mediation efforts played a critical role in negotiating the establishment of a civilian-led Government. We cannot succeed without a strong partnership with the AU. We have to be creative and find a way to design an ad hoc partnership between the follow-on mission and the African Union, taking into consideration the added value each institution provides.

France is ready to engage with the penholders and hopes for a united Security Council in agreeing a resolution that will serve peace and the best interests of the people of the Sudan.

Annex VIII

Statement by Mr. Christoph Heusgen, Permanent Representative of Germany to the United Nations

With regard to the transition in Khartoum and international support, it is very timely that the Security Council is discussing the situation in the Sudan in the month of the first anniversary of the peaceful revolution in the country that led to the ouster of the Al-Bashir regime. It is thanks to the civilian protest movement that the Sudan experienced that turning point in its history. By protesting peacefully and unremittingly, the country's civil society, including a large number of women who held key roles in the protest, ushered in a civilian-led Government. The role of the region and the strong political involvement of the African Union were also of crucial importance.

Under the courageous leadership of Prime Minister Hamdok, the new Sudanese Government has taken on the challenging task of opening up the Sudan and carrying out reforms. These tasks have become only more difficult with the onset of the coronavirus disease pandemic crisis in the country.

Along with its international partners, Germany has supported and will continue to support the democratic transition in the Sudan and the transitional Government's quest to fulfil the ambitions of the Sudanese people. Together with the transitional Government, we are closely coordinating within the Group of Friends of the Sudan on how we can best help to move fundamental economic reforms forward while protecting the most vulnerable. We acknowledge the steps that have been undertaken by the transitional Government in this regard.

Furthermore, within the Security Council, Germany and the United Kingdom, together with all other members gathering at this virtual table, will make every effort to help open a new chapter in the cooperation between the United Nations and the Sudan. Our joint goal should be to provide the Sudan with a support mission that helps to consolidate the political transition in Khartoum, supports the ongoing peace process and prevents a relapse into conflict in Darfur. We are encouraged by the fact that the Sudan has explicitly asked for United Nations support, and Germany, as a penholder together with the United Kingdom, is carefully studying the Sudan's requests.

With regard to the transformation of the United Nations engagement in the Sudan, we are not only at a historical juncture in the relationship between Security Council and the Sudan, but also in the middle of a complex transformation of the international presence itself in the Sudan. There is broad agreement that the current mission, the African Union-United Nations Mission Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID), will be coming to an end, which means that the Security Council has the responsibility to manage UNAMID's transition in a way that takes into account the needs of the country and its Government as well as the people of Darfur. It should also set an example for peacekeeping-operation transition processes in future.

As members of the Security Council, we have to take into account the ongoing volatility of the situation in Darfur and the continuing challenges with regard to security and protection of civilians in parts of the region when designing the envisaged follow-on mission to UNAMID. Working in close partnership with the Sudanese Government, we must find the best mechanism for addressing the remaining challenges in protecting civilians in parts of Darfur. Given that we have taken on this responsibility, we must continue to live up to it. To that end, we must be clear: any violence in the periphery, such as what we saw in west Darfur at the beginning of the year, has the potential to negatively impact the transition in Khartoum.

Annex IX**Statement by Mr. Dian Triansyah Djani, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Indonesia to the United Nations**

Let me begin by thanking Under-Secretaries-General DiCarlo and Lacroix for their comprehensive briefings.

Indonesia joins the Secretary-General in condemning the attack on Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok's motorcade in Khartoum last month. The attack underlines the security challenges that exist in the Sudan. Furthermore, the situation in the country, which was already marred by a weak economy and locust attacks, among other challenges, has begun to worsen under the impact of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. We also concur with Under-Secretary-General Lacroix that COVID-19 has deeply affected the peace process.

We hope that the progress achieved in the Sudan will not be derailed by a security vacuum. The drawdown plan needs to ensure that the Sudan's journey towards peace and stability will be even more robust after the closure of the African Union-United Nations Mission Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID).

