



Security Council

Seventy-fourth year

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 Tuesday, 18 June 2019, 10 a.m.
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Provisional

President: Mr. Alotaibi (Kuwait)

Members:

Belgium	Mrs. Van Vlierberge
China	Mr. Wu Haitao
Côte d'Ivoire	Mr. Ipo
Dominican Republic	Mr. Singer Weisinger
Equatorial Guinea	Mr. Esono Mbengono
France	Mrs. Gueguen
Germany	Mr. Heusgen
Indonesia	Mr. Syihab
Peru	Mr. Meza-Cuadra
Poland	Mr. Lewicki
Russian Federation	Mr. Nebenzia
South Africa	Mr. Van Shalkwyk
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Allen
United States of America	Mr. Hunter

Agenda

United Nations peacekeeping operations

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

United Nations peacekeeping operations

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Mr. Jean-Pierre Lacroix, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations; Lieutenant General Leonard Muriuki Ngondi, Force Commander of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur; and Major General Cheryl Pearce, Force Commander of the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus.

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

I now give the floor to Mr. Lacroix.

Mr. Lacroix: It is my pleasure to open this Security Council meeting on the occasion of the Head of Military Components Conference here in New York. I will be brief, as the purpose of today's meeting is for the Council to hear from the Force Commanders about their experiences in implementing the mandates negotiated and adopted by the Council.

This gathering of the Force Commanders of our peacekeeping operations has become a yearly occasion, and it is a very important moment for peacekeeping. It directly contributes to our efforts to implement the Secretary-General's Action for Peacekeeping initiative. They will hold sessions on many topics of critical importance to advance the initiative, from performance to the protection of civilians, from conduct and discipline to women in peacekeeping, to name just a few. This week also provides them with an opportunity to remain closely attuned to the major discussions happening here in New York on peacekeeping — in the Security Council, the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations, the Fifth Committee and other forums — and, ultimately, to our common efforts to enhance the impact of peacekeeping in the field.

I would also like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to Major General Francis Vib Sanziri, Head of Mission and Force Commander of the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF), who passed

away suddenly on 19 April. Through his distinguished leadership, Major General Vib Sanziri led UNDOF in a complex and challenging period. His passing away was a tragic loss for his colleagues and fellow peacekeepers in UNDOF, and for the whole United Nations family. I want to thank the Council and all the Member States that have expressed their solidarity and support in these difficult times.

And through the Heads of military components, I want to recognize the work accomplished every day in very challenging situations by all the women and men serving under the United Nations flag, for the cause of peace.

The topic that the Security Council has chosen for today's discussions, cooperation with host States, is key for the effectiveness of peace operations. I trust that this meeting will be most informative and beneficial for all of us. The Council will shortly hear from the Force Commander of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur, Lieutenant General Leonard Ngondi; and the Force Commander of the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus, Major General Cheryl Pearce, whose experience, I am certain, will be most useful to the Council in its work.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank Mr. Lacroix for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Lieutenant General Ngondi.

Lieutenant General Ngondi: It is humbling to make this presentation on cooperation with host States.

The Republic of the Sudan has been going through a difficult political time since mid-December of last year. We have seen a revolution that has led to the dissolution of the Government and its militarization, as well as the subsequent deposition of the President and his replacement with the Transitional Military Council in April. Negotiations for a transitional arrangement to transfer power to a civilian-led Government collapsed following the events of 3 June. The Transitional Military Council announced elections to be held in nine months' time. The African Union suspended the Sudan from participating in the organization's affairs on 6 June. Efforts to bring negotiations back on track are ongoing. The situation has impacted the operations of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID).

The importance of cooperation between peacekeeping missions and host States for the successful

implementation of mandates cannot be over emphasized. For better communication and coordination, the Government of the Sudan has in place a UNAMID unit within the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, while UNAMID maintains its Khartoum Liaison Office, from which the Head of Mission operates.

This presentation will cover the cooperation and relations between UNAMID and the Republic of the Sudan with regard to mandate implementation, as provided for in resolution 2429 (2018) and the status of forces agreement, respectively.

UNAMID's mandate includes four main pillars. The first entails the closure and handover of team sites for civilian use, the drawdown of the peacekeepers and the eventual exit by June 2020. The previous and current Governments of the Sudan assured UNAMID of their cooperation and facilitation of the mission's operations and smooth exit. As part of the transition process, UNAMID — jointly with United Nations agencies, funds and programmes — is implementing state liaison functions in four states of Darfur, covering four priorities areas of the rule of law, durable solutions for displaced populations and host communities, human rights, capacity-building and immediate service delivery to displaced people. These interventions are aimed at addressing challenges facing the four Darfur states, where UNAMID and the United Nations country team have the comparative advantages to work together based on analysis. These include land, enhanced dispute-resolution mechanisms and awareness of tenure rights, intercommunal conflict over water and other scarce resources, and the return of internally displaced persons and refugees.

The drawdown, closure of team sites and handover to the Government have been proceeding in a timely manner. However, not all team sites are being used for civilian purposes, and authorities cite institutional incapacities and the need for protecting the facilities. Recently, the Transitional Military Council issued a decree to the effect that in future team sites must be handed over to the Rapid Support Forces, which are part of the military wing. This led to the suspension of the further closure and handover of sites until further clarity is obtained.

The second pillar is the protection of civilians and humanitarian personnel and the facilitation of the delivery of humanitarian assistance. The Government of the Sudan has largely cooperated with the Mission

in the implementation of this pillar, especially in areas under its control. However, there has been access denial in the limited area controlled by the armed movements, in particular the Sudan Liberation Army-Abdul Wahid, except on one occasion in September 2018, when a joint humanitarian mission was successful in visiting and assisting victims of a landslide incident in eastern Jebel Marra. The Government cited its inability to guarantee security to the peacekeepers as the reason for the denial.

The third pillar is about mediation between the Government of the Sudan and the non-signatory armed movements. Under the previous regime, two of the non-signatory movements and the Government signed a pre-negotiation agreement, while one armed movement remained uncommitted. It is important to note that the Transitional Military Council called on all armed movements to join the national negotiations. However, the current political situation has caused the process to stall.

The last pillar is support for mediation of intercommunal conflict, including measures to address the root causes. While there has been tremendous effort in promoting peaceful coexistence, the land ownership problem that is at the heart of the Darfur conflict has yet to be sufficiently addressed. Indeed, it is among the main reasons for laxity in the return of internally displaced persons return, while others are insecurity and lack of basic services.

I now turn to the status of forces agreement, which guides the conduct of peacekeepers and relations between the Mission and the host State. There are three main areas of cooperation. First is the provision of premises and facilities for UNAMID to stay in and operate from. It is commendable that the Government granted UNAMID large spaces where team sites and super camps were established. However, in the recent past local communities have been demanding compensation for their land from UNAMID instead of engaging their Government.

Secondly, the status of forces agreement provides for freedom of movement in the territory in execution of the mandate. As mentioned earlier, the Government has generally allowed free movement, including inter-state flights, in areas under its control but denies UNAMID access to areas under control of the armed movements, citing security reasons.

Lastly, the Government is obliged to protect UNAMID assets and facilities when requested by the

Head of Mission. Recently, fulfilling this obligation proved challenging when the El Geneina super camp in West Darfur was looted and vandalized during the handover. Following that unfortunate incident, the Mission and the Government are working together to ensure that such an incident will never recur.

In conclusion, we are of the view that cooperation between UNAMID and the Republic of the Sudan has been cordial. The few setbacks that I have highlighted can be rectified, as long as there is trust and political will. The Sudanese authorities have assured their cooperation with and support for UNAMID operations, including the facilitation of a smooth exit, in accordance with resolution 2429 (2018). It is reiterated that cooperation with host States and other partners is crucial for mandates to be implemented successfully. Trust and political will are key ingredients of cooperation.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank Lieutenant General Ngondi for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Major General Pearce.

Major General Pearce: It is with great pleasure that I take this opportunity to address the Council on the topic of cooperation with host States — one in which I can offer a unique view of the long-standing mission of the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP).

Since its inception, UNFICYP has been mandated by the Council to use its best efforts to prevent a recurrence of fighting and, as necessary, to contribute to the maintenance and restoration of law and order and return to normal conditions. For decades, the mission has successfully carried out this mandate, with the military component playing a crucial role in this regard, namely, by maintaining a stable military environment in and around the 180-kilometre buffer zone.

Our efforts to prevent and defuse tensions before they escalate, as well as to liaise between the sides in the absence of any direct contact, remain essential, particularly given the uncertainty of the current period and the prevailing political climate on the island. It is through these efforts that UNFICYP contributes to creating the conditions conducive to a successful settlement process.

Turning to the topic at hand, cooperation with host States, as Head of the military component of UNFICYP, my cooperation in this context lies primarily with the opposing forces, which overall, is constructive. Since

arriving in January, I have met with my counterparts numerous times, in a spirit of professionalization, collegiality and mutual respect. My engagement plan puts a premium on a nuanced and regular interaction that is underpinned by the principles of impartiality, openness and transparency. Keeping the channels of communication open, even in times of tension, is my utmost priority.

Beyond my own personal engagement, the Force maintains day-to-day contact with its counterparts from the opposing forces on all levels to prevent the escalation of tensions. Since the November 2017 strategic review of UNFICYP, the mission has implemented a more robust engagement and liaison effort, in close coordination with our police and civilian components. The guiding principles I mentioned a moment ago are the basis of this interaction and applied at all levels, be it at the level of general or that of private soldier.

Despite the generally positive relationships the military component of UNFICYP has cultivated over the years with the opposing forces, our cooperation is not without its challenges. There is a trend of increased violations of the military status quo along the ceasefire lines and an apparent hardening of positions by the opposing forces more broadly, potentially mirroring the political situation on the island.

I should like to elaborate on specific areas of concern.

First, UNFICYP's authority in the buffer zone is challenged regularly. In its latest resolution relating to UNFICYP (resolution 2453 (2019)), the Security Council, in evoking UNFICYP's mandated authority in the buffer zone, expresses serious concern at the increased number of violations of the military status quo along the ceasefire lines and calls on the sides and all involved parties to respect UNFICYP's mandated authority in the buffer zone. Nevertheless, I regret to note that there has been no improvement on the ground thus far.

