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Chair: Mr. Bhattarai (Nepal)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Agenda item 53: Comprehensive review of special political missions (A/69/325)

1. **Mr. Feltman** (Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on overall policy matters pertaining to special political missions (A/69/325), said that the Department of Political Affairs valued the Fourth Committee's engagement on the issue of special political missions, as it would help to strengthen such missions and the Organization's overall efforts to promote peace and security. The United Nations currently faced multiple threats and challenges, including protracted conflicts, violent political upheaval, terrorism, transnational organized crime and arms proliferation, that tested the collective ability to respond. Special political missions played a critical role in preventing and resolving conflict and helping Member States to navigate transitions and peace consolidation processes.

2. The Secretary-General's report built on the first report on the subject (A/68/233) and reflected input from Special Representatives of the Secretary-General and other personnel on the ground. It therefore reflected the critical policy issues that affected the ability of missions to implement their mandates. All types of special political missions were operating in increasingly volatile security environments, and in 2014 evacuations had been carried out in two field missions. A menu of options had been developed to cope with rising security challenges; it included enhanced cooperation with host Governments, the deployment of United Nations security officers, cooperation with existing international or regional military operations and the deployment of guard units. Operating in less hospitable environments had wide-ranging implications for the Organization as a whole: constraints on its ability to implement Security Council or General Assembly mandates, increased operational costs, reduced ability to interact with national stakeholders, and effects on staff morale. Despite the difficulties and dangers, United Nations staff remained committed to their missions' mandates, and ensuring their protection and enhancing their ability to do their job was a collective duty for which the support of Member States was crucial.

3. Strong partnerships with regional and subregional organizations were also critical because those

organizations' proximity to the situation on the ground and their strong networks with national stakeholders and neighbouring countries gave them legitimacy and influence in preventing or resolving conflict and supporting political transition. The regional focus of special political missions had increased in recent years: envoys with region-wide mandates had been appointed for the Sahel and the Great Lakes region; the Organization's regional offices in West Africa, Central Africa and Central Asia had increased their engagement with regional counterparts; and country-specific missions were working with regional organizations to implement complex multidimensional mandates.

4. As geographical diversity and women's participation in special political missions were critical to their success, efforts had been made to increase the numbers of women and participants from different regions in training activities.

5. The newly established High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations would help to analyse the new peace and security landscape and recommend practical ways of strengthening missions, in consultation with Member States and other stakeholders. The critical issues to be reviewed by the Panel included the increased complexity of mission mandates and its implications for their flexibility and resources, the improvement of staff security and mandate delivery in volatile environments, and the resource and managerial requirements of special political missions.

6. Questions of accountability and transparency, which were of great importance to Member States, as outlined in General Assembly resolution 68/85, were a key commitment of the Secretary-General and the Department of Political Affairs. That commitment was reflected in the Department's reports to the Fourth and Fifth Committees, its interaction with Member States and governing bodies, and its mission reports to the Security Council and the General Assembly. His Department would continue to work towards holding regular, inclusive and interactive dialogue with Member States on the overall policy matters pertaining to special political missions and had taken steps to meet the request made at the first such dialogue, held in March 2014, for additional consultations on the definition of agenda items for the interactive dialogues.

7. He paid tribute to the memory of Margaret Vogt, former Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Central African Republic, who had been a leading voice in efforts to strengthen special political missions.

8. **Mr. Maleki** (Islamic Republic of Iran) asked whether the Department of Political Affairs had considered merging special political missions with peacekeeping operations.

9. **Mr. Feltman** (Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs) said that, although both special political missions and peacekeeping operations were political tools for promoting stability in countries emerging from conflict and seeking to build a sustainable future, they operated in different situations. The High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations would consider the overall context in which special political missions and peacekeeping operations were deployed and would make recommendations. His Department would also welcome the views of Member States on those issues, which would ultimately be decided by the General Assembly and the Security Council.

10. **Mr. Alday González** (Mexico) asked how important it was to the Department of Political Affairs to have a separate account for the financing of special political missions.

11. **Mr. Feltman** (Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs) said that the financing of support mechanisms for special political missions was a matter for Member States to determine. The report of the Secretary-General on the review of arrangements for funding and backstopping special political missions (A/66/340), which had been discussed by the Fifth Committee in 2011, outlined alternative approaches for addressing shortcomings in the current mechanisms for financing special political missions. His Department sought the flexibility and support needed to make special political missions as effective as possible in a volatile environment.

