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Seventy-fourth year

8657th meeting

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New York

Provisional

<i>President:</i>	Ms. Pierce	(United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)
<i>Members:</i>	Belgium	Mrs. Van Vlierberge
	China	Mr. Wu Haitao
	Côte d'Ivoire	Mr. Adom
	Dominican Republic	Mr. Singer Weisinger
	Equatorial Guinea	Mr. Esono Mbengono
	France	Mr. De Rivière
	Germany	Mr. Heusgen
	Indonesia	Mr. Djani
	Kuwait	Mr. Alotaibi
	Peru	Mr. Duclos
	Poland	Mr. Lewicki
	Russian Federation	Mr. Polyanskiy
	South Africa	Mr. Matjila
	United States of America	Mrs. Craft

Agenda

Peace and security in Africa

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Peace and security in Africa

The President: In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Her Excellency Ms. Fatima Kyari Mohammed, Permanent Observer of the African Union to the United Nations, to participate in this meeting.

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

I wish to warmly welcome the Deputy Secretary-General, Her Excellency Ms. Amina Mohammed, to whom I now give the floor.

The Deputy Secretary-General: I thank you, Madam President, for the invitation to brief the Security Council on my recent joint mission with the African Union (AU) to Ethiopia, Djibouti, Eritrea and Somalia. This is the fourth visit I have undertaken focused on women, peace and security and development, and the third joint solidarity mission with the African Union. I am pleased that Ambassador Fatima Kyari Mohammed is here to brief alongside me.

At the request of the Prime Minister, I also travelled with senior United Nations officials to the Sudan, to focus on support for the transition, the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) and women's leadership. Those missions are an opportunity to strengthen implementation of our shared United Nations-AU frameworks on peace and security, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Agenda 2063 of the African Union and the Silencing the Guns in Africa by 2020 initiative.

I would like to commend the leadership of Chairperson Moussa Faki Mahamat as well as that of Ms. Bineta Diop, AU Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security, who led the AU delegation.

In each country, we met Heads of State, ministers, senior women Government officials, civil society members, the international community and our United Nations country teams and peacekeeping missions. I left all five countries with a sense of hope and optimism. The chance for peace in this region is very real. The international community, together with these countries,

can find lasting solutions to the complex challenges of the region.

Each country is moving at its own pace through a process of reform and transformation. And in all countries, women are playing a critical leadership role in social cohesion, economic revival and peace. The leaders of these countries are making concrete efforts to place gender equality and greater representation of women at the heart of reforms in order to reap the benefits of the links between inclusion, stability and peace, and to give substance to prevention efforts during these complex transitions.

Ethiopia now has its first woman President, and half its Government ministers are women. Together they hold some of the most significant decision-making portfolios in the country. The President is leading efforts towards social cohesion. Women serve as the Ministers of Peace, Labour and Infrastructure and are at the helm of the National Electoral Commission and the Supreme Court. The Government programme includes far-reaching legal reforms for greater gender equality. All of this was cited by the Nobel Committee when it awarded Prime Minister Ahmed the Nobel Peace Prize last month. I also met with the Mothers for Peace initiative, which is working across communities to repair the social fabric of the country, and with women who have served as United Nations peacekeepers. I note that Ethiopia is our largest troop-contributing country.

In Somalia, we met the Prime Minister and dynamic female ministers who are introducing reforms to address the challenges of women's low representation in political life. We heard from women in civil society who are on the front lines of preventing the spread of violent extremism. We also met with the head of the National Independent Electoral Commission, who has a challenging task ahead of her. Our efforts in Somalia must prioritize financial support to free, fair and inclusive elections next year, as well as to the national development priorities of the Government, including debt relief. There are islands of stability in the country that can be built upon, but that will require more central Government cooperation with federal member states, as well as a road map for transitional justice and social reintegration.

In Eritrea, one of the few countries in the world where women fought in significant numbers on the front lines of the independence movement, gender equality and women's leadership are seen as an unquestioned

reality. We met with young women entrepreneurs and saw the investments in critical infrastructure — from multipurpose dams to solar power to roads that will reintegrate the country with the region. Relations between Eritrea and its neighbours are nascent, but they are making strides. There is a unique opportunity at this moment for the international community to support greater integration and sustainable peace.