As mentioned by the briefers, the Sudan remains fragile and therefore needs our help and joint efforts. We also take note of what Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo pointed out concerning the dire humanitarian situation amid the risk of COVID-19 and the need for the international community to assist the Sudan in that regard.

Indonesia has consistently underlined the importance of a responsible drawdown of UNAMID. We also take note of the options presented in the special report (S/2020/202) regarding the drawdown and stand ready to discuss them with other Council members.

After hearing South Africa's statement on behalf of the three African members of the Security Council plus Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, we share many of the important points. Allow me to highlight three important issues.

First, with regard to the impact of COVID-19 on the transition, besides threatening the health of the Sudanese population, the spread of COVID-19 also poses a serious threat to the Sudan's transition. We are closely following the impact of the pandemic on the Sudan's economy, especially access to food in the country. We call for broadened access to health services and food in all parts of the Sudan during this pandemic.

We once again call for the international community to assist in the economic recovery and capacity-building efforts. I share the belief that it is perhaps time for the Security Council to reconsider lifting the current sanctions regime, which affects the economy and the lives of the people of the Sudan. There is now a Government in place, and it is time for us to rethink those sanctions.

At this trying time, we also emphasize the need to ensure the safety and security of peacekeepers, as well as the other United Nations personnel in the Sudan in maintaining the protection of civilians and humanitarian operations, especially in the time of COVID-19.

Secondly, with regard to sustaining the gains made in Darfur, the drawdown plan needs to ensure that those gains can be sustained and further advanced after UNAMID. Indonesia concurs with the assessment in the special report that national ownership and support are a precondition for a successful follow-on mechanism.

To that end, we need an inclusive drawdown plan with the participation of all parties in the Sudan. This is especially important to support the ongoing peace negotiations between the Sudanese parties and further it through peacebuilding efforts.

It is now clear in our mind that we need to ensure a safe, smooth and responsible drawdown. I would like to underline the word “responsible”. The safety of peacekeepers as well as the protection of civilians are important.

In this time of COVID-19, we must be rational, manage carefully and not to force ourselves to follow the former deadline, which may no longer be practical or realistic. What is important is to safeguard the peace dividends.

The drawdown of UNAMID should not create anxiety and affect the vulnerability of the population. Otherwise, all the achievements of UNAMID would be in vain. Trust is an expensive commodity, and we do not want to see any relapse. We must be careful and responsible and take into account the limitations due to COVID-19 that might affect our plan.

Thirdly, regarding international support for the follow-on presence, as the Government of the Sudan assumes a central role in the country post-UNAMID, the world needs to maintain its support to achieve the Government’s priorities and tackle remaining challenges. Indonesia closely follows the increase in intercommunal violence in numerous parts of Darfur and remains cognizant of its impact on the Sudan’s transition.

We therefore believe that a limited number of peacekeepers to assist the Government of the Sudan is still necessary in the follow-on presence, particularly to enhance peacebuilding, capacity-building and the protection of civilians. The United Nations post-UNAMID presence should be flexible, effective, lean and tailor-made to the wish and needs of the host country and assist in the transition process. In short, it should support peacebuilding, economic recovery and sustainable development.

In the end, the conclusion of UNAMID’s operation in the Sudan does not mean that the country’s journey towards peace and prosperity has ended. It is time for the Sudan to embark on a new phase towards peace. Rest assured that Indonesia stands ready to walk hand in hand with the Sudan on this journey.

Annex X**Statement by Mr. Dmitry Polyanskiy, First Deputy Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations**

Let me start by thanking our briefers today for their valuable inputs.

We share most of the main observations and proposals enumerated in the latest special report (S/2020/202) prepared by the African Union and the United Nations. The security dynamics in Darfur have remained mostly unchanged. Isolated incidents, as well as sporadic but low-scale clashes in Jebel Marra between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Sudan Liberation Army of Abdul Wahid Al-Nur, who remains the main spoiler of the peace process, do not change the picture. Developments in those areas already vacated by the Blue Helmets are also not extremely worrisome.

