



# Security Council

Seventy-fourth year

*Provisional*

## 8644<sup>th</sup>

meeting

Thursday, 24 October 2019, 10 a.m.

New York

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*President:* Mr. Mabhongo . . . . . (South Africa)

*Members:*

Belgium . . . . .	Mrs. Van Vlierberge
China . . . . .	Mr. Yao Shaojun
Côte d'Ivoire . . . . .	Mr. Moriko
Dominican Republic . . . . .	Ms. Batista Díaz
Equatorial Guinea . . . . .	Mrs. Mele Colifa
France . . . . .	Mr. Michon
Germany . . . . .	Mr. Licharz
Indonesia . . . . .	Mr. Syihab
Kuwait . . . . .	Mr. Almunayekh
Peru . . . . .	Ms. Bustamante
Poland . . . . .	Mr. Lewicki
Russian Federation . . . . .	Mr. Repkin
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . .	Mr. Clay
United States of America . . . . .	Mr. Cohen

## Agenda

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

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Abyei (S/2019/817)

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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 Abyei (S/2019/817)**

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

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in the meeting: Mr. Jean-Pierre Lacroix, Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations; and Mr. Parfait Onanga-Anyanga, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Horn of Africa.

Mr. Onanga-Anyanga is joining the meeting via video-teleconference from Addis Ababa.

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/2019/817, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Abyei.

I now give the floor to Mr. Lacroix.

**Mr. Lacroix:** I thank you, Mr. President, for this opportunity to brief the Security Council on the latest developments pertaining to the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA), including its support to the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism (JBVMM). I will provide a brief update on the situation since the publication of the Secretary-General's report before the Council (S/2019/817), as well as the key recommendations contained therein on the way forward with regard to UNISFA and the JBVMM.

The continued partnership between the Sudan and South Sudan, notwithstanding the recent change of Government in Khartoum, presents a unique opportunity to move the political process forward on the border issues. Further to the reciprocal visits of President Salva Kiir Mayardit and Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok to their respective capitals in the past two months, since 14 October Juba has hosted peace

talks between the Sudanese transitional authority and armed opposition groups. On 21 October, the negotiating parties signed a political agreement, which includes a renewed ceasefire. The delegation of the Security Council also met with President Kiir and Mr. Riek Machar in Juba a few days ago, in support of the implementation of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan, of which the Sudan is a guarantor.

Building on that momentum, we have seen some positive steps with regard to the border arrangements. On 2 and 13 October in Juba, South Sudan and the Sudan convened, respectively, two ordinary sessions of the Joint Political and Security Mechanism. Both parties reaffirmed their commitment to implementing the Cooperation Agreement between the Republic of the Sudan and the Republic of South Sudan, signed on 27 September 2012, and, inter alia, withdrawing all the forces, including the Sudan People's Liberation Movement in Opposition, from the Safe Demilitarized Border Zone, with immediate effect, as well as their commitment to setting up border crossing corridors, reopening the Kosti-Renk Nile river corridor and Meiram-Aweil road corridor, and establishing customs and immigration posts. The Joint Political and Security Mechanism also urged UNISFA to accelerate the opening of sector headquarters in Malakal and Buram.

In addition, from 11 to 13 October, the ad hoc committee for the disputed 14 Mile Area visited the JBVMM's sector headquarters in Gok Machar and its team site at Sumayah/War-Abar to assess the redeployment of forces and the opening of the Meiram-Aweil border crossing. The 14 Mile ad hoc committee is to hold one more meeting before the next meeting of the Joint Political and Security Mechanism in Khartoum, which is scheduled to take place on 4 December.

Meanwhile, those positive developments have not extended to a settlement with regard to the final status of Abyei. No meetings of the Abyei Joint Oversight Committee have taken place since November 2017. No progress has been made on the establishment of joint governance institutions such as police, court and corrections institutions. While the Government of the Sudan has indicated its willingness to participate in a joint planning exercise for the establishment of the Abyei police service, South Sudan has not responded to such an initiative. That is of paramount concern, since the general security situation in Abyei remains fragile, with persisting intercommunal tensions, the

increase in criminality and the sporadic presence of armed elements in the area. The community protection committees, which act as the alternative local security response mechanism, continue to suffer from a lack of logistical, administrative and financial resources.

In accordance with paragraph 34 of resolution 2469 (2019), in August and September the Secretariat conducted an assessment mission, in conjunction with a military and police capability study. The overall objectives of those exercises were to assess the capacity of UNISFA to implement its mandate and support for the JBVMM, and to propose recommendations regarding its structure, capabilities, and posture to fulfil all its mandated tasks, based on the current and projected security situation.

With respect to UNISFA support to the JBVMM, in the light of the recent efforts taken by the Sudan and South Sudan on border issues, we welcome the decision of the Security Council to allow a one-month technical roll-over of the mandate of the Mission until 15 November. Furthermore, in his letter to the Security Council dated 20 September (S/2019/768), the Secretary-General proposed a six-month extension of UNISFA's support to the JBVMM. The JBVMM plays an important role as a monitoring and confidence-building measure between the parties. We stand ready to take every possible effort in order to enable the JBVMM to reach its full operating capability, provided that the two countries abide by their commitment to implementing the outcomes of the border management discussions.

As for the reconfiguration of UNISFA, the military and police capabilities studies have recommended that the Mission update its operational concept and improve its capabilities with regard to peacekeeping intelligence and the protection of civilians by readjusting its enablers. Specifically, the proposed actions included upgrading its mobility with night-flying assets, enhancing its engineering and medical capabilities and deploying personnel with the appropriate skills. The new operational concept is expected to take six months to implement.

Informed by those recommendations, the two options presented to the Council include, first, to comply with the reduction of troops set out in resolution 2469 (2019), and, secondly, to seek the postponement of the second phase of the reduction of the additional 295 troops until the end of the dry season, in April 2020. The second option would be preferable, as it would provide

UNISFA with the sufficient forces to fulfil its mandate, given the recent security and political developments on the ground. In any event, further efforts will be made to implement the police-related provisions of resolution 2469 (2019), including the deployment of at least one formed police unit and 140 individual police officers by January 2020.

The review mission also stressed the urgent need to deploy civilian personnel with expertise in political and civil affairs to Mission headquarters, JBVMM headquarters and the liaison offices in Khartoum, Juba and Addis Ababa. A small office should also be established under the Community Liaison Office to focus on criminality, justice and detention issues. As for the request by the Council to appoint a civilian deputy head of mission for UNISFA, the Sudan maintains its objection on the grounds that such an appointment would be inconsistent with the 2011 Agreement.

We witnessed an unprecedented opportunity to resolve the border-related issues between the Sudan and South Sudan. Both countries have never been closer to achieving sustainable peace with each other and with their armed oppositions as they continue to support respective peace processes. Building on the recent positive developments in their bilateral relations, the two sides need to resume direct talks immediately to resolve outstanding provisions of the agreements in relation to the final status of Abyei and border issues. We continue to work closely with the African Union, in particular the African Union High-level Implementation Panel, in support of a political process between the two parties. In the meantime, UNISFA and the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism continue to play a key role in stabilizing the security situation on the ground. Their presence has had a deterrent effect, filling the gap deriving from the absence of the formal governance institutions and supporting community reconciliation and law and order efforts.

