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Seventy-seventh year

9123rd meeting

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New York

Provisional

President: Mr. De Rivière (France)

Members:

Albania	Mr. Hoxha
Brazil	Mr. Costa Filho
China	Mr. Geng Shuang
Gabon	Mr. Biang
Ghana	Mr. Anyanah
India	Mrs. Kamboj
Ireland	Mr. Mythen
Kenya	Mr. Kiboino
Mexico	Mr. De la Fuente Ramírez
Norway	Ms. Heimerback
Russian Federation	Mr. Nebenzia
United Arab Emirates	Mrs. Alhefeiti
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . .	Mr. Kariuki
United States of America	Mr. DeLaurentis

Agenda

United Nations peacekeeping operations

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

Expression of thanks to the outgoing President

The President (*spoke in French*): I should also like to take this opportunity to pay tribute, on behalf of the Council, to His Excellency Ambassador Zhang Jun, Permanent Representative of China, for his service as President of the Council for the month of August 2022. I am sure I speak for all members of the Council in expressing deep appreciation to Ambassador Zhang and his team for the great diplomatic skill with which they conducted the Council's business last month.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

United Nations peacekeeping operations

The President (*spoke in French*): In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Jean-Pierre Lacroix, Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations, to participate in this meeting.

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

I give the floor to Mr. Lacroix.

Mr. Lacroix (*spoke in French*): I am very honoured to be given the opportunity to brief the Security Council on resolution 2378 (2017), as well as the progress and challenges concerning the implementation of the Action for Peacekeeping (A4P) initiative and, more recently, the Action for Peacekeeping Plus (A4P+) initiative.

(spoke in English)

Four years ago (S/PV.8218), before the Council, the Secretary-General launched A4P to make our missions stronger, safer and more effective. He invited Member States and relevant international and regional organizations to endorse the Declaration of Shared Commitments, as a clear commitment to work with us towards those objectives.

Two years on, we took stock of the progress made and remaining gaps. Based on research and strategic reviews of our missions, we decided to focus on seven priority areas in order to make tangible improvements to our impact. That led to the Secretary-General launching A4P+ in March 2021, not to replace A4P but rather to

prioritize the areas that are most critical to addressing challenges faced in the area of peacekeeping.

Today is an opportunity to update Council members on the highlights of our efforts and results so far. I hope that the A4P+ reports distributed to all Council members serve as a resource to provide a more detailed overview. We look forward to continuing to provide such updates on a regular basis, but I would like to emphasize that, as in everything we do, our own collective efforts and those of Member States are required for success.

(spoke in French)

The environments in which peacekeepers are deployed are complex and difficult. As we know all too well, the world today is facing many overlapping crises. We are facing the largest number of violent conflicts since 1945, with growing geopolitical tensions and phenomena such as the coronavirus disease pandemic and the destructive impact of the effects of climate change.

In the middle of all of that, United Nations peacekeepers remain on the front lines and strive to prevent the spread and escalation of the scourge of war in the areas in which they operate. They protect civilians, support ceasefires, participate in national capacity-building, promote human rights and bring communities and countries together. They are facing unprecedented risks, including by being targeted by violent extremists. Challenges of that scale will be overcome only by working together in order to find political solutions to conflicts in accordance with our A4P+ priority involving coherence underlying a political strategy.

With regard to the increasingly complex geopolitical environment, I would like to stress two points.

First, we must do everything possible to preserve the space needed for United Nations peacekeeping operations, which continue to visibly manifest a multilateral system in action on the ground. Secondly, we must stay the course in supporting peacebuilding in complex mission contexts — for example, in Mali and Lebanon — within the context of the extreme difficulties that have been encountered and have been exacerbated by the global situation. Our impact depends on the coordinated efforts of peacekeeping operations and our partners that together are trying to prevent, mitigate and resolve conflicts.

In line with the second A4P+ priority — strategic and operational integration — 11 out of 12 missions currently have integrated mission plans in place or results frameworks for the Comprehensive Performance Assessment System. Most of those plans take into account gender considerations and the women and peace and security agenda. Of course, we can fulfil our mandates only if the missions have the appropriate capacities at the right time, at the right place and with the right mindset — our third priority.

In that regard, I thank all Member States for their continued support, particularly at the meeting on peacekeeping at the ministerial level held in Seoul in 2021. Since then, we have made significant progress to be more proactive, agile and flexible, as seen particularly in the strategy in strengthening of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA), the reconfiguration of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) and the force adaptation plan of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA).

I call for the support of Council members to fill the critical gaps that we continue to face in the area of capacities, especially with regard to utility and armed helicopters. Work is under way with the Heads of missions to ensure that our staff members have the necessary mindset, and, in that regard, we have come up with performance standards, which concern both individual officials and the contingents of the formed military units.

Our fourth priority concerns our responsibility vis-à-vis our personnel and the need to ensure their safety and security. Despite enormous efforts, the annual decrease in the number of losses of our peacekeepers has increased. We saw a positive trend between 2007 and 2020. However, in 2021 the number of deaths from malicious acts doubled as compared with the previous year, from 13 to 25. Unfortunately, that trend is continuing, with 21 deaths from malicious acts as of the end of August 2022.

(spoke in English)

Attacks on peacekeepers utilizing explosive ordnance and improvised explosive devices (IEDs) persist and are tracking at levels as high as those of 2021. While MINUSMA remains the most dangerous peacekeeping mission, MINUSCA and MONUSCO

are facing a sustained and ongoing threat. In a presidential statement in May 2021 (S/PRST/2021/11), the Council requested that the Secretary-General conduct an independent strategic review of United Nations peacekeeping operations' responses to the threat of IEDs, and we are currently implementing its recommendations. We have made significant progress so far in improving capabilities to counter IEDs in missions where that threat is evolving. We will continue to take forward the recommendations of the review. However, we need Member State support to fully address the recommendations.

In line with resolution 2518 (2020), we are developing an integrated base defence strategy that will improve the integration and interoperability of existing defence systems across mission components, a policy that is expected to significantly improve threat responses. We also seek the support of Member States in that context, particularly through their expertise on base defence and its exercise in high-threat areas. Accountability for peacekeepers remains a critical priority as we seek to better assess performance and recognize and remedy issues as necessary. In relation to the ongoing challenge of sexual exploitation and abuse, the trust fund in support of victims has established a project in South Sudan to offer psychosocial, medical and legal support. The Secretariat will engage with Member States to discuss concrete commitments to resolve paternity-recognition cases and child support for victims. We are making progress in the development of a confidential mechanism to allow Member States to access information about allegations against their personnel more easily.

Our sixth priority is strategic communications, which have become more important than ever in securing the support needed for missions in the face of a surge of misinformation and disinformation, a challenge that impedes mandate delivery and threatens the safety of both host communities and United Nations peacekeepers. To address it, we are proactively communicating on the tangible impact of peacekeeping in a compelling, human-centred way. We are harnessing the power of many platforms, including social media, to ensure maximum audience engagement, and using United Nations-operated radio networks to provide news to remote and vulnerable populations. We are also working to provide tools, guidance and training for missions. Given the increased importance of strategic communications, as reflected in the Security Council

open debate on the issue in July (see S/PV.9090), as well as the subsequent presidential statement (S/PRST/2022/5), we are working to fully integrate it into planning and decision-making. Our efforts to step up cooperation with host States continue apace. As requested by resolution 2518 (2020), we are making progress systematically in documenting violations of status-of-forces agreements, commonly referred to as SOFA violations, including through the creation of a mechanism that can track and report such violations across missions.

Turning now to the subject of women and peace and security, women's full, equal and meaningful participation in peacekeeping remains a key priority that is being mainstreamed throughout our A4P+ efforts. As of June, except for military contingents, most targets set in the Uniformed Gender Parity Strategy have been met and in fact surpassed. Women now account for 21 per cent of military observers and staff officers, 31 per cent of individual police officers and 43 per cent of Government-provided justice and corrections personnel. We are also continuing to work to create more gender-responsive working and living environments, including through camp design. However, in order to address the remaining gaps in uniformed gender parity, we must intensify our concerted efforts to enhance the recruitment, training and career development of women in national security institutions. Missions have also prioritized gender analysis in informing decision-making. For example, the transition planned by MONUSCO is one of the most gender-responsive transitions planned to date. The missions continue to be constrained, however, by inadequate resources and personnel, including a shortage of gender advisers. We are implementing projects to strengthen tech-enabled, data-driven peacekeeping, including some aimed at enhancing situational awareness and leveraging technology for uniformed peacekeepers.

