



# Security Council

Seventy-fifth year

**8741**<sup>st</sup> meeting

Wednesday, 4 March 2020, 10 a.m.

New York

*Provisional*

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*President:* Mr. Wu Haitao . . . . . (China)

*Members:*

Belgium . . . . .	Mrs. Van Vlierberge
Dominican Republic . . . . .	Mr. Singer Weisinger
Estonia . . . . .	Mr. Jürgenson
France . . . . .	Mrs. Gueguen
Germany . . . . .	Mr. Heusgen
Indonesia . . . . .	Mr. Syihab
Niger . . . . .	Mr. Abarry
Russian Federation . . . . .	Mr. Polyanskiy
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines . . . . .	Ms. Gonsalves
South Africa . . . . .	Mr. Matjila
Tunisia . . . . .	Mr. Ben Lagha
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . . . . .	Mr. Allen
United States of America . . . . .	Mr. Barkin
Viet Nam . . . . .	Mr. Dang

## Agenda

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

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in South Sudan (S/2020/145)

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*The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.*

### **Adoption of the agenda**

*The agenda was adopted.*

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

#### **Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in South Sudan (S/2020/145)**

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

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Mr. David Shearer, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan, and Ms. Betty Sunday, Coordinator of the Women's Monthly Forum on Peace and Political Processes in South Sudan.

Mr. Shearer and Ms. Sunday are joining us via video-conference from Juba.

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

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2020/145, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in South Sudan.

I now give the floor to Mr. Shearer.

**Mr. Shearer:** Often when I brief the Security Council on South Sudan, the news is not encouraging. However, today is different. There have been positive developments that have moved the country further along the road to sustainable peace.

On 15 February, President Salva Kiir, against the wishes of many of his supporters, agreed to a compromise to return South Sudan to its pre-2015 position of 10 states, although he added three administrative areas. With that shift, Riek Machar accepted the challenge to join a transitional Government in Juba, serving as the country's First Vice-President, despite transitional security arrangements not yet in place.

With the deadlock broken, four Vice-Presidents were sworn in at a ceremony in Juba, attended by senior leaders from the Sudan, South Africa and

Uganda. The fifth was sworn in the following day. I acknowledge the role of President Museveni of Uganda, General Burhan of the Sudan and the Heads of State of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, as well as South African President Ramaphosa and regional envoys Stephen Kalonzo and Ismail Wais, for supporting the process. But the progress is attributable to the political willingness of two men who put the interests of their country first — President Kiir, to make critical concessions, and Riek Machar, to agree to return to the capital that he left during fighting in 2016.

We often speak of courage in war and battle, but peace also requires courage. Relief was the overwhelming feeling expressed to us around the country, the consensus being that the priority is to form the transitional Government so that the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan — and the country — can advance. As we speak, parties are now negotiating over the allocation of ministerial portfolios. Meanwhile, non-signatory groups, through the mediation efforts of the Community of Sant'Egidio, committed to ceasing hostilities last month. The return to Rome next week will aim to bring them into the agreement.

The new Government can prompt positive change. The number of displaced and refugees returning is likely to increase. Already, according to the International Organization for Migration, approximately 800,000 people have already come back since the signing of the 2018 peace agreement. The first joint statement from the new presidency — the President and Vice-President — last week urged people in protection-of-civilians sites and neighbouring countries to return home. The collective message is significant and timely, coming ahead of the rainy — and planting — season. The message, of course, puts the onus on the new Government to ensure that areas of return are safe for those who are coming back.

For its part, the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) has stepped up its protective presence to build confidence in areas of return. In addition, the United Nations police (UNPOL) is expanding technical assistance and beginning to co-locate with the National Police Service to enhance policing capabilities.

Yet, the dearth of health and education services in rural areas has discouraged returns. The imbalance between services in protection-of-civilians sites, for example, and outside is glaring. It needs urgent redress

by humanitarian and development actors, including donors. The Bentiu protection-of-civilians site, for example, faces high numbers of unaccompanied children, who have been left at the site to continue their schooling while adults go back, simply because schools do not exist in their own villages.

The protection environment has also changed. The ceasefire and the free movement of opposition leaders across South Sudan have lowered the risk of violence, which has been confirmed by the security risk assessments conducted by UNMISS and its partners. Consequently, UNMISS has prioritized peacekeepers to hotspot locations and areas of return. Between five and eight temporary operating bases, at any one time, are being manned in remote areas. For example, the force presence inside the Bor protection-of-civilians site has been reduced by 70 per cent. That has freed troops to respond robustly to protect civilians against extreme intercommunal violence in Jonglei last week and this week. Our Pibor base has been reinforced to better protect 5,000 civilians who had fled there from adjacent areas and three temporary operating bases have been established in surrounding villages.

Nevertheless, the new Government faces a daunting array of challenges on day one that will test its unity. Most urgent is the need to move on the transitional security arrangements. The pretransitional structures are now redundant. The implementation of those measures is dangerously lagging. UNMISS has transported more than 250 tons of supplies to training locations to plug urgent gaps. But universally across sites, there is no registration, no substantial training and a shortage of supplies for those troops assembled.

The new Government will also face a precarious humanitarian situation in many of its states. The anticipated improvement in harvest levels 12 months ago was quashed by the extensive flooding last year. Crops were destroyed, livestock were lost. The floods contaminated water supplies, worsening health conditions, particularly for children, in areas that have sparse access to health resources. The flooding has also contributed to communal violence among pastoralists. It is no coincidence that the most severe food insecurity conditions, but also the heaviest fighting, are in Jonglei state, where livestock losses have undermined the social fabric, which is centred around the production of cattle. The threat of damage from locusts, amid South Sudan's never-ending woes, is yet to have a substantial impact on the country. The Food and Agriculture Organization

of the United Nations is gearing up its preparations to spray to protect crops.

A unified Government heralds the start of a new phase. The peace agreement, of course, will be the road map for the coming three years. However, in parallel, South Sudan needs to address four issues that are the cornerstones of a properly functioning State.

First, impunity must end, which will require increased support to police and the justice chain, from the collection of evidence through to prosecutions and court trials. Where crimes are committed, especially the number of sexually based offences, perpetrators need to be brought to justice.

Secondly, corruption must end. That requires financial accountability and transparency. Government mechanisms exist but are often bypassed. For example, if Government workers and security services receive their salaries regularly every month, they will focus on their jobs, not on other activities to support their families.

Thirdly, dependency must end. That requires a determined shift by both the Government and the international community to supporting programmes that promote self-reliance where appropriate. Yes, there are areas where humanitarian assistance is urgently required, but such interventions should be progressively more surgical and vigorously monitored.

Fourthly, exclusion must end, which means that all South Sudanese are part of the democratic process, that civil society has a greater role and that there is a political space where it is alright to speak out and criticize. Those are the underpinnings of the upcoming constitution-making and election processes.

The mandate of UNMISS is due for renewal. South Sudan, as we have heard and seen, is in flux as the new Government is established; therefore, it is premature to propose significant change. A better understanding will be possible in the coming months. Until then, the current UNMISS mandate is sufficiently broad, in my view, to continue activities to build durable peace and protect civilians. Nevertheless, there will be a need to focus on two areas, namely, the mobility of peacekeepers, which has improved, and plans are in place to enhance it further through increased riverine and air support, particularly during the rainy season; and the role of UNPOL and our Rule of Law Unit to expand its activities to better

tackle impunity and support the shift to civilian law enforcement and accountability.

Finally, the doubters are telling us that we have been here before. However, it is also important to acknowledge that these are changed circumstances. The international community will likely lean on the side of caution, wary of repeating past mistakes. That, of course, is fair, but neither can we totally step back to wait and see what happens before making a commitment. Our actions can push South Sudan further towards sustainable peace; our inaction can help condemn it to failure. In the past weeks, its leaders have shown leadership. It is hoped that this will continue. It is imperative there be no renegeing on the peace agreement or the ceasefire. International partners must remain engaged — both in solidarity and, at times, with pressure — to encourage compromise in order to achieve and maintain the unity. South Sudan's future depends on the ability to compromise and maintain that unity.