Similarly, despite years of urging by the Security Council, neither side has yet accepted the 2018 aide-memoire or its predecessor of 1989, which is a key guiding document with respect to UNFICYP's rules of the road in the buffer zone. Thus, with respect to cooperation with the two sides in the area under my remit, which is that of the military, there is significant scope for improvement. In that regard, we would once again ask for the Council's support — also in the spirit

of the Action for Peacekeeping — in urging the sides to heed what has been a years' long call to work with UNFICYP on the implementation of the aide-memoire, as well as to respect our mandated authority in the buffer zone overall.

With respect to the topic at hand, and in the Cyprus context specifically, as Council members are aware, UNFICYP has a status of forces agreement with the Republic of Cyprus. At the same time, cooperation, including on military and other operational matters, is key also with the Turkish Cypriot community. We continue to work closely with all the relevant actors to ensure optimal cooperation.

In conclusion, the impartial execution of UNFICYP's mandate is what allows me and the military component to effectively maintain the military status quo, prevent military-to-military tensions and ensure calm and stability in and around the buffer zone. Impartiality is a fundamental principle of United Nations peacekeeping that, importantly, was reaffirmed once again recently through the Secretary-General's Action for Peacekeeping agenda.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank Major General Pearce for her briefing.

I remind all colleagues that the concept for this briefing aims to keep it as interactive as possible — the main added value being the question-and-answer segment with the Force Commanders. Therefore, so as to take advantage of this opportunity and hear more from our guests, I encourage Council members to keep their statements brief and focus on the question-and-answer segment.

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

Mr. Lewicki (Poland): I promise that I will be as brief as possible.

First of all, let me offer our condolences on the passing away of Major General Francis Vib Sanziri and take this opportunity to pay tribute to all the brave Blue Helmets — both the men and women — who, unfortunately, sometimes pay the highest price for their service to peace and to us.

I also thank all the briefers. This interactive debate is a very useful exercise. This year's Heads of Military Components Conference is exceptionally timely. We have been discussing peacekeeping over the past

years. Only last March, we held the United Nations Peacekeeping Ministerial, which highlighted some of the key challenges and dilemmas that peacekeeping operations are facing right now.

One of those challenges involves improving training and capacity-building. We must acknowledge that insufficient training of peacekeepers directly affects the mandate implementation. We must work hard in order to provide every tool to enable peacekeepers at all levels of the chain of command to improve the effective performance and security of mission personnel. Needless to say, the security of peacekeepers is of paramount importance for all stakeholders involved in United Nations peacekeeping operations. Nevertheless, one must not forget that it is also one of the decisive factors of a mission's effectiveness in the course of the mandate implementation.

Indeed, mandates are one of the topics for today's considerations. The importance of the re-evaluation of missions' composition and mandates, which both need to be based on the situation and the capability to implement them on the ground, has already been discussed in the Council. The flexibility of the tools used by the Force Commanders according to the current security circumstances in order to act proactively is of crucial importance.

I would like to ask the Force Commanders several questions with regard to their missions. I think that this should also be an opportunity for them to convey their message to us, the members of the Council.

My first question, which is addressed to both Force Commanders, is the following. From their point of view, do the current mandates allow the Force Commanders to operate actively and, if the situation requires, proactively in order to fulfil the mission's tasks? If not, what are the key obstacles hampering smooth mandate implementation?

Secondly, as we are concerned about the situation of people fleeing from conflict zones, I would like to ask Major General Cheryl Pearce if she has experienced challenges posed by refugees and undocumented migrants in areas of the buffer zone?

I would also like to ask Lieutenant General Ngondi the following questions. How does the current situation in Khartoum influence the mission under his command, and what is his view regarding the suspension of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in

Darfur of the handover of camps for displaced civilians to the Sudanese military against the backdrop of worsening violence and insecurity across the country?

In conclusion, I would like once again to express our deep appreciation for the Force Commanders' work, their presence here today and their sharing of their experience.

Mr. Allen (United Kingdom): I thank you, Mr. President, for your guidance to limit today's meeting to questions. I will do so. I have to say that following our Polish colleague's intervention, that he has already taken some of my questions. Therefore, I think that, as you will speak last, Sir, that you will have a difficult time and will really have to think of something new.

I also thank the Force Commanders here today. May I, like my Polish colleague, pay tribute to the men and women who serve in blue the Security Council and the United Nations. I pay tribute to those who have lost their lives in doing so. I also ask the Force Commanders to please pass on the thanks of the Council to their own troops for all that they are doing in sometimes very difficult circumstances. It is very helpful and important for the Council to hear ground truth from the Force Commanders. I therefore hope that they will feel enabled and emboldened to answer all questions fully and without any need to be diplomatic.

With regard to my questions, I would like to ask a general question to either one or both of the Force Commanders, which is what impact they are seeing on the ground from the support provided from Headquarters as a result of the Secretary-General's reforms of the peace and security architecture. My second general question involves the great deal of focus placed on improving the performance of uniformed components in missions. Do they have access to the data that they need to be able to drive forward performance improvement efforts based on evidence?

Echoing the question that my Polish colleague asked, I would like to ask General Ngondi specifically to elaborate on the cooperation between the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur and the Sudanese authorities since the removal of President Al-Bashir. I also want to ask him the following question: After the looting at the camp in El Geneina, what lessons-learned exercises were carried out and what has he taken away from that, recognizing, of course, as he

says, that there has been a suspension of handing over of team sites for now?

Finally, with regard to the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP), General Pearce mentioned the work that UNFICYP does in liaising between the two sides. The most recent mandate calls for the establishment of a mechanism for direct contact between the two sides to resolve security and other issues, as is fairly commonplace in other United Nations mission settings. I wonder if she could tell us anything about how those efforts to establish that are progressing or, if they are not, what the blockages might be.

Mr. Meza-Cuadra (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): We are grateful for the holding of this meeting and the briefing by Under-Secretary-General Lacroix, as well as the extremely interesting briefings by the Force Commanders of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur and the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP).

I too would like to begin by paying tribute to the men and women who have given their lives to the cause of peace, and to the thousands of troops, police and civilians who every day represent a symbol of hope, contribute to the protection of vulnerable populations in various parts of the world and advance prevention, peacekeeping and peacebuilding processes in the multiple and complex missions to which they are deployed.

We believe that this dialogue is particularly relevant. We will also be brief. The representative of the United Kingdom touched on the same question that I have, but I will do my best to approach it from a different angle. One of UNFICYP's key elements is its work in establishing mechanisms and measures aimed at building trust among the parties, which contributes to the efforts to find a just and lasting solution. In that context, we believe that it is essential to ensure positive interaction between the mission and civilians, including by developing preventive approaches and eventually mediation, as well as instituting communication strategies suited to both communities. In that regard, we would like to ask Major General Pearce to share the lessons learned in that context, and also if she believes that the capacities of her staff should, or indeed must, be included in the training offered to troop-contributing countries, or if they can be learned on the ground, based on the unique nature of each context.

As a troop-contributing country, Peru strongly supports the priority that the Secretary-General gives to the safety and security of Blue Helmets. Among other measures, we believe that this requires training on specific challenges and performance evaluations that should be designed to correct any shortcomings that are detected rather than being punitive. In the case of Darfur right now there is a critical situation with regard to human rights violations, including numerous cases of sexual violence, many of which have been attributed to the Government's own forces. In that regard, we would like to ask Lieutenant General Ngondi how the Security Council can help to establish better channels of communication with the local authorities in order to address such serious problems.

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We would like to thank Mr. Jean-Pierre Lacroix, as well as the Force Commanders of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur and the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) for their briefings on the situations in their missions. I too want to join my colleagues in expressing our gratitude to all peacekeepers for their dedicated service, often in extremely difficult conditions, as well as honouring the memory of those who have laid down their lives in the service of peace.

I have a few questions I want to ask, but before I do so, I have a few comments to make about peacekeeping that we are all familiar with but that are still important. The success of any United Nations peacekeeping operation depends on peacekeepers' constructive day-to-day interaction both with the authorities of the countries to which they are deployed and with the parties to the conflict, and following through on the mission's tasks that are key in the host country without pursuing secondary or marginal mandates.

We know that host countries bear the primary responsibility for protecting civilians, establishing the political process, addressing the root causes of crises and promoting post-conflict reconstruction. We believe there is potential for countries hosting peacekeeping operations to connect fully with the triangular cooperation between the Security Council, the Secretariat and troop-contributing countries, which would certainly improve the effectiveness of the mechanism in question. Peacekeeping operations clearly should not be a substitute for the authorities of host countries, but should rather provide them with the assistance they need at the implementation stage of

the strategy for dealing with a crisis, and the priority should be to increase the capacity of the authorities themselves in order to avoid relapses into conflict. It is in countries where missions have been able to achieve credible and effective cooperation with the host Governments that they have been able to establish conditions conducive to ensuring national reconciliation and post-crisis reconstruction. I would like to address the Force Commander of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur and mention that we believe it is important to assure a smooth transition from peacekeeping to peacebuilding, and we hope that this will be happening in Darfur in the context of the drawdown and full withdrawal planned for 2020.

Needless to say, the problems related to improving peacekeeping missions' effectiveness and ensuring Blue Helmets' security are as pertinent as ever. The effectiveness of a peacekeeping operation depends directly on how well the consensus-based agreements of States on peacekeeping issues are carried out, including by both the Secretariat and the missions on the ground. It is those agreements that reflect the shared commitments that the States have expressed their willingness to assume. In that connection, I want to remind the Council that the action plan for the report on *Improving security of United Nations peacekeepers* by former United Nations Force Commander Lieutenant General dos Santos Cruz should be implemented only within the parameters agreed on by the General Assembly Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations. Intelligence in peacekeeping, information-gathering and analysis can be used only to ensure the safety of peacekeepers and the protection of civilians. Any misuse of those instruments, including for political purposes, risks undermining trust in United Nations peacekeeping activities. In that regard, in line with your request, Sir, I would like to ask the Force Commanders if they are guided in their activities by the recommendations outlined in the Cruz report and if so, how they are guided by them.

We would also like to note that the mandates of some Security Council missions, including those of UNFICYP, have already incorporated the performance policy framework strategy even before the Secretariat's finalization of the document. Has it already been incorporated into the mission's work? We hope that before it is put into practice by the Secretariat and the missions, it will go through all the necessary coordinating procedures in the Special Committee on

Peacekeeping Operations. In the spirit of partnership all interested States, including troop-contributing countries, should take part in the discussions on it. We hope that UNFICYP will also be guided by that approach.