In conclusion, we have made notable progress in addressing the priorities outlined in the A4P+ initiative. As I already emphasized, we continue to need extensive support from our Member States. First, I would like to call for stronger and more united support from the Council for advancing the political efforts of our operations. Such support is a prerequisite for our efforts to promote sustainable peace where we have mandates from the Council to do so. I also need the Council's ongoing support for our missions when they face undue restrictions and obstacles from the

parties to the conflict, including SOFA violations. We continue to conduct regular reviews of the mandates of our missions and their capabilities to ensure that they remain fit for the rapidly evolving conflicts in which they are deployed, but we need the Council's support to make the recommendations of such reviews a reality. For United Nations peacekeeping to act effectively, all of us need to act for peacekeeping with equal vigour.

Allow me, finally, to reiterate our gratitude to Member States for the commitment shown to our work in all A4P areas. I trust that we can continue to count on their steadfast support.

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

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

Mr. Anyanah (Ghana): At the outset, Mr. President, let me wish you and the French delegation the best of success during your presidency of the Council for this month. I also congratulate Ambassador Zhang Jun and the Chinese delegation on their excellent leadership of the Council last month.

We have listened carefully to Mr. Jean-Pierre Lacroix, Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations, and thank him for his briefing, which highlights various initiatives being undertaken to improve the effectiveness of United Nations peacekeeping operations. Ghana recognizes the important role of United Nations peacekeeping in maintaining international peace and security and providing stability in various parts of the world. We have continued to support all efforts to improve the performance of peacekeeping by enhancing its effectiveness for every historical era.

Since 1960, when Ghana first contributed troops to the United Nations Operation in the Congo, we have actively followed peacekeeping's evolving nature and adaptation to the changing dynamics of the conflict settings where peacekeepers are deployed. By comparison to the past, today peacekeepers are called on to do more and usually in a multidimensional context where the parties concerned may themselves not welcome their presence. We therefore appreciate the discussions that have ensued since the 2015 report of the High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations and the Secretary-General's follow-up report (S/2018/623) and actions, including the Action for Peacekeeping Plus initiative, which have defined our shared commitments

regarding addressing the challenges of peacekeeping, such as protracted conflicts, the elusive nature of political solutions and broad and complex mandates that are difficult to achieve.

However, there are several other challenges that must also be tackled by the peacekeeping stakeholder community in order to make peacekeeping fit for purpose and effective in achieving its objectives. Some of them relate to mandates, while others are in the area of performance, and ensuring the safety and security of peacekeepers continues to need improvement. Ghana looks forward to working in that context to support the priorities set out in the Secretary-General's review of the peace and security architecture, and especially in ensuring that conflict prevention, sustaining peace and sustainable development are treated with the urgency and importance they deserve.

First, with regard to peacekeeping mandates, Ghana continues to be concerned about the insufficient emphasis on the primacy of politics in some peacekeeping missions, which continues to prolong a number of conflicts. Also, despite the fact that mandates for some missions, such as the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), include the creation of rapid intervention brigades, the structure and focus of current peacekeeping arrangements make them inappropriate instruments for counter-terrorism, and the Council itself lacks an established mechanism for dealing with extremist groups. We believe that mandates and resolutions could also be more concise and focused. There is therefore a need for the Council to refocus the formulation and implementation of mandates on the primacy of politics and to tap into the partnership opportunities provided by regional arrangements, such as those with the African Union (AU), in addressing the threats to international peace and security that United Nations peacekeeping missions are unable to respond to, especially as they relate to terrorists and extremist groups. That would of course require us to constructively embrace the report expected from the Secretary-General on the question of the adequate, predictable and sustainable funding for Council-mandated AU-led peace operations, especially through assessed contributions.

Secondly, concerning the performance of peacekeeping operations, while we welcome the implementation of the Integrated Peacekeeping Performance and Accountability Framework, we

believe that we need to strengthen its use in a way that ensures that the performance of individual troop- and police-contributing countries and individual mission staff members meets the expectations of mandates. In significant instances where such performance expectations are not met, it will be important for the Secretariat to bring them to the attention of the appropriate working group of the Council in order to enable systemic concerns to be redressed. We believe it is essential to involve the relevant Member States systematically in implementing the Framework. We also emphasize the importance of prioritizing capacity-building for all categories of United Nations peacekeepers in order to enhance their operational effectiveness.

Thirdly, with regard to the safety and security of peacekeepers, we continue to be worried about their deliberate targeting, which has resulted in a surge in the number of fatalities in peacekeeping operations. My delegation would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to all Blue Helmets personnel who have paid the ultimate price in the line of duty and to commend peacekeepers for their selfless contributions. We believe that where it applies, we should enhance predeployment training in countering improvised explosive devices (IEDs) in order to address the threat of extremist groups' increasing use of IEDs against peacekeepers, as we have been witnessing in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali.

We also urge for strategic communications to be strengthened in order to counter the significant increase in disinformation and misinformation, which has become systematic, synchronized and orchestrated on an industrial scale and is negatively affecting the efforts of peacekeepers, shaping the conflict environment and negatively influencing public opinion about most United Nations peacekeeping operations, especially on the African continent. In some instances the perceptions that have been created have led to hostile reactions from local populations, culminating in riots, vandalized United Nations property and casualties among United Nations personnel and the local population, something we saw recently in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo.

I should not conclude without mentioning the emerging challenge that United Nations peacekeeping is facing with regard to host Governments' implementation of their status-of-forces agreements,

as well as restrictions on peacekeeping personnel's freedom of movement and the rotation and resupply of troops, with negative effects on their performance and attainment of mandates. While we acknowledge the fact that the demands for United Nations peacekeeping missions throughout the world are greater than ever before, overstretching the available resources and existing capacities, we are mindful that fulfilling mandates for sustaining peace is critical and requires the commitment of all peacekeeping actors.

I reiterate Ghana's unflinching support for every initiative that helps address the myriad of contemporary challenges affecting United Nations peacekeeping operations. We also underscore the need for improved planning and adequate resources for transitions, as well as for considering post-mandate-period implications so as to ensure that the hard-won gains of peace operations and mandates are safeguarded.

Mr. Geng Shuang (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): First of all, I would like to thank everyone for their kind words addressed to the Chinese delegation and to take this opportunity to congratulate France on assuming the presidency of the Security Council for the month of September. We will work closely with you and your colleagues, Mr. President. I am confident that under France's excellent leadership, the work of the Council in September will be successful. I would also like to thank Under-Secretary-General Lacroix for his briefing.

United Nations peacekeeping operations have made important contributions to maintaining international peace and security, from the Balkans to the Congo River basin to the Sahara desert and the South Asian subcontinent. Nearly 90,000 peacekeepers have braved hardships and dangers in fulfilling their duties and carrying out their mission under the banner of the United Nations, bringing peace and stability to conflict areas and highlighting peace and hope in the world. I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to all the Blue Helmets and express my sincere gratitude to the troop- and police-contributing countries.

The world is entering a period of turbulent change and instability. Factors promoting destabilization and uncertainty are on the rise and international and regional peace and security have been increasingly challenged. In those circumstances, the important role of peacekeeping operations, as well as Member States' expectations of them, is growing more prominent. To respond to these evolving situations, peacekeeping

operations need to constantly improve, better position themselves, strengthen their weak areas and do a better job of serving Member States and the wider international community. China would like to highlight the following four points regarding the performance of peacekeeping operations over the past year.

First, we must strengthen the overarching structure of peacekeeping operations in order to serve the central task of maintaining peace and security. Peacekeeping mandates have continued to grow over the decades, expanding from the traditional monitoring of ceasefires to the protection of civilians, from the area of traditional security to the humanitarian and human rights fronts, and in some cases to the areas of natural resources and sanctions. Some of the new mandates are designed to respond to changing dynamics and some to meet the legitimate needs of the countries concerned. Others, however, have arisen out of reasons of so-called political correctness, and some may even risk becoming tools for exerting pressure on the countries concerned.

