United Nations S/PV.7982

Security Council

Seventy-second year

Provisional

7982nd meeting
Wednesday, 21 June 2017, 3.40 p.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Llorentty Solíz	(Bolivia (Plurinational State of))
Members:	China	Mr. Zhang Dianbin
	Egypt	Mr. Moustafa
	Ethiopia	Mr. Alemu
	France	Mrs. Gueguen
	Italy	Mr. Cardi
	Japan	Mr. Bessho
	Kazakhstan	Mr. Tumysh
	Russian Federation	Mr. Iliichev
	Senegal	Mr. Barro
	Sweden	Mr. Skau
	Ukraine	Mr. Vitrenko
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Hickey
	United States of America	Ms. Sison
	Uruguay	Mrs. Carrión

Agenda

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

Report of the Secretary-General on South Sudan (covering the period from 2 March to 1 June 2017) (S/2017/505)

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17-17895 (E)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.40 p.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 South Sudan (covering the period from 2 March to 1 June 2017) (S/2017/505)

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

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Jean-Pierre Lacroix, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, and Mr. Nicholas Haysom, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Sudan and South Sudan, to participate in this meeting.

Mr. Haysom is participating in today's meeting via video-teleconference from Geneva.

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/2017/505, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on South Sudan covering the period from 2 March to 1 June 2017.

I now give the floor to Mr. Lacroix.

Mr. Lacroix: I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for this opportunity to brief the Security Council on the Secretary-General's 90-day report (S/2017/505) on the situation in South Sudan.

I should state at the outset that the people of South Sudan remain desperate for peace. More than half of the country requires food aid, despite its tremendous potential for food production. One third of the population is displaced. Half of those displaced are refugees, who have been arriving in Uganda at a rate of 50,000 for each month of this year. Others have fled to the Sudan in record numbers, and Kenya and Ethiopia are also hosting thousands of South Sudanese.

We must not lose sight of the fact that this tragedy is man-made. It is neither a meteorological phenomenon nor the result of traditional enmities between local communities. It is the result of decisions by the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) in Government, the SPLA in Opposition and various other entities to pursue and sustain armed conflict in order to achieve political goals. Extreme violence continues to create ever deeper divisions among the people of South Sudan and make it even more difficult for us to put the country back on a path to peace and development. Hostilities have persisted well after the ceasefire commitment made by President Salva Kiir and continue to unfold in various parts of the country. In the North, the SPLA has dislodged Opposition forces from their strongholds on the west bank of the Nile River. In the East, it has taken towns in northern Greater Jonglei. In the west, clashes between Government and Opposition forces around Wau have forced 22,000 people to take refuge with the Mission. And fighting in the South has left towns in the Equatorias with as little as 10 per cent of their previous populations.

In the midst of those hostilities, displacements and human rights abuses, the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) has been doing its utmost to protect civilians. Our peacekeepers persevere in getting through checkpoints to reach vulnerable populations even when their patrols are threatened and sometimes shot at. Their proactive approach directly supports the South Sudanese people, giving them confidence that we are there to protect them, enabling us to report human rights abuses, and helping us to support our humanitarian partners in ensuring that assistance goes to those who need it most.

In the meantime, we continue to press forward with the deployment of the Regional Protection Force (RPF). The advance parties of the RPF vanguard units have begun arriving, including those of the engineering and high-readiness companies. The main bodies of both contingents are on track to arrive by late July. Subject to cargo readiness, security clearances and final tax exemptions from the Government, the expected time for the Ethiopian advance infantry company to begin to deploy is July at the earliest. The commencement of the Kenyan troops' deployment remains subject to completion of the ongoing repatriation of Kenya's contingent-owned equipment from Wau and its subsequent refurbishment to meet the needs of its RPF contribution.

Concerning the Government's allocation of the required second plot of land for the northern base site of the RPF, the Government informed UNMISS,

in a letter dated 11 April, that it had allocated a site approximately 12 kilometres north of central Juba. On 19 April, an UNMISS integrated team, accompanied by community leaders and country and local Government representatives, visited the site to assess its suitability. The Mission has a number of reservations about the operational suitability and accessibility of the site, but we continue to explore options for its use in conjunction with existing bases at Tomping and United Nations House, in order to ensure that the land issue does not further delay the RPF's deployment, since that is still an important enabler for the political process in South Sudan.

