



# Security Council

Seventy-eighth year

*Provisional*

**9413**<sup>th</sup> meeting

Thursday, 7 September 2023, 3.10 p.m.

New York

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*President:* Mr. Hoxha . . . . . (Albania)

*Members:*

Brazil . . . . .	Mr. Moretti
China . . . . .	Mr. Geng Shuang
Ecuador . . . . .	Mr. Pérez Loose
France . . . . .	Mr. De Rivière
Gabon . . . . .	Mr. Biang
Ghana . . . . .	Mr. Agyeman
Japan . . . . .	Mrs. Shino
Malta . . . . .	Ms. Gatt
Mozambique . . . . .	Mr. Fernandes
Russian Federation . . . . .	Mr. Polyanskiy
Switzerland . . . . .	Mrs. Baeriswyl
United Arab Emirates . . . . .	Mrs. Alhefeiti
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . .	Mr. Kariuki
United States of America . . . . .	Mr. Wood

## Agenda

United Nations peacekeeping operations

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*The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.*

### **Adoption of the agenda**

*The agenda was adopted.*

### **United Nations peacekeeping operations**

**The President:** 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:** I welcome this opportunity to brief the Security Council in the context of resolution 2378 (2017), on the progress made and the challenges encountered in the implementation of Action for Peacekeeping (A4P) initiative and its implementation strategy, Action for Peacekeeping Plus.

We are five years into A4P. The Declaration of Shared Commitments stands as a testimony to a global consensus and ambition to strengthen missions and make our peacekeepers safer and more effective. A4P+, launched in 2021, focuses our energy on catalytic issues that are critical for achieving A4P's aims.

Today I will briefly speak to results thus far. For more details, I refer members to our latest A4P+ progress report, circulated to the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations, to the brief summary in front of members and to the Secretary-General's report on peacekeeping performance, recently submitted to the Council.

I would also like to take this opportunity to underscore the extent to which we need stronger, more consistent and unified support by Member States to fulfil the ultimate goals of United Nations peacekeeping, that is, helping to establish and provide the space for durable peace.

As we have always conveyed, A4P is a collective effort, and peacekeeping is only as strong as the unity and support of our Member States. Growing divisions among Member States, combined with the increased complexity of today's conflicts, poses a formidable challenge to peacekeeping and the broader task of maintaining peace and security.

Peacekeeping is not a magic wand to help a country return to stability, but with the support of a unified international community, political processes and peace agreements have been successfully implemented. It also took the assistance of peacekeeping missions in the various countries that I will mention. As a result, countries such as Sierra Leone, Cambodia, Namibia, Côte d'Ivoire, Timor-Leste and many more were able to transition from conflict to peace with the support of United Nations peacekeeping. Of course, it took not only peacekeeping missions, but also the strong and united support of Member States for those political processes.

Even where political solutions to conflicts seem distant, which is much more often the case nowadays, peacekeepers continue to protect the lives of hundreds and thousands of civilians in the countries and regions in which they are deployed. It is the case, for example, with the United Nations Mission in South Sudan and with the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), which protects hundreds of thousands of civilians under direct threat of violence, in spite of daunting challenges and limitations.

United Nations peacekeeping is also working to keep civilians out of harm's way by preserving ceasefires and preventing the resumption of hostilities in places such as southern Lebanon and Cyprus. As we are all too aware, incidents in those regions can easily escalate into the resumption of hostilities. I encourage the Council to consider the alternative and to imagine how those situations would evolve if peacekeepers were not present to undertake those daily efforts. With that said, I must note that while peacekeeping plays a critical role in reducing violent conflict, as outlined in the New Agenda for Peace, peace enforcement is a step too far for peacekeeping and needs to be carried out under different modalities.

In an era of increasing complexity, the environment in which our peacekeepers are deployed is ever evolving. Last year, the number of conflict-related deaths worldwide reached a 20-year high. A convergence of global phenomena — geopolitical tension, climate change and transnational organized crime point to a future of overlapping crises. But we must continue to strengthen the effectiveness of peacekeeping, which is one of the most powerful multilateral tools at our disposal to manage and help resolve conflict. And as the reports I mentioned earlier attest to, we are doing our utmost.

Political strategies that have coherent and collective support from key actors are a cornerstone of A4P and A4P+. Political solutions must be at the heart of all efforts. That approach is evident in the engagements undertaken by our missions, often in conjunction with regional organizations and other partners leading on political processes.

In the Central African Republic, the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) is advancing the peace process through the implementation of a multi-year political strategy, coupled with a robust and proactive security approach to deter armed groups.

In Mali, the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) was instrumental in its assistance to the international mediation team supporting the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali, particularly in negotiations among the parties. And here, I wish to affirm that even as the Mission pursues its withdrawal in line with resolution 2690 (2023), the United Nations has expressed its readiness to continue its support to the implementation of the peace agreement, which remains critical for peace and stability in Mali.

Even where peacekeeping mandates do not explicitly confer the task of supporting political processes, missions often have a pivotal role in enabling conditions conducive to the pursuit or resumption of negotiations. That is the case in Cyprus, for example, where the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus works closely with the Secretary-General's good-offices mission to foster intercommunal cooperation and facilitate trust and confidence-building measures.

Effective peacekeeping also requires the right capabilities and mindset. We continue to utilize the Peacekeeping Capability Readiness System (PCRS) to accelerate deployment timelines. Since November, seven units have been deployed from the PCRS, including two to the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei as part of the mission's reconfiguration.

We also continue to adapt training and deployment to the needs of missions, for instance through implementing the recommendations of the Independent Strategic Review of the United Nations Response to Explosive Ordnance Threats (see S/2021/1042). Among other actions, that has included revising requirements for units deploying to three missions to

ensure that contingents can effectively operate in their threat environments.

However, our work is far from complete. Caveats, especially when undeclared by troop- and police-contributing countries' can significantly hamper our missions' effectiveness and lead to operational setbacks. They also create risk for troop- and police-contributing countries that are willing to do their utmost to implement the mandate. I would like to reiterate our position that undeclared caveats have no place in United Nations peacekeeping.

I also appeal to Member States to fill existing capability gaps. The Peacekeeping Ministerial meeting in Accra on 5 and 6 December will be a pivotal opportunity to reaffirm and make new commitments to peacekeeping. I invite all Member States to review the pledging guide and capability requirement paper we have issued in order to tailor their pledges at the Ministerial meeting to the precise needs we have. The Ministerial meeting will also be a critical opportunity for Member States to express their political support for United Nations peacekeeping.

Accountability to United Nations peacekeepers remains a core priority, in line with resolutions 2518 (2020) and 2589 (2021). As documented in the three A4P+ progress reports published to date, we continue to make notable strides in enhancing the safety and security of United Nations peacekeepers, despite the increasingly complex security environments in which we operate.

Efforts such as the Action Plan to Improve the Security of Peacekeepers and the implementation of the review on explosive ordnance threats have fostered progress in areas such as force protection, integrated base defence and countering improvised explosive devices. Advances in peacekeeping intelligence and situational awareness are helping missions foresee and address threats, whereas enhanced field crisis management capabilities, such as regular casualty evacuation trainings and stress-testing, contribute to improving the safety and security of peacekeepers. Further progress hinges on sustained Member State support, especially in the form of specialized skills, equipment and expertise.

But the death of one peacekeeper is always one too many. We must remember and honour the sacrifices made by our peacekeepers worldwide, including the 18 peacekeepers killed by malicious acts since my

briefing last September (see S/PV.9123). In the context of MINUSMA's drawdown, the Mission's operating environment remains particularly dangerous. The risk of attacks by non-State armed groups persists. Five out of seven peacekeepers killed by malicious acts so far, in 2023, were serving in Mali. I appeal to all Council members to help ensure that we can proceed with the drawdown of MINUSMA in a safe and orderly manner.

The accountability of peacekeepers aims for the highest level of performance by all personnel, uniformed and civilian. That includes responsible action towards host countries and their populations, not only in conduct and discipline, but in missions' environmental footprints.

In line with resolution 2436 (2018) and as documented in the most recent report of the Secretary-General on the overall performance of United Nations peacekeeping operations, we continue our efforts to strengthen the performance of United Nations peacekeeping at all levels, including at Headquarters, within missions and within uniformed and civilian components. Performance-assessment tools have been improved, as has the way we actively follow up on underperformance reports and take remedial actions.