The unchecked expansion of mandates interferes with the Council's core mission, strains peacekeeping resources and raises excessive expectations for missions. Some mandates exceed missions' capacity, interfere in the internal affairs of host countries and undermine the mutual trust between the two. In August, the Security Council adopted a presidential statement on capacity-building in Africa drafted by China (S/PRST/2022/6), requesting that the Secretary-General submit a report within one year to assess peacekeeping mission mandates and make recommendations for adjusting them or formulating exit strategies. We hope that the Council will take this opportunity to streamline and optimize the mandates of peacekeeping operations so that missions can focus on fulfilling their core tasks.

Secondly, we must eliminate the trust deficit and rebuild good cooperative relations with the countries concerned. Relationships between some missions and the countries concerned have been a serious problem for some time, so much so that peacekeepers have even paid the ultimate price in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Abyei region, which is extremely distressing. Strengthening cooperation with host countries has always been an important part of peacekeeping reform and should be given greater priority in future. In performing their duties, missions should listen to the views of the countries involved, take their concerns into account and seek their support. In resolution 2650 (2022), adopted in August, on extending

the mandate of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (see S/PV.9121), some Council members included language that weakened the coordination between the Force and Lebanon, which is not conducive to consolidating mutual trust with Lebanon.

Human rights issues have often been a complicating factor in missions' relationships with host countries, particularly in Mali and South Sudan. Missions with human rights mandates should fact-check with the State concerned when reporting on a human rights situation and seek its consent when investigating human rights violations. The United Nations should strengthen strategic communications with host Governments and peoples in order to promote their understanding of and support for a mission's mandate and the way it works. That is the best way to combat misinformation about missions. The United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo has recently been communicating with the various sectors of the Democratic Republic of the Congo through multiple channels, which deserves full recognition.

Thirdly, we must strengthen partnerships and mobilize all States and stakeholders to advance peacekeeping operations. In recent years, regional and subregional organizations have rapidly increased their willingness and capacity to maintain peace and security in various regions, in particular in Africa. The need for autonomous peace operations in Africa continues to rise and the Sahel is a prime example. Cooperation with autonomous peace operations in Africa should be an integral part of United Nations peace operations in a broad sense. The two sides have accumulated a wealth of experience in that regard. The African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur, which has played an important role in restoring peace and stability in the area, has been successfully withdrawn. In Somalia, the multi-stakeholder model, in which the African Union provides the troops, the United Nations the logistical support and the European Union the funding, has generally worked well and has helped to improve the security situation. The United Nations and the African Union should further strengthen their communication and consultation, resolve the legal and resource-specific challenges in their cooperation creatively and play to each other's strengths.

Fourthly, we must ensure peacekeepers' safety and strive to reduce the security risks of peacekeeping operations. Physical threats and challenges to

peacekeepers have been growing for some time. There have been seven serious attacks this year on the missions in Mali and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, resulting in the death or injury of dozens of peacekeepers. Member States and the Secretariat should work together to enhance missions' emergency response and early-warning capabilities, strengthen rescue and medical support systems and properly use new technologies to improve equipment and security. As we speak, China is sending a unit of unmanned aerial vehicles to the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali, which we believe will help ensure personnel safety and improve peacekeeping performance.

As co-Chair of the Group of Friends of the Safety and Security of United Nations Peacekeepers, China, together with Brazil, Indonesia and Rwanda, co-hosted a meeting on casualty evacuation last month that yielded positive results. China will continue to lead and to work with other parties on various United Nations platforms to promote the issue of the security of peacekeepers and make efforts and contributions to ensure the safety of our Blue Helmets.

Mr. Biang (Gabon) (*spoke in French*): I would like to congratulate France on its assumption of the presidency of the Security Council and to thank you, Sir, for taking the initiative to hold today's debate on peacekeeping operations at a time when that tool is crucial to the role and visibility of the United Nations. We are at a crossroads as we confront the challenges we face on the ground. It is therefore a timely discussion. As we determine the strengths and weaknesses of peacekeeping operations, we must not be biased or complacent if we are to provide concrete, fitting and specific solutions for every situation on the ground. Needless to say, I want to congratulate China on its excellent efforts in guiding our work in August. I also thank Under-Secretary-General Jean-Pierre Lacroix for his informative briefing.

Since the Organization's creation, peacekeeping operations have been at the heart of United Nations strategies for ending conflicts and promoting reconciliation. In more than a dozen countries, including Sierra Leone, Burundi, Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia, the efforts of the United Nations peacekeeping operations have made a genuine difference. The United Nations has offered key security guarantees and facilitated political transitions. It has helped to set up new institutions for fragile States and has helped to

curb instability in several countries that have been able to return to a normal path of development, despite the remaining challenges in peacebuilding. However, in a number of other cases, United Nations peacekeeping efforts and the response of the international community as a whole have fallen short of expectations and have been severely criticized, for example in Somalia, Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia at the beginning of the 1990s.

In cases that are still current, the presence of peacekeeping operations has coincided with an increase in chronic conflict. The terrible sight of Blue Helmets hunted by people and heckled for their inability to protect civilians in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is intolerable for several reasons. Such reversals should lead the international community to reflect on the reasons for them, draw lessons and improve the calibration of the mandates and deployment of United Nations peacekeeping operations as tools for restoring and maintaining international peace and security.

Our collective security system was conceived and established 77 years ago, and the world has changed since then. The nature of conflicts has changed. New threats emerge every day and help reshape the international order, and yet the way in which we approach crises, and the representation at our Organization, along with its tools for maintaining international peace, are from another era. Africa, which hosts the majority of the peacekeeping operations and has always featured heavily on the Council's agenda, has never had its rightful place at the table and is considered more of a challenge to be met by the great Powers than a stakeholder in its own right in international governance. That anachronistic situation clearly falls far short of our current reality and does nothing to ease the suffering of our peoples, in particular women and children, in war-prone regions. Given the current complex environment and the proliferation of inter-State conflicts, the United Nations must constantly reinvent itself if it is to provide a response to its security challenges. The Council must not just ensure that peace operations are effective but also that their mandate is adapted to the situation and the needs on the ground.

Beyond an inclusive approach that must take into account the internal regional narrative in crisis areas, the effectiveness and success of peacekeeping operations depend on key factors in responding to challenges, including clear, credible and realistic mandates, as well as personnel and logistical and financial

resources. Secondly, they depend on the consent of host countries and on impartiality and respect for the terms of the mandate. Thirdly, they depend on their legitimacy and credibility, especially in the eyes of the local population; the promotion of national and local ownership in the peace process in the host country; the commitment of the host country to refraining from undermining United Nations operations and to guaranteeing missions' freedom of movement; the constructive involvement of neighbouring countries and regional actors; an integrated United Nations approach; effective coordination with other stakeholders on the ground; solid communication with the authorities and the population of the host country; considerable tact with regard to the host population and respect for professional norms of conduct and the highest professional standards on the part of Blue Helmets.

Another aspect that the efficiency and effectiveness of peacekeeping operations depend on is their connection to regional dynamics. In that regard, enhancing cooperation between the African Union and the United Nations, particularly in resolving crises on the African continent, is key. The experience of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur and the African Union Mission in Somalia, in particular, demonstrate that with the help of predictable funding and adequate logistical support, the African Union can conduct peacekeeping operations even in the most difficult circumstances. We should be mindful of that example with regard to the new mission in Somalia — the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia — and the Group of Five for the Sahel, which will be under African leadership. In a regional context increasingly marked by the threat of terrorism, a partnership between the United Nations and the African Union, supported by adequate funding, is essential.

In conclusion, I would like to reaffirm the support of my country for the Action for Peacekeeping Plus initiative, which calls for an accelerated implementation of the women and peace and security agenda. Cross-cutting concerns include priority areas, such as the need to develop an effective communications strategy. I would also like to reiterate our support for the Strategy for the Digital Transformation of United Nations Peacekeeping and the United Nations Strategy and Plan of Action on Hate Speech and call for greater consideration of multilingualism in peacekeeping operations.

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We thank Under-Secretary-General Lacroix for his informative briefing.