**The President** (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank Mr. Shearer for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Ms. Sunday.

**Ms. Sunday**: It is truly an honour for me, as a South Sudanese civil society representative, to brief the Security Council on the situation in my country and since the completion of a historical milestone in our long journey towards peace in South Sudan. I would like to dedicate my remarks to all of the South Sudanese women who fought so hard for this peace agreement and who continue to work tirelessly to support their communities on the ground.

My name is Betty Sunday. Today I represent the Women's Monthly Forum on Peace and Political Processes in South Sudan. We have been bringing together South Sudanese women from all walks of life since 2014 to make sure that we play a critical role in peace processes. I am also a member of South Sudan Women's Coalition and a staff member of the Community Empowerment for Progress Organization, which took part in the peace talks in 2015 and 2018.

I would like to start by thanking the Council for its efforts in pushing for the full implementation of the 2018 Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan, including through its visit to South Sudan in October. By meeting with my colleagues in Juba, the Council has help us to create a space for civil society in my country at a

critical juncture. Just two weeks after the formation of the much-awaited Transitional Government of National Unity, I want to focus my remarks on the situation on the ground in South Sudan from a civil society perspective, in particular that of women-led organizations.

The completion of key aspects of the peace agreement just before the 22 February deadline brings us undeniably closer to the vision of an inclusive and peaceful South Sudan that ordinary citizens have kept alive in their hearts. The alternative could have brought war back to our doorsteps, had the ceasefire that drastically reduced political violence not held. South Sudanese civil society organizations worked tirelessly to keep the international community engaged and to make our recommendations weigh in the political balance. I am confident that I can speak for my sisters and brothers in saying that we are grateful that the Council did not turn a blind eye. Peace required substantial concessions from all parties and, when it was all said and done, I believe it was pressure from the region, from the African Union and from the international community as a whole, that compelled South Sudanese leaders to put the good of our people first.

It is not the first time that we have had hope. But I remember bitterly the return to violence and suffering that followed the collapse of previous agreements, which friends of South Sudan were all too quick to call a success, when their disengagement enabled personal interests to prevail once more. Women and girls paid the highest price of that failure to see peace through in a country where specific threats to them continue to be extreme. The 125 survivors of the November 2018 mass rape in Bentiu should convince the international community to vow "never again", and to mean it this time.

The recent breakthrough in the peace process rekindles our hope for a South Sudan where guns have been silenced and the Government can use national resources to tackle key issues, such as girls' education, child marriage, youth job creation and basic services for communities. While the situation on the ground remains calm, we hope that the current political disputes among parties haggling over ministerial attributions will remain just that and that they will not bring us back to the brink.

Yet serious challenges lie ahead. Violence continues to displace communities in parts of the country, and humanitarian assistance is as critical as ever for over

7 million people in need. Women and girls are still at extreme risk of rape and other forms of sexual or gender-based violence when they fetch food and water. Communities need rebuilding, with 1.5 million people remaining displaced and experiencing uncertainty about safety and services if they return. Over 2 million refugees remain outside the country, the majority of whom are women and children.

I recently visited the Rejab Unified Police Training Center in Juba and was shocked to see how inadequate the conditions were at the site, with pregnant women, lactating mothers and some 700 children without access to proper installations and services. After a visit with the Reconstituted Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission, we had to go back as women of South Sudan as an act of solidarity with our sisters to help them deal with the suffering we had seen there. I argue that measures should be implemented to tackle those inadequate conditions and ensure that pregnant women are not taken to the training centre until they give birth.

On the political front, we have been encouraged to see that civil society organizations, including women-led organizations, have increased their influence through their unwavering engagement in the peace process. They have played a critical role in some of the recent progress by advocating women's increased representation, the 100-day extension of the pre-transitional deadline and the resolution of a number of state disputes.

South Sudanese women have fought hard for the peace agreement to come to life and hold. However, we are still far from achieving the 35 per cent quota for women in the Transitional Government's bodies, particularly at the state level, where the list of governors that is still being negotiated does not include a single woman.

This brings me to my recommendations for what the Security Council can do to support for the South Sudanese people on our way to peace and security for all. First, most importantly, I urge all friends of South Sudan, including the Security Council, to maintain full diplomatic engagement so that the parties may work to resolve pending issues to ensure the swift implementation of the peace agreement. In this regard, we hope the Council could impress upon some South Sudanese politicians that individuals on international sanctions lists should not be part of a new Government.

Hundreds of thousands of families are still waiting for safe and dignified conditions to go back to their homes. It will be critical for the Security Council and the United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan (UNMISS) to urge the Government to ensure that armed forces vacate civilian houses without further delay, as required by the peace agreement. Likewise, security sector reform needs to continue so that we can have a professional, unified military equipped with the appropriate training to keep all South Sudanese citizens safe. This must include, for the safety of women and girls in particular, training to counter gender-based violence.

After years of abuses, peace will require justice to hold. We hope members of the Security Council will reiterate their support for transitional justice in South Sudan, which must include accountability for gender-based violence, if things are ever going to change in my country.

It will take all of us to build a safe and prosperous South Sudan. Grass-roots organizations are counting on the Security Council to help by urging all parties to respect the space for civil society to make a contribution. Women-led organizations in particular need to be recognized for the essential role they played to build peace nationally and at the community level. This young nation of ours will only achieve its full potential through the meaningful participation in public life of women and women-led organizations. We need the Council to stand with us as we renew our call on all parties to realize the hard-won promise of the 35 per cent quota for women's representation in Government.

Finally, as the Security Council considers renewing the UNMISS mandate, it is crucial that all existing provisions on women, peace and security be maintained and that the Mission engage with diverse women's groups, in particular those working on ending gender-based violence. We strongly believe that, to be successful, UNMISS should consult a wide range of women's civil society organizations to guide its work in the areas of protection of civilians, confidence-building and mediation.

Women and girls have lived in fear for far too long in South Sudan, where gender-based violence continues to reach some of its highest rates in the world. As a mother and a human rights defender, I want to make sure South Sudanese women and girls are not relegated

to a status of victims: we have a voice, and we must have a say in our country's future.

**The President** (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank Ms. Sunday for her briefing.

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

**Mr. Barkin** (United States of America): I thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Shearer for his dedication to South Sudan and for his timely briefing. Ms. Sunday's continued advocacy for an inclusive peace process in South Sudan is commendable. We thank her for her remarks on behalf of women and civil society in South Sudan.

The United States welcomes the decision by the Government and the opposition to form a new Transitional Government of National Unity. We recognize the significant compromises agreed to by all parties in order to take this important step forward in the peace process. We also commend the efforts of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, countries in the region and other stakeholders for their direct and ongoing engagement with South Sudan's leaders in advance of the February deadline.

We are hopeful that the people of South Sudan can now see a glimmer of hope and progress. For this progress to be sustained, however, South Sudan's leaders must view recent developments as an important first step on the long path to lasting peace. The hard work of compromise and collaboration must continue.

The international community must continue its engagement to encourage progress in areas that address the underlying causes of conflict. Now is a particularly sensitive time for the implementation of security arrangements. The proximity of Government and opposition forces during the cantonment and training process creates a high risk of conflict. South Sudan's leaders must continue to reinforce the sanctity of the permanent ceasefire and be prepared to defuse tensions in the case of friction between forces. We also urge South Sudan's leaders to take measures to stop persistent intercommunal violence, such as recent clashes in Jonglei state.

Humanitarian assistance remains a crucial lifeline for more than half of South Sudan's population. Access for humanitarians to the most vulnerable populations must continue to improve, especially in the context of increasing food insecurity. We call on the new

Government to remove bureaucratic impediments that prevent timely delivery of much-needed assistance.

