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Summary record of the 20th meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Friday, 2 November 2018, at 10 a.m.

Chair: Mr. Alhakbani (Vice-Chair)..... (Saudi Arabia)

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In the absence of Mr. Kemaya, Sr. (Liberia), Mr. Alhakbani (Saudi Arabia), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.

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

Agenda item 56: Comprehensive review of the whole question of peacekeeping operations in all their aspects (*continued*)

1. **Mr. Al-Zouwaymel** (Saudi Arabia) said that his Government recognized all those who had given their lives in the cause of peace and strongly supported United Nations peacekeeping operations for protecting international peace and security. However, international efforts to strengthen the role of peacekeeping forces and their mandates should be redoubled in order to address armed conflicts and civil wars as well as terrorist organizations that exploit the lack of development in some countries to establish footholds. In that regard, Saudi Arabia welcomed the reforms proposed by the Secretary-General to make peacekeeping operations more effective and efficient, along with his Action for Peacekeeping initiative and Declaration of Shared Commitments to improve the work of peacekeeping and protect peacekeeping personnel.

2. His Government had garnered support, in such regional and international fora as the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and the League of Arab States, for United Nations resolutions on regional issues facing the Middle East. Pursuant to Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations, regional organizations should be given a greater role in contributing to peacekeeping and preserving international security.

3. His Government had worked closely with the United Nations to achieve international peace and security through its financial contribution to peacekeeping. As one of the countries that had done the most to heed global calls for urgent humanitarian assistance in wars and armed conflicts in Palestine, Lebanon, Somalia, Kosovo and Syria, Saudi Arabia had pledged 100 million euros to the joint force established by the Group of Five for the Sahel (G5 Sahel), as well as logistical and intelligence support to the joint force and other Islamic forces, to bolster the peace and security of the States of the western Sahel region.

4. Given the importance of sustainable economic development in stopping domestic and regional conflicts, his Government supported countries undergoing financial crises, as with its recently announced forgiveness of six billion dollars of debt for least developed countries, as part of its cooperation with

the United Nations and the international community to further the cause of security, stability and development.

5. **Ms. Palau-Hernandez** (United States) said that peacekeeping missions were becoming more effective and efficient in line with the five peacekeeping principles laid out by the United States: that peacekeeping missions must support political solutions; have the cooperation of the host country; possess realistic and achievable mandates; have an exit strategy; and adjust to progress and failure. In that regard, her Government welcomed the Action for Peacekeeping initiative proposed by the Secretary-General.

6. Peacekeeping remained the most important mission of the United Nations and was responsible for protecting the most vulnerable civilians from armed antagonists and re-establishing the rule of law in the midst of conflict. The United Nations should continue to focus on effective and efficient mandate delivery, both in the field and at headquarters, and improvements to performance must take place within the overall framework of the United Nations reform agenda, namely within the peace and security and management reform pillars. The United States had long been a champion of peacekeeping reform, as in the landmark Security Council resolution [2436 \(2018\)](#) it had sponsored on peacekeeper performance and accountability, and welcomed the Secretary-General's commitment to developing an integrated performance policy to hold peacekeepers accountable, including through repatriation.

7. There should be no tolerance for sexual exploitation and abuse within United Nations peacekeeping. Notwithstanding previous action on the issue, much remained to be done, such as basing deployment decisions on troop- and police-contributing countries' records on sexual exploitation and abuse, including their performance in previous deployments.

8. **Ms. Coutou** (International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)) said that peacekeeping operations were the most tangible instrument of the United Nations for implementing its peace and security mandate. Over the previous 20 years, United Nations peacekeeping operations had been entrusted with the authority to use deadly force to ensure the protection of civilians, through stabilization tasks and the neutralization of security threats. That more robust posture had increased the applicability of international humanitarian law to peacekeeping operations and rendered them more likely to be designated as a party to armed conflict. The ICRC operated in the same theatres with a mandate under international humanitarian law to neutrally, impartially and independently protect and assist the victims of

armed conflict and create an environment conducive to the respect of international humanitarian law.