For decades, peacekeeping has been the backbone of the work of the United Nations in maintaining peace and security and has had a direct impact on the lives of millions of people. There are intense hopes placed on peacekeeping operations, as they are expected both to address urgent challenges and contribute to the long-term resolution of crises. The changing nature and specifics of conflicts and the dangerous conditions in which missions operate, often compounded by dire humanitarian and socioeconomic situations, dictate the necessity of adapting peacekeeping mechanisms. That is why Member States and the Secretariat are focused on optimizing peacekeeping missions and improving their effectiveness, as well as ensuring the security of Blue Helmets and civilian personnel.

One of the key prerequisites for peacekeeping operations' effective implementation of their tasks is constructive interaction with host States, which have the primary responsibility for protecting their civilian populations, addressing the root causes of conflict and dealing with post-conflict reconstruction. The role of ensuring cooperation between the mission, the Secretariat and the host country authorities is a top priority that neither civil society nor non-governmental organizations can replace. Triangular cooperation between the Security Council, troop-contributing countries and the Secretariat is also just as important in strengthening a spirit of partnership, collaboration and mutual trust.

Ensuring effective interaction between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations, based on Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations, clearly adds value in enhancing the effectiveness of United Nations peacekeeping, as demonstrated by the productive cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union. We see good potential for developing partnerships between the United Nations, the Collective Security Treaty Organization and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, which are expanding their political authority and contributing to strengthening regional and international security.

Clear and realistic mission mandates that take into account the views of host States, the specific causes of each conflict and the current situation on the ground help to improve the effectiveness of peacekeeping activities.

We believe it is essential to reduce peacekeepers' secondary and non-core tasks, especially those on the human rights, social and gender fronts, which distract peacekeepers from their primary functions and require considerable funding. The Blue Helmets' efforts should focus on high-quality, painstaking assistance aimed at reaching a political settlement and the achievement of national reconciliation, which would address the root causes of conflicts as well as the symptoms. However, the imperative must remain unconditional respect for the sovereignty of host States, strict compliance with the purposes and principles of the Charter and the basic principles of peacekeeping — the consent of the parties, impartiality and refraining from the use of force except in self-defence and to protect the mandate. We cannot accept flexible interpretations of those principles even on the noblest of pretexts.

Those basic principles, including the protection of civilians where mandated, must govern every aspect of the work of missions. Peacekeepers must not rattle their sabres and become a party to the conflict. Obsessing over force mandates and involving peacekeepers in offensive and counter-terrorist operations could undermine Blue Helmets' neutral status, turning them into active participants in conflicts with a concomitant increase in threats to their life and health.

We fully share the view that the security of peacekeepers should be improved. We believe that this can be achieved by improving their material and technical equipping and professional training. In Russia, the training centres of the Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of Internal Affairs provide high-quality training for both Russian and foreign peacekeepers. For example, in October 2021, the United Nations Secretariat certified the training programmes for the United Nations military observer course at the Military Training Centre of the Ground Forces of the Russian Federation in Naro-Fominsk.

We believe that the main thrusts of United Nations peacekeeping activities should be determined in an intergovernmental format. In that regard, the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations of the General Assembly is a unique platform in which a majority of the Member States of the Organization, including troop-contributing countries and host States, have an opportunity to develop common approaches to the parameters for peacekeeping activities that should guide the Secretariat and missions on the ground. Only unconditional respect in practice for the agreements

and obligations reached in an intergovernmental format can ensure the necessary level of trust among all parties concerned and thereby contribute to the effectiveness of peacekeeping missions and their ultimate success. We believe that solidarity among States with regard to the principles of the functioning of peacekeeping operations will make it easier to resolve other related issues as well.

We would like to take this opportunity to commend the military, police and civilian personnel of United Nations peacekeeping missions for their unwavering commitment to their noble duty in extremely difficult and dangerous circumstances and at a daily risk to their lives.

In conclusion, I would like to note that our efforts in support of United Nations peacekeeping have been met with blatant opposition from the United States. Just last week, the third United Nations Chiefs of Police Summit took place, and a delegation from the Russian Ministry of Internal Affairs, headed by Internal Affairs Minister Vladimir Kolokoltsev, was invited to attend. However, as a result of United States actions, the Russian delegation was not able to participate in the summit — the representatives were simply not issued visas. That is yet another blatant violation by the United States of its obligations under the United Nations Headquarters Agreement. In that regard, we would like to stress once again that granting visas to members of delegations is an international legal obligation for the United States, not a privilege. Failure to grant visas to representatives of individual States is contrary to the principle of sovereign equality and hinders their effective participation in the work of the Organization.

Mr. Mythen (Ireland): I thank Under-Secretary-General Lacroix for his very useful and informative briefing this morning. I would also like to join others in congratulating France on its forthcoming presidency and thank China for its very successful leadership last month.

Ireland is a strong supporter of the Secretary-General's Action for Peacekeeping (A4P) agenda. This agenda, coupled with the Action for Peacekeeping Plus (A4P+), is central to successful mandate implementation and to enhancing the safety and security of peacekeepers and the civilians they protect, and will help to create the conditions necessary for successful peace processes. That said, this work is far from complete and must continue to evolve to meet new

operational challenges. It is imperative that both A4P and the catalytic A4P+ continue to drive the formulation of effective and integrated political strategies, enhance partnerships and coherence, support the development of capabilities and improve leadership, accountability and performance. Successful and effective peacekeeping reform has never been more necessary, particularly as missions navigate increasingly complex political and security environments. I would like to highlight four areas that Ireland considers particularly relevant to the implementation of the A4P and A4P+ priorities.

First, peacekeeping operations cannot be successful unless they have clear, credible and realistic mandates, coupled with realistic and adequate resources. Mandates must be informed by needs on the ground and nested within a broader political strategy in pursuit of a sustainable peace.

Secondly, we must continue to enhance the links between peacekeeping and peacebuilding efforts. Ireland led on the development and adoption of resolution 2594 (2021), which aims to ensure that as a United Nations peace operation draws down, it does so in a way that supports peacebuilding objectives and ensures that peace gains made are not lost.

The Secretary-General's recent comprehensive report on transitions in United Nations peace operations (S/2022/522), based on a critical analysis of ongoing and recent transitions, recognizes the need for proactive and integrated transition planning, the critical importance of national leadership and ownership, including on the protection of civilians, and the importance of adequate resourcing. These findings are fully in line with the provisions of resolution 2594 (2021). The task for us now is to continue to support and implement the provisions of the resolution. Put simply, transitions will not just happen; they will require sustained political support and attention.

Thirdly, I would like to highlight the importance of the safety and security of our peacekeepers. We know that to be effective, peacekeeping operations must be agile, peacekeeping- and intelligence-led, data-driven and technologically enabled. The development of the Strategy for the Digital Transformation of United Nations Peacekeeping is a key enabler in that regard. It is increasingly important that peacekeeping operations be capable of addressing emerging threats, such as the weaponization of new technologies, misinformation, disinformation and hate speech. As a State transformed

by the digital revolution, Ireland supports the Strategy and has provided funding to a project with a view to bolstering the effectiveness of peacekeeping operations.

Finally, I would like to reiterate Ireland's strong support of the women and peace and security agenda as a cross-cutting priority. We should all support the efforts being put in place by the Secretariat to break the barriers to participation and leadership for women peacekeepers at every level. Ireland has taken on the role of an A4P women and peace and security champion and developed a series of recommendations with members from across regional groupings. We must be extremely ambitious in ensuring that the A4P's call for the full, equal and meaningful participation of women in peacekeeping operations is fully addressed and realized.

To truly contribute to peacekeeping reform, we must keep all those deployed in peacekeeping operations and the populations they protect at the forefront of our efforts. Let us strive to make peacekeeping better for those whom it affects the most.

Mr. De la Fuente Ramírez (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, I would like to congratulate France on its presidency of the Security Council this month and to recognize China for its wise leadership of the Council last month.

I thank Under-Secretary-General Lacroix for his briefing, which is timely and informative, as always.

For more than 70 years, United Nations peace operations have demonstrated that they can make the difference between the persistence of conflict and peacebuilding. We recognize the efforts and bravery of the personnel involved in those operations, who constantly face adverse conditions. I wish to express our condolences to the families of peacekeeping mission personnel who have fallen in the past year, as well as our wishes for the full and speedy recovery of those who have suffered physical or psychological injuries. In that regard, we note in particular the efforts of the Department of Peace Operations to design a strategy that also addresses the mental health and psychosocial well-being of those personnel.

