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Seventy-ninth year

Provisional

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New York

<i>President:</i>	Mr. Kariuki	(United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)
<i>Members:</i>	Algeria	Mr. Koudri
	China	Mr. Dai Bing
	Ecuador	Mr. Montalvo Sosa
	France	Mr. Dharmadhikari
	Guyana	Ms. Persaud
	Japan	Mr. Mikanagi
	Malta	Mr. Camilleri
	Mozambique	Mr. Afonso
	Republic of Korea	Mr. Cho
	Russian Federation	Ms. Evstigneeva
	Sierra Leone	Mr. Kanu
	Slovenia	Mrs. Blokar Drobič
	Switzerland	Mr. Hauri
	United States of America	Mr. Wood

Agenda

Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and South Sudan

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in South Sudan (S/2024/776)

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

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and South Sudan

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in South Sudan (S/2024/776)

The President: In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representatives of Kenya and South 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: Mr. Nicholas Haysom, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for South Sudan and Head of United Nations Mission in South Sudan; and Ms. Merekaje Lorna, Secretary-General of South Sudan Democratic Engagement, Monitoring and Observation Programme.

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

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2024/776, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in South Sudan.

I now give the floor to Mr. Haysom.

Mr. Haysom: I thank you, Mr. President, for the opportunity to once again brief the Council on developments in South Sudan.

Since my last update (see S/PV.9705), South Sudan's transitional period was extended until February 2027, pushing back the timetable for elections to December 2026. That was an inevitable but regrettable development, given the deep frustration and fatigue felt by the South Sudanese people at the apparent political paralysis and inaction of their leaders to implement the peace agreement and deliver the long-awaited democratic transition.

I have been holding intensive discussions with political leaders, civil society, faith-based representatives, youth leaders, women's coalitions and international partners. That has left me in no doubt that, as the Secretary-General has stated, the only way forward is for the South Sudanese leaders to urgently

find the compromises and modes of implementation and to take the decisive steps required to achieve a critical mass of key benchmarks set out in the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan.

Since the extension, however, implementation of the Revitalized Agreement and its road map, yet again, has been relegated to the back burner while political interests play out at the national level. It seems that the Tumaini initiative, aimed at bringing holdout opposition groups into the peace agreement, has largely stalled, although, upon the invitation of President Salva Kiir Mayardit, President William Samoei Ruto of Kenya visited Juba yesterday. The Presidents apparently decided to reconvene the initiative, resolve outstanding issues within two weeks and to secure, thereafter, a regional endorsement.

The United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) has been clear: the clock on South Sudan's fourth extension has started ticking. It does not reset in February 2025, when the extended transition begins. It begins now. Otherwise, we may find ourselves in the same predicament in December 2026. This cannot be business as usual for the parties to the peace agreement, the political elite, the guarantors of the peace agreement or the international community. We must take this opportunity to make this extension the last and deliver the peace and democracy that the people of South Sudan deserve. Compromises are required to make the electoral math add up. Small actions are not enough. Decisions, actions, realism and benchmarks associated with an implementation plan are needed. Concessions on what is feasible within the timeline are required. Some processes will have to be truncated or altered to make the overall harmonization realistically achievable. To achieve those outcomes, the Government should immediately reconvene the Government-led joint task force on constitution-making and elections.

UNMISS has identified six achievable benchmarks, which the parties can address immediately: first, deploying the necessary unified forces, starting phase II of their joint training and agreeing the middle command structure; secondly, making a start on civic education; thirdly, preparatory work for voter registration; fourthly, amending the National Security Service bill so as to expand civic and political space; fifthly, developing a code of conduct between political parties, civil society and the media; and sixthly, clarifying responsibility-sharing for electoral security. I met recently with

President Mayardit to discuss the urgent need for progress, informing him of our productive engagements with other national stakeholders and emphasizing the importance of his continued involvement in this regard. The international community must also rally around those immediate tasks. We need collective leverage and a unified voice to support a peaceful conclusion to the transitional period.

A partnership approach remains critical. We acknowledge that it is difficult to keep the focus on South Sudan at a time of competing global crises but remain convinced that neither the country nor the region is capable of withstanding another relapse into conflict.

UNMISS is moving ahead with assistance to the National Elections Commission, including through packages of support that combine hardware — bricks and mortar — and software — that is, programmatic activities — to standup the Commission as soon as possible. We have a significant amount of in-house electoral, political and law enforcement expertise to dedicate in that area of our mandate, including as it relates to managing electoral security issues. We are driving initiatives to enhance the civic and political space where dialogue is taking place between political actors from across the spectrum on what a democratic society means to them, and how they can collectively achieve it. We are also collaborating with some 200 civil society organizations across the country to build monitoring alliances and to boost civic education and participation in the important task of electoral observation.

I must underscore that our efforts and the current momentum is a product of the strong desire of the South Sudanese people to contribute to their own nation-building project. After all, these are not united Nations elections or foreign elections, they are South Sudan's first sovereign, post-independence elections. An example of how the international community's joint efforts can make an impact is the support provided to the Judicial Reform Committee, which has recently validated its recommendations for building an independent judiciary in South Sudan, rooted in the principles of the separation of powers and the supremacy of the rule of law. It is an important step towards strengthening democratic institutions, establishing a system of checks and balances by the end of the transitional period and, importantly, supplementing our own work to make up the current deficit by delivering justice through mobile courts to rural areas.

As the rainy season concludes, we are already seeing a spike in subnational violence. The number of civilian casualties during separate incidents in Upper Nile, Central Equatoria, and Warrap states is alarming. UNMISS continues to implement our protection of civilians mandate, but we cannot be everywhere at once, and static physical protection is also not a permanent solution in these circumstances. I call on South Sudan's leaders to unify and deploy their own forces, because that is the only way to sustainably prevent civilian deaths. UNMISS has already provided significant logistical support to the rollout of phase 1 of the unified force deployment, but there has been no visible movement forward on phase 2.

In furthering our women and peace and security mandate, UNMISS is providing technical and advisory services to the Ministry of Gender, Child and Social Welfare for the sexual and gender-based violence prevention and response task force, soon to be launched across the country. We are engaging stakeholders on the intersection of gender, security and climate change, given the disproportionate impact of climate shocks and conflict on women.

Ongoing violence and flooding continue to cause immense harm and disrupt opportunities for recovery and durable solutions in South Sudan. Humanitarian partners have ramped up life-saving operations, delivering food, water, shelter, protection and medical care to more than 3.9 million people this year. Challenges persist in reaching all those in need, including limited resources, with just 57 per cent received of the \$1.8 billion required for the 2024 humanitarian needs and response plan.

With the support of UNMISS and humanitarian partners, the Government has successfully led the development of a joint plan to prepare and respond to the needs of up to 1.5 million flood-affected people. Those efforts include the implementation of flood mitigation projects such as dike reconstruction and early warning systems. But many communities remain vulnerable due to inadequate infrastructure and resources, so we are certainly not out of the woods, particularly as floodwaters stubbornly persist in many areas even when rains subside and river levels drop.