Mr. Hunter (United States of America): We thank Under-Secretary-General Lacroix and the Force Commanders for their briefings, as well as for their service. Today I will focus on the two issues of host-country cooperation and peacekeeping performance.

The consent of the parties is indeed one of the core principles of United Nations peacekeeping operations, but underlying that principle is the parties' commitment to a political process. We have seen an inextricable link between the two, as reflected both in the Secretary-General's Action for Peacekeeping (A4P) initiative and the United States' own peacekeeping principles. Peacekeeping operations must support the achievement of political solutions, and peacekeeping missions must have host-country cooperation. The two go hand in hand. For peacekeeping missions to effectively implement their mandates and successfully support political efforts to achieve stability and a durable peace, they must have the full cooperation of the host countries, and mission personnel must have complete freedom of movement within their area of operations. While the Security Council must not renounce its role in the maintenance of international peace and security mandated by the Charter of the United Nations, we have seen that missions face a significantly larger number of challenges in achieving their mandates when host Governments choose to obstruct them.

The United States has championed peacekeeping performance in the A4P initiative and through the unanimous adoption of resolution 2436 (2018). A key aspect of ensuring good performance is the accountability of peacekeeping missions. More accountable missions deliver better on their mandates and increase the credibility of United Nations Blue Helmets around the world. Resolution 2436 (2018) makes it very clear that the Security Council needs better information on peacekeeping performance in order to make better decisions. From training and capacity-building to ensuring accountability for underperformance, we cannot fix what we do not know about. We can no longer accept a business-as-usual approach of not talking openly and honestly about our own shortcomings. We welcome the Secretary-General's commitment to implementing an integrated

performance policy, but much more must be done. We will continue to work with our partners towards the full and speedy implementation of resolution 2436 (2018).

Separately, host countries must embrace the strategic goals of the United Nations, the peacekeeping missions and the work of the United Nations country teams. Without the host country's understanding and acceptance of the goals and assistance provided by the United Nations, the completion of a Security Council mandate cannot be achieved. Host countries must cooperate with the United Nations and the peacekeeping missions deployed in their country. Without that cooperation, peacekeeping missions will never achieve their goals or the Security Council mandates contained in our resolutions.

With all of this in mind, I would like to ask a couple of questions. First, what are the ways in which host countries have rebuffed the good offices of the United Nations country team and attempted to restrict freedom of movement and access that our briefers might like to highlight for the Council today?

Looking at the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID), the Transitional Military Council recently stated its intention to withdraw all armed forces from team sites formerly operated by UNAMID. To whom will these sites transition, and how would this transition be expected to take place, logistically?

For the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus, we know that the leaders of the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities have different views on the issue of host country consent. What types of challenges has the mission faced that stem from that issue directly?

Finally, the United States expresses our appreciation to all the Force Commanders and for the continuing service and sacrifice of their teams around the world.

Mrs. Gueguen (France) (*spoke in French*): I thank you, Mr. President, for having convened this interactive meeting on a particularly pertinent and important issue, namely, cooperation with host States, which, as we all know, is a crucial component of the success of peacekeeping operations. I would also like to pay heartfelt tribute, through Lieutenant General Leonard Muriuki Ngondi and Major General Cheryl Pearce, to all their military components carrying out their missions in often highly challenging and adverse conditions.

I would like to make two preliminary remarks. First, cooperation with the host State is crucial and sine qua non to ensure that peacekeeping operations can achieve their objectives, respecting, of course, the sovereignty of the host State and taking account of the need to protect the Blue Helmets and all United Nations personnel in general, both civilian and uniformed. Secondly, cooperation with the host State is not an option but a pressing necessity enshrined in the guiding principles of peacekeeping. Such cooperation entails rights and duties for both the host State and the United Nations. In that connection, I would like to highlight three principal points, followed by questions pertaining to these for our briefers.

First, the host State's consent to the deployment of a peacekeeping operation must be sought not only as a matter of principle, but also for operational purposes. The political dialogue between the United Nations and the host State is essential, but it must also be pursued on the ground between the Blue Helmets, on the one hand, and the military and police of the host State on the other. It is clear that such respect and dialogue are a means of guaranteeing the mission's effectiveness and its acceptance by the local population. This cooperation can take many forms, such as the exchange of information on the risks and threats that affect the civilian population as well as peacekeeping personnel; or operational coordination, if provided for in a mission's mandate.

Here I would like to ask our briefers a question: what feedback can they give regarding their experiences at these two levels of strategic and operational cooperation in the context of their respective missions?

The second point that I wanted to highlight is that the host State must respect its commitments under a status-of-forces agreement, which ensures the freedom of movement and protection of the Blue Helmets deployed on host State territory. There is no context in which violating a status-of-forces agreement is acceptable. I believe that the Security Council must monitor this and ensure that dialogue between a deployed mission and host State authorities is ongoing, in order to resolve, at an early stage and as rapidly as possible, any difficulties that may emerge.

Thirdly and finally, the principal mandate of a peacekeeping operation, as we know, is often the protection of civilians. Nevertheless, it is the host States that have primary responsibility for protecting

their people. Peacekeeping operations can help States in difficulty to protect their populations against a particular threat, but they cannot replace the host State, which must do everything in its power to protect its civilians, including through the police and the military as well as the legal system, by systematically prosecuting perpetrators of violence against civilians and attacks on the rights of the population, even if such perpetrators were to be found within the ranks of the security forces themselves.

I have another question for our two briefers: what do they expect from the Security Council in terms of supporting cooperation with the host State, particularly in the area of the protection of civilians?

Another remark I would like to make on this point is that while the Security Council demands exemplary conduct from its peacekeepers, similar behaviour is expected from the security forces of the host State receiving United Nations support. This is a major requirement that is sometimes difficult to meet in areas where a State may have been destabilized or have limited capacities. France stands ready to provide all necessary support to such States to help them achieve this goal.

Finally, cooperation between the host State and the peacekeeping operation may involve helping to strengthen the host State's security and defence forces, particularly in terms of training personnel and providing equipment. The goal is then to shift the responsibility to protect onto the security and defence forces so that the host State is able to fully ensure the security of the civilian population.

I wish to pose one last question here: what options could we collectively explore, in terms of the capacity-building of security and defence forces, to bolster cooperation between a force and the host State? We are often told that a United Nations force can withdraw once the host State's defence and security forces are fully operational.

Mr. Ipo (Côte d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): Allow me first of all to add my delegation's voice to the well-deserved tributes paid to the late Major General Francis Vib Sanziri. We extend our deepest condolences to his family, to the Government and the people of Ghana and to the United Nations.

Turning now to the issue that brings us together today, I would like to welcome the holding of this annual

interactive, informative meeting with the Heads of the military components of United Nations peacekeeping operations. I thank Under-Secretary-General Lacroix, Lieutenant General Leonard Muriuki Ngondi and Major General Cheryl Pearce for their enlightening and highly useful briefings.

The issue of cooperation between a peacekeeping mission and the host State is of particular importance to my delegation. Indeed, my country's recent history has been characterized by exemplary cooperation with the entire United Nations system, which served as a catalyst for the success of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI).

Peacekeeping operations, as we all know, are not intended to be a substitute for the authorities of the host State, but rather to support them as part of a crisis exit strategy that is based on an inclusive and credible political process. In that connection, the experience of UNOCI provides us with sufficient insight into the fact that dynamic cooperation, based on mutual trust and the pursuit of consensual objectives between a United Nations peacekeeping mission and host State authorities, is essential. It creates the necessary conditions for a successful transition that paves the way for lasting peace and stability.

The military components of peacekeeping missions are a key part of such cooperation. Their exemplary work with the host country Government relies on the latter taking strong national ownership of all United Nations action, ensuring that local authorities are involved in the peacekeeping mission's main tasks. UNOCI and the Government of Côte d'Ivoire worked together to improve the protection of civilians by, inter alia, combating human rights violations and gender-based violence, leading the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process and reforming the security sector, as well as advancing the national reconciliation process.

I would like at this stage to ask Lieutenant General Ngondi for his insights on the following points.

What is his assessment of cooperation between the United Nations-African Union Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) and the Sudanese authorities, in particular with regard to the protection of civilians in those regions affected by violence perpetrated by armed groups, or to the curbing of communal violence? Will the current political context, which is marked by tensions between the Transitional Military Council and the demonstrators from the affected sociopolitical strata, affect relations

between UNAMID and the Sudanese authorities? What effects might the current sociopolitical situation in the Sudan have on the UNAMID reconfiguration and troop drawdown process?

Initiatives to promote national reconciliation are an indispensable step on the road to peacebuilding, especially in a context of deep resentment between local communities. With regard more specifically to the situation in Cyprus, what actions is UNFICYP taking to promote reconciliation between local communities?

With regard to the zero-tolerance policy on sexual violence, I wish to seek clarification on the actions carried out in the framework of UNAMID and UNFICYP to ensure exemplary conduct by their troops.

In conclusion, I would like to express my delegation's congratulations and encouragement to the UNAMID and UNFICYP Force Commanders, as well as to all of their staff, for the outstanding work they are doing in spite of numerous constraints and in particularly difficult deployment environments. My delegation also wishes to commend the thousands of men and women of the military and police components of the United Nations missions, and to pay tribute to the soldiers who have made the ultimate sacrifice for peace and security in the world.

Mr. Wu Haitao (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank you, Mr. President, for convening this meeting. I also wish to thank Mr. Lacroix, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, and the Force Commanders of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur and of the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus for their briefings. Through them I wish to pay tribute to all military personnel deployed in the 14 United Nations peacekeeping missions.

Further to your proposal, Mr. President, in my statement today I will first elaborate on China's views on peacekeeping operations. Following that I will ask the Commanders two questions.

United Nations peacekeeping operations are an important method of maintaining international peace and security. They play an irreplaceable role in helping to stabilize the situation in host countries and in strengthening their security capacity. They help to create favourable conditions for political settlement. Therefore, peacekeeping operations overall have been well recognized by Member States. To further improve the performance of peacekeeping missions in terms of

implementing the Council's mandates and to deepen cooperation with the relevant host countries, China wishes to share the following points.

First, it is imperative to adhere to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the fundamental principles for peacekeeping operations, as well as to respect the sovereignty and leadership of host countries.