We also continue to take all necessary measures to address allegations of all forms of misconduct, both past and present. Ending impunity for all forms of misconduct remains a central goal and we have taken drastic measures in the case of serious allegations, including through repatriation of units where needed. Consistent numbers of allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse continue to be reported annually, although many of these have related to events from past years. Together with Member States, we must work to ensure preventive measures, enforce zero-tolerance of all misconduct and, most importantly, uphold the rights and dignity of victims.

As we mark the seventy-fifth anniversary of United Nations peacekeeping, we are reflecting not only on milestones achieved, but also on how we communicate and engage with the public and communities, explain our mandates and dispel falsehoods.

The recent strategic review of strategic communications across United Nations peacekeeping operations (S/2023/282) highlighted that effective and proactive strategic communication helps to manage expectations among host Governments and populations. Several missions are now implementing

regular perception surveys to better understand the attitudes and expectations of local populations, and we are working to further build capacity and expertise in that area. Communicating peacekeeping's aims and achievements also supports collaboration with national actors, which can enhance our effectiveness.

As a proactive measure, our global communications Peace Begins with Me campaign demonstrates our tangible impact on those we serve and our collective commitment to peace. We are also working to step up this kind of proactive media engagement at Headquarters and within our missions. And we are taking robust action against all forms of mis- and disinformation that interfere with the work of our missions. For example, within hours of its coming out, MINUSCA recently identified and debunked a false online story claiming that a peacekeeper had been arrested for arms trafficking. More needs to be done, including by ensuring that we have the right skill sets both at Headquarters and in our missions to adequately address mis- and disinformation.

The final A4P+ priority, cooperation with host States, is undergirded by transparency, mutual respect and open dialogue. Through proactive discussions with national authorities, we have often been able to address critical challenges, such as detentions of United Nations personnel or restrictions on their freedom of movement, but it is not always enough. As reaffirmed by resolution 2518 (2020), reducing violations of status-of-forces agreements across missions is critical. In order to strengthen our cooperation with host States, we are working to better document and communicate with the Council on status-of-forces violations. To that end, it is essential to ensure the political engagement of Member States and of the Security Council in particular. I urge Council members to engage with host countries where needed, to help us proceed with the effective and unimpeded implementation of Security Council mandates.

Advancing the women and peace and security agenda, a core priority in peacekeeping, increases peacekeeping effectiveness. Women's participation in political processes is critical to efforts to achieve sustainable political solutions, and we are continuing our efforts in support of that engagement. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, for example, MONUSCO actively supported the participation of women in the Nairobi process, leading to 40 per cent representation in its third round of consultations between the

Government and representatives of armed groups and communities. We also continue to make great strides in the Uniformed Gender Parity Strategy. As of May, women constituted 25.6 per cent of individual uniformed personnel. As of today, 38 per cent of Heads and 33 per cent of Deputy Heads of civilian-led peacekeeping operations are women. We have also worked to foster gender-responsive working and living conditions. I once again call on Member States to intensify efforts to remove barriers at the national level and increase the participation of women in peacekeeping, including at the civilian level. Technology and data are also critical to the future of peacekeeping. Central to that is the ongoing implementation of the Strategy for the Digital Transformation of United Nations Peacekeeping. While we have made progress towards ensuring tech-savvy, data-informed peacekeeping forces, further investment in data capabilities among personnel is required to ensure that data can be properly leveraged for effective decision-making.

We continue to proactively advance A4P and A4P+ but also remain seized of the need to continually review and expand our efforts to ensure that peacekeeping remains fit for purpose. In the past few years the Security Council has mandated us to do so, notably through resolutions 2518 (2020) on the safety and security of peacekeepers, 2589 (2021) on accountability for crimes against peacekeepers, 2436 (2018) on peacekeeping performance and 2594 (2021) on peacekeeping transitions. Most, if not all, of the work I have mentioned is therefore indeed mandated by Member States. As the drawdown from Mali creates greater pressure for scalability, I would like to take this opportunity to emphasize that upholding and fulfilling our responsibilities, as stipulated in the resolutions, requires both resources and political will. At its core, peacekeeping is a political instrument. Its efficacy is linked to robust political support from the Council. While clear mandates with adequate resources are the foundation for success, host nations' cooperation and a genuine desire among the parties to seek peace are also crucial.

As we reflect on the past 75 years, there are many examples of successful political processes supported by United Nations peacekeeping. Currently, as the international community has grown increasingly divided, peacekeeping efforts in support of political processes are looking at a less consistent track record. Nonetheless, the intermediate goals of our missions,

including in protecting the lives of countless civilians, preserving ceasefires and preventing escalations and resumptions of hostilities, remain extremely meaningful. For many populations at the front lines of conflict, the presence of peacekeeping missions is an important deterrent to an even grimmer reality. As we continue to work to improve and update peacekeeping to meet the evolving nature of threats to peace, we must be diligent in assessing our added value and ensuring that our capabilities and resources are aligned with our objectives. The dedication of all stakeholders during five years of A4P has brought results. But we cannot be complacent. Let us recommit to peacekeeping reform and build further on our shared successes. In conclusion, I would like to thank the Member States for championing A4P and the priority areas of A4P+.

**The President:** 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. Agyeman** (Ghana): As this is the first time that we are taking the floor during your presidency of the Security Council, Sir, we would like to congratulate you and your team and wish you the very best for your term. Let me also thank Under-Secretary-General Jean-Pierre Lacroix for his briefing to the Council against the backdrop of the Secretary-General's comprehensive report on United Nations peacekeeping operations.

Despite the fact that present-day peacekeeping operations are complicated by dangerous environments and challenging circumstances, Ghana continues to assert the importance of the role of the United Nations in maintaining international peace and security and of peacekeeping operations as instrumental to those efforts. We recognize the significant contributions made by peacekeepers and peacekeeping around the world and pay tribute to all the Blue Helmet personnel who have made the ultimate sacrifice for the cause of peace. At this time, we remember the gallant men and women who have fallen in the line of duty and urge all warring parties to consider their sacrifice and recommit to peace.

The Secretary-General's report examines where we are with United Nations peacekeeping operations, including the parameters used to assess peacekeeping performance, details on progress in the implementation of the Action for Peace Plus (A4P+) priority areas and recommendations for further improving United Nations peacekeeping to ensure that it can realize its full



potential. We welcome the report and associate ourselves with the Secretary-General's call for the Security Council and the General Assembly to holistically reflect on the limitations and the future of peacekeeping. That reflection is particularly necessary considering the contexts of the conflicts that peacekeeping is called on to respond to today. As the Secretary-General's report points out, today's conflict environments are often marked by geopolitical tensions, the proliferation of armed groups, exclusion, inequalities, social and political marginalization, climate insecurity, violent extremism, terrorism and the spread of misinformation and disinformation, as well as food insecurity. In some instances, those circumstances demand that we pivot away from the traditional peacekeeping paradigm where it is appropriate to do so. For today's briefing, we would like to highlight three key points.

First, we emphasize the need to ensure the primacy of politics in peacekeeping missions' mandates, and for the Council itself to work to streamline mandates to ensure that they are realistic and commensurate with the known capabilities of what peacekeeping missions can deliver. In that regard, we must work in a manner that can support peacekeeping missions in harnessing relevant partnerships to deliver a coherent and unified political strategy for resolving conflicts, while also closing the gaps between the expectations of local populations and what peacekeeping missions can realistically deliver.

Secondly, we underscore the need to prioritize peacekeeping operations as an integral part of the broader processes for peace, not an activity in isolation. While they may not have the capacity to fully address the underlying causes of conflicts, the historical evidence shows that peacekeeping operations can have a transformative impact. Peacekeeping should therefore be carefully structured and implemented to achieve sustainable conflict-management outcomes and foster an environment conducive to lasting peace and stability.