In that context, the Secretary-General has recommended that the role and capacity of UNISFA to engage in local mediation, provide political support for dialogue between the two parties and fulfil protection-related tasks should be strengthened. At this critical juncture of transition in both countries, it is critical that the only international mechanism of writing in the border area be equipped with the appropriate mandate, capabilities and assets. That would also send a strong signal to the parties that the United Nations remains committed to maintaining stability in the

Area. In that regard, we seek the support of the Security Council for the Secretary-General's recommendations as set out in the report before the Council and to extend the mandate of UNISFA and its support to the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism by an additional period of six months.

**The President:** I now give the floor to Mr. Onanga-Anyanga.

**Mr. Onanga-Anyanga:** I thank you, Sir, for this opportunity to brief the Security Council on progress in the implementation of resolution 2046 (2012) concerning outstanding bilateral issues between the Sudan and South Sudan and the conflict in South Kordofan and Blue Nile states.

Before proceeding further, allow me to congratulate members of the Council upon their recent visit to the region. In our previous reports to the Council over the past year, we drew the Council's attention to the improved relationship between the Sudan and South Sudan. The change of Government in the Sudan earlier this year provided new impetus for this positive trend. Eager to open a new chapter in relations and to secure peace across the Sudan, the new transitional leadership in Khartoum encouraged President Kiir Mayardit to intensify his mediation efforts between the Government in Khartoum and Sudanese armed groups. President Kiir readily accepted the invitation and has since dedicated considerable effort to advancing this noble cause.

With this new partnership in place, the past five months have seen a flurry of high-level visits between Khartoum and Juba. In July, General Burhan and his deputy on the Transitional Military Council, General Mohamed Hamdam Dagalo, also known as Hemetti, visited Juba. Two months later, General Hemetti, this time as Deputy Chair of the Sovereign Council, and the new Prime Minister, Abdalla Hamdok, paid separate visits to South Sudan. Both held meetings with Sudanese armed groups in Juba in addition to their formal calls on President Kiir.

In the course of August and September, Juba hosted talks with and between the armed movements from Darfur and the two areas. The talks resulted in the Darfuri armed groups, except the Sudan Liberation Army, led by Abdul Wahid Al-Nur, and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N), under Malik Agar, uniting under the new umbrella of the Sudanese Revolutionary Front. The South Sudanese mediation

initiative culminated in the signing, on 11 September, of the Juba Declaration on Confidence-building Measures and preparations for negotiations between the Sudanese armed movements and the Sudanese Sovereign Council. With those agreements in hand, General Hemetti also engaged with SPLM-N leader Abdul Aziz Al-Hilu, who made a gesture of good faith by renewing the SPLM-North unilateral ceasefire for another three months and expressing his readiness to join future rounds of negotiation in Juba.

So far, the Sudanese opposition appears comfortable with President Kiir facilitating the negotiations with Khartoum. Nevertheless, several other countries have expressed an interest in hosting coming phases of the negotiations and some Sudanese stakeholders have asked that Juba consult with other neighbouring countries as they pursue their own mediation efforts.

As agreed in the Juba Declaration, the Sudanese Government launched substantive talks with the Sudanese armed movements on 14 October, which are expected to continue until 14 December. On 21 October, the Sovereign Council signed an initial agreement renewing the cessation of hostilities and opening humanitarian access from within and outside the Sudan to areas held by armed groups. That marks significant progress, as previous peace negotiations between the parties had consistently stumbled on the issue of humanitarian access roads to those areas. Talks between the Council and the SPLM-North and Abdul Aziz Al-Hilu to reach a similar agreement have so far been fruitless. However, both parties have committed to continuing negotiations in November, when the next phase of talks is expected to resume. The next round of negotiations is expected to focus, among other things, on a permanent ceasefire, the delivery of humanitarian assistance, the opening of political space and the return of refugees.

In another expression of the involvement of the Sudan and South Sudan in each other's peace processes, General Hemetti's September visit also allowed South Sudan's First Vice-President designate, Riek Machar, to travel to Juba for a long-awaited face-to-face meeting with President Kiir. That was repeated on 19 October, when the Government of the Sudan again facilitated Mr. Machar's travel to Juba for a meeting with President Kiir and the Security Council delegation.

Prime Minister Hamdok's visit to Juba in September, his first visit outside of the Sudan after



his nomination, was devoted to bilateral relations. Discussions between he and President Kiir focused on the peace processes in both countries, trade, oil, border issues and the free movement of people. In July, the two sides discussed technical and financial issues relating to oil. Furthermore, police chiefs from the two countries met in August to explore cooperation, information exchange and related matters. Consistent with his vision for peace and reform in the Sudan, Prime Minister Hamdok stated that he wanted to use his first visit to repair the damage caused by the former regime and restore the traditional ties among what he sees as one people living in two States. In his view, that was the first step towards finding a mutually agreed solution to the disputed border areas and Abyei. In that spirit, President Kiir and Prime Minister Hamdok discussed border crossing points and agreed that the opening of six corridors would be considered soon.

The list of pending issues between Khartoum and Juba is long, as most of the commitments signed in 2012 have yet to be implemented. The exception is the agreement on oil, under which South Sudan has so far paid the Sudan approximately \$2.4 billion of the \$3.02 billion transitional financial arrangement agreed in 2012. On 7 October, South Sudan said it intended to ask Khartoum at the end of October for an extension of the December 2019 deadline to complete the payment of the arrangement. It is also worth noting that the delegation led by Prime Minister Hamdok met its South Sudanese counterparts in the areas of foreign affairs, the interior, trade and industry, and energy and mining to discuss pending issues. In a joint statement, the two Foreign Ministers noted that the operationalization of the agreements required sustainable peace in both countries, hence the commitment by each Government to support peace in the other's country.

Following Prime Minister Hamdok's visit to Juba, I am pleased to report that the Joint Security Committee, led by the Army Chiefs of Staff of the two countries, met in Juba on 4 and 5 October and discussed a number of pending issues, including the opening of additional border crossing points, the redeployment of forces from the Safe Demilitarized Border Zone and the full deployment of the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism. The Joint Border Commission has also been meeting in Khartoum since 13 October, after a hiatus of several months. During my visits to Juba and Khartoum in July and September, respectively, I encouraged authorities to

tackle all outstanding issues outlined in the cooperation agreement in a spirit of openness and collaboration, including by revitalizing and participating in the joint implementation mechanisms.

As I conclude my remarks, let me say a word on the conflict in South Kordofan and Blue Nile states. The two areas were relatively calm during the reporting period, due in part to the dramatic changes in Khartoum and the declarations announcing the cessation of hostilities made by the Government and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North. The standoff in the Nuba Mountains in South Kordofan continues, with forces loyal to Abdel Aziz Al-Hilu maintaining their positions. The Government is in a stronger position in Blue Nile state, with the opposition divided between followers of Al-Hilu and those who support Malik Agar, who was recently been elected deputy chairperson of the Sudan Revolutionary Front.