We remain convinced that the agreed phased reduction and withdrawal of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) should be implemented in line with the relevant Security Council decision. We believe that a dialogue between the United Nations and the Sudanese authorities will contribute to the achievement of the necessary context and parameters for the follow-on presence. Today Darfur faces mainly peacebuilding challenges rather than peacekeeping ones. It is high time to focus on the restoration and economic development of Darfur.

We once again insist on lifting all unilateral sanctions imposed on Khartoum. This would be extremely useful to the efforts of the Sudanese authorities to revitalize the country's economy. This step would be even more important and timely in the midst of a raging pandemic.

We would like to emphasize that the opinion of the Sudan as the host country should in any case be decisive both for the drawdown and exit of UNAMID and in deploying a possible special political mission.

Russia believes that any future special political mission should support Khartoum precisely where the Sudanese themselves need and expect this. From that perspective, it seems obvious that a future United Nations presence should be based on Chapter VI of the Charter of the United Nations. Let us leave the task of the protection of civilians to the Sudanese authorities, which have repeatedly affirmed their readiness to assume those responsibilities. In that regard, the role of the international community would be to help Khartoum to build up the necessary national capabilities.

It is also very important not to bypass the African Union in our efforts. Regional organizations, which made a significant contribution to the stabilization of Darfur, should also play an important role during the peacebuilding phase.

Annex XI**Statement by Mr. Jerry Matjila, Permanent Representative of South Africa to the United Nations**

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the three African States members of the Security Council, namely, the Niger, Tunisia and South Africa, as well as Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (A3+1).

I would like to thank you, Sir, for convening this timely meeting. I would also like to thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report (S/2020/202) on the continued activities of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) for the maintenance of peace in Darfur. We commend the efforts of the United Nations working jointly with the African Union (AU) over the past 12 years.

I would also like to thank our briefers today, Ms. DiCarlo and Mr. Lacroix, for their comprehensive briefings, and for their continued collaboration with African Union Commissioner for Peace and Security Chergui and the AU Commission. The collaboration and cooperation between the AU and the United Nations have contributed immensely to the stabilization of the security situation in Darfur, thus resulting in our consideration of the withdrawal of UNAMID and subsequent transformation of the peacekeeping mission into a political and peacebuilding support mission despite the fact that Darfur continues to face residual protection challenges.

We would like to express our full support for the current transitional process under way in the Sudan, including the role of Prime Minister Hamdok. We also wish to express our strongest condemnation of the attack on Prime Minister Hamdok in the Sudan on 9 March. Attacks of this nature highlight continued risks that could considerably undermine the existing momentum towards restoring stability, development and prosperity in the Sudan.

We have reached a critical juncture with regard to UNAMID, and it is vital that we safeguard the gains that have been made in the past decade, while also continuing to place the needs of Sudanese civilians before all else. The current environment and challenges presented by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) require us to adopt a pragmatic and contextualized approach to any further reconfiguration of UNAMID. The pandemic has significantly affected the Sudan peace talks in Juba as well as the operations of UNAMID.

In this respect, we reiterate the call made by the African Union Peace and Security Council on the Government of the Sudan, working in collaboration with the AU and the United Nations, to agree on a comprehensive UNAMID withdrawal road map to ensure that the process is carefully managed and sequenced, based on conditions and aligned with the priorities and timelines of the Government of the Sudan, in order to safeguard the gains made to date and to maintain the current momentum in the Darfur peace process. We would like to raise the following key issues.

On the political transition, we support the transition in the Sudan under the leadership of Prime Minister Hamdok and call on all stakeholders to continue working for the success and respect of the transition period through the implementation of the provisions of the military-civilian transition agreement signed in Doha in July 2019, which should lead to the establishment of a democratically elected civilian Government.

Moreover, we urge all parties to remain steadfast in their engagement in the Sudan peace talks in Juba, and to find resolve through continued political dialogue. Furthermore, we urge Sudan Liberation Army leader Abdel Wahid Al-Nur to join the

Juba talks to ensure the process is inclusive and the political dialogue a success. Only through the inclusion of Darfur and its relevant actors will we have the baseline for sustainable and comprehensive peace and a real opportunity to address prevailing security and protection threats and risks, especially in the Greater Jebel Marra area. We also applaud the efforts by South Sudan in facilitating the ongoing peace talks and encourage its leaders to continue their constructive role in mediating the process.