12. **Mr. Laassel** (Morocco), speaking on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, said that the Movement was committed to supporting all efforts to ensure the effectiveness of special political missions. The Movement attached great importance to reaching consensus among Member States on the development of policies related to such missions, so as to ensure that only ideas and approaches collectively adopted by

Member States were implemented. The relevant United Nations bodies should draft clear and achievable mandates that were based on objective assessments and did not lack a political basis or sufficient resources. Integrated planning and consistent approaches were needed in order to link policy formulation with implementation on the ground.

13. The Movement stressed the importance of respecting the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of all States and recalled the primary role of the United Nations, and the respective roles of the General Assembly and the Security Council, in maintaining peace and security, while reaffirming the principles of impartiality, consent of the parties, national ownership and national responsibility. It also underlined the role of the General Assembly in discussing overall policy matters pertaining to special political missions.

14. The next report of the Secretary-General on policy matters pertaining to special political missions should also report on efforts towards ensuring transparency, expertise and effectiveness in missions, as well as accountability and balanced geographical representation. Regular, inclusive and interactive dialogues should continue to be held on the overall policy matters pertaining to special political missions, and the Secretariat should reach out to Member States in a timely manner to ensure meaningful participation in those dialogues. While taking note of the exponential increase in the financial requirements and the complexity of special political missions over the last decade, the Movement acknowledged their unique characteristics in terms of establishment and financing, since they did not follow the cycle of the regular budget despite being funded by it. In order to enhance efficiency and transparency in the budget process, the Movement called for special political missions to be financed through the same criteria, methodology and mechanisms as those used to fund peacekeeping operations, including the establishment of a new separate account for them.

15. **Mr. Sinhaseni** (Thailand), speaking on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), said that the Association stressed the importance of transparency and accountability for the legitimacy and credibility of special political missions, since key decisions pertaining to those missions were made by a limited number of Member States privy to the process. Although the report of the Secretary-General contained

a useful summary of key developments, it had insufficient information on efforts towards ensuring transparency, accountability and geographical representation, as requested in General Assembly resolution 68/85. That information remained crucial for enabling Member States to enhance their contribution to special political missions.

16. ASEAN welcomed the completion of the mandate of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone (UNIPSIL) in March 2014, which demonstrated that special political missions were an effective peacebuilding tool, but noted that, in the Central African Republic, the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in the Central African Republic (BINUCA) had been subsumed under the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) owing to the worsening security situation. Those cases demonstrated that local conditions could be fluid and must be given due consideration and that mission progress should be reviewed regularly, in consultation with the host country, to ensure that mandates remained achievable.

17. The Association welcomed the holding, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 68/85, of the first interactive dialogue on the overall policy matters pertaining to special political missions. Close interaction between Member States and the Department of Political Affairs was important for improving the transparency and accountability of missions. To that end, the Department was encouraged to reach out to Member States in a timely manner prior to such dialogues. Women made an invaluable contribution to conflict prevention and resolution, and ASEAN welcomed the commitment of the United Nations to gender equality in missions, particularly in senior-level positions, and encouraged the inclusion of women in all stages of peace processes. Host countries needed to take ownership of peace processes and possess the necessary capacity to sustain peace; their participation in missions from an early stage was thus essential. Building national capacity, taking into account local contexts and needs, should be a core mandate of missions.

18. Cooperation between regional partners was often critical to the success of missions, particularly when a broad regional response was required to address the underlying causes of conflict. Strategic partnership between special political missions and the wider

United Nations system was also needed; effective cooperation and coordination between missions and with Headquarters and country teams would ensure that the United Nations could deliver as one to achieve peace, promote human rights and lay the foundations for development.

19. **Mr. Vrailas** (Observer for the European Union), speaking also on behalf of the candidate countries Albania, Montenegro, Serbia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia; the stabilization and association process country Bosnia and Herzegovina; and, in addition, Georgia and Ukraine, said that the international community faced increasingly complex crises. Long-term efforts to consolidate stability and build just and effective States were often confronted by fluid situations. Special political missions should remain a flexible instrument for conflict prevention, peacemaking and peacebuilding. It was important to identify and address new challenges, and the European Union therefore welcomed the timely announcement by the Secretary-General of the review to be conducted on peace operations, including special political missions.