The conflict in the Sudan continues to exacerbate those challenges in South Sudan, with more than 830,000 refugees and returnees entering the country since April 2023 — equivalent to more than 7 per cent

of South Sudan's population. In addition, South Sudan has announced rising hunger and a cholera outbreak that has started at its northern border, with new cases arriving from the Sudan. In that regard, I wish to acknowledge the efforts of many South Sudanese citizens, who work at great personal risk and sacrifice to serve their people, whether they are humanitarian workers on the frontline or civil servants delivering every day despite going months without pay.

While we see the Government's various appeals for financial support up front and in advance of steps to implement the agreement, we want to advise that there needs to be demonstrable proof that national financial resources are being prioritized for peace. Meaningful steps could be taken in that regard through the recommendations of the Public Financial Management Oversight Committee in order to ensure that the allocation of funding serves to effectively implement the peace agreement and deliver public services.

The international community needs tangible evidence that the country's leaders and political elite are genuinely committed to a democratic future. As things stand, there is concern about the current political stagnation. Public patience is not limitless. I therefore call on the parties to use the next four months, before the extended period commences, to not only set and achieve realistic targets but also, in particular, to take the critical political decisions required to move the process forward.

In conclusion, I want to thank the Council for its consistent support to the people of South Sudan and reiterate the need for a united voice and support to enable a peaceful conclusion to the transitional period.

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

I now give the floor to Ms. Lorna.

Ms. Lorna: I sincerely appreciate the invitation to brief the Security Council today. Speaking to the Council on important issues affecting my country and fellow citizens is a great honour, yet humbling. During this meeting on South Sudan, I wish to address the Council as the Secretary-General of a civil society organization known as the South Sudan Democratic Engagement, Monitoring and Observation Programme, and also in my own right as a concerned citizen. I am pleased to come back to the Chamber once more and reaffirm to the Council that these briefings are indeed important and effective. Civil society across South Sudan now

has quarterly meetings with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General. Though the situation is still evolving, I commend the Special Representative and the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) team for taking up our request, and we appreciate that the Council supported it.

Today, as I share my reflections on the challenges and opportunities for democracy and human rights, including women's participation, in a difficult political context, it is important to note that citizens' voices and interests are almost absent in decisions of a public nature in my country. Political elites run the affairs of the country without much regard for the interests of interest. Examples of that include the extension of the transitional period and postponement of the elections from 2024 to 2026. Those few political elites, who are supposed to handle resources for important national processes such as security sector reform, elections and the constitution-making process, are busy building business empires and exhibit flamboyancy in their lifestyles. Their interests have always been prioritized over the rights of the majority.

The recent extension of the transitional period and mandate of the Revitalized Transitional Government of National Unity of South Sudan was received with great disappointment among citizens, who are wondering what the political elites of the Revitalized Transitional Government of National Unity will do differently during that extended period that they were not able to do over the past six years — especially after they publicly admitted to having fully implemented only 10 per cent of the entire peace agreement over the past six years. We urge the Council to join the citizens of South Sudan in demanding that the Government provide a clear programme for the 24 months of extension.

The repeated postponement of national elections by the Revitalized Transitional Government of National Unity is a great setback to the hopes for the democratization of the country. While there may be other challenges to democracy in South Sudan, the continued appetite of the Revitalized Transitional Government of National Unity to perpetually extend its mandate is the ultimate obstacle to democracy. It has deprived citizens of the opportunity to choose their leaders and to realize the implementation of important national processes such as constitution-making and security sector reform. Most citizens are not confident that the current Government is interested in, and can facilitate, a people-driven Constitution for South

Sudan without the robust engagement of civil society and other non-political stakeholders, including the international community.

The economic situation in the country continues to worsen as violence escalates. The country is generally faced with numerous challenges, ranging from large-scale human right violations, such as the recent killing of civilians in Wonduruba Payam of Yei county, the killings in Kajo Keji county, the assault on a human rights lawyer who defended a girl child against early and forced marriage in Rumbek, and many more. The cost of living has risen beyond the means of many citizens. It is unimaginable that in this modern-day era, a Government is not able to provide clean water for its citizens or even an environment in which they can access basic food commodities. South Sudan is a sad story and on the brink of collapse.

Since South Sudan gained independence in 2011, Juba residents have been dependent on water tankers to deliver water for domestic use. The Government has been too depleted to maintain regular salary payments for public servants, with delays spanning over 10 months. One of the biggest impediments to human rights is the restrictions on fundamental freedoms, which have led to shrinking civic and political space. That has been further exacerbated by the passing of the amendment to the National Security Service Act this year. The Act grants the National Security Service powers to arrest without warrant. Despite calls to return the amendment bill to Parliament, the President opted to keep the bill until 30 days elapsed, and now it has become law. That has led citizens to fear even raising concerns about their right to access basic commodities such as water.

The question of women's political participation is indeed an important aspect of the quest for women's emancipation. I would be in denial if I did not speak to this matter. However, while we acknowledge the numerous challenges faced by women, including sexual and gender-based violence and conflict-related sexual violence, today I will focus on political participation.

While we appreciate those Member States that generously contributed to the Peacebuilding Fund, I must mention that its implementation requires keen follow-up. Aware of the compelling vision of the Fund and having participated in the conceptualization phase of the project for South Sudan, some of our organizations — including the South Sudan Democratic Engagement, Monitoring and Observation

Programme — were listed as additional implementing partners of the Fund because of our contribution. However, the implementation process is not clear to us, and it is disheartening to read a letter of complaint against UN- Women from a group of South Sudanese women and women's organizations citing exclusion. I would say that the original vision of the project may be lost if no immediate steps are taken. Women's political participation cannot be achieved through workshops alone. South Sudanese women are tired of workshops, which do not necessarily address the challenges and have rather become social gatherings.

Whenever I am invited to brief the Council, I conduct indirect consultations with different categories of people, including ordinary citizens, those who would qualify as middle class and international actors working and living in South Sudan. Following those consultations, I have the following recommendations to make.

First, we appreciate the United Nations Mission in South Sudan's (UNMISS) contribution in providing support for and facilitation of the conduct of free, fair and peaceful elections, legislative development and a people-driven constitution-making process. Nonetheless, I would like to mention that workshops alone are not enough. It will be important for the UNMISS team to embrace joint programming, planning and meaningful partnerships with civil society actors and institutions to develop a civic engagement programme for meaningful citizen participation. We are asking for a different model than the one currently being implemented in South Sudan. UNMISS seems to be waiting for the Government to tell them when to start engagement on civic education, yet civic engagement is not the Government's priority.

Secondly, aware of President Ruto's visit to South Sudan yesterday, 6 November, we appeal to the international community to remain engaged on South Sudan and support the Tumaini initiative. That currently remains the only formal effort to restore peace and stability in South Sudan. The process indeed symbolizes hope for the people of South Sudan.

Thirdly, UNMISS must be allowed to facilitate periodic engagement with the South Sudanese Government and civil society groups — and I mean that this must be at the strategic and decision-making level for strategic purposes and to support implementation of the key tasks of the transitional period. We want

to contribute to shaping the future of our country in order to avoid the further and perpetual extension of the transition.

My fourth and final recommendation concerns the Peacebuilding Fund. We recommend that a meeting be held with the participation of the Peacebuilding Commission, direct recipients of the Fund and the listed additional implementing partners to restructure and refocus the intervention and implementation of the Fund. Women's political participation and inclusion cannot be achieved only through workshops.