Thirdly, we urge for a stronger strategic approach to the question of transitions. Peace processes do not end when the last peacekeeper leaves, and neither should our commitment. Before, during and after a peacekeeping mission, we must take full advantage of the existing peace toolbox, as well as centralize peacebuilding in breaking the cycles of underdevelopment, inequitable growth and flawed or militarized political systems. Moreover, the huge gap between the resources we put at the disposal of peacekeeping missions and what we

are prepared to give United Nations country teams to carry over residual tasks and functions that support peace should be narrowed and more resources given for such tasks.

Ghana remains committed to advancing the effectiveness of peacekeeping and looks forward, as the Under-Secretary-General also mentioned, to hosting a successful Peacekeeping Ministerial meeting in Accra on 5 and 6 December. We encourage the participation of all delegations and are ready to facilitate such participation.

We are optimistic that, underpinned by the four preparatory meetings, the last of which will be held next month in Kigali, the five themes chosen for the ministerial meeting — namely, the safety and security of uniformed personnel; strategic communication, including hate speech and misinformation and disinformation; the mental health of peacekeepers; the participation of women in peacekeeping and the protection of civilians — will engender the necessary pledges to support the implementation of the Action for Peacekeeping Plus initiative.

In conclusion, and as highlighted by the Secretary-General in his policy brief on A New Agenda for Peace, the Council and the wider United Nations need to embrace African-led peace support operations, funded from United Nations assessed contributions, if we are to be effective and successful in silencing the guns on the African continent. As a reliable regional partner, the African Union's resolve to assist the Council in maintaining continental peace and security holds the best prospects for preserving the credibility of United Nations peacekeeping and maintaining peace where limitations in peacekeeping are evident. We therefore look forward to the adoption of a framework draft resolution on the matter.

**Mr. Kariuki** (United Kingdom): I thank Under-Secretary-General Lacroix for his briefing and continued leadership of United Nations peacekeeping.

The United Kingdom pays tribute to those peacekeepers who lost their lives in pursuit of peace this year. Peacekeeping relies on the determination and dedication of United Nations personnel. As members of the Security Council, we must support them, as must all host nations and Member States, by providing the necessary training and equipment, improving awareness of threats and ensuring medical provision.

The United Kingdom continues to play its part, training thousands of United Nations peacekeepers each year. As a top contributor of extra-budgetary funds — more than \$2.8 million in 2022 — we remain committed supporters of peacekeeping reform.

We are also dedicated to advancing the participation of women in peacekeeping and peace processes, through our support for the Senior Women Talent Pipeline and the Elsie Initiative Fund, to which we have contributed \$9 million to date. We look forward to discussing those issues further at the Peacekeeping Ministerial conference in Ghana in December.

United Nations peacekeeping operations have faced continued challenges, as we have heard today. Disinformation campaigns against United Nations peacekeeping missions are on the rise, undermining their ability to implement mandates safely and effectively. We are grateful to our co-hosts — Rwanda, the Netherlands and Indonesia — for their support ahead of the planned Peacekeeping Ministerial preparatory conference on countering misinformation and disinformation next month.

Missions also continue to suffer from restrictions on the freedom of movement and from violations of status-of-forces agreements, including in Mali, the Central African Republic, Lebanon and Western Sahara. It is not only peacekeeping missions that suffer when host Governments neglect their obligations; it is the people peacekeepers protect who often pay the price. Host States must allow the safe and effective implementation of mission mandates.

With the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali withdrawing from Mali and the transition of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo approaching, we should implement lessons learned from past peacekeeping transitions. Particularly, we should be wary of time-based, rather than conditions-based, withdrawals of peacekeeping operations, which can put lives and peace processes at risk.

In conclusion, let me underscore the continued importance the United Kingdom places on United Nations peacekeeping, which remains an essential tool for responding to peace and security challenges. As the Council, we must continue to ensure that peacekeeping is fit for modern challenges and receives our full support. Nationally, we remain fully committed to

the Action for Peacekeeping Plus agenda and its eight priority commitment areas.

**Mrs. Alhfeiti** (United Arab Emirates) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I thank Under-Secretary-General Lacroix for his insightful briefing.

Today's debate comes at a time when peacekeeping operations are confronted with growing challenges due to the exacerbation of armed conflicts and the escalation of violence and incitement against peacekeeping forces, as explained by Mr. Lacroix. As we look forward to discussing those challenges during the United Nations Peacekeeping Ministerial meeting, scheduled to be held in Ghana at the end of this year, we believe that today's meeting presents an opportunity to exchange views on ways to improve peacekeeping operations while considering the Secretary-General's New Agenda for Peace. Accordingly, I would like to address four points.

First, the Security Council must renew the mandates of peacekeeping operations in a manner that responds to developments on the ground. That is particularly important when missions face serious challenges that limit their ability to implement their mandates, such as the imposition of restrictions on their movement by armed groups. It is therefore critical for peacekeeping missions to be appropriately resourced and equipped in order to strengthen their resilience to challenges and fully assume their responsibilities.

Secondly, it is essential to reach a common and clear understanding with host countries on the mandates of peacekeeping operations. That would ensure the effective implementation of peacekeeping mandates and the safety and security of peacekeepers, along with implementing successful transitions. The Secretary-General has made cooperation with host countries one of the seven main pillars of his Action for Peacekeeping Plus initiative. It is therefore critical to take that into consideration and conduct transparent and practical discussions with host Governments to build the confidence needed for durable cooperation. In addition, utilizing alternative approaches, such as co-deployment and providing clearer definitions of host Governments' role and engagement in peacekeeping mandates will enhance cooperation on the ground and help manage the expectations of local communities.

Thirdly, the international community must continue developing its methods to confront hate speech, extremism and the proliferation of misinformation and disinformation, which have an impact on the safety and

security of peacekeepers and fuel conflicts and tensions between communities, as acknowledged by the Security Council in resolution 2686 (2023), adopted in June. We underscore the need to implement that resolution, which requests United Nations peacekeeping and special political missions to monitor hate speech, racism and extremism and to include information about those issues in their regular reports to the Council. A better understanding of those threats is crucial to countering them. The practical implementation of the resolution requires empowering and supporting host communities by considering the deployment of strategic media experts in peace missions.

Fourthly, we stress the importance of increasing the participation of women in peacekeeping operations due to their pivotal role in supporting the success of those operations. The United Arab Emirates supports efforts to advance that aim, including the ongoing efforts to implement the Uniformed Gender Parity Strategy. We commend the progress made on mainstreaming gender perspectives in peacekeeping operations in a comprehensive manner. That must include expertise to adequately respond to conflict-related sexual violence. The United Arab Emirates continues to increase women's participation in peace and security, including through Sheikha Fatima Bint Mubarak Women, Peace and Security Initiative, in cooperation with UN-Women. That Initiative builds the capacities of women from Asia and Africa in the areas of military and peacekeeping.

In conclusion, the United Arab Emirates reaffirms its commitment to coordinating international efforts to contribute to improving the performance of peacekeeping operations. In that context, we look forward to the outcomes of the discussions that will take place during the second United Nations workshop on managing the performance of United Nations police commanders in peacekeeping operations", which the United Arab Emirates will host next week. In addition, I want to express our appreciation to all peacekeepers and to honour those who have died while performing their noble duties in the service of peace.

**Mr. Polyanskiy** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We are grateful to Under-Secretary-General Lacroix for his thorough briefing. We would like to take this opportunity to thank the military, police and civilian personnel of United Nations peacekeeping missions for their unwavering commitment to fulfilling their noble duty in extremely difficult and dangerous circumstances, risking their lives on a daily basis. We

also offer our condolences to the States and families of those killed in action.

United Nations peacekeeping is an important tool for strengthening international peace and security. For 75 years, thanks to the Blue Helmets, we have succeeded in creating the conditions necessary for establishing and maintaining lasting peace in many countries. During that time, United Nations peacekeeping operations have come a long way, from compact observation missions that still exist to this day to complex multidisciplinary presences numbering tens of thousands of military, police and civilian professionals. It is that readiness to adapt to changing circumstances that has always distinguished peacekeeping and enabled it to fulfil its mandates effectively and with dignity.