9. As protection of civilians was a centrepiece of peacekeeping, the principle of “do no harm” should be the primary directive. The concept of “civilian” was currently under much discussion from legal, operational and policy points of view, since operations were carried out in close proximity to civilians and it was increasingly difficult to distinguish threats from the civilian population. When peacekeepers used force, they must be fully cognizant of the legal framework for civilian protection, and operations must be planned accordingly. There must be consideration for the risk that even if they were not engaged in hostilities, peacekeepers could be targeted and thus expose local populations to reprisal attacks or incidental harm.

10. Peacekeeping operation resources should be focused on those activities, whether armed or unarmed, in which peacekeepers were the only ones able to deliver protection for communities or where they were the best placed to do so, where neither humanitarian nor human rights organizations could deliver such protection. Peacekeepers’ full spectrum of assets, including non-military assets, were important in protecting civilians, though unarmed approaches should complement and not replace armed interventions.

11. Peacekeepers’ mandate to protect civilians should include healthcare, including the provision of medical evaluations, to the point of constituting an obligation to ensure treatment or at least access to healthcare. In its resolution [2286 \(2016\)](#), the Security Council foresaw a role for peacekeeping missions in fostering a secure environment for the delivery of healthcare. Peacekeepers could make a positive contribution to healthcare by searching for, collecting and evacuating the wounded and sick even if they were not parties to the conflict themselves. They could ensure security perimeters around health facilities at risk of attacks; refrain from disturbing delivery of medical services through strict procedures when searching health facilities during law enforcement operations or patrols; and facilitate access for humanitarian agencies or even deliver health assistance directly in some situations. For those tasks, peacekeepers needed clear guidance and collaboration with humanitarian actors.

12. States and international organizations must ensure that parties to a conflict comply with international humanitarian law, and must take steps to reinstall respect for international humanitarian law among them. The United Nations Due Diligence Policy on Human Rights provided a sound framework for influencing behaviours. Against the backdrop of enhanced partnership between

the United Nations and the African Union and increasing sub-regional ad-hoc security coalitions in Africa, States and international organizations must ensure that troops and police are adequately trained, equipped and instructed to ensure compliance with international humanitarian law. The ICRC had contributed to that effort by providing pre deployment briefings on international humanitarian law and other issues for more than 25,000 peacekeepers.

13. Detention by peacekeepers was a reality. Despite its being an ordinary occurrence in armed conflict and a corollary of the use of force, however, detention was rarely mainstreamed in the planning of peacekeeping operations, nor was it allocated proper capacities. The ICRC was closely following United Nations efforts to revise the interim standard operating procedures (SOPs) on detention and other specific SOPs to ensure their compliance with relevant international rules.

14. The ICRC was ready to continue collaborating on any initiative to alleviate human suffering during armed conflicts and situations of violence. In that vein, it had worked with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees on operational guidance on maintaining the civilian and humanitarian character of sites and settlements in armed conflict. Lastly, it had recently published a report identifying formal and informal sources of influence on armed forces and armed groups, so as to help States and peacekeeping operations better carry out their mandates during armed conflict.

15. **Mr. Allen** (United Kingdom) said that his Government supported the shared commitments to United Nations peacekeeping operations outlined in the Secretary-General’s Action for Peacekeeping initiative, including the pursuit of clear, focused, sequenced, prioritized and achievable mandates; the Secretary-General had committed to ensuring integrated analysis and planning as part of that process, particularly for transitions.

16. Achieving sequenced and prioritized mandates depended on the commitment by the Secretary-General to providing the Security Council with frank and realistic recommendations using a whole-of-United Nations approach to conflicts and looking at the full lifecycle of the mission under consideration. The Security Council needed a clear vision of what was a sufficiently stable end state, as well as benchmarks and robust methods for measuring achievement against them. Such benchmarks needed to be developed much earlier, to be realistic, achievable and measurable, and be tailored to the mission’s specific context.

