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Seventy-eighth year

Provisional

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Monday, 20 March 2023, 12.25 p.m.

New York

<i>President:</i>	Mr. Afonso	(Mozambique)
<i>Members:</i>	Albania	Mr. Spasse
	Brazil	Mr. Parga Cintra
	China	Mr. Dai Bing
	Ecuador	Mr. Montalvo Sosa
	France	Mr. Olmedo
	Gabon	Ms. Koumby Missambo
	Ghana	Ms. Osei
	Japan	Mrs. Shino
	Malta	Ms. Gatt
	Russian Federation	Ms. Evstigneeva
	Switzerland	Mr. Hauri
	United Arab Emirates	Mrs. Nusseibeh
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . .	Mr. Kariuki
	United States of America	Mr. Wood

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 the Sudan (S/2023/154)

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The meeting was called to order at 12.25 p.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/2023/154)

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

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. 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 give the floor to Mr. Perthes.

Mr. Perthes: I thank the members of the Security Council for the opportunity to brief them once again. When I previously briefed the Council on 7 December 2022 (see S/PV.9211), the Sudanese military leadership and a broad range of civilian actors had just signed a political framework agreement. That was a watershed moment and ushered in a new phase of the political process, which seeks to lead to a new transitional period. Today we are the closest we have been to reaching a solution, although challenges remain. Let me outline where we are.

On 9 January, the signatories to the framework agreement, with the facilitation of the trilateral mechanism of the African Union, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development and the United Nations, began broad consultations in the form of workshops convened on five contentious issues: the dismantling of the old regime, the Juba Peace Agreement, the east of the Sudan, transitional justice and security sector reform. Calling those consultations "workshops" is a bit of a misnomer. Each consultation gathered together hundreds of Sudanese women and men, most of whom

came from outside the capital, representing a broad social, professional and political spectrum. Even some people who had previously publicly rejected the political process joined the conferences or workshops. Each workshop thus created space for public and transparent discussions among Sudanese citizens from all walks of life, including societal groups who often feel voiceless. While the representation of Sudanese women fell short of the commitment to a 40 per cent minimum, women actively participated in the discussions.

Many areas of consensus emerged. During the workshop on the east, for example, important breakthroughs, such as an agreement on a forum that will pave the way for future reconciliation in that region, emerged. The national conference on transitional justice, which concludes today, was instrumental in advancing a common understanding of accountability and reconciliation.

The reform of the security sector and the integration of forces are among the most sensitive elements of the current process. Last Thursday, military and civilian leaders signed a joint paper on the phases and substance of security sector reform. That allows us — the trilateral mechanism — to launch the last workshop by the end of this week. It will focus on feasible options for the reform of the security sector and the integration of the Rapid Support Forces and armed movements into one national professional army. Hopefully, it will also come up with an initial road map for the implementation of those steps in the years to come.

Things are moving fast. Yesterday the military and civilian signatories again met the trilateral mechanism, the Quad — Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, the United States and the United Kingdom — and the European Union to confirm their commitment to the process and to speak about the next steps. Based on their understanding, we, the trilateral mechanism, convened a preparatory meeting at the Republican Palace, where those parties agreed to begin the drafting process for a final political agreement and a transitional constitution. They also established a committee to reach out to non-signatory parties and movements, with a timeline. Their aim is to reach a final political agreement, agree on the constitution and begin on the formation of a civilian Government before mid-April. That is ambitious, but it can be done with the necessary political will.

We, the trilateral mechanism, remain encouraged by how few substantive differences there remain among the main actors. That includes the leaders of two major armed movements, who are members of the current military-led Government but have not signed the framework agreement and did not participate in yesterday's meetings. Their main difference with the signatories is not about the structures of the transition or the next Government, but rather that they wish to ensure their own representation in it. Joining the process and voicing their demands through the final political agreement would be the best way to guarantee that.

The process has been a truly Sudanese one. We, the United Nations and our partners in the trilateral mechanism, have been actively facilitating it, and we will continue to do so. Lieutenant General Al-Burhan, Chairman of the Sovereign Council, and General Hemetti, Vice-Chairman, have repeatedly stressed that they want to see the process through and hand over power to a civilian Government. Their commitment and the cooperation of military and civilian leaders in recent weeks in order to reach a solution are highly commendable.

At the same time, we have been alarmed by the rising tensions between the Sudanese army and the Rapid Support Forces in recent weeks. I have appealed to both sides for urgent de-escalation, and I was encouraged by their decision to establish a joint security committee last week and their agreement on fundamental aspects of security sector reform and integration.

Civilian parties will now have to swiftly finalize discussions on the mechanisms to select a Prime Minister and form a Government. Transparent engagement with the public, the youth on the street and those who have not — or not yet — entered the process is necessary to build legitimacy for the future Government.

Time is essential. The scale of challenges facing the people and any new Government are enormous. The humanitarian needs in the Sudan are at record levels, with 15.8 million people — about a third of the population — requiring humanitarian assistance this year. High food prices and increasing hunger remain a serious concern.

Local conflicts, particularly in Darfur, Blue Nile and South and West Kordofan, and mainly over access to, and control of, resources, continue to result in the killing, injury and displacement of civilians. More than 16,000 people were displaced owing to conflict between

December last year and February. In just one incident in Bleil, in South Darfur, last December, intercommunal clashes claimed the lives of at least 15 people, injured another 47 and displaced nearly 13,000.

Increasing interventions by the authorities managed to de-escalate such situations and broker a cessation of hostilities. In several instances, investigations were also conducted, which is a welcome development. At the same time, the deployment of the joint security-keeping forces continues to be delayed. In the context of those conflicts, we are also concerned about reports of sexual violence, which must be investigated.

The Permanent Ceasefire Committee continues its monitoring. Encouragingly, no ceasefire violations have been reported since my most recent briefing. In my recent meeting with the Joint High Military Committee, it repeated its call for more international support and for the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan to continue its role as Chair of the ceasefire committees.

Humanitarian access is still a critical concern, as are the bureaucratic and administrative impediments that hinder effective operations of the United Nations and our non-governmental organization partners. We remain in continuous dialogue with the authorities to address those concerns, including on the issuance of visas for United Nations staff. Slower responses entail less support, including less timely support, for the people of the Sudan. We also continue our dialogue with the Government on the implementation of the National Plan for the Protection of Civilians.

The protests against military rule have continued, albeit in lower numbers and with less frequency. While the excessive use of force has decreased over time, a young protester was fatally shot by a police officer in Khartoum on 28 February. The immediate action taken by the authorities to investigate his death and lift immunity from prosecution for the officer was promising. I urge the authorities to make visible progress on investigations into that and other human rights abuses and bring the perpetrators to justice.