Secondly, attention must be paid to communication with host countries and the relevant parties so as to win their trust. Peacekeeping operations must ensure smooth communication with host countries at all stages of deployment, and relevant issues must be addressed through timely consultations.

Thirdly, it is necessary to assist host countries in building and improving their national mechanisms and enhancing their force generation capacity. Peacekeeping operations must prioritize capacity-building in host countries when conditions permit. Moreover, at the request of host countries, peacebuilding operations should provide support in the establishment and the improvement of national mechanisms.

I would now like to ask the two Force Commanders two questions. First, peacekeeping operations take political settlement as a priority. Based on the experience of the two Force Commanders, which areas of peacekeeping mission mandates require further adjustment? Secondly, to improve the safety and security of peacekeeping personnel, how have their two missions cooperated with host countries? What are some areas for further improvement?

Mr. Heusgen (Germany): At the outset, I wish to commend you, Mr. President, for organizing this debate. You have been very successful in terms of holding the shortest and most interactive briefings ever.

Germany wishes to pay tribute to the peacekeepers, soldiers and police deployed worldwide and recognizes their actions, achievements and the sacrifices they must often make.

Turning to Major General Cheryl Pearce, those who do not follow the developments in Cyprus on a daily basis might have the impression that the situation there is rather quiet. She helpfully pointed out that there has been an increase in violations and a hardening of positions, which certainly has an impact on the overall situation in Cyprus. She mentioned in particular that the authority of the United Nations Peacekeeping Force

in Cyprus in the buffer zone is questioned. Given that, what more can be done to re-establish or strengthen the authority of the mission? What can be done internally, perhaps with the Secretary-General or with Mr. Lacroix? Perhaps she could tell us a bit about the "internal cuisine". Also, what action can the Security Council take?

Turning now to the situation in the Sudan, I do not think anyone perceives the situation there to be quiet. I would like to commend Lieutenant General Leonard Muriuki Ngondi for his briefing, which was very precise and very much to the point. I understood from his statement that he finds the situation worrisome. I also understood that the handover of team sites to civilians, as foreseen by the mandate, is not taking place, but that there is an order by the Transitional Military Council to give the team sites to the Rapid Support Forces (RSF). We all know that the Rapid Support Forces were previously known as the Janjaweed, who were responsible for the mass atrocities in Darfur.

The Lieutenant General mentioned looting at team sites and said that the Government is not fulfilling its obligation to allow access. Furthermore, he said that land ownership was the major issue at the root of much of the conflict, which had not been addressed. In that context, I have of course listened to all of those who said how important it is for peacekeeping operations to have good relations with the authorities and that host authorities have the main obligation to protect civilians. The challenge, then, is what happens if the authorities do not fulfil their obligations? Two weeks ago, in Khartoum, the authorities were responsible for the death of over 100 people. Sexual violence was once again used. What happens in such cases, or when the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is violated by the authorities?

I would like to ask the Lieutenant General what military consequences he expects if we continue with the drawdown of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID), a decision that was made when the weather was fair. What consequences are expected when the Rapid Support Forces, as the Transitional Military Council decrees, takes over the team sites? What can he tell us about his experience on the ground? How is the RSF accepted by the local African population? Does he expect renewed clashes in Darfur? Perhaps he can tell us something about the situation in Darfur over the past week.

Lastly, I would like to add on to what my colleague from Peru said with regard to sexual violence. Two weeks ago, we again witnessed sexual violence being used in Khartoum. Khartoum is no longer UNAMID's area of operation, but what can the Lieutenant General tell us about sexual violence in the area where UNAMID is operational? What can be done? What has Lieutenant General Ngondi been doing to fight sexual violence in conflict?

Mr. Singer Weisinger (Dominican Republic) (*spoke in Spanish*): First of all, we would like thank the briefers for their briefings today.

We express our most sincere condolences following the death of Major General Francis Vib Sanziri.

There is no denying the important role played by peacekeeping operations, which are a vital tool for achieving international peace and security, as set out in the Charter of the United Nations. Peace operations are conducted in the context of daily life and therefore involve several disciplines. We must stress that it is important for missions to strictly adhere to the basic pillars of peacekeeping: consent of the parties to the conflict, impartiality and the non-use of force, except in cases of legitimate self-defence and in defence of mandates. The consent of the host country is key for the effective discharge of mission mandates. At times, we have seen the use of tactics that obstruct and affect the performance of mandate activities or delay the political process that the missions must support.

We thank Lieutenant General Ngondi for his briefing and note with concern the impact recent political developments in the Sudan could have on the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID). Such developments are marked by the lack of cooperation between the Sudanese State and the mission. A successful exit requires close cooperation between the host country and peace missions and allows for the effective transfer of responsibilities from the mission to the State. In the Sudan there is a need for an inclusive and transparent political process, led by civilians, that allows for the restoration of democratic order and good governance. That would ensure that the State is committed to cooperating closely with UNAMID and implementing the proposed exit strategy. Such cooperation would make it possible for both the mission and the State to have the tools needed for the transfer of responsibilities.

Our delegation would like to take this opportunity to express the following concerns.

The first pertains to the work with communities in countries affected by conflict. How do they think we could strengthen the mandates of peacekeeping operations to ensure closer collaboration with communities and, specifically, with young people and women? Secondly, we acknowledge the crucial role played by peacekeepers deployed in highly dangerous missions. That sacrifice requires that the necessary measures be taken in order to equip personnel with the skills that would enable them to develop and thereby ensure efficient and effective performance on the ground. In that regard, what additional measures or programmes are being considered to strengthen the training of peacekeepers prior to deployment in order to ensure optimum performance as they carry out their functions and the effective fulfilment of mandates?

It is important that peacekeepers be trained on gender issues, which requires the deployment of gender advisers and women's protection advisers and the strengthening of zero-tolerance policies for sexual and gender-based violence committed by peacekeepers.

With regard to the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus, we note that incursions into the buffer zone continue, in violation of resolution 2453 (2019). What other preventive measures do the Force Commanders think could be taken to reduce such violations?

In conclusion, we would like to reiterate that peace missions are a vital tool in peacebuilding and peacekeeping and that only with will and joint efforts will we succeed in achieving lasting peace.

Mr. Van Shalkwyk (South Africa): Let me start by thanking Under-Secretary-General Lacroix and Lieutenant General Ngondi for their briefings. It is good to see a fellow brother from Africa speaking to us today. I would also like to thank Major General Pearce for her briefing.

Let me also extend condolences to the families of all peacekeepers, men and women, who have made the ultimate sacrifice in their duty to keep the peace and help communities and societies achieve peace and find a way forward. We appreciate their sacrifice and acknowledge the difficult circumstances in which peacekeepers work and the challenges they must face and overcome.

My delegation would like to reaffirm the importance of peacekeeping as one of the most effective tools available to the United Nations as it promotes and maintains international peace and security. The briefers gave us quite a challenge — coming here without prepared statements and fielding questions. We really appreciate that.

As we have stated before in the Chamber, we remain of the view, especially with regard to the two missions represented here today, both for the Sudanese people and the people of Cyprus, that the solution to their problems lies with the communities themselves. In our view, peacekeeping operations create an environment to find the peace they need to find. It would be helpful to hear from our colleagues whether or not they think that that approach plays a positive role in specific missions. We are referring to the drawdown and withdrawal of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID). It will be interesting to hear the perspectives of Lieutenant General Ngondi about that issue. With regard to Cyprus, it is one of our longest-running peacekeeping missions. It is one we think of as “business as usual”. As we know, things are not always that easy. It would be good to hear her perspective.

Much has been said about trilateral cooperation. We would like to hear from our briefers about the value of trilateral cooperation. As members of the Council, we always provide our views regarding how important it is. Could we perhaps have a practical example of how it works in both missions, because the two missions are very different?

As an African member of the Council, the situation in the Sudan is very important to us. We are also well aware of the operational and financial challenges being faced. Funding is constantly an issue as it pertains to ensuring success and that peacekeepers are safe and peacekeeping operations effective. It is vital to ensure that, with respect to peacekeeping operations, there is no reversal in the gains made. The Force Commanders are probably well aware of the decision that the African Union Peace and Security Council made regarding the drawdown of UNAMID and some of the concerns that have been raised, such as, in particular, not leaving a vacuum and, as some of the other members have already mentioned, the handover of sites. How is that kind of situation managed, especially as it pertains to agreeing with the host State, when a certain decision runs counter to the original view, for instance the

handover of sites to civilians? How is that situation managed? What assistance is needed from the Council?

As we have just done, we extend condolences following loss of life. However, there is a trend. We believe that, with regard to the safety and security of peacekeepers, they are increasingly coming under fire. It is becoming increasingly dangerous. What does Lieutenant General Ngondi think could be done to ensure the safety of peacekeepers? What do we need to enhance their safety and security? It is technology or equipment? We know that situations differ in terms of how dangerous they are, but what is his view with regard to what we can do to try to curb the rising death toll and the increasing number of attacks on peacekeepers?

Turning to Major General Cheryl Pearce, South Africa is a great supporter of women in peacekeeping operations. We are very glad to see her here, in particular as a woman in a leadership role. Since most of the other questions around the topic on which the President asked us to focus have already been asked, I will take a slight liberty and request, from her perspective, an understanding of the challenges faced by women in uniform, especially those in leadership positions, and we hope to see an increasing number of those positions going to women. We are very proud of our own progress, for example, with regard to the Force Intervention Brigade in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Some of her perspectives in that regard would be much appreciated.

Mr. Djani (Indonesia): At the outset, let me present Indonesia’s views on the agenda item under consideration. After that, we will pose questions to both Force Commanders. I would like to thank Under-Secretary-General Lacroix and the Force Commanders for their comprehensive briefings, which focused on cooperation with host States and on the operational challenges to the current mission mandates in the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) and the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP). Let me also extend our condolences to the family of Major General Francis Vib Sanziri and to all peacekeepers around the globe.

Consent is indeed one of the core principles of United Nations peacekeeping. Peacekeeping missions cannot deploy without the agreement and cooperation of the Government of the host State. There are in fact concrete actions that we could take as part of the Action for Peacekeeping agenda and its Declaration of

Shared Commitments to strengthen host-State consent and cooperation.

The first action is strengthening consultation among peacekeeping stakeholders on mandates and their implementation. We need to collectively implement the existing intergovernmental commitments on triangular cooperation between troop- and police-contributing countries, the Security Council and the Secretariat. We also need to consider options for further direct engagement between host Governments and the Security Council. That should include cooperation in the pursuit of Security Council mandates, including facilitating access, and recognize national responsibilities related to the safety and security of peacekeepers.