Transparent and accountable management of resources and the Transitional Government's continued financial support for the peace process have never been more important. To consolidate the gains of peace, South Sudan's people need to see the country's resources being used to provide services that can support sustainable development.

As the Security Council heard during its trip to Juba last October, there can be no peace in South Sudan without justice. South Sudan's leaders must now work together to address issues of transitional justice and accountability, including establishing the African Union hybrid court for South Sudan. The February report from the Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan documented alarming violations of human rights, including the use of starvation as a tool of war and ongoing conflict-related sexual violence committed by forces on all sides. We expect the new Government to take these findings seriously.

We particularly condemn the abduction of women and girls by commanders of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army in Opposition in Western Equatoria. We are also concerned by reports of sexual and gender-based violence perpetrated by personnel of the South Sudan People's Defence Forces and the National Salvation Front in Central Equatoria. With the formation of the new Government, we expect safeguards to stop such abuses and to ensure accountability.

One of the distinctions between the current peace process and the previous failed attempts at peace in South Sudan is some improvement in inclusivity with respect to civil society, women, youth and faith groups, among others. We encourage continued progress to include South Sudan's diverse communities in the process of implementing the peace agreement.

The United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) is playing a vital role in supporting stability in South Sudan. The Council is aware that the formation of the previous transitional Government triggered years of violence and human rights atrocities. For that reason, regarding the upcoming mandate renewal for UNMISS, we seek to ensure that the Mission maintains the necessary tools to support the peace process and to respond to outbreaks of violence.

For UNMISS to do its part to support the peace process, it must be able to conduct its work without restrictions or violations of its status-of-forces agreement. We urge the new Government to support UNMISS in fulfilling its mandate and leveraging the United Nations presence to consolidate peace in South Sudan.

South Sudan's leaders have made important political progress. We fully recognize their efforts. We also recognize that maintaining momentum in the peace process means continuing to demonstrate a willingness to compromise and collaborate on the challenging issues that I have discussed. Progress on these issues is precisely what will allow the people of South Sudan to reap tangible benefits from the recent encouraging developments.

The United States continues to stand with the people of South Sudan in their pursuit of peace, stability and prosperity.

**Mrs. Gueguen** (France) (*spoke in French*): I wish to begin by warmly thanking Mr. David Shearer and Mrs. Betty Sunday for their very enlightening briefings and for their personal commitment to peace in South Sudan.

After two postponements, we are now pleased to be in a position to welcome the establishment of the Government of National Unity. France commends the parties on their spirit of compromise and dialogue and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development and the African Union on their steadfast commitment to the process.

An important milestone has now been reached, but the process of building a lasting peace remains lengthy. The parties must appoint various ministers as well as governors and members of the legislative body. There is also a need for the effective, full and meaningful participation of women and young people. In that regard, the quota for women set out in the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan must be fully upheld.

It is now incumbent upon the Transitional Government to expeditiously implement the reforms agreed under to the agreement, specifically security-sector reform, transitional justice, accountability for governors and transparency in public finance. The Sudanese people must be able to freely express their aspirations to peace in an open political space. Respect

for basic freedoms for journalists and all citizens is paramount.

Strengthening trust must be the watchword during this transitional stage. Only respect for the commitments undertaken under the agreement can reweave a social fabric rent by years of conflict. Trust should be rebuilt at the leadership level but also at the local community level. In that regard, we welcome the work done by the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) to pre-empt local conflict and to work towards intercommunal reconciliation.

France encourages the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, the African Union and South Sudan's main partners to remain fully mobilized during this transition stage. Transitional stages, as is well known, are precarious ones, and the parties will require ongoing robust attention on the part of the international community so as not to deviate from the course charted by the peace agreement. In that respect, I welcome the decisive role played by the Community of Sant'Egidio in the achievement of a rapprochement among the non-signatory armed groups and the Government.

It is high time that the South Sudanese people finally be able to enjoy the dividends of peace. We are aware of the tragic humanitarian situation and of the fact that people's needs have not diminished. I call upon all parties to provide safe and unhindered humanitarian assistance to all people in need of it. That requires the protection of humanitarian and medical personnel as well as civilian infrastructure.

Ms. Betty Sunday's briefing underscored once again the crucial importance of continuing to fight against sexual violence and to protect children from the grave violations to which they are been subjected. The establishment of the hybrid court set up under the agreement, with support from the African Union, should help to counter impunity and contribute to reducing such violence.

We are preparing to renew the mandate of UNMISS at a time when encouraging progress is being achieved, but the situation remains fragile and uncertain. We therefore believe that it is reasonable to maintain unchanged the format and the mandate of the Mission for this year. Next year, if the peace process continues to make headway, we could revisit the mandate to reflect the new context so as to provide optimal support to the peacebuilding stage.

France fully supports the efforts undertaken to increase the mobility of the Mission and enable it to best deliver on its civilian-protection mandate. In this regard, it is vital for the Mission to have freedom of movement throughout the entire territory of South Sudan. My delegation also encourages the Mission to persevere in its efforts to strengthen the South Sudanese justice system, particularly through mobile justice courts.

Finally, my country extends its gratitude to the Blue Helmets and the police and civilian personnel deployed in UNMISS as well as to all humanitarian actors present in South Sudan, who, under difficult circumstances, are providing vital support to the South Sudanese population.

**Mr. Allen** (United Kingdom): May I say, Sir, how good it is to see you in the presidency during what I think is your last month with us in the Council, so it is very nice to see you there.

Let me also thank Special Representative Shearer for his briefing and all he has done. I would also like to thank Ms. Sunday for her very insightful briefing and her continued efforts to seek justice and accountability for women in South Sudan. It was an inspirational part of our recent visit to Juba to meet her and her fellow civil-society activists, and I am pleased to hear from her that the Council's interest then has helped her locally to open that space.

Let me start, like others, by welcoming the very positive news of the decision of the South Sudanese parties to form the Transitional Government of National Unity. The people of South Sudan have long awaited this important step, and the people of the United Kingdom join them in celebrating that important progress. Let me therefore salute the leadership shown by President Kiir and First Vice-President Machar in making the necessary compromises, including on the number and composition of states in particular. Putting the people of South Sudan first is what matters and is their test of leadership.

Let me also praise the role of the region in the efforts to bring the parties together. I agree wholeheartedly with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on the important unity shown and efforts made by the subregion and beyond. Thanks are due widely, as he said, reflecting the wide concern and interest of the international community. However, he left out one

person, so I wish to thank him personally for all that he has done.

But let me also echo Special Representative of the Secretary-General Shearer's words of caution. It is really important that the dividends of this progress be felt by the wider population. That has not yet happened. Our focus remains on helping the people of South Sudan to lead their lives free from hunger, violence and fear. Only through the genuine implementation of the commitments made by all sides will South Sudan move forward.

Let us not forget that this conflict has killed nearly 400,000 people; left 7.5 million people in need of humanitarian assistance; and has seen sexual and gender-based violence used as a weapon of war, more than 4 million people displaced and some 6.5 million people at risk of acute food insecurity.

The United Kingdom will continue to stand by South Sudan and its people in this endeavour. We remain one of the largest humanitarian donors. Last year the United Kingdom gave more than \$220 million in humanitarian assistance to South Sudan.

As I have said, recent steps are only the start of the next phase of delivering change for the people of South Sudan. Our hope is that this spirit of compromise will continue and swift progress will be made to address the many challenges ahead.

Most immediately, we need to see the timely formation of an inclusive Government, with positions and portfolios allocated. One very concrete step that could be taken would be to ensure the meaningful participation of women, as Ms. Sunday made clear, both in this Government and in South Sudan's future. In that regard, I would simply say that the 35 per cent quota should be the floor, not the ceiling. I welcome Ms. Sunday's comments in general, and I particularly agree with her that South Sudan's natural resource wealth should be used in support of its people, including girls' education as a priority.