A court decision on 6 March to acquit and release eight young men accused of killing a military intelligence officer last year was welcome, given the absence of evidence against them. I also welcome the release of 300 other men, who were detained without charges on the orders of the Governors of North and West Darfur in 2021 and 2022. The authorities must

respect the due process rights of detainees and release anyone who was unlawfully detained.

The United Nations also continues to work with the authorities and armed groups to ensure the release of children associated with such groups. Over the past two months, 122 children — 92 boys and 30 girls — were released in Darfur.

The challenges facing the next Government are immense. Addressing the pressing humanitarian and economic needs, ensuring security, justice and respect for human rights, peacemaking and advancing the democratic transition are all critical demands of the Sudanese.

The United Nations, with international partners, is coordinating and jointly planning collective support for the post-agreement transition phase and the Government's priorities. We have already convened an initial discussion with United Nations agencies, the international financial institutions and donors to support the priorities of an expected incoming Government post-agreement.

Allow me to conclude by reminding ourselves of how far the Sudanese have come: when I briefed the Council last year around this time (see S/PV.9006), the trilateral mechanism had just begun the process of shuttling between Sudanese stakeholders. At that time, protests were held every few days, and key actors did not want to talk, let alone negotiate, with each other. Today Sudanese stakeholders are closer than they have ever been to a settlement and the return to civilian government. The process, certainly not perfect, and occasionally criticized for being too slow, has managed to get a broad and sufficiently inclusive group of stakeholders, particularly military authorities and civilian opposition parties, to near agreement.

And as the Sudanese navigate this last hurdle, collective efforts from the international community are needed now more than ever. It is necessary to support the next government with the required capacity to tackle the major issues that have lain dormant: addressing root causes of conflict, implementing security arrangements, significantly improving the lives of Sudanese women and men, and preparing free and fair elections. The united support of the Security Council will be crucial.

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

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

Mr. Kariuki (United Kingdom): I thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Perthes for his briefing and for the continued efforts of the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan (UNITAMS) on the ground. I also welcome the presence of the Permanent Representative of the Sudan in our meeting today.

I will make four broad points.

First, I would like to commend the progress made since the announcement of the Framework Agreement on 5 December. The United Kingdom welcomes the wide and diverse range of participants involved in the completed workshops. We encourage the holding of the remaining workshop on security sector reform as soon as possible.

As we approach Ramadan, it is essential to consolidate the progress made so far. Now is the time for all parties to seize momentum, accelerate their engagement and reach a final agreement within the coming weeks. The United Kingdom is working with partners to ensure an early and coordinated offer of support to a civilian-led transitional Government.

We support the role of UNITAMS, the African Union and Intergovernmental Authority on Development in facilitating the political process and encourage the non-signatories of the Framework Agreement to join these discussions and contribute to a final agreement.

Secondly, we echo the Secretary-General's call for the Sudanese authorities to create conditions conducive to helping negotiations succeed. In the light of this, we welcome the release of hundreds of Darfuri civilians from arbitrary detention, but we condemn the excessive use of force against protesters, which has resulted in the death of 125 protesters since the start of the coup.

Thirdly, the United Kingdom remains deeply concerned by ongoing intercommunal conflict across the Sudan. We call on the Sudanese authorities to accelerate implementation of both the Juba Peace Agreement and the National Plan for the Protection of Civilians in Darfur, and to deploy the Joint Security-Keeping Force to Darfur.

Lastly, the worsening humanitarian situation continues to have a devastating effect on ordinary Sudanese citizens. We urge the Sudanese authorities

to remove all bureaucratic impediments, which are hindering the ability of humanitarians to address the record levels of need. This includes urgently processing visas and lifting movement restrictions for United Nations personnel.

In conclusion, the United Kingdom remains committed to the realization of the Sudanese people's calls for freedom, peace and justice.

Mr. Spasse (Albania): Allow me to express my gratitude to Special Representative of the Secretary-General Perthes for providing us with an informative update on the situation in the Sudan. I also welcome the representative of the Sudan to today's meeting.

The 5 December signing of the Framework Agreement has renewed hope for a civilian-led transition, including the holding of elections, which meets the aspirations of the Sudanese people. We commend the civilian and military signatories for the progress made so far, including the launching of the final phase of the political process in Khartoum on 8 January, facilitated by the trilateral mechanism.

Albania urges non-signatories to join the political process and engage in meaningful talks to resolve remaining differences, and it calls on signatories not to lose sight of this momentum. Furthermore, to be sustainable, the political process must be comprehensive and have widespread public backing.

While it welcomes the release of hundreds of Darfuri detainees from prisons throughout the country, Albania remains concerned about the numerous reports of the excessive use of force on protesters. The current situation in Darfur and across the country demonstrates the urgent need for implementing the Juba process. We urge the authorities to investigate effectively, impartially and in a timely manner any allegation of unlawful use of force or other alleged violations by members of the security forces. Demonstrators must be allowed to fulfil their right to peaceful assembly.

Moreover, regrettably, women have continued to be underrepresented. We strongly encourage the parties to honour their commitment to including women in their delegations, with a level of representation of 40 per cent, including in leadership positions and in future transitional institutions.

Despite the progress on the political front, we remain concerned about the impact of intercommunal

clashes in Blue Nile, West and South Kordofan and Central, North and South Darfur states.

Humanitarian needs remain at a record high. Some 18 million Sudanese will be under acute food-insecure conditions in 2023, and a record of 11.7 million people — almost a quarter of the Sudan's population — are currently facing hunger. We therefore call on the Sudanese authorities to provide unhindered humanitarian access to all affected. The current state of humanitarian conditions, grave violations of human rights and the socioeconomic situation in the country are worrisome and require immediate attention.

Albania is deeply concerned about the instances of sexual violence against women, particularly in internally displaced persons camps in Darfur. The fact that these incidents are underreported due to the victims' fear of shame, stigma and retaliation should alarm all of us. Additionally, violations against children — boys and girls — by unidentified perpetrators are extremely troubling. Shockingly, survivors and victims of sexual violence are often themselves considered to be perpetrators of immoral activity. This practice, coupled with a lack of accountability, leads to the silencing of survivors and denying them access to justice.

In conclusion, Albania reiterates its strong support for the trilateral mechanism and commends the work of the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan and its dedicated team led by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General. Although international assistance remains crucial, all stakeholders involved need to seize the momentum and put their own personal interests aside because it is only through a civilian-led political process, spearheaded and owned by the Sudanese people themselves, that a resolution can be achieved. The Sudanese people must be offered the chance for a stable country that can provide basic services for all. That is what they deserve.

Mr. Montalvo Sosa (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Mr. Volker Perthes, Special Representative of the Secretary-General, for his briefing and for the work being done by the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan. I also recognize the presence of the Permanent Representative of the Sudan at today's meeting.