17. As some of the larger peacekeeping operations like that in Darfur began to be drawn down, the transitions issue was timely. Better and more sustainable transitions required better coordination, joint planning and cooperation with the United Nations country team and other stakeholders, including the host Government, and required the United Nations peacebuilding structures, peace and security architecture, and development system to work together more effectively through a mission's lifecycle. The structural reforms proposed by the Secretary-General should be accompanied by behavioural change within the United Nations, and by Member States to better coordinate funding and not reinforce a silo mentality at the United Nations.

18. Those reforms would occur within the framework of the report of the Secretary-General on peacebuilding and sustaining peace (A/72/707-S/2018/43), the reform of the United Nations development system and the Action for Peacekeeping initiative. The Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations was an important forum for discussing peacekeeping policy and had given sound advice on such issues as peacekeeping intelligence and performance. The Special Committee should look at the issue of transitions more closely during its next session.

19. **Ms. Al Hammadi** (United Arab Emirates) said that because peacekeeping operations were among the most important tools of the United Nations for building international peace and security, they should be supported and strengthened to deliver their mandates, especially as new challenges arose and conflicts became increasingly complex. Her Government welcomed the efforts of the Secretary-General, through the Action for Peacekeeping initiative and the Declaration of Shared Commitments, to reform United Nations peacekeeping operations, make them more effective and responsive to current challenges and intensify collective efforts to resolve current conflicts and prevent new conflicts from breaking out.

20. In the cause of restoring regional and international security and stability, the United Arab Emirates was contributing militarily to confront extremism and terrorism and address urgent crises around the world. To that end, her country was a strategic ally of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, an active member of the coalition to support legitimacy in Yemen, and a member of the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS. It had also contributed 30 million euros to the G5 Sahel joint force to fight terrorism.

21. Her Government also favoured political solutions and the United Nations operations supporting them, particularly in Yemen, Libya, Syria and Palestine. It

praised the historic recent peace agreement between Eritrea and Ethiopia and hoped other States would take similar steps to resolve conflicts peacefully.

22. The United Arab Emirates assisted conflict-damaged countries to rebuild by strengthening the rule of law and restoring services to those countries, to help them avoid lapsing back into conflict. As one of the largest donors of humanitarian assistance worldwide, her Government had donated \$1.02 billion to Yemen since the beginning of 2018, including \$466.5 million as part of the United Nations Humanitarian Response Plan for Yemen, along with \$198.8 million in direct aid.

23. Given their critical role in building peaceful societies, women and youth must be empowered in negotiations on political solutions. Women should fully participate in all stages of the peace process, and the international community's efforts to increase the number of women in peacekeeping at all levels should be supported. In that regard, her Government had signed a memorandum of understanding with the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women to cooperate in building military and peacekeeping capacity among Arab women.

24. Her Government reiterated its commitment to supporting all efforts to further security and stability around the world. It was important for Member States to respect international law as the basis for achieving stability, preventing crises and stopping the spread of chaos in the Middle East. The international community should hold accountable those States that did not respect the principles of good neighbourliness or non-interference in internal affairs, and those that supported extremist or terrorist groups that undermined peacekeeping efforts. Finally, her Government stood with peacekeepers working in difficult and dangerous environments and recognized those who had lost their lives in the line of duty.

25. **Mr. Simon-Michel** (France) said that while peacekeeping operations were an essential tool for conflict resolution, an increase in the complexity of situations and asymmetric threats meant that peacekeeping in its current form had run its course. Peacekeeping operations must evolve in order to better address the new challenges arising daily. As one of the first States to sign the Declaration of Shared Commitments on United Nations Peacekeeping Operations, France fully supported the Secretary-General's will to reform and encouraged all Member States to endorse the Declaration. The Action for Peacekeeping initiative must be supported with a view

to achieving a sustained improvement of peacekeeping operations.