The tasks that should have been completed during the pre-transition phase must now be addressed. That includes with regard to unifying forces and cantonment. Partial implementation would bring new security challenges, which must not happen. We would like to see full transparency in that regard, including concerning funds that have already been disbursed. Efforts to address the increasing levels of



intercommunal violence and immediate steps to tackle the humanitarian situation would show the Government prioritizing its people.

The Council must remain alert to the risks. History has shown that the violence in South Sudan can rapidly escalate. In addition to the sustained commitment of the new Government, we therefore believe that the international efforts that we have recently seen reap such benefits and dividends must remain present with South Sudan in order to provide a conducive environment for sustainable peace. As part of that, we believe that it is important to maintain the sanctions regime to discourage any potential spoilers of the peace, as well as the arms embargo, which exists for the protection of the people of South Sudan. Necessary exemptions must of course be applied in the correct way.

The Security Council has stood with South Sudan over the past years and months. It has been a very difficult time but the strong interest and focus, including our recent visit, have been important elements in support of peace. As a Council, we need to maintain that interest and focus. On the Security Council visit, I vividly recall the words of one of the representatives of civil society whom we met regarding South Sudan's parties. The representative said:

“When they are united, they loot us. When they are divided, they kill us. It is better that they are united.”

The people of South Sudan deserve a world in which they are not in danger and in which they are able to fulfil their potential and live their lives to the fullest. As we say for all on the planet, let no one be left behind.

The President and Vice-President have shown leadership to reach this point. True leadership means being able to make compromises for the good of their people. I applaud them for that. But this is just the beginning. We need them and all South Sudanese politicians to demonstrate true leadership now. The hard work is just starting.

**Mr. Singer Weisinger** (Dominican Republic) (*spoke in Spanish*): We thank Mr. Shearer and Ms. Sunday for their important briefings.

South Sudan has officially formed the Transitional Government of National Unity. We welcome that agreement and the readiness of the parties to put aside their differences and make way for a sustainable peace process. In that regard, we would like to acknowledge

the role of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development and other regional and international actors for their mediation efforts in that process. We hope that that encouraging step will make it possible to advance the agreed reforms, particularly those relating to transitional justice, accountability and transparency in public administration. At the same time, we regret the recent incidents of intercommunal violence, which have exacted a high toll in terms of the dead and injured, as well as the volatile security situation along the border.

While it is clear that this rapprochement between the parties is an important step forward, it is no less certain that it will be successful only if it results in the eradication of the root causes of the conflict. It is of great concern that the recent report of the Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan (A/HRC/43/56) notes that more than half the population is acutely food insecure. It is urgent that such a commitment be reflected in an improvement in the quality of life of a population where more than 7 million people are in need of life-saving assistance.

That situation is exacerbated by the recent floods and the continuing threat of diseases such as Ebola. Also of concern is the serious threat in the Horn of Africa of an outbreak of desert locusts, whose reproduction is linked to the effects of climate change and which has been described as a disaster by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. In that regard, it is necessary to promote State policies for the development of resilience and the mitigation of the undeniable risks resulting from climate change.

Meanwhile, we emphatically reiterate our call for the implementation of all measures to end to sexual and gender-based violence, the recruitment and use of child soldiers and human rights violations in general. In particular, we call for the implementation of transitional justice mechanisms, such as the hybrid court for South Sudan. In that vein, we would like to acknowledge the ratification by the Government of South Sudan of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict and the signing of the comprehensive action plan by the Government and the South Sudan People's Defence Forces.

The culture of entrenched impunity and the lack of accountability prevailing in South Sudan have been the main triggers of violence and must therefore be

addressed in order to bring about genuine democratic transformation. The Transitional Government must urgently prioritize accountability and national reconciliation. Peace will not be achieved if there is no resolve to bring to justice those guilty of crimes against humanity.

In conclusion, we would like to emphasize the need to promote the meaningful participation of women, young people and civil society in the formation of the Transitional Government of National Unity. We continue to call for achieving 35 per cent participation of women in leadership positions within the Government.

**Mrs. Van Vlierberge** (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, allow me to warmly thank Mr. David Shearer and Ms. Betty Sunday for their briefings, their commitment and their excellent work in very difficult conditions.

We welcome the decision of the parties in South Sudan to form a Transitional Government of National Unity and the swearing-in of the Vice-Presidents on 22 February. That is an important step towards a lasting peace. Such a development is the result of a spirit of compromise by President Kiir and Mr. Riek Machar and the commitment of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, countries of the region, the African Union and a number of international actors. We now encourage all parties to finalize the formation of a balanced Government of National Unity and to continue to fully implement the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan.

Despite the commendable progress in the past few weeks, many challenges remain, such as the unification of the armed forces, a genuine political dialogue, the strengthening of transitional justice mechanisms and rapprochement with the non-signatory parties to the peace agreement. In that context, we welcome the significant efforts of the Community of Sant'Egidio in Rome.

The formation of the Transitional Government and the distribution of ministerial portfolios cannot be goals in themselves. It is essential that progress on the political front now translate into a tangible improvement in the lives of the people of South Sudan. The population continues to face a serious humanitarian crisis. More than 7.5 million people are in need of assistance. Hunger is increasing as a result of droughts, floods and the acute political instability of recent years. According to the most recent World Food Programme

statistics, 5.3 million South Sudanese are in crisis or facing even more severe levels of food insecurity. More than 1.3 million children will suffer from acute malnutrition in 2020. Those statistics are unacceptable.

The ceasefire continues to be largely respected but fighting continues in parts of Equatoria. Intercommunal violence, sexual violence and crime persist throughout the country, as indicated in the most recent report of the Secretary-General (S/2020/145). The United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) reports an average of 150 people killed, wounded, abducted or sexually assaulted each month. We call on the Government to bring the perpetrators to justice in order to end the cycle of violence. Impunity for serious human rights violations must also continue to be addressed, including through the operationalization of transitional justice mechanisms, such as the establishment of the African Union hybrid court for South Sudan.

Let me now turn to the UNMISS mandate. The encouraging developments in recent weeks can be attributed to the new mandate, but we must remain vigilant. In that regard, we believe that the mandate should remain largely unchanged. The protection of civilians must remain the priority for UNMISS. It is too early for the reconfiguration of protection-of-civilians sites, as the situation on the ground remains difficult and unpredictable. The mandate should give due attention to the issues of human rights, children in armed conflict and sexual and gender-based violence, as those are genuine challenges. We support the request of UNMISS to integrate the Regional Protection Force into the Mission's strength. The operational posture of UNMISS has continued to evolve to become more mobile and to maximize its presence. We encourage the Mission to continue its efforts in that regard to deter violence against civilians.

For the first time in some time, there are genuine reasons to be optimistic about the situation. A crucial step has been taken. It is now time to tackle the remaining challenges as well, as there are several. Only in that way can the plight of the people of South Sudan be improved in a sustainable manner.

**Mr. Dang** (Viet Nam): We thank Mr. David Shearer for his hard work and that of all personnel of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS). We assure him of our full support. I also thank Ms. Sunday for her briefing.

I would like to welcome our good friend Ambassador Akuei Bona Malwal, Permanent Representative of South Sudan, to today's briefing.

Viet Nam is closely following recent developments in South Sudan. We highly welcome the decision taken by all stakeholders to establish the transitional Government, including President Salva Kiir and First Vice-President Riek Machar. We commend the efforts of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the African Union (AU), South Africa and other relevant parties. It is an extremely important achievement, which we believe will lay the foundation for long-term peace and prosperity in South Sudan. In the light of the recent developments, allow me to make the following observations.

First, we reiterate the importance of the full implementation of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan by the parties in South Sudan. The establishment of a transitional Government marks the beginning of a new period, but much work remains to be done. Viet Nam calls on the parties to resolve the pending issues in a steady manner, in the spirit of mutual trust and understanding. We are strongly convinced that, if the parties show similar will and commitment as when they formed the Transitional Government, they will be able to resolve all pending matters. We look forward to the national dialogue conference, which will take place on 16 March. We also welcome the recent peace talks in Rome between the Government and the non-signatories to the peace agreement. Within our capacity, including as the Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 2206 (2015), concerning South Sudan, we will continue to support all efforts in the process.