In conclusion, I would like to inform the Council and all Member States that, on paper, it may look as though civil society in South Sudan is included and engaged. The workshops may have many participants listed — 50, 70 or even 100. However, numbers alone are not sufficient to qualify as inclusion and participation. The key to inclusion is joint programming and agenda-setting. We demand a truly principled inclusive and participatory approach to realize meaningful inclusion.

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

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

Mr. Wood (United States of America): I thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Haysom for his sobering briefing. We applaud the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) for its leadership, technical assistance and protection of civilians across South Sudan. We also thank Ms. Lorna for her presentation.

We reaffirm our profound disappointment with the decision of South Sudan's Transitional Government of National Unity to extend the country's transitional period to conserve power in the control of a small elite. South Sudan's leaders have again demonstrated the lack of political will to meet their commitments under the 2018 Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan.

It is essential that the Transitional Government demonstrate, at last, its commitment to the people of South Sudan by implementing the peace agreement during the forthcoming extension period. There must not be another delay. We reiterate that the best way for the people of South Sudan to realize their objectives of political and economic stability is through free, fair and peaceful elections. While the international community stands ready to assist South Sudan towards that end,

UNMISS should not support elections unless and until the Transitional Government dedicates and deploys its own resources — human and capital — to that effort. We urge UNMISS to immediately develop a timeline to guide the Transitional Government in taking the necessary steps to conduct elections in 2026 and bring an end to the transition once and for all.

We call on South Sudan's leaders and parties to engage in urgent dialogue, promote free civic space and seek consensus to resolve any election-related disputes. Furthermore, we call on the Transitional Government of South Sudan to produce a clear and realistic work plan, timeline and budget to implement remaining critical tasks in the peace agreement. Presenting such a work plan is key to restoring confidence among the South Sudanese people and the international community that political leaders are committed to implementing the peace deal's outstanding provisions.

We are particularly concerned by the Transitional Government's continued efforts to limit political opposition, which limits free speech and freedom of association. We note the inter-party dialogue in Juba and the Tumaini initiative mediation effort and reaffirm our support to Kenya for leading that initiative. We call on all South Sudanese leaders — both signatories and non-signatories — to take full advantage of those talks in the interest of creating a sustainable peace.

Violent attacks against humanitarian actors have led to the suspension of operations by some humanitarian agencies and the reduction of life-saving assistance to vulnerable citizens. We condemn all attacks on humanitarian workers. The Transitional Government must prioritize reducing the risks faced by those seeking to help the people of South Sudan.

Transitional Government officials at the national, state and county levels continue to impose illicit fees and demands for resources on UNMISS, diplomatic missions, foreign aid agencies and their implementing partners. Those types of activities create impediments to and delays in the delivery of humanitarian assistance and stall peacekeeping operations. Many of those taxes, fees and other charges run counter to bilateral and multilateral agreements, and they must stop.

That access is even more important, as throughout 2024 we have seen an increase in communal violence. We urgently call upon the Transitional Government to ensure the protection of civilians. We are deeply concerned about the safety and well-being of children

and fear an increase of gender-based violence, including sexual violence, in particular against girls, the continued forced recruitment and use of child soldiers, killing and maiming, abductions and the denial of humanitarian access to children in need. Equally, we share the concern expressed by United Nations representatives about worsening hunger, malnutrition and disease outbreaks in South Sudan, which we expect to be compounded further by heavy rains and associated flooding.

The United States remains committed to the people of South Sudan and to working closely with UNMISS, the transitional Government, Council members and all stakeholders to enable peace and prosperity for the country and the region.

Mrs. Blokar Drobič (Slovenia): I wish to begin by thanking Special Representative of the Secretary-General Haysom for his briefing and Ms. Lorna for her valuable insights.

Slovenia reiterates its steadfast support to the people of South Sudan in their pursuit of lasting peace and stability. While regretting the decision to further extend the transitional period, we urge the Government of South Sudan and all parties that this time be used constructively to fully implement the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan. Steady progress on the electoral road map is essential for a sustainable and democratic future in South Sudan.

Recognizing the precarious economic situation South Sudan faces, exacerbated by, among others, the ongoing conflict in the Sudan, we nevertheless believe that the Government should prioritize adequate funding in support of the Revitalized Agreement's implementation and peace efforts. We strongly urge the Government to make concrete progress, uphold its commitments, ensure transparent preparations of free, fair, credible and inclusive elections and implement security sector reforms. Immediate progress on critical issues, including necessary unified forces deployment, preparation for voter registration and a permanent Constitution, among others, is essential. A clear, strategic road map should be prepared, backed by robust resource mobilization.

Women and youth must have the ability to fully, equally, meaningfully and safely participate in all peace and political processes. Their leadership is extremely valuable, and their voices must be heard in order to build a democratic, inclusive and resilient

future. Through those processes, the root causes of the intercommunal conflicts should be addressed.

The humanitarian crisis in South Sudan has been worsening. Economic stress, resource shortages and intensified violence have left millions in need. The compounding effects of severe climate impacts and spillover from the conflict in the Sudan further heighten acute food insecurity, which is now affecting more than half the population. The arrival of more than 830,000 refugees and returnees from the Sudan has further strained the country's already fragile socioeconomic stability. An immediate and durable ceasefire in the Sudan is therefore imperative. Humanitarian supply routes have been further impacted by extreme weather events, hindering the delivery of essential aid. Critical infrastructure, especially healthcare, is under immense pressure, with reports of a cholera outbreak in Renk county raising additional concerns. Humanitarian efforts are also endangered by the escalation of subnational and intercommunal violence. Safe and unhindered humanitarian access is critical, and we condemn all violence against humanitarian workers. We urge South Sudan's Government to prioritize the safety of humanitarian operations.

Slovenia is especially alarmed by documented cases of child recruitment and sexual and gender-based violence, including conflict-related sexual violence. We call on the Government of South Sudan to step up preventive efforts and protect all members of all communities, in particular women and children. We also call for ensuring accountability for those responsible for human rights abuses and violations of international humanitarian law.

We reaffirm our support for the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) and commend its indispensable role in supporting peace and protecting civilians. We remain deeply concerned about reports of ongoing and widespread violations of the status-of-forces agreement. Persistent violations gravely hinder UNMISS's ability to effectively carry out its mandate. Slovenia urges the Government to fully respect and implement the provisions of the status-of-forces agreement, thereby enabling UNMISS to operate without restrictions, fulfilling its essential role in protecting civilians.

Mr. Hauri (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): I thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Haysom for his briefing. I especially thank

Ms. Merekaje Lorna for her insightful remarks and clear recommendations on quite rightly including women and civil society in this critical phase for the future of South Sudan. I welcome the presence of the Permanent Representatives of South Sudan and Kenya at today's meeting.

We take note of the consensus-based decision of the parties to extend the transition period by two years, and we recognize that the organization of elections is a South Sudanese process. However, given the persistent lack of progress in that regard, we wish to echo the words of the interim Chair of the reconstituted Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission, who said last week that it was necessary to do things differently now. The clock is ticking, and there is no margin for delay.

I would like to emphasize three priorities that will remain central for the next two years.