It is fair to say that there are encouraging signs of progress in relations between the Sudan and South Sudan, with a positive influence on peace processes in both countries. My Office will continue to closely follow developments in the weeks and months ahead, in close collaboration with the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, the African Union and other relevant stakeholders.

**The President:** I thank Mr. Onanga-Anyanga for his briefing.

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

**Mr. Cohen** (United States of America): I thank Under-Secretary-General Lacroix and Special Envoy Onanga-Anyanga for their briefings on the latest developments on the ground in Abyei and along the South Sudan-Sudan border.

The United States would like to extend particular thanks to Ethiopia for its contributions to the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA). Without Ethiopia's efforts, the relatively stable situation in Abyei would not be possible. The United States recognizes that Abyei is a strategic crossroads between the Sudan and South Sudan, and resolving Abyei's political status is needed for a complete and lasting peace in the region. While the internal political shifts in the Sudan and South Sudan provide some momentum towards resolving ongoing disputes, unfortunately

those developments have yet to prompt action to resolve Abyei's final status.

We remain concerned that UNISFA is not being allowed to fully implement its mandate. We call on both parties to ensure that UNISFA can operate as an effective and efficient peacekeeping mission, including by granting visas for United Nations police and allowing the appointment of a civilian deputy.

While insecurity remains contained in Abyei, the situation is fragile, as evidenced by attacks on UNISFA personnel, rising criminality and ongoing incidents of cattle raiding and kidnapping. That is all unacceptable.

In recognition of the vital role that women play in securing peace and security, we support UNISFA's efforts to encourage local peace committees to include women leaders. Their absence limits prospects for achieving a lasting peace.

The United States welcomes UNISFA's efforts to stabilize Abyei through supporting local peace communities, establishing new checkpoints, resolving local conflicts and disarming the population. We also commend the work of non-governmental organizations and United Nations agencies undertaking work in support of local populations in Abyei.

We endorse the Secretary-General's call for Special Envoy Onanga-Anyanga and the African Union to increase their efforts to secure a resolution of the political conflicts in Abyei. We look forward to learning more on that.

The United States remains committed to peace and security in Abyei. Supporting peace there will enable long-term stability for both the Sudan and South Sudan.

**Mr. Michon** (France) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I wish to thank Mr. Jean-Pierre Lacroix and Mr. Parfait Onanga-Anyanga for their briefings.

I would like to begin by commending the bilateral rapprochement between the Sudan and South Sudan, particularly President Salva Kiir Mayardit's leading role in launching the Sudanese peace talks that took place last week. We are also pleased that, during their meeting in Juba on 12 September, Prime Minister Hamdok and President Kiir decided to strengthen their bilateral relations, especially with regard to their shared border. The will of the Sudanese Prime Minister to restore relations between the border populations is very encouraging. This new situation inspires hope that

the Abyei issue will finally be addressed with a view to achieving a political solution negotiated between the two Governments, which is the only way to prevent this dispute from becoming an endless frozen conflict. The holding of a meeting of the Joint Political and Security Mechanism on 2 October constitutes a step forward in that direction. We hope that both countries will continue along that path.

We call upon the Special Envoy for the Horn of Africa to fully support the resumption of the political dialogue on Abyei and the demarcation of the border. We also encourage the African Union High-level Implementation Panel for Sudan to throw its full weight behind convincing the parties to move forward.

In this encouraging context, it is essential that the decisions of the Security Council regarding the mandate of the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA) finally be implemented. France encourages the Sudanese authorities to authorize, as soon as possible, the deployment of police contingents, as decided by the Council last year. The new police forces should enable UNISFA to curb crime, particularly in the Amiet common market, and prevent the escalation of intercommunal tensions that we have witnessed, which are often linked to cattle raiding. It is also important that South Sudan cooperate in good faith in the joint establishment of the Abyei police service and that the two countries convene a meeting of the Joint Committee.

Finally, we support the strengthening of the civilian component of the mission. We support the Secretary-General's recommendation to deploy a political section within UNISFA. That is essential to allow the mission to actively support the dialogue between the parties, particularly at the local level. It would also enable the mission to better prevent local conflicts and enhance cooperation with the African Union High-level Implementation Panel. We also ask that the Sudan, in the same spirit, accept the appointment of a civilian deputy head of mission, as decided by the Council in May.

With regard to a broader UNISFA mandate, we understand the rationale suggested by the Secretariat, which advocates giving the mission and the Sudanese authorities more time to implement UNISFA's reconfiguration, which was decided last year. We are ready to positively consider that recommendation with the other members of the Security Council.

In conclusion, I would like to commend, as did my American colleague, the work of the Ethiopian troops that stabilize the situation in Abyei and along the border between the Sudan and South Sudan on a daily basis.

**Mrs. Van Vlierberge** (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): Allow me, at the outset, to thank Under-Secretary-General Jean Pierre Lacroix and the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Horn of Africa, Mr. Parfait Onanga-Anyanga, for their enlightening briefings.

We are aware of the current political situation in the Sudan and South Sudan, and the issue of Abyei is inextricably linked to it. Belgium continues to follow developments very closely.

We wish the new Sudanese authorities every success in the essential tasks that they will have to carry out, as set out in the Constitutional Declaration of 17 August. We welcome the priorities outlined by the Prime Minister, Mr. Abdalla Hamdok, during his interventions here in New York during the high-level week.

In South Sudan, we urge stakeholders to make rapid progress on key issues in the implementation of the peace process, in particular the establishment of security arrangements, the status of Juba, the finalization of internal boundaries and the full release of implementation funds announced by the Government.

We note that the security situation in the Abyei area remains fragile, with intercommunal tensions, an increase in criminal incidents, and the presence of armed groups in the region. Widespread poverty, unemployment, insecurity in the surrounding areas of the Abyei region and the lack of functional governance and rule of law institutions only exacerbate the situation. Some 200,000 vulnerable people continue to need humanitarian assistance.

We share the Secretary-General's assessment that the continued presence of the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA) remains crucial. We take note of the two options proposed by the Secretary-General in his report (S/2019/817) and look forward to a fruitful discussion in the Council.

I would like to highlight two points: the need for a political solution and the role of UNISFA in that respect.

Stability in the Abyei region remains our key objective. The main responsibility for the implementation of the 2011 and 2012 agreements rests

with the Governments of both countries. However, it must be noted that only very little progress has been made in fulfilling the commitments agreed by the parties since last April. The Security Council should encourage the Governments of the Sudan and South Sudan to continue the dialogue and, in the longer term, develop a political solution that would allow for the settlement of the final status of the Abyei area and other border disputes.

As the name of the mission indicates, UNISFA was established as an interim security force in 2011. The Council must ensure that the dispute between the Sudan and South Sudan with regard to Abyei and the border region does not become another deadlocked conflict. We therefore call on the parties to facilitate the mission's operations, including the issuance of visas and the strengthening of the civilian component of the mission, with a view to facilitating the revitalization of the political process in order to be able to work towards an exit-strategy framework in a timely manner.

There is no option other than dialogue to resolve the Abyei issue. The presence of UNISFA remains crucial but it cannot replace the role of the State. The Council must ensure that the mission has the necessary resources to help address the causes of the conflict and ensure the long-term stability of the Sudan and South Sudan.