Secondly, we are encouraged to see that the ceasefire has been maintained in most parts of the country and the security situation has mostly remained stable, as stated in the most recent report of the Secretary-General on UNMISS (S/2020/145). We also note that the issue of intercommunal violence remains a challenge. Along with the efforts to establish the Transitional Government, Viet Nam calls on all relevant parties in South Sudan to continue to respect the ceasefire and refrain from any actions that might undermine efforts towards sustainable peace. Further effective measures are also needed to address the issue of intercommunal violence and its root causes. We commend the work and efforts of UNMISS, especially that of female peacekeepers, in the area of the protection of civilians.

The increased participation of women peacekeepers, as well as their safety and security, should be further promoted. Vietnamese women represent 16 per cent of our peacekeepers in UNMISS, and they do an excellent job. The full potential of women remains to be unlocked.

Thirdly, we welcome the efforts of the regional and subregional organizations, namely, IGAD and the AU, in facilitating the implementation of the peace agreement. The role of IGAD, as guarantor of the peace agreement, will continue to be critical in the transitional period. We welcome the efforts of UNMISS and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in providing good offices for the parties in South Sudan and IGAD. We hope that the United Nations, AU and IGAD can support more confidence-building measures to facilitate the work of the transitional Government.

Fourthly, Viet Nam warmly welcomes the recent positive economic development in South Sudan. The forecast of 8.2 per cent gross domestic product growth in 2020 is very encouraging. At the same time, we acknowledge the critical humanitarian challenges that the people in South Sudan still face. We call on the Government of South Sudan and other parties in South Sudan to put forth their best efforts in promoting sustainable livelihoods for the people.

Fifthly, we reiterate our view that sanctions measures should be used as a tool to promote sustainable peace and security in the country and be rightly targeted. They should not serve to negatively affect the livelihoods of the people, the development of the country or the effective functioning and capacity of the Government, which is responsible for ensuring security and stability in the country. Those measures are subjected to adjustments in the light of the progress achieved in the peace and reconciliation process and the implementation of the commitments of the parties.

In conclusion, Viet Nam reiterates its consistent position in supporting the unity, peace, stability and sovereignty of South Sudan.

**Mr. Jürgenson** (Estonia): I thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. David Shearer, and Ms. Betty Sunday for their briefings. I also thank the personnel of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) for their tremendous work in South Sudan.

Estonia welcomes the encouraging developments in South Sudan's peace process, including the ongoing

talks to form a revitalized Transitional Government of National Unity. We are hopeful that the parties will come to an agreement. The leaders must understand that it is not a zero-sum game.

Estonia welcomes the signing of the comprehensive action plan to end and prevent all grave violations against children. We would like to thank UNMISS and UNICEF for supporting the process. However, according to the February report of the Commission on Human Rights (A/HRC/43/56), there are approximately 19,000 children in the ranks of the South Sudan People's Defence Forces and armed opposition groups. We call upon all signatories to ensure a swift and full implementation of the action plan. It is up to them to make it a success. The South Sudanese people deserve it.

We understand that moving towards a unity Government is only a first step. Much remains to be done. Continued political will is required to move forward with peacebuilding and reconciliation among the parties, especially considering the unification of forces. Cooperation is the only way forward.

We are very disturbed by the dire humanitarian situation in the country. An estimated 7.5 million South Sudanese will remain in need of humanitarian assistance this year. More than 3.5 million persons remain forcibly displaced as security concerns and multiple other reasons continue to prevent them from returning to their homes.

Combating sexual and gender-based violence has to remain a priority. It is very important to tackle the culture of impunity. We welcome the headway that has been made with the mobile courts and encourage UNMISS to continue those efforts. We also support placing perpetrators of human rights violations under sanctions and encourage the work of the Panel of Experts in that regard. We would like to stress the importance of the full, effective and meaningful participation of women in all spheres and levels of political leadership, the peace process and the pretransitional and Transitional Government.

Estonia is concerned by the continuing intercommunal violence, which has had a devastating impact on the civilian population. The primary responsibility of a State is to protect its citizens. In the past three months, UNMISS has been unable to respond to the violence on at least 46 occasions because of the movement restrictions imposed by the previous Government. We call on the leaders of

South Sudan to deal with the violations of the status-of-forces agreement. I wish that the current leaders would find more common ground and turn the lives of the South Sudanese people around in the most positive way possible.

**Mr. Syihab** (Indonesia): Allow me to thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General David Shearer for his tireless work in supporting peace in South Sudan and for his insightful briefing. I would also like to thank Ms. Betty Sunday for her important briefing this morning.

Indonesia welcomes the agreement to form the Transitional Government of National Unity and commends both parties for their spirit of compromise. Their confidence shows their commitment to creating an enabling environment for peace. While the ceasefire continues to hold, we note clashes in areas of Western and Central Equatoria and Upper Nile and that a number of security challenges remain. However, we are also confident that with the parties' commitment to fulfilling their respective responsibilities, the challenges can be overcome. Sustainable peace and stability with prosperity are very much possible. The people of South Sudan deserve that fully. In that regard, I wish to underline the following three points.

First, the formation of the Transitional Government needs to be finalized. Recognizing that much work needs to happen, including on transitional security arrangements and the establishment of three administrative areas, the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan remains the best overarching blueprint to build peace with the wide support of the South Sudanese parties. The effective implementation of the Revitalized Agreement, including the finalization of the Transitional Government, is of critical importance. We need to show the South Sudanese that this time will be different. The party's leadership must deliver. In the process, every effort must be made to cease any actions that might be perceived as provocative by the other party. Indonesia commends the African Union, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development and South Africa, along with other countries, for their support of peacebuilding in South Sudan. The engagement of the United Nations and regional and international partners remains vital.

Secondly, the humanitarian situation should be improved. The opening up of space and positive political developments should also be used to deepen and widen

humanitarian action, which is presently unevenly spread. Indonesia is concerned that 1.67 million people remain internally displaced, with another 2.2 million living in neighbouring countries. The Secretary-General's call to fulfil the \$1.5 billion target under the 2020 humanitarian response plan needs to be responded to befittingly. We also commend the signing of the comprehensive action plan to end and prevent all grave violations against children, which indicates that South Sudan has set the right priorities, and its implementation must be supported fully.

Third is the role of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS). Indonesia supports the renewal of the UNMISS mandate, which maintains its current strength and role in supporting the peace process. At the same time, the mandate must also reflect the ongoing positive developments. Since physical access is an important hindrance to humanitarian assistance, UNMISS resource mobility, especially of its air and water assets, should be enhanced. Indonesian military and police officers, including women police peacekeepers, are currently proudly serving in UNMISS. Their professionalism and hard work, including through local community engagement, have already made a concrete impact.

In conclusion, the South Sudanese people's journey towards peace has come to a critical juncture. Its commitment, with effective backing from the United Nations and other partners, promise a peaceful and prosperous future. I reaffirm Indonesia's long-standing support towards a lasting peace and stability in South Sudan, including through its contribution to UNMISS.

**Mr. Matjila** (South Africa): We thank you, Mr. President, for convening today's important meeting on South Sudan. We also thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Mr. David Shearer and our sister, Ms. Betty Sunday, for their briefings. We commend them and their teams for their work in South Sudan and their contribution to the country's stability. We also welcome our colleague and friend, the Permanent Representative of South Sudan, to the Council Chamber and look forward to his presentation on the developments in his homeland.

I will limit my intervention to three issues, namely, the political, security and humanitarian situations and the renewal of the mandate of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS).

On the political situation, South Sudan's leaders have presented their country with a dawn of renewed hope through sacrifice and compromise. In that regard, we would like to congratulate the Government of South Sudan and all political parties on the overall progress achieved to date in the implementation of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan. South Africa applauds President Salva Kiir Mayardit, Mr. Riek Machar and the leaders of the other opposition groups for reaching an agreement to form the inclusive revitalized Transitional Government of National Unity on the agreed date of 22 February.