At the same time, the challenges facing United Nations peacekeeping efforts today are a source of serious concern about the future of peacekeeping operations. The drawdown of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali, and the demands from Kinshasa for the withdrawal of the United Nations presence from the Democratic Republic of the Congo to begin by the end of the year, have compelled us to think about the real reasons for the dissatisfaction among States that had originally consented to the deployment of peacekeepers on their territory. Those reasons include insufficient consideration of the wishes of host States and some mistaken priorities, with a shift in focus to secondary issues such as human rights, gender and climate. An additional factor is the so-called multidimensional nature of modern peacekeeping operations, which often distracts them from their core tasks and results in diminished internal coordination. It is not unheard of for different units within the same mission to differ in their understanding of their roles.

United Nations peacekeeping operations have been present for many years in a number of regions, becoming part and parcel of the domestic political context and the conflict-management process rather than a tool for resolving that conflict. As a result — and we have seen it increasingly often of late — there is growing public dissatisfaction with the way in which peacekeepers are carrying out their mandate. In many country situations, we see a patronizing approach and an arbitrary interpretation of such concepts as the imperative of unconditional respect for the sovereignty of host States and strict adherence to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and



the basic principles of peacekeeping — ensuring the consent of the parties and impartiality and refraining from the use of force, except in self-defence and to defend the mandate. Unfortunately, that approach has done nothing except worsen relations.

The issue of increasing disinformation and misinformation about the United Nations, which has recently been the subject of such active discussion in various forums within the Organization, is closely related to that. It requires a complex approach, since negative responses to United Nations missions are certainly not always attempts to tarnish the Organization's reputation, and countering disinformation should not be used as a pretext for censoring fair criticism of Blue Helmets. Where peacekeepers are doing a good job of performing their functions, no one listens to slander. But the fact is that critical assessments are often evidence of the disappointment of host States' populations with missions' work. That is why major attention should be paid to the concerns and priorities of the host country and the local population. United Nations peacekeeping missions should explain their mandates, work more actively with the population through radio, television and social networks and implement a variety of local quick-impact projects. All of that can help to establish a constructive relationship with the local population and reliable contacts, and thereby strengthen the authority of the United Nations.

Another serious problem is the discrepancies between the tasks that peacekeepers are assigned and the resources available to them for doing them, which creates inflated expectations among the population. We believe that peacekeepers' main focus should continue to be on achieving reconciliation through dialogue and creating favourable conditions to political processes. The quest for political solutions should be based on reaching agreement on the reasons for the emergence of the conflict. Without defining the goal it is difficult to identify the proper resources. Unfortunately, we are seeing situations in which opinions on those issues differ significantly between the warring parties, the main regional players and outside stakeholders, as well as in the Security Council. Without political solutions it is impossible to agree on clear and realistic mandates, gain the trust of host States and ensure effective support for regional efforts. One of the consequences of such disagreements in a number of regions around the world is that the lack of results produced by the United Nations presence leads countries to pursue regional or

other bilateral options. We believe that in situations where peace is lacking and terrorist threats are elevated, involving regional players at the host State's request is an effective way to establish peace and security.

United Nations cooperation with regional and subregional organizations is an integral element of the current international agenda in general and the Security Council in particular. We have consistently advocated for developing such cooperation on the basis of the Charter of the United Nations, especially its Chapter VIII. We believe firmly that regional integration associations, first and foremost the African Union, which have a first-hand acquaintance with the problems of their members, can play a constructive role in supporting the aspirations of States to ensure the security and welfare of their citizens. An overall assessment by the countries of the region of existing threats and ways to deal with them, a willingness to take on the risks of doing that and the creation of a coherent and effective command-and-control system based on trust and cooperation are the keys to the success of regional efforts. In addition, an undeniable advantage of regional efforts compared to United Nations peacekeeping operations is the ability to respond rapidly to emerging challenges and threats.

Constructive cooperation with host States is a key prerequisite for the effective implementation of peacekeeping operations. After all, it is they that bear the chief responsibility for the protection of civilians, the elimination of the causes of the crisis and the achievement of post-conflict recovery. We should never forget that resolving a country's internal crisis is a complex, painstaking and often lengthy process that must be national in nature and take into account the interests of every sector of the population. There is no universal formula. What is needed is a unique approach based on the social, historical, cultural and civilizational specificities of each society. Only the Government of the State itself can ensure that stable social contract. We consider the situation in the Central African Republic a positive example of the establishment of cooperation with the authorities of the host State. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Ms. Valentine Rugwabiza, has succeeded in establishing a close dialogue with Bangui. In that regard we should all remember that one of the basic principles of peacekeeping is the consent of the parties. Without it the work of peacekeeping is impossible.

In conclusion, we want to emphasize that the main platform for discussing major developments in

United Nations peacekeeping activities should remain the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations of the General Assembly (C-34). Its decisions draw their legitimacy from the universal composition of its membership, which includes all active participants in peace processes, and from the consensus nature of its work. The Secretariat should follow the course of discussions within the C-34 closely and take their outcomes into account in its work. That is especially true for an issue as sensitive as peacekeeping intelligence-gathering and information analysis. As we know from the latest report of the Secretary-General on the performance of United Nations peacekeeping operations, the Secretariat has established a peacekeeping intelligence academy. However, Member States did not directly instruct it to establish such an academy, and it is not acceptable for the Secretariat to ignore or arbitrarily interpret the conclusions of the C-34 when taking administrative decisions. We expect to see a similar approach with regard to agreement on the Secretary-General's initiative for a New Agenda for Peace. It will be important for the full range of views of Member States to be taken into account in developing that initiative.

I would like to assure the Council that as one of its permanent members, Russia bears a special responsibility for the prevention and settlement of armed conflicts and is focused on strengthening our global Organization's capacity for peacekeeping and countering crises.

**Mr. Moretti (Brazil):** I join others in thanking the Albanian presidency for organizing this meeting, as well as Under-Secretary-General Lacroix for his briefing.

Brazil knows first-hand the importance of United Nations peace missions. In the past 70 years, more than 55,000 Brazilian military and police personnel have participated in United Nations missions across the globe. We fully appreciate and are immensely grateful for those who often risk their lives in hostile environments. They deserve our wholehearted support. Men and women peacekeepers have a crucial task, which is to help create the conditions for durable peace and sustainable development. In our view, it is key to invest in the security pillar while solidly laying the ground for sustainable development initiatives, bearing in mind that security and development are closely interlinked and mutually reinforcing.

We concur with the Secretary-General's view that peacekeeping remains a central component of the continuum of United Nations responses to threats to international peace and security. For that to be maintained, peacekeeping must abide by the basic principles of the consent of the parties, impartiality and the non-use of force, except in self-defence and in defence of the mandate.

The United Nations peacekeeping system is at a critical juncture. Tensions between missions and host countries and recurring violent incidents point to an increasingly challenging environment for peacekeeping. We have recently witnessed worrisome events involving the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus, as well as the decision to withdraw the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali. In the Sudan, the deteriorating conditions have affected the capacity of the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan to discharge its mandate. The reasons for and the magnitude of such tensions vary considerably.

In any case, the Security Council should take responsibility and react according to its duties under the Charter of the United Nations. It must design mandates that are both realistic and fit for purpose. And it must oversee their implementation in a systematic manner in order to adjust them in the light of changing situations. For example, when dealing with complex, multidimensional mandates — which is increasingly the case — the Council should ensure that the missions have the tools appropriate for the effective discharge of their duties. It should also be able to detect in a timely manner when conditions on the ground no longer require, justify or allow for the presence of United Nations peace operations. We commend efforts to identify gaps and formulate updated policies, such as those recommended by the Action for Peacekeeping initiative of 2018 and the Action for Peacekeeping Plus initiative.

We also support the approach proposed in the New Agenda for Peace on the need to strengthen peace operations and partnerships. In its assessment, the Secretary-General rightly points out the evident gap between United Nations peacekeeping mandates and what missions can actually deliver. That is a pressing task we have in our hands.

The impact of the women and peace and security agenda on operational performance is of particular relevance, and we welcome the integration of that agenda across the Action for Peace Plus priorities.

In the context of an increasingly hostile environment for peacekeepers, we highlight the importance of strategic communications as a powerful tool to improve the overall performance of United Nations operations, not only in countering disinformation but also in promoting engagement with local communities.

Our commitment to adequately addressing those issues and others raised today is crucial if we are to preserve and enhance the effectiveness and legitimacy of peacekeeping operations.