First, it is imperative that efforts to address humanitarian and protection needs continue. Those needs are increasing, which is deeply worrisome. The country is already heavily impacted by the conflict in the Sudan and by an economic situation that is deteriorating considerably, as we just heard. A significant proportion of the population is seriously affected by food insecurity, which is exacerbated by the adverse impacts of climate change. In that respect, gender-sensitive risk assessment and early-warning systems are essential, in particular for communities at risk of flooding. As demonstrated by the United Nations Satellite Centre and the World Meteorological Organization, during the Council members' visit to Geneva in August, the potential of science and data to support peacekeeping missions such as the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) is immense.

Secondly, it is essential to address the persistent insecurity in the country. Widespread violence and attacks against civilians continue, in particular at the subnational level, as reported by the UNMISS Human Rights Division. That is extremely worrisome, in particular in the light of reports of sexual violence and abductions. All parties must respect international humanitarian law and human rights. In that context, we welcome the renewal of the joint action plan for the armed forces to combat conflict-related sexual violence and call for its effective implementation. We also call on all parties to strengthen the protection of humanitarian personnel, including national and locally recruited staff. South Sudan remains one of the most

dangerous countries for them. To that end, we recall the obligations under international humanitarian law, reiterated by resolution 2730 (2024), the implementation of which will be discussed in the Council at the end of the month.

Thirdly, it is imperative to achieve rapid and tangible results on the outstanding provisions of the peace agreement. That requires political will, constructive dialogue and a realistic work plan, with timelines and indications on resource mobilization. The international community must be able to recognize progress early on in order to make decisions about its continued support, including financial support. Furthermore, in order to strengthen the trust of the South Sudanese population as a whole in the extension of the transition, we stress once again that a free and safe civic and political space and the participation of women and youth, including as voters, candidates and observers in future elections, are essential. All forms of gender-based harassment and threats must be halted and prosecuted.

I would like to reiterate our full support for UNMISS and the trilateral task force, the continued work and support of which for South Sudan on this complex path will remain essential and indispensable over the next two years. We also reaffirm Switzerland's firm commitment to the Government and the people of South Sudan in achieving lasting peace.

Mr. Dai Bing (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank Special Representative Nicholas Haysom for his briefing. I also listened to the statement by the representative of civil society. I welcome the presence of the representatives of South Sudan and Kenya at today's meeting.

In connection with the report of the Secretary-General's (S/2024/776), I would like to make the following points.

First, we must continue to support South Sudan in advancing the political process. China has taken note of the decision of the signatories to the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan to extend the transition period by two additional years and reschedule the general elections to December 2026. It should be noted that, as the youngest member of the United Nations, South Sudan, in the face of its myriad internal and external challenges, has actively implemented the Revitalized Agreement, enacted election-related laws, established specialized national institutions and accelerated the

deployment of unified forces, thereby making great efforts to promote the political transition, which deserves full recognition. China encourages the signatories to the Revitalized Agreement to accelerate the implementation of various tasks in the spirit of solidarity and cooperation and steadily push forward the political process so as to consolidate the hard-won gains of peaceful development. We support the trilateral mechanism of the African Union, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development and the United Nations in continuing to work closely with the Government of South Sudan and providing additional assistance to the political process. It should be emphasized that the general elections are part of the internal affairs of South Sudan. The international community should fully respect South Sudan's sovereignty and ownership, maintain the necessary level of patience, endeavour to provide constructive support and avoid imposing external solutions, especially through unwarranted interference.

Secondly, we must continue to support South Sudan in maintaining peace and stability. Currently, the security situation in South Sudan still faces many challenges, with the sporadic eruption of intercommunal violence as a result of the competition for agricultural and pastoral resources. The conflict in the Sudan has led to an influx of refugees, which has exacerbated intercommunal tensions. We support the Government of South Sudan in promoting dialogue and consultation among the relevant tribal communities on disputes over agricultural and pastoral resources with a view to resolving conflicts and achieving peaceful coexistence. China supports the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) in focusing on its primary responsibility for peacekeeping and helping the Government of South Sudan strengthen its security capacity and enhance its ability to independently protect civilians. The Security Council should listen to the strong voices of South Sudan and other African countries and adjust or lift inappropriate sanctions in a timely manner.

Thirdly, we must continue to support South Sudan in developing its economy and improving people's livelihoods. The industrial structure of South Sudan is relatively homogeneous, and its ability to withstand risks is weak. As a result of the conflict in the Sudan, South Sudan's oil exports have decreased, government revenues have plummeted and food insecurity has become an extremely salient problem. In addition, the economy of South Sudan has suffered from raging

floods and devastating epidemics. We appreciate the close cooperation between UNMISS and the United Nations country team in providing relief to the affected population and carrying out quick-impact livelihood projects to alleviate the humanitarian situation. The international community should not only expedite filling funding gaps for humanitarian response but also ramp up support in such areas as industry, agriculture, healthcare, education and training in order to help diversify the economy of South Sudan and realize independent and sustainable development as soon as possible.

China attaches great importance to the difficulties faced by South Sudan and has actively provided assistance to the best of its ability. In recent years, China has implemented a number of infrastructure projects in South Sudan, such as hospitals and bridges, and has provided several shipments of humanitarian supplies. As a major troop-contributing country to UNMISS, China will continue to take practical actions to support the effective performance of UNMISS under the leadership of Mr. Haysom in order to contribute to the peace, stability, prosperity and development of South Sudan.

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

We take note of the comprehensive report of the Secretary-General (S/2024/776) on the situation in South Sudan and the updates on the implementation of the mandate of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS). We thank Mr. Nicholas Haysom, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan, for his informative briefing, and we take note of the information provided by Ms. Merekaje Lorna, Secretary-General of the South Sudan Democratic Engagement, Monitoring and Observation Programme. We welcome the participation of the representatives of South Sudan and Kenya at this meeting.

The A3+ commends the leadership of the Government of South Sudan for its sustained effort in the implementation of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan, as part of its efforts to consolidate the gains for durable peace and stability in the country. The

strides made by the Government are illustrated by the decision of the Cabinet to establish the reconstituted Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission. The adoption of the Truth, Reconciliation and Healing Bill and the Compensation and Reparations Authority Bill, as well as the ratification of the International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism, are all steps in the right direction. The A3+ looks forward to the ratification of that local legislation and its subsequent implementation. We take note of the consensus decision reached by the relevant parties to the Revitalized Agreement to extend the transition period by two years, with elections rescheduled to be held in February 2027. The A3+ reaffirms the need for renewed and sustained measures to ensure that the new extension is used to deliver an acceptable electoral process that ensures that the democratic aspirations of the South Sudanese people are met in 2027.

In that regard, it is important that appropriate actions be taken during that period to ensure that the key provisions of the Revitalized Agreement, which have the potential to consolidate peace, entrench human rights protections and transform the country, are implemented. The timely achievement of the benchmarks in the transitional implementation period to facilitate the conduct of free, fair and credible elections requires adequate and predictable financing, with sustained political commitment and the dedication of all parties in South Sudan. South Sudan continues to grapple with a significant economic crisis resulting from declining State revenues from oil export disruptions, a dire humanitarian situation, the influx of refugees and returnees and adverse climate events, such as extensive flooding. All those factors have adversely impacted the implementation of the key benchmarks. It is therefore imperative that the international community, including international financial institutions and development partners, continue providing critical logistical and technical support, capacity-building and financial assistance to the Government of South Sudan.