Recent studies show that rates of post-traumatic stress disorder and other mental health problems is very high among those who have participated in United Nations peace operations. That, of course, has consequences for the performance of the Organization,

but more importantly for the health and well-being of personnel who volunteer their lives for peace. In order to ensure that peacekeeping operations are more effective and successful, Member States and the Security Council have an obligation to address all aspects of the physical and mental security challenges facing peacekeepers.

To that end, we propose four actions to be undertaken. First, we must give greater visibility to mental health issues in peacekeeping operations. Secondly, we must provide better training and professional support to recognize symptoms of conditions affecting mental health in a timely manner. Thirdly, we must foster a culture of care and psychosocial support during the operational deployments of all missions. Finally, we must ensure that deployed personnel receive the required psychosocial support.

During the Seoul United Nations Peacekeeping Ministerial, in addition to joining the Secretary-General's Action for Peacekeeping initiative, Mexico announced a series of commitments to strengthen our contribution to peace. They mark my country's move to a new stage of greater participation in peacekeeping missions. In that regard, I am pleased to share that, in recent weeks, Mexico presented the company of engineers that will represent the first Mexican contingent to be deployed in a peacekeeping operation. In addition, a psychiatrist from the Mexican Ministry of Defence will participate in the advisory committee in charge of designing a mental health strategy for peace contingents.

We also made progress in the contribution of equipment to operate unmanned aerial vehicles as part of our commitment to the women and peace and security agenda, and I would also like to highlight Mexico's participation at the ministerial level in the United Nations Chiefs of Police Summit, held last week.

I reiterate the invitation to troop-contributing countries to participate in the activities of Mexico's Joint Peace Operations Training Centre, which offers courses certified by the United Nations. We thank the Department of Peace Operations for the advice it has provided us in the design and execution of those courses.

In conclusion, I reiterate that my country attaches great importance to combating trafficking in small arms and light weapons. Resolution 2616 (2021), promoted by Mexico, recognizes that peace operations can assist in disarmament and illegal-weapons collection.

Likewise, when considering the renewal of the mandates of peace operations in places where an arms embargo has been imposed, the Council should consider the possibility of such operations assisting national authorities in combating the illicit transfer and diversion of arms in violation of that embargo. This is a timely opportunity to call for the full implementation of that resolution.

Ms. Heimerback (Norway): Like others, we wish France all the best for their presidency of the Security Council in the month of September, and we thank China for its professional leadership during the month of August.

I thank Under-Secretary-General Lacroix for his briefing on the status of United Nations peacekeeping reform. Peacekeeping is the Organization's most powerful tool to be used in the maintenance of international peace and security. But with that tool comes responsibility. As members of the Council, we have an obligation to ensure that United Nations peacekeeping operations are adequately planned and equipped so that mandates can be executed in the best way possible.

The Secretary-General's Action for Peacekeeping (A4P) initiative reflects and frames that responsibility. Since the launch of A4P, most Member States have committed to that reform initiative. We welcome the concrete actions taken to improve the implementation of mission mandates. That includes advancing lasting political solutions, strengthening the protection of civilians, including children, ensuring the safety and security of our peacekeepers and monitoring the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda.

Our commitment is essential if United Nations peacekeeping is to remain an effective tool for helping countries torn by conflict to transition to lasting peace. However, commitments and initiatives are nothing without implementation. In the few years since A4P was launched, we have learned of several challenges to its progress, including the increasingly difficult security situation in many host countries, which in some cases is further complicated by the presence of foreign security personnel. The differing views among Member States on how missions should deal with such situations add to the challenge.

Norway is very supportive of the Action for Peacekeeping Plus (A4P+) initiative. It is well designed

for driving the reform process forward. The focus should be directed at translating priorities into concrete action. In that respect, Norway is disappointed that the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations was not able to conclude a consensus report this year, as many important concrete recommendations were agreed to.

I would like to highlight some Norwegian reform priorities. Ensuring a coherent strategy in support of political solutions must be at the core of all peacekeeping. Women must be included for peace to be sustainable. As members of the Council, we should do our part to support peace processes by putting aside our differences, whatever they may be.

For missions to be effective, efforts must continue to strengthen strategic and operational integration between civilian staff, United Nations police and military components. All Member States must ensure that both women and men are available for recruitment to all peacekeeping functions at all levels. All peacekeepers must be trained, prepared and willing to fulfil their designated task. That is particularly important when it comes to the protection of civilians, including children. Peacekeepers must be provided with the equipment needed to stay as safe as possible and to perform as expected. The focus on strategic communication must be maintained. That is key to creating trust among local communities and countering the increasing challenge of mis- and disinformation and hate speech.

Finally, I would like to stress Norway's support for the A4P+ ambition of moving towards data-driven and technology-enabled peacekeeping. We will continue to contribute financially to the new Strategy for the Digital Transformation of United Nations Peacekeeping, which has been described as a game changer.

Let me conclude by reiterating Norway's commitment to the reform of United Nations peacekeeping and to our continued work to ensure the effective implementation of all peacekeeping mandates.

Mr. Kariuki (United Kingdom): I would like to join others in thanking our Chinese colleagues for a successful and well-run presidency during the month of August and in congratulating France on its assumption of the presidency in September. We wish you all the best, Sir, and assure you of our support. I also thank Under-Secretary-General Lacroix for his briefing and continued leadership of United Nations peacekeeping.

On behalf of the United Kingdom, I want to pay tribute to those peacekeepers who lost their lives this year. Peacekeeping relies on the dedication of our personnel. We must do all that we can to support them, including by providing the necessary training and equipment, improving awareness of threats and ensuring appropriate medical provision.

The United Kingdom continues to play its part, training thousands of peacekeepers every year. As a top contributor of extrabudgetary funds, having donated more than \$3.5 million in 2021, we support key reforms in areas such as peacekeeping intelligence and situational awareness and tackling sexual exploitation and abuse. We provided expertise to support the review of approaches to dealing with improvised explosive devices, which Under-Secretary-General Lacroix referred to earlier today. Since 2020, United Kingdom peacekeepers deployed to the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali have demonstrated the value of new, proactive approaches to the protection of civilians, reconnaissance and civilian-military coordination. We are encouraged by the ongoing implementation of the Integrated Peacekeeping Performance and Accountability Framework, which should underpin higher standards of safety and security and mandate delivery. We continue to support evidence-based assessments of mission performance and integrated planning through the Comprehensive Performance and Assessment System. We also remain committed to advancing the participation of women through the United Kingdom's support for the Senior Women Talent Pipeline and the Elsie Initiative Fund, to which we have contributed \$7.5 million to date.

In the past year, peacekeeping operations have faced challenges that hamper mandate delivery and threaten safety and security. Thanks to Brazil, in July we discussed the increasing threat posed by anti-United Nations disinformation campaigns in contexts such as Mali and the Central African Republic following the deployment of the Kremlin-backed Wagner Group, as well as in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (see S/PV.9090). We have seen numerous examples of restrictions on freedom of movement and violations of status-of-forces agreements in Mali, Abyei and elsewhere. As Under-Secretary-General Lacroix said, the United Nations should help address rising levels of distrust through better strategic communication, but host Governments must also uphold their responsibilities

to protect United Nations personnel and comply with status-of-forces agreements.

The United Kingdom will remain a strong supporter of the Action for Peacekeeping (A4P) agenda and the A4P+ priorities. We call on all stakeholders to play their part in making United Nations peacekeeping the best it can be.

Mrs. Alhefeiti (United Arab Emirates) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, we wish France every success in managing the Council's work this month and stand fully ready to provide every necessary support. We also thank China for its effective management of the work of the Council last month.