**Mrs. Shino** (Japan): I thank Under-Secretary-General Lacroix for his briefing.

Peacekeeping operations are facing an increasingly challenging environment, politically and operationally. To uphold peacekeeping as one of the most effective tools available to the United Nations in the promotion and maintenance of international peace and security, political support and commitment from all stakeholders are required. The Security Council should remind itself of the importance of its unified support to peacekeeping and its responsibility to provide well-defined, realistic and achievable mandates, while acknowledging the limitations peacekeeping may have in delivering those mandates, as noted in the most recent report of the Secretary-General on the overall performance of United Nations peacekeeping operations and his policy brief on the New Agenda for Peace. As a stark reminder to us in the Chamber, let me quote one powerful phrase from the Secretary-General's report:

"A lack of unity within the Security Council can negatively impact the political leverage and effectiveness of peacekeeping operations to support peace processes".

We join the Secretary-General in re-emphasizing the need to continue to push forward peacekeeping reforms in order to enable nimble adaptation to dynamic environments. Japan reiterates its support for the priorities of the Action for Peacekeeping and Action for Peacekeeping Plus (A4P+) initiatives and is encouraged by the collective efforts to date to strengthen performance in line with them. All those priorities remain important, including achieving gender parity, as well as integrated performance tools and strategic

communication. The target period of A4P+ is the end of this year. Therefore, in addition to taking stock of what has been achieved, it is also imperative to identify the areas that require a renewed focus in particular. In that regard, we would like to highlight three areas.

The first is to further enhance partnerships. Peacekeeping is built on partnerships among all stakeholders, and the smooth functioning of resilient partnerships is a foundation for improving mission performance. The African Union in particular, among other regional organizations, can play an increasingly larger role in that regard, taking on ever-more ownership, especially given the recent expansion of its institutional capacity. Further strengthening partnerships between the United Nations and the AU, including on capacity-building and expertise-sharing, is one of the issues that needs to be properly taken into consideration to improve overall peacekeeping performance.

The second is to enhance strategic and operational integration, especially in response to the increase in the number of missions undergoing transitions. Peacekeeping operations need to contribute to achieving sustainable peace and preventing the recurrence of conflict. Therefore, their seamless handover to other entities, such as United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, must be used as a critical parameter for measuring their performance. In that vein, at the Headquarters level, we call on the Council to better utilize the Peacebuilding Commission's advisory role and ability to convene a wide range of stakeholders to mobilize every available tool.

The third is to improve the safety and security of peacekeepers. Risks to peacekeepers and missions are becoming more wide-ranging, including improvised explosive devices (IEDs), misinformation and disinformation. The Secretariat and Member States can support troop- and police-contributing countries' efforts to ensure that their personnel are well-prepared to mitigate those risks. Japan supports the United Nations efforts to develop and provide training programmes in areas such as countering IEDs, peacekeeping intelligence and medical capacity. In the meantime, new and yet-unknown risks will continue to emerge. The Security Council needs to be mindful to reflect them in its discussions on its various peacekeeping missions, as appropriate.

With those areas in mind, Japan remains committed to contributing to enhancing performance

in peacekeeping and further engaging in discussions in the Council.

**Mr. Wood** (United States of America): I thank Under-Secretary-General Lacroix for his briefing and his leadership on peacekeeping reform.

In recent years, there has been a disturbing trend of increasing threats of violence against United Nations peacekeepers. Just this past month in August, peacekeepers from the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus were physically assaulted in Pyla. Violence perpetrated against United Nations peacekeepers is unacceptable. We call on the Secretary-General and Member States, particularly host Governments, to do everything they can to promote the safety and security of United Nations peacekeepers.

One of the largest and growing threats to that safety is misinformation and disinformation. Misinformation and disinformation campaigns, such as those we have seen targeting the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic, hinder missions' abilities to protect civilians, investigate human rights violations and facilitate political dialogue. Misinformation and disinformation breed mistrust of the mission by local populations, which makes peacekeepers a target for violence.

Peacekeeping missions must proactively shape public messaging to include factual information about a mission's mandate in local languages on accessible media platforms. Host Governments must also increase their efforts to combat misinformation and disinformation campaigns targeting United Nations missions.

Environmental management is a cross-cutting issue that impacts peacekeeper safety and security, mission operations and the legacy that peacekeepers leave behind. More reliance on renewable energy and less reliance on diesel means fewer supply convoys which expose peacekeepers to attacks and lessens the flow of funding to conflict actors who control supply chains. The bottom line is this: greener peacekeeping leads to safer peacekeepers and safer and cleaner environments for host communities.

To encourage greater support for those efforts, the United States will host a side event for the 2023 Accra peacekeeping ministerial to explore innovative partnerships with troop- and police-contributing countries to meet key United Nations environmental management goals.

The United States underlines the importance of the Secretariat and Member States continuing to work to improve the performance of peacekeeping operations. Improving peacekeeping performance is an integral part of the Secretary-General's Action for Peacekeeping and Action for Peacekeeping Plus agenda, and resolution 2436 (2018) shows it is a priority for the Council as well. The Council must continue to seek accountability for underperformance in United Nations peacekeeping and do its part to ensure that missions have the support they need to succeed.

**Mr. De Rivi re** (France) (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank Mr. Lacroix for his briefing.

Despite the challenges of the past year, peacekeeping remains an irreplaceable instrument. It is often the only possible response to contemporary security challenges. Conflict prevention and peacebuilding are useful levers but are unsuitable once crises have broken out. To operate on the ground, a security presence remains essential in many cases.

The role of the Security Council is paramount, and few organizations offer equivalent force-generation and logistical support capabilities. Where partnerships with host States are functioning, peacekeeping operations have continued to implement their mandates for the benefit of international peace and security.

The success of peacekeeping operations depends on the existence of momentum and strategy among the parties on the ground. Host States must facilitate the implementation of peacekeeping mandates, and they must not give in to the temptation to make the United Nations a scapegoat nor to the siren calls of mercenaries who proliferate human rights violations and plunder natural resources.

The results seen in 2023 owe a great deal to the Action for Peacekeeping initiative. In 2023, France increased its efforts by allocating nearly €4 million in voluntary contributions. In particular, we have also supported the digital transformation of peacekeeping, efforts in strategic communications and the fight against information manipulation, as well as the fight against improvised explosive devices. France is also working to strengthen language skills. We continue to encourage a significant increase in the number of women in peacekeeping operations, particularly in managerial positions.



The Accra ministerial meeting in December must reaffirm a political vision of peacekeeping. That will require the collective commitment of the Secretary-General, troop-contributing countries and all partners. The momentum generated by the New Agenda for Peace must be maintained. France will continue to play its full part.

The future of peacekeeping lies in strengthening partnerships.

I am referring to the partnership with the African Union and the financing of African peace operations from United Nations assessed contributions. France will continue its engagement this year to bring positions together and to make progress towards the adoption of a framework resolution.

I am also referring to partnerships with the European Union (EU). EU member States deploy more than 5,000 personnel and EU operations and financial instruments complement the work of the United Nations and the African Union. The EU has also allocated €1.5 billion in support of conflict prevention and security efforts in sub-Saharan Africa for the period 2021-2027.

**Mr. Afonso** (Mozambique): Mozambique wishes to thank the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Mr. Jean-Pierre Lacroix, for his important and insightful briefing.

We welcome the report of the Secretary-General on the overall performance of the United Nations peacekeeping operations, as well as the timely recommendations for improving their performance. We highly appreciate the fact that, since 1948, more than 70 United Nations peacekeeping operations, involving more than 88,000 uniformed and civilian personnel, have been deployed. They have contributed enormously and continue to work towards the cessations of hostilities or the prevention of the resurgence of violent conflicts. We wish to take this opportunity to commend the positive and complex work of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. Furthermore, we pay tribute to the men and women who have served or are still serving to keep peace, security and stability in different places on the planet.

The challenges posed by long-standing and protracted conflicts, without peace to keep, driven by complex domestic, regional, geopolitical and transnational factors, serve as a stark illustration of the

limitations of ambitious mandates without adequate political support.

The recent request by the Malian transitional Government for the withdrawal of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali and the recent demonstrations against the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo bear testimony to the challenges facing some peacekeeping operations today.