The second action concerns the contribution of peacekeeping operations to the protection of civilians. Our contingents in UNAMID have experienced first-hand that quick-impact projects, community engagement, mediation and facilitation, with close cooperation with the host Government, are vital in improving protection-of-civilian mandates.

The third action is better training and capacity-building for mission leaders to navigate issues related to host-State consent and cooperation. It takes a regular effort by mission leaders, with the assistance of Member States and regional organizations, to maintain the consent and cooperation of the host-State Government counterparts through all the changes. Managing host-State consent and cooperation is, I believe, the most important and difficult part of a mission leader's job.

The fourth action is ensuring that missions have the right tools to manage host-State consent and cooperation. In that respect, possible guidelines are required to navigate the cooperation with host-State Governments. The guidelines can outline different consent scenarios facing peacekeepers, response options and criteria for identifying a serious deterioration of consent. Such tools will be important when needed to elevate issues to the Security Council before the situation becomes a crisis.

Let me once again thank and pay tribute to the Force Commanders for their exemplary commitment. Indonesia, as one of the largest troop/police-contributors to peacekeeping operations, will always support their work and efforts, be it within UNAMID, UNFICYP or other peacekeeping missions around the globe.

I would like to end my remarks by posing some question to both Force Commanders. I would like to ask them, from their observations, the following. What are the concrete impacts of the so-called Christmas-tree mandates on the relationship between the peacekeeping missions and the host countries?

I would like to ask the Force Commander of UNAMID two additional questions. What are the challenges being faced to achieve a responsible drawdown and exit strategy? And what should the Security Council do to ensure that the formulation of the next mandate is clearly articulated and corresponds to the operational challenges?

I would like to ask the Force Commander of UNFICYP the following question. What should be improved in terms of the current mandate to ensure that UNFICYP can support the achievement of a political solution and improve cooperation with the host country?

Mr. Esono Mbengono (Equatorial Guinea) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to begin by thanking Mr. Lacroix, Lieutenant General Ngondi and Major General Pearce for their briefings. I will not read out a statement, since it would be very similar to what we have already heard. I will focus on some specific African-related issues.

We underline the significance of peacekeeping operations in the history of the United Nations. They have played a very important role in bringing about peace after many conflicts. At the same time, they face serious challenges. I believe that one of the tasks of the Council is to seek ways to streamline peacekeeping operations to ensure that they are more efficient. Of course, speakers have mentioned the importance of host countries, relations between peacekeeping operations and host countries and the consent of those countries, which are very important to success.

However, I want to focus on the issue of funding operations in Africa with United Nations financial support. I think that for us as Africans that continues to be a crucial issue. We know that there is not unanimity in the Council on this particular matter. But we think that this model of cooperation could be very valuable in the sense that we as Africans know our environment better than anyone else and Africa is where most of the conflicts under the Security Council's consideration emerge. Many of our partners, many of whom are here in the Chamber, and the United Nations itself have the resources that we as Africans need to be able to

deal with the problems and resolve the conflicts that plague us.

In that regard, I would like to ask a specific question, which I think is directed more to Mr. Lacroix, since the discrepancies that we have in the Security Council on the issue are to do with financing. Does he think that such financing by partners and the United Nations is viable to ensure that peacekeeping operations in Africa are more effective? With regard to the issue of Cyprus, I would like to know what the most serious challenges being faced by the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus are given the complexity of dealing with two different communities.

Regarding the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur, I would like to ask the following. In order for the mission to be successful, what should the Security Council do to ensure that the mandates are fully implemented without being amended?

Lastly, I would like to know — I do not know if someone asked this question before I arrived — if peacekeeping operations, specifically the two cases that we are considering, have any programmes in place to promote reconciliation, including confidence-building measures to improve coexistence in such complex situations, should the local populations become hostile towards the troops that are basically in their countries?

Mrs. Van Vlierberge (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): I will start by paying tribute to the men and women who serve the flags and the values of the United Nations on the ground. The Security Council owes it to them to continue the work it is doing as part of the Action for Peacekeeping initiative.

Today I would like to raise a few questions and underscore two points: first, our responsibility to support political processes and, secondly, the quest for performance by the operations themselves.

I would like to start by affirming our commitment to focusing on sustainable political solutions. I see many ways to achieve that. First of all, peacekeeping operations must be dynamic and adapt to the realities on the ground. The African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur is a prime example of that. Pursuing withdrawal without taking into consideration the political developments under way in Khartoum would be unrealistic. In that regard, I would be very

grateful if Lieutenant General Ngondi could share with us his assessment of that particular matter.

Secondly, missions can be served only through clear, understandable, unequivocal and consistent mandates. I have a question for the two Force Commanders: how could the Council make mandates clearer?

Thirdly, with regard to providing appropriate mandates and adequate resources, Belgium is very keen on ensuring that adequate resources be made available to United Nations missions.

My second point concerns performance. The performance of missions is key to improving their acceptance by local populations and the renewed commitment of police- and troop-contributing countries. We all have a shared interest in effective performance. The host country is both a key player in terms of performance and the primary beneficiary of that.

Performance, however, does not depend solely on adequate capacity and the training of troops, it also depends on how United Nations missions function and use their capacities over and beyond the necessary command and control relations of the military component. What we are talking about is the way in which all capacities and components are deployed and the so-called integrated function of the mission. In that regard, I have a question for the two Force Commanders. How do they see the integration of their respective missions?

Finally, the performance of missions involves the people within the missions. We were pleased to hear from Major General Cheryl Pearce today and we commend the Secretariat for the action undertaken on gender equity in the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP), which makes the mission a model of gender equity with regard to its leadership. How is Major General Pearce experiencing that aspect of UNFICYP?

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I shall now make a statement in my national capacity.

At the outset, I would like to thank Under-Secretary-General Lacroix, Lieutenant General Ngondi and Major General Pearce for their briefings. We welcome their presence with us in this meeting and the dialogue currently under way. We express our deep gratitude for the Force Commanders' efforts and endeavours in the

service of peace, and we honour their colleagues who sacrificed their lives for peace.

We might not be one of the regular troop-contributing countries. However, Kuwait hosted a United Nations peacekeeping Mission for more than 10 years, and we are fully aware of the importance of peacekeeping operations. I am of course referring to the United Nations Iraq-Kuwait Observation Mission (UNIKOM), which was an example of the successful missions.

I would like to thank Member States for agreeing that this meeting would have the format of an interactive dialogue with each other. In my statement today I will focus on three basic points: first, best practices; secondly, initiatives to enhance cooperation and, thirdly, what is needed to enhance cooperation.

It has been more than 70 years since the establishment of the first peacekeeping operation. We now have at our disposal a wealth of best practices, foremost among them the three peacekeeping principles, including the primacy of political solutions and national ownership.

The first peacekeeping principle is the consent and approval of the parties concerned. Continuous communication between the mission and the host country contributes to implementing the mission's mandate and defusing any dispute before it erupts. Moreover, designing missions based on the primacy of political solutions contributes to promoting national ownership through robust national institutions that host countries can use to fulfil their primary responsibility of protection. We have seen the success of that approach in Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia and Haiti.

On initiatives to enhance cooperation, we have listened to the briefers about some examples of cooperation. We recall our own national experience in hosting UNIKOM for more than 12 years, during which we shared the burden. We would like to note some commendable initiatives that need to be followed.

We thank Côte d'Ivoire for its interest in the topic at hand, as illustrated by the holding a meeting of the Working Group on Peacekeeping Operations prior to today's meeting. We also commend the Cairo road map, which advanced the concept of trilateral cooperation and turned it into quadripartite consultations by adding the perspective of the host country.

Coordinating in advance with host countries and ensuring their participation in drafting resolutions

to establish or modify a mission are not a periodic requirement but a necessity, as those countries are part of making peacekeeping a success. In addition, peacekeepers must receive the necessary training, including on discipline-related matters as well as language training. That responsibility is not shouldered only by a mission, but also by host countries through continuously abiding by agreements — from the establishing of a mission until its departure. We thank the Republic of the Sudan and the Republic of Cyprus for their cooperation with the two missions.

Many questions have been directed to the briefers. That is why, before I conclude, I will raise only a general question. The Security Council designs missions, while those in the field implement them. This is an opportunity to ask the briefers about any advice they could provide, especially when there is disagreement between the parties during periods of transition. What kind of advice could the briefers give the Security Council on what action to take when there is disagreement between the parties concerned and in periods of transition?

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I would now like to turn the floor over to the briefers to respond to the questions posed or make further comments.

I give the floor to Mr. Lacroix.

Mr. Lacroix: I will be very brief. I certainly do not want to turn the discussion into one primarily between the Security Council and myself. Most of the questions were addressed to my colleagues the Force Commanders, and they will be answering those questions.

First, a question was posed directly to me regarding the financing of peacekeeping operations in Africa. I think there are two different levels for doing that. On one hand, the issue of making sure that United Nations operations in Africa have enough resources to deliver on their mandates is very important. I think, just to be very concise on this issue, there are three points there.

The first is that we are committed to continuing our efforts to find efficiency and to make the best use of the resources that are given to us. There are a number of efforts that were made to that effect, and we feel it is our duty to continue.

Secondly, we need adequate resources to continue implementing our mandates in environments that I think everybody around this table recognizes are very challenging and very difficult.

Thirdly, it may be the case in some instances that our peace operations can be faced with unexpected situations that may have financial implications. I just want to mention one, which is the challenge posed by the support of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) to the Ebola response, which draws heavily on MONUSCO's resources in terms of logistical support, the use of our security and police and military forces to support our colleagues who are dealing with Ebola, and a number of other resources dedicated by MONUSCO to that support, including some of our colleagues, especially after the decision that was made to strengthen the Ebola response in Butembo. That is just one example of a case where an unexpected situation has an impact on the financial resources required by peacekeeping operations.

The second part of the question was about financing operations in Africa, and the Council is no doubt aware of the position that the Secretary-General expresses regularly in support of providing those operations with predictable and sustainable financial resources, which we think is an important condition for their success. I want to reiterate that position here.