Such support is critical for developing an enabling environment to achieve the key benchmarks within the extended two-year framework. That will allow for the holding of credible elections and ensure that the country does not relapse into another vicious cycle of violence. The A3+ takes this opportunity to commend the efforts of UNMISS, the African Union High Level Ad Hoc Committee for South Sudan, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development

and the Government of Kenya for their continued engagement with non-signatory actors in the collective dialogue to maintain the opportunity for inclusion and confidence-building measures.

The 2024 South Sudan humanitarian response plan, which calls for \$1.8 billion to assist targeted vulnerable people across South Sudan, is a little more than half funded. That is a notable shortfall, given the scale of the humanitarian crisis. Acute food insecurity, floods, other climate shocks, the spread of diseases and the influx of more than 830,000 refugees and returnees from the Sudan have exacerbated the humanitarian crisis across the country. We call on donor partners and the United Nations system to scale up efforts to alleviate the suffering of the South Sudanese people.

On the security front, the A3+ is alarmed by the rising intercommunal violence, which is already forcing internally displaced persons to relocate to neighbouring communities in search of safety. We therefore implore all actors to remain steadfast and committed to the Revitalized Agreement and call on the non-signatory parties to demonstrate their full commitment to the stability of South Sudan. We believe that the successful conduct of elections in South Sudan is principally contingent on providing a suitable security environment in the country in order to ensure the safety and impartial participation of all parties in the political process. We also emphasize the need for concrete action to be taken by the Government and all stakeholders to contain intercommunal and political violence across the country.

Sexual and gender-based violence is reported to be one of the key manifestations of human rights violations against women and girls in South Sudan and remains a critical threat to the protection and well-being of women and girls. Despite the conclusion of the Revitalized Agreement and various efforts by both international and national stakeholders, such violations persist with impunity. The perpetrators of that type of violence must be held accountable for their actions. The A3+ reiterates its support for UNMISS in its efforts to monitor, verify, document and report on incidents of sexual and gender-based violence in South Sudan in order to ensure that the perpetrators are held accountable at the appropriate time in the country's political transition.

In conclusion, we acknowledge the sacrifices and dedication of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, the UNMISS team, the African Union, IGAD,

humanitarian organizations and international partners in their contribution to the pursuit of peace and stability for the people of South Sudan. We reiterate the call to explore all practical and realistic avenues to ensure that the country's peacebuilding and fledgling democratic process remain on course.

Ms. Evstigneeva (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Nicholas Haysom, for the information he provided. We listened to the representative of civil society, Ms. Merekaje Lorna. We welcome the participation of the Permanent Representatives of South Sudan and Kenya in today's meeting.

We have closely studied the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in South Sudan (S/2024/776). We have taken note of the decision of the country's Government to extend the transition period for a further 24 months and postpone the general elections until December 2026. We are convinced that the issues related to elections, including the date and form of voting, are internal matters for South Sudan. We hope that the South Sudanese stakeholders will show determination and political will in fully implementing the provisions of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan and that they will make every effort to strictly adhere to the new timelines. We believe that the international community's support for South Sudan must be consistent, constructive and respectful of the country's sovereignty and that it certainly should not be confined only to criticizing the South Sudanese authorities, whatever decision they take.

We note that, despite all those difficulties, the authorities of South Sudan have in recent years managed to achieve relative stabilization and some progress in State-building and resolving security issues. We trust that the formation of a unified armed force as a guarantor of further progress in the peace process will be carried out at a quicker pace. We believe that requires not only the efforts of the South Sudanese authorities but also contributions on the part of the opposition movements. At the same time, we are convinced that the current sanctions regime against the country hinders the development and consolidation of national security structures. We categorically oppose the use of Security Council sanctions to exert pressure on or interfere in the internal affairs of South Sudan. We believe that the

parameters of the international arms embargo on the country are outdated and call for revision.

We commend the mediation efforts of the African Union and the member States of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development. We note the ongoing negotiation process on the Kenyan platform with the representatives of the South Sudanese opposition groups that have not joined the Revitalized Agreement. We share the concern about the humanitarian situation in South Sudan. It has been aggravated by natural disasters and the strain caused by the significant influx of refugees and returnees into the country, which has severely exacerbated the already difficult situation in the northern states and become a serious challenge for the country as a whole.

Russia has consistently supported the work of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), which has made a significant contribution to stabilizing the situation and further implementing all the provisions of the Revitalized Agreement. We note Juba's work to promote intercommunal dialogue, with the assistance of UNMISS. We firmly condemn any violations of the Revitalized Agreement and any acts of violence against civilians, including the United Nations and humanitarian staff in South Sudan. We hope that the authorities of South Sudan and the Mission's leadership will continue their dialogue on ways to carry out the broad range of tasks facing UNMISS and their constructive engagement to address possible problematic issues, including the use of certain types of infrastructure and logistical facilities in the country.

Mr. Montalvo Sosa (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Mr. Haysom and the representative of civil society, Ms. Lorna, for their briefings. I recognize the presence here today of the Permanent Representatives of South Sudan and Kenya.

Ecuador notes the slow progress on the implementation of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan and the road map for the transition period. The decision to further postpone the elections to December 2026 has raised a series of challenges that must be addressed directly and in good faith by all South Sudanese stakeholders to get the democratic process back on track. The Tumaini initiative, led by Kenya, and the joint efforts of the African Union, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development and the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) to

advance the broadening of dialogues, the definition of the type of elections, the constitution-making process and a security plan for the elections continue to be key elements to making progress on the agreements. Ecuador renews its call for work on expanding civic space, guaranteeing transparent, fair and inclusive elections and strengthening the participation of all segments of the population, including the full, meaningful and safe participation of women. We urge the Government to fulfil its promise of a 35 per cent quota for women in all Government institutions.

Ecuador recognizes the complex challenges that South Sudan faces, including the humanitarian, security and economic challenges, in addition to natural disasters. South Sudan has received approximately 830,000 refugees and returnees as a result of the conflict in the Sudan, which has overburdened the country's already limited response capacities. Floods have complicated the humanitarian assistance operations. With regard to security, intercommunal violence is of particular concern, as we heard from Mr. Haysom. Several reports confirm that South Sudan remains one of the most dangerous countries for humanitarian workers, which is why no attack can go unpunished. We call for safe and unhindered access for humanitarian aid and humanitarian personnel to be guaranteed, in accordance with Security Council resolutions, in particular resolution 2730 (2024). Human rights violations persist in the country, including in the form of attacks against civilians, acts of gender-based violence and sexual violence. The perpetrators of those crimes must face justice. UNMISS has played a crucial role in promoting spaces for dialogue and transitional justice mechanisms, including the implementation of mobile courts and programmes for the mitigation of intercommunal violence. We encourage Special Representative Haysom to pursue his diplomatic efforts towards achieving stability and lasting peace in the country, with the support of UNMISS and United Nations staff, to whom we renew our appreciation for their endeavours.

Ecuador is aware of the challenges that face South Sudan, which became the 193rd Member of the United Nations in 2011 — the year of its independence — and therefore urges the international community not to waver in its support for the stability and development of that young nation. I would like to conclude by quoting the words of the Permanent Representative of South

Sudan, who stated, at the Council's meeting during Ecuador's presidency on 14 December 2023 that

“South Sudan is committed to addressing the root causes of conflict, promoting gender equality and creating sustainable peace so that all citizens can live free from fear and violence as we strive for a future marked by justice, liberty and prosperity” (*S/PV.9507, p.17*).