26. He stressed the importance of promoting political solutions, strengthening security for peacekeepers, improving performance and partnerships and reinforcing civilian protection. As a permanent member of the Security Council and a troop and funding contributor for peacekeeping operations and support operations, France was fully committed to participating in the reform of the peace and security pillar. Such reform could only be achieved through collective and decisive action and should lead to an enhancement of triangular dialogue among the Security Council, the Secretariat and troop-contributing countries, as well as closer association between funding contributors and host countries. Efforts should also be made to improve the performance of troops by enhancing performance assessment as well as training, using the appropriate equipment and means to safeguard their security. Training should also ensure exemplary conduct and avoid all forms of indecent behaviour, notably sexual violence.

27. France pledged to continue its contribution of 30,000 male and female soldiers to francophone Africa each year, and encouraged the development of a partnership for cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations, which was needed to promote peace and security. A strengthened partnership between the United Nations and the African Union, particularly through intensified support of African peacekeeping operations, was crucial and required the support of all.

28. **Ms. Ighil** (Algeria) said that the seventieth anniversary of United Nations peacekeeping marked an opportunity for collective engagement in improving operations in order to better adapt to current security challenges and threats. In that regard, Algeria welcomed the Action for Peacekeeping initiative and the efforts of the Secretary-General to reform the peace and security architecture, and shared his vision of the need to focus on prevention, mediation and peacebuilding.

29. Algeria welcomed the Secretary-General's prioritization of politics in his approach to conflict resolution. The Declaration of Shared Commitments on United Nations Peacekeeping Operations was an important tool for reaffirming political commitment to peacekeeping, highlighting the primacy of politics and the need to address root causes in conflict resolution. Such political support must be translated into concrete action in order to address the most urgent contemporary challenges. It was necessary to foster a culture of prevention and to strengthen capacity among local

actors, including through the increased participation of women and youth. Such measures would enable them to play a leading role in mediation, thereby laying solid groundwork for sustainable peace.

30. Peacekeeping operations must be given clear exit strategies, as well as realistic mandates that included human rights components. The ongoing strategic review of peacekeeping operations required an independent and transparent assessment of whether missions had fulfilled their mandates, taking into account the specificities of each peacekeeping operation. The conflict zones where peacekeepers were deployed were increasingly dangerous, highlighting issues of preparation, performance and capacity as well as the crucial need to strengthen strategic analysis and planning; improve predeployment training, performance monitoring and accountability; enhance situation awareness and protection of personnel; and prioritize recruitment of women peacekeepers.

31. Acts of sexual exploitation and abuse committed by peacekeepers remained a major concern, for such a scourge undermined not only the effectiveness of peacekeeping missions but also the credibility of the Organization as a whole. There must be a zero-tolerance policy on sexual abuse, with a focus on prevention, enforcement, reporting and remedial actions to ensure greater accountability.

32. The United Nations should strengthen its cooperation with subregional and regional partners, particularly the African Union. Collaborative efforts such as the Joint United Nations-African Union Framework for Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security should be the product of mutual consultations, consultative decision-making, capacity-building, joint analysis and mission planning and assessment visits by both parties. Enhancing the capacity of the African Union peace and security architecture through predictable, sustainable and flexible funding of peace support operations remained crucial. Practical steps must therefore be taken to ensure that African Union-led peace support operations authorized by the Security Council received financing through United Nations-assessed contributions, on a case-by-case basis, in line with Security Council resolutions [2320 \(2016\)](#) and [2378 \(2017\)](#). Lastly, her delegation remained concerned that peacekeepers continued to be targeted by spoilers, armed groups and terrorists.