While we welcome the commitments made by President Salva Kiir at the swearing-in of the National Dialogue Steering Committee, we note with concern that the unilateral ceasefire he announced has so far not materialized. With regard to his pledge to release political prisoners, I should point out to the Council that, while one United Nations staff member was recently released, two others have been held for two years without being charged and another has recently been detained in Rumbek. We must judge the President's commitments by his actions. And, critically, the Ceasefire and Transitional Security Arrangements Monitoring Mechanism should finally be granted full freedom of movement to monitor and verify ceasefire violations. UNMISS and the Monitoring Mechanism have been dealing with far too many obstructions of their movements, making their work extremely challenging and in some cases impossible.

We are encouraged by the communiqué of 13 June from the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), which included a number of concrete steps aimed at resuscitating the South Sudan political process. The proposed high-level revitalization forum to be convened by the IGAD Council of Ministers and the meeting of the chiefs of defence staff of the RPF are welcome initiatives that we hope to see happen soon. Allow me to register our strong support for IGAD and regional partners as they move forward to actualize the various initiatives spelled out in the communiqué. The Mission and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations are ready to provide whatever support may be required to that end.

I believe it important to take this opportunity to emphasize our views on recent references to the prospect of elections in South Sudan. Under the 2015 peace agreement, elections are to be held towards the end of the transitional period, which was originally estimated to be in 2018. We must be clear that if the current situation of armed conflict, political paralysis, massive displacement, humanitarian and protection needs, and ongoing human rights abuses were to persist, then credible, free and fair elections will not be possible in South Sudan. Elections are the ultimate democratic process and would require pervasive stability and an environment in which people can freely express their political opinions.They would also require that the transitional institutions established by the peace agreement be genuinely inclusive of all groups and political persuasions, as envisaged in the agreement.

Operative paragraph 34 of resolution 2327 (2016) requested that the Secretary-General provide the Council with a review of the progress made by the parties in ceasing hostilities, returning to the path of dialogue and achieving inclusiveness within the Government, as well as recommend any relevant adjustments to the UNMISS mandate. In the light of the lack of real progress in these key areas and the continuation of the political and security crisis that plagues South Sudan, we cannot recommend any adjustments to the Mission's current mandate. The persistence of significant military operations on the ground, the lack of dialogue between the parties and the absence of authentic inclusivity within the governmental structures in South Sudan mean, unfortunately, that UNMISS's mandate, as currently structured under resolution 2327 (2016), remains relevant and suited to purpose; this includes the role of the Regional Protection Force in enhancing security and the protection of civilians in the capital. Should a genuine cessation of hostilities take hold, buttressed by the full implementation of the peace agreement, revisiting the UNMISS mandate and the tasks of the Regional Protection Force would be warranted.

In conclusion, let me emphasize that the Secretariat is continuing to make every effort to take forward the core tasks of its mandate, including with respect to expediting the deployment of the RPF. Meanwhile, although the President declared a unilateral ceasefire and the launch of the national dialogue on 22 May, it remains to be seen whether these developments will yield any tangible improvement in the security or humanitarian situation on the ground. We cannot lose sight of the fact that neither the RPF nor UNMISS is a panacea for this crisis. Only a truly inclusive political process and the genuine political will of the

key protagonists to end the conflict and implement the Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan will bring peace to this country.

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

I now give the floor to Mr. Haysom.

Mr. Haysom: I wish to thank you, Mr. President, for this opportunity to brief the Council on South Sudan. My remarks build on the briefing provided by Under-Secretary-General Lacroix and cover developments specific to the resumption of a political process in South Sudan.

My starting point is the concluding observation of Under-Secretary-General Lacroix: that only a truly inclusive political process and the political will to implement the peace agreement will bring peace to war-torn South Sudan.