20. Effective conflict prevention and resolution required an inclusive approach, and women's equal and full participation in peace processes and conflict prevention strategies should be ensured, inter alia through the full implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) and related resolutions. The European Union recognized the importance of a system-wide, flexible and context-specific approach; in May 2014 the Foreign Affairs Council of the European Union had agreed on a comprehensive approach to conflict and crisis that emphasized conflict prevention. As noted in the report of the Secretary-General, regional and subregional organizations were key to the success of special political missions. The European Union had actively supported the efforts of the United Nations and regional organizations to reinforce cooperation and remained a committed partner in areas ranging from strengthening conflict-prevention capacities to long-term partnerships on development, economic cooperation and trade.

21. **Mr. Alday González** (Mexico) said that special political missions were one of the principal instruments of the United Nations for preventing conflict and consolidating international peace and security. His country therefore welcomed the Secretary-General's decision to establish the High-level Independent Panel

on Peace Operations, with which his delegation would cooperate. The Panel should clearly identify the gap between the constantly changing expectations and the challenges that faced peacekeeping operations and special political missions. The Panel should also make specific recommendations that would enable Member States to provide the political, logistical and financial resources that such missions required in order to respond in a timely and effective manner, and should work with the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations and the relevant Secretariat departments.

22. Special political missions had increased faster than any other activity financed from the regular budget, resulting in a clear transfer of the costs of peacekeeping to the regular budget of the United Nations. Given the increase in the number and complexity of such missions, it was important to reflect on the duplication of efforts and resources, such as the simultaneous deployment of a peacekeeping operation and a special political mission to the same country. Although situations on the ground often required rapid decision-making, his delegation was concerned that transparency and accountability were sometimes sacrificed for the sake of reacting quickly. The United Nations system could address international peace and security needs and priorities while acting in an orderly, transparent and accountable manner. His delegation would continue to work with the relevant Main Committees to that end.

23. While the Organization undoubtedly needed to adapt its responses to tackle new types of crises and challenges, the justifications for those approaches were not always convincing. In some special political missions, guard units appeared to be carrying out peacekeeping functions, and their mandates were sometimes hard to distinguish from peacekeeping mandates. His delegation called on the Secretary-General to clarify the criteria and parameters being used to determine where and when guard units were deployed and their logistical, legal and political arrangements.

24. Mexico was convinced that transparency and accountability could only serve to build understanding and increase the active participation of States in the field of international peace and security. It had accordingly worked with the delegation of Finland to facilitate a draft resolution on special political missions, which it hoped would be adopted by consensus.

25. More comprehensive, clear and detailed information was needed on the establishment and definition of mandates and on the criteria and rules governing special political missions and the transitions between those missions, peacekeeping operations and country teams. Regular interactive dialogue on the overall policy matters pertaining to special political missions was important, and it was regrettable that a second dialogue had not been held during the sixty-eighth session of the General Assembly.

26. **Mr. Sauer** (Finland) said that the report of the Secretary-General emphasized that special political missions were a core mechanism for conflict prevention, peacemaking and peacebuilding and highlighted policy issues and challenges that hindered mandate implementation and required further discussion. His delegation welcomed the information given in the report about the efforts of the Department of Political Affairs to strengthen mediation capacity. Since most special political missions were not permanent fixtures, flexible deployment and support mechanisms were required. Special political missions sometimes evolved into country teams or peacekeeping operations once their mandates had been fulfilled; that inevitably raised questions about how well they had performed and whether they had been adequately and realistically designed and resourced.

27. His delegation looked forward to further interactive dialogues with the Secretary-General and the wider membership on the effective use of special political missions. Future reports of the Secretary-General on the subject should include concrete suggestions on measures to overcome challenges and on the role of Member States in supporting special political missions.

28. Special political missions' increasingly broad mandates and increasingly difficult environments required thorough analysis. Limits should be set on how broad the mandates of field-based political missions could be, in order to ensure that they were effective. The Joint Mission of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and the United Nations to eliminate the chemical weapons programme of the Syrian Arab Republic, however, was an excellent example of how special political missions could be used creatively to respond to new challenges. Special political missions had synergies with peacekeeping operations and peacebuilding activities, which would be reviewed in 2015. His delegation

supported those processes and considered that they should be reflected in the Fourth Committee's annual draft resolution on issues pertaining to special political missions.

29. Special political missions played a vital role in implementing Security Council resolution 1325 (2000). Women played an important role in conflict prevention and resolution and should enjoy equal and effective participation at all levels and stages and in all aspects of the peaceful settlement of disputes, since there could be no lasting solutions without the involvement of that 50 per cent of the population. That, too, should be reflected in the draft resolution. Finland wished to maximize the effectiveness of special political missions for the benefit of all host countries, their regions and global peace and security; that, in turn, would reduce both expenses and human suffering. Finland was proud to facilitate, along with Mexico, the annual draft resolution on the review of special political missions.