On the economic situation, we recognize the dire economic and financial situation with which the country continues to grapple. This situation risks collapsing the good progress made on the political front. We therefore reiterate the call of the African Union Peace and Security Council for the lifting of all forms of sanctions imposed against the Sudan, including its delisting as a State sponsor of terrorism, in order to boost the existing momentum of the transition process and to create conditions conducive to economic recovery, growth and stability in the country. In this regard, we urge the international community and financial institutions to assist in addressing these challenges, particularly as the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbates the economic situation for the Sudan and neighbouring countries.

On the security situation, we remain concerned about the ongoing challenges in Jebel Marra as well as other hotspots such as Kalma and more recently El Geneina, which have displaced over 50,000 people within and beyond the Sudan. We are particularly concerned regarding the status of and security threats faced by internally displaced persons as well as the intercommunal violence highlighted in the Secretary-General's report.

In addition, we are disturbed by reports of grave violations against groups that have been put in the most vulnerable of conditions, including women and children. We welcome the signing of the Framework of Cooperation to Prevent and Respond to Conflict-related Sexual Violence between the Government of the Sudan and the United Nations in response to the high levels of violence against women, girls and boys in internally displaced person camps, in particular, and the use of rape at increasingly high levels in the fight against pastoralists and farmers for land in Darfur. We renew our call to strengthen institutions, guarantee the safety of the most vulnerable groups and prosecute the perpetrators.

We are also concerned about the deteriorating humanitarian situation prevailing in Darfur. This grave situation is driven by a number of factors, including the hazards related to climate change, such as flooding and drought, as well as intercommunal conflicts. These factors cause internal and external displacement and serve to exacerbate an already challenging situation, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. We urge the mission and other United Nations agencies working on the ground to coordinate their actions to support the Government in containing and minimizing the impact of the disease in Darfur, as well as in continuing to combat the desert locusts, which constitute a genuine threat to food security in the Sudan.

On the drawdown and the post-UNAMID mechanism, we are pleased that the Government of the Sudan has highlighted the needs on the ground, and we support Prime Minister Hamdok's call for a mission, following UNAMID's withdrawal, mandated under Chapter VI of the Charter of the United Nations. It is therefore imperative that a follow-up mission be fully aligned with the priorities and objectives of the Government to ensure the efforts of the international and regional communities have a meaningful impact.

Moreover, as noted by Prime Minister Hamdok in his letter as well as by the Secretary-General and the Chairperson of the AU Commission in their report, the role of the African Union should continue during the transition period. Therefore,

there remains a need to ensure that the AU and the United Nations build on their excellent collaboration and continue working in unison.

As we deliberate a post-UNAMID mission, and given the current uncertain times due to the pandemic, there are some key questions we would like to raise.

First, given the changed circumstances, including the impact of COVID-19, the halt in UNAMID's operations and the effects of the rainy season, what is the feasibility of extending the mission's deadlines? Is UNAMID's exit viable at this stage?

Secondly, if the United Nations were to maintain a police presence in Darfur and the security situation there deteriorates, to what extent would the United Nations have the requisite capacity to respond? Would the limited police presence create false expectations and potentially undermine the Organization's credibility?

Thirdly, with regard to the protection-of-civilians mandate in particular, does the security situation in the entire Darfur area merit the total withdrawal of UNAMID by October 2020?

Fourthly, given that broader political developments in the Sudan require international support to ensure the country's stability and its recovery and economic development, in particular, should the new United Nations mission not specifically focus on political and peacebuilding efforts only, with the support of the African Union and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development?

Lastly, we would like to express our gratitude to UNAMID through the invaluable efforts of Mr. Jeremiah Mamabolo, Acting Joint Special Representative for Darfur and Head of the United Nations-African Union Mission in Darfur, and his team, and urge them to continue to spare no effort until lasting peace is restored to the Darfur region. Our continued engagement and collective support will be key in advancing peace and stability in the Sudan. Most important, the Sudan's stability is critical to an already fragile region.