It is important to define what is meant by an inclusive political process in South Sudan. Simply put, a genuine and inclusive political process at the least must involve the combatants and those political leaders with whom combatants and communities are aligned, as well as the signatories to the 2015 peace agreement. At the moment, no clear, inclusive political process is in sight. There is still the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD)-sponsored peace agreement signed in 2015, to which the United Nations is a witness. Even though its current status is contested, it remains the only valid document signed by the major stakeholders. Though originally agreed with reservations by the Government, there is now broad understanding that the text is mostly and widely supported and should be adjusted only to the extent necessary to reflect new realities, including in respect of the inclusivity requirement.

The expulsion of Riek Machar — a key signatory — from South Sudan and his procedurally contested replacement by General Taban Deng has added a particular difficulty to establishing such a process: the demand for an inclusive process contradicts the narrative that First Vice-President Deng represents and will incorporate all opposition groups into the Government construct. The Government has argued that Mr. Deng's participation in the Government meets the inclusivity requirement set out in the peace agreement, and, following this logic, the Government has been required to pacify the remaining opposition-held areas and has consistently proposed alternatives to an inclusive political process.

However, we sense that this opposition may be softening. In the meantime, the pacification strategy has allowed the opposition to claim that they are in favour of peace, while justifying their military posture as protecting themselves against a Government offensive. Since July the conflict has spread throughout the country, and new actors, armed and unarmed, have emerged. All only pay lip service to the proposition that there can be no military solution to this conflict.

As noted by Under-Secretary-General Lacroix, the mere introduction of the Regional Protection Force cannot substitute for a political solution, although it would surely contribute to an enabling environment for a peace process.

Questions have arisen as to whether the national dialogue could substitute for an inclusive political process. A genuinely inclusive and credible national dialogue would, no doubt, be an important nation-building exercise in and of itself. In South Sudan, it would need to be anchored in a peace process and not be offered as a substitute for such a process. It would have to be preceded by a political process that creates the security and political environment necessary for an inclusive and credible dialogue.

The demand for the opposition to lay down its weapons in order to participate in the national dialogue is interpreted as a call to surrender, without any assurance that the underlying grievances will be addressed. Nonetheless, it is most encouraging that the steering committee of the national dialogue only yesterday announced its intention to consult opposition groups outside the country, including Mr. Riek Machar.

It seems that other political alternatives have been offered, such as trusteeship, early elections and a return to the status quo ante, that are deemed politically unfeasible. This realization, coupled with the downward trajectory of South Sudan, has now led to an increasingly broad understanding among South Sudanese and regional and international players that there is no way around an inclusive political process.

To that end, and following the 25 January meeting of the Secretary-General, the African Union Chairperson and the IGAD Chair, President Alpha Oumar Konare engaged the South Sudanese Government and regional players in order to revive the political process, obtain

a cessation of hostilities and create an environment conducive to inclusive dialogue.

His engagements — which, apparently, are due, after a three-month hiatus, to recommence in earnest shortly — were followed at the time by a visit of the Chair of the African Union Commission, Moussa Faki Mahamat, to South Sudan soon after taking office. These efforts on their own have so far not led to concrete steps forward on a political process.

The Chair of the Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission, President Festus Mogae, has spoken of the limits to the implementation of the peace agreement in the face of pervasive conflict and the non-participation of active combatants and has called for a unified effort to secure those conditions. I can report that arrangements are now being made for both Presidents Konaré and Mogae, and my office to work together on a joint action plan, which will in turn be promoted jointly to regional leaders in the coming weeks.

Faced with a deteriorating situation in South Sudan and increasing calls from the international community for engagement, South Sudan's neighbours have also been exploring ways and means to start a process that could bring the conflict to an end. One of those initiatives, led by President Museveni of Uganda, is focused on the reunification of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM). Noting that the earlier decision to exclude the SPLM in Opposition, led by Riek Machar, from this exercise had drawn criticism from some participants, Uganda has now belatedly reached out to Mr. Machar, who declined to participate due to his present circumstances and the short notice of the invitation. It is to be recalled that the Ugandan initiative was faulted earlier by the former detainees group for prioritizing party unification over bringing the war to an end.