30. **Mr. Forés Rodríguez** (Cuba) said that special political missions should be governed by policies that were jointly devised by Member States and adopted through a democratic exercise in the General Assembly, which should thus play a decisive role in their approval, implementation and monitoring. Such missions must be guided by the same basic principles as peacekeeping operations, including respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of States and non-interference in their internal affairs. Mandates should be clear, achievable and realistic and based on intergovernmental decisions, and must be supplied with the necessary logistical and financial support, in order to avoid stagnation or undue extension and to maintain the credibility of the missions and the United Nations.

31. In order to prevent new missions from adversely impacting the regular budget of the United Nations, there should be a transparent and democratic debate in the General Assembly to identify a differentiated financial mechanism. The Movement of Non-Aligned Countries had proposed the use of the same criteria, methodology and mechanisms used for the financing of peacekeeping operations, including the establishment of a separate account for special political missions. Ongoing, in-depth and systematic analysis of the issues pertaining to special political missions, with the participation of all Member States, would make it possible to adapt missions to changing realities. Lastly,

the Secretary-General should submit an annual report on matters pertaining to special political missions, with a view to ensuring transparency and accountability.

32. **Ms. Bolaños Pérez** (Guatemala) said that, as it was important to eliminate the information gap on policy matters pertaining to special political missions, the Secretary-General's annual report on the subject was fundamental for ensuring the transparency, accountability and effectiveness of missions. Consensus among Member States was needed on policy issues pertaining to special political missions, and the ideas and approaches adopted should be effectively implemented. Her delegation welcomed the establishment of the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations and hoped that its recommendations would take into account the specific features of peacekeeping operations and special political missions. Missions must have clear and feasible mandates that were based on an objective assessment of the situation on the ground and should not be given tasks that lacked a political basis or sufficient resources or were not practically achievable. Their mandates should be subject to clear rules and procedures, at both the development and implementation stages. Special political missions required flexibility and rapid response, but also had limitations and costs. For that reason, the decision to deploy them rather than using other tools must be guided by objective considerations regarding the situation on the ground.

33. Given the increased number and complexity of special political missions, the General Assembly must play a key role in discussing the overall policies governing them. The reports of the Secretary-General should therefore contain the required information. Her delegation was concerned to note that the second report did not contain information on fundamental issues such as transparency and accountability. Moreover, in a period of both progress and challenges, only one interactive dialogue had been held on the overall policy matters pertaining to special political missions.

34. The structure of the regular budget had changed considerably over the last decade, with the result that over 25 per cent of it was allocated to special political missions. There should therefore be three budget categories — regular, peacekeeping and special political missions — each of which should have its own scale of assessments, in order to enhance the efficiency and transparency of the budget process and the sustainability of Member States' contributions. Her

delegation hoped that future interactive dialogues would build confidence between Member States and the Department of Political Affairs.

35. **Mr. de Aguiar Patriota** (Brazil) said that special political missions involved tasks that were at the very heart of the Organization's mandate. Although the United Nations currently had 38 special political missions, only a few of them had been created by the General Assembly. Due to their growing complexity, field-based missions were increasingly acquiring characteristics akin to multidimensional peacekeeping operations. Thus, a thorough discussion on their nature and their links to peacekeeping and peacebuilding was crucial. A clear distinction between peacekeeping operations and special political missions would increase transparency and help to address operational challenges.

36. Urgent attention was needed to correct an inconsistency in the institutional design of special political missions, since, while the vast majority of such missions were established and mandated by the Security Council, all of them were funded by the Organization's regular budget. That heightened the imbalance between decision-making by the few and the disproportionate dilution of costs among the many. Funding for special political missions accounted for more than 20 per cent of the regular budget and was the single most significant distortion in the budget process, hindering the Organization's capacity to carry out mandates in other areas. The budgetary expansion of special political missions had impaired the decision-making process on the regular budget, particularly given the zero-growth policy favoured by some Member States.