Furthermore, we recognize the vital role that the Sudan plays in the political developments in South Sudan despite the former's own significant challenges. The A3+1 agree with Prime Minister Hamdok that the overall security and protection of the Sudanese people is the responsibility of the Sudanese Government and its institutions. The A3+1 also agree that the entire United Nations system, in general, and the Security Council, in particular, have immense responsibility in accompanying and ensuring that the multi-stakeholder transitional Government in the Sudan succeeds in leading its people towards a hopeful future of a peaceful, unified, democratic, open and freer society.

Annex XII**Statement by Mr. Jonathan Allen, Chargé d'affaires of the Permanent Mission of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations**

Let me begin by thanking Under-Secretary-Generals DiCarlo and Lacroix and for their briefings. Let me also reiterate the United Kingdom's condemnation of the attack and the attempted assassination of Prime Minister Hamdok.

Regrettably, the Sudan, like many parts of the world, is experiencing the coronavirus disease (COVID-19), which compounds an already difficult socioeconomic and humanitarian situation. On behalf of the United Kingdom, I want to send today a message of solidarity and support to the Government and the people of the Sudan in their efforts to respond to COVID-19 and mitigate its effects. As part of the United Kingdom's \$1 billion commitment since the COVID-19 outbreak began, we have given \$6 million to the United Nations COVID-19 response plan for the Sudan.

One of the brightest spots on the Council's agenda has been the beginning of the Sudan's transition to a democratic and peaceful nation. There has been much progress in the years since the removal of former President Al-Bashir. We encourage all Sudanese parties, as well as the international community, to remain fully committed behind the Sudan to ensure the successful implementation of the Constitutional Declaration, even during the challenges presented by COVID-19. In that connection, I commend in particular the positive role that the African Union continues to play in the Sudan's political transition.

The Government of the Sudan and a number of armed movements have been engaging in talks for comprehensive peace across the Sudan. That commitment to peace is promising, as is the positive response to the Secretary-General's call for a global ceasefire by the parties to the Juba peace talks. But we now need to see that all sides, especially the armed movements, engage constructively, immediately and without preconditions to conclude swiftly the negotiations on a comprehensive peace agreement. We call on them to do so.

Despite the positive progress that has been made in the Sudan, we remain concerned about the security situation in Darfur, which continues to be undermined by ongoing conflict in Jebel Marra that increases intercommunal violence and civilian displacement. Just this week, there were reports of an attack on a village in central Darfur, in which civilians were apparently killed and wounded, 70 homes burned down and approximately 155 households displaced. The approximately 1.8 million internally displaced persons in Darfur remain particularly vulnerable to human rights violations and abuses. We cannot ignore the considerable and ongoing challenges in Darfur relating to the protection of civilians.

The United Kingdom fully supports the Sudanese Government's request for a new, whole-of-Sudan United Nations mission that can provide support across the full range of issues related to the transition. We believe that the Council should support that request and back a relationship between the Sudan and the United Nations that is underpinned by national ownership, partnership and collaboration. We should be ready to move quickly in response to the Sudan's declared needs. As Rosemary DiCarlo said today, the situation is dire.

We understand that the Government of the Sudan would like the United Nations to support capacity-building. The United Kingdom believes that there should also be a role for the capacity-building, training and mentoring of police forces. In the time it takes to implement such capacity-building, we must ensure that

a security vacuum does not undermine efforts to achieve comprehensive peace in Darfur and facilitate the overall political transition in the Sudan. And, in a spirit of the new relationship between the Sudan and the United Nations, we firmly believe that the new mission can and should be a partner to the Government of Sudan in responding to the ongoing challenges in Darfur related to the protection of civilians, particularly in the internally displaced persons camps. I would therefore like to ask Under-Secretary-General Lacroix for his assessment of the protection-of-civilians needs and risks in Darfur and the current capacity of the Government of the Sudan to assume full responsibility for such protection. I would also be grateful if he could provide information on the type of deployment that would be required for the new mission to support the Sudanese Government in protecting its civilians.