Ecuador affirms its solidarity with the people of the Sudan and its support for overcoming the country's political, economic, security and humanitarian crisis, which is key to making progress towards inclusive

civilian governance, based on the rule of law. We view the signing of the framework agreement on 5 December 2022 as a positive step that cements the hope for an inclusive political solution with a new civilian Government through a credible, transparent and inclusive election process. We note the developments and talks that have taken place in the past few days, consistent with the information just provided by Mr. Perthes. We reiterate that the participation of women is crucial for the success of the political process. We therefore urge all signatories to the Juba Agreement for Peace in the Sudan to maintain their commitment to the framework agreement with regard to the representation of women, in particular in leadership positions and in future appointments of transition authorities. The Council should also encourage groups that are not signatories to the Juba Agreement to join the peace process. Commitment and engagement in fostering social dialogue are key tools in that regard.

The violence, particularly in the states of the Blue Nile, West Kordofan, South Kordofan and Darfur, remains worrisome, with dozens — hundreds, really — of deaths, including seven women and one child, during the reporting period. We therefore urge the Sudanese authorities to redouble their efforts to protect civilians. The National Plan for the Protection of Civilians in Darfur remains vital to increasing the protection of communities. Improving early-warning mechanisms and ensuring accountability are crucial and indispensable to building trust.

Lastly, we are concerned about the bureaucratic and security obstacles that are limiting the international community's ability to provide humanitarian assistance to those most in need, especially considering that approximately 15.8 million people, about a third of the population, require humanitarian assistance. We therefore urge the authorities to eliminate all such barriers immediately and to respect the agreement on the Mission's status, including by lifting their restrictions on the movement of United Nations personnel.

Mr. Wood (United States of America): I thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Perthes for his very thoughtful briefing.

Reaching a final political agreement on a new civilian-led transitional Government is essential to ending the Sudan's political crisis and addressing its urgent political, economic, security and humanitarian challenges. We acknowledge the significant work done

in phase two of the framework agreement process and urge the parties to capitalize on it by swiftly finalizing an agreement on a new civilian-led Government and interim constitutional arrangements that will enable the Sudan to resume its democratic transition. We acknowledge that the military leaders have reiterated their willingness to withdraw the military from politics. We call on all the parties to put the Sudan's national interests above narrow political ends and urgently and constructively engage with one another to reach a final political agreement that realizes the Sudanese people's continued calls for freedom, peace and justice. In support of that, and recognizing the fragility of democratic transitions, the United States will promote accountability for spoilers, whether military or political actors, who attempt to undermine or delay the Sudan's democratic progress.

We continue our support for the Sudanese-led process in close coordination with the trilateral mechanism. We urge all the parties to engage in good-faith dialogue and ensure that women, young people, displaced persons and representatives from all over the Sudan have an opportunity to participate in shaping their country's future. For that process to succeed, the parties must foster an environment conducive to the participation of all stakeholders so that they can freely express their views without fear of retribution. Furthermore, all Sudanese citizens must be protected from violence in any form. Full respect for freedom of association, expression and peaceful assembly is vital. We have consistently condemned violence against peaceful protesters and their unjust detention, and we renew our call for those responsible to be held accountable.

Turning to Darfur, we note with concern that the security situation remains extremely volatile and dangerous and that tensions and violence have increased in other regions. The chronic violence highlights the urgent need for the implementation of the Juba Agreement for Peace in the Sudan, including the full deployment of the Joint Security-Keeping Force in Darfur, inclusive security-sector reform and comprehensive, inclusive and transparent transitional justice processes.

Mr. Olmedo (France) (*spoke in French*): I thank the Special Representative for his briefing and welcome the participation of the representative of the Sudan in today's meeting.

I would like to make four points. The re-establishment of a democratic transition in the Sudan remains the main priority. We call on all Sudanese political forces to maintain the spirit of compromise that led to the framework agreement on 5 December 2022. All actors must prioritize unity and broaden the political basis of the framework agreement. That cooperation is critical to addressing outstanding issues. Discussions must take into consideration the vital importance of the effective participation of women.

The re-establishment of a credible democratic transition is critical to rebuilding the international community's trust. The Secretary-General has outlined in his report (S/2023/154) the challenges that the civilian Government must address once it has been set up. We welcome the efforts of the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan (UNITAMS) to plan that approach. We will be ready to play our role in providing international support, together with our European partners, once a civilian Government has been appointed and the conditions have been met.

The current status quo is fragile and is having a severe impact on the Sudanese population, especially in outlying areas. First, with regard to the humanitarian situation, the European Union responded by mobilizing €78 million in 2022. We are also concerned about the high level of intercommunity violence, whose root causes persist. All actors must work together to end the recruitment of combatants, which leads to escalation on the ground. The Juba Peace Agreement set a timetable that must be respected, including the reintegration of signatory armed groups and the deployment of a joint force. The initial steps have been taken, but faster progress is needed.

Lastly, we call on the authorities to cooperate with UNITAMS and eliminate the obstacles that are affecting its operations. Blocking the issuance of visas to Mission personnel and restricting their freedom of movement disrespect the agreement on the Mission's status. In a difficult environment, UNITAMS continues to discharge all its duties mandated by the Security Council. We welcome the joint facilitation by the United Nations, the African Union and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, which has our unwavering support.

Mrs. Shino (Japan): I also thank Mr. Volker Perthes, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Sudan, for his insightful briefing.

The Security Council has authorized four pillars in the mandate of the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan (UNITAMS), and several significant developments can be found in each domain. Today I would like to take each in turn.

First, regarding the political transition, Japan welcomes the recent positive political developments, above all the signing of the political framework agreement in December. Japan also commends the work of the trilateral mechanism — namely UNITAMS, the African Union and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development — in implementing that agreement.

In particular, the trilateral mechanism has been facilitating workshops on the five outstanding issues. Japan welcomes the wide participation of various stakeholders, including women, youth and representatives from all over the country, in those workshops. Although the percentage is still short of the aim set by UNITAMS, Japan welcomes that a significant number of women have actively joined the workshops.

Launching the final phase of the political process on 8 January and yesterday's announcement on the agreed schedule of the political process were also important steps towards bringing back a civilian-led transitional Government. The Council should encourage non-signatories of the agreement to join the process. We should also urge regional and international partners to support this Sudan-led and -owned political process, in line with and in close consultation with the trilateral mechanism.

Secondly, we need to further support the peace process and implementation of the Juba Peace Agreement and future peace agreements. The slow implementation of the Juba Peace Agreement and the National Plan for the Protection of Civilians is a serious concern. Japan welcomes all efforts of the Sudanese Government to move forward on those two arrangements. We also urge the Government to further strengthen measures to counter intercommunal violence, which has led to large-scale internal displacement.