We understand that there have also been discussions between President Kenyatta and the opposition parties on the facilitation of a meeting of all the opposition groups in Kenya. Recalling the reported abduction of opposition figures in Kenya, some groups have expressed anxiety about the meeting venue. Yet they seem to see the value of establishing a joint platform as a necessary step for full political engagement with the Government.

The most recent initiative emanates from the extraordinary summit of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) held on 12 June. Reiterating that the full implementation of the peace agreement remained the only viable way to bring about peace, IGAD had decided to convene a high-level revitalization forum of the parties to the 2015 agreement, including what it termed "estranged groups". The forum will address concrete measures to restore the permanent ceasefire, advance the full implementation of the peace agreement, and to develop a "revised and realistic timeline" for democratic elections at the end of the transition period. To that effect, the summit mandated the IGAD Council of Ministers to urgently convene and facilitate such a forum in collaboration with relevant stakeholders, emphasizing the importance of IGAD-African Union (AU)-United Nations collaboration.

Those proposals, as well as the appointment of an IGAD Special Envoy, were positive outcomes of the summit. One concern, however, remains, and that is the lack of clear timelines for the implementation of the proposals put forward in the IGAD communiqué.

There seems to be a common understanding now that a credible political process in South Sudan is one in which, inter alia, both President Kiir's Government and the SPLM in Opposition that is, the Riek Machar faction, are represented, although not necessarily by having the principal protagonists attend themselves. In addition, it would require the attendance of the new players that have come to the fore, at least for the purposes of negotiating a ceasefire and an adjustment to the peace agreement.

The opposition groups began meeting in April and have started issuing joint statements regarding developments in the country. They are reported to have met with the Government officials of neighbouring States to seek their understanding and support. It remains to be seen whether the groups will overcome the differences between them, especially on the issue of the leadership of the Opposition. Still, the discussions that took place in the Oslo forum last week among the opposition groups, which I chaired, revealed more common ground among them, and even between the Opposition and the Government, than had been the impression before.

I believe the demands for a resumption of an inclusive political process are greater today than they were a month ago, or three months ago; but much work remains to be done for a credible political process to be established. The international community should, in support of those efforts, deliver a clear message

that it supports an inclusive process that includes all significant armed groups and the political parties that are, to one degree of another, influential in bringing the ongoing fighting to a halt. Initiatives, including regional initiatives that promote dialogue within the opposition and between the opposition and the Government should be supported. Collaboration between IGAD, the AU and the United Nations should further be promoted.

Finally, to reinforce the common message, credible national elections can be held only to conclude a transition period underpinned by political inclusion and stability — not in circumstances of insecurity and widespread displacement. My office will continue to engage all South Sudanese stakeholders and work closely with the United Nations Mission in South Sudan and the members of the international community, particularly IGAD and the AU, in pursuit of those objectives.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Mr. Haysom for his briefing.

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

Mrs. Carrión (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): We would like to express our gratitude for the briefings that we have just heard from the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Mr. Jean-Pierre Lacroix, and from the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Sudan and South Sudan, Mr. Nicholas Haysom. We would like to thank them for their very comprehensive overview of recent events in South Sudan.

Uruguay would like to reiterate its deep-rooted concern and alarm in light of the political, security, economic and humanitarian crisis currently ravaging South Sudan. A month ago (see S/PV.7950), my delegation recognized the launch of the national dialogue and the declaration of the cessation of hostilities by President Salva Kiir. At the time, we made it clear that there was a need to follow up on both of those initiatives. Today, we regret to note that there has been little — practically zero — progress due to the lack political will of the parties to the conflict, to the great despair of the population. Despite the unilateral declaration of the cessation of hostilities, armed clashes have continued in the country over the past few months.

Furthermore, the national dialogue process launched by the Government has been rejected in its current format by various members of the opposition. In that connection, it is necessary that the stakeholders continue to make efforts to ensure that the existing dialogue process is more inclusive and representative of all the voices of South Sudan. Only an inclusive dialogue will achieve the legitimacy necessary to finding a peaceful resolution to the conflict. It will be unfeasible, moreover, to launch a credible dialogue process in a climate of war and fear. The international community, including the United Nations, the African Union and regional and subregional bodies, must make a coordinated contribution to the dialogue process in South Sudan, in accordance with the relevant conditions to be legitimate.