33. **Ms. Cerrato** (Honduras) said that reform towards more integrated and interdisciplinary approaches to peacekeeping was necessary in order to adapt to the changing face of conflict. An adequate supply of resources, capacity-building, appropriate predeployment

training and suitable equipment for peacekeeping staff were essential to ensure they could effectively fulfil their mandates.

34. Honduras supported the Secretary-General's Action for Peacekeeping initiative, which was vital for strengthening the peace and security pillar, to make progress towards political solutions, enhance the political impact of peacekeeping operations and improve the protection and security of peacekeeping staff. Her delegation reiterated its call for swift resolution of ongoing conflicts and for displaced populations to be supported rather than criminalized. Honduras was willing to increase its peacekeeping presence while advocating the importance of preventive diplomacy in the attainment of sustainable peace.

35. In accordance with Security Council resolution [1325 \(2000\)](#), women must be active agents in peacekeeping and peacebuilding. Her Government therefore strongly supported the efforts of the Secretariat to increase the number of female staff officers and military observers to 15 per cent.

36. Peace and development were interlinked since the Sustainable Development Goals could not be achieved in unstable, conflict-ridden areas. Consequently, to achieve those Goals, all Member States should work together to find peaceful solutions to disputes, on the basis of equality and mutual benefit, while acting with restraint and avoiding threats of violence.

37. **Mr. Husni** (Sudan) said that his Government offered condolences to the families and States of peacekeepers who had fallen in the line of duty around the world. It fully supported the Secretary-General's comprehensive reform initiative, in particular its peace and security architecture and the Declaration of Shared Commitments.

38. With regard to the peacekeeping principle of consent of the parties, he noted that the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA) had been established pursuant to the Agreement of 20 June 2011 between the Government of the Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (now South Sudan) and a tripartite agreement between the Sudan, South Sudan and Ethiopia regarding the components for the Force, of which there was currently only a military component to maintain stability.

39. The Agreement of 20 June 2011 had stipulated that Abyei would have a joint administration, legislative council and police formed by the parties to the Agreement. While the Government of the Sudan had submitted a list of its appointees for those entities, the Government of South Sudan had failed to do so.

However, the failure to implement the provisions regarding the joint local administration, legislative council and police entities did not necessarily nullify the Agreement, replace the entities to be formed, or change the UNISFA mandate to a peacekeeping mandate with civilian and police components in addition to its military component, unless all parties to the Agreement consented to those changes.

40. If the Secretary-General's recommendations conflicted with the principle of consent of the parties, consultations must be held with the non-consenting party or parties to hear their points of view and must not be imposed via the Security Council, which itself harboured differing perspectives on the issue. Some States had emphasized the principle of consent of the parties in peacekeeping operations, while others had called for implementing the recommendations of the special report of the Secretary-General on the review of the mandate of UNISFA ([S/2017/293](#)). In calling for a police force and civilian component to assist UNISFA in civilian, policing, administrative and service tasks, that report failed to take into account that those tasks had been entrusted to the parties to the Agreement. Restructuring UNISFA to include a police element and civilian element would not simply violate the principle of consent of the parties; it would obliterate the June 2011 Agreement.

41. Darfur, meanwhile, had moved a long way towards complete recovery, as reflected by progress in implementing the exit strategy for the African Union-United Nations Mission in Darfur (UNAMID). Initial phases were complete, with a full exit in 2020 and a transition to peacebuilding taking shape. The Government of the Sudan was fulfilling all of its domestic responsibilities for peacebuilding, sustaining peace, and accelerating the pace of sustainable development, with the assistance of the United Nations and development partners worldwide. It was also facilitating the voluntary return of refugees and displaced persons, along with reconstruction and reconciliation projects and societal dialogue to spread a culture of peace and coexistence among local communities in Darfur.

42. As part of its efforts to bring peace and stability to the region, his Government had hosted negotiations in Khartoum between the parties to the conflict in South Sudan, under the auspices of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), which had led to a peace agreement which had just been implemented. The agreement included provisions for a regional protection force in participation with Sudan and Uganda as the guarantors of the agreement, ultimately to fall under the command of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan

(UNMISS), upon agreement between the chiefs of staff of the armies of the IGAD member States.