Thirdly, concerning peacebuilding, civilian protection and the rule of law, we are deeply concerned about the excessive use of force against peaceful protesters who were exercising their legitimate right to

peaceful assembly. We call upon the authorities to take appropriate measures to prevent such action against non-violent demonstrators.

Last but not least, we stress that conditions for ordinary the Sudanese are worsening. It is of the utmost importance to bring back a civilian-led transitional Government that can ensure that the Sudan receives sufficient humanitarian assistance from the international community.

Let me conclude by reiterating Japan's full support for the role of UNITAMS. In December, Japan decided to make a contribution of \$664,435 to support UNITAMS activities in Blue Nile and South Kordofan. Japan remains firmly committed to supporting the Sudan's democratic transition and the aspirations of the Sudanese people for peace, freedom and justice and encourages the Sudanese Government to enhance its efforts in that regard.

Mr. Hauri (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): I thank Mr. Perthes, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Sudan, for his briefing. I also welcome the presence of the representative of the Sudan at this meeting.

The Sudan is at a critical juncture in terms of restoring its democratic transition, which underpins the hopes of the Sudanese people for freedom, peace and justice. Switzerland welcomes the constructive engagement and progress made in recent weeks in addressing the five key issues identified in the 5 December framework agreement. We call on the signatories to continue their tireless efforts towards dialogue and on the political forces that remain outside the framework agreement to engage constructively. The renewed commitment of the leadership of the Sovereign Council to hand over power to a civilian Government is a further encouraging signal.

We recognize the key role that the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan, the African Union and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development are playing in facilitating this process.

Now is the time for that progress to be translated into a political agreement. There are three key reasons for that.

First, a political solution at the national level is essential to improving the humanitarian, economic and security situation across the country. We remain deeply concerned about the continuing violence in Darfur, the

Kordofans and Blue Nile. That violence, which primarily affects the civilian population, is unacceptable. We call on all parties to respect international humanitarian law. Switzerland welcomes the work of the Darfur Permanent Ceasefire Committee, one of the few mechanisms established by the Juba Peace Agreement. This Committee, supported by Switzerland since its creation, plays a key role in defusing tensions. However, more needs to be done to tackle insecurity, as human suffering continues to increase. Nearly 16 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance — the highest number since 2011.

Secondly, with the imminent return of civilian leadership, we must invest in strengthening an inclusive transition, backed by broad public support. The efforts of the civilian and military signatories to broaden the participation of various actors in the five dialogue processes are an encouraging signal. However, despite their engagement, women remain underrepresented throughout the process. That must change — women have been at the forefront of the Sudanese revolution and their full, equal and meaningful participation remains absolutely crucial to the success of the political transition. We call on all parties to keep their promises to ensure a minimum of 40 per cent representation by women in future transitional institutions.

Thirdly, a strong commitment to justice will be fundamental to restoring the trust of the Sudanese people in the country's authorities and breaking the cycle of violence. Those responsible for human rights violations and abuses must be held accountable. We remain deeply concerned about recurring reports of sexual and gender-based violence against women and girls in the internally displaced persons camps in Darfur. The recent visit of the designated expert on human rights in the Sudan is an important step. We reiterate his call for a comprehensive and inclusive transitional justice process, tailored to the different regions of the country, focusing on the needs of the victims and taking into account the gender dimension.

Although a political agreement is a significant step forward, the real work will begin only thereafter. Switzerland will continue to support the transition in the Sudan and to engage with the Sudanese people on the road to a more peaceful future.

Mr. Parga Cintra (Brazil): I want to begin by thanking Ambassador Agyeman for his briefing (see S/PV.9288) and chairmanship of the Security Council

Committee established pursuant to resolution 1591 (2005), concerning the Sudan. I also thank Special Representative Perthes for his very important briefing today and his leadership of the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan (UNITAMS). I also want to welcome Ambassador Al-Harith Idriss Al-Harith Mohamed and the Sudan's other representatives to the meeting.

The last time the Council heard a briefing from Special Representative Perthes (see S/PV.9211), the Sudanese military leadership and a broad range of civilian actors had just come together to sign a political framework agreement. Even though we could then commend the efforts that had led to the 5 December agreement, today's vantage point affords a much more precise appraisal of the Sudan's political developments.

As the Secretary-General pointed out in his most recent report (S/2023/154), signing the framework agreement renewed hope for resuming a civilian-led transition in Khartoum. We commend the commitment to a long-term solution to the political deadlock that the signatories of the framework agreement have displayed thus far. We encourage the signatories of the framework agreement to advance the implementation of the Juba Peace Agreement, debate how transitional justice can become integral to public policy all over the Sudan, especially in Darfur, Blue Nile and South Kordofan, and take further steps towards security sector reform.

The participation of local communities and leaders is undoubtedly crucial to addressing those issues adequately. We therefore appreciate that community representatives, civil society groups, women leaders, youth leaders and even resistance committees have participated in the pertinent conferences.

The principle of Sudanese ownership and leadership of the transition naturally remains critical. The Sudanese people will rightly judge the success of a civilian-led transition through the lenses of Sudanese ownership and leadership. We therefore commend the United Nations-African Union-Intergovernmental Authority on Development trilateral mechanism for continuing its efforts to support and facilitate the civilian-led transition based on the core principle of Sudanese ownership. We particularly appreciate the steps that the trilateral mechanism has taken to engage the Sudanese stakeholders who have not yet signed the framework agreement. We encourage those political actors to join the agreement and participate in the formal

proceedings. Sudanese ownership is coherent with truly comprehensive national consultations. We commend the fact that the trilateral mechanism has enabled broad participation, not only in formal dialogues but also in grass-roots activities.

Intercommunal violence and armed conflict remain a concern, especially in Darfur, Blue Nile state and South Kordofan. Although UNITAMS supports peace processes in the Sudan and the implementation of the Juba Peace Agreement, protecting civilians has become an exclusive responsibility of the Sudanese authorities since the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur concluded its withdrawal. Therefore, the suitable protection of civilians and a sustained peace also rely on the progress of the civilian-led political transition. We commend the ongoing conflict resolution initiatives and welcome the Sudanese authorities' support for peacebuilding efforts. After all, mediation endeavours, peacebuilding initiatives and reconciliation projects are among the seeds of lasting peace. In-depth reforms are necessary to address the root causes of violence. Security sector reform is perhaps the most important one. Bearing in mind the situation on the ground and the challenges faced by the Sudan and its people, we encourage the Sudanese authorities to prioritize progress on that front.

Let me conclude by reiterating Brazil's support for the Sudan, the Sudanese people and UNITAMS. We are hopeful that the Sudan will reach an inclusive, civilian-led political settlement.

Mr. Dai Bing (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank Special Representative Perthes for his briefing and welcome the presence of the Permanent Representative of the Sudan at today's meeting.