With regard to the questions that had to do with the relations with the host Government, I want to say that this key principle of peacekeeping remains entirely valid and that it is incumbent on us to seek the best possible interaction and cooperation with the host Government. Sometimes that is challenging. Our Force Commanders and Heads of missions make great efforts to address issues that have to do with clearances or freedom of movement, but in some cases we have to escalate those issues. My colleagues and I have done so on occasion when some of those issues needed to be addressed with representatives of the host Governments, and in some cases we do need the support of the Council in making sure that whatever difficulties we encounter can be resolved. I want to emphasize that it is a top priority of our missions to ensure the smoothest possible cooperation and interaction with host Governments.

The issue of performance was also mentioned. In that regard, I want to comment on the efforts we are currently making to enhance performance. It is a

multifaceted effort that includes putting in place various performance assessment mechanisms, including the military-unit and police-unit performance systems, along with the systematic investigation of cases where we believe we have not performed to expectations. We now systematically investigate those cases and I think that has resulted in a number of lessons learned and useful improvements.

The issue of the prioritization of mandates was also raised. I believe that we still need the Council to focus on our mandates' key priorities, but those priorities are evolving, and situations where at least in some cases we might once have considered the extension of a mandate to be a routine procedure no longer apply. All missions are more or less in a situation of transition. I have two comments to add in that connection, the first being that prioritizing mandates is also our responsibility as the United Nations, because we make recommendations to the Council that should be adequately prioritized. Secondly, our missions want the Council to decide their mandates so that their financial and human resources are allocated to the implementation of those priorities. That is easier said than done, because it requires constantly changing operations and seeing their structure evolve on a permanent basis.

Last but not least, we are committed to continuing our efforts to generally increase the role and positions for women in peacekeeping, including in the senior leadership of both our military units and civilian components. The trend is encouraging, but we are certainly committed to doing more.

Finally, regarding peacekeepers' safety and security, we are also committed to continuing the implementation of our dedicated plan for improving that. We had encouraging results last year, with a decrease in the number of fatalities due to hostile attacks, and this year so far only one mission has had fatalities as a result of hostile attacks. We are aware that more must be done, and that has to do with training, equipment, performance and medical support. We are working very hard on all of those issues.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank Mr. Lacroix for the clarifications he has provided.

I now give the floor to Lieutenant General Ngondi to respond to the questions and comments.

Lieutenant General Ngondi: I thank the speakers and the members of the Council for their kind words

and commendations. We appreciate the encouragement we have heard today.

There have been a lot of questions. I think it would be unfair to the Council members who have taken the time to ask them if I did not answer them all, and I will therefore try to respond to each and every question addressed to me.

First, with regard to the question posed by the representative of Poland as to whether the current mandate will allow us to work pragmatically, the short answer is yes. The four aspects that I mentioned as the main issues of the mandate are very clear and are functioning well, with the exception of the political pillar, which, because of the current political situation, has stalled. The rest are going well. The problem of denials of access in terms of visiting the entire area, particularly the limited area that is under the control of the armed movement, is the only area that is an obstacle to the full implementation of the mandate. I would therefore answer that the current mandate as outlined in resolution 2429 (2018) can indeed be implemented pragmatically.

The situation in Khartoum does have some impact on operations in Darfur, but not as much as in other areas. That is because whatever is happening in Khartoum, in Darfur there are those who support the Government and those who support the opposition. So it does have an effect, now more so given the militarization of the Government and the fact that the State is being run by people in uniform, which creates a disconnect with the management of the population itself and which is what we see as having a big impact in the area.

With regard to the suspension of the handover of the camps, it is our own camps that we are withdrawing from. I believe that this is something that will be worked out. From what I have gathered from what the Transitional Military Council has said, those that are with the Rapid Support Forces will be given to the communities for civilian use and not kept for the Rapid Support Forces. I therefore think the suspension is just a matter of time while these issues are sorted out. I think that is because of the response not only from the mission itself, but from the international community, including here at Headquarters, to the decree that was issued.

Moving to the question posed by the representative of the United Kingdom regarding the impact of reforms and what we are seeing on the ground, I say

that decentralizing resources and decision-making is always good. It makes it easy for us to operate with our resources and to make decisions.

As for the lessons we can learn from the looting of El Geneina, that was an unfortunate incident. The investigations are going on right now, but the El Geneina incident was unfortunate because the substantive section stopped operations in El Geneina as far back as 1 December 2018, and the facility has therefore remained there without people working with the communities. The substantive sections of components of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) work with the communities. Based on the experience of seeing team sites handed over to benefit the men in uniform, I tend to think that it is they who are also benefiting from that.

Lastly, as I said, the militarization of the Government has given the leadership of the State to uniformed officers who perhaps do not have the necessary channels of communication to the population to explain to them the usefulness of those team sites if they are left the way they are and handed over. This was an unfortunate incident, and the lesson that we have learned is that we must ensure that we have adequate capacity to protect ourselves to the best of our ability, depending on what we have at our disposal, and then to engage. We should not detach ourselves from the community again. The civil-affairs and rule-of-law personnel and all the other components that reach out to the communities and educate them on the beneficial purpose of our presence there must engage with them and the Government with regard to their primary responsibility to ensure peace and order in the area — which they are doing — so as to ensure that such incidents never recur.

Turning to the issue of violations of human rights raised by the representative of Peru, it is a major challenge. Our priority is to increase rule-of-law and human rights capacities, particularly with regard to monitoring human rights issues in the territories and, more important, educating the people and the Government on capabilities for ensuring law and order and respect for human rights. It is especially important to realize that the Sudan is a vast area, and that it is therefore vital to expand State authority to reach all the people, as well as the institutions that are responsible for the rule of law and maintaining order and justice.

Lastly, with regard to development, while it is not an immediate part of peacekeeping, the poverty

in Darfur has a direct influence on the incidence of violations, as they are what results when people struggle for their livelihoods in the absence of proper governance throughout the country and have to compete for resources, with all of that compounded by arms proliferation and weapons falling into the wrong hands. That is what makes the situation especially difficult.

Turning to the issue of the peaceful transition of power raised by the representative of Russia, the arrangements for that transition are quite elaborate. That is why the State liaison functions are there. We believe that it will be a peaceful transition, and it is being carried out as well as possible on the ground. As far as our safety is concerned, there are indeed valuable lessons to be learned from Lieutenant General dos Santos Cruz's report on *Improving security of United Nations peacekeepers*. I should start by saying that the situation in the Sudan is somewhat better than in other areas, because the Government has always dominated the area, and unlike in other missions, we do not see deliberate attacks on the mission itself. The Government is in full control of the area, and it is very difficult for concentrated armed elements to attack our camps without the Government identifying their signature. The problem we had was with the people themselves wanting to loot. We have said how we are tackling that and have put an adequate number of troops at every team site to ensure that we can do whatever is necessary.

With regard to the question by the representative of the United States, the Transitional Military Council has indicated that it will rescind its decree, although that has not been officially communicated. The question was about how we proceed from there. From the outset it has been agreed with the authorities that the team sites will be for civilian use. Working with communities and other non-security Government institutions, with the exception of the police, we have some idea of who the appropriate people will be to take over those team sites for civilian use. That will be put back on the table once we can ensure that the team sites will benefit the communities in which they are located and can be used by the communities, including universities, polytechnic institutions, hospitals and anything else that the communities have in mind. While we are supposed to hand back the spaces to the Government, which is where UNAMID got them from in the first place, the arrangement is that they will be returned to the community and not to the people in uniforms. That

is why the decree has to be contested so that we can go back to where we were.

The representative of France asked what the Security Council can do to help us enhance our work there in terms of cooperation. In that regard, it is important to ensure that both parties, UNAMID and the Government and its authorities, respect the mandate and the status of force agreement. It is as simple as that. As I said, there are two essential elements for that cooperation — trust and political will. We need that to ensure that our work can be done, and that is where we need the help.

With regard to the behaviour of the peacekeepers in the area, this mission has been perfect. For instance, we have not had a single allegation of sexual exploitation or abuse on the part of our uniformed personnel for the past four years, which is quite excellent.

With regard to the question from the representative of Côte d'Ivoire, as I said in my briefing, in terms of cooperation with the authorities regarding armed groups in the areas under their control, that is the only area in which people are not benefiting from UNAMID services, because of the denial of access. The area where the armed groups are is limited and contained. There was an exception to the denial of access on one occasion, in September of last year, when there was a landslide in that area and the Government allowed us access to it to help the victims of the landslide. The argument would be that as we are enemies neither of the Sudanese Liberation Army (SLA) nor of the Government, UNAMID peacekeepers should be allowed to go anywhere without problems, given that we negotiate and talk neutrally.

The representative of China asked what we should change in the mandate to ensure our success. As I said, the only issue relates to the political pillar, which is not very clear owing to the ongoing political situation and whether or not we might have to exit before it is resolved. We need to find an arrangement that will enable us to address that pillar through negotiations. As far as I can see, within the current political situation, in my honest opinion it would be better to consider the Darfur issue as part of the Sudan situation as a whole rather than separately, but that is up to the Sudanese people to decide. As far as our mission is concerned right now, that is the only area where we see no clarity of direction. We leave it to the Security Council to decide how to proceed on that pillar as we move forward.

The representative of Germany mentioned a number of important things, but to start with, the possibility of handing over the team sites to the Rapid Support Forces is something that will be worked on but will not happen. There are two sides to the coin with regard to the Rapid Support Forces. There are areas where the people themselves say that it is better to have them around because it keeps the peace and protects them from armed groups in a defined area. They therefore feel that there are areas where the Rapid Support Forces are useful to the people and are embraced because they help them, particularly the farming communities, because they do not have their own weapons, while there are nomads who roam about and do have weapons. The farmers feel all right about the presence of the Rapid Support Forces in certain areas because it means there will not be any armed people there. On the other hand, based on the Rapid Support Forces' history, some people are not very comfortable with them.

Are new clashes possible? I look at this issue from two perspectives. My concern is a military threat from clashes between the armed group that has a political agenda, the SLA, and the Government. Those are possible, and they break out once in a while. The other aspect is banditry activities — the cattle rustling, looting and criminality that happen everywhere. With the drawdown, those clashes might or might not happen, and the same goes for banditry. Without the rule of law and governance, those crimes are likely to continue. There could also be clashes between the SLA and the Government, but they would be contained within a certain area of Jebel Marra.

With regard to sexual violations and human rights violations generally, I believe that it is important to have human rights monitoring capability in the area.