I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for organizing this annual discussion, as well as Mr. Lacroix for his briefing on the progress made in the implementation of the Secretary-General's Action for Peacekeeping initiative. I want to take this opportunity to commend the countries that have contributed troops, police and civilian employees working in difficult and dangerous environments, far from their families, to implement the Security Council's mandates for the sake of international peace and security. We also honour and pay tribute to the more than 4,000 personnel who have lost their lives in the line of duty under the United Nations flag. In that regard, I would particularly like to point to the critical and extraordinary contributions of women in the field of peacekeeping and their ability to overcome many obstacles in order to carry out their responsibilities. We sincerely congratulate Ms. Alizeta Kabore Kinda of Burkina Faso on receiving the 2022 United Nations Police Officer of the Year award.

Today nearly 78,000 peacekeepers from more than 125 countries are deployed in the efforts to implement the first commitment of the Charter of the United Nations, to saving succeeding generations from the scourge of war. That requires peace operations to be resilient, effective and appropriately resourced in order to be able to fully implement their mandates. We are all aware that the circumstances in which peacekeeping operations operate have grown increasingly complex and dangerous in the past few years, thanks to a lack of political solutions, deteriorating security situations and the evolving threats posed by various active groups in conflicts, especially considering that many of them have been able to access advanced weaponry.

The Action for Peacekeeping initiative itself recognizes that the effectiveness of peacekeeping

depends on designing political processes that produce sustainable solutions. As a number of Council members have said, the Council must focus on political processes and reject the tacit acceptance of managing conflicts rather than resolving them, which means that it is not enough for peace operations merely to support and facilitate political processes that remain the Council's priority, because gaps between the reality and expectations of peace operations will emerge. Delays in reaching solutions breed frustration, resentment and a lack of trust, which can be conveniently exploited by actors advancing their own nefarious agendas, to the detriment of the United Nations and those it is meant to serve. It is therefore important to promote confidence between host communities and peacekeepers while addressing misinformation and disinformation by highlighting the noble goals of peace operations. Although a recommitment to conflict resolution would certainly help address those challenges, it is not the only available measure. A tailored and dynamic approach to mandate design and mission resourcing will help to build and promote trust in missions in a sustainable manner.

The report of the High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations (S/2015/446) and before it, the Brahimi Report (S/2000/809), suggested the idea of prioritizing and sequencing Council mandates as a measure to save heavily mandated peace operations. Despite ongoing efforts in that regard, past recommendations are still relevant today and it falls to us Council members to start implementing them. As we all know, designing better mandates requires strengthened triangular cooperation between the Security Council, troop-contributing countries and the Secretariat on the one hand, and improved cooperation between missions and host communities on the other, in addition to enhanced cooperation between those actors and regional organizations, especially in Africa. We also emphasize the importance of direct and regular engagement with host communities, which would contribute to more responsive mission decision-making and resource allocation. We should ensure inclusivity in that approach, particularly by engaging women and young people.

It is time to look at peacekeeping as a partnership among all actors that support peace operations, a partnership that is a realistic example of multilateralism. It is therefore important to design mandates in a streamlined manner that can adapt to changes. That

will be an essential element in preserving the future of peacekeeping in the light of the current global polarization. For its part, the United Arab Emirates remains committed to supporting peace operations and their reform and to enhancing their effectiveness.

Mr. Kiboino (Kenya): I join others in congratulating China on its successful presidency during the month of August and would like to assure you, Sir, of Kenya's cooperation during your presidency in September. We wish you every success. I thank the Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations, Mr. Jean-Pierre Lacroix, for his briefing on this important subject. Kenya salutes all the gallant women and men serving in the various United Nations peacekeeping operations. We also pay tribute to and honour the memory of those who have paid the ultimate price while serving in peacekeeping.

The current peacekeeping environment is increasingly unpredictable, fluid and insecure. It exposes peacekeepers to new and complex threats. And yet peacekeeping remains relevant today as one of the cardinal tools available to the United Nations in the pursuit of sustainable peace and the protection of civilians. The evolving nature of threats to peace support operations calls for enhanced partnership and cooperation with host communities and States, as well as regional security mechanisms, in order to gain an in-depth understanding of their operational environments, including conflict dynamics and expectations on the ground. That is particularly the case in Africa, where peacekeeping operations have not been functioning optimally, due to multiple challenges.

One of the emerging and formidable challenges is the apparently increasing tension between local populations and peacekeeping missions. It should be a matter for grave concern when civilian populations mistrust and in some cases turn against peacekeepers whom they should be looking to for protection in the first place. Clearly, there is an urgent need for peacekeeping missions to win back the trust and confidence of host countries and local communities. They can do that by listening keenly to their views with the aim of recalibrating their operations in a way that meets people's expectations. Operations must be seen to respond to actual political and security dynamics more than to the interests of external actors. In addition, by robustly engaging in the protection of civilians within the context of their relevant mandates, peacekeeping missions can earn the trust and confidence that they so badly need from the local populations. That and

other confidence-building measures will lead to strong partnerships between peacekeeping missions and local communities in addressing their common safety and security concerns. As a troop-contributing country, Kenya unreservedly supports every measure guaranteeing the safety and security of peacekeepers, which should be pursued without compromising the protection of civilians. We appreciate only too well that by its nature peacekeeping comes with a degree of exposure to risks. And that demands that every troop-contributing country should deploy nothing less than properly trained peacekeepers who fully understand their operating environment and are committed to operating in it.

Needless to say, United Nations peacekeeping missions best fulfil their mandates when they are fully supported financially and politically. We therefore cannot overstate the continuing need for resourcing them adequately, predictably and sustainably in every aspect. Also indispensable is the imperative for strategic partnerships with regional security mechanisms, particularly the African Union, given that it is Africa that hosts the largest number of peacekeeping missions. Such partnerships enable the United Nations to tap into the knowledge and expertise of local and regional actors whose political and community-level ideas and perspectives are more suitable than externally imposed one-size-fits-all approaches.

Kenya fully supports the Secretary General's Action for Peacekeeping and Action for Peacekeeping Plus initiatives and all their provisions, including the performance of peacekeepers and their accountability to others as well as others' accountability to them, and especially the importance of increasing the numbers of women peacekeepers at all levels. In addition, Kenya places great value on training to ensure the continued exemplary work of peacekeepers, including in peacebuilding and reconstruction. Under the Triangular Partnership Project, in partnership with other Member States, including Brazil, Germany, Japan and Switzerland, Kenya continues to support peacekeeping by training peacekeepers in various areas. We have offered training and mentorship to more than 5,000 South Sudanese civil servants including in the areas of public administration, immigration, policing and civil aviation. We have also supported Burundi and Somalia in rebuilding their governance and public service institutions. More recently, we have

offered the Democratic Republic of the Congo training in our State institutions.

We have also strengthened our training capacity to detect, identify and defeat improvised explosive devices (IEDs), which have become a major threat to the safety and security of civilians and peacekeepers. Notably, Kenya's Humanitarian Peace Support School recently underwent a training recognition process through the United Nations Integrated Training Service and United Nations Mine Action Service as a counter-IED institution, for which we received a certificate of recognition, the first of its kind in the world. These facilities are available for the training of humanitarian and peacekeeping personnel, whether civilian or uniformed, from all over the world.

Mr. DeLaurentis (United States of America): I would like to thank China for its successful stewardship of the Security Council presidency last month and to extend warm wishes to France as it begins its Council presidency. Given the importance of peacekeeping to international peace and security, this is a fitting meeting with which to begin the month. I thank Under-Secretary-General Lacroix for his comprehensive briefing.

The United States is deeply committed to United Nations peacekeeping. To ensure the success of peacekeeping operations, it is clear that all stakeholders must fulfil their responsibilities. In order to further the capacity of peacekeepers to effectively implement the mandates given to them by the Council and promote their safety and security, the United States continues to work both within the United Nations system and bilaterally to promote peacekeeping leadership, performance and accountability across missions. Improving peacekeeping performance is an integral part of the Secretary-General's Action for Peacekeeping and Action for Peacekeeping Plus agendas. Security Council resolution 2436 (2018) shows that it is a priority for the Council as well.

One of the most important responsibilities of today's integrated and multidimensional peacekeeping missions is the protection of civilians. We welcome the fact that the Secretary-General's Action for Peacekeeping and Action for Peacekeeping Plus initiatives prioritize the protection of civilians as well as performance and accountability, conduct and discipline and women and peace and security initiatives. Those efforts further a mission's ability to be as efficient and effective as possible and to identify and secure appropriate

resources, training, equipment and personnel to carry out the mandates authorized by those of us around this table. All of us can play a part in enhancing peacekeeper safety and effective mandate implementation by giving peacekeeping missions realistic and achievable mandates. We can also support efforts to ensure that missions have the necessary resources and capabilities to fully carry out their mandated tasks in complex, fragile environments. Robust training and equipment are, of course, necessary, but not sufficient on their own to improve performance and effectiveness.