Recently, progress has been made on the political situation in the Sudan. After the signing of the political framework agreement by the main Sudanese parties in December, the final phase of the political process was launched in January, and four special meetings were organized by the tripartite mechanism of the United Nations, the African Union and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development with a view to resolving the five outstanding issues identified in the framework agreement.

Yesterday the relevant parties held a preparatory meeting, at which consensus was reached on the road map and timeline for the drafting of a political agreement and the transitional constitution. That

provides an important opportunity for all parties in the Sudan to bridge their differences and reach consensus. China is encouraged by the political will and spirit of consultation shown by all parties involved in the process, and supports all parties in adhering to the Sudanese-led and Sudanese-owned political process. Continuing the inclusive dialogue will help to expand consensus and find a development path suitable for the country.

Meanwhile, the economic and humanitarian situation in the Sudan is worrisome. According to United Nations assessments, in 2023, one third of the Sudan's population will be in need of humanitarian assistance, while reduced international funding is seriously constraining humanitarian relief work. We call on the relevant countries and international financial institutions to resume economic assistance to the Sudan immediately and unconditionally. Some countries attach political strings to aid, linking it to the Sudan's political process. That not only interferes with the Sudan's sovereignty but also disregards the basic human rights of the Sudanese people, including their right to subsistence and their right to development. We hope that the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan will step up its efforts to mobilize international aid to alleviate the difficulties faced by the Sudanese people.

We note that while intercommunal clashes still occur from time to time in the Sudan, the number of security incidents is declining — a trend that is intrinsically linked to the efforts of the Sudanese Government. We welcome the timely visit of the Sudanese Government to the conflict-affected communities, as well as its commitment to hold the perpetrators to account, its efforts to achieve reconciliation agreements between the communities concerned, and the series of responsible and effective initiatives it has taken in that regard. We also welcome the important role of the Darfur Permanent Ceasefire Committee in monitoring the security situation on the ground, and we call on the international community to provide financial and technical support to the Sudan so that it can ensure the establishment and operation of the various mechanisms provided for in the Juba Peace Agreement.

China has reservations about the Security Council's continued imposition of sanctions against the Darfur region of the Sudan. We elaborated on our position when the Council adopted resolution 2676 (2023) on sanctions against the Sudan earlier this month (see

S/PV.9278). We have repeatedly stressed that the Council's continued imposition of sanctions against Darfur not only lacks political and security grounds but also limits the efforts of the Sudanese Government to maintain stability, protect civilians and combat crime on the ground. We oppose the politicization and perpetuation of sanctions measures and urge the relevant parties to acknowledge the improved situation in the country and heed the calls of the countries of the region to lift the sanctions against the Sudan. Sanctions must not be used for political manipulation and efforts must be made to lift them.

Ms. Evstigneeva (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We are grateful to Special Representative Perthes for the update on developments with respect to the situation in the Sudan. We have taken note of the 90-day report of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1591 (2005), concerning the Sudan, submitted by the Permanent Representative of Ghana (see S/PV.9288). We also welcome the participation in today's meeting of the Permanent Representative of the Sudan.

We are closely following developments with respect to the situation in the Sudan. The Sudanese political landscape remains fragile, with many different possible scenarios of further development. We welcome the Sudanese leadership's willingness to cooperate constructively with the various components of civil society, which made it possible to sign the political framework agreement on 5 December 2022 with the participation of the faction of the former ruling coalition — the Forces for Freedom and Change — Central Council. We note the ongoing discussions in the country on outstanding issues, including with the support of the States of the region. We hope that such efforts will have a stabilizing effect on the situation in the country.

At the same time, we note that the political framework agreement did not include a number of significant players in the country's political arena, who continue to reject it. We believe that pushing the current political process forward artificially is unlikely to help to promote a comprehensive settlement. In order to achieve a sustainable solution, inter-Sudanese dialogue should be based on the principle of inclusiveness, which implies the involvement of all influential political forces and ethno-religious groups, including regional leaders with authority. We call on the tripartite mechanism of the United Nations, the

African Union and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development to continue efforts in support of the drafting of a constitutional document that could unite the entire country. We believe that any kind of external interference in the affairs of the friendly country of the Sudan is counterproductive and unacceptable. We are convinced that the Sudanese citizens are more than capable and should resolve their domestic issues themselves.

The prolonged period of internal political turbulence and the renewed outbursts of violence have had a negative impact on the socioeconomic situation. A significant part of the Sudan's population lives below the poverty line, and there are food shortages in the country. In that connection, the issue of the international community's ability to honour its commitments to providing financial assistance is particularly relevant. We call on the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan (UNITAMS) to finally engage seriously in unblocking international assistance without any preconditions. We think the efforts to tie the issue to the country's transfer of power to a civilian Government are hypocritical. In general, we feel compelled to conclude that so far the results of UNITAMS's activities in implementing its mandate have not fully lived up to our expectations. The Mission's main efforts are concentrated only in one area, and its annual reports suffer from unbalanced assessments. Meanwhile, the Sudanese vision of the situation is being largely ignored.

We commend the efforts by the Sudanese leadership to stabilize the situation in Darfur and implement the Juba Peace Agreement. Given the periodic outbreaks of intertribal violence, we hope the central and local authorities will continue to take every possible measure to respond to them expeditiously. We support Khartoum's request for a review of the outdated Security Council sanctions, which is also echoed in the consolidated position of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, the League of Arab States and the regional Group of African States here in New York. We continue to believe that the current situation in Darfur demands that the restrictions imposed 18 years ago should be lifted immediately. We hope that the issue will be resolved as quickly as possible, in line with resolution 2676 (2023), adopted this month.

In conclusion, we would like to reiterate the Russian Federation's firm willingness to continue to help our

friends in the Sudan overcome their current difficulties and return to a path of sustainable development.

Mrs. Nusseibeh (United Arab Emirates): I thank Special Representative Perthes for updating us on the recent developments in the Sudan. We recognize and continue to support the collective efforts of the African Union, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development and the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan (UNITAMS). I also welcome the participation of Ambassador Mohamed in today's meeting.

Our meeting comes at a historic moment for the Sudan. Earlier this month the Security Council adopted resolution 2676 (2023), which sets the tone for United Nations engagement in the Sudan going forward. The resolution, submitted at the initiative of the three African members of the Council and the United Arab Emirates, outlines a clear time frame for determining the future of the Sudan's sanctions regime. Almost two decades after the imposition of those measures, a sunset clause of that kind is critical as we chart a course for lifting sanctions in the near future.

Today's meeting also coincides with the launch of the final phase of the political process. Despite the challenges faced throughout the past year, the Sudan launched a dialogue, supported by the trilateral mechanism, with the aim of achieving a sustainable political solution led and owned by the Sudanese people. As Special Representative Perthes highlighted in his statement, the commitment of the Sudan has borne fruit since the signing of the political framework agreement in December, including the plans for signing the final political agreement and adopting a transitional constitution.