With that renewed hope, we encourage all parties to continue to address the outstanding issues pertaining to the implementation of the peace agreement, as well as to sustain the dialogue that has allowed them to make notable progress to date. In that regard, we look forward to the convening of the national dialogue conference on 16 March. The progress needs to be translated into peace dividends that ordinary people in South Sudan can see in their daily lives, through socioeconomic development, security and sustained stability.

South Africa commends the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, the African Union and the international community for their role in facilitating the formation of the revitalized Transitional Government of National Unity. Furthermore, we also commend the Community of Sant'Egidio for facilitating the Rome declaration with the non-signatory groups, which agreed to a ceasefire in South Sudan and to joining the peace process. This is a critical process that addresses inclusiveness with a view to averting spoilers in the political process that could undermine the valuable progress that has been made to date.

We also welcome the valuable role played by the women of South Sudan, and through Ms. Sunday and through Ambassador Malwal we would like to pay particular tribute to ordinary women in the far corners of South Sudan who have supported the peace process. We want to thank the women in the Government and in the political parties who have made sure that women's voices are not only heard but are respected and influence the current political developments in the country. Women of South Sudan deserve to be at the table, and the 35 per cent or more quota should be fulfilled throughout the stages of the political process.

The Government of National Unity will have to deal with security sector reform and the formation

of unified security agencies. It will have to create an appropriate environment for internally displaced persons and refugees to return home, schools to open where they had been closed, and children to pursue their dreams. Like my colleague from Viet Nam, we call for the concomitant removal of sanctions to support these positive developments.

On the humanitarian and security front, we are encouraged by the sustained cessation of hostilities, which is a testament to the political will of the leaders. However, we would like to raise our concern over the intercommunal violence and sub-clan clashes in the Jonglei and Pibor regions resulting in civilian deaths and internal displacement. We urge the Government to address skirmishes of intercommunal violence that could threaten peace and stability; they have already claimed significant lives and displaced millions.

The dire humanitarian situation requires our collective action. We call on international donors to support the South Sudan Humanitarian Response Plan 2020, which requires \$1.5 billion to meet the life-saving needs of 5.6 million people.

Furthermore, we urge all parties to fulfil their commitments to ending and preventing violations against children. In this regard, we welcome the signing by the Government of a comprehensive action plan to end and prevent all grave violations against children.

On the mandate for UNMISS, we first have to commend the Mission for the important role it continues to play in South Sudan. We are also encouraged by its continued cooperation with the Government and call on it to continue on this trajectory in supporting the Transitional Government of National Unity. In this regard, it is important that we maintain the Mission's current capacity and ensure that it has the requisite mandate and capacity to discharge its duties.

Lastly, we have reached a crucial milestone. However, this is just the beginning. As the international community, we need to sustain our valuable support to all aspects of the peace process in order to prevent a relapse into conflict. In this regard, South Africa remains steadfast in its commitment to supporting the peace process in country with the overall aim of building a peaceful, stable, united and prosperous South Sudan.

**Ms. Gonsalves** (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines): Saint Vincent and the Grenadines thanks Special

Representative of the Secretary-General Shearer for his briefing and for his efforts aimed at assisting in making progress in the peace process. We also thank Ms. Betty Sunday for her briefing. We acknowledge the presence of the Permanent Representative of South Sudan in the Chamber today.

South Sudan is on a path towards a significant milestone in its nine-year history, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines stands with the people of South Sudan as they embark on this new chapter of their journey. We are conscious that the formation of a transitional Government will not resolve all of South Sudan's challenges overnight, nor can it serve as a panacea for the devastation wrought on the country over several years. Notwithstanding these difficulties, we believe that South Sudan is on a productive course to ensure a prosperous future.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines applauds the decision by the South Sudanese parties to form the Revitalized Transitional Government of National Unity in South Sudan, in keeping with the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan. The spirit of compromise exhibited by the parties to put aside their differences for the benefit of the people is positive and reaffirms the significance of dialogue in resolving conflict. We also commend the effort to meet the 35 per cent quota for women in the formal implementation and monitoring mechanisms of the Revitalized Agreement, in particular the Ceasefire Transitional Security Arrangements Monitoring and Verification Mechanism and the reconstituted Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission.

As South Sudan ushers in a new dawn in nation-building, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines encourages all its leaders to assume their collective responsibilities and to ensure that the hard-won gains to form a transitional Government will be maintained and enhanced. In this respect, the full implementation of the Revitalized Agreement, including the permanent cessation of hostilities, the commencement of the National Dialogue Conference, the establishment of a permanent Constitution and the appropriate management of the Transitional Government within the next 36 months geared towards general elections, remain critical.

My delegation is mindful that the promise of lasting peace faces daunting challenges, including the lingering

impediments to security arrangements and transitional justice and the issues of poverty, corruption, the adverse effects of climate change, conflict-related sexual violence, the recruitment of children in armed conflict and a dire humanitarian situation. Such challenges run the risk of thwarting sustainable development for the people of South Sudan. Though difficult to address, they are by no means insurmountable.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines therefore urges the South Sudanese leaders and all stakeholders within the State to seize this moment and continue to work together to ensure peace, security and development for the future of the country and all its children and to refrain from taking any adverse action that may undermine the progress already made. A return to conflict and widespread violence would not only compound the suffering on another generation of South Sudanese but also could cause irreparable damage, which would have dangerous ramifications for neighbouring countries and the broader continent.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines commends the unstinting effort of the United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, the African Union, the Community of Saint Egidio in Rome and the Government of South Africa, in particular Deputy President David Mabuza, South Africa's Special Envoy to South Sudan, for their constructive role in helping South Sudan to reach this promising moment.

In closing, we reiterate our unwavering solidarity with the people of South Sudan and remain enthusiastic about the country's rebuilding process. Unity is pivotal for success. We call on the international community to continue to support South Sudan during this new phase of its history.

**Mr. Heusgen** (Germany): When coming to the Chamber this morning, I walked with our colleague from South Sudan, who was in a very enthusiastic mood. I asked him why he is in such a good mood. He said, "well, do we not have a fantastic result here?" I said, "well, it was the third deadline that was finally met." He said, "well, better late than never." I agreed with that, but we have to recall that where we are today is where we were back in 2016, and in 2016 we also thought that we had a solution for the problem. I think therefore that we would be very well advised if we stay a bit wary. Let me also recognize that the leaders, this time, I would say, put the interests of the country and

the people first. We all have to recognize that fact, and we have done so.

But, as I said, we have to remain worried. There is still no Government. I would also urge here, through the Ambassador, that the promise be kept that 35 per cent of ministers will be women. I heard someone say with that with regard to the governors, we are not there yet. I would also urge the Government and the parties to see to it that 35 per cent of the governors are women.

The second part of the agreement that has not been implemented yet involves the transitional security arrangements. I would recall what David Shearer said with respect to those arrangements: that in that area we are dangerously lacking and that we must make every effort to ensure that the process works well, that the arrangements are put together properly and that the proper training is provided, in particular with regard to readiness to counter sexual violence.

Again, as I said, we need to be worried. Reports of the International Committee of the Red Cross have noted that the fresh regional violence has erupted and that hundreds of civilians had to flee in Jonglei state. There was a great deal of violence, and that is, by the way, additional proof of the fact that climate change has a direct effect on security, because, as we also heard from the Special Representative, floods destroyed crops and livelihoods and led to communal violence.

So what remains to be done? First, and I agree with the programme that David Shearer presented, impunity has to be addressed. There must be a continuing fight against sexual violence; we need to have accountability in that respect. Ms. Sunday also underlined this issue.