37. Brazil strongly supported the proposal made in 2011 by the Secretariat and the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions on measures to improve arrangements for funding and backstopping special political missions, including the establishment of a special account for such missions. The special responsibility of the permanent members of the Security Council should be borne in mind with regard to the financing of peace and security operations, including special political missions. His delegation welcomed the establishment of the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations and the appointment of a Brazilian national as one of its members. Special political missions were an important tool for conflict prevention, and their performance on

the ground should be improved. Increased efficiency could not be decoupled from increased fairness in their institutional design, a concern that should be reflected in the Secretary-General's next report on special political missions.

38. **Mr. Percaya** (Indonesia) said that, in the vast majority of situations where United Nations personnel were deployed, peace agreements were either shaky or absent. As security threats worsened, it was imperative to reassess the system in order to ensure that the framework for special political missions was effectively geared to meeting emerging and multidimensional demands. In addition to robust and timely support and financial and logistical resources, special political missions should have a composition that reflected an appropriate geographical and gender balance, was suited to the tasks to be performed and made use of relevant regional and subregional entities. While the report of the Secretary-General outlined key developments and policy challenges, it would have been useful to have a thorough picture of all aspects and policy matters, including more information on transparency, accountability and geographical representation, as requested by General Assembly resolution 68/85. The report should also have included information and figures on the composition of staff at Headquarters and in the field, and details of the steps that could be taken to achieve equitable geographical and gender representation. The participation of civilian expertise from the global South, including countries with experience in post-conflict peacebuilding and democratic transition, should be expanded.

39. Indonesia was a passionate advocate of dialogue and diplomacy because it had reaped the benefits of the peaceful settlement of disputes. The United Nations should partner more closely with ASEAN in strengthening international peace and security, given the latter's experience in resolving inter-State and intra-State issues. Since even the best-equipped special political missions could fail if they lacked regional and international political support, his delegation emphasized the importance of regular, inclusive and interactive dialogue between Member States and the Secretariat. The Fourth Committee played a key role in reviewing and making recommendations on special political missions.

40. Clear and achievable mandates were vital for improving the performance of special political missions and enhancing transparency, responsibility

and shared commitment. Alongside clear exit strategies, national ownership should be strengthened through better preparation of national authorities for the responsibilities of the country team phase, since, as noted by the Secretary-General, the role of special political missions was ultimately a supporting role. Given the increased financial requirements of special political missions, reports on their funding and administrative arrangements should be submitted to the Fifth Committee and, where appropriate, to the Fourth Committee. His delegation encouraged more systematic sharing of best practices among different stakeholders and stood ready to offer its support to bolster the ability of special political missions to implement complex mandates.

41. **Mr. Ghirani** (Libya) said that the report of the Secretary-General left no doubt that special political missions were one of the main tools of the United Nations for maintaining international peace and security through the use of mediation and good offices to prevent conflicts from recurring and to build sustainable peace. Although special political missions had multidimensional mandates that varied according to the conflict concerned, their overall objective was to prevent conflict and strengthen States' capacity for peacebuilding while supporting national decisions and national ownership. United Nations agencies, funds and programmes should cooperate in order to connect security to socioeconomic activities that would strengthen States' capacity to assume their key functions, including protecting the interests of their citizens. The mandates of special political missions should be clearly defined, as should their linkages to peacekeeping and peacebuilding missions.

42. The United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) had been established to support the transition in Libya and the aspiration of the Libyan people to build a democratic State based on the rule of law. The Mission had provided valuable advice and technical assistance in areas such as transitional justice, and training sessions had been held in fields such as the judiciary, security sector reform, the reintegration of rebels and the elimination of unexploded remnants of war. UNSMIL was also currently helping to strengthen the rule of law, establish democracy and curb the spread of weapons.

43. **Mr. Sollberger** (Switzerland) said that closer collaboration was needed between the relevant stakeholders in special political missions. The request

in General Assembly resolution 68/85 for regular, inclusive and interactive dialogue on the overall policy matters pertaining to special political missions had led to a valuable interactive dialogue in March 2014; further and more in-depth dialogues should be held with all stakeholders. His delegation wished to know what challenges were faced by special political missions, what measures could be taken to help them meet those challenges and how Member States could assist. Resolution 68/85 also encouraged sustained exchanges of information among the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Secretariat, in line with the Security Council's commitment to enhance transparency, as expressed in a note by its President (S/2013/515).

44. Improvements to the funding and backstopping of special political missions were urgently needed, as the current arrangements limited the potential, performance and effectiveness of those missions. While administrative and budgetary matters were within the purview of the Fifth Committee, such matters could not be dealt with in isolation from policy issues. His delegation welcomed the review to be conducted on peace operations, which would provide an opportunity to reflect on the growing number, complexity and importance of special political missions as a complement to peacekeeping, on ways to ensure that their needs were met and on the transition to country teams and development work. The review of peacebuilding architecture that would take place in 2015 would help Member States better understand how the United Nations engaged in post-conflict situations.