With those positive steps in their early stages, the United Arab Emirates believes that it is more important than ever to ensure that the Council and the broader international community unite in support of the Sudan and its people. First and foremost, that means helping to address the challenges and obstacles that the Sudan has faced, including the lack of the financial resources it needs to implement the Juba Peace Agreement. It also means creating the environment necessary for the Sudanese people to forge meaningful and lasting progress in the political process. With that in mind, I would like to focus on three critical issues.

First, the completion of the transitional period in the Sudan remains contingent on a broad political

consensus. We believe that what unites Sudanese stakeholders far outweighs whatever divides them, and in that regard we commend the recent efforts to expand the range of parties involved in the political process. We are under no illusions that crafting a way forward will not require huge efforts by all actors, both to overcome their differences and to work for a consensus while also building trust. In our view that is the only way to achieve a truly Sudanese-led and -owned solution and a peaceful way forward.

Secondly, the ongoing diplomatic efforts in the political process must be accompanied by decisive support to the Sudanese economy. The two tracks are complementary and mutually reinforcing. The economy tipped into recession last year and inflation remains in triple digits, among the highest in the world. Humanitarian actors estimate that about 15.8 million people — around a third of the population — will need humanitarian assistance this year. That is 1.5 million more than last year, and that figure is at its highest since 2011. Peace does not occur in a vacuum. The material conditions for progress are critical to addressing inequalities and promoting sustainable peace. The Sudan needs international support to be able to develop its own capacity to respond to emergencies and channel critical resources to achieve long-term stability. In the light of the Sudan's vulnerability to climate shocks, we emphasize the need for a comprehensive response that also enables climate adaptation and community resilience.

Thirdly, while the Secretary-General has reported a decrease in security incidents, the continuing security challenges need to be tackled. We remain concerned about the increase in intercommunal violence, including the events that led to the death of a peacebuilding adviser in Blue Nile state. We are encouraged by the efforts being made by local and religious leaders to defuse tensions. The dialogues facilitated by UNITAMS at the community level in various areas of the Sudan that contribute to alleviating tensions between communities should be built on. Those efforts remain an essential pillar for the consolidation of peaceful coexistence in the country. We also recognize the vital role of the Darfur Permanent Ceasefire Committee as it continues its activities and engagement with the parties to ensure implementation.

In conclusion, the United Arab Emirates remains steadfast in its commitment to supporting the Sudanese people in their quest for stability and prosperity.

Ms. Gatt (Malta): I join others in thanking Special Representative Perthes for his briefing and welcoming the Permanent Representative of the Sudan to today's meeting.

Malta strongly supports a civilian-led transition in the Sudan that, once established, will reflect the aspirations of the Sudanese people. We welcomed the signing of the political framework agreement last December and urge both signatories and non-signatories to fully engage in and join the political process. We call on the Sudan's authorities to establish and sustain an environment conducive to a safe, inclusive civic space.

It will be critical to ensure the inclusion of all stakeholders, including women, young people and civil society, in every area of decision-making. It is only with the full, equal and meaningful participation of women that the realities of all the Sudanese people can be included in the final political settlement. Malta calls on the signatories to uphold their commitment to including a minimum 40 per cent representation of women in the legislative, executive and sovereign bodies, and we commend the support provided to that end by the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan (UNITAMS).

The courage displayed by Sudanese women in their resolute path towards peace and democracy is inspiring and commendable. While they play a key role, they continue to be at high risk of sexual and gender-based violence, including conflict-related sexual violence. That is especially true for internally displaced women who engage in livelihood activities outside the camps. The low numbers of reported cases indicate the high rate of reluctance on the part of the victims to report them, owing to stigma and victim-shaming. In that connection, Malta reiterates its call for accountability. We must see justice done for all victims, including those in remote areas where justice is harder to access. The perpetrators must be held accountable. We also underline the need for timely and impartial investigations of any allegations of the unlawful use of force on protesters.

Children also continue to suffer from severe violations. Malta welcomes the collaboration between the Sudan's national authorities and the United Nations, which has led to a road map based on the 2016 Action Plan for ending and preventing child recruitment, as well as the subsequent mission to Darfur to verify

allegations of the recruitment and use of children by the parties to the conflict.

While we welcome the release of Darfuri detainees in Khartoum, we remain deeply concerned about the renewed intercommunal violence in the Sudan, including in Darfur. We strongly condemn the killing of a peacebuilding adviser in Blue Nile state and call for the urgent protection of aid workers in the country.

Turning to the humanitarian situation, we are deeply concerned that the Sudan's humanitarian needs have now reached record levels. One third of the population requires humanitarian assistance, with the situation expected to worsen this year. Climate-induced shocks have also driven displacement and competition over shrinking resources, following years of political misguidance and impunity. Malta supports ensuring a strong financial donor base, including through the European Union's humanitarian aid response. We welcome the launch of the 2023 humanitarian response plan for the Sudan and acknowledge United Nations efforts to stand ready to mobilize partners to resume financial support once the transitional period is complete. Malta also supports UNITAMS. The Mission's work should continue unimpeded, and we regret that administrative impediments hamper its mandate's implementation. We therefore call on the authorities to fully respect the operations of UNITAMS and to lift all restrictions on United Nations personnel while carrying out their duties.

In conclusion, Malta reiterates its commitment to a Sudanese-led and -owned process, facilitated by the trilateral mechanism, which will effectively bring about solutions aimed at peace and security in the Sudan. We are convinced that if confidence-building is enhanced, the people of the Sudan will enjoy the future that they deserve.

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

I make this statement on behalf of the three African members of the Security Council (A3), namely, Gabon, Ghana and my own country, Mozambique.

I thank Ambassador Harold Agyeman, Permanent Representative of Ghana, for the report of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to 1591 (2005), concerning the Sudan, which he just submitted (see S/PV.9288). The A3 thanks the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Volker Perthes, for his

important briefing and for his work and that of his team in the Sudan. We welcome the presence in this meeting of Ambassador Idriss Mohamed, Permanent Representative of the Sudan. We have taken note of the report of the Secretary General (S/2023/154) and have carefully considered the recommendations contained therein.

The Sudan is at an important crossroad. As the A3, we recognize the efforts of the Sudanese people to overcome the political, security and humanitarian challenges that confront them. We remain strongly supportive of the ongoing initiatives to promote national reconciliation, restore constitutional rule and ensure stability in the country. We therefore reiterate our call on the international community to maintain the needed support and to work in concert with the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan (UNITAMS) to facilitate the peace process in order to end the many years of protracted conflict.