Let me also say that we have noted the measures taken by the United Nations concerning peacekeeping, in particular the pause on rotations. We understand the impact that this could have, depending on climatic conditions, as Under-Secretary-General Lacroix mentioned. We also understand the impact that said measures will have on the timing of the planned drawdown of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur.

Let me conclude by once again reaffirming the United Kingdom's support for the Government and the people of the Sudan in their endeavours to bring about a peaceful, stable, prosperous and democratic future. We look forward to working with our colleagues in the Council to play our part in supporting those efforts.

Annex XIII**Statement by Ms. Cherith Norman-Chalet, Acting Deputy Permanent Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations**

I wish to thank you, Mr. President, and Under-Secretaries-General Lacroix and DiCarlo for their respective but joint briefings.

The United States stands in solidarity with the Sudanese Government as it continues to engage in the Juba peace process, especially in the face of economic challenges and the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. We condemn, as others have today, the assassination attempt last month against Prime Minister Hamdok, and we remain concerned about the continued insecurity, including the ongoing and widespread sexual and gender-based violence, in addition to the recent violence in Darfur, including the late December attack in El Geneina, which displaced more than 30,000 civilians, as well as the looting of the former African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) team site in Nyala, which occurred soon after.

Next month the Security Council is expected to create a new mission in the Sudan — one that supports Prime Minister Hamdok and the transitional Government and that fosters political stability and peace for all Sudanese, especially those in Darfur and other conflict-affected areas.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Prime Minister Hamdok for his outreach to the United Nations regarding the establishment of a follow-on presence to UNAMID. In addition, we wish to welcome the joint African Union-United Nations report on UNAMID's activities and the recommendations therein for the follow-on mission (S/2020/202). However, it would be helpful for the Security Council to have a more informed understanding of the risks related to the protection of civilians, especially in Darfur, and how the United Nations could assist the Sudanese with this challenge. Specifically, what is the Secretariat's risk assessment of the security situation in Darfur? Looking to the future, the United States has several priorities for the follow-on mission to UNAMID that we would like to share with the Council.

First, a seamless transition must occur between UNAMID and the follow-on mission. Given COVID-19 developments and constraints on troop rotations, we recognize, however, that the 31 October deadline to end UNAMID may not be met. The drawdown should happen as quickly and as responsibly as possible to allow the new mission to establish itself. The drawdown should also include assurances that returned team sites will be protected from looting.

Secondly, the follow-on mission must support the civilian-led transitional Government to undertake national-level tasks, including support for the peace process, constitutional reform, elections and the conduct of a census.

Lastly, we are greatly concerned about the continued insecurity in Darfur. We see the need for a robust police mission in Darfur with a mandate that supports the Sudan's efforts to address the remaining security challenges in that volatile region.

We all have an opportunity to help move the Sudan forward towards stability. The United States is ready to seize this opportunity, and we look forward to working with the Council to design a follow-on mission to UNAMID that addresses the Sudan's security and political needs.

Annex XIV**Statement by Mr. Pham Hai Anh, Deputy Permanent Representative of Viet Nam to the United Nations**

I thank Under-Secretaries-General Rosemary DiCarlo and Jean-Pierre Lacroix for their comprehensive briefings. I would also like to welcome Ambassador Omer Siddig, Permanent Representative of the Republic of the Sudan.

Viet Nam commends the efforts of the transitional Government of the Sudan in promoting peace, stability and development in the country, as well as in responding to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. We welcome the recent progress made in the peace negotiations between the Government and the armed groups in Darfur. We also express our support for the efforts of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID), as well as those of regional organizations and countries of the region, namely, the African Union and neighbouring South Sudan, in contributing to the peace process in the Sudan. We also agree with many of the points in the statement made earlier on behalf of the three African countries that are members of the Security Council. With regard to recent developments, allow me to make the following observations.