We are mindful that peacekeeping remains a unifying force that brings Member States together around a shared vision of maintaining or restoring peace. Peacekeeping enjoys international legitimacy that derives from the Security Council mandate and broad international backing.

In that connection, we are reminded of the successful experience of the United Nations Operation in Mozambique (ONUMOZ), established under resolution 797 (1992). The Security Council created ONUMOZ within the framework of the General Peace Agreement for Mozambique, also known as the Rome Accords, of which the Mozambican Government and the Mozambique National Resistance (RENAMO) were the signatories on the 4 October 1992.

ONUMOZ led to a successful completion of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process, which ended up demobilizing Government soldiers and RENAMO armed men. It laid the foundation for the creation of the new army — the Mozambique Defence Armed Forces. ONUMOZ also guided the peaceful transition of the political process in the country, creating conditions conducive to the holding of the first multiparty general elections, in 1994.

It is our understanding that the success of the Mozambican peacemaking and peacekeeping processes were largely due to a combination of enabling factors: the political will of the parties and the overwhelming support of the Mozambican people themselves; clear and well-defined goals by the parties to the conflict, as contained in the Rome General Peace Accords; the strong support of the southern African region, the Secretary-General, along with the cohesion and unity of the Security Council and of the international community at large, with regard to the mandate; and the necessary resources — human, material and financial — made available for the process.

It is fair to say that behind every successful peacekeeping operation, one will find some or all of the elements listed above. Therefore, insights and lessons that can be drawn from the Mozambican experience clearly indicate that a peacekeeping operation cannot succeed in its primary objectives when there is insufficient political will for peace among the main stakeholders, when the people are not involved, when the international community is not constructively engaged or when the resources, including financial resources, are lacking.

Mozambique wishes to reaffirm our support for the integration of the women and peace and security agenda, in line with resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security. We believe that the resolution has had a positive impact on the operational effectiveness of peacekeeping operations.

**Mr. Geng Shuang** (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank Under-Secretary-General Lacroix for his briefing and congratulate him on his recent successful visit to China.

United Nations peacekeeping operations are an important means of maintaining international peace and security. As we speak, nearly 90,000 peacekeepers are united under the banner of the United Nations in mission areas around the world. They are bringing peace to conflict areas and hope to local people. I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to all the Blue Helmets serving on the front line of peacekeeping.

The international situation is undergoing profound changes, with hotspot issues emerging one after another and geopolitical conflicts continuing unabated. United Nations peacekeeping operations are facing new and increasingly prominent problems, tasks and challenges. Not long ago, Secretary-General Guterres put forward his New Agenda for Peace, which provided an important reference for Member States to discuss the cause of peace and further improve peacekeeping operations. Under such new circumstances, peacekeeping operations should have clearly defined roles and address their weaknesses and shortcomings so as to better serve Member States and the international community.

With a view to advancing the New Agenda for Peace, I would like to make four points.

First, peacekeeping operations must remain political. Peacekeeping operations are a complement to political and diplomatic efforts, a means rather

than an end. In his New Agenda for Peace, Secretary-General Guterres emphasized that peace operations must be deployed on the basis of and in support of a clear political process. Starting with the creation and deployment of mandates to their implementation and conduct of operations, peacekeeping missions must not lose sight of the fundamental goal of serving political settlements and must not deviate from the overall direction of supporting diplomatic efforts.

Host Governments and their people are the driving force of peace and development in their own country. Gaining the trust of the host Government and the support of the local people is the basis and prerequisite for the smooth conduct of peacekeeping operations and a requirement to ensure the political process is served. The recent withdrawal of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) has attracted the attention of all parties, and the resistance encountered by the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in carrying out its mandate was worrisome. The United Nations should draw the appropriate lessons and continue to improve its peacekeeping efforts. That is also why we support the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) in further strengthening its communication with the Lebanese Government and army in the discharge of its mandate.

Secondly, peacekeeping operations should strengthen their partnerships. Peacekeeping operations are closely connected to the development, social, humanitarian and human rights and other work of the United Nations and cannot be successful without coordination and cooperation among the Security Council, the Secretariat, troop- and police-contributing countries, donors, host countries, regional organizations and other stakeholders. The New Agenda for Peace also stresses that peace operations should fully leverage the range of capacities and expertise of the entire United Nations system and its partners as part of a system of networked multilateralism and enhanced partnerships.

It is necessary to enhance coordination between peacekeeping and peacebuilding. Peacebuilding proposals should be considered during the initial phase of deploying peacekeeping operation, and transition strategies must be formulated to support host countries in improving their capacity for independent development and lay a solid foundation for durable peace and stability. We must enhance coordination between

peacekeeping operations and the United Nations resident agencies so as to enable them to implement their respective mandates in the fields of sustainable development, humanitarian assistance, women and children and other areas and fully leverage their comparative advantages in order to achieve synergy. There is also a need to strengthen coordination between the United Nations and regional organizations in order to support efforts to rely on regional capacities to resolve regional issues. We should support the African Union and other regional and subregional organizations in efforts to improve their independent peacekeeping capabilities and create synergies with United Nations peacekeeping operations.

Thirdly, peacekeeping operations should use force with caution. Over the past few decades, the practice and doctrine of United Nations peacekeeping operations have continued to evolve, but the three basic principles remain unchanged, namely, the consent of the parties, impartiality and the non-use of force, except in self-defence or to protect the mandate. In the current context, there is a strong need to define the line between peacekeeping and peace enforcement. We must adopt a very cautious approach towards allowing peacekeeping forces to carry out offensive tasks or supporting relevant regions or countries in carrying out military operations. Every effort must be made to avoid scenarios where the mission's rules of engagement are too broad or where the imprudent use of force triggers conflicts between the parties, both of which would put peacekeepers in danger.

In highly exceptional circumstances, the Council could authorize the launching of peace enforcement operations or grant peacekeeping operations an offensive mandate, but that must only be the last resort after all other options have been exhausted. The scenarios, mandates, responsible bodies and exit strategies must be clearly defined, and robust accountability mechanisms must be in place. As Secretary-General Guterres highlighted in his New Agenda for Peace, any peace enforcement action authorized by the Council must be fully in line with the Charter of the United Nations, international humanitarian law and international human rights law.

Fourthly, peacekeeping operations must keep up with the times. We have seen the rapid development and broad application of emerging technologies in recent years. United Nations peacekeeping operations must adapt to new developments and accelerate their

digital transformation. On the one hand, emerging technologies should be used to enable peacekeeping operations to improve their situational awareness, strategic communication and other capacities. On the other hand, it is important to ensure that they are safe and reliable, and every effort must be made to avoid their abuse, misuse or use for malicious purposes. The increasing risks to peacekeepers have been a major issue for peacekeeping operations in recent years. A helicopter unit from the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei was fired on during its operations not long ago. UNIFIL personnel have been harassed while conducting patrols. MINUSMA has come under attack while carrying out its mandated withdrawal. Every one of those incidents sounds an alarm for us. When they are faced with new threats and challenges, United Nations peacekeeping operations must adapt and respond proactively. As co-Chair of the Group of Friends of the Safety and Security of United Nations Peacekeepers, China stands ready to make greater efforts to fully implement resolution 2518 (2020) and foster discussions with all the relevant parties to jointly safeguard the safety and security of Blue Helmets.

China has been an active participant in and significant contributor to United Nations peacekeeping operations. For more than three decades we have dispatched more than 50,000 peacekeepers to operations in more than 20 countries, bringing peace and hope to people in conflict areas. China will continue to actively support, facilitate and participate in United Nations peacekeeping operations and ramp up its contribution to maintaining international peace and security.

**Mr. Pérez Loose** (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to begin by thanking Mr. Lacroix for his briefing today, and the Secretary-General for his report on peacekeeping operations, and by paying tribute to all the men and women who are serving or have served in them for more than 75 years, in difficult conditions, while putting their own welfare and even their lives at risk to fulfil one of the promises on which our Organization was founded.