It is essential that all United Nations personnel meet United Nations performance standards while maintaining the highest standards of conduct, and that especially means adherence to the Secretary-General's zero-tolerance policy on sexual exploitation and abuse. Those who do not meet such standards should be held accountable, including by the relevant troop- and police-contributing countries. Those who have been victimized deserve to know that those responsible will face consequences for their actions. Accountability, however, is a two-way street, and the Action for Peacekeeping initiative reminds us that we are also accountable to peacekeepers and, to that end, we must do everything possible to improve their safety, security and well-being. Improved performance across the board provides safety and security to peacekeepers everywhere and is in everyone's interest.

We are deeply concerned about the fact that countries are failing to take appropriate action and thereby putting peacekeepers at risk. We call on all stakeholders to abide by status of forces agreements. Host nation cooperation is critical to ensuring that peacekeepers have the full access and freedom of movement needed to achieve their mandated tasks safely and effectively. Where host nation cooperation is lacking, we owe it to the peacekeepers on the ground and to the populations they serve to engage bilaterally and multilaterally in search of solutions that can restore trust and confidence.

Another growing threat to peacekeeper safety and security, as well as mission effectiveness, is disinformation that leads to an erosion of trust between local populations and peacekeeping missions. It is imperative for the Security Council to support the integration of strategic communications into mission planning and risk management efforts, highlight mission successes, manage the expectations of local populations and address misinformation

and disinformation in real time. We all know the tragic consequences for peacekeepers when such disinformation is not strongly and quickly addressed. We hope that all Council members will join us in strongly condemning all actors who spread misinformation and disinformation or incite violence against United Nations peacekeeping operations.

The United States also welcomes the importance of women and peace and security as a cross-cutting theme of Action for Peacekeeping Plus. We already know that women increase peacekeeping performance and effectiveness. That is why we have long-supported increasing the number and meaningful participation of women in United Nations peacekeeping and why we were pleased to co-sponsor resolution 2538 (2020), the first standalone resolution on women in peacekeeping. Although the integration of women in peacekeeping has come a long way, adopting resolutions is not enough. We must work together to ensure those resolutions are effectively implemented. The United States remains committed to advancing peacekeeping reform and stands ready to work with all stakeholders to ensure these missions have the tools and support they need to succeed.

Mrs. Kamboj (India): I would like to congratulate France on assuming the presidency of the Security Council for this month and wish its entire team success. I also thank China for presiding over the Council last month. I want to thank Under-Secretary-General Jean-Pierre Lacroix for his briefing on this important subject.

India's peacekeeping credentials need no elaboration. Suffice it to say that we have proudly contributed to United Nations peacekeeping since the 1950s through the cumulative deployment of more than 260,000 troops and personnel over six decades. That tradition continues, as India remains one of the largest troop- and police-contributing countries, currently providing more than 5,700 Indian peacekeepers deployed in 9 of the 12 peacekeeping missions of the United Nations. A total of 177 Indian peacekeepers — the most from any troop-contributing country — have made the ultimate sacrifice while serving in United Nations peacekeeping missions. I take this opportunity to pay homage to all the valiant peacekeepers who have laid down their lives in defending the highest ideals of the United Nations.

United Nations peacekeeping is becoming increasingly challenging today in the face of growing violence across conflict theatres, with a diminishing

focus on the political process. It is therefore critical to reassess the Council's approach to peacekeeping and address the security and operational challenges faced by peace operations. With those objectives in mind, I would like to make the following 10 points for the consideration of the Council.

First, it is important for peacekeeping missions to be given clear and realistic mandates, as well as commensurate adequate resources. The Council needs to refrain from using terminology and formulations that may generate false hopes and expectations when crafting mission mandates. The fact that troop- and police-contributing countries do not have a role in the decision-making process is a major source of that problem. That anomaly should be rectified sooner than later. Consulting troop-contributing countries while reviewing mandates should become a standard norm for the Council in its crafting of peacekeeping mandates.

Second, peacekeeping missions should be deployed prudently, with full recognition of their limitations. Equally important is improving the understanding of the mandates of peace operations among the local stakeholders with regard to what a United Nations peacekeeping mission can and cannot do for them. An effective mission communication strategy and coordination with the host Government plays a critical role in that regard and would help in addressing misinformation and disinformation against peacekeepers, thereby enhancing their safety and security.

Third, we should maximize our efforts to bring the perpetrators of crimes against peacekeepers to justice. The Council needs to call on host nations to ensure the implementation of the measures adopted by the Council under resolution 2589 (2021) to address the issue of impunity for crimes against peacekeepers. In that regard, my delegation reiterates that the least the United Nations system needs to do is to ensure that the proposed memorial wall at United Nations Headquarters in memory of the fallen peacekeepers be installed urgently and at a visibly prominent location on the premises. India stands ready to contribute, including financially, to that noble endeavour.

Fourth, establishing trust and ensuring smooth coordination between the leadership of peacekeeping missions and the host State is essential for achieving the desired goals of peacekeeping operations. Peacekeeping missions should encourage national

ownership of the peacebuilding process among the various stakeholders and adhere to the fundamental principles of peacekeeping.

Fifth, the role of women peacekeepers cannot be overemphasized in effective peacekeeping. India takes pride in having deployed the first-ever all-women peacekeeping contingent in Liberia in 2007, which inspired a whole generation of Liberian women to take part in the country's security sector. We stand ready to contribute further in that regard.

Sixth, India has been a strong advocate of introducing new and advanced technology in peacekeeping missions to overcome security and mandate implementation challenges. In 2021, India supported the roll-out of the UNITE Aware platform, aimed at enhancing the safety and security of peacekeepers, and signed a memorandum of understanding with the United Nations C4ISR Academy for Peace Operations in Entebbe to meet its training and technology needs.

Seventh, a peacekeeping operation is a collective endeavour. Therefore, while evaluating the performance of a mission, the performance of all mission components, military and civilian, and the leadership should be considered.

Eighth, the need for addressing the insecurity of civilians caused by terrorist groups cannot be ignored. However, the primary responsibility to protect civilians from non-State groups across its territory lies with the host State. We should strengthen capabilities of the host State's security forces by providing them with adequate training and logistical support.

Ninth, a regional approach is imperative for the resolution of armed conflicts as well as building collective security against transnational threats posed by terrorist groups. The Council should support the role of regional and subregional organizations in mediation, the monitoring of ceasefires, assistance for the implementation of peace accords and post-conflict rebuilding.

Last, but not least, peacekeeping missions need to factor in an exit strategy from their very inception. There are several examples of redundant peacekeeping missions, which continue to be a drain on the depleting resources of the United Nations. Given the spate of spiralling conflict zones across the global landscape, the retention of redundancy, at the cost of minimizing

efficiency in other critical peacekeeping operations, is uncalled for.

In conclusion, I would like to emphasize that the success of United Nations peacekeeping ultimately depends not just on the weapons and equipment that troops carry, but on the moral force that the decisions of the Security Council command and the political process set in motion to resolve conflict. In line with its time-tested credentials and experience in this domain, India stands ready to support any sincere effort in that regard.

Mr. Hoxha (Albania) (*spoke in French*): As this is the first meeting this month under the French presidency of the Security Council, I would like to wish you, Mr. President, and your team every success and assure you of our full support in the implementation of a very full and ambitious programme of work. I would also like to reiterate our gratitude to the Chinese presidency of the Council last month.

(*spoke in English*)

We thank you, Mr. President, for organizing today's meeting which, in our view, highlights the very important role that Blue Helmets play in fostering sustainable political solutions. I thank Under-Secretary-General Lacroix for his update on the implementation of the Action for Peacekeeping Plus (A4P+) initiative. I would like to underscore the following points.

First, Albania fully supports A4P+ and its seven priorities and cross-cutting themes. We believe that a comprehensive approach to emerging challenges is vital — one that recognizes and addresses the intersectional character of those challenges, including sustainable development and human rights. Empowered good offices that support consensus-based political solutions are instrumental in that regard.