In Djibouti, we met with local women who have built community centres to care for children with disabilities and to support refugee and migrant women, in a context where many young women are fleeing conflict or migrating in search of a better life, only to become victims of human trafficking and horrendous abuse. The country has recently passed legislation that increases maternity leave and provides for greater protection from violence, gender parity in the civil service and the private sector and a quota for women in Parliament.

In the Sudan, I met some of the women who were the engine of the revolution and are now demanding equality and social inclusion across all strata of society.

All of that reinforces the need for us to question our own narrative and mindsets. The region I saw has some of the fastest-growing economies on the continent, with rich natural resources, extraordinary capacity, particularly among their youth, and genuine reforms. Those are the elements that we need to support and the narrative that we need to share.

The road ahead for the Horn of Africa will not be easy. The foundations have been laid for a transition from peace to sustainable development. But building on these fragile foundations will require unity and cooperation across the region and common ground internationally to accompany those transitions. That is particularly true when it comes to the issue of refugees and internally displaced persons, of which there are tens of thousands, many of whom are vulnerable to trafficking, as well as in finding regional solutions to protection challenges, including sexual violence, in areas where conflict is still going on.

It was clear from our travels that the whole region is cut from the same fabric. Each country is its own shade, but they are interwoven. What happens in one country will impact the others, and therefore regional approach and genuine collaboration are paramount. In that regard, I am encouraged by the signs of the revitalization of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development. This

platform will be essential to providing the necessary pathways we can all support.

That is also the reason that it was important that it was a joint mission with the African Union. In working together, we can achieve so much more. As one Government official said to us, the joint mission has changed the nature of the relationship with both the United Nations and the AU, in terms of the quality and content of the dialogue. What is needed now is to maintain and deepen that dialogue and partnership, and to use them to encourage regional solutions and unity.

Finally, I wish to turn to the Sudan. Last week, the Council heard from an amazing young woman, Alaa Salah, whose image became synonymous with the protests in Khartoum (see S/PV.8649). I met Alaa, along with three other women civil society activists — Huda Shafiq, Safaa Adam and Samah Mohamed — in New York, after talking to their compatriots in Khartoum and El Fasher. Thanks to the efforts of these amazing women and thousands more like them, the Sudan is seeing a new dawn. We must be ready to support the people and the Government through a successful transition that lays the foundations for truly inclusive elections and sustained peace.

I welcome the recent unanimous extension by the Council of UNAMID's mandate for one more year and its decision to include in that mandate support for the peace process and peacebuilding activities. During my visit to El Fasher and in meetings with women from local communities, they made it clear that a premature drawdown could leave a security vacuum, thereby exposing them to greater violence and putting at risk progress towards economic stability.

We have just taken part in a whole-of-system visioning exercise with the Sudanese Government that will enable us to respond to the changing context and support the Sudan's priorities over the next three years of the transition. The exercise establishes a vision for our partnership with the Sudanese people, our support to those leading the transition — the Forces for Freedom and Change, the Sovereign Council and the transitional Government — and the national development plan that they have jointly developed. Our responses will sequence immediate and longer-term activities, in alignment with the priorities set by the Government. Those priorities include the peace process, economic and social development, economic reforms, the

reintegration of internally displaced persons and comprehensive transitional justice and reconciliation.

These are tall orders and, while they need to be delivered urgently, expectations must also be managed. I urge the Council, and the international community more broadly, to assist in identifying concrete actions that can be delivered in the short term over the next three months, while maintaining momentum and addressing the medium- and long-term opportunities necessary for lasting peace.

At the same time, the Government is committed to addressing root causes. I cannot put it better than the Sudanese Minister who told me:

“It is not peace documents that are missing in [the] Sudan. We have shelves of beautifully worded peace agreements since independence. We need to address the root causes — exclusion, human rights, marginalization and underdevelopment. We need a Marshall Plan for areas of our country and the support of the international community to deliver this.”

Responding to the opportunity in the Sudan will require putting aside our usual ways of working. Investment in development must accompany the transition if it is to take root and flourish. Continuous efforts in a wide range of critical areas, such as delisting and debt relief, will be urgently needed to give the Sudan a fresh start, as will creative solutions for domestic resources and external investments, including tax reforms and the recovery of stolen assets.

While they are moving at different speeds, each country in the region is heading in the right direction. We must seize this opportunity to invest and support peace and promote women’s participation and leadership, education, peace dividends, free and fair elections and the short-term, high-impact projects that reach those who are farthest behind.