**Ms. Batista** (Dominican Republic) (*spoke in Spanish*): We would also like to thank the briefers of this morning's meeting.

We recognize that the security situation in the Abyei Area remains generally contained although we are concerned about sporadic intercommunal tensions and the presence of armed elements, as well as the high crime rate. We hope that those negative events do not diminish the relative calm. To that end, it is indispensable that the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA) maintain its rapid response capacity and continue its protection of civilian activities.

The meetings of the Abyei Joint Oversight Committee should be resumed and the meetings of the Joint Political and Security Mechanism should continue. The absence of those bodies in the Area affects the lives, safety and well-being of more than 200,000 vulnerable people, with increasing humanitarian needs, which are worsened by the impact of the floods that have affected the farming areas.

Regarding the reconfiguration of UNISFA, we see as positive the increase in the police component and the proposal for the strengthening of political support, which will help to alleviate the increasing levels of criminality, the effective management of intercommunal relations and the general maintenance of peace in the Area.

In that regard, we call on the authorities in Khartoum to expedite the issuance of visas for police personnel in order to strengthen their deployment, in particular in vulnerable areas such as the Amiet common market, which has seen various incidents of public disorder.

A vital element in normalizing relations between the Sudan and South Sudan is the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism. Its significance to UNISFA fulfilling its mandate for the protection of civilians and peacekeeping is undeniable. We hope and are optimistic that the political processes in both countries and the current rapprochement between their capitals will provide momentum to ultimately resolve the pending border issues.

Another extremely significant aspect that we would like to emphasize is UNISFA's commitment to gender initiatives. We applaud the implementation of activities to raise awareness of the importance of women's representation in joint peace committees and the establishment of a traditional leaders gender champion network for the promotion of resolution 1325 (2000). We also commend the work done by UNISFA to address sexual and gender-based violence and children's rights.

In conclusion, the presence of UNISFA and its support to the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism have been instrumental in stabilizing the Abyei Area. However, it is crucial that both the Sudan and South Sudan do more as soon as possible to fulfil their commitments and that the Council continue to seek ways to make UNISFA's operations more effective.

**Mr. Moriko** (Côte d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): My delegation welcomes the holding of this meeting and congratulates Mr. Jean-Pierre Lacroix, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, and Mr. Parfait Onanga-Anyanga, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Horn of Africa, for their detailed briefings on the developments in the situation in Abyei.

Côte d'Ivoire notes with satisfaction the rapprochement between the Sudan and South Sudan

and the willingness shown by both countries to strengthen their cooperation. We welcome the fact that the first foreign visit of the Sudanese Prime Minister, Mr. Abdalla Hamdok, was to Juba.

Apart from its symbolic nature, the visit paved the way for a lasting peace through discussions on strengthening relations between the two countries and promoting peaceful coexistence between their populations along the border. My delegation sincerely hopes that the visit will be followed by further initiatives to strengthen mutual trust.

My country welcomes the significant role of the President of South Sudan in the talks between the Government of the Sudan and armed groups, which is fully in line with the normalization of relations between the Sudan and South Sudan.

However, despite that positive development and the leaders' stated determination to commit to the path of peace, my delegation remains concerned about the lack of progress in implementing the 2011 and 2012 agreements on interim administrative and security arrangements in the Abyei Area as well as cooperation between the two countries.

My country believes that, given the stalemate in the political process, it is essential to actively engage both Governments in further discussions, under the auspices of the African Union's High-level Panel and the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, to resolve outstanding important issues, including those related to border demarcation and the establishment of a joint administration in Abyei.

While the stabilizing role of the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA), whose activities on the ground contribute to promoting reconciliation and peace in the Abyei Area and along the border, is unanimously welcomed by the members of the Council, it must be recognized that immense challenges remain in the region.

In that regard, the resurgence of criminal activities, the presence of armed groups and the continuing intercommunal tensions remain a source of concern for my delegation. These impediments call for urgent action by the authorities of both countries, which have the primary responsibility for protecting civilians and ensuring the safety of populations along the border, in conjunction with UNISFA. In that regard, it urges them, *inter alia*, to proceed expeditiously with the



establishment of the Abyei joint police force and to facilitate the implementation of the provisions of the relevant Security Council resolutions, including those dealing with the deployment of police officers and formed police units, in order to prevent a security vacuum in the area.

My delegation recalls the correlation between peace and development in order to emphasize the need to implement development and capacity-building projects. It is also necessary to ensure the provision of basic social services for the population, which cannot be achieved without the establishment of functional joint institutions in Abyei.

In that context, my country welcomes the establishment by the United Nations country teams in the Sudan and South Sudan of a joint United Nations-Abyei capacity-building programme in the areas of the rule of law and peacebuilding, improving access to basic social services, gender equality and combating sexual and gender-based violence. The initiative warrants the highest attention and therefore requires the international community's ongoing mobilization in order to ensure adequate funding.

My delegation is of the opinion that, in view of the renewal of UNISFA's mandate, it is important to make adjustments, taking into account trends observed on the ground in order to optimize the efficiency of the Force and preserve the gains of its eight-year presence in Abyei. In that regard, my delegation takes note of the recommendations made by the Secretary-General in his report (S/2019/817) and reaffirms its commitment to pursuing constructive discussions with all stakeholders in the upcoming negotiations for the renewal of UNISFA's mandate, as well as its support to the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism.

In conclusion, Côte d'Ivoire urges all actors in the conflict to capitalize on the positive momentum of recent months between the Sudan and South Sudan with a view to finding a lasting solution to the status of Abyei.

**Mr. Yao Shaojun** (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China thanks Under-Secretary-General Lacroix and Special Envoy Onanga-Anyanga.

At present, the situation in the Abyei Area remains generally stable. The political situation in the Sudan and South Sudan has witnessed positive progress. The two sides have strengthened their interaction

and cooperation on Abyei and have been actively cooperating with the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA) in the performance of its mandate. China welcomes such developments.

The Secretary-General notes in his report (S/2019/817) that the Abyei Area still faces many challenges and that the security situation remains fragile. The proper resolution of the issue of Abyei is of vital importance to the stability of the Sudan, South Sudan and the entire region. We must continue to promote cooperation between the Governments of the Sudan and South Sudan and seek a political settlement to the issue of Abyei. The Security Council should continue to fully respect the leadership role of the Sudan and South Sudan on the Abyei issue, listen carefully to the views of both sides, continue to support regional and subregional organizations, such as the African Union and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, and carry out good offices in support of African countries providing African solutions to African problems. The Governments of the Sudan and South Sudan should continue to cooperate on the establishment of administrative, judicial and public security institutions in the Abyei Area as soon as possible so as to ease intercommunal tensions. The international community should give active support in that regard.

We must continue to support UNISFA in implementing its mandate. The mission has an important role in maintaining the stability of the Abyei Area. China welcomes the efforts of Ethiopia, as one of the troop-contributing countries, notes the Secretary-General's recommendation and supports the extension of UNISFA's mandate.

On the issue of UNISFA's reconfiguration, the Security Council should listen carefully to the views of the Governments of the Sudan and South Sudan, the African Union and troop-contributing countries. The Secretariat should strengthen communication and coordination with relevant parties, give the peacekeeping force a greater role and promote the proper settlement of the Abyei issue. China stands ready to work with African countries and the international community to contribute to resolving the Abyei issue and promote peace, stability and development in Africa.