First, the implementation of the transitional tasks and the peace negotiations remain the two most important tasks in order to achieve long-term peace and stability in the Sudan. It is our sincere hope that the Government of the Sudan and the relevant parties in Darfur can build consensus and jointly advance the political transition and peace process.

We believe that more confidence-building measures should be supported in this regard. The support of the United Nations and the African Union, as well as the mediation role of South Sudan, can be further strengthened. The recent positive developments in the Sudan's neighbour country can be conducive to promoting the Darfur peace process. Furthermore, in the light of the challenges posed by COVID-19, it is important to support the Government in maintaining dialogue with the relevant parties in Darfur, including via remote means.

Secondly, we note that the security situation in Sudan in general and Darfur in particular have become more stable, owing not only to the effective work of UNAMID but also to the active efforts of the Sudanese Government. However, intercommunal violence, attacks on camps for internally displaced persons and United Nations staff in Darfur remain issues of high concern. We urge all armed groups in Darfur to exercise maximum restraint. We call on the Sudanese authorities to find more comprehensive solutions to address the root causes of those issues.

We also strongly condemn the attempted assassination of Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok on 9 March. In this critical period, it is vital to refrain from any actions that could undermine the peace, security and stability of the Sudan.

Thirdly, it is important to promote the safety and livelihoods of the people, especially in the context of COVID-19. Viet Nam is concerned by the growing spread of COVID-19 in the Sudan in recent weeks. The international community should continue to support the Sudanese Government in its efforts to address the pandemic as well as the current socioeconomic challenges, including food insecurity and climate change. Sustainable development will reduce the risk of violence.

Fourthly, on UNAMID, we acknowledge that Darfur is currently in a transitional phase from peacekeeping to peacebuilding, as mentioned by the United Nations and the Sudanese Government. The whole country is also in a critical period of transition. In that regard, Viet Nam supports the establishment of a new United Nations presence, after the exit of UNAMID, to assist the political, security

and development process in all of the Sudan as well as to promote the governance capacity of the Sudanese Government and the local authorities. At the same time, we believe that this process must be carefully considered and carried out in line with the situation on the ground and the relevant resolutions of the Security Council. It is also important for the international community and the Council to take into account the views of the Sudanese Government, which holds the primary responsibility for maintaining security in the Sudan.

Fifthly, we strongly support the active role and participation of women in all stages of the peace process, and therefore appreciate the efforts of UNAMID to support the engagement of women in many aspects, such as resolving intercommunal issues and the protection of civilians. We look forward to the continuation of such efforts in the post-UNAMID phase.

To conclude, Viet Nam would like to reaffirm its support for the pursuit of sustainable peace, stability and development for the Sudanese people.

Annex XV**Statement by Mr. Omer Mohamed Ahmed Siddig, Permanent Representative of the Republic of the Sudan to the United Nations**

At the outset, allow me, Mr. President, to congratulate you and your delegation on assuming the presidency of the Security Council for this month. I would also like to express our appreciation for the Permanent Representative of China for his able leadership in steering the Council's agenda during the exceptionally difficult month of March. In addition, we thank the Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations, Mr. Jean-Pierre Lacroix, and the Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, Ms. Rosemary DiCarlo, for their briefings.

The Sudan has taken note of the special report by the Chairperson of the African Union Commission and the Secretary-General of the United Nations (S/2020/202). While we welcome some of the suggestions and recommendations contained therein, I would like to highlight the following points.

The overall security situation in Darfur has largely been stable. The Security Council, in resolution 2495 (2019), adopted on 31 October, reflected that reality when it welcomed the steady improvement in the security conditions in Darfur. The transitional Government of the Sudan is doing its utmost to safeguard Darfur's stability by, inter alia, preventing intercommunal conflicts and promoting the culture of peace and coexistence. The primary responsibility for protecting civilians in Darfur and elsewhere in the country lies with the Government of the Sudan. In that regard, my Government is able and willing to perform all of its responsibilities. The Government has already put in place a comprehensive strategy to enhance the protection of civilians in Darfur, address the root causes of the conflict, promote human rights and build sustainable peace.