The many members of our armed forces who are currently serving in several peacekeeping operations are living proof of Ecuador's historic support of that work. Ecuador remains committed to the continued improvement of peacekeeping operations and to supporting the Action for Peace initiative, which Secretary-General António Guterres has supported for the past five years, and its Action for Peace Plus

implementation strategy. A few weeks ago, the Secretary-General presented us with a new document in which he proposes measures to strengthen peacekeeping operations and address the issue of peace enforcement. The valuable recommendations set forth in the New Agenda for Peace should be carefully analysed to ensure that peacekeeping operations are more effective and efficient and remain one of the most powerful tools of the Organization, particularly the Security Council. We believe, for example, that mandates must be clear, prioritized and achievable and that Council members should avoid proposing unrealistic mandates. We must always bear in mind what the primary purpose of a mission is and separate its primary from its secondary tasks.

It is also vital to ensure that mandates are adequately resourced and that the operations of regional and subregional organizations are supported, especially in Africa, where the proliferation of non-State armed groups represents a threat. We also agree with the Secretary-General that peacekeeping operations should be deployed in support of clearly defined political processes. We believe that the other basic principles of peacekeeping, such as the consent of the parties, impartiality and the non-use of force except in self-defence and in the defence of a Council-authorized mandate, are also key to operations' success.

I would like to address the challenges and opportunities that today's rapid technological developments present for peacekeeping operations, particularly those related to communications. Technological solutions can help United Nations peacekeeping operations fulfil their mandates more effectively in complex environments by facilitating adaptation to changing conflict dynamics, among other things. Technology can strengthen early-warning and early-action capabilities and the security of camps and convoys, with stable Internet connections and integrated communication networks. It can also improve conflict monitoring and analysis, enhance energy efficiency and reduce environmental pollution. It is our responsibility to promote and harness technological development as an enabler of peace.

The security of peacekeepers is critical. With new technologies have come new forms of harassment. Every effort must be made to ensure not only the physical security of peacekeepers but their protection from virtual surveillance, privacy violations and online threats. That requires combating the worrisome

rise in mis- and disinformation and their negative impact on the safety of peacekeeping personnel and on mandate implementation more generally. Strategic communication has always been an important tool for our Organization. Rapid technological change and the digital revolution have added an unprecedented layer of sophistication and complexity, but they also provide communication opportunities for fostering improvement in the performance of peacekeeping missions. For example, strategic communication should be used to manage expectations among local communities, counter mis- and disinformation, help build trust between the members of peacekeeping operations and the populations of the areas in which they operate, dovetail effectively with the planning and work of the mission and contribute to the protection of civilians. Strategic communication efforts should make effective use of all available technologies and seek close coordination with regional, national and local organizations, which are most familiar with the terrain and the peculiarities of the communities concerned. The recent Peace Begins with Me campaign initiative is moving in the right direction, and according to the Secretary-General's report is already having positive results.

I will conclude my statement by reminding us of the importance of addressing the root causes of conflict, because lasting peace is founded on development, the creation of opportunities, the improvement of living conditions and respect for the rule of law. That is the only way that we will achieve long-term stability and security and peacekeeping operations will become less necessary.

**Mrs. Baeriswyl** (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): The idea of United Nations peacekeeping operations was born when the Cold War imposed itself on the work of the Security Council. Those operations have saved the lives of millions of civilians over the past few decades. I would therefore like to begin by thanking the Blue Helmets for doing extraordinary work every day, often in difficult conditions and at times at great personal cost.

As many of my colleagues have underscored, since the concept of peacekeeping operations was established 75 years ago, the nature of conflicts and the mandates of missions have changed considerably. That is why in his New Agenda for Peace, as my colleague from Ecuador just mentioned, the Secretary-General states that



“the gap between United Nations peacekeeping mandates and what such missions can actually deliver in practice has become apparent”.

We therefore need to adapt our instruments to swiftly close that gap. That is a task for the Council, the United Nations itself and all Member States. I thank the Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations, Jean-Pierre Lacroix, for his briefing, in particular for reminding us of all the peacekeeping success stories. I welcome the third progress report on the implementation of the Action for Peacekeeping Plus initiative. The initiative must continue, and we fully support it. Recommendations from the Secretariat show that we need to reflect in depth on peacekeeping reform. I would like to outline three points that we consider essential.

First, it is up to the Council to ensure that peace operations are guided principally by politics and that those operations support a clearly defined political process, which, of course, includes women. It also entails reimagining partnerships with regional organizations in general and the African Union in particular, in order to develop modular and flexible mission models. In that respect, Switzerland recognizes that predictable, sustainable and flexible funding for African Union-led peace-support operations would be an important instrument for the Council. Needless to say, we will support all of the efforts that our colleague from Ghana just described. That is also why, during our presidency, we organized a debate on the subject presided over by our Vice-President (see S/PV.9315).

Secondly, the protection of civilians in the broadest sense must remain at the centre of our focus. All missions authorized by the Council have an obligation to respect the Charter of the United Nations, international humanitarian law, human rights and refugee law. That must be a precondition for the provision of funding and support by the United Nations and it requires adequate structures, processes and resources. The United Nations human rights due-diligence policy is particularly relevant now, for example in the context of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in which the question of support to non-United Nations forces has been raised.

Thirdly, there are now legitimate expectations for proof of the effectiveness of missions. Effectiveness is not only a first line of defence against disinformation but a moral responsibility to the populations affected and to

our taxpayers. Switzerland's provision of an expert in that area to the Department of Peace Operations underlines our support for the implementation and development of the Comprehensive Planning and Performance Assessment System. The aim is to strengthen the link between performance assessment, planning and budgeting. We also welcome developments in the area of environmental performance, in line with the strategy of the Department of Operational Support. That helps to reduce the environmental footprint of peacekeeping operations and better manage natural resources. Greening the missions is now a guiding principle.

Switzerland is committed to an in-depth discussion of peacekeeping reform. That is why we organized a workshop on the subject with the International Peace Institute during our presidency. The discussion highlighted the need to develop the capabilities of regional forces, strengthen current structures and rationalize mandates. As Karin Landgren, Executive Director of Security Council Report and former head of several peace missions, said at the debate on peace operations in November last year,

“Peace operations fit for contemporary times need to devise new approaches that include responsiveness to the underlying causes and drivers of conflict” (S/PV.9181, p.7).

The New Agenda for Peace provides us with a unique opportunity to do so, and Switzerland will continue to contribute to it actively and constructively. Or, as was said on the occasion of the seventy-fifth anniversary of peacekeeping, “Peace begins with me, with you, with all of us”.

**Ms. Gatt (Malta):** I thank Under-Secretary-General Lacroix for his comprehensive and informative briefing.

Let me begin by emphasizing that United Nations peacekeeping missions play a pivotal and invaluable role in promoting stability and protecting civilians in some of the most complex and dangerous theatres around the world. The courage, sacrifices and commitment of United Nations peacekeepers enable missions to continue to operate in increasingly difficult political and security contexts. Malta remains steadfast in its commitment to the security and safety of peacekeepers. We strongly condemn all attacks on peacekeeping missions, some of which may amount to war crimes under international law. We are concerned about the growing challenges that peacekeepers are facing on the ground. They are a constant threat to their security

and hinder their ability to implement mandates. In that regard, we deplore the recurring instances of restrictions on freedom of movement and the increasing presence of mercenaries in operating areas. We welcome the latest report of the Secretary-General and strongly support the Action for Peacekeeping initiative and the Action for Peacekeeping Plus (A4P+) implementation plan. We believe that a comprehensive approach to those cross-cutting issues is the best way to improve peacekeeping operations. In that regard, we would like to highlight four key areas of implementation.

First, having clear, credible and realistic mandates is a prerequisite for the success of peacekeeping missions. Mandates should be rooted in a broader political strategy that gives priority to child protection, women and peace and security and climate action, which are central to achieving sustainable peace. Malta attaches great importance to the protection of civilians and respect for human rights as core responsibilities of peacekeeping missions. While the primary responsibility for those tasks lies with the host State, we stress that close cooperation with all local, regional and multilateral stakeholders is key and should be supported.

Secondly, we reaffirm the importance of ensuring the integration of the women and peace and security agenda across A4P+ priorities. The catalytic impact of that agenda on the operational effectiveness of peacekeeping operations has strengthened early warning and increased the protection of women and girls through gender-responsive patrols and community engagement, including with young people. Promoting and supporting gender parity in peacekeeping requires support mechanisms for deployed women and gender-responsive leadership, and we commend the Secretariat's ongoing efforts in that area. Lasting peace can be achieved only through the full, equal and meaningful participation of women in all facets of peacebuilding and peacekeeping.