The representative of the Dominican Republic mentioned collaboration with young people and the general population, which I agree is important. As I said before, when we started the drawdown, most of the components whose job it is to interact with the people, particularly civil society, among others, were removed. It is important to interact with the population, including young people, and promote capacity-building measures for their livelihoods. The governance section does a lot of good work in that regard. As for the military, what we need from the international community is for the troops to be trained on a variety of cross-cutting aspects, which is important in the areas of gender and human rights, for instance, so that when the troops are

in further areas where they cannot move with civilian components, they can still advocate and propagate for issues of civil society, gender and human rights and any others that can help communities. That is something that can be discussed with Member States to ensure that their troops are well trained on those issues even before they are deployed to mission areas.

The representative of South Africa asked whether we leave a vacuum when we hand over sites. I want to repeat that I have already discussed the issue of sites.

With respect to the safety of the peacekeepers, the Cruz report has been important for us. As Mr. Lacroix said, it is important for the Department of Peace Operations to be provided with enough resources to ensure that it can perform. I just want to say that if a time came when it seemed as if UNAMID could replace the Government, it would be time for us to exit and leave the country to take ownership of itself.

The representative of Indonesia asked what challenges we see and what we need for a responsible drawdown. I think that the mandate has always been clear for us uniformed personnel. We listen to what we are told and implement it. The drawdown has been responsibly conducted since we began it. We have been clear on that. We began in peaceful areas and are now left with the problematic area, although there are no problems on its outskirts, and that is a problem that requires a political solution rather than a military one. As I said in my briefing, the tripartite coordination mechanism invited everyone to the table, including the armed movements, but one of the movements has remained persistently uncommitted. Getting people to the table is an area that requires political effort, because everything must be sorted out through dialogue and the way forward must be agreed on. That is what we are seeing. But as far as the drawdown is concerned, I believe it has consistently been responsible, especially because we have seen no recurrences of hostilities within the areas where the mission has drawn down. I believe that even in the final stages it will continue to be done responsibly and will be supported by the greatest possible diplomatic efforts to ensure that the people reach agreement on the way forward for their country.

The representative of Equatorial Guinea asked about the peacekeeping force within the communities, and I will say again that our uniformed troops do not have skills in other areas such as civil affairs. They are more concerned with physical security. But as a

mission, we are integrated with civilian components and experts in other areas, and we work together so that we engage the communities, as well as the Government, in various areas. That collaboration should continue so as to ensure that the communities are engaged and well educated on what they need to do in various areas for their own survival and welfare.

The representative of Belgium asked about pulling out without political success, for lack of a better word. In my assessment, the political pillar is somewhat stalled and should be jump-started. The current situation is a little challenging in that regard, and work needs to be done there. Otherwise, all the UNAMID components are well integrated. We have an integrated approach to addressing issues, and we trust that we are all doing our part in a coordinated manner, from the leadership to the tactical level. However, I have to say that since we started the drawdown, some of the civilian elements and their useful services have been terminated, and we are really missing them, particularly the civil-affairs staff, who have eyes and ears on the ground in the communities.

I will turn lastly to the question of what we do when there are differences between parties, which I believe is in reference to the parties to the conflict. I want to underscore the most important aspect, which is dialogue and diplomatic effort, because it is through diplomatic efforts — people sitting down together and discussing the way forward — that final settlements are reached. Political dialogue, agreement and togetherness are crucial. It is the people themselves who are causing the problems, and they are the same ones who can solve problems by sitting down together, talking and agreeing on a way forward, which is how everything will be okay. Therefore, when parties have differences, they should seek each other out, discuss from their different points of view and come together until they reach an agreement.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I shall now give the floor to Major General Pearce to respond to the comments and questions raised.

Major General Pearce: I thank Council members for their kind words regarding our peacekeeping efforts. They are much appreciated. I shall answer all questions as I heard them, and ask members to correct me if I captured them incorrectly. Some will be practically aligned to myself as Force Commander, but there are a couple that are more politically aligned. My Special

Representative of the Secretary-General will be here in a month and I will make some comments and defer to her those that I sense she is better able to answer.

In regard to the question posed by the representative of Poland with respect to whether the current mandate is working well and what our approach is, under the current mandate we are able to support the mission and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General's political outcome. We are proactive in the buffer zone. We have a small force now of only just over 800 personnel. We are fully committed, through a strong patrolling and engagement liaison programme, to achieving the mission to de-escalate tensions within the buffer zone.

The obstacles for us are actually twofold. As I indicated in my statement, it is about the lack of respect for our mandated authority in the buffer zone and the fact that neither side acknowledges or accepts the 2018 aide-memoire. It is a very loose and difficult environment in which to communicate and engage when we do not have a base level from which to operate.

In response to the question on migration, we have a whole-of-United-Nations approach to migration in Cyprus. The past six months have seen a continual increase in arrivals of asylum-seekers and applications to Cyprus. Cyprus remains in first place among European Union members in terms of applicants per capita. New arrivals from the north of the island are mostly Syrian nationals arriving from Turkey and Lebanon, while persons of African origin are entering as students or to seek employment and crossing south in steadily increasing numbers.

We recorded fewer actual arrivals in the buffer zone, as there is a small area on the west of the island where it is possible to enter by boat. However, smuggling routes across the island are increasingly being used. The buffer zone is porous and there are insufficient forces to be able to take on the responsibility of irregular migration. Having said that, we are working closely with both sides to address the issue and identify opportunities to support those that are coming through, as well as those who will have to return to their home countries.

I thank the representative of the United Kingdom for his questions. Regarding impact on the ground and the peace and security architecture, I wholeheartedly welcomed the directed architecture, which allows for the synchronization of the work that we are currently doing within Cyprus. Through the performance measures,

the mission concept that we now have operating and the comprehensive performance assessment system that we are developing and trialling this year, we can monitor the performance of our troops; ensure that our resources are expended in the best way possible; and ensure that the training we are conducting is aligned with the outcomes of the Action for Peacekeeping initiative (A4P) and, where there are gaps, allows us to focus on them.

In terms of performance, we certainly engage through our sectors in addition to a top-down approach. We have long-standing troop-contributing country commitments and that national line with the troop-contributing countries ensures a short feedback loop in terms of training; that we see optimal performance and training in our individuals when they first arrive; and that we have the opportunity, where gaps exist, to conduct mission training and address those gaps.

Mandate mechanisms, which the Special Representative of the Secretary-General will speak about in more detail, have certainly been a work in progress. The concept of mechanisms within Cyprus has been uncharted and so we are attempting a cold start. Some are working at a faster pace than others, and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General has done a lot of work with both sides to identify mechanisms that we can move forward with. She will indicate that rapport when she comes here next month, so I will leave this matter for her to expand on then.

In response to the representative of Peru, we have been working on confidence-building mechanisms politically at the civilian, military and police levels. Many of these measures are therefore stemming into the military and the policing components. For us, this involves demining and suspected hazardous areas, where we are certainly making progress and looking to complete early next year.

With regard to working at the community level, we believe that a bottom-up approach and bicomunal engagement across the island to build the confidence of the communities — the Turkish Cypriots and the Greek Cypriots — will help us to successfully identify a way forward. That is a whole-of-mission approach and we, as a military, work closely with the civil affairs section, the United Nations police and the political component to address that on a number of levels.

In response to the representative of Russia, as I have already mentioned and touched on with regard

to the report authored by former United Nations Force Commander, Lieutenant General Carlos Alberto dos Santos Cruz, entitled *Improving security of United Nations peacekeepers*, we take performance seriously. Training and safety are certainly my primary priority in everything we do within the mission. It is articulated in our mission concept; we have our work force plans, our comprehensive performance assessment system and the A4P outcomes, as well as my own concept of operations and my priorities for the Force. We have continual evaluations and, as I said, a close feedback loop, which we continue to review, analyse and implement going forward.

I thank the representative of the United States for his questions. Regarding freedom of action around the island, we do have, and are very fortunate to have, freedom of action around Cyprus. We have a couple of areas that are disputed on the northern ceasefire line, where that freedom of action is challenged at times. I am currently working closely with my opposing force commanders on those areas of challenge with the intention of de-escalating the situation to support the Special Representative of the Secretary-General to achieve the political outcomes. I keep an eye on that what we have done as a United Nations over time and there are certainly some cyclic approaches that we have taken. In order to understand the opposing force's position, aligning to what the political outcomes are is really important.

As for the second question of the United States representative regarding host country consent and their view of the buffer zone, both sides have completely separate views. The Greek Cypriots see the buffer zone as Republic of Cyprus territory, despite us having mandated authority, and they encourage Greek Cypriot civilians to pursue activities there, whereas the Turkish forces see it as an area that should remain sterile until its status is determined as an agreed part of the settlement and those territorial adjustments. That creates a tension in itself, in terms of their own understanding of what their position on the buffer zone is. Without accepting or even reading and acknowledging the aide-memoire, it is really difficult. We do not have rules of the road on which way to operate, so it certainly creates tensions near and close to the northern ceasefire line, between us and the Turkish forces; the farmers and the Turkish forces; and us and the farmers.

I thank the representative of France for her questions. In regard to the internal and external

strategic and operational feedback, as a small mission we are very fortunate that we can work in a really integrated approach, and the political nuances and what I do as a military force have political implications. It is probably the first time for me as a Commander that small and what I would consider to be very tactical incidents on the ground have political implications. I was surprised but now, having a better understanding of the environment in which I work, I can understand those tensions tactically at the small level on the ground and what that means to both sides. The Council has seen that through some of the reporting that we have done in the past six months.

In regard to the representative of France's second question concerning freedom of movement with respect to the status of forces agreement, as I indicated we have no concerns about that. We do have the freedom of action for that.

We do not have protection of civilians within our mandate, so I will not respond to those questions directly, but in regard to the behaviour of peacekeepers I have zero tolerance for sexual exploitation and abuse and for any unacceptable behaviour by my peacekeepers. I will hold every individual accountable for his or her actions in the mission. The reputational risk, not only to the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) but to the United Nations as a whole, is sometimes disproportionate to the incident but is also unacceptable to the United Nations when they are serving under the flag, and I know that they are also held to the highest standard by the troop-contributing countries.

With respect to the question from the representative of Côte d'Ivoire regarding reconciliation among communities, we work closely with a lot of non-governmental organizations working with the communities in the bicomunal space. We have a civil affairs unit, and across the board we are all working together to engage not only along the buffer zone and the communities that straddle it, but across the island more broadly. It is becoming a bit of an issue just along the buffer zone, and there are a lot of areas outside of that where it is business as usual. They are not really focused on or aware of the Cyprus problem as it certainly does not connect to them individually.