Having met with our United Nations staff in each country, I can attest to their courage, sacrifice, commitment, motivation, and willingness to walk this road together in support of the collective goals of national counterparts. That includes everything from the United Nations Office to the African Union personnel, who are leading our partnership with the African Union on peace and security, to the innovative efforts of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime on trafficking in the region, the UN-Women’s work

towards mobilizing and supporting women’s demands, the United Nations Development Programme’s role in sustainable development, the Economic Commission for Africa’s efforts at strengthening economies, and all those who serve in our country team under the leadership of our Resident Coordinators, alongside the critical work of our peacekeeping and political missions. With the solidarity and support of the international community, those countries can overcome their challenges and become an anchor for growth and stability within the broader region and the African continent.

Finally, I would like to pay tribute to our peacekeepers and specifically mention our women in peacekeeping. In each of the countries that we visited, the critical importance of women serving in security forces, the police, the military and in peacekeeping was starkly clear. Those women, against all odds, strengthen our protection efforts, increase the credibility of our endeavours, engage in local-level mediation and make communities feel much more at ease. And yet we continue to deploy less than four per cent female peacekeepers. Much more can and should be done. Women shared their practical challenges with us. Even where they are enrolled in their national security services, they are often not provided with the opportunities needed to be deployed — from map-reading to specific driving and computer skills. When they are deployed, they often contend with harassment or are asked to serve tea and coffee rather than patrol communities. The kits we provide do not fit the needs of women. In contexts such as that of Somalia, where head-covering is needed, that is left to the individual women to secure. And while this may be the first time that these words have been said in the Security Council, sanitary pads are a basic necessity for women and yet do not form part of their deployment kits.

As the Security Council returns to the open debate on women and peace and security this afternoon, I hope that these issues will be among those discussed. I humbly urge the Council to heed the winds of change, so that we may continue to strive towards peace in all hearts and in all nations.

The President: I thank the Deputy Secretary-General for her thoughtful briefing. Her words are well-heeded.

I now give the floor to Ms. Mohammed.

Ms. Mohammed: At the outset, I wish to congratulate the delegation of the United Kingdom to

the United Nations for assuming the presidency of the Security Council for the month of November. I also wish to thank Ambassador Pierce, and through her the United Kingdom, for giving us an opportunity to brief the Security Council on our recent joint African Union (AU)-United Nations solidarity mission to the Horn of Africa, which was led by my dear sister Her Excellency Amina Mohammed, Deputy Secretary-General — along with whom I am honoured to be briefing the Council today — and Her Excellency Ms. Bineta Diop, Special Envoy of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission on Women, Peace and Security.

As indicated by the Deputy Secretary-General, senior women leaders from the African Union Commission and the United Nations conducted a joint solidarity mission on the participation of women in peace, security and development and visited a number of countries in the Horn of Africa from 21 to 26 October. On the first day, the joint mission briefed the African Union Peace and Security Council on the purpose of the mission. We also met with the Chairperson of the African Union Commission for exchange and guidance on the proposed engagements during the mission. The central tenet of these missions is that of supporting women's initiatives and enhancing their roles and leadership in peace processes, governance and the development of their communities, countries and ultimately the transformation of Africa through inclusive processes.

The mission to the Horn of Africa is the third joint AU-United Nations solidarity mission. This past year, in July 2018, we had the opportunity to brief the Security Council after the second joint mission, which had taken us to South Sudan, the Lake Chad basin and the Sahel region (see S/PV.8306). Then, we witnessed first-hand that peace, security and development had little chances to stand without the full and effective participation of women and young people, who are on the front line addressing climate insecurity, radicalization and violent extremism. Our efforts this year highlighted the poignant realities of women and girls who continue to suffer from exclusion, communal conflict, internal displacement, unregulated migration and violent extremism. However, in the midst of the challenges faced by women, girls and young people in the Horn of Africa, our delegation also witnessed resilience, commitment and a strong drive for the transformation of the region. Indeed, in all of the countries we visited,

the delegation witnessed the creativity and innovation of women in the political and socioeconomic spheres of their societies. We must all bolster their laudable and courageous initiatives. With that in mind, permit me to share some of our experiences and perceptions from this year's visit.