We support the observations set out in the report of the Secretary-General (S/2017/505) in terms of the current structure and mandate of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), which remain relevant and appropriate to the realities on the ground. On that particular point, Uruguay believes that UNMISS should continue to have as its highest priority the protection of civilians and the promotion of human rights and the submission of reports on human rights abuses and violations. In that regard, we call upon the Government of South Sudan to fully cooperate with the implementation of resolution 2327 (2016), including with regard to the deployment of the Regional Protection Force. Any restrictions on the free functioning of UNMISS should be lifted in full compliance with the status of forces agreement. We would like to recall that neither UNMISS nor the Regional Protection Force are a panacea for resolving the crisis. Only a genuine, inclusive political process, complemented by the political will of the parties, will bring peace to South Sudan.

I wish to conclude by paying tribute to the courage and dedication of the staff of UNMISS and to the humanitarian workers who continue to protect and to provide assistance to millions of victims of humanitarian disasters, and who do so in a very dangerous operational environment.

Mr. Tumysh (Kazakhstan): I wish to thank you, Mr. President, for bringing the crisis in South Sudan to the attention of the Security Council, and I express my appreciation to the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Mr. Lacroix, and the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Sudan and South Sudan, Mr. Haysom, for their comprehensive and insightful briefings.

We fully endorse the recommendations contained in the Secretary-General's quarterly report (S/2017/7969) and his monthly update on the deployment of the Regional Protection Force. My delegation would like to make the following observations and recommendations.

First, despite efforts made by the Transitional Government and Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission, in general slight tangible progress has been made in the peace process. Only inclusive and transparent dialogue, as well as the full-fledged implementation of the Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan can result in genuine reconciliation.

In that regard, we need to fully support the concerted efforts of the United Nations, the African Union and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) to achieve our objectives in South Sudan. At the same time, we need to ensure that the national dialogue launched by President Salva Kiir one month ago be truly inclusive and transparent. We therefore welcomed the decision made at the thirty-first IGAD Extraordinary Summit of the Assembly of Heads of State to convene a revitalization forum. It is noteworthy that that platform will include all parties so as to discuss the implementation of the peace agreement and prepare for the upcoming democratic elections. The foundations will therefore be laid to help build State institutions.

Secondly, Kazakhstan commends the efforts of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) to ensure the delivery of humanitarian assistance to those areas in need. We note the report's mention that UNMISS continues to encounter bureaucratic obstacles and restrictions in connection with its operations and freedom of movement in implementing its mandate. My delegation expresses its support for the three-tiered approach to the protection of civilians, especially with regard to women and children. We endorse the Secretary-General's recommendation that the Mission remain structured under resolution 2327 (2016).

Thirdly, severe humanitarian and security conditions, as well as the increasing number of internally displaced persons, demand our serious consideration. All sides and non-State actors should stop attacks on humanitarian workers and ensure unhindered humanitarian access, especially to areas affected by famine. Similarly, perpetrators must be brought to justice. We must ensure that no destruction occurs in close proximity to homes, schools, hospitals and other life-saving infrastructure.

We call on international partners and donors to ensure the necessary funding for implementing the humanitarian response plan. We also urgently call for the cessation of hostilities by all parties and the implementation of security sector reforms so as to ensure the rule of law and bring an end to all impunity. Whenever possible, hybrid courts should be set up to carry out the process of transitional justice and reconciliation.

Furthermore, the engagement of women and youth would greatly promote conflict prevention and settlement processes. We therefore commend the appointment of women to the leadership organ of the National Dialogue Steering Committee and call for an additional increase in their numbers.

Lastly, the situation in South Sudan should remain a top priority for the Council. We pay sincere tribute to the personnel of UNMISS and Special Representative of the Secretary-General Shearer for their work on the ground in such a difficult environment. Kazakhstan will work with Council members and key actors in finding a lasting solution to the conflict.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I shall now make a statement in my national capacity as the representative of the Plurinational State of Bolivia.