45. **Mr. Ishikawa** (Japan) said that special political missions had grown in number and size, and the complexity of their mandates had increased. Together with peacekeeping operations, they had become a flagship instrument for maintaining international peace and security. Field-based missions had become multidimensional operations that combined political tasks with broader mandates that included human rights, the rule of law and sexual violence in conflicts, thereby blurring the demarcation between special political missions and peacekeeping operations. The relationship and transitions between multidimensional field-based special political missions and peacekeeping operations should be clarified. The available tools for meeting demands in the field of peace and security, including peacekeeping operations, special political missions, country teams and regional and bilateral

support, should be appropriately configured, taking into account the strengths and weaknesses of each and the situation on the ground. They should also be adapted to changing situations, with a view to the best possible use of limited financial and human resources. To that end, greater collaboration was called for between the Security Council, the Secretariat and the General Assembly. Japan welcomed the establishment of the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations, which should consider ways to enhance such collaboration.

46. As many decisions on special political missions were made internally by the Security Council, the rationale behind them was often unclear to Member States outside the Council. More transparent decision-making was essential for gaining support from all Member States, and future discussions should paint a clearer picture in that regard. The Security Council was responsible for authorizing the establishment of special political missions and defining their mandates, and should therefore account in greater detail for each mission's mandate and operation and its timeline of activities, including drawdown, merging and closure.

47. The Peacebuilding Commission had been established to assist countries emerging from conflict in their reconstruction and sustainable development. It had engaged in national transition processes in a number of countries through advocacy, accompaniment, resource mobilization and partnerships. Japan, as the Chair of the Commission's Working Group on Lessons Learned, had led discussions on how the Commission could best support countries transitioning from United Nations-mandated missions, and hoped that that exercise would help to enhance the Commission's role in supporting special political missions.

48. **Mr. Singh** (India) said that it was important to respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all States where special political missions operated and to observe the principles of impartiality, consent of the parties, national ownership and national responsibility. Given the importance of clear mandates, there should be more consultation with Member States on policy formulation relating to special political missions in order to minimize the chance of a disconnect between mandates and political realities on the ground. Communication between the Security Council, the General Assembly and the Secretariat should flow freely, should not be perfunctory in nature and should involve Member States in a substantive manner. Policy

formulation for special political missions was currently an opaque process; the Fourth Committee should develop a more participatory process that involved Member States, rather than letting policy formulation remain the sole preserve of the Security Council and the Secretariat. Care should be taken in expanding special political missions into areas that were within the purview of treaty bodies or other United Nations institutions.

49. His delegation expected that the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations would hold substantive consultations with troop-contributing countries. The Department of Political Affairs should organize more interactive briefings by the heads of special political missions, so that Member States could ask questions and offer suggestions. Since the funding of special political missions did not follow the regular budget cycle, his delegation urged that such missions should be financed according to the same criteria, methodology and mechanisms as peacekeeping operations. Such arrangements would enhance the transparency of the budget process. Special political missions should operate within their mandates, and due process should be followed if those mandates needed to be expanded or amended.

50. **Ms. Carayanides** (Australia) said that special political missions played a vital role in conflict prevention, peacemaking and peacebuilding and were a central part of the peace and security architecture of the United Nations. The last year alone had seen the establishment of the Panel of Experts on Yemen, the Panel of Experts on the Central African Republic and the Joint Mission of OPCW and the United Nations to eliminate the chemical weapons programme of the Syrian Arab Republic. Special political missions supported countries in areas ranging from electoral assistance to security sector reform to the monitoring of sanctions regimes that prevented illegal arms flows or the unlawful exploitation of natural resources. They also played a role in advancing the women, peace and security agenda; her delegation welcomed the Secretary-General's appointment of senior female mediators and underlined the important role of special political missions in promoting women's involvement in conflict prevention and peacemaking.

51. Her delegation welcomed the timely upcoming reviews of peace operations and the peacebuilding architecture and looked forward to engaging with the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations.

The leadership of special political missions was crucial, since mission leaders were in part responsible for translating ambitious mandates into workable operations. All Member States should therefore provide political and other support and cooperate with the efforts of the Special Representatives and Special Envoys of the Secretary-General.