Again, we have zero tolerance for sexual exploitation and abuse. We have just had an evaluation

team come through, and we are always looking for continuous improvement in that space.

As to the question posed by the representative of China in regard to performance improvement, I am on a continuous improvement programme, whether it be with the Force, with our training, with our safety or with our engagement and liaison. It is a constant evaluation of what we are doing. How can we improve? How can we engage better? One issue of having troop-contributing nations that have contributed to UNFICYP for decades is that complacency can creep in. It is therefore really important that we remain focused to ensure that training remains relevant for the mission. I will not address the question concerning which areas of the mandate require adjustment directly. There is a situation of tension with UNFICYP. The mandate was established in 1964. The current environment is one in which the two sides differ in opinion as to what is in the buffer zone. We now have tension in terms of maintaining stability and calm within the buffer zone and maintaining the normal conditions of the buffer zone. What do I mean by normal conditions? To the Greek Cypriots, that means opening the zone up to farming, which actually has an effect on security. So, we are seeing tensions between different components of the mandate, but we are currently working through them.

Regarding the question on engagement with the host countries, we recognize that we have a status of forces agreement with the Republic of Cyprus. For myself as Force Commander, I need to have engagement with both the opposing forces and I need to be impartial. I need to demonstrate impartiality. I need to have proactive, honest and direct conversations in a respectful way with both my counterparts to ensure that we can find measures and that we can find ways to tackle the issues of concern with a view to de-escalating those areas of tension.

Turning to the representative of Germany, who referred to the hardening of positions, there were reports in 2018 concerning this. CCTV captured the hardening of positions, as well as construction, at the northern ceasefire line. We had a lot of violations in that area, although there was a slight decrease in 2018. They are still there and they are still manned. However, where we are seeing the violations now is actually in the disputed areas, where we have a difference in what the United Nations and the Turkish forces recognize as the ceasefire line. It is those areas of dispute that are creating many of the violations. There are also farmers

who choose to farm close to the position of the Turkish forces, and that is also creating some tension, prompting some moves of the Turkish forces from the north.

Regarding what support the Security Council could provide, acknowledgement of the aide-memoire and the continued support of our mandated authority, allowing us to continue to work towards progress with both sides will give us a baseline on which to communicate and on which to make progress in terms of de-escalating the environment.

In regard to the question asked by the representative of the Dominican Republic on collaboration with the communities and strengthening the mandate, we have a really strong programme with women and youth. We are taking a bottom-up, bicomunal approach, as I indicated. We actively engage with the diplomatic community within Cyprus, and they are all on board to support and empower the women and youth in Cyprus to have a voice, both in the educational and in the political environments. We have a gender adviser who is focused solely on that area. It is still sometimes disappointing to see the lack of results, but we will continue to persist in that area.

In regard to peacekeeping staff dealing with gender issues, we do have gender advisers. I would also like to say that we have strong female leadership within the mission, and we continue to focus on that area. I would say, though, that an inclusive and diverse environment in which females feel that they can thrive and operate on an equal footing with their male counterparts is one that must be created. They will then spread the word. We are very fortunate with our troop-contributing countries from both Slovakia and Argentina, which do not send formed units. They send individuals who are volunteers. We therefore have the opportunity within UNFICYP to target, engage and try to increase the number of females within the mission.

It is about the voice. I know through my own experiences that word of mouth and understanding of the working environment can encourage people to want to go there. People will want to come to UNFICYP if the right environment is created. On top of that we have a gender parity action plan that allows us to provide a voice to the sectors. That is led by our female peacekeepers, who inform headquarters on what is working and what is not, and what resources should be provided in order to create that right environment.

I have covered the question concerning incursions in the buffer zone. That is really about the farmers working close to the northern ceasefire line. They will continue to be problematic because the issue pertains to European Union subsidies. They will continue to seek the use of more land. Permits account for perhaps 20 per cent usage of the buffer zone. They have our approval to be there. Unauthorized personnel account for 80 per cent of the buffer zone. There are also Turkish Cypriots who are not authorized to farm there, creating farmer-on-farmer tension, which can escalate and become violent. We target that issue through hotspot targeting and try to de-escalate the situation by using civilian mukhtars and mayors and by working through Civil Affairs back to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. With regard to the issue of opposing force on opposing force, that has not been as problematic in my time as Force Commander.

With respect to the question from the representative of South Africa about the communities, we have continued to focus on our bicomunal, bizonal approach. We work along the buffer zone, within the communities, to find opportunities going forward. It is a long process in achieving even few gains concerning ownership by both sides to work together and be bottom-up driven. It continues to be a priority focus for the Special Representative of the Secretary-General. In the absence of political dialogue, our focus is on community-led opportunities at the moment, which will become significant in trying to achieve a positive environment on which we can build going forward.

The question regarding women in leadership is in line with comments I have already made. The challenges are about creating, as I said, an inclusive and diverse environment in which both men and women can thrive, allowing everyone to have a voice. In my own career, I recognized that in 1995 when I first joined, it was the first year that we had integrated training. In sum, it is a generational change in which women can come to fill some of the senior leadership. Those opportunities must be grown. They are not opportunities that you can bring in in the military generally at different ranks. It is something you have to nurture from the start. If you create the right framework, open up the trades and employment opportunities for females and provide initiatives and policies to allow periods of part-time work for those who choose to have families so that they can enter and exit the service, you can create some really great leaders. Fifty per cent of society can be targeted

and, in that there are many very talented individuals who can really be a capability force multiplier if the approach is right.

For me, it is not about females advocating for other females. It is he for she. It is the male champions of change approach that must be emphasized. I know that the Military Adviser sitting behind me is a great champion of change on that issue and is focused on it. Certainly, I think there is great opportunity going forward for the United Nations, especially in the military force, where we can remain focused on it. In time and through targets, I believe that we will continue to improve. It will not happen quickly but it will happen.

We all understand at the higher level, but at the lower level my priority is not to disenfranchise our young males or our males within the units. Females do not want to be singled out, in the main. They just want to get in and do the job. Whatever we do as we go forward, we must create an environment that allows everyone to thrive and grow within that framework.

With regard to the question from the representative of Indonesia about concrete methods in the mandate for host countries and understanding their interpretation of those methods, for us that is about the aide-memoire and that mandated authority. Without that, it will remain difficult for us to make progress. It is crucial for us to de-escalate and reduce tensions. At the moment — and it is a very colloquial term — we are playing whack-a-mole. We are taking on every issue. We are proactive. We know where the hot issues will be and we target them. They are the same every year. We really need to get at the cause and not purely treat the symptoms of what we are dealing with. What should be improved in the current mandate? I spoke about the tension between the normal conditions and security in the buffer zone.

Regarding the question from the representative of Equatorial Guinea about the most serious challenges with the two different communities, we started with a group of Cypriots. We had the Turkish Cypriots and the Greek Cypriots. Over time, the longer we take to come up with a solution, the more culturally diverse the two communities become. We are now seeing permanent residents from Turkey establishing themselves in the north. There is a whole community in the south. If they are not along the buffer zone, they have little relevance to what is occurring. The education systems for both have a different narrative, as Council members

are aware. As time goes on, both groups become increasingly culturally diverse.

It is really is about trying to encourage those communities to want to come together to create a bicomunal, bizonal federation. For that, we have to work really hard to bring the groups together, develop initiatives and determine how to communicate with them. Creating the outreach programmes and building confidence within the community is significant in that regard, but we have to keep thinking about more than just the same groups that we deal with now, because they are already on board. It is about finding new communities and encouraging and engaging with the broader community to work together.

The representative of Belgium asked how the Council could further improve the appropriate resources. As Council members are aware, we had our strategic review in 2017. We have implemented all those recommendations. As a Force Commander, I would say that I have the minimum number of troops I need to be able to carry out my component of the mandate. The strength of UNFICYP lies in the number of troops on the ground. It is the patrol and engagement activities, day in and day out. It is our liaison and engagement. We are porous and stretched. Any reduction in resources for UNFICYP would require consideration of a change of mandate or change of what the Force would look like.

With regard to the performance of the missions and acceptance by the communities, because of our normal day-to-day activities, we are always actively engaged with the communities through our active patrolling. That relationship is being built over time. As a long-established mission, we have been actively involved with both communities and have established very strong relationships with all of them.

With respect to the integration of the mission, we are a small mission and we work closely together as the three components. There are still challenges but we often have solid approaches. My assessment is that through the comprehensive performance assessment system mission concept and a focus by the current leadership on conducting an integrated approach, we will continue to improve in that area.

Concerning the question from you, Mr. President, about our challenges, there is confliction of the mandate with regard to normal conditions and security and stability within the buffer zone. We must also work to ensure that we do not have a recurrence of

fighting. The void when we are not there could lead to farmer-on-farmer conflict, which would be backed by opposing forces or it would certainly be between a Greek Cypriot farmer and one of the Turkish forces, which would also create tensions. For us it means being in the buffer zone and continually engaging with our counterparts through the very strong engagement plan that we have implemented.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): The representative of Germany has asked to make a second statement.

Mr. Heusgen (Germany): First, I wish very briefly to thank both Commanders for their responses to the questions, their level of detail and their commitment to their tasks, as reflected in their answers.

I want briefly to come back to the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID). I am somewhat afraid that we are too much on autopilot with respect to the drawdown of UNAMID. From what I heard about the challenges that the Force Commander faces, we are aware that he and

his troops are able to handle most of those, but they are still challenges.

From my perspective, the most important of these was perhaps not sufficiently highlighted, and that is the fact that we now have a new environment in Khartoum. The Transitional Military Council is now in control, and the strongman General Hamdan is the head of the Rapid Support Forces (RSF). They have decided that the Rapid Support Forces should take over the sites where UNAMID is stationed. I believe that we cannot accept that. We fully support what the Force Commander is planning with regard to the team sites being taken over by universities, hospitals or civil society. But to have them as outposts of the Rapid Support Forces, which were responsible for what is now being called the “Khartoum massacre” on 3 June, is unacceptable. We cannot accept that the UNAMID team sites will in future be the sites of the RSF, which is the follow-up organization to the Janjaweed, who were co-responsible for the outbreak of the Darfur conflict from the very beginning.

The meeting rose at 12.35 p.m.