We trust that will come to pass and that South Sudan's leaders will have the foresight to fulfil that aspiration of the people of South Sudan.

Mr. Dharmadhikari (France) (*spoke in French*): I would like to begin by thanking Special Representative of the Secretary-General Mr. Haysom and Ms. Lorna for their briefings.

I would like to make three points.

First, France regrets that the elections were not held as planned. We therefore call on the Southern Sudanese authorities to assume their responsibilities and create the necessary conditions that, through dialogue, will allow peaceful, transparent and inclusive elections to be held as soon as possible. That is the optimal way of safeguarding the main achievements of the 2018 Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan, namely, the end to the civil war and the return to peace. France underscores the importance of involving all of civil society in dialogue efforts and in the preparations for and the holding of free, inclusive and transparent elections. France calls for the full, equal and meaningful participation of women in that process to be promoted.

Secondly, France encourages South Sudan to continue its cooperation with the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), which plays a pivotal stabilizing role in the country. That cooperation has improved in recent years, which is something that we welcome and that must be preserved. UNMISS must be able to continue implementing its mandate in full. It is essential that all parties honour their undertakings under the status-of-forces agreement and work in close cooperation. France will continue to support United Nations efforts in South Sudan and in that regard commends the endeavours of Mr. Nicolas Haysom, who is here with us today.

Thirdly and lastly, France is concerned about the repercussions for South Sudan of the conflict in the Sudan. The influx of people returning from the Sudan

and Sudanese refugees is compounding an already difficult humanitarian situation and a fragile economy. We call on the South Sudanese authorities to do their utmost to facilitate the delivery of the international humanitarian response. In that connection, we support the work of humanitarian organizations that are providing assistance to displaced people and host communities, in particular the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

France calls on the parties to the conflict in the Sudan to conclude a ceasefire and engage in an inclusive dialogue with a view to restoring lasting peace. At stake are not only the security and future of the people of the Sudan but also the security and future of the people of South Sudan and of other countries in the region.

Mr. Mikanagi (Japan): I thank Mr. Haysom and Ms. Lorna for their insightful briefings, and I also welcome the participation of the Permanent Representatives of South Sudan and Kenya in today's meeting.

At the outset, Japan would like to express its appreciation for the efforts of all United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) personnel in protecting civilians, mitigating violence and supporting the peace process in a challenging environment. Japan is committed to our continued deployment of staffing officers to UNMISS. Japan also appreciates the continuous efforts made by UNMISS, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development and the African Union under the trilateral configuration and various other initiatives.

I would like to make three points.

First, Japan notes the decision in September by the parties to the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan to extend the transition period for a further two years. Japan is concerned about the lack of progress following that decision and urges the parties not to relent in their efforts but to renew their commitment and show a clear timetable for implementing the Revitalized Agreement. We expect the current extension to be the last one before free, fair and credible elections are held. Japan also calls for the transitional Government to exercise the appropriate fiscal and monetary discipline so that it can allocate the necessary resources to the completion of outstanding tasks within the two-year extension period.

Secondly, Japan remains gravely concerned about the deteriorating humanitarian situation. Needs are increasing due to the influx of refugees and returnees from the Sudan, the worsening economic situation and the impact of the widespread flooding. However, the provision of assistance has been restricted by factors such as the fragile infrastructure and the dangerous environment in which humanitarian workers are operating. While welcoming the efforts of the transitional Government to allocate budgetary resources to address the flooding, Japan expects their proper implementation and encourages the Government to take further steps to improve humanitarian access, with the support of UNMISS and the United Nations country team. Japan also stresses the importance of the safety of United Nations and non-United Nations humanitarian workers.

Thirdly, Japan is concerned about the continuing insecurity, which has a negative impact on all aspects of humanitarian assistance and economic activity. While noting with satisfaction that the necessary unified forces have been partly deployed, Japan calls for the immediate formation and further deployment of the remaining part of those forces.

In conclusion, Japan reiterates its strong commitment to the people of South Sudan and to their aspiration for peace and prosperity through completion of the process set out in the Revitalized Agreement.

Mr. Cho (Republic of Korea): I would like to thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Haysom for his briefing and Ms. Lorna for her remarks, which are particularly valuable as we convene in this women and peace and security-focused setting. I welcome the participation of the representatives of Kenya and South Sudan.

At the outset, we welcome the decision to resume the Tumaini initiative following yesterday's meeting between President Ruto and President Salva Kiir Mayardit. However, we note with deep concern the recent decision to extend the transition period yet again and postpone the elections for two years. While we fully respect the country's sovereignty in determining the modalities and timeline for elections, we emphasize the need for renewed political commitment from all parties to ensure that there is no additional extension to the transitional period.

In that regard, I would like to highlight three points.

First, we strongly urge all South Sudanese parties to use the critical two-year extension period to fully prepare and meet the requirements for free, fair, credible and peaceful elections. All parties should engage in continued dialogue with a sense of urgency and take immediate steps to implement the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan. A clear timeline should be set up and sufficient resources must be allocated to ensure concrete progress. More important than the election itself is achieving a democratic and inclusive transition, which requires a secure political and civic space that allows for meaningful participation, including the participation of women and young people. In that regard, we welcome UNMISS efforts to promote women's participation in the peace process and the recent launch of a project by the Peacebuilding Fund to strengthen women's role within the security sector. However, we are concerned by the National Security Act (Amendment) Bill and underscore the need for it to align with international human rights standards, while fully safeguarding the freedom of expression.

Secondly, we encourage all stakeholders to address the ongoing instability in South Sudan's security situation, including the persistent subnational violence that continues to significantly affect civilians across South Sudan. The situation is compounded by delays in transitional security arrangements, resource scarcity owing to climate change and the spillover of the Sudan conflict into border regions. In that regard, we call on South Sudan to expedite the deployment of the necessary unified forces in order to address security challenges and ensure effective protection for civilians. Furthermore, we are particularly alarmed by the upsurge in sexual and gender-based violence, which disproportionately affects women and girls. We support UNMISS in its continued efforts to protect civilians and facilitate intercommunal dialogues and call for strengthened action to prevent and respond to sexual violence.

Thirdly, we remain deeply concerned about the economic and humanitarian situation and call for increased efforts to address the protracted crisis. While we commend the collaborative efforts between UNMISS and South Sudanese officials in flood preparedness, it is important that South Sudan prioritize funding for essential services and social safety net programmes in order to better meet the basic needs of its people and ensure transparent resource allocation. We also

highlight the need for UNMISS and international partners to scale up support to South Sudan, focusing not only on emergency humanitarian aid but also on mid- to long-term development efforts. For our part, Korea has been supporting both development and humanitarian assistance in South Sudan through the community engagement programme of its engineering battalion, known as Hanbit, deployed to UNMISS, and also through partnerships with the International Committee of the Red Cross, UNICEF, the World Food Programme and UN-Women, focusing on such areas as food security, health and improving resilience. In addition, protecting the safety of all humanitarian aid workers remains imperative. We reiterate our call for all parties to ensure safe, rapid and unhindered humanitarian access and delivery.