On the political front, the A3 welcomes the progress made towards guaranteeing an inclusive political and transition process with the signing on 5 December 2022 of a framework agreement to relaunch the transition process in the Sudan and end the stalled political process. That agreement, which provides for a two-year transition period under a "fully democratic civilian authority", is a real breakthrough towards a way out of the crisis and the holding of credible, fair and democratic elections. The A3 urges the non-signatory political parties to join the new dynamic driven by those positive developments. We encourage all stakeholders to continue their discussions on all the outstanding issues and to continue consultations with all social and political actors with a view to establishing a comprehensive political agreement that takes into account the best interests of the Sudanese people. The A3 strongly echoes the call made by the Chairperson of the African Union Commission encouraging all parties to work together in good faith for the establishment of democratic institutions, which will allow the return to constitutional order.

We note with satisfaction the convening by the trilateral mechanism of a conference on the theme "The Juba Peace Agreement and completing peace", which was held from 31 January to 3 February and provided an opportunity to discuss the issue of women's rights. The A3 wishes to stress that women's participation is essential to the success of the political process in the Sudan. We further encourage the signatory parties

to implement the commitments of the framework agreement and ensure that women are represented in all spheres, including in decision-making positions in the institutions to be established. The resilience of Sudanese women and their commitment to peace deserve to be highlighted.

On the security front, despite the downward trend in insecurity, armed conflict and crime remain major challenges in the Sudan. The A3 remains primarily concerned about the persistence of intercommunal clashes, particularly in Blue Nile, West Kordofan, South Kordofan, Central Darfur, North Darfur and South Darfur. It is regrettable that the civilian populations are still targeted, including women, children and vulnerable people. We continue to maintain that violence against the civilian population is unacceptable, and we strongly condemn those heinous acts.

The A3 encourages UNITAMS to continue to support the Sudan through political process facilitation, capacity-building, peacebuilding and development initiatives for the implementation of the National Plan for the Protection of Civilians. In that regard, the A3 notes with satisfaction the implementation by UNITAMS of a civilian threat assessment and the improvement of documentation on conflict-related human rights and the protection of civilians. We support the Sudanese authorities' efforts to create an environment conducive to the reconstruction of the country. In that regard, we welcome the release of detainees from Darfur, Khartoum and Port Sudan, as well as the decision to end the use of force against demonstrators and the commitment of the Sudanese authorities to protect the rights of the civilian population.

Regarding the humanitarian situation, in order to respond to the serious humanitarian crisis currently affecting the Sudan, which has worsened with the increase in the prices of basic foodstuffs, the A3 echoes the appeal for sustained support for the 2023 humanitarian response plan for the Sudan. We call on the international community to pay particular attention to the socioeconomic situation in the Sudan, which has been exacerbated by rising food and energy prices and could have serious consequences for the stabilization process. We commend the facilitation role of the trilateral mechanism, which has enabled a revival of the political process, as well as the strengthening of donor assistance, and the Peacebuilding Fund. The A3 affirms its commitment and support for the important efforts to stabilize the situation in the Sudan by the

African Union and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development and UNITAMS, in close cooperation with international partners, including the United Nations, in accordance with an approach that respects the principles of the sovereignty of the Sudan in dealing with its own affairs.

In conclusion, Gabon, Ghana, and Mozambique reaffirm their solidarity with the people of the Sudan and call for a Sudanese-led solution to the country's political impasse in order to enable it to achieve sustainable peace, security and greater economic development.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I give the floor to the representative of the Sudan.

Mr. Mohamed (Sudan) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to 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 positive briefing today. We would also like to thank Ambassador Harold Agyeman, Permanent Representative of Ghana, in his capacity as Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1591 (2005), for his positive report (see S/PV.9288) on the Committee. And we thank all delegations that have shown their support for the positive transitional and political developments under way in the Sudan.

As we promised the Security Council at its meeting (see S/PV.9211) in December 2022 on the work of UNITAMS, the framework agreement was signed on 5 December 2022 with civilian components, most notably the Forces for Freedom and Change, the Central Council and a range of professional and trade union entities. We hope that the agreement will be followed by a definitive agreement leading to a two-year transition period led by an entirely civilian Government, with the army's commitment to withdrawing from political life. The military component has repeatedly expressed its commitment to the framework agreement and to working with all parties to reach a final agreement in order to pave the way for the establishment of a transitional civilian Government. It has also stressed that it is working to convince the hold-outs to join those important political arrangements in order to agree on the establishment of a Government that will lead the country towards the holding of free and fair elections at the end of the transition period.

The civilian signatories to the framework agreement have begun implementing a plan geared to achieving the broadest possible national consensus to prepare for the final signature. The plan envisages local and regional contacts, the establishment of consultation committees with the relevant stakeholders on the outstanding issues of the framework agreement and the holding of workshops and conferences to explain the agreement to all the revolutionary parties concerned. The discussion of the outstanding issues will continue with a view to achieving the broadest possible consensus by holding specialized meetings with the participation of scientific and professional experts to discuss justice, assess the peace agreement, dismantle the previous regime and deal with the situation in eastern Sudan.

I want to point out that an important meeting, focused on the political process and achievements, was held last week between the President and Vice-President of the Transitional Sovereignty Council, the civilian signatories to the framework agreement, the trilateral mechanism and other regional and international partners. The meeting resulted in some important outcomes, including the conclusion of discussions on transitional justice, security and military reform through the various workshops, a decision that the trilateral mechanism should call on signatories and non-signatories to immediately begin drafting a final agreement, and a request to the relevant joint committees of the signatory forces and the trilateral mechanism to update the timetable for concluding the outstanding tasks and signing the final agreement as soon as possible.

Last month, with regard to the implementation of the Juba Peace Agreement, together with the movements that joined the Agreement the transitional Government signed off on timetables for implementing the Agreement's outstanding items. The timetables were established following a five-day workshop hosted by our sister Republic of South Sudan. The workshop's outcome included an updated matrix for implementing the Agreement agreed on by the Government and partners in the peace process. The matrix was signed on 12 February by the President of the Transitional Sovereignty Council and the President of South Sudan, as well as the parties to the peace process and the leaders of organizations and signatory movements to the Juba Peace Agreement, along with the representatives of the countries of the region that are guarantors and witnesses of the Agreement. Work is under way to

implement the matrix, which underscores that peace remains the linchpin and a top priority for the Sudan. The commitment to implementing the new matrix was reiterated in line with the timetables so as to complete the implementation of the Agreement's outstanding items. The transitional Government is committed to ensuring the implementation of the updated matrix in line with its new timetables with a view to creating strong momentum for resolving the outstanding items. Peace is the key issue in the Sudan and the State's overarching priority, since it is vital to its ability to deal with the country's security and development issues. My country's Government will spare no effort to ensure positive and constructive participation in the negotiations with other factions that have yet to join the peace process.