52. Special political missions were central to the efforts towards a stronger focus on conflict prevention and mediation tools. The practical and financial problems that impeded the implementation of their mandates, as set out in the report of the Secretary-General on the review of arrangements for funding and backstopping special political missions (A/66/340), should therefore be addressed as a matter of priority. In order for missions to retain their flexibility and utility, they must be allowed access to the necessary support structures, including the Peacekeeping Reserve Fund and strategic deployment stocks. Relevant departments should have access to the support account for peacekeeping operations to fund their backstopping requirements.

53. **Ms. Sameer** (Maldives) said that her delegation appreciated the unique role of special political missions in defusing tension and promoting peace and reconciliation. It supported the recommendations made in the Secretary-General's report. The objectives, mandates and expected outcomes of special political missions should be made clear prior to their approval. The Department of Political Affairs should not be allowed to use special political missions to interfere in the domestic politics of Member States, and the terms of reference of such missions should be drafted in consultation with and approved by the host countries. Missions should not impose policy prescriptions on Member States; rather, they should work with Governments to develop a common agenda that was flexible and context-specific. Public discussion of the work of such missions should be conducted in a responsible manner, without undermining their objectives. The main emphasis of special political missions should be on building confidence among all stakeholders, and such missions should not be used to influence democratic political outcomes or to promote the national interests of a specific group of Member States.

54. **Ms. Wilson** (Fiji) said that close partnerships with regional and subregional organizations, inter alia in the development of policies and mandates, were key

to the success of special political missions. Also crucial were continued support from Member States and respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of host countries. Political unity was the most important determinant of success in special political missions. Her delegation supported efforts to enhance those missions' effectiveness and transparency and, in that light, welcomed the report of the Secretary-General. The holding of regular, inclusive and interactive dialogue on the overall policy matters pertaining to special political missions was central to the maintenance of international peace and security.

55. Fiji noted the increased administrative requirements and complexity of special political missions and the fact that they were funded from the regular budget but did not follow the regular budget cycle. Taking into account the nature of the approval, functioning, scope and mandates of special political missions, her delegation suggested that they should be financed in the same way as peacekeeping operations in order to increase transparency, accountability and ownership by those who authorized the mandates and, in turn, paid a share of the costs.

56. **Ms. Jones** (United States of America) said that her delegation strongly supported special political missions and appreciated their unique capabilities and invaluable role in preventing and resolving conflicts. Special political missions with region-wide mandates were well equipped to engage immediately when warranted; in that regard, with several presidential elections due to take place in West Africa in the next two years, the important role of the United Nations Office for West Africa (UNOWA) should be recognized. Her delegation welcomed the swift engagement of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for West Africa following violent protests in Burkina Faso that had led to the President's resignation, and noted the role of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) in encouraging dialogue to produce a Government of national unity. Special political missions must adapt to the situation on the ground, as exemplified by the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), which had launched a massive humanitarian effort following the onslaught by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL).

57. The United States welcomed the Secretary-General's announcement of a comprehensive review of

peace operations, which would encompass the full spectrum of activities, including special political missions, United Nations agencies and country teams. Improved information exchange between the Secretariat and Member States on matters pertaining to special political missions would enhance understanding of that function of the United Nations. The draft resolution to be adopted on the comprehensive review of special political missions should respect the clear and separate prerogatives set out for different bodies by the Charter of the United Nations, including the primary role of the Security Council in maintaining international peace and security, and should not encroach on administrative and budgetary issues that were the responsibility of the Fifth Committee.

58. **Mr. Ilichev** (Russian Federation) said that special political missions were an effective instrument for tackling crisis situations that threatened international peace and security, and had played a significant role in helping countries to avoid conflict, manage political transitions and achieve national reconciliation. A key feature of special political missions was their flexibility. The Security Council was empowered under the Charter of the United Nations to investigate any dispute or any situation that might lead to international friction and to do so by any means of its choosing, whether through an individual, such as a Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, or a substantial civilian presence. Special political missions could achieve long-term results only through close cooperation with host countries, based on the countries' own priorities and guided by the principles of national ownership and respect for sovereignty. Regional and subregional organizations could also help to resolve problems, since their approach was consistent with that of the United Nations.