All parties must recognize their responsibility for addressing the current challenges and recommit to the people of South Sudan. Now more than ever, strengthened political will is crucial to ensure a transparent and peaceful transition towards sustainable stability.

Mr. Camilleri (Malta): I would like to thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Haysom and Ms. Lorna for their briefings. We also welcome the participation of the Permanent Representatives of South Sudan and Kenya in this meeting.

Malta regrets that the extension of South Sudan's transitional period was prompted by the lack of progress in meeting the benchmarks for free, fair, peaceful and inclusive elections. A commitment to a credible timeline for elections in 2026, the allocation of sufficient funds for electoral institutions and the political will to foster conditions that are conducive to a safe and inclusive civic space are urgently needed. Malta will be supportive of all efforts to that end. We also encourage dialogue to continue with both signatories and non-signatories of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan.

South Sudanese women have a critical role to play, particularly in the electoral process. We reiterate our call for their full, equal, meaningful and safe participation, and we urge the authorities to take steps to meet the 35 per cent quota. We commend the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) for maintaining support for the operationalization of the women and peace and security agenda. Malta strongly encourages the continued participation of women-led organizations in peace processes, constitutional

and electoral governance reforms and accountability efforts. We condemn all threats and reprisals against human rights defenders and civil society activists, especially those against women.

Malta remains deeply concerned by the intercommunal violence, especially violence led by armed youth. The timely consolidation and deployment of the necessary unified forces is necessary in order to ensure a secure environment, free from violence and conducive to elections.

We strongly deplore all grave violations committed against children, especially incidents of conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence. The military use of schools is unacceptable. We welcome the recently held National Conference on the Protection of Children against Recruitment and Use, and we strongly encourage further awareness-raising and advocacy for accountability. The recommendation to establish a child protection desk within the presidential office is a step in the right direction.

We commend recent efforts to address sexual and gender-based violence, including through the continued use of mobile courts and the free legal representation and psychosocial support offered to survivors. We welcome the renewal of the Action Plan for the Armed Forces on Addressing Conflict-related Sexual Violence in South Sudan, and we call for the timely nomination by the South Sudan People's Defence Forces of the members of the Joint Implementation Committee in order to ensure its full operationalization.

South Sudan remains one of the most dangerous environments for humanitarian workers. We condemn all threats to humanitarian workers and all violations of international humanitarian law. Perpetrators must be held accountable. Those conditions add to a dire humanitarian situation in a country affected by flooding.

We welcome the support of UNMISS for the authorities to jointly map high ground for self-relocation from flooding, as well as the work of the United Nations country team, led by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, to support the preparation of the national flood preparedness and response plan and organize peace dialogues between communities at risk.

The disposal of suspected landmines and explosive ordnance by the Mine Action Service of the United Nations, including in support of the emergency flood

response, continues to be a critical tool for ensuring civilian protection. The influx of people from the Sudan is also exacerbating those challenges, as we just heard from Special Representative of the Secretary-General Haysom.

In conclusion, a positive conclusion of the transitional period in South Sudan remains indispensable for the country's progress to peace and prosperity. Malta calls on all regional and international partners to support South Sudan in reaching that critical goal. There is no time to lose.

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

I would like to thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Haysom and Ms. Merekaje Lorna for briefing us today. I also welcome the participation of the representatives of South Sudan and Kenya in our meeting.

South Sudan is at a crossroads. We regret the lack of political will that led to the election delay, prolonging instability for a population already suffering from multiple crises. For South Sudan to overcome the serious challenges it faces, its leaders should demonstrate their determination to deliver on the agreements to which they have committed.

I will make three broad points.

First, we urge the Government to publish a credible timetable for election preparations. An important first step is the commencement of voter registration. The participation of women in decision-making and all electoral processes should be prioritized, as highlighted by the women and peace and security shared commitment signatories at our press stake-out for this meeting. We thank the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) for its work on building capacity and capability for South Sudan's electoral institutions. We call on the Government to match those efforts and provide funding for such bodies. We again urge a review of the National Security Service Act, which allows arrests to be made without a warrant and threatens freedom of speech. We also call on the Government to re-engage in good faith with the Kenyan-led Tumaini initiative in order to foster an inclusive peace.

Secondly, we underscore the importance of enabling UNMISS to fulfil its mandate, including on the protection of civilians. This year has seen an alarming increase in violent conflict incidents, including

alarming instances of conflict-related sexual violence. Survivors deserve to see justice, and perpetrators must be held to account. We note that UNMISS peacekeepers are subject to increasing obstruction of access by the Government and the South Sudan People's Defence Forces. We call on the Government to ensure all obstructions on the work of UNMISS are lifted.

Thirdly, the humanitarian situation also demands urgent attention, with 9 million people in need of assistance. The situation has been made worse by the influx of over 850,000 refugees and returnees from the Sudan. We welcome the assistance South Sudan has provided to those fleeing conflict. We also note the challenges posed by recent outbreaks of infectious diseases such as cholera and the impacts of climate change through extreme flooding, which continue to exacerbate the humanitarian situation, particularly for women and girls.

In conclusion, it is imperative that the next two years deliver real progress for South Sudan. As the powerful briefing from Ms. Lorna made clear, women's meaningful participation is integral to achieving that.

I resume my functions as President of the Council.

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

Mrs. Adeng (South Sudan): It is with great honour that I address the Council today on the ongoing efforts of and challenges facing South Sudan. I would like to extend our gratitude to Special Representative Nicholas Haysom and the team of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) for their support. I would also like to extend our gratitude to the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report on South Sudan (S/2024/776). I would like to acknowledge the presence of my colleague the Permanent Representative of Kenya and thank him for being here. I would also like to acknowledge Ms. Merekaje Lorna for her statement and briefing. Such opportunities are what South Sudan fought all these years for — to have South Sudanese citizens voice their opinion and for the Government to listen to those opinions. I therefore pray that we will continue to work together to make sure that we achieve what South Sudan was made for.

The decision to extend the transition period was a tough decision made in the interest of maintaining peace and ensuring a stable foundation for free, fair and credible elections. The delay was necessary due

to financial constraints and logistical challenges. Despite those setbacks, we are still committed to using this extended period to address those challenges. We welcome the call by the African Union, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), UNMISS and members of the Security Council to redouble our efforts and are actively engaging with electoral and security institutions to establish a realistic election time frame and ensure proper preparations.

We also want to assure our international partners that we are focused on securing sufficient funding to implement the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan. The Government has directed relevant bodies to prioritize budget allocations to facilitate voter registration, constitution-making and the deployment of the necessary unified forces. Those steps are essential for creating the conditions required for peaceful elections at the end of the transition period. We recognize that significant work is still needed, which will require continued dedication and resources.

The Government of South Sudan remains committed to the implementation of the Revitalized Agreement. We have taken proactive measures, including recent legislative actions, to strengthen institutions that uphold democratic values, transparency and accountability. Moreover, we are working to build a secure environment in which all political parties can participate freely in the political process.