With respect to corruption, financial accountability and transparency are key. However, I would also like, because members all sit on the Committee established pursuant to resolution 2206 (2015) concerning South Sudan, to look at the report of the Panel of Experts. The Panel reports regularly to the Sanctions Committee about the lack of transparency with regard to the funds released for the practical implementation of the peace agreement. It would be good if there were not this lack of transparency and the funds actually went into the training camps in the containment areas. We heard from Ms. Sunday about the situation on the ground in the training areas.

The Panel of Experts also tracks the illicit exploitation of and trade in the natural resources of

Sudan and has noted the lack of oversight of where the funds come from and where they go. South Sudan is a rich country, but at the same time, as we heard from the representative of the United Kingdom and other countries, including Germany, millions are spent every year to support the country. So I think that what we can demand is actually that there be more financial oversight and transparency.

Just to give the Council one concrete example from the public report of the Panel of Experts, the Ministry of Petroleum does not publish the names of the companies bidding to buy South Sudan's crude oil. We know the crude oil, of course, is the country's key source of income.

So concerning impunity, the fight against corruption and ending exclusion, I can only subscribe to what Ms. Sunday said with regard to the need for a greater role to be played by civil society and also freedom of the press; that is key for a functioning State.

Concerning the future of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), again, we have to be careful that there not be a repeat of what happened in 2016, so I think we should keep the mandate as is. UNMISS must continue to support the peace process. Here I would also add my voice to those who have asked the Government of South Sudan not to put any restrictions on the movement of peacekeepers.

On the mandate, the first priority needs to be the protection of civilians, and therefore I also support what Mr. Shearer said with regard to the mobility of peacekeepers and the support for the rule of law.

On the sanctions regime, we must look at it to see if the lists have been updated, but I would warn again against getting rid of the sanctions. The sanctions were imposed for a reason; to achieve reconciliation, we need accountability. We must not allow impunity for the many crimes have been committed, including violations of human rights, violations of international humanitarian law and gross violations with regard to sexual violence. So my plea is to continue with the good work being done by the Sanctions Committee.

Last but not least, let me also add my voice to those who have thanked Mr. Shearer and, through him, the entire UNMISS team and all humanitarian actors. We thank Betty Sunday and, through her, all of civil society for their brave work. They are the one who have suffered the most; women and children were the victims of this

conflict, which lasted for too long. I would also like to thank the African Union, the regional organizations, South Africa and the Community of Sant'Egidio, which is doing an important job.

Germany will continue to support the country through development aid. Just a few weeks ago we released a \$5 million contribution to the UNMISS/United Nations country team reconciliation, stabilization and resilience trust fund, which supports community-based programmes, addresses underlying causes of conflict and provides socioeconomic incentives for peace; we would like to encourage others to join us.

**Mr. Ben Lagha** (Tunisia) (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank Mr. David Shearer, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan, and Ms. Betty Sunday for their briefings.

Tunisia welcomes the latest developments in the peace process in South Sudan, beginning with the decision to establish the revitalized Transitional Government. We consider this to be a new and crucial step forward and hope that the international community will continue to provide support to South Sudan so that the transitional phase can be successful and security, stability and peace can be established in South Sudan and in the region.

Tunisia values the recent mediation efforts deployed by the two special envoys of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development and South Africa, under the auspices of the African Union and a number of countries of the region, in order to bring closer together the points of view of the Government and the opposition.

We congratulate the South Sudanese parties, which have shown flexibility and a sense of responsibility in order to ensure that the interests of the people prevail. We urge them to make further efforts to consolidate trust and dialogue with a view to concluding the establishment of a revitalized, inclusive Government and to ensure greater participation by women. At the same time, we encourage the Government and the non-signatories to the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan to continue the dialogue.

We reaffirm the importance of a final settlement of pending issues, including borders between states and transitional security measures, so as to further expedite



the implementation of the peace process, pursuant to the provisions of the revitalized agreement.

Based on its experience in political transition, Tunisia believes that all transition stages can be successful only through consensus. This is a strategic option aimed at defusing political tensions and violence, establishing democracy and promoting the participation of women and young people, as well as supporting the role of civil society. The latest positive developments must not allow us to forget the remaining challenges and complexities in South Sudan.

Tunisia welcomes the fact that the ceasefire agreement is still widely in force. However, we express our concern at the deterioration of the humanitarian and economic situations and at the continued violations of human rights, criminal acts and acts of sexual violence, which are on the rise. These are violations described in last month's report of the Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan.

We urge the Government to improve the security situation throughout the country and to address impunity. We also remind all parties to ensure respect for international human rights law, international humanitarian law and the delivery of safe and unimpeded humanitarian assistance to those who need it, as well as ensuring physical and emotional protection for citizens. We emphasize the need for the international community and the United Nations to continue to provide logistical and technical support to the Government in order to expedite the implementation of transitional security measures, particularly with regard to the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process and the formation of a unified army, towards the creation of a stable security, political and societal environment for the safe and voluntary return of displaced persons and refugees.

Tunisia supports the renewal of the mandate of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), and believes that this is extremely important given the current challenges. My country supports the efforts of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the Mission to advance the ongoing political process under way between the South Sudanese parties. We also support UNMISS in implementing its mandate in accordance with its four strategic priorities. We call as well for the facilitation of its work and freedom of movement so that it can implement the tasks assigned

to it, especially in the area of protecting civilians and monitoring and investigating human rights.

In conclusion, my country's delegation expresses its hope that the chapter of violence and fighting will be closed forever in South Sudan, leading to a new phase in its modern history based on sustained peace, justice, national reconciliation and prosperity for the people of South Sudan.

**Mr. Abarry (Niger)** (*spoke in French*): There are no small steps on the path of peace. Any distance covered in the right direction brings us closer to the ultimate goal — a return to peace. I fully share the optimism of Mr. Shearer and encourage the South Sudanese political actors to continue to demonstrate political courage in order to make further progress along the difficult but only viable path towards peace in the interest of their people.

That optimism also shows through in the report of the Secretary-General (S/2020/145) in terms of respect for the ceasefire and confidence-building between the parties. The speech of peace by President Salva Kiir on 22 February, in which he particularly called for forgiveness and reconciliation among all sons and daughters of the country, is a historic landmark that should be commended.

The Niger supports the decision of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) to request a review of the composition and role of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) Regional Protection Force. We also welcome the plan to hold regional conferences as part of the national dialogue. We are well aware of the situation of women and girls and appreciate the excellent work done by Ms. Sunday to assist that vulnerable group of the South Sudanese population.

In addition to the political glimmers of hope seen recently, the improvement in the key macroeconomic indicators is another positive sign that could strengthen the current positive dynamic. In that way, South Sudan could benefit from its vast resources and potential to tackle the challenges that its people face.

How could we not congratulate the African Union, IGAD, South Africa and South Sudan's neighbouring countries on their involvement in the peace process. We express our support of UNMISS for its very positive role in support of the peace process and hope that it

will have adequate resources to even better achieve its mission.

Moreover, with regard to the very high price paid by civilians, in particular women, my country would like to recall the importance of implementing the provisions of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan of November 2018 concerning transitional justice, whose true relevance we were able to gauge during the debate organized on this issue during the Belgian presidency of the Council (see S/PV.8718). Only in that way will those severely affected by the horrors of war overcome their trauma and start to pave the way for a genuine reconciliation among all the sons and daughters of South Sudan.

We await the good news that Ambassador Malwal, who is here with us today, will certainly give us.

**Mr. Polyanskiy** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We wish to note the briefing by Mr. David Shearer, Special Representative of the Secretary-General, and assure him of our full support in his work and the United Nations peacekeeping operation in South Sudan that he leads. We also thank Ms. Betty Sunday for her briefing. We are also grateful to the troop- and police-contributing countries within the United Nations Mission in South Sudan.