**Mr. Syihab** (Indonesia): Let me begin by thanking Under-Secretary-General Jean-Pierre Lacroix and

Special Envoy Parfait Onanga-Anyanga for their important briefings.

My statement today will focus on three key messages.

First, the presence of the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA) is essential to stability in Abyei and along the border region between the Sudan and South Sudan. The security situation in Abyei remains volatile, characterized by increased criminality and the sporadic presence of armed elements, in contravention of resolution 1990 (2011). We condemn all attacks against UNISFA peacekeepers.

However, no act of intercommunal violence was recorded during the reporting period. That speaks volumes about UNISFA's role in promoting dialogue, confidence-building and local conflict resolution among communities in Abyei. We attach great importance to UNISFA's provision of capacity-building to the community protection committees in the absence of the Abyei police service and its support to traditional justice mechanisms. My delegation also acknowledges UNISFA's support to the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism (JBVMM), which is an indispensable tool for border-related issues and deterrence against potential spoilers.

Secondly, we must continue encouraging the Sudan and South Sudan to accelerate the discussion on outstanding issues. Progress on the implementation of the 20 June 2011 Agreement between the Government of Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement on temporary arrangements for the administration and security of the Abyei Area, particularly the formation of joint interim institutions, has been somewhat limited.

On the JBVMM front, the Sudan and South Sudan have not been able to achieve the benchmarks set in resolution 2465 (2019), including the complete withdrawal from the Safe Demilitarized Border Zone. Momentum for a decisive step forward is now growing, building on the countries' renewed commitment to promoting progress on border issues, including during Prime Minister Hamdok's visit to Juba. My delegation welcomes the breakthrough at the Joint Border Commission meeting two days ago. The Security Council should support the Sudan and South Sudan in making the best use of that momentum to make further progress, as well as support the work of regional initiatives, including the African Union High-Level Implementation Panel.

Thirdly, we need to proceed cautiously with the reconfiguration of UNISFA. It must take into consideration domestic political challenges in the Sudan and South Sudan and build on positive bilateral relations between the two countries. UNISFA's reconfiguration must be geared towards enabling the Mission to effectively respond to the challenges on the ground and match them with appropriate personnel and capability support. We concur that there is a need to maintain the Mission's capacity at this stage in order to guard against potential spoilers and urge the two countries to provide full support to UNISFA in the deployment of personnel. My delegation sees merit in the Secretary-General's proposal to reconfigure UNISFA with the aim of reinvigorating the political process through the deployment of civilian capacity. If UNISFA's reconfiguration is to be effective, it is important to secure the support of both the Sudan and South Sudan while also taking into account the views of troop- and police-contributing countries.

I would like to close by commending Ethiopia for its valuable contribution to UNISFA. Indonesia is heartened to see positive relations between the Sudan and South Sudan, whereby both countries actively support each other's peace process. My delegation reaffirms its long-standing support for the Sudan and South Sudan in finding a peaceful solution to their outstanding issues.

**Mr. Repkin** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We thank Under-Secretary-General Jean-Pierre Lacroix and Special Envoy Parfait Onanga-Anyanga for their briefings on the progress in the peace process between the Sudan and South Sudan and on the activities of the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA). We note the contribution of Ethiopian peacekeepers to the effective work of the United Nations presence.

We have consistently emphasized that the joint efforts of the parties are essential to making progress towards achieving a settlement between the Sudan and South Sudan. We look forward to seeing work on demarcation between Khartoum and Juba resumed as soon as possible. There is an international legal basis for that in the form of the existing Security Council and African Union resolutions and the package of bilateral agreements concluded between the two countries in Addis Ababa in September 2012. We hope that the relevant work of the African Union High-

Level Implementation Panel with the Sudanese parties will continue.

We note that the improvement in inter-Sudanese relations that began at the end of last year has continued. Khartoum's participation with the Intergovernmental Authority on Development in revitalizing the South Sudan peace agreement was a significant contribution to the peace process in the country, as have been the significant mediation efforts of President Salva Kiir aimed at launching negotiations between the Sudanese authorities and the various groups in Darfur. It will be crucial to make use of the positive momentum in bilateral relations to resolve the Abyei issue as well.

We note that there has been some improvement in the situation in Abyei. An intercommunal dialogue is being established and progress is being made in the demarcation of border corridors. We believe that the work of UNISFA is vital to maintaining constructive relations with the local communities. The measures taken by the United Nations to establish intercommunal cooperation in issues related to ensuring law enforcement and regarding economic activity around the common market in Amiet need support, since without that the restoration of trust and intercommunal reconciliation will be impossible.

We believe that the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism is integral to the incident prevention system between the parties. Ending UNISFA's support to it could have an extremely negative impact on the prospects for a full settlement of the situation in Abyei. We are all well aware of the factors preventing Khartoum and Juba from accelerating the settlement of the final status of Abyei, and in the circumstances, UNISFA's continued presence in the region remains urgent. In that connection, we support the Secretary-General's proposal (S/2019/817) to extend UNISFA's mandate by six months, including its support for the Verification and Monitoring Mechanism. At the same time, we believe that the Secretariat's proposal for a civilian component for the Mission should take into account the views of Khartoum and Juba, in line with the basic principles of peacekeeping.

**Mr. Licharz** (Germany): We thank Under-Secretary-General Jean-Pierre Lacroix and Special Envoy Parfait Onanga-Anyanga for their briefings. Like the briefers, I would also like to address the overall political situation before discussing the United Nations

Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA) and the current situation in Abyei.

Germany welcomes the political developments in Khartoum and Juba and between them both, and we congratulate those who have contributed constructively to those developments, including the African Union and, especially, the peoples of both countries, who have expressed their desire for democratic change and an end to this cycle of conflict.

The overall political developments have yet to translate into progress in reaching a final political solution for Abyei. Despite the two meetings of the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism that Under-Secretary-General Lacroix discussed, a political solution and the implementation of resolution 2046 (2018) are still lacking. We therefore call on both the Sudan and South Sudan to actively engage in finding a solution, which must be carried out by the countries themselves. The international community can and will support them, but it cannot be a substitute for that solution.

In the absence of a political solution, UNISFA continues to play a crucial role in stabilizing the Abyei area. In that regard, I would like to reiterate the gratitude that other colleagues have expressed to Ethiopia for contributing high-quality peacekeepers. We agree with the Secretary-General's recommendation (S/2019/817) that the mandate of UNISFA, including its support for the Verification and Monitoring Mechanism, should be extended by six months. However, as we have said before, the Mission should be calibrated in order to enable it to respond effectively to the changing realities on the ground. It is essential to ensure that it has the capacity to address the rising crime rate, support community-level peace efforts, mediation and dialogue and advance support for the African Union Commission, the African Union High-Level Implementation Panel and the two parties concerned. In order to address the rising crime rate and the overall security situation, I would like to underline the urgent need to strengthen the police component.