It is worth mentioning that peace is a key priority for the transitional Government and a cornerstone in the Constitutional Document, which governs the transitional period in the country. My Government has been engaging for several months in tireless and ceaseless negotiations with the various Sudanese factions in order to reach a comprehensive peace in the Sudan. At a joint meeting on 18 March, the Sovereign Council, the Council of Ministers and the political forces agreed on a matrix that sets timetables in seven key areas, topmost of which is the realization of peace. The second week of May has been agreed as the deadline for accomplishing a settlement that is viable, sustainable and responsive to the aspirations of all people. It is further worth mentioning that the peace negotiations are now continuing between partners — not adversaries — as the leaders of the armed groups are part and parcel of the change that has taken place in the country.

Against the backdrop of those positive developments and the constantly improving situation on the ground in Darfur, Prime Minister Hamdok sent a letter to the President of the Security Council and the Secretary-General on 27 February, detailing the strategic areas in which the Sudan requires assistance from the United Nations and the wider international community. The Prime Minister's letter was issued as a Security Council document (S/2020/221), and all members of the Council must have perused it.

Since the Sudan voluntarily sought the assistance of the United Nations in specific areas, we implore that the follow-on mission be mandated according to arrangements that fall under Chapter VI of the Charter of the United Nations. The current situation in Darfur no longer necessitates any Chapter VII provisions. The follow-on mission should be established in a manner that respects the sovereignty, national consent and national ownership of the Sudan. Furthermore, any deployment of United Nations police or military personnel pursuant to Chapter VII would be

contrary to what has been sought by the consensus among the Sovereign Council, the Council of Ministers and the governing political parties in the Sudan. Therefore, I would like to stress that any discussion involving reference to Chapter VII will not obtain the consent of my Government.

Darfur is at a key juncture in its transition from peacekeeping to peacebuilding. In order to make that transition as smooth as possible and avoid any security vacuum in a post-African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) configuration, my Government is fully committed to continuing its efforts to enhance security in Darfur by deploying law enforcement teams to maintain law and order. It is to be recalled that when a tribal clash erupted in El Geneina, West Darfur, earlier in January, both the Vice-Chair of the Sudan's Sovereign Council and the Prime Minister visited and stayed in the area until a robust security arrangement had been set up and non-recurrence of such incidents was assured.

While we note the significant progress achieved in the overall security situation in Darfur, we are concerned about the ongoing sanctions imposed against the Sudan pursuant to resolution 1591 (2005). We strongly urge the Council to courageously reconsider those measures, particularly the restrictions imposed on the movement of arms and troops to and within Darfur. The region of Darfur is adjacent to volatile hotspots where terrorist organizations, such as Boko Haram, Al-Qaida, the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham and others, are active and illegal migration and human trafficking are rampant. For these and other reasons, it is imperative to adequately enable the Sudanese security forces to be prepared for any potential threats by lifting the sanctions.

We highly appreciate the efforts of the Friends of the Sudan contact group and their ardent desire to assist in mitigating the negative impacts and heavy heritage of the deposed regime on the country's economy. We urge the Friends of the Sudan to keep up the momentum until the convening of an international pledging conference for the Sudan and the accomplishment of its outcomes.

I would be remiss if I did not reflect on the challenges resulting from the designation by the United States of America of the Sudan as a State sponsoring terrorism and the effects of that designation on our economy. That is compounded by the socioeconomic difficulties the coronavirus disease pandemic poses for our economy and health infrastructure. These represent two real threats to the success of our revolution, which toppled the most notorious dictatorship in Africa.

Finally, while the Security Council is conducting a full and objective evaluation of a UNAMID drawdown and coming up with options for the post-UNAMID follow-on presence, it is imperative that the Sudan be fully engaged in that process in a transparent and consultative manner. Furthermore, the Sudan will continue to cooperate with UNAMID during the liquidation and exit phase. We stand ready to work with the international community so as to jointly achieve stability and development, not only in Darfur but in the whole of the Sudan.