43. His Government had also led a joint initiative with the Russian Federation to bring together the parties to the conflict in the Central African Republic which had just achieved a framework agreement signed in Khartoum between the ex-Séléka and anti-Balaka factions. The African Union had adopted the Sudanese initiative and provided it support and coordination, with further progress expected in coming months.

44. United Nations peacekeeping operations remained the spearhead for establishing peace, stability and sustainable development, but conflict prevention and diplomacy must take priority, through early warning, mediation, reconciliation, good governance, the rule of law, protection of human rights and democracy, and negotiated political solutions to conflicts, followed by security sector reforms, disarmament and demobilization of combatants, and reintegration into local societies. Partnerships with regional organizations also played an important role in peacekeeping, as for example the African Union–United Nations partnership in the areas of peace and security.

45. Synergy between peacekeeping and peacebuilding represented a tool for sustaining peace and development and preventing backsliding on achievements already made. In that regard, the expected formation in 2019 of the Department of Peace Operations represented the fruit of the ongoing reform of the peace and security pillar of the United Nations, which was possible only because of the positive engagement of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Field Support.

46. **Mr. Kazi** (Bangladesh) said that shifting realities in the international political landscape and in conflict situations on the ground necessitated an evolving approach to the way peacekeeping was mandated and conducted. It was crucial that the political commitment expressed at the Secretary-General's high-level meeting on Action for Peacekeeping in September 2018 led to tangible outcomes in the work of legislative bodies and related processes both within and outside of the Organization. While there was broad consensus in favour of triangular consultation and cooperation, no viable institutional structure had yet been established.

47. Transitions towards any structural changes to the peace and security pillar and the management pillar must be seamless and should seek to eliminate the gap between policies and implementation, both at United

Nations Headquarters and in the field. Implementation of the Action Plan to improve the security of peacekeepers required a coordinated and consultative approach, integrating the issue into discussions at the General Assembly and Security Council. The success of the integrated performance policy framework depended on objective benchmarks and transparency. Performance should be viewed holistically, in the context of clear, achievable mandates and adequate resource allocation, taking into account the impact of caveats on performance. Predeployment and in-mission training and guidelines from the Secretariat remained crucial.

48. The Peacekeeping Capability Readiness System should be reviewed to ensure that it was fit for purpose, and smart pledges should be realized to facilitate the provision of critical enablers, such as helicopters. It was also important to further elaborate a peacekeeping intelligence policy in an inclusive, consultative manner. Bangladesh shared the objective of increasing the number of female peacekeepers deployed to missions, and resources for gender expertise in missions should therefore be maintained. The zero-tolerance approach to sexual exploitation and abuse must remain unwavering.

49. Action was needed to reduce the environmental footprint of peacekeeping operations. The Department of Field Support Environment Strategy was a useful blueprint in that regard. Missions must be allocated adequate resources for a conscious approach to protecting the environment. The emphasis on mainstreaming peacebuilding into peacekeeping operations, through a comprehensive analysis of conflicts, was encouraging. The proposal for the Peacebuilding Support Office to function as a “hinge” between the peace and security pillar and the other pillars and with the humanitarian community should be implemented, particularly in relation to sequenced and prioritized peacekeeping mandates. Past mistakes could be avoided by learning from the experience of transitions in previous peacekeeping missions.

50. Resources were fundamental to the effectiveness and efficiency of peacekeeping operations. The current trend for cost-cutting was disconcerting and could severely hinder the implementation of reforms. Member States must bring a sense of maturity and shared commitment to discussions on the scale of assessments for contributions to peacekeeping operations within the Fifth Committee. Bangladesh stood ready to increase its contribution of troops, police, civilians and equipment to peacekeeping operations.

The meeting rose at 11.15 a.m.