We note with concern that the recommended adaptations of the mandate established by the Council in November 2018 and in May this year have not yet been implemented. We strongly urge the new Government of the Sudan to issue visas without further delay, especially to enable the mandated increase in UNISFA's police personnel, and to begin work on the

191 applications that are still outstanding, including for a civilian Deputy Head of Mission. We also see a continued need to strengthen the Mission's civilian component in order to support the efforts of the Abyei communities to achieve reconciliation and create enduring peaceful relations, particularly by supporting initiatives for the full and effective participation of women at all stages of the peace process. As the Secretary-General recommended, it will be essential to deploy political affairs officers to the Mission headquarters as well as its liaison offices in Khartoum, Juba and Addis Ababa, which will enable the Mission to support the political process more effectively and improve UNISFA's communication and awareness-raising capabilities. The Mission mandate should ensure continued effective human rights monitoring, including of any sexual and gender-based violence and violations and abuses of human rights, including those committed against women and children.

In summary, Germany welcomes the overall progress that has been made in the political process. We urge and encourage the parties to work towards a political solution for their border region. We continue to support UNISFA and its mandate, and we call for implementing its adaptation in order to address the current challenges.

**Mrs. Mele Colifa** (Equatorial Guinea) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation wishes to thank Mr. Jean-Pierre Lacroix, Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations, and Mr. Parfait Onanga-Anyanga, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Horn of Africa, for their informative briefings.

Equatorial Guinea would like to express its gratitude to the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA) and the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism for the stabilizing role they have played in the Abyei region through their continued efforts to communicate and mediate among the various communities in the region, which demonstrate the Mission's commitment to ensuring the welfare of the population of Abyei and the border region. In that regard, the Verification and Monitoring Mechanism continues to be an essential tool for decisions on border issues.

We commend the efforts being made and encouraging steps being taken by the leaders of both the Sudan and South Sudan with a view to improving their relations and paving the way for new momentum

for both countries. We also welcomed the visit to Khartoum in August by President Salva Kiir of South Sudan to attend the ceremony of the historic signing of the political and constitutional declarations marking the start of transitional rule in the Sudan, as well as the visit to Juba on 12 September by Mr. Abdalla Hamdok, the new Prime Minister of the Sudan, aimed at improving bilateral relations with regard to borders and trade. We applaud the commitment to restoring relations among people living in the border region as a first step towards resolving the border disputes between the Sudan and South Sudan. We ask the Council to take advantage of this opportunity to extend its support to both countries in their efforts to overcome their years of conflict and division.

Notwithstanding the progress made, we are concerned about the general security situation in Abyei, which remains fragile, as well as the continuing tensions among communities, the increase in crime, the scattered presence of armed elements in the area, the levels of widespread poverty and unemployment, the lack of any legal agreement or unity between the two parties on dealing with criminals detained in the Abyei area, and the failure of both parties to sign the memorandum of understanding on establishing procedures for dealing with such criminals, despite several reminders that have been issued since November 2016.

My country remains extremely concerned about the lack of progress towards establishing a political process, owing to the latest political developments in the Sudan and South Sudan, to conclude negotiations related to the border between the two countries. That should not overshadow the importance of the stabilizing role that UNISFA and the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism continue to play along the borders between the two countries. In that regard, we hope that this stalemate will be broken with the establishment of the transitional Government in Khartoum and its pledge to end all remaining conflicts in the Sudan. We urge the two parties to pursue their talks to overcome their disagreements over disputed and claimed areas along the border, in accordance with resolution 2416 (2018), taking into account the concept of flexible borders agreed in 2012 in order to reach agreement on the final demarcation of the common border.

We believe that the 2011 agreements remain the only way to achieve lasting stability in the Abyei region and the Sudan-South Sudan border. Therefore, all parties



involved must clearly reaffirm their commitment to those agreements and make the necessary efforts to take measures that will lead to peace and stability as soon as possible.

In conclusion, we congratulate all those who have facilitated progress in the Abyei Area, such as the African Union, UNISFA and the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism, which have shown commendable determination in the pursuit of peace and security in the border area. We urge them to maintain the necessary momentum and spirit of compromise for the implementation of the signed agreements.

We urge the transitional Government in Khartoum to hold talks with South Sudan and with regional, continental and international partners, particularly UNISFA, in order to expeditiously address the country's challenges with regard to Abyei, in particular, and relations with South Sudan, in general.

**Mr. Almunayekh** (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to thank Mr. Jean-Pierre Lacroix, Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations, and Mr. Parfait Onanga-Anyanga, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Horn of Africa, for their invaluable briefings.

In the context of our debate today, I would like to focus on three issues: the work of the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA), the desired bilateral cooperation and the way forward.

With regard to the work of UNISFA, we condemn all attacks on UNISFA and peacekeepers by whomsoever. We emphasize the importance of the full deployment of UNISFA, in keeping with resolution 2469 (2019), and we appreciate the tireless efforts made by mission personnel to maintain peace in Abyei. We also welcome the technical extension two weeks ago, through resolution 2492 (2019), to define a clearer and more consistent mandate for UNISFA. At the same time, the parties concerned — the Sudan, South Sudan and Ethiopia — must accept that mandate. We also call for the adoption of a gradual and thoughtful approach in the mission's development so as to ensure the security of Abyei, its inhabitants and all peacekeepers working there.

With regard to bilateral cooperation, we welcome the agreement reached by the Joint Technical Committee for Border Demarcation on the remaining

border disputes, as well as on the resumption of river navigation through the borders and its use for the delivery of humanitarian assistance. We hope that cooperation will increase until all the provisions of the relevant Council resolutions are met. We hope, too, that Abyei will be more than merely a place of convergence and coexistence for its inhabitants. We hope that it becomes a symbol of fraternity between the two neighbouring countries, especially in the light of the constructive political roles played by Khartoum and Juba in the respective countries' political processes.

With regard to the way forward, we all know that the Sudan and South Sudan are going through a transitional phase. This is an opportunity to achieve positive and constructive progress. The next phase will require the Council to be patient, temper its demands and give adequate latitude to both countries. As we mentioned several months ago, that could contribute to even more progress, including in the three joint institutions in Abyei. The Secretary-General's good offices, through his Special Envoy, could also be helpful.

In conclusion, the State of Kuwait is fully prepared to cooperate with the two neighbouring countries, the Security Council and the Secretariat in order to reach a definitive settlement of the situation in Abyei and to maintain security in the Sudan, South Sudan and the entire region.

**Mr. Clay** (United Kingdom): The Sudan and South Sudan are at critical junctures in their political transitions. We hope to see both Governments seize the opportunities this offers for forging a lasting and comprehensive peace in Abyei and Blue Nile and South Kordofan states. We are therefore encouraged by the recent talks between the Governments of the Sudan and South Sudan and express our hope that this momentum in bilateral relations will continue. Strengthened dialogue is key to securing a lasting resolution to the situation in Abyei.

We remain concerned that armed forces from both sides continue to occupy the Safe Demilitarized Border Zone. We therefore commend the recent commitment of both Governments to withdrawing all forces from the Zone and we urge swift implementation of that commitment.