We are grateful for the information that Under-Secretary-General Lacroix and Special Envoy Haysom have provided us at today's meeting. We recognize the work that they are doing in a situation as difficult as the one in South Sudan today.

Since the beginning of the year, we have been examining the situation in South Sudan on almost a monthly basis. Unfortunately, we have seen little progress in the political arena and hardly any advances in security and humanitarian situation, which remains the same or has even worsened in various parts of the country since last year. The revitalization of the political process and fostering the full implementation of the Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan need to be our shared goals and understood as the only solution to the conflict.

In that regard, as we have said on previous occasions, we welcomed the announcement of the unilateral cessation of hostilities made by President Salva Kiir and the rollout of the national dialogue. Nevertheless,

it is clear that we need greater commitment from all parties so that those initiatives can be successfully implemented. We regret that, as the Secretary-General states in his report (S/2017/505), hostilities have not stopped, and confrontations continue in Upper Nile, Greater Equatoria, Greater Bahr el-Ghazal, Jonglei and Unity states.

We once again call on the Sudan People's Liberation Army and Sudan People's Liberation Army in Opposition to agree to the ceasefire, which would decrease tensions and constructively pave the way towards dialogue. The consequences of those confrontations have corresponded to the increase in the humanitarian needs of the millions of South Sudanese people who had to flee their homes. Since 2013, 3.8 million South Sudanese have had to leave their homes. As the Secretary-General's report indicates, since the beginning of this year alone, Uganda has hosted approximately 247,500 South Sudanese refugees. Those statistics are alarming, and we require the commitment of all parties to ensure that humanitarian aid arrives unhindered and ensure the safety of humanitarian workers.

Against that troubling backdrop, regional cooperation is vital for progress to be made in that regard. Bolivia welcomes the communiqué of the thirty-first Extraordinary Summit of the Assembly of Heads of State of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), which took place on 2 June and was attended by the Commissioner of African Union Peace and Security Council, the Chair of the Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission, representatives of the United Nations and the representatives of the troika on South Sudan. We concur with all the conclusions reached at that important meeting, which, in our opinion, brought together the key stakeholders interested in finding a solution to the conflict in South Sudan. Accordingly, I would like to underscore the following points contained in the communiqué, which calls on President Salva Kiir to

> "follow up the strict implementation of the ceasefire and ensure that his field commanders respect the ceasefire and take swift measure against those who violate his decision.
>
> "In this connection, the IGAD Summit urges the armed opposition groups to reciprocate the call for a ceasefire as well as to renounce violence ... [while emphasizing] that all armed opposition groups in South Sudan also share full responsibility on the humanitarian consequences of the conflict and human rights violations occurring in South Sudan".
>
> Furthermore the communiqué expresses
>
> "concern on the obstacles facing humanitarian agencies including killings of humanitarian personnel and takes note of the progress made by the Government to address the issue of access through the establishment of the High-level Humanitarian Oversight Committee, and the opening of the new humanitarian corridors."

We especially welcome the convening of the High-level Revitalization Forum to breathe new life into the Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan. We hope that this will be an important element in efforts to advance the effective implementation of the peace agreement.

Concerning the deployment of the Regional Protection Force, we welcome the meeting with the Chiefs of Staff of the troop-contributing countries and the representatives of the Government of South Sudan to take up pending issues and set a definitive timetable for a full deployment to coordinate with the work of UNMISS. We are anxiously awaiting the outcome of that meeting.

Lastly, we would like to underscore the work of Special Representative David Shearer, Special Envoy Haysom and UNMISS. We wish them every success in their endeavours, and we offer them a full support and backing as they pursue the action going forward.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I give the floor to the representative of South Sudan.

Mr. Malok (South Sudan): I thank you, Mr. President, for this opportunity to address the Security Council once again on this vitally important issue for my country. I would also like to thank, Mr. Lacroix, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, and Mr. Haysom, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Sudan and South Sudan, for their kind briefings.