59. The report of the Secretary-General confirmed the growing complexity of the challenges faced by special political missions, which were taking on tasks in fields such as the rule of law, electoral assistance, human rights and security sector reform, alongside their traditional political work. The report's focus on the gender component of their work was also noteworthy. His delegation took note of the holding of the first interactive dialogue between Member States and the Secretariat. That process was just beginning, and the modalities of future dialogues should take the views of Member States into account. The prerogatives, functions and powers of the principal

organs of the United Nations should be borne in mind, as well as the Organization's experience with special political missions, and the interactive dialogues should not duplicate work on issues that were discussed in other forums.

60. **Mr. Tesfay** (Eritrea) said that his delegation had taken note of the Secretary-General's report and looked forward to receiving the next such report, which should describe the measures taken by the Secretariat to ensure effectiveness, accountability and equitable geographical representation in special political missions. Eritrea recognized the complexity of the environments in which many special political missions were operating. The General Assembly, as a universal and deliberative organ of the United Nations, had a critical role to play in the development of policies pertaining to special political missions, and the support of all Member States was critical to their success. Regarding the interactive dialogues, prior consultation between Member States and the Secretariat on the topics to be discussed and a timetable for the dialogues would help to ensure productive exchanges and predictable outcomes. It was important to maintain a proper balance between the different clusters of special political missions — Special Envoys, field-based missions and sanctions panels — in both the interactive dialogues and the reports of the Secretary-General.

61. **Mr. Alnaqshabandi** (Iraq) said that his country faced terrorist aggression from ISIL, which had committed heinous crimes against the different factions of the Iraqi people and had brought normal life to a standstill, as various government institutions and educational establishments had closed and people had been forced to leave their homes. His delegation had repeatedly warned of the dangers posed by ISIL to international peace and security. Fighting ISIL would save not only the people of Iraq but also humanity as a whole. Statistics compiled by UNAMI indicated that 1.8 million persons had been displaced by the violence perpetrated by ISIL since January 2014. Large numbers of those persons were living in government facilities, including 1 million persons living in schools, which had delayed the start of the school year. His delegation hoped that, as winter approached, the United Nations would assist pupils by providing basic essentials, including food, medical supplies and shelter. Iraq appreciated the role of UNAMI in providing advice and support to the Iraqi Government, particularly in the field of political dialogue among different factions and

the provision of technical support that had led to the successful holding of parliamentary elections in April 2014.

62. **Mr. Metref** (Algeria) said that the decision, at the Assembly's sixty-eighth session, to include special political missions as a new agenda item separate from the one on peacekeeping operations was evidence of those missions' growing importance. Over the last decade, special political missions had expanded in number, scope and complexity and had taken on new tasks, such as mediation and facilitation, electoral assistance and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration. Special political missions must be based on clear, credible and realistic mandates and their progress should be evaluated.

63. Although General Assembly resolution 68/85 implicitly indicated that the Fourth Committee's discussions on special political missions should not touch on financing, it should be noted that the regular budget was no longer able to accommodate the fluctuating needs and evolving roles of special political missions. The budget for those missions had increased significantly, from \$100 million in the 2000-2001 biennium to more than \$1.8 billion in 2012-2013. Given that sustained and substantial increase, a separate special account was needed for special political missions, as already existed for peacekeeping operations.

64. The different approaches of the United Nations and the African Union and other regional organizations required the careful division of tasks and stronger strategic coordination regarding alerts and rapid response. His delegation supported the recommendations made by the Secretary-General in the previous year's report on overall policy matters pertaining to special political missions (A/68/223), in particular with regard to close cooperation with national stakeholders and strengthening of missions' capacity to deliver an integrated United Nations response linking political work and security with the longer-term development agenda.

65. **Mr. Alemu** (Ethiopia) said that the challenge of maintaining international peace and security was becoming more complex and tensions were at an all-time high. Special political missions played a critical role, since nothing was more important to international peace and security than prevention. In view of the danger faced by the personnel of special

political missions, more should be done to ensure that those missions were used properly and were supported by a serious analysis of conflict situations. His delegation therefore looked forward to the review by the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations. The general membership of the United Nations should have a say in the establishment of special political missions.

66. His delegation was pleased by the growing cooperation between the African Union and the United Nations, including in connection with the establishment of special political missions, and hoped that such cooperation would be expanded to encompass the analysis of political situations. Missions that were not based on an objective political analysis would not produce optimal results, and a Department of Political Affairs that was weakened by a lack of resources would be unable to provide such analyses and could produce unrealistic recommendations that would worsen delicate conflict situations. The Department should be strengthened, in order to enable it to provide the in-depth analyses needed for ensuring the effectiveness of special political missions.

The meeting rose at 5.10 p.m.