In Ethiopia, our joint delegation sat down and listened to the testimonies of women leading peacebuilding efforts at the grassroots level. The Mothers for Peace initiative has endeavoured to sensitize young people to the dangers of ethnic division as the country undertakes to build a democratic and peaceful country. The delegation also met with women peacekeepers, who play a pivotal role in Ethiopia's engagement in peace operations. We participated in the launch of the National Ethiopian Chapter of the African Women Leaders Network (AWLN), together with the President of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, Her Excellency Mrs. Sahle-Work Zewde, herself an AWLN pioneer. The National Ethiopian Chapter of the AWLN will seek to contribute to ensuring women's financial inclusion, empower rural women, mentor young women and support women's participation in peace and development. Our delegation further seeks to continue supporting women-led movements that are transforming the lives of people on the ground through that network. We also visited a shelter for women victims of human trafficking and heard first hand their plight as they try to reconcile their experiences and try to heal from the physical and mental wounds. The African Union, in partnership with its member States, is providing leadership to tackle the challenges of human trafficking in the region. The African Union-Horn of Africa initiative on human trafficking and migrant smuggling provides a platform for countries in the region to exchange information, share experiences and deliberate on policies and strategies to effectively respond to that menace.

In Djibouti, our joint delegation met with women parliamentarians and entrepreneurs in new technologies and media, as well as medical doctors who are leading transformation on the ground. Our meeting with the President of the Republic, His Excellency Mr. Ismaïl Omar Guelleh, was very positive. He reaffirmed the country's commitment to strengthening women's participation in governance and peace, especially in the light of the new era for peace in the region. The African Union remains committed to supporting the Government, women and young people of Djibouti in

an effort to achieve the objectives inscribed in Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

In Somalia, the joint mission was received by the Prime Minister, His Excellency Mr. Hassan Ali Khayre, and other senior Government officials. Our consultations focused on women's participation in elections and preventing violent extremism. At the headquarters of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), we were inspired by our engagements with women peacekeepers. We shared in their activities at the community level, as well as in improving enhanced civil-military relations, which allows AMISOM to support national initiatives on women's leadership for peace and elections. The AU reaffirms its commitment to the participation of women in its mission in that country, and the AU is actively engaging its member States to increase women's participation in peacekeeping and to increase the number of women in their national defence and security services.

In Eritrea, women's economic empowerment featured strongly with interactions on dam projects led by young women engineers to provide water for households and agriculture. The joint delegation also met with the National Union of Eritrean Women, a leading force for women that goes back to the years of the liberation struggle. We also met with a dynamic group of young women who are committed to building their country and inspired by a future filled with hope and potential. The joint delegation also held a fruitful meeting with the President of Eritrea, Mr. Isaias Afwerki, as well as with ministers, senior Government officials and the diplomatic community. We had important exchanges and discussed the meaningful participation of women in all sectors for peace, security and development. Despite the positive perceptions garnered from the initiatives on the ground, there is no doubt that efforts have to be redoubled in order to ensure that we remain on track towards achieving the development goals we have set for ourselves.

Last week, during the open debate on women and peace and security (see S/PV.8649), we were reminded that the realities on the ground are far from reflective of the pronouncements and commitments in our deliberations and decisions. It is time for us to break that cycle. Women's aspirations and initiatives that we heard and saw in our interactions across the four countries provide a clear basis to affirm that women's participation is imperative if we want to deliver on our

commitments. Substantive support to their organizations and projects and continued engagement with member States to create the conducive environment for women's participation in decision-making, at all levels, from grassroots to higher office, should be prioritized.

In French they say "*l'union fait la force*" — there is strength in unity. Indeed, concerted efforts between our two institutions, guided by the frameworks of cooperation on peace, security and development, provide an immense opportunity to bridge the gaps on women's leadership. I had an opportunity to brief the Council last week (see S/PV.8650), alongside Special Representative of the Secretary-General Hannah Tetteh, on AU-United Nations cooperation, which continues to strengthen as we make significant progress in a number of areas. It is important that our organizations continue to support women's initiatives, as they have impact on communities. At the African Union Commission, under the women, peace and security framework, we want to emphasize the implementation of commitments by various actors and strongly believe that partnership with women's organizations will provide the vehicle for concrete actions.

On that note, I would like to conclude with the following points. First, the Horn of Africa must be encouraged and supported to invest in its women and youth. Secondly, we saw women's initiatives to enhance participation in peace efforts, governance and development geared towards service to the community in all the countries we visited. They need Member State and partner support. Thirdly, women peacekeepers in the African Union Mission in Somalia are playing a key role in the sensitization of Somali women to leadership and community engagement. It is important to continue to support their endeavours and provide them with adequate gender-sensitive facilities to create a better working environment for them. Lastly, the new era of peace in the Horn of Africa provides an immense opportunity for enhanced regional cooperation. It is an opportunity to show true solidarity with the people and the Governments of the region. I call on our two institutions to be at the vanguard of that solidarity and to respond to the aspirations of the people of the Horn of Africa for a peaceful, stable and integrated region.