South Sudan is a very young country at a crucial moment in its history. It is the task of the international community to provide the necessary support to the South Sudanese to overcome the challenges facing their country. Moscow welcomes the recent positive developments in the peace process in South Sudan. That was the result of the compromise agreements reached by the main parties to the South Sudanese process. We would like to highlight the important initiative of President Salva Kiir, who showed political will and made compromises on the administrative division of the country. We also note Mr. Riek Machar's decision to join the process to form the Transitional Government of National Unity and assume the post of First Vice-President.

We believe that the beginning of the formation of the country's new governing bodies and the conclusion of the pre-transition period within the previously agreed time frame create the necessary conditions for South Sudan to move towards political stability and national reconciliation so as to successfully address the urgent socioeconomic development challenges for the benefit of all South Sudanese people.

We believe it important that the parties be ready to overcome their differences through frank dialogue. We hope that all necessary formalities will be completed as soon as possible and that the transition agreements will continue to be implemented. We believe that only the full and complete implementation of the commitments undertaken by the parties will help to increase mutual trust and prevent the recurrence of past mistakes.

We note the overall reduction in the level of armed violence and in the number of intercommunal clashes since the signing of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan of 2018. The improvement in the security situation has facilitated greater humanitarian access. The number of human rights violations has decreased. All that has a positive impact on the rate of return of South Sudanese refugees and internally displaced persons to their places of origin.

We attribute that primarily to the implementation of confidence-building measures and contacts between the opposing parties on the ground. It is important that they continue to respect the terms of the ceasefire. We call on the South Sudanese to strictly abide by those agreements.

We also call on the non-signatory parties to the Revitalized Agreement to join the State-building process as soon as possible. We highlight the efforts of the Community of Sant'Egidio and the Italian Government to that end.

We have repeatedly stated and reiterate today that the leading role in supporting the South Sudanese peace process must be played by regional actors. In that connection, we welcome the efforts undertaken by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, the African Union, the Sudan, Kenya, Uganda and the Republic of South Africa. It is important that their approaches continue to promote unity. That will help advance the implementation of the principle of African solutions to African problems. We believe that progress in settling the situation in South Sudan was not facilitated by stronger sanctions against the country or, in particular, the imposition of unilateral restrictions. A key component in that progress was the contribution made by regional mediators.

We trust that the South Sudanese will be able to expeditiously reach an agreement on the whole array of issues, which will give the Security Council a reason to conduct an assessment of the sanctions regime, with

a view to tailoring it to reflect the real situation on the ground.

**The President** (*spoke in Chinese*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of China.

China thanks Special Representative of the Secretary-General David Shearer for his briefing. I also listened carefully to the briefing made by Ms. Sunday.

The political process in South Sudan has recently made positive headway. China welcomes the establishment, on schedule, of a transitional coalition Government and congratulates South Sudan on that achievement. We commend the leadership and courage demonstrated by the leaders of South Sudan. That marks an important step forward in the country's peace process with the active mediation by the international community, especially by the African countries and regional organizations concerned. In that regard, I would like to highlight the following three points.

First, it is important to fully respect the leadership of the Government of South Sudan. The parties in South Sudan are primarily responsible for implementing the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan. International partners should strengthen engagement and communication with South Sudanese parties, especially the Government, listen to and heed their input and suggestions and provide financial, material and technical support to ensure stability and security, as needed by South Sudan.

Secondly, it is vital to continue supporting the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) in its role as the main player in the area of mediation. The international community should intensify coordination with IGAD and the African Union, support their mediation efforts and help all parties in South Sudan build greater mutual trust and show more responsibility and goodwill so that consensus can be reached as soon as possible on all outstanding issues.

Thirdly, humanitarian and economic assistance to South Sudan must be maintained. At present, the focus should be on helping South Sudan address its development problems, assisting the return and resettlement of persons in camps for internally displaced people and expanding investment in areas such as agriculture, energy, infrastructure, education and medical services to help the people of South Sudan rebuild their homes and resume development efforts.

China applauds the important contributions made by the United Nations Mission in South Sudan to the maintenance of peace and stability in the country, supports the renewal of the Mission's mandate and continues to provide assistance to facilitate the implementation of the Revitalized Agreement and the peace process so that the people of South Sudan can reap peace dividends as soon as possible.

As in the past, China will support the peace process in South Sudan and provide assistance as required. We stand ready to work with the international community constructively to help South Sudan maintain peace and stability and achieve socioeconomic development.

I resume my functions as President of the Council.

I give the floor to the representative of South Sudan.

**Mr. Malwal** (South Sudan): Please accept our good wishes to you, Mr. President, on your country's assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of March. My delegation is pleased that China is President of the Council as South Sudan shows positive developments in the implementation of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict. China's constructive engagement with the region and the African Union to encourage the leaders of South Sudan to work together is appreciated by the people of South Sudan, and my delegation is ready to closely cooperate with you during your presidency.

Allow me also to congratulate the new members who joined the Council earlier this year. In particular, we would like to wish a productive and successful tenure to Tunisia and the Niger.

We would like to welcome Mr. David Shearer and thank him for his briefing and his service to the people of South Sudan. I also welcome our sister Betty Sunday. I would like to assure the Council that the role of South Sudanese women is irreversible. As my brother from South Africa said, peace is dawning in South Sudan. There is also the dawn of friendliness in the Council. I agree with the representative of the United Kingdom, as 35 per cent is indeed the floor. That percentage will be increased as we move forward.

I would like to thank all members of the Council for their statements today, which have demonstrated a positive response to developments in South Sudan. I have been vindicated because I have always told my leaders that it is not what the Security Council does, but rather what we do in Juba. Our actions are then

reflected in the Security Council. I thank all members for their statements and encouragement. We hope to continue on the same path.

My delegation welcomes the Secretary-General's report on the situation in South Sudan, covering the period from 1 December 2019 to 15 February 2020 (S/2020/145). As always, we pay close attention to the Secretary-General's observations and recommendations. The leaders and the people of South Sudan value his support, encouragement and positive advice. As has already been reported, there have been historic developments in South Sudan since the report was written. We are grateful that the Secretary-General was able to include in his report the historic and momentous decision of President Salva Kiir Mayardit to return South Sudan's federal system to 10 states, plus three administrative areas, on 21 February.

Since that decision, the five Vice-Presidents have taken an oath of office and Mr. Riek Machar has returned to reside in Juba permanently. The parties signatory to the agreement have been in continuous negotiations to find a formula on how to divide the ministerial portfolios equitably. The people of South Sudan are on standby to hear the imminent announcement of the new Cabinet of national unity any time between now and Friday.

With regard to the issue of sanctions, many Council members today mentioned the peace dividend. The new Government of National Unity should not have to start its mandate with the dividend of sanctions as the way forward. The Government is a new one, and the international community should be in a position to grant it some leeway to move the people of South Sudan forward. If it is tied down with sanctions, I am afraid that its progress will be slowed. However, that decision lies with the Council.

As we celebrate the glimmers of positive developments in South Sudan, daunting challenges

remain. Our statement today would be remiss if we did not repeat our appeal to the international community to provide much-needed assistance and support to the people of South Sudan in order for the peace agreement to hold in the long run. The coming Government of National Unity will need technical, material and specialized expertise in order to establish liveable cantonment sites and to ensure the orderly and peaceful return of internally displaced persons and refugees from our neighbouring countries.

Our appeal to peace-loving members of the international community is simply this — if they have stood with the people of South Sudan during the past six difficult years, this is the most opportune time to double or triple their care and support for the people of South Sudan, for the sake of lasting peace and unity in South Sudan. As a sign of the good things happening in my the Council, I agree with my friend the Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany. We welcome his country's engagement. We are not asking anyone to move on to the next flavour. We still need Council members to be engaged and to see to it that we are on the right path. They are most welcome, and we want to thank Germany for starting to submit its grants for development projects. That is what will keep the peace on track in South Sudan. When you have something dear to hold on to, you are not likely to destroy it so easily. We again thank Germany and hope that all Council members will contribute to the development of South Sudan in the near future.

**The President** (*spoke in Chinese*): 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 11.50 a.m.*