We reiterate our determination to promote the protection of civilians in Darfur, especially women and children, so that we can preserve their human dignity and uphold the rights that the Sudan committed to safeguarding when it joined the relevant international instruments. We are working to implement the National Plan for the Protection of Civilians and the development and deployment of joint forces for that purpose, which is one of our top priorities in Darfur in addition to collecting unauthorized small arms and light weapons and implementing disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes. We note that despite its scarce resources, the Government of the Sudan has been able to provide the joint protection force with approximately 200 new vehicles equipped to support its work. I am sure that Council members have noticed that the situation in Darfur is gradually improving and that many displaced persons and refugees have begun to return to their villages and places of origin. Furthermore, the situation in the Blue Nile and West Kordofan regions, where there were tribal tensions, is now being restored to normality thanks to the Government's measures.

The results of the workshop assessing the implementation of the Juba Peace Agreement are focused on eliminating obstacles and addressing the challenges involved. Now the international community must respect its financial obligations to implement the pledged financial support in order to implement the security arrangement requirements, protect civilians and ensure that the remaining armed movements join the peace process.

I would like to take this opportunity to call on the international community to provide financial support for the completion of all provisions of the Juba Peace Agreement, particularly since the security arrangements for the Peace Agreement and the related demobilization and integration of the forces of the armed movements are an extremely costly and complex task in terms of organization, logistics and funding. I thank friendly countries that have always supported such efforts. We stress the fact that UNITAMS has a greater role to play in that regard than we are currently witnessing.

The Sudan ensures cooperation with human rights mechanisms. A United Nations expert on the human rights situation visited the Sudan in February. During the visit, the expert received assurances from the Ministers for Foreign Affairs and Justice of the Sudan's readiness to cooperate with him and facilitate his work. The expert also took note of the progress made on the human rights file and the Sudan's commitment to ensuring accountability so as to combat impunity and to upholding civil and political rights.

In his report before the Council (S/2023/154), the Secretary-General notes the difficult economic situation, and we share his view. We look forward to the resumption of cooperation with, and development assistance from, bilateral partners that are keen to see a successful transition in the Sudan, as well as international financial institutions, so as to mitigate the impact of the Sudanese economic reforms and reduce the external debt burden. The Sudan has qualified for such a reduction by taking the necessary measures, in line with the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative, and completing to address the inherited economic distortions. The international community must shoulder its responsibilities by providing all kinds of humanitarian assistance to the hundreds of thousands of refugees from neighbouring countries hosted by the Sudan.

The Secretary-General's report recognizes the positive developments and the overcoming of the political stalemate thanks to the tripartite mechanism's efforts regarding the signing of the framework political agreement in December 2022 by the military component and more than 40 political parties, armed movements signatories to the Juba Peace Agreement, trade unions and professional associations, as well as the signing of the political declaration to be joined by the Darfur movement and members of the Forces for Freedom and Change-Democratic Bloc, in particular Mr. Gibril

Ibrahim, leader of the Justice and Equality Movement and Minister for Finance, and Mr. Minni Arko Minawi, Governor of the Darfur region and leader of the Sudan Liberation Movement.

The military leadership's renewed commitment to withdrawing from the political process, strengthening the momentum for reaching a final agreement and forming a broad-based civilian Government has become a criterion for the political transition following the announcement made at the United Nations in September 2022.

The political process will continue to be strengthened by including participants such as internally displaced persons, resistance committees, young people, nomads, herders and women representatives. Women's participation was between 26 per cent and 35 per cent, a rate that does not exist even in some developed countries.

In the past week, political leaders have made efforts to overcome differences, strengthen national unity and prioritize national interests, including representatives of the National Umma Party, the Original Democratic Unionist Party, the Justice and Equality Movement, the Sudan Liberation Movement, the Umma Party, the Alliance Democratic Alliance, the United Popular Front, the Beja High Council and other independent groups. Other consultations aimed at communication with the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North, led by Abdel Aziz Al-Hilu, resumed in Juba, and there is still hope that it will join the political process. We affirm that the role of the United Nations should be to support the national process, adopt a peaceful approach, engage in multilateral dialogue, complete the security arrangements and facilitate the return of displaced persons.

The report of the Secretary-General also mentions so-called administrative impediments to the Mission's work. I would not have thought that this was the appropriate place to discuss them. The report refers to the non-issuance of visas and travel permits to the Mission's staff. Please note that the report is wrong in that regard. We have confirmation that all visa applications and travel permits required by the Mission were issued, in line with the Mission's administrative structure, endorsed by the General Assembly. Allow me to elaborate on such issues in detail.

Paragraphs 61 and 74 of the report state the following regarding visas and the internal movements of Mission

staff: delays in issuing entry visas for 19 staff members and in procedures for approving internal travel. After taking that up with the competent authorities, the following became clear. Visas for 11 staff members were approved, whose names are included in the number given. It is unclear whether five others, some of whose details the Mission did not clarify, were in addition to the number approved or replacements for others. The Mission was asked for clarification, but there has been no answer to date.

In paragraph 61, the Mission mentioned that procedural delays had hindered the deployment of officials of the Darfur Permanent Ceasefire Committee. After reviewing the matter, it became clear that there were no outstanding visa requests for the 27 ceasefire officials, which was the number, requested by the Mission, all of whose visas were approved.

The Mission also reported restrictions on the internal movement of its staff. After reviewing the matter, it became clear that the Sudanese authorities did not oppose or prevent the travel of any of the Mission's staff even during the period before it was agreed that they would request waivers, which were completed by the Mission and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs in January for a period of six months. All such waivers were issued, and there are no further outstanding waivers.

The statements in the Mission's periodic report in paragraphs 61 and 74 regarding the Government authorities' lack of cooperation with the Mission and the fact that that hindered the Mission's efforts to implement its mandate are inaccurate. On the contrary, the Sudanese authorities cooperated with

the Mission regarding all its movements, and no travel by any staff member of the Mission was prevented. However, the Mission does not allow Sudanese officials working within the Ceasefire Committee and security arrangements to travel in UNITAMS aircraft. Such issues were brought up, and the Mission did not respond with regard to the reasons for preventing Sudanese officials from travelling in the Mission's aircraft.

We note that there is a national executive committee comprising the relevant State institutions to prevent any hindrance to the Mission's work and to guide its work in line with the Sudan matrix, which is consistent with the four strategic pillars and objectives contained in the Mission's mandate. The Sudan seeks to prioritize them within the operations undertaken by UNITAMS and welcomes the Mission's achievements.

In conclusion, I would like to emphasize that the partners of the transitional period will continue their efforts to ensure its success. At the same time, we reaffirm our commitment to dialogue as an indispensable way to address the challenges of the Sudan's political transition. We also reiterate our commitment to working with the international community so as to address the challenges to the transition process in order to achieve the goals that we seek.

The President: There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers.

I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 2 p.m.