The United Kingdom welcomes the first round of preliminary peace talks between the Government of the Sudan and the armed movements. We encourage all parties to return to talks on 21 November, ready to

engage constructively and without preconditions. We also welcome the Government of the Sudan's moves to remove bureaucratic impediments on humanitarian actors. We hope that this decision will be implemented in full, enabling unfettered humanitarian access across the Sudan, including in Abyei and the Two Areas.

Against that changing backdrop, we welcome the continuing progress outlined in the Secretary-General's report (S/2019/817) at the mission level, including on human rights and judicial capacity-building. However, we recognize the persistent operational challenges the mission faces, including delays in issuing visas and entry clearances for mission assets. We regret that the civilian Deputy Head of Mission has not yet been deployed, given the importance of this role in supporting progress on the political track.

Like others around the table, we commend the Government of Ethiopia for its contribution to the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA). We condemn all attacks on mission personnel and reiterate our condolences to the Government of Ethiopia and the family of the peacekeeper who lost his life on 16 July.

As the security situation in Abyei remains fragile, with an increase in criminality and the sporadic presence of armed elements, we share the Secretary-General's assessment that UNISFA continues to have a vital role to play in maintaining stability. The Council should ensure that the mission is adequately resourced to deliver on its mandates, including through strengthened civilian and police capabilities. That is vital if Abyei and the Two Areas are to benefit from the opportunities for peace created by recent political developments at the national level.

**Ms. Bustamante** (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): We are grateful for the holding of this meeting and thank Mr. Jean-Pierre Lacroix and Mr. Parfait Onanga-Anyanga for their important briefings today.

We highlight the overtures made by the new authorities of Khartoum and their counterparts in Yuba. The reciprocal visits by senior officials of both countries in August and September give us reason to be hopeful of their determination to improve bilateral relations.

We welcome the meeting of the Joint Political and Security Mechanism held on 2 October and hope that its subsequent meetings will report on important progress, such as the withdrawal of forces from the Safe Demilitarized Border Zone and the establishment

of border crossing corridors. We underscore the critical role of the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism in regulating relations between the two countries. We also acknowledge the stabilizing role of the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA) in Abyei and along the border between the Sudan and South Sudan. At the same time, we stress that the primary responsibility for resolving outstanding issues on the shared border lies with the Governments of the Sudan and South Sudan.

We note with concern that women continue to be underrepresented at all levels of decision-making in Abyei. In that regard, we appreciate UNISFA's mediation efforts with traditional and administrative leaders, with a view to protecting women's rights and fostering their participation in decision-making. We welcome the initiative of the United Nations joint programme initiative for Abyei by the country teams in the Sudan and South Sudan, which is aimed at strengthening local institutional capacity and the rule of law, fostering peacebuilding and development, promoting gender equality and combating sexual violence, among other things.

We reiterate the urgent need for the establishment of the Abyei police service. We call on the Government of South Sudan to continue joint planning for its establishment and on the Government of the Sudan to expedite the issuance of visas to UNISFA police personnel so that the rule of law can be fully established in Abyei.

We appreciate the efforts of humanitarian personnel in addressing the humanitarian situation in Abyei by providing food assistance, health services and through community livelihood activities and capacity-building. We encourage the international community to continue to provide the necessary resources for development projects and the establishment of basic services.

We are confident that, despite the limited progress on issues related to border demarcation, the Governments of the Sudan and South Sudan will capitalize on recent developments in the region to move forward with concrete measures leading to the resolution of the issue of the status of Abyei and the establishment of the shared border.

Lastly, we believe that it is of the utmost importance that the Security Council continue to support the parties. In that regard, we stress the need to maintain UNISFA's presence in the Abyei Area, adapt its mandates to the

situation on the ground and create the necessary space for reaching a viable political solution to the conflict.

**Mr. Lewicki (Poland):** Let me also thank Under-Secretary-General Jean-Pierre Lacroix and Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, Mr. Parfait Onanga-Anyanga, for their informative briefings.

Poland welcomes the recent efforts by the leadership of the Sudan and South Sudan to enhance bilateral relations between the two countries. We encourage the Sudanese and South Sudanese authorities to continue building on the rapprochement that we have witnessed over the past months and work together to achieve a lasting solution to the status of the Abyei Area.

Despite those encouraging developments, we note with regret that very little progress has been made on the issues of border demarcation and the process leading to the final status of Abyei, especially with regard to the establishment of joint institutions in the Abyei Area.

We are concerned that the lack of genuine cooperation between the Sudan and South Sudan will perpetuate the administrative vacuum that exists in Abyei. The security situation in the Area remains fragile, with criminality on the rise. The absence of effective formal authorities in Abyei is resulting in limited law enforcement and the lack of good governance and the rule of law. Widespread poverty and unemployment, as well as the lack of basic social services, are only contributing to the volatility of the situation.

In that context, I would like to praise the role of the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA). My country continues to believe that the relatively stable security situation in Abyei can be attributed to a large extent to the mission's efforts and the sacrifices made daily by its personnel on the ground. We believe, however, that the presence of UNISFA cannot be a substitute for the role of the State.

We remain convinced that every peacekeeping mission needs to adapt to the changing realities on the ground. That also applies to UNISFA, which has to be able to adjust its tasks to the current situation in Abyei. We voted in favour of UNISFA's new mandate last year, which reinforced the police component within the Mission and enhanced its civilian capacities. Today we note with regret that the increase in police personnel has yet to be implemented and that the civilian Deputy Head of Mission has yet to be appointed. We call on the Sudan authorities to facilitate the mission's

reconfiguration. We support the renewal of UNISFA's mandate for another six months and remain in favour of strengthening the political posture of the mission and enhancing its capacity to support the political process in Abyei Area.

I stress that the primary responsibility for the implementation of the 2011 Agreement between the Government of the Sudan and the Government of South Sudan on Border Security and the Joint Political and Security Mechanism and the 2012 Agreements on Cooperation and Security Arrangements lies with the Governments of the Sudan and South Sudan. Poland believes that the Security Council should remain unified in its message and encourage both Governments to swiftly establish the joint mechanisms with full capabilities, normalize border agreements and, in terms of the long-term perspective, elaborate a political solution that will lead to lasting peace in Abyei. There is no way for the Sudan and South Sudan to resolve the question of Abyei other than through dialogue, including intercommunal dialogue and reconciliation, and a genuine and inclusive political process, involving women and youth.

Finally, let me draw the Council's attention to my colleague, Poland's Political Coordinator, sitting behind me. As everyone knows, to a large extent, the Council's work rests on the Coordinator's shoulders. It is Kamil Krzysztof Mielus' last day at the Mission in New York — at least for the time being. I hope that Council members share my belief that Kamil has contributed greatly the work of the Council. I therefore shout out and offer my kudos to Kamil for his work and daily commitment. I thank him.

**The President:** I congratulate the representative of Poland, Mr. Mielus, and wish him well in discharging his future duties.

I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of South Africa.

We would also like to add our voice to express our appreciation to our briefers, Mr. Lacroix and Mr. Onanga-Anyanga, for their insightful observations. We also appreciate the report of the Secretary-General (S/2019/817) and the continued support for the work being undertaken by United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA). South Africa notes and welcomes the positive political developments that have taken place in both the Sudan and South Sudan, including those highlighted in the report of the Secretary-General.