South Sudan also acknowledges the importance of fostering regional cooperation and partnerships with our neighbours and international allies, as those relationships are essential for maintaining peace and stability, both domestically and across the region. In pursuit of those goals, President Salva Kiir Mayardit has actively engaged with regional leaders. We believe that those dialogues underscore South Sudan's commitment to supporting peace, which in turn contributes to peace across the region. President Salva Kiir's meetings provided valuable opportunities to discuss the implementation of the Revitalized Agreement, the Tumaini initiative and regional stability. Those engagements reflect our dedication to fostering a cohesive regional approach to peace and development. The Government of South Sudan remains dedicated to promoting regional peace and stability, not only for the benefit of our own citizens but also as part of a broader commitment to the prosperity of Africa. We also look

forward to continued collaboration with our neighbours and international partners to address shared challenges.

South Sudan recognizes the importance of the Tumaini initiative and the positive intention of that additional platform to promote dialogue. At the same time, we understand the concerns raised by stakeholders with regard to its alignment with the Revitalized Agreement. The Government of South Sudan has taken proactive steps to clarify the Tumaini initiative's role as a complement to and not a replacement for the Revitalized Agreement. We appreciate the participation of key mediators, including IGAD and representatives of the African Union, in facilitating discussions to align those initiatives with the primary goals of our national peace process. Yesterday Mr. William Ruto, President of Kenya, honouring an invitation from President Salva Kiir Mayardit, concluded that the mediation team would reconvene and resolve outstanding issues within two weeks.

South Sudan appreciates the members of the Security Council and the international community who continue to stand in solidarity with us and respect our national decisions. We urge all stakeholders to remain committed to peace, and we invite constructive dialogue with those who are hesitant to join the process. We are confident that, with collective efforts, we can lay the groundwork for a peaceful and democratic future for South Sudan. UNMISS continues to play an invaluable role in supporting peacebuilding and security efforts. We are grateful for its mandate, which is crucial for supporting the peace process. The Government of South Sudan looks forward to continued collaboration with UNMISS as we work together to address the challenges on the ground. We call upon the international community to stand with us as we seek support in areas in which we continue to face obstacles, especially with regard to establishing electoral mechanisms, enhancing security and facilitating humanitarian assistance. The Council's solidarity and commitment will be instrumental in helping South Sudan realize its aspirations for a peaceful and democratic future.

We are also advancing our legislative reforms. As I mentioned earlier, we have adopted bills related to fiscal management, legislative justice and institutional alignment with international standards. Key adopted bills include the National Bureau of Statistics Act, the Anti-Money Laundering and Counter-Terrorist Financing Act and the Public Procurement and Disposal of Assets Act. Those laws enhance financial

transparency and are crucial to economic stability. Notably, the Commission for Truth, Reconciliation and Healing Bill and the Compensation and Reparation Authority Bill underscore our commitment to justice, reconciliation and victim support. South Sudan also reaffirms its dedication to global security through the recent ratification of the International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism. With regard to the National Security Act, we acknowledge concerns about the National Security Service's powers. While enacted with due consultations, we remain open to ensuring that the framework balances national needs with citizens' rights. In line with our commitment to international standards, South Sudan made five pledges to end statelessness at the high-level segment of the General Assembly on statelessness held in October 2023, including by acceding to the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness. We are pleased to announce that South Sudan has now deposited its instruments of ratification and is dedicated to implementing those commitments.

South Sudan acknowledges serious economic challenges, including inflation, currency volatility and reduced oil revenue due to pipeline disruptions. Those issues have worsened living costs, affecting vulnerable groups. We are taking proactive steps, including through interventions by the Bank of South Sudan to stabilize exchange rates, and are also improving transparency in oil revenue management and working with partners to create more resilient safety nets. South Sudan is also concerned by the current humanitarian crisis, which was mentioned several times in this Chamber. We will continue to seek as much support as possible in that regard. We are also facing a number of outbreaks, including outbreaks of cholera, Hepatitis E and Mpox.

In conclusion, South Sudan reaffirms its commitment to achieving sustainable peace and stability through the Revitalized Agreement. While the road ahead may be challenging, we are resolute in our journey towards a united, peaceful and democratic South Sudan. We ask for the Council's continued support, encouragement and constructive engagement as we work towards those goals.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Kenya.

Mr. Lokaale (Kenya): I would like to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your country's assumption of

the presidency of the Security Council for the month of October. My delegation looks forward to working with you, Sir, and other members of the Council to address the issues affecting our world today. I would also like to thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Nicholas Haysom and his team from the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) for the comprehensive briefing, as well as to thank Ms. Lorna for her briefing. UNMISS and the United Nations agencies based in South Sudan have been a dependable partner of the people of South Sudan in their journey towards a peaceful, stable and prosperous society. They deserve to be commended and supported.

As a country in the same region, Kenya commends the Revitalized Transitional Government of National Unity of South Sudan for its efforts to build an inclusive nation. Since the Government's establishment in 2018, major milestones have been achieved in an effort to address the security and development challenges facing the country, as highlighted by the Secretary-General in his report (S/2024/776) and by the Special Representative in his briefing.

Where challenges have persisted or new ones have emerged, Kenya witnessed the desire and determination of the Government and the people of South Sudan to seek solutions to those challenges. We have seen that with the implementation of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan of 2018. We have seen it in the actions taken by the leadership of South Sudan to reach out to regional leaders in order to help reconcile them with opposition leaders. And we have seen it in the generosity of the people of South Sudan in hosting persons displaced by conflicts in neighbouring countries.

When faced with conflicts of a scale and magnitude such as those that we are witnessing across our world today, the temptation to shift the focus away from older situations is strong. The temptation to shrug our shoulders and look the other way is even stronger. But that should not happen in South Sudan. We cannot afford to risk regression when there is evidence of so much positive change. We cannot grow weary when South Sudan is proudly taking its place among the community of nations in helping us to shoulder some

of the burdens of conflicts within the region. We must therefore support the people of South Sudan to make the final leap. We must encourage them to turn the corner towards lasting peace, stability and development.

My own country is doing its part in that regard. The President of the Republic of Kenya, Mr. William Ruto, has been hosting mediation talks between the Government of South Sudan and the opposition groups under the auspices of the Tumaini initiative. It must be noted that the Tumaini initiative is not a replacement for the Revitalized Agreement but a complementary effort to it. Since its launch in Nairobi by East African Heads of State and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) in May, the Tumaini initiative has recorded tremendous progress, and the parties are currently on the verge of signing various protocols. As other speakers mentioned, President Ruto was in South Sudan yesterday for consultations with the President of South Sudan and other political leaders. Following that meeting, the parties agreed to resume talks in Nairobi and make rapid progress within the next two weeks. Together with other Member States from the region, IGAD and the African Union, Kenya will seek partnerships and solidarity with members of the Council, and indeed the rest of the international community, in order to implement both the Revitalized Agreement and the Tumaini protocols so that South Sudan can hold its elections without undue delay.

Finally, we hope that all of us will support South Sudan constructively to achieve the conditions, such as the unification of its security forces and others, that will eventually free it from measures such as the arms embargo and sanctions regime. Although they are often put in place with good intentions, measures such as the arms embargo have the tendency to undermine a country's ability to secure all parts of its territory, ensure the safety of humanitarian workers and bring intercommunal conflicts — as referenced by previous speakers here today — under control. We therefore urge that we all act in solidarity to support and work with the people of South Sudan in order to ensure that it becomes and continues to be a responsible member of the global community.

The meeting rose at 11.25 a.m.