Secondly, we remain of the view that providing peacekeepers with advanced equipment enhances their safety and ensures that their operations are more effective in protecting civilians — a core part of any United Nations mission. The safety and security of peacekeepers must remain a priority. We pay tribute to all peacekeepers who lost their lives under the blue flag. Furthermore, continued and tailor-made training and capacity-building play a critical role in increasing the performance of peacekeepers. Each peacekeeper must be able to respond to the specific context in exercising

the mandate. One-size-fits-all models do not respond to everyday challenges on the ground.

Thirdly, we welcome the continued focus on strengthening performance and accountability across the board for peacekeepers and peacekeeping operations. Peacekeepers must embody the best ethical norms in implementing their mandate with professionalism and integrity. We commend the efforts of the Secretariat in developing performance standards and evaluation systems with the use of information and communications technology so that concrete progress on mandate delivery can be easily tracked. We are sure that the use of transparent systems, as foreseen in A4P+, will help the United Nations forge a bolder response in reviewing the efficiency of each peacekeeping operation. That is an opportunity for increasing the transparency, effectiveness and efficiency of the Organization across the board.

Fourthly, we find progress on cross-cutting issues, such as women and peace and security, human rights and climate change, to be encouraging. More must be done to ensure that those issues are strongly reflected in mandate renewals as important aspects of United Nations action on the ground.

Fifthly and finally, we support close cooperation between peacekeeping missions and local communities, in order to increase their effectiveness but also to build trust and help prevent conflicts. There is also potential for more effective involvement of United Nations country teams and cooperation with the host country.

We all bear witness to the increased challenges encountered by peacekeeping missions due to misinformation and disinformation. We would like to underscore the significance of strategic communications for United Nations peacekeeping operations to build trust and support with host Governments and local communities, counter disinformation and misinformation, enhance the safety and security of peacekeepers and strengthen their ability to implement their mandate. In our view, a holistic approach that encompasses peace and security, political engagement and justice, human rights and development and strategic communication is the best way to implement mandates and advance towards sustained peace.

Mr. Costa Filho (Brazil): I would like to begin by thanking Ambassador Zhang Jun and his team at the Chinese mission for the dynamic leadership in the exercise of the presidency in the month of August. I

also congratulate you, Mr. President, on taking over the presidency this month and pledge to you the full support of my delegation.

I would like to thank Under-Secretary-General Jean-Pierre Lacroix for his briefing. I also take note of the highly informative report on the Action for Peacekeeping Plus (A4P+) initiative.

Peacekeeping operations are often the most visible aspect of the work of the United Nations around the world. It is certainly one of the ways in which the presence of the Organization is most directly felt. It is also where real or perceived shortcomings can have immediate consequences. It is therefore a task of ultimate importance for the work of the Security Council.

Brazil has contributed police and troops to several missions, from the United Nations Emergency Force on the Sinai peninsula to the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon. In the past 70 years, Brazil has taken part in more than 50 of the 72 peacekeeping operations deployed thus far. Over the years, more than 55,000 Brazilian military and police personnel have participated in missions in Africa, the Americas, the Middle East and Asia.

As a traditional troop-contributing country, Brazil fully supports the Action for Peacekeeping initiative, as well as the implementation of the priorities established for 2021 to 2023 as part of the A4P+ initiative. Brazil also co-chairs, along with China, Indonesia and Rwanda, the Group of Friends on the Safety and Security of United Nations Peacekeepers.

Efficient peacekeeping must abide by the basic principles of United Nations peacekeeping — the consent of the parties, impartiality and non-use of force except in self-defence and defence of the mandate. The resolution of conflict depends on a lasting political solution. Therefore, peacekeeping operations must provide support for achieving this outcome.

Efficient peacekeeping also needs clear mandates and well-defined priorities, based on realistic assessments of the situation on the ground. It needs to effectively communicate with the local Government, civil society, the local population and other stakeholders.

Bearing that in mind, during the Brazilian presidency in July, the Council held its first meeting specifically on strategic communications in peacekeeping missions (see S/PV.9090). We are grateful for the support of members to a presidential statement

on the matter (S/PRST/2022/5), which highlights strategic communications as essential for the missions to implement their mandates, including with respect to civilian protection, as well as for the creation of a safe environment for peacekeepers.

Strategic communications also help manage expectations of the host Government and local communities. The importance of effectively communicating with the local population has been highlighted by the recent developments in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where protests against the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo degenerated into violence against Blue Helmets.

Peacekeeping operations cannot and should not last indefinitely. If circumstances allow, they can be reconfigured into a special political mission. Or the peace operation may be withdrawn altogether and the work of the United Nations in the area concerned can be conducted by the United Nations country team.

Such transitions, which are a normal and desirable development, are nonetheless not free from difficulties. Adequate planning is necessary to avoid a recurrence of violence and to ensure that the host country is on a sustainable path to peace and prosperity. Brazil therefore welcomes the report of the Secretary-General on transitions, mandated by resolution 2594 (2021), which provides updates on recent transition settings and offers valuable insights on the matter. In particular, we strongly concur on the importance of coordination, coherence and cooperation between the Council and the Peacebuilding Commission.

The causes of each individual conflict are complex and unique. However, it is undeniable that there can be no lasting peace without development, and there can be no development without peace. Security and development are closely interlinked and mutually reinforcing. That should not be interpreted by the Security Council, however, as a mandate in each and every realm of human endeavour that may have an impact on security. Rather, it is a call for the Council to strengthen its cooperation and coordination with those bodies mandated by the membership to take a lead on those issues.

Security sector reform, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, community violence reduction and strengthening the rule of law are essential in order to build a more stable institutional framework,

which is a precondition for economic development. Those issues must be integral to our considerations on peacekeeping. Strengthening international cooperation, investing in productive capacities and combating poverty and hunger are as essential to addressing conflict as security considerations.

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

I thank Mr. Lacroix for his briefing. I would like to stress three points.

The Action for Peacekeeping initiative has allowed the action of the missions, the Secretariat and the Member States to converge around clear priorities. The United Nations has adapted to difficult theatres of crisis. The United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali, the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic, the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the United Nations Mission in South Sudan have been able to implement more robust peacekeeping. They have done so without losing sight of their political support function.

Peace operations are now facing new difficulties: one of them is opposition by the host State, sometimes by local communities. The presence of mercenaries, with the weakening of the host State and the associated abuses that accompany it, is another particularly dangerous one. Those challenges are amplified by the manipulation of information. In some cases, those hostile actions have led to the death of peacekeepers, who are becoming priority targets. France pays tribute to them.

We are encouraged by the adaptation efforts undertaken by the United Nations in the context of the Action for Peacekeeping Plus initiative. In particular, the respect of the host State for its obligations is fundamental. Any deviation from that principle undermines the authority of the Security Council, endangers the safety of the Blue Helmets and hinders the implementation of their mandate.

France defends an ambitious vision of peacekeeping, which is reflected in the Action for Peacekeeping initiative. In 2022, we increased our voluntary contributions, allocating \$3.7 million to the Department of Peace Operations and the Department of Operational Support. In particular, we supported the digital transformation of peacekeeping, strategic communications and countering the manipulation of information, as well as countering improvised explosive devices. We are working to strengthen the language skills of contingents and continue to encourage the participation of women in peacekeeping operations. I commend those women who, because of their language skills, are on the front lines with civilian populations. Those efforts must continue, in particular by strengthening the human rights components responsible for reporting on violations committed on the ground.

We are convinced that the future of peacekeeping lies in strengthening partnerships. I would mention the partnership with the African Union and the financing of African peace operations through mandatory United Nations contributions. We hope that clear guidelines will be defined at the African Union Summit in February 2023 so that negotiations can resume in New York.

I would also like to mention the partnership with the European Union. States members of the European Union deploy more than 5,000 personnel in peace operations. European Union operations and its financial instruments complement the actions of the United Nations and the African Union in many theatres of crisis. The European Union has allocated €1.5 billion to support conflict prevention and security efforts in sub-Saharan Africa for the period 2021 to 2027.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

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

The meeting rose at 11.50 a.m.