Allow me to end by commending the efforts undertaken by the women and leadership of Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia and Somalia. The African Union remains firm about the urgency of supporting those regional efforts to ensure the full rebirth of the Horn

of Africa in line with our continental aspirations for peace, security and development.

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

I recognize the presence in the Chamber of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Sexual Violence in Conflict, Ms. Pramila Patten, and thank her for joining us today.

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

Mrs. Craft (United States of America): I thank the Deputy Secretary-General for her briefing. I extend my congratulations to South Africa for a successful presidency of the Security Council and welcome the United Kingdom's presidency for the month of November.

The success of the Council's work in the Horn of Africa hinges on a clear understanding of the key issues. Therefore, the United States is grateful for the close attention to detail, especially to the role played by women and youth in peace processes. I thank Ms. Fatima Mohammed for her briefing. Yes, it is time to break the cycle. I would like to highlight that we have an opportunity to do so with the current peace process in South Sudan.

In remarks last week (see S/PV.8649), I noted that the United States has released a strategy on women, peace and security. Central to that landmark document is a commitment to the full, effective and meaningful participation of women in United Nations peacekeeping operations. While greater female participation is welcome in its own right, our commitment to that principle is born of our understanding that women improve the effectiveness of missions in specific ways that men cannot. As just one example, given that local communities and conflict areas are largely comprised of women and children, female peacekeepers have a unique ability to conduct outreach and build trust among hurting and traumatized populations. We must strive to increase the number of women in military contingents, police units and civilian support forces. The United States will continue to work with troop- and police-contributing countries to strengthen the capabilities of all peacekeepers, as we have over 11,000 women in our Global Peace Operations Initiative. We continue to urge all troop- and police-contributing

countries to promote policies that increase women's participation.

The United States also remains dedicated to advancing security more broadly in the Horn of Africa. We support efforts to stabilize Somalia through the advancement of the federalism process, including peaceful, inclusive and democratic elections next year. We commend Eritrea's efforts to develop and implement a peace agreement with Ethiopia and hope the momentum of peacebuilding in the region leads to greater harmony between Djibouti and Eritrea. We congratulate Prime Minister Ahmed on winning the Nobel Peace Prize for his efforts to promote regional peace and stability. Improving inter-State relations in the Horn of Africa is an important step on the road to greater trade and development. We therefore encourage the United Nations Special Envoy to the region to facilitate more dialogue on improved cooperation and integration. We also look to countries in the Horn of Africa to improve cooperation for the sake of regional peace and stability.

In particular, we urge the Intergovernmental Authority on Development and its member States to engage with South Sudan's leaders and encourage them to reaffirm their commitment to the cessation of hostilities and to implementing their peace agreement. In our recent visit, the Council was united in its message that South Sudan's leaders must embrace compromise to form an inclusive transitional Government. We know the urgency of that task because we saw for ourselves that political failure in this moment will spell catastrophe for the people of South Sudan, especially women and children. The eyes of the international community remain firmly fixed on 12 November, when we expect the parties to form a Government of national unity. That is just one example of why the full participation of women in our institutions of power must be a priority for each of us.

The Council has an incredible opportunity to help secure the meaningful inclusion of women in preventing, resolving and recovering from conflict in Africa. But, frankly, this is not just an opportunity. It is an obligation. When women are involved, the result is more durable peace and greater security. Accordingly, if the Council is serious about fulfilling its core mandate, let us make use of the solution that has been ignored for so long despite standing in plain sight. Let us give more women a seat at the table and let us listen to what they have to say.

Mr. De Rivière (France) (*spoke in French*): First of all, Madam President, I would like to welcome your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council and to thank South Africa for having carried out that function effectively throughout the month of October and for having led the Council on the Horn of Africa. I thank the Deputy Secretary-General for her statement. Thanks also to the Permanent Observer of the African Union for her briefing.

The Deputy Secretary-General's visit to the Horn of Africa is very timely, given the encouraging momentum in the region today. Women are stakeholders in that process, and the momentum must benefit them over time. The resolution we adopted last week (