As I reported last month (see S/PV.7950), the national dialogue has been officially launched and the Steering Committee sworn in, and they have already begun their work. The national dialogue is a positive step in the right direction. The co-Chairs of the Steering Committee have begun their efforts to reach out to the stakeholders in South Sudan, as well as those outside

the country. The co-Chair of the Steering Committee is currently leading a delegation to South Africa to meet with Mr. Riek Machar, while the Deputy co-Chair is leading another delegation to Khartoum and Addis Ababa to meet with the other armed groups and political parties. It is the hope of the Government that all stakeholders will join the national dialogue initiative.

The national dialogue should not be in any way seen as a replacement for the peace agreement signed in 2015, but as a viable mechanism to resolve the political problems and end the war, which is causing death and suffering for the people of South Sudan. The Government assures the Council and the international community that it will not interfere in the national dialogue. The dialogue will be inclusive and its findings will be respected and adhered to by the Government.

The Government is engaging other armed groups in the country. In the recent weeks, other armed groups from Yei River state, Raja, the Luo tribe in Wau state and in the greater Jonglei have agreed to put down their weapons and join the national dialogue. There are also positive initiatives being conducted by His Excellency President Museveni of Uganda to reunify the factions of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement and to encourage them to join the national dialogue. We reiterate our commitment to the deployment of the Regional Protection Force. Its deployment will also address the concerns of those stakeholders who would feel a sense of insecurity should they return to the country now.

My delegation would like to emphasize that it is not the policy of the Government to hinder the work of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) and the humanitarian actors. UNMISS is in South Sudan at the invitation of the Government and we have every intention to support it. Most of the violations reported are usually at lower levels. We urge UNMISS to coordinate with the Government by immediately reporting incidents of impediments as they happen, so that perpetrators are brought to book. It is in that light that the President issued a decree that gives strict instructions for all roadblocks to be removed and for all field commanders to grant unhindered access to UNMISS and the humanitarian actors.

Since the President declared the unilateral ceasefire, there has not been any active and direct confrontation between the Government and rebel groups. The overall security situation in the country is relatively calm. However, the ceasefire still faces challenges as other stakeholders are yet to declare their own ceasefire. The Sudan People's Liberation Movement in Opposition forces allied to Riek Machar resorted to conducting attacks with the intention to cause instability and to seek attention from the international community. The Transitional Government of National Unity strongly condemns the most recent attack by the former Vice-President's group on a civilian bus being escorted from Nimule to Juba.

In order for the unilateral ceasefire to hold, we call upon the Security Council and the international community to ask the other stakeholders to respect the ceasefire so as to allow humanitarian actors to deliver aid to those areas in need. From the side of the Government, I wish to assure the Council that it is fully committed to the unilateral ceasefire. We also call on the Security Council and the international community to discourage the moral equivalence approach, which causes the other stakeholders to take advantage. There is a need to pinpoint exactly who is in violation and when.

The general amnesty issued by the Government to those who denounce violence is not intended to obstruct accountability and justice, but to create an environment that would allow people to come back and join the national dialogue. It is the firm belief of the Government that people should be held accountable for their actions following due process.

The humanitarian situation in the country continues to be of great concern. Climate change, which also affects the region, and falling oil prices have had adverse effects on the economic situation and prevented the Government from being able to address the crisis. The Government is working to put measures in place, which include collecting non-oil revenues, reducing expenditures and strengthening the banking and monetary system. The results of those measures cannot be seen overnight. We call on our friends and partners to step in and help the Government avert a crisis.

We recognize our shared objective of bringing sustainable and lasting peace, security and stability to our country. The Transitional Government of National Unity is grateful for the efforts and initiatives being exerted by the leaders of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, the African Union and all friends and partners of South Sudan. We thank the men and women in police and military uniform and the civilian components of UNMISS, as well as the

humanitarian actors, for their unwavering and tireless efforts in helping the people of South Sudan

The Transitional Government of National Unity remains committed to finding peace, stability and prosperity for South Sudan and to working with UNMISS and humanitarian actors. At this critical juncture, when the Transitional Government of National Unity is seeking to bring about peace, reconciliation and healing through the national dialogue, we hope that the Security Council, United Nations and the international community will positively support those efforts, instead of the scepticism, negative messages and threats of sanctions being sent out by some.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers. I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 4.30 p.m.