Thirdly, Malta acknowledges the potential adverse effects that peacekeeping operations may have on the environment, local economy and relations with host communities. To that end, it is essential to ensure that the Security Council increases its focus on environmental management and deploys green, responsible missions that achieve maximum efficiency in their use of natural resources. We stress the need to comprehensively address the environmental impact of peacekeeping operations in close coordination

with the parties involved, including troop- and police-contributing countries.

Fourthly, it is crucial to ensure that peacekeeping missions have adequate and predictable funding. We would like to remind the Council that European Union member States have always contributed to United Nations peacekeeping operations and together constitute the second largest financial contributor to the peacekeeping budget.

In conclusion, while we recognize that there is still more work to be done to meet new and fast-changing operational challenges, we reaffirm our readiness to support efforts to improve peacekeeping operations at all levels.

**Mr. Biang** (Gabon) (*spoke in French*): I thank Under-Secretary-General Lacroix for his briefing on peacekeeping around the world.

The effectiveness of peacekeeping operations has been tested for a number of years, while the vital need to adapt them to today's many security challenges has become clear. It is particularly important in the circumstances to make a clear diagnosis of the strengths and limitations of peacekeeping operations and to reinvent them with concrete and appropriate solutions in order to be able to respond effectively to the specific realities of each situation on the ground.

As the backbone of the United Nations security strategy, peacekeeping operations have long been an important asset, particularly in terms of the protection of civilians, the promotion of the rule of law and conflict prevention and peacebuilding. In a number of countries in Africa and other regions of the world, peacekeeping operations have made a significant contribution to overseeing peaceful political transitions, reducing hostilities, promoting reconciliation and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration processes and in some cases helping to establish the rule of law. However, the complexity of new threats to international peace and security — such as those posed by terrorism and violent extremism, cybercrime, the pillaging of resources and climate change — has gradually atrophied the performance of peacekeeping operations and highlighted the limits of mandates, which are often out of touch with the realities on the ground.

The hasty departure of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali, only 10 years after its deployment, at a time when

the country is still facing major security challenges; the questioning of the presence of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, considering the persistent insecurity in the east of the country; and the increase in public complaints about peacekeeping missions, not to mention violence against peacekeepers, are all realities that are sounding alarm bells and forcing us to learn lessons and reconfigure our solutions.

First, it is essential to develop innovative mandates that are adapted to specific theatres of operations. Of course, in order to be more effective, we need to improve the processes for preparing peacekeepers for deployment.

Secondly, it is essential to listen to the countries concerned and the populations who legitimately aspire to the restoration of peace by providing unified and diversified responses that can enable fragile States to emerge from the multidimensional cyclical crises they face.

The African Union's willingness to contribute to resolving the security crises undermining the continent can no longer be questioned and has been demonstrated on numerous occasions. In the light of the challenges facing United Nations operations, peacekeeping operations led by the African Union or hybrid configurations, such as the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur, are key elements that could represent the future of the maintenance of international peace and security in Africa. There is therefore an urgent need to define a more effective partnership between the United Nations and the African Union that can be consolidated with appropriate, predictable and reliable funding for the African Union's peace and security efforts. For Gabon, that United Nations-African Union cooperation, in line with the principle of subsidiarity, offers a concrete solution to the issues of preventing conflicts, managing the challenges linked to terrorism, especially in the Sahel, and building peace in the Horn of Africa in particular.

I want to reiterate my country's commitment to the promotion of women's participation in peacekeeping operations and to the digital transformation of those operations, as well as to the Secretary-General's initiatives of Action for Peacekeeping Plus and the New Agenda for Peace. I also want to call for a greater inclusion of multilingualism and interculturality in peacekeeping operations. Language skills are factors

that can boost the performance of missions and help build trust with host countries. They also contribute to the safety and security of personnel and facilitate interaction with local communities. In that regard, I commend the International Organization of la Francophonie, which has been supporting French-speaking participation in peacekeeping operations for almost two decades now, particularly through capacity-building for contingents from Francophone countries.

Finally, I want to pay tribute to the Blue Helmets deployed around the world, who demonstrate such commitment and courage, and to honour the memory of those peacekeepers who have died in the line of duty.

**The President:** I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of Albania.

I thank Under-Secretary-General Lacroix for his thorough briefing. We welcome the report of the Secretary-General, which highlights efforts to enhance the efficiency of United Nations peacekeeping missions. We strongly support the Action for Peacekeeping initiative and the subsequent Action for Peacekeeping Plus (A4P+) plan for 2021–2023.

United Nations peacekeeping missions unquestionably remain an indispensable means for sustaining peace and pursuing political solutions in many parts of the world. As of June of this year, close to 90,000 personnel continue to serve and more than 70 United Nations peacekeeping operations have been deployed in different parts of the world, dedicated to maintaining peace and preventing further violence and conflicts. Throughout history, those missions have been pivotal to promoting human rights, supporting accountability initiatives and advancing governance, security and justice reform.

There are many success stories. The United Nations Mission in South Sudan's intervention in Tambura during the 2021 conflict was instrumental in establishing a temporary base to halt hostilities, protect civilians and facilitate dialogue. The United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) has worked tirelessly to create stability since the 2018 elections, safeguarding more than 100,000 internally displaced persons. The United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic facilitated peace negotiations and the delivery of humanitarian aid to nearly 2 million people in 2022. The United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon has

successfully maintained the ceasefire since 2006 and is rightly credited for its role in deterrence. The United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) has contributed significantly to the protection of civilians despite the difficulties faced in terms of patrols, convoys and static and temporary bases. Peacekeepers' outposts have often served as a haven for those displaced by violent conflict and terrorist acts.

But it is a fact that conflicts have grown increasingly complex, influenced by domestic, geopolitical and transnational factors, exposing gaps between United Nations peacekeeping mandates, practical implementation and sometimes the expectations of host countries. Matching mandates with operational realities, especially in difficult and extended conflicts, has become very challenging. That has led to increased and sometimes unrealistic expectations, and when those expectations are not met, they are followed by growing criticism and in some cases even hostile attitudes. Understanding, cooperation and support from host countries are therefore essential to ensuring that peacekeepers can implement their mandates and enjoy freedom of movement so that they can execute their missions safely. When trust is broken, it is the implementation of the mandate and, ultimately, peace and the protection of civilians that will pay the price.

At the request of the host country, MINUSMA is being withdrawn. MONUSCO will soon begin its transition phase. We remain worried that the security crisis that has already been precipitated by activity in various places by notorious mercenaries, known for their lack of care for innocent lives, risks further aggravating weakened peace and stability after the United Nations withdraws. While United Nations missions and their mandates are not beyond criticism, unhappy Governments must know that resorting to mercenaries should not be done lightly. It may prove wrong, treacherous, costly and even dangerous.

As many speakers have mentioned today, in the age of social media, disinformation and misinformation pose a significant threat. To counter false information and distorted narratives, peacekeeping missions need to work closely with local communities so that the people can see and understand that United Nations missions are not there to implement some theoretical and opaque mandate but to help and protect them in every way they can; that they are not there just because they are mandated to be, but because they are needed; and that while they represent the United Nations, they work only for the people. The safety of peacekeepers is paramount, and the increase in national investigations addressing acts of violence against them demonstrates our commitment to justice. We must bring justice for fallen peacekeepers and deter future acts of violence against those serving with the Blue Helmets. The same goes for improving peacekeeping performance and transparency in standards and evaluation systems, as outlined in the A4P+ initiative.

Finally, the involvement of women in peacekeeping ensures inclusivity, brings diversity and favours gender equality. It enhances conflict resolution and sustainable peace efforts through diverse perspectives, negotiation skills and the protection of vulnerable groups in conflict zones, particularly women and children. Promoting gender equality aligns with United Nations principles emphasizing women's active roles and rights in society.

In conclusion, we salute the dedication and bravery of United Nations peacekeepers worldwide and pay tribute to those who have made the ultimate sacrifice in the service of the noble cause of peace over the past 75 years.

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 4.50 p.m.*