I will speak to only two issues — the political situation and the developments concerning UNISFA.

With regard to the political situation, South Africa is encouraged by the positive strides being made by the Sudan and South Sudan in improving their relations. The support provided reciprocally to one another's peace processes is indicative of the trajectory that the two countries have taken. It is our hope that these countries can maintain the momentum towards the achievement of peace, stability and economic development.

We welcome the efforts undertaken by South Sudan last week in hosting peace talks for the Sudan and armed groups. This continued rapprochement by the two countries is fundamental in rebuilding mutual trust and addressing all outstanding issues. We urge both countries to redouble their efforts in mustering resolve and to implement all the provisions of the Agreement of 20 June 2011, particularly concerning the final status of Abyei.

Turning to the developments pertaining to UNISFA, South Africa welcomes the Security Council's decision to renew the support provided by UNISFA to the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism of the Sudan and South Sudan under resolution 2492 (2019).

My delegation appreciates and welcomes the importance of the stabilizing role that UNISFA and the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism in particular continue to play along the borders between the Sudan and South Sudan. We recognize the critical and strategic importance of Abyei Area for both countries as well as its potential for being a destabilizing point if not closely monitored.

We therefore encourage the Sudan and South Sudan to resume talks to implement their agreements on border issues and work towards meeting the benchmarks previously set by the Security Council. South Africa further supports the convening of the Joint Political and Security Mechanism meeting in October 2019, through the coordination of the African Union High-Level Implementation Panel.

In conclusion, South Africa takes note of the recommendation made by the Secretary-General in his report of 15 October 2019 to the Security Council.

As the Council returns from Juba, we hope that both parties remain steadfast in their commitment to peace and stability. Similarly, the Council's continued support for UNISFA remains paramount.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I give the floor to the representative of the Sudan.

**Mr. Ahmed** (Sudan) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to express my appreciation and thanks to Mr. Lacroix and Mr. Onanga-Anyanga for their comprehensive briefings. I would also like to thank the Secretary-General for his report (S/2019/817).

I take this opportunity to reiterate the full commitment of my country to cooperating with the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA), so that it can implement its mandate pursuant to resolution 1990 (2011) and subsequent resolutions and carry out its functions in a way that contributes to strengthening security and stability in Abyei and along the border between the two countries.

I want to stress once again that the Agreement of 20 June 2011, on temporary arrangements for the administration and security of the Abyei area, is the basis for a comprehensive settlement of the final status of Abyei. The agreement stated that no change would be made concerning what has been agreed upon without the approval of the three signatory parties: the Government of the Sudan, the Government of the Republic of South Sudan and the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia.

UNISFA is a security force in nature. It was deployed to carry out specific functions for an interim period, as agreed by all parties and as ratified by the Council, taking into consideration that Abyei is part of Sudanese territory and that the Sudan has full sovereignty thereover, pursuant to the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement.

We have gathered here today to discuss the situation in Abyei in the light of recent significant changes in the Sudan followed by a major change in the relationship between the two countries, particularly in the context of the mediation of the Sudan between the parties to the conflict in South Sudan and the fact that the Sudan hosted the negotiations that led to the signing of the peace agreement. Negotiations began recently between the Sudanese parties to achieve peace in the Sudan, sponsored and hosted by the Government of the Republic of South Sudan. This round of talks led to important and positive results that strengthened the chances of reaching a just, comprehensive and sustainable peace.



The efforts of the two countries — the Sudan and South Sudan — to assist each other in achieving peace and stability must be supported. These endeavours are in the interest of the two fraternal peoples and will lead to strengthening cooperation between the two countries, which could represent a solid basis for seeking a solution for Abyei through the implementation of previous agreements.

Several meetings were held recently at which joint bodies and commissions between the Sudan and South Sudan addressed pending issues concerning Abyei. The Joint Political and Security Mechanism in Juba held its meeting earlier this month and discussed measures that were implemented in order to establish joint administrative mechanisms and to evacuate both forces from the Safe Demilitarized Border Zone, as well as complete the opening of border crossing points.

Both parties reaffirmed their commitment to the agreements of 27 September 2012 and to the immediate reopening of the Kosti-Renk crossing point. The Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism also held a meeting and issued a full description of the border areas agreed upon by the two countries, and it agreed to meet again to complete its work on disputed and claimed areas.

I would like to reaffirm the importance of the Security Council considering these important developments when extending the mandate of UNISFA next month. It is also important for the upcoming mandate to support the positive developments between the two countries, leading to the final status of Abyei, free of any measure that could undermine these developments and efforts on the ground.

In conclusion, I would like to emphasize the determination of the Government of the Sudan to cooperate with the Government of the Republic of South Sudan and all partners to reach a lasting and comprehensive solution leading to security and stability for Abyei and the region, while giving the people of Abyei the opportunity to live the decent life that they deserve. We also assert our full readiness for and openness to any initiative aimed at reaching our main objective: resolving the final status of Abyei. I would also like to thank all those who contributed to facilitating the work of UNISFA, particularly the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, the African Union Commission and the United Nations.

**The President:** I now give the floor to the representative of South Sudan.

**Mrs. Adeng** (South Sudan): We would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of October. Our delegation is ready to cooperate and work with you during your tenure. We would also like to welcome and recognize the presence of the Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations and the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Horn of Africa.

We wish also to welcome the members of the Council back from their recent field visit. That visit to South Sudan shows their support for the people of South Sudan and for the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan, to whose full implementation my Government is fully committed.

On behalf of the Government of the Republic of South Sudan, we would like to welcome the briefing and the recommendations of the Secretary-General on the situation in Abyei. We want to urge that the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA) presence extend beyond the current areas of operations in the Abyei box in order to allow for the return of the civilian population to their homes. That objective will not be achieved if the troop ceiling is reduced.

We are hopeful that the new Government of the Republic of the Sudan, which has expressed its commitment to resolving any outstanding issues related to the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement, will work together with my Government to finalize the status of Abyei. We also welcome the Secretary-General's call for the appointment of a civilian deputy head of Mission, which would enhance the ongoing efforts of the local chiefs and the people of Abyei towards reconciliation and development.

My Government would like to bring to the attention of the Council, in regard to visa issuance, the fact that article 34 of the two status-of-forces agreements signed by the United Nations — with the Sudan on 1 October 2012 and with South Sudan on 12 November 2012, respectively — states that either South Sudan or the Sudan can issue visas. My Government stands ready to facilitate and issue entry visas for those who need to enter Abyei.

We would also like to recognize the tireless efforts of the Government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, the United Nations, the African Union

High-Level Implementation Panel and the Sudan in the positive collaboration they have demonstrated for the support of UNISFA and the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism (JBVMM) mandates. We assure the Council that our Government and the Government of the Sudan have been fully engaged in the implementation of the mandate. For our Government, Abyei has been a priority and we appreciate the efforts and contributions of the regional and international

communities. We strongly believe that the continuous support for UNISFA and the JBVMM will allow for more progress to be achieved on the benchmarks.

I would like to conclude by reiterating that the Government of the Republic of South Sudan is committed to working closely with the Security Council to implement this mandate.

*The meeting rose at 11.30 a.m.*