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New York

President: Mr. Yamazaki (Japan)

Members:

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China	Mr. Dai Bing
Ecuador	Mr. De La Gasca
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Guyana	Mrs. Rodrigues-Birkett
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Slovenia	Mr. Žbogar
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United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . .	Mr. Kariuki
United States of America	Mrs. Thomas-Greenfield

Agenda

Protection of civilians in armed conflict

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

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Protection of civilians in armed conflict

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

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Ms. Edem Wosornu, Director of Operations and Advocacy, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs; Mr. Maurizio Martina, Deputy Director-General, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations; and Mr. Carl Skau, Deputy Executive Director, United Nations World Food Programme.

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

I give the floor to Ms. Wosornu.

Ms. Wosornu: In resolution 2417 (2018), the Security Council asked the Secretary-General to report swiftly to it when the risk of conflict-induced famine and widespread food insecurity arose in armed conflict. We are here today to warn of a far-reaching and fast-deteriorating situation of food insecurity in the Sudan, a situation driven by 11 months of brutal and unrelenting conflict.

The harrowing levels of violence in the conflict have taken a horrendous toll on civilians. In its report of 23 February, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights relates appalling accounts of sexual violence and ethnic-based attacks that have taken place so far across conflict hotspots (A/HRC/55/29). It is truly the stuff of nightmares. There are reports of mass graves, gang rapes, shockingly indiscriminate attacks in densely populated areas and many more horrors. The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights has warned that at least some of those acts of horror may amount to war crimes.

In Khartoum, Darfur and Kordofan — which are home to 90 per cent of people facing emergency levels of food insecurity — there has been no respite from the

fierce fighting for 340 days — 11 months. Hostilities have resulted in extensive damage, looting and widespread destruction of critical infrastructure, including food and nutrition manufacturing facilities — once the pride of the Sudan. In May 2023, a factory in Khartoum that produced 60 per cent of the Sudan's life-saving ready-to-use therapeutic food was destroyed. That factory served hundreds of thousands of children.

Farmers have been forced to abandon their farmlands as they have fled to protect their children and families. And in December last year, hostilities moved into the Sudan's breadbasket, Gezira state, which accounts for almost half of the country's wheat production.

National cereal production has dropped by almost half since last year. And the supply of animal-sourced food, such as milk, has plummeted, contributing to spiralling levels of malnutrition — with 730,000 people currently suffering from severe acute malnutrition. Meanwhile, the conflict has driven up prices of basic commodities by a staggering 83 per cent compared to the pre-crisis period.

By all measures — the sheer scale of humanitarian needs and the numbers of people displaced and facing hunger — the Sudan is one of the worst humanitarian disasters in recent memory. The conflict has already precipitated the world's largest internal displacement crisis. Six and a half million people have been displaced within the country since the start of the current crisis, adding to the 3 million people already displaced before 15 April 2023. A further 1.8 million people have sought refuge in neighbouring countries.

Now, as the conflict rages on, the Sudan is on course to become possibly the world's worst hunger crisis. Already, 18 million people — more than one third of the country's estimated population — are facing food insecurity. By the time the lean season arrives in May, people in some parts of Darfur could face what we term Integrated Food Security Phase Classification phase 5 level acute food insecurity. We call that stage a catastrophe.

Malnutrition is soaring to alarming levels and is already claiming children's lives. A recent report issued by Médecins Sans Frontières revealed that one child is dying every two hours in Zamzam camp in El Fasher, North Darfur. Our humanitarian partners estimate that, in the coming weeks and months, around 222,000 children could die from malnutrition. And with the World Health Organization estimating

that more than 70 per cent of health facilities are not functional, children who are already malnourished are at even greater risk of dying from preventable diseases. It seems utterly unfathomable that this tragedy could be allowed to happen. It keeps us all up at night, and will do so for a long time.

In such a situation, the delivery of humanitarian aid should be a lifeline to the millions of people who have lost almost everything to the conflict. Let me zero in on the importance of humanitarians' ability to access people in need at this time. Regrettably, our ability to reach the most vulnerable, most notably in Khartoum, Darfur, Kordofan and Gezira states, continues to be obstructed.

Earlier this month, the Security Council adopted resolution 2724 (2024) calling for full and unhindered humanitarian access in the Sudan. I regret to report that, since then, there has been no major progress on the ground.

We do welcome that, after revoking their agreement to the cross-border operation from Chad, on 5 March the Sudanese authorities announced alternative routes, including temporary access via Al-Tina crossing. The procedures for the use of that crossing are yet to be elaborated or put in place. On 14 March, the Sudanese authorities informed us of their decision to allow the entry of 60 trucks through Adré, Chad, into West Darfur. A convoy of trucks with assistance, including food for more than 175,000 people, is being prepared and should be deployed in the coming two to three days. Those are positive steps, but they are far from enough in the face of a looming famine.

At a minimum, identified entry points must be made operational as soon as possible and kept open for as long as they are needed. One-off arrangements will simply not be sufficient. We also need immediate approvals to facilitate the cross-line movement of supplies from Port Sudan. We have not been able to cross conflict lines into Khartoum since October 2023 due to insecurity and lack of timely approvals. Finally, the parties must protect humanitarian staff and supplies. That is crucial to our ability to deliver life-saving, urgent humanitarian assistance and address this escalating hunger crisis.

In just one incident in Wad Medani, Gezira state, in December 2023, armed actors looted a warehouse containing food supplies. That attack — in areas controlled by the Rapid Support Forces — affected supplies that could have fed 1.5 million acutely food-

insecure people for one whole month, which we were unable to do.

A humanitarian travesty is playing out in the Sudan under a veil of international inattention and inaction. Simply put, we are failing the people of the Sudan.

The upcoming high-level conference for the Sudan and its neighbours, to be held in Paris on 15 April, is an indispensable opportunity to make tangible commitments to support the aid operation and address the suffering — including through increased financial contributions for the 2024 humanitarian appeal for the Sudan. Of the \$2.7 billion needed, as of now, the end of the first quarter of 2024, we have received only \$131 million — less than 5 per cent.

The white note that we recently submitted to the Council sets out recommendations on urgent steps to address the escalating food insecurity crisis. Those include: first, ensuring that the parties respect their obligations under international humanitarian law, including the prohibition of the use of starvation as a method of warfare and the protection of vital goods, infrastructure and services needed for food systems and production; secondly, ensuring that the parties commit to sustained humanitarian dialogue in order to facilitate cross-line and cross-border humanitarian access; thirdly, scaling up funding for the humanitarian operation, as 5 per cent at the end of the first quarter of 2024, is simply not enough; and fourthly, pressing for an immediate ceasefire and a peaceful resolution to the conflict.

The reporting process under resolution 2417 (2018) and the recommendations I have just outlined are only as good as the action taken on them.

Let me end by saying that since the conflict broke out on 15 April, this is the eighth briefing that the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs is delivering to the Council on the humanitarian situation in the Sudan. And it is the second briefing in the past month. As we approach the one-year anniversary of the conflict, we cannot make clearer the desperation that civilians are facing in the Sudan. We cannot explain in greater terms the catastrophic situation, and we cannot stress enough the need for Council action.

The President: I thank Ms. Wosornu for her briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Martina.

Mr. Martina: The scale of hunger across the Sudan is deeply worrisome, with some areas, particularly in West and Central Darfur, likely to slide into catastrophic food insecurity. The conflict is driving this hunger crisis. The escalation of fighting is directly affecting food security, especially as the conflict reaches new areas. Hostilities are expanding across the south-eastern states — the Sudan's breadbasket — and had grave consequences for the harvest of millet and sorghum, which concluded in January. If the fighting persists, it will also disrupt the harvesting operations related to the irrigated wheat crop, normally guaranteed in March.

The spread of conflict to Gezira poses a significant threat to national food production, given that that state accounts for the production of approximately 50 per cent of wheat and 10 per cent of sorghum, which are essential crops for the country. In addition, Gezira hosts the Gezira Scheme, the most important irrigation project. It is estimated that 100 per cent of the meat consumed in the Sudan and 90 per cent of exported livestock are produced by smallholder pastoralists within the Kordofan and Darfur regions. By July 2023, around 20.3 million people — 42 per cent of the population — were projected to face crisis or worse levels of acute food insecurity, representing a 74 per cent increase compared to the same time in 2022.

During the recent harvest season, an estimated 18 million people were expected to face crisis or worse levels of acute food insecurity. That is the worst level of hunger ever recorded by the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) during the harvest season.

And the situation continues to deteriorate as the conflict nears the one-year mark. Nearly 9 out of 10 people facing emergency food insecurity — IPC phase 4 — are in conflict hotspots in the Darfur and Kordofan regions, as well as in the states of Khartoum and Gezira.

With over 8 million people displaced, the Sudan is the world's largest displacement crisis. Not only do displaced people require urgent assistance, but a large majority have left behind agriculture-based livelihoods, further disrupting food production within the country. The widespread disruption of crucial markets and transportation routes is leading to irregular deliveries, reduced quantities and varieties of goods, and pushing food prices steadily upwards.

Yesterday the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) issued its annual Crop and

Food Supply Assessment Mission report for the Sudan, which examined food production in 2023 and assessed food supply throughout the 18 states of the country. The performance of the 2023 main cereal production season was very poor owing to the impact of the conflict, at 46 per cent below the harvests of the previous year. The sharpest reductions were recorded in the greater Kordofan and in the greater Darfur regions, and cereal production is estimated at up to 80 per cent below average. Alarming, in West Darfur state, widespread insecurity preventing farmers from accessing their fields caused a total failure of the cropping season.

Cereal import requirements in 2024, forecast at about 3.38 million tons, raise concerns about the financial and logistical capacity of the country to meet those import needs. And the high production costs of cereals are likely to further inflate market prices, which are already at exceptionally high levels.

The outlook for food production in 2024 is bleak. Critical agricultural inputs are difficult to access as we near the 2024 main planting season. Conflict has reduced the availability of and access to veterinary services, limited access to water and pasture in some areas and disrupted seasonal migrations, all resulting in reduced livestock production, a critical source of nutrition and income across the country. That is likely to increase already high malnutrition rates among vulnerable children.

A peaceful and negotiated political solution and an immediate cessation of hostilities to facilitate the delivery of urgent humanitarian assistance is an essential step in eliminating a risk of famine. I join my colleagues in calling on all parties to respect their obligations under international humanitarian and human rights law. Safe and sustained humanitarian access must urgently be restored to all in need of life-saving assistance.

Where farmers can access land and inputs, they will produce food. Last year, the FAO's rapid scaling up of seed distribution inputs enabled 1 million farmers to produce enough food to feed more than 14 million people for a year. As the season nears, time-sensitive and life-saving agricultural assistance is crucial to tackle the hunger crisis. But funds to do so must come now so that we can get urgent aid to millions of people in the Sudan. And that is why we call on donors to fund time-critical and urgent agriculture activities to avoid worsening food security in the next six to nine months.

I thank the Council for its attention to the critical food security situation in the Sudan.

The President: I thank Mr. Martina for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Skau.

Mr. Skau: I thank you, Mr. President, for this opportunity to brief the Council on the rapidly worsening food security situation in the Sudan and the profound regional implications of this crisis.

Since the conflict broke out last year, hunger and acute malnutrition have soared. As the representative of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs pointed out just now, there is a real and growing risk that the violence in the Sudan will soon create the world's largest hunger crisis.

Across the region, nearly 28 million people face acute food insecurity, with 18 million in the Sudan, 7 million in South Sudan and nearly 3 million in Chad. Within the Sudan, the World Food Programme (WFP) has been working day and night to meet the massive humanitarian needs, with our teams risking their own lives to help others. Last year, we assisted nearly 8 million people. But our emergency relief operation is being severely hampered by a lack of access and a lack of resources.

Currently, 90 per cent of the people in Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) phase 4, who urgently need life-saving food assistance, are trapped in areas that are largely inaccessible to humanitarian agencies. Those include conflict hotspots, such as Khartoum, Gezira state, the Kordofans and the Darfur states. Our efforts to reach those civilians are challenged by the relentless violence and by interference from the warring parties. And bureaucratic obstacles are further shrinking the space for humanitarians to operate.

We welcome the recent announcement by the authorities in Port Sudan that will allow the WFP to resume cross-border aid deliveries from Chad and open a new corridor from South Sudan. The WFP's inability to move aid in since permissions were revoked has impeded our plan to reach about 1 million people each month across Darfur. But other border crossings must also reopen to get aid into the greater Darfur region, which has recorded some of the highest rates of hunger and malnutrition.

And cross-border operations are not the only solution, as they are considerably more expensive

and time-consuming. Within the Sudan, we also need access across conflict lines, as a more cost-effective and efficient way to scale up our operations.

We are also deeply concerned that hunger will spike even higher in the weeks ahead, when the Sudan's lean season arrives in May. Without sustained access and resources needed to scale up our response, there is a high risk we will see IPC phase 5, or catastrophic food insecurity. If we are to prevent the Sudan from becoming the world's largest hunger crisis, coordinated efforts and joined-up diplomacy is urgent and critical. We need all parties to provide unrestricted access across borders and across conflict lines.

This conflict has turned the Sudan into the world's worst displacement crisis, scattering more than 8 million people internally and across the Sudan's borders, sparking wider regional destabilization. Nearly 2 million people have fled to neighbouring countries to escape the bloodshed, and thousands more are expected to follow this year. That is putting mounting pressure on Chad and South Sudan, which are already grappling with dangerous levels of food insecurity. And humanitarian agencies are being forced to make harsh choices for an already underfunded and overstretched humanitarian operation. In South Sudan, owing to the lack of funds, 3 million acutely hungry people are receiving no assistance from the WFP, and those whom we are able to help are receiving reduced rations. Similarly, in Chad, the WFP will have to end all support to the 1.2 million refugees in the country and the nearly 3 million acutely hungry Chadians. All that is happening as we enter the peak of the lean season. The WFP's ability to pre-position supplies in the east of Chad before the rains arrive in June is also being threatened by resource constraints.

Increasing hunger will only stoke instability across this region of Africa. The international community must therefore rapidly increase support for our emergency relief operations, financially and politically. Diplomatic efforts are needed to secure humanitarian access to the cut-off populations in the Sudan, which are now threatened by starvation. And, fundamentally, this forgotten crisis requires political solutions to halt the fighting, which is tearing the country apart. But we are running out of time, and we now look to the Council to step up its commitments under resolution 2417 (2018) and take urgent action to avert a hunger catastrophe in the Sudan and the broader region, alleviate the suffering

and save the lives of the desperate civilians who are stuck in this inferno of fighting and hunger.

The President: I thank Mr. Skau for his briefing.

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

Mr. Bendjama (Algeria): I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the African members of the Security Council plus one (A3+1), namely, Guyana, Mozambique, Sierra Leone and my own country, Algeria.

We thank the briefers for their insightful presentations, describing once again a worrisome situation in the Sudan. We welcome the presence of the Permanent Representative of the Sudan in this meeting.

Almost a year has passed since the crisis erupted in the Sudan, claiming many innocent lives and forcibly displacing hundreds of thousands of people, causing widespread displacement both within and outside the Sudan's borders. As described in the white note presented by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in accordance with resolution 2417 (2018), the situation is appalling and requires our full and close attention.

In that regard, the A3+1 would like to underline the following points.

First, regarding the humanitarian situation on the ground, it is extremely concerning that 18 million people in the Sudan are reportedly facing acute food insecurity. If we had the ability to turn back the hands of time, it would have been unimaginable for a country like the Sudan, known as a breadbasket thanks to its abundant resources and agricultural traditions, to face acute food insecurity risks. Regrettably, the war led to a different and sad reality. It is even more concerning to contemplate the figures describing the direct impact of the rapidly deteriorating humanitarian situation on children. It is therefore crucial to ensure unrestricted access for humanitarian assistance and delivery, particularly cross-line and cross-border access, to reach the affected areas. In that connection, the decision of the Sudanese Government to facilitate humanitarian access through several cross-border points, including by air, is commendable and requires speedy implementation to address the urgent challenges.

Secondly, in terms of funding, there is an urgent need for scaled-up support in order to formulate

a comprehensive humanitarian response plan to eliminate the risk of widespread food insecurity, restore food systems and, ultimately, set into motion the reconstruction of the country. The armed confrontation in the Sudan disrupted its food systems and led to the destruction of critical infrastructure, thereby shrinking the country's economy. We call upon international donors to redouble efforts to improve the humanitarian situation and support the Sudan to engage on a path of stability, lasting peace and post-crisis reconstruction.

Thirdly, with respect to the political process to end the Sudanese crisis, it is clear that addressing the humanitarian aspects must go hand in hand with a comprehensive political solution. As outlined in the white note, nearly nine out of 10 people facing emergency food insecurity in the Sudan are in conflict-affected areas in Darfur, Kordofan, Khartoum and Gezira. That reality serves to emphasize the importance of a political solution to sustainably address the humanitarian crisis. The protagonists must therefore clearly commit to the ceasefire as a critical first step towards a political solution.

The adoption by the Security Council of resolution 2724 (2024), on 8 March, calling for a ceasefire during the holy month of Ramadan, brought with it many hopes. However, there is much to be done to ensure the full implementation of that resolution. In that regard, we look forward to the holding of the next round of the Jeddah process and the forthcoming humanitarian conference in Paris, while expressing optimism that both could secure concrete commitments from the Sudanese parties. A comprehensive political process that takes on board all concerns and views requires broad-based and sincere support from the international community. External interference fuelling the crisis and impeding the efforts towards peace must therefore be publicly and firmly condemned.

The situation in the Sudan is not of any less importance than any other matter on the Council's agenda. We need to remain focused on the best ways and means to de-escalate tensions in coordination with the Sudanese authorities. The innocent Sudanese people deserve dignity, protection and a better future.

Mrs. Baeriswyl (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank the representatives of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the World Food Programme for their briefings

and proposals. Switzerland is grateful for the ongoing and courageous commitment of all the humanitarian actors and local front-line responders to the disastrous situation the Sudanese people are facing — “the stuff of nightmares”, as Ms. Wosornu put it.

We are appalled by the alarming level of food insecurity and the real risk of famine — which is indeed more than a risk, and already happening. The main cause is the devastating conflict that continues unabated. Switzerland, as the Council’s focal point on conflict and hunger, together with Guyana, welcomes the early-warning mechanism established pursuant to resolution 2417 (2018). In the same resolution, the Council undertook to consider ways of translating early warnings into concrete action. We must act together now before thousands of people die of hunger.

In view of that situation, and in line with the recommendations contained in the white note, Switzerland would like to highlight three points.

First, we call on the parties to the conflict to immediately silence their weapons and engage in dialogue around a political solution to end a war, which has gone on for too long. A fortnight ago, the Council called on the parties to immediately cease hostilities during the month of Ramadan. That decision must now be respected. On the ground, however, the fighting continues unabated. The implementation of resolution 2724 (2024) is crucial if humanitarian aid is to be delivered quickly, safely and unhindered across borders and front lines. The bureaucratic and administrative obstacles facing humanitarian actors must be removed immediately.

Secondly, and echoing Mr. Martina of the FAO, we reiterate that the parties must respect their obligations under international humanitarian law and international human rights law. The use of starvation as a weapon of war against the civilian population is prohibited and constitutes a war crime under the Rome Statute. Moreover, objects indispensable to the survival of the civilian population are specifically protected by international humanitarian law, which prohibits the parties from attacking, destroying or rendering useless such objects. Lastly, the parties must authorize and facilitate the rapid and unimpeded passage of humanitarian aid intended for civilians in need. It is essential that those responsible for violations of those obligations be held accountable for their actions.

Thirdly, the most vulnerable people must be protected. In the context of acute food insecurity and generalized conflict, women and girls are on the front line in the search for means of subsistence. They are consequently exposed to major protection challenges, particularly sexual and gender-based violence. Moreover, the resilience of communities hosting internally displaced persons must be strengthened through an integrated assistance approach.

The window of opportunity to reverse the catastrophic food crisis is rapidly closing. We therefore welcome the donors’ conference to be held in Paris on 15 April, in which Switzerland will be participating. However, financial aid is not enough. It is essential to continue diplomatic efforts to stop the fighting, find a peaceful solution to the conflict and, in the meantime, to call on the parties to the conflict to respect international humanitarian law. The Council must therefore assume its responsibility, as it decided unanimously five years ago when it adopted resolution 2417 (2018), and remain mobilized to break the vicious circle between armed conflict and hunger.

Mr. Žbogar (Slovenia): I also want to extend my sincere thanks today to the briefers, Ms. Wosornu, from the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Mr. Martina and Mr. Skau for their really harrowing and sincere briefings today. I also want to welcome the representative of the Sudan to today’s meeting.

After less than a month, the Council is confronted with another alarming update on the escalating crisis of acute food insecurity affecting millions. The conflict in the Sudan, now nearing its one-year mark, is a sombre reminder of the fragility of peace, and of lives lost, communities fragmented and the future of an entire nation at stake.

Slovenia is profoundly alarmed by the evidence and predictions presented by today’s briefers and the OCHA white note highlighting hunger caused by conflict and the looming threat of famine. We fully support the recommendations contained in the white note. Allow me to emphasize a few points.

First, this is the time to speed up our efforts. The Security Council issued a clear message to the parties to the conflict for a ceasefire during Ramadan. We reiterate our call to the warring parties to silence their guns and cease hostilities. We continue to support coordinated regional and broader diplomatic initiatives

to end the conflict. We also call on all external actors to refrain from influencing the conflict through the provision of arms support and to comply with the arms embargo. The primary focus must remain on halting the violence and ensuring the protection of civilians.

Secondly, the humanitarian response is a lifeline for millions of people, and we thank France, along with Germany and the European Union, for their leadership in the upcoming humanitarian conference for the Sudan. Ensuring that humanitarian aid can reach those in need without hindrance is imperative. That is especially critical in areas like Khartoum, Darfur, Kordofan and El Gezira, where the levels of acute food insecurity are highest. We again renew our call on all parties to enable and facilitate full, rapid, safe, unimpeded and much-needed humanitarian access across borders and across conflict lines, including by providing immediate security guarantees. We also call on all parties to take action and restore life-saving networks and Internet services, which are critical for humanitarian operations and emergency services. Starvation of a civilian population as a method of warfare is strictly prohibited, besides being simply brutal, heartless and inhumane, and the Security Council has been united in its condemnation in that regard. We therefore call on all parties to the conflict to comply with their obligations under international humanitarian law and human rights law and cooperate fully with OCHA, United Nations agencies and other humanitarian actors in providing aid.

Thirdly, amid the turmoil, the plight of the most vulnerable, including women, children, persons with disabilities, older persons and internally displaced persons, warrants our immediate attention. The alarming projections of severe acute malnutrition among children, as we heard today, are a stark reminder of the devastating toll on those whose voices are silenced in the conflict. The detrimental nexus between health and malnutrition, which has a particular impact on children, pregnant women and new mothers, is undeniable. Ensuring rapid and comprehensive humanitarian access in order to deliver food, critical medical resources and safe water is urgent.

In conclusion, the Sudan is facing a crisis that threatens the very fabric of its society. The food crisis is not just a statistic; behind the alarming numbers of people in need, behind the victims of violence and those killed, displaced or assaulted, there are real individuals, each with their own life and aspirations. This is, once again, a struggle for survival, with

profound repercussions for those who dream of peace, including us in the Security Council. The briefers' statements — that this is one of the worst humanitarian crises in recent memory and, possibly, the worst hunger crisis and that 200,000 children could potentially die of malnutrition — call on us to shoulder our responsibility. Slovenia is ready to heed the cry of the briefers and the people of the Sudan and to consider possible actions by the Council.

Mrs. Thomas-Greenfield (United States of America): Let me start by thanking our briefers — Director Wosornu, Deputy Director-General Martina, and Deputy Executive Director Skau — for briefing the Council on the humanitarian crisis caused by this senseless and brutal conflict. I look forward to the statement by the Permanent Representative of the Sudan, who has joined us today.

Put plainly, the people of the Sudan need full, unhindered humanitarian access, and they need it now. As we just heard, a record 18 million Sudanese people are facing acute food insecurity. Without urgent humanitarian assistance, many of them will face catastrophic food insecurity in the coming months. We therefore echo the Council's call in resolution 2724 (2024) and urge the parties to not only immediately ensure unhindered humanitarian access, but also to begin direct negotiations and cease hostilities — because we cannot hope to alleviate the humanitarian crisis facing the Sudanese people if we do not address its root cause.

With that, we reiterate our determination that members of the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces have committed war crimes in Sudan. We demand that the parties do more to actively protect civilians in all circumstances, respect human rights and comply with their obligations under international humanitarian law. We urge regional Powers to immediately end the provision of weapons to the parties in the Sudan and remind them that there is a binding United Nations arms embargo in place in Darfur. And we underscore the prohibition on starvation of civilians as a method of warfare.

Of course, just as we demand an end to this conflict, we also demand immediate relief for the Sudanese people now, and we note how crucial it is for humanitarian actors to reach all civilians in need, no matter where they are, in order to avert a larger catastrophe. To that end, we call once again for the SAF to immediately and fully reopen all of the country's

border crossings with Chad — most critically, the Adré border crossing — for humanitarian purposes. I will note that we heard today that the border crossing may have been reopened by the Sudanese authorities. If that is the case, it is a good sign, but it cannot be a one-off. The few existing cross-border access routes by land from Chad and South Sudan are simply insufficient. The full opening of the Chad border is the only option for permitting significant humanitarian assistance to flow. If the SAF does not urgently reverse its decision to limit cross-border access, the Security Council must take swift action to ensure that life-saving aid is delivered and distributed and consider all tools at its disposal, including authorizing a cross-border mechanism.

It is not just those needing aid who are in danger. Those delivering aid are also at risk. Far too many humanitarian personnel have lost their lives helping those on the brink. Humanitarian aid workers must not be targeted or harassed as they try to meet the critical needs of Sudanese civilians. They have to be protected.

Finally, we urge other donors to massively scale up funding to the United Nations humanitarian response. The United States is the largest donor of humanitarian aid to the response in the Sudan and neighbouring countries, and we have provided more than \$968 million since September 2023. Still, just 5 per cent of the United Nations humanitarian appeal for Sudan has been met, and that is simply unacceptable. We remain committed to helping the people of the Sudan, but we cannot do it alone.

I have often spoken about my visit to the Adré refugee camp, where I met women and children who fled the violence in the Sudan. If I could see them again today, I would want to tell them that the international community is doing everything it can to end the suffering of the Sudanese people, that the violence and hunger is subsiding and that everything is going to be okay. Right now, I cannot say that. For the sake of the people I met in Chad and the millions of Sudanese people crying out for help, we must do more, and we must do it now.

Mr. Dai Bing (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank the representatives of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the World Food Programme for their briefings. I welcome the presence of the representative of the Sudan at today's meeting.

As the briefers noted, amid the ongoing conflict in the Sudan, the humanitarian situation in the country continues to worsen, with 18 million people suffering from hunger and many parts of the country facing pronounced food insecurity. China appreciates the work undertaken by United Nations humanitarian agencies and welcomes the Sudanese authorities' opening of multiple humanitarian border crossings and active facilitation of relief efforts. We call on all Sudanese parties to continue to guarantee rapid, safe and unhindered humanitarian access.

It is worth noting that funding shortfalls remain the biggest challenge to humanitarian relief work. Currently, the humanitarian appeal for the Sudan is less than 5 per cent funded, with quite a few humanitarian agencies likely to see their funding dry up. The international community, and traditional donors in particular, need to act responsibly by scaling up financial and food aid and must do all they can to mitigate the impact of the conflict on people's lives and to avert an even greater humanitarian crisis.

It is important to flag that humanitarian relief efforts should primarily aim to save lives and aid those in need. Humanitarian issues should not be politicized. In the recent past, certain countries have used humanitarian aid as a political tool to pressure and sanction others and have even gone so far as to directly interfere in the internal affairs of the Sudan and to steamroll a democratic transition. That is one of the major contributors to the prolonged turmoil in the Sudan, which eventually plunged the country into a deep crisis. The tragedy unfolding in the Sudan deserves in-depth reflection by the Council.

A ceasefire and a return to order in the Sudan constitute the fundamental way to alleviate the humanitarian situation. We call on both parties to the conflict to implement resolution 2724 (2024) by securing a Ramadan ceasefire without delay, so as to minimize civilian casualties and to prevent the further spillover of the conflict to neighbouring countries. The United Nations should step up coordination with the African Union, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development and other regional organizations in order to synergize their good offices, with a view to achieving an early and durable solution for peace.

Since the outbreak of the conflict in the Sudan, China has, through bilateral channels, provided the Sudan with multiple consignments of medical supplies

and food aid — doing our part to ease the humanitarian crisis on the ground. China will continue to work with the international community in our unrelenting efforts to end the conflict and bring about a lasting peace in the Sudan.

Mr. Cho (Republic of Korea): I extend my gratitude to the briefers of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the World Food Programme for their insightful, sobering briefing today. I commend Guyana and Switzerland, the informal co-focal points on conflict and hunger, for convening today's meeting.

The prolonged food insecurity situation in the Sudan is becoming chronic. The number of children suffering from severe acute malnutrition — 730,000 — is a stark reminder of the cost of inaction. Interconnected with other risks, including the largest-scale displacement and an outbreak of disease, the impact of the long-standing crisis will stretch into future generations.

To avoid that worst-case scenario, we must act now. With that in mind, I propose three key points.

First, measures must be taken to ensure secure humanitarian access. The unhindered delivery of life-saving aid is particularly critical in the Sudan. We acknowledge the announcement by the Sudanese authorities on 5 March to allow temporary humanitarian access through the Al-Tina crossing between Chad and Darfur and to establish alternative routes through other border areas. We call for the full and immediate implementation of those measures and for ensuring further unhindered access for humanitarian assistance to reach all regions of the Sudan in compliance with their obligations under international humanitarian law, as outlined in resolutions 2417 (2018) and 2724 (2024).

In addition, there are disturbing reports of widespread looting of humanitarian supplies and attacks on critical infrastructure providing life-saving basic services, such as health, water and sanitation. We call for the immediate cessation of those attacks, which deprive civilians of objects indispensable to their survival. That may constitute a flagrant violation of international humanitarian law. And as mentioned yesterday (see S/PV.9581), the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1591 (2005) concerning the Sudan, which the Republic of Korea chairs, reminded the parties that those who

commit violations of international humanitarian law may be subject to targeted sanctions measures.

Secondly, the funding for humanitarian assistance to the Sudan should be expanded. Last year, the Government of the Republic of Korea provided approximately \$1.3 million in humanitarian aid to support the Sudan. We have decided to significantly increase our contribution to the Central Emergency Response Fund this year, a part of which will be directed towards the Sudan.

We hope that the upcoming international humanitarian conference for the Sudan and its neighbours, co-hosted by the European Union, France and Germany in Paris in April, will inspire more countries to provide emergency humanitarian assistance to the Sudan. Along with those international efforts, we also urge the Sudanese Government to fulfil its primary responsibility to address the dire humanitarian crisis in the Sudan.

Finally, we reiterate our call for an immediate cessation of hostilities. The power struggle has devastated the Sudan since April last year. It is imperative to seek a negotiated solution to the power struggles.

Last week, resolution 2724 (2024), adopted in this Chamber, expressed grave concern about the conflict-induced food insecurity and called for an immediate halt to hostilities during the month of Ramadan. It is deeply regrettable that the resolution has not yet been implemented, and we urge all warring parties to fully comply with it as soon as possible.

We must not remain idle in the face of the Sudan's looming humanitarian catastrophe. Today's meeting is a critical and positive step, but our efforts must not end here. If necessary, the Security Council should take further measures to facilitate cross-border and crossline aid delivery, including authorizing humanitarian corridors. The Republic of Korea is committed to engaging constructively with Council members to make that progress possible.

Ms. Gatt (Malta): I thank Director of Operations and Advocacy of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs Wosornu, Deputy Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations Martina and Deputy Executive Director of the World Food Programme Skau for their timely and comprehensive briefings.

Over the past 11 months, violence in the Sudan has culminated in a mass displacement, malnutrition, inter-ethnic and sexual and gender-based violence emergency.

As we heard today, crop harvests in 2024 are expected to be below average. Many farmers in conflict-affected areas have suffered loss of farming assets and land or been forced to abandon their properties. Food prices are soaring, aggravated by reduced quantities of food and the destruction of food production assets.

Vulnerable groups are particularly at risk. Almost three quarters of 1 million children are projected to suffer severe acute malnutrition, all while missing a year of education.

The humanitarian response to the crisis has been beleaguered by a lack of resources, safety and security constraints. Systematic impediments to access to aid across borders and front lines by the parties have compounded the situation.

Since the start of the conflict, 20 aid workers have been killed and 33 injured. Nearly 150 warehouses and offices have been looted. Humanitarian aid workers have been denied permission to travel and suffered violent attacks. Any violence against humanitarian aid workers is deplorable and completely unacceptable.

Crossline delivery of humanitarian aid in the Sudan has also been severely constrained, particularly to Khartoum, Kordofan and Gezira. Host communities that welcomed millions are now exhausted and in need of urgent support. In that regard, any humanitarian scale-up needs all possible border crossing points to remain open and accessible for humanitarians.

United Nations agencies and international non-governmental organizations must reach those most in need first. Unfortunately, in many areas of concern, there is little to no international humanitarian presence.

Cross-border operations from Chad to Darfur have proved vital, as the routes from Port Sudan are either unavailable or impractical. While Malta welcomes the recent changes in aid delivery modalities announced by the Sudanese authorities, we recall the necessity of having multiple crossing points available. Humanitarians need greater resources, a lifting of the barriers they face to reach populations and guarantees of safety and security from the parties.

Malta calls on the parties to the conflict to implement resolution 2724 (2024). The demand for a ceasefire for the holy month of Ramadan has not been implemented, and we are even witnessing an increase in violence and suffering. They must also abide by their obligations under international humanitarian law, which includes a prohibition of the use of starvation of the civilian population as a method of warfare. Parties must also protect vital goods, infrastructure and services to ensure the civilian population's essential needs are met. They must also commit to sustained humanitarian dialogue to facilitate crossline and cross-border humanitarian access and ensure there is rapid, unimpeded and safe flows of humanitarian aid to all civilians no matter where they are in the country.

The international community must do its part and scale up multisectoral humanitarian assistance as part of a comprehensive protection and famine-averting response in the Sudan. The upcoming humanitarian pledging conference for the Sudan that will take place in France next month will be an important opportunity that should not be missed.

In conclusion, it is imperative that we, the members of the Council, redouble our efforts to rapidly end the conflict. The people of the Sudan are in a desperate situation, as we have heard today. This is one of the worst humanitarian disasters in recent memory. We cannot and must not fail the people of the Sudan.

Mr. De La Gasca (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank you, Mr. President, for convening this meeting and thank the briefers for their statements. I also welcome the representative of the Sudan to this meeting.

My delegation acknowledges the work of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in the development of the white note, the early warning mechanism established in resolution 2417 (2018), which empowers the Security Council to take specific action to break the vicious cycle that unfortunately exists between armed conflict and hunger.

The information we received today is clear and irrefutable. The conflict in the Sudan has caused a rapidly deepening humanitarian crisis, with nearly 18 million people facing acute hunger, 5 million of whom are facing emergency levels, particularly women and children. More than 75 per cent of those in emergency situations are in areas where access is extremely limited due to hostilities, such as Khartoum, Darfur and Kordofan.

In addition, the intensity of the fighting has generated the largest number of displaced people in the world, with around 8 million people, which may even destabilize the region. The answer to the violence and the imminent risk of millions of people dying from hunger must always be peace and security, which is the essence of our collective mandate.

The Security Council recently adopted resolution 2724 (2024), which calls for an immediate cessation of hostilities during the month of Ramadan, and its implementation must be immediate in order to promote, in the near future, a peaceful solution to the conflict as the only way to prevent a humanitarian catastrophe. Without political will to put an end to the conflict, any other measure will only mitigate its effects.

The Council must also speak out clearly and firmly against violations of international humanitarian law and for accountability, including in relation to the obstruction of humanitarian assistance and the use of starvation as a method of warfare.

In that context, there is an urgent need to maintain and expand cross-border crossings, lift bureaucratic obstacles to the delivery of vital supplies, secure funding for humanitarian aid, estimated at \$4.1 billion and ensure the safety of humanitarian workers.

Not so long ago, the Sudan was considered the future breadbasket of all of East Africa. However, the destruction of essential infrastructure, the loss of arable land and the displacement of farmers have undermined its agricultural potential.

In that regard, international cooperation aimed at creating or restoring productive capacities, together with financing and technology transfer, will be essential to develop productive, competitive and sustainable food systems in a post-conflict scenario.

We need to redouble our efforts to address the threat of hunger looming over the people of the Sudan as quickly as the situation warrants, and we must find the political will to contain this crisis by using the tools at our disposal.

Mr. Kariuki (United Kingdom): I thank Ms. Wosornu, Mr. Martina and Mr. Skau for their briefings. We are grateful to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), the World Food Programme and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations for alerting the

Council to this urgent crisis, and to Switzerland and Guyana for convening this meeting so swiftly. I welcome the participation of the representative of the Sudan.

The risk of famine in the Sudan, set out in OCHA's white note, is of extreme concern. After a bad harvest, severe hunger will deepen, harming vulnerable people the most. Most of the fatalities will be children under five.

We pay tribute to the United Nations, international and Sudanese humanitarian staff, who are working in extreme conditions to alleviate the suffering.

I would like to make three key points.

First, the white note is clear that obstruction of humanitarian access by the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and Rapid Support Forces (RSF) is resulting in the starvation of the Sudanese people. Using starvation as a method of warfare is prohibited by international humanitarian law. The Sudanese authority's decision to allow extremely limited humanitarian access from Chad is nowhere near enough to meet the soaring humanitarian needs — especially while cross-line access remains completely blocked. We call on the warring parties to urgently ensure and facilitate unimpeded access via all routes, both cross-border and cross-line, including through the vital route at Adré, Chad.

Secondly, we need increased humanitarian funding. The United Kingdom has provided over \$54 million in humanitarian aid to the people of the Sudan this financial year. And we are providing financial support to those fleeing to neighbouring countries. We welcome the upcoming pledging event hosted by France, Germany and the European Union and appeal to the international community to increase funding to avoid the horrific scenario of 1 million excess deaths in the Sudan this year. But while funding is important, this human-made crisis ultimately requires a political solution.

Thirdly, the fighting needs to stop. The world is witnessing the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of a conflict that should never have begun. The failure of the SAF and RSF to implement a Ramadan ceasefire and immediately facilitate unimpeded humanitarian access, in line with resolution 2724 (2024), is unacceptable. We call on both to stop fighting immediately and return to negotiations. Given the clear warning of impending famine, it is imperative that the Council remain seized of this issue and that we hold ourselves and

the warring parties accountable for delivering on the recommendations in the white note.

Mrs. Dime Labille (France) (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank Ms. Wosornu, Mr. Skau and Mr. Martina for their inspiring briefings. I would also like to thank Algeria, Switzerland, Sierra Leone and Slovenia for requesting this meeting.

We are meeting today in furtherance of resolution 2417 (2018). For the first time, a resolution denounced the use of famine as a weapon of war, the lack of humanitarian access and the deprivation of civilians of goods essential to their survival. That resolution must be fully implemented.

The humanitarian situation in the Sudan continues to deteriorate as the conflict intensifies and spreads to new regions of the country. Projections leave little room for doubt, and the spectre of famine looms large. Agriculture and the entire food supply chain are affected — fields are being destroyed or are inaccessible, and agricultural infrastructure is being severely damaged, often permanently. The displacement of civilian populations has also led to the abandonment of arable land. The lack of water, electricity and fuel has led to the virtual collapse of all food systems. The situation is unacceptable.

Both parties must abide by international law, and we call on them to respect the commitments made in Jeddah to protect civilians and facilitate the delivery of humanitarian aid. The protection of humanitarian personnel must also be guaranteed.

It is essential to guarantee full, safe and unhindered humanitarian access and to remove obstacles to the delivery of aid, both across the front lines and in the context of cross-border aid. France welcomes the initial commitments made by the Sudanese authorities to authorize the use of cross-border points and three airports in order to improve humanitarian access. We call on both parties to the conflict to facilitate access on the ground. Facilitating access will be one of the main objectives of the international humanitarian conference for the Sudan and neighbouring countries, which France, Germany and the European Union are organizing in Paris on 15 April.

With the adoption of resolution 2724 (2024), the Council has called for a ceasefire for the duration of Ramadan. The resolution must be implemented

as a matter of urgency, and we must work towards a cessation of fighting beyond that period.

France and the European Union will remain mobilized to respond to the suffering of the Sudanese population and the impact of the conflict on the region.

Ms. Evstigneeva (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We thank Ms. Edem Wosornu, Director of Operations and Advocacy of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Mr. Maurizio Martina, Deputy Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and Mr. Carl Skau, Deputy Executive Director of the United Nations World Food Programme for the briefings on the humanitarian and food situation in the Sudan. We welcome the participation of the Permanent Representative of the Sudan in this meeting.

We share the concern expressed in the assessments of the difficult humanitarian and food situation in the Sudan, including in the white note prepared by OCHA in accordance with resolution 2417 (2018). We note that OCHA is predicting a further deterioration of the situation, depending on the region, and has identified the risk of the situation moving from phase three to phase four of the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification — and possibly even up to phase five, the most acute phase, in some areas. The situation is linked to the continued intense fighting in some parts of the country since April 2023 and has resulted in numerous casualties, including civilians.

The statistics are truly depressing, with 40 per cent of the population of this large African country facing acute food insecurity and tens of thousands of children at risk of severe malnutrition. In the face of ongoing conflict, they have no access to health care, with 70 per cent of health facilities in those areas not functioning. Just as with the children of Gaza, we should consider the potential serious damage that could cause to the development of an entire generation — the future generation of the Sudan.

At the same time, it would not be constructive to simply dramatize the situation without looking into the real state of affairs, and it is even more inappropriate to politicize its humanitarian component. There are varying assessments of the food security situation in the Sudan. While some delegations and United Nations representatives fear that the Sudan is almost completely engulfed in famine, we should note that not everyone shares such alarmist assessments. The reality

is that food is available in the country, and the shelves of markets and stores are not empty — even in the remote states of Kassala, Gedaref, Sennar and Gezira. The country harvested 3 million tons of sorghum last year. There are wheat shortages, but they are being addressed using external supplies. Quite often the main problem stems from wage cuts, galloping inflation and falling purchasing power. The trend of a long-term deterioration of the country's economic and food potential is also alarming. According to the World Bank, the Sudan's economy is shrinking at a significant rate, decreasing by 12 per cent in 2023. The destruction of critical infrastructure continues. For the first time ever, there is a recorded rise in the number of Sudanese people exposed to hunger during the harvest season. That demonstrates the extent to which the Sudan's agricultural sector has been destroyed. Its recovery will take time, of course.

We note that, on 5 March, the Sudanese authorities decided to resume the delivery of humanitarian aid through a number of border crossings with Chad, South Sudan and Egypt, as well as through some Sudanese airports. Moreover, according to the United Nations country team, on 17 March the Sudan approved the passage of 60 trucks with humanitarian aid to El Geneina through the Rapid Support Forces-controlled Adré checkpoint on the Sudan-Chad border. I would like to recall that, according to OCHA, the situation in that town is dire.

We call on the participants of this meeting to refrain from turning everything on its head. The Sudanese authorities are showing their openness and constructive cooperation step after step. They are seriously engaged in supplying food to Greater Darfur. We underscore the fact that Port Sudan has approved the delivery of supplies from Chad, despite major security threats.

We firmly believe that it is necessary to continue humanitarian cooperation with the current authorities. After all, they must shoulder the responsibility of rectifying the current humanitarian situation, facilitating the distribution of supplies, reporting and ensuring the protection of civilians. To refuse to do so would mean exacerbating the already dire situation of the Sudanese population. There is a need to increase deliveries through various checkpoints under the control and solely with the consent of the central authorities. Sufficient funding for humanitarian response programmes in the Sudan could alleviate the suffering of the Sudanese. Neighbouring States should

also be helped. We hope that the upcoming international conference in Paris on 15 April will meet expectations.

Unfortunately, the politicization of food security and humanitarian situations in various countries has become a frequent phenomenon in the Security Council. The Council has no tools to truly address such situations because other United Nations bodies do the same. That is why, at certain times, tensions here are deliberately stoked for political reasons. Quite often that is done in the interests of external players. The conflict has clearly worsened the humanitarian situation in the Sudan, but we should not forget that the economic and other restrictive measures imposed on the country by the West have undermined the resilience of Sudanese society.

Russia provides assistance to the Sudan both bilaterally and through international organizations. In 2022, a shipment of 20,000 tons of food-grade wheat was dispatched to Port Sudan. In 2023, our country made a voluntary contribution of \$2.5 million to the World Food Programme in order to provide food aid to the Sudan. In May 2023, once the current conflict had already begun, Russia donated kits containing medicines and medical equipment sufficient to assist 12,000 patients, including for surgical operations. A year earlier, the Sudan received about 100 Russian anti-cholera and anti-malaria kits.

Port Sudan's proactive steps on the humanitarian front are commendable. They are in line with the Jeddah Declaration of Commitment to Protect the Civilians in the Sudan, regarding the organization of safe and sustainable humanitarian corridors under the guarantees of the parties to the conflict. We should not forget that the same document prohibits the use of human shields by the parties. In spite of that, one of the parties continues to use human shields. We believe that the intention demonstrated by the Sudanese authorities to solve emerging humanitarian problems in a positive and constructive manner is something on which we can build in order to move towards a comprehensive settlement of the conflict in the country.

Only a political solution to the conflict will allow people to return to their homes and proceed with their traditional lifestyles without putting their lives at risk. We consistently call for an end to armed confrontation and the establishment of an inclusive inter-Sudanese dialogue involving all influential political forces and ethnic and religious groups. Past international efforts,

including in the Sudan, show that externally imposed decisions, particularly hasty ones that fail to take into account the opinions of influential national players, are not durable and sometimes do not even last a day. In the worst cases, they can cause significant damage.

We believe that any destructive external interference in the affairs of friendly Sudan is unacceptable. We firmly believe that the Sudanese people can and should independently resolve their internal problems without external pressure and, particularly, without attempts by third parties to use the humanitarian situation to bring pressure to bear on the Sudan.

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

I thank Ms. Wosornu of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Mr. Martina of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, and Mr. Skau of the World Food Programme for their insightful briefings, which highlighted the gravity of the situation.

Japan thanks Guyana and Switzerland, as focal points for conflict and hunger, joined by Sierra Leone and Slovenia, for requesting this timely and important meeting.

Two weeks ago, from the Chamber, the Secretary-General called on all parties in the Sudan to honour a Ramadan cessation of hostilities in order to chart a firm path towards lasting peace for the Sudanese people (see S/PV.9567). The African Union and the League of Arab States echoed his call, as did the Security Council, by swiftly adopting resolution 2724 (2024).

In spite of those strong and united voices, the continuing clashes between the Sudanese Armed Forces and Rapid Support Forces have now lasted 11 months. We are alarmed by the fact that nearly 18 million people in the Sudan now face acute food insecurity, largely as a result of the war.

Bearing the situation in mind, I would like to stress three points today.

First and foremost, the most important step to be taken immediately is to heed the unanimous calls of the international community and honour the spirit of Ramadan by observing a cessation of hostilities. The Council supports the coordinated international and regional efforts for a negotiated peaceful solution.

We reaffirm our support for Personal Envoy Ramtane Lamamra continuing to fully utilize his good offices.

Secondly, the parties must uphold their obligations under international humanitarian law. Starvation cannot be used as a means of warfare. The parties must protect civilians, not threaten civilian infrastructure or the provision of vital goods and services. We are concerned that many farmers have been displaced from their farmlands. Attacks against economic and agricultural infrastructure have also severely damaged the Sudan's food system.

Thirdly, full, rapid, safe, and unhindered humanitarian access is critical. Cross-line and cross-border operations are imperative for the delivery of humanitarian assistance to conflict-affected areas, including Darfur, Kordofan, Khartoum and Gezira. All the humanitarian aid providers must be protected and their presence secured. We call on both parties to fully commit to a dialogue to ensure unobstructed cross-line and cross-border operations and comply with their commitments under the Jeddah Declaration of Commitment to Protect the Civilians of the Sudan.

In that vein, we positively note the Sudanese authorities' announcement that they will facilitate humanitarian access through certain border points with Chad, South Sudan and Egypt, as well as air transportation. We also note some progress on the issuance of visas and customs clearances.

Japan joins others in calling for donors to step up humanitarian assistance for the Sudanese people. Let me conclude my statement by reiterating our strong commitment to the Sudanese people and their future.

I resume my functions as President of the Council.

I now give the floor to the representative of the Sudan.

Mr. Mohammed (Sudan) (*spoke in Arabic*): I hope, Mr. President, that you grant me enough time after having listened to the various views about the humanitarian relief in question, which is leaning towards politicization. The interpreters have asked me to speak at a reasonable pace, and that is why I need sufficient time to be able to deliver my long statement.

I thank Ms. Edem Wosornu, Director of Operations and Advocacy of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Mr. Maurizio Martina, Deputy Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), and Mr. Carl

Skau, Deputy Executive Director of the United Nations World Food Programme for their briefings. I also thank all the delegations for their good faith and for what they have said about the humanitarian situation in the Sudan. I especially thank the representatives of the United States, Russia, China, the United Kingdom and others for their humanitarian assistance to the Sudan.

I would like to revisit some criticism that has been repeatedly levied at the Sudan by delegations, without responding to what we said many times before the Security Council. I mentioned to the Council that there are no bureaucratic impediments because bureaucracy itself has died. There is no bureaucracy except in a State functioning in a normal situation, while we are facing a war of aggression. The United Arab Emirates is still supporting, financing and supplying weapons, missiles and materiel to the Rapid Support Forces in Darfur through Amdjarass airport in Chad. Last week, 3,000 fighters from the Rapid Support Forces landed in Abu Dhabi to receive training and then return to Darfur to continue the war.

We would like to thank the representative of Algeria for his statement on behalf of the members of the Security Council, in which he called for immediately putting pressure on the States that are supporting and exacerbating the conflict.

I would also like to thank the representative of the United States, Mrs. Thomas-Greenfield, for her statement, in which she called upon regional Powers to put an end to the delivery of weapons to Darfur, in line with the arms embargo. The Council is requested to include a similar call because when it adopted its previous resolution (resolution 2685 (2023)), it did not include a paragraph demanding a cessation of the conflict. When we requested the inclusion of such a paragraph in the resolution the penholder ignored it. We were told later that such a paragraph was omitted by mistake.

With regard to reopening of border crossings, I have told the Council that all air, ground and sea crossings have been opened, including the temporary opening of the Al-Tina crossing. A United Nations humanitarian relief convoy, estimated at 237 trucks, was supposed to cross, but only 60 trucks have been able to do so. I believe that there is no longer a United Nations humanitarian relief convoy on the ground. Port Sudan is also opened. I would like to be clear on that point. There are no obstacles hindering humanitarian operations.

With regard to those who exaggerated by saying that the Sudan is facing famine, I respond by echoing Amartya Sen, who said that famine is not caused by lack of food, but may be caused by access roads being cut off and distribution networks being disrupted. The Sudan, as ecologists say, is not prone to famine. However, international agendas that target the Sudan, wage wars against the country and kill the Sudanese people unjustly prevent the Sudan from benefiting from its land. Certain States have interfered in order to prevent the Sudan from being the breadbasket of the world.

We have five seasonal rivers, valleys, the Great Nile and the Nuba water basin. There are multiple climatic regions in the Sudan, and wheat cultivation is possible in the cold regions. There is the Gezira Scheme, which has a surface area of 2 million acres of arable land. We have a total of 172 million acres of arable land in the Sudan. We have also adopted modern agricultural methods that help us to increase productivity by using improved seeds.

We would like to acknowledge the FAO for the assistance it has provided in the area of agriculture and food security. Other international organizations have been reluctant to do the same. However, the FAO report on agricultural production in the Sudan contains some errors, especially when it noted that the cultivated area is 9 million hectares, or 23 million acres, and that cultivated areas should be increased to avoid famine. However, the war has impeded the strategic distribution of 7,000 tons of seeds and fertilizers. We are grateful to have received these from the FAO, the Agricultural Bank of Sudan and the African Development Bank. While it was difficult to deliver seeds and fertilizer to Darfur, South Kordofan and Khartoum states, they were delivered by the joint forces. It was also difficult to deliver fuel, as common pests such as locusts and birds were sprayed, costing €7 million; pesticides and aviation fuel were purchased and foreign pilots were hired.

The incursion of the Rapid Support Forces into Gezira state after the summer crops were planted affected 770,000 acres, and 85 per cent of the crops were harvested before the war. The area doubled to 1,150,000 acres during the current season, stabilizing water levels and providing production inputs to expand the cultivation of maize.

From 2 to 17 January 2024, at the request of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, in close collaboration with the Food Security Technical Secretariat and the State ministries, carried out its annual crop and food supply assessment mission to determine the 2023 crop production and assess the food supply situation across the country's 18 states.

Given that the ongoing war has restricted movement between and within some States, a revised approach was required to carry out the mission. The core teams were replaced by Government teams, whose composition varied from state to state, while the Production Department of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry and the Ministry of Finance, Economic Planning and Economic Security had already relocated to various states across the country after war broke out in the capital, Khartoum.

Teams, especially those linked to the Ministry of State and irrigation projects, were provided with data and information on crop production and livestock conditions, including official estimates of the area in which crops were planted and harvested and of production of staple grains and cash crops, in addition to information on key influencing factors. Whenever the security situation permitted, field visits were conducted to verify official estimates provided by State authorities against information collected through field inspections, rapid case studies with samples from farmers and interviews with pastoralists and traders.

It was not possible to collect evidence on livestock, farms and pastures, as pasture conditions were assessed using the Pictorial Evaluation Tool methodology. Farmers and key suppliers provided information on rainfall amount and distribution, vegetation conditions, crop protection campaigns, livestock conditions and health, as well as the prices of major crops. Periodic food security reports were noted, but it was not possible to obtain official information on key social and economic indicators from the Central Bank of Sudan, the Agricultural Bank of Sudan, the Central Bureau of Statistics and the Strategic Reserve Corporation. Given that it was impossible to obtain such official data, most rain gauges — for example, from the national weather service — were replaced by information from satellite data and images, which were used to estimate the rainfall during the rainy season and the evolution of vegetation conditions during the year.

National cereal production of sorghum, millet and wheat for the 2022-23 season is estimated at approximately 4 million tons. The wheat production scheduled to be harvested during the current agricultural season, in March, is expected to reach about 377,900 tons — 21 per cent less than the previous year.

Although animal vaccination rates in 2023 were lower than those of the previous year, overall livestock health was generally good, and no major disease outbreaks were reported. The condition of the pastures was assessed as moderate to good at the time of the evaluation, but erratic seasonal rains allowed only a partial replenishment of pasture resources, which will not be sufficient to sustain livestock until the start of the next rainy season in June. A similar situation was reported for water, with conflict limiting herd movements and restricting access to pasture and water in some areas.

Prices of sorghum, locally produced millet and imported wheat mostly increased in 2023, owing to conflict-related trade disruptions, supply shortages and the continued devaluation of the national currency, with the steepest increases recorded in the Greater Darfur region, the Greater Kordofan region and in Khartoum state, where the conflict is most intense.

Food grain use in 2024 is estimated at nearly 7.3 million tons, using the population census taken at the end of 2023, based on the latest Integrated Food Security Phase Classification analysis, with an average per capita consumption of 152 kilograms. Cereal import requirements for the 2024 marketing year are projected at 3.7 million tons, consisting of 2.4 million tons of wheat and maize and 936,000 tons of sorghum.

Turning to agricultural production and cultivated and harvested areas, in 2023 sorghum was planted over an area of approximately 9 million hectares, or 23 million acres, amounting to an increase of nearly 1 per cent compared to the previous year and the average over the previous five years. There was a decline in the semi-automated sector, which saw a decrease of approximately 3 per cent in cultivated areas compared to the previous year, and 9 per cent compared to the average over the previous five years. That is mainly owing to a decrease in the number of beneficiaries of agricultural financing and a rise in production costs.

Sharp declines have been reported in Sennar and Blue Nile states, while North Kordofan and West Kordofan have not reported any interruptions in

planting for the 2023 summer crop season. In contrast, planted areas in Al-Qadarif state reportedly increased by 23 per cent over the previous year and 27 per cent over the five-year average. The increase in cultivated area was 7 per cent over the previous year and 14 per cent over the five-year average. That is mainly due to the increase in Sennar state, in which the cultivated area is reported to be three times larger than the previous year and four times larger than the five-year average, owing to the influx of internally displaced persons, most of whom are from Khartoum state, participating in agricultural operations. The increase in cultivated area in Sennar state offset the sharp decline observed in West, South and Central Darfur due to the prevailing insecurity resulting from the systematic attacks of the Rapid Support Forces, which hinder farmers' access to the fields.

Millet was cultivated over an estimated area of 3.9 hectares, equivalent to 9.4 million acres, which is 20 per cent less than the previous year and 15 per cent less than the five-year average. That decrease is mainly due to the decline in the area planted in the traditional sector, which, in the past five years, on average, accounted for 90 per cent of the total area in which millet was planted. The sharpest declines were recorded in Central Darfur and were partially offset by increases in the planted areas in Sennar, South and West Kordofan states.

Wheat was planted between the beginning of November and the middle of December 2023. The cultivated area was estimated at 179,130 hectares, or 500,000 acres, by the end of December, which represented a decline of 38 per cent compared to the previous season and 7 per cent compared to the average of the previous five years. That decline started in the previous year and is due to the challenges related to access to agriculture financing, exacerbated by the disruption in the activities of agricultural banks; the difficulties in getting competitive prices on the market; and the decrease in the cultivated areas of sorghum and millet compared to the previous year and the previous five years, respectively.

The cultivated area of sorghum was estimated at 6 million hectares, or 14.4 million acres, a decrease of 17 per cent compared to the previous year and 21 per cent compared to the average of the previous five years. The cultivated area of millet was estimated at 3 million hectares, a decrease of 15 per cent compared to the previous year and 21 per cent compared to the average of the previous five years.

The ratio of harvested crops to the total surface area under cultivation is 77 per cent for millet, which is similar to the average of the previous five years. The percentage of harvested sorghum is 61 per cent compared to 77 per cent in the previous five years. It is expected that the cultivated surface area of wheat will be 161,360 hectares, or 397,000 acres, a decrease of nearly 15 per cent from the previous year.

Based on the Crop and Food Supply Assessment Mission estimates, including the winter wheat crop and the March 2024 harvest, and according to the latest information on consumption and animal feed use, we arrived at the following estimates.

The total grain production is estimated at nearly 4 million tons, including the expected production of 377,900 tons of wheat with the winter wheat crop.

Total consumption is estimated at 7.32 million tons, using the estimated population figure of 48.2 million people until the end of 2023. Those figures were used in the latest Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC). According to the IPC analysis, the average per capita consumption per year is 152 kg of grain, including 75 kg of sorghum, 58 kg of wheat, 16 kg of millet and 2 kg of rice.

Feed for livestock consumption is expected to reach 152,740 tons of which 5 per cent is sorghum and 2 per cent is millet that is used to feed livestock.

Moreover, the needs for seed in 2023 are estimated at approximately 122,000 tons, based on a rate of 7.5 kg per hectare for sorghum, 4 kg per hectare for millet and 20 kg for maize.

Post-harvest losses are estimated at 191.3 tons, at a rate of 5 per cent for sorghum and 1 per cent for rice.

In conclusion, there is a food gap. But it does not amount to famine because there is a strategic reserve in the silos and mills. There is the silo of the Agricultural Bank in Al-Qadarif, in addition to grains stored as supplies and grains stored in stores among the population. There is no famine in the Sudan, and the food gap did not result in a shortage of grain production, but there are critical cuts owing to the Rapid Support militia's control of certain areas. That led to limited access to food in those areas while large areas in South Kordofan and West Kordofan states were cultivated. In Gezira state, the target is to cultivate 350,000 acres, but 250,000 acres were cultivated, despite the war and the repetitive attacks by the Rapid Support militia.

The gap of maize is equal to 1.5 million tons which can be bridged by importing food through the United Nations in two phases. Moreover, 1.5 million tons of wheat for making bread are being imported from abroad at a cheaper price than the cost of cultivating wheat. Maize and millet are usually not imported from abroad.

Finally, we call on the United Nations and its relevant agencies to provide support in the following areas. The war of aggression supported by the United Arab Emirates has resulted in cuts in food chain supplies and in obstructions to the delivery of relief assistance, foodstuff and agricultural products to the areas controlled by the Rapid Support militia. Therefore, we call on the United Nations and its relevant agencies to provide life-saving humanitarian assistance to the vulnerable sectors in areas of internally displaced people in eastern Sudan, in Darfur, and South Kordofan, West Kordofan, Khartoum, White Nile and Northern states. Quality humanitarian assistance should be provided to

boost local agricultural production and improve food security and market performance, subjected to looting and disruptions of the production cycle, leading to a decrease in the revenues to less than 20 per cent of the target level.

We hope that the United Nations will help the Sudan to improve education and health services, fight pandemics, develop agriculture in both plant and animal sectors, in addition to providing technical assistance for producing wheat and increasing productivity. We also hope to get support for the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Agriculture to improve data collection in cultivated, confined and harvested areas. We hope as well to get assistance in improving the performance of the public administration in protecting plants and addressing pandemics and support in improving and maintaining the irrigation infrastructure and increasing the quantities of seeds provided by the FAO.

The meeting rose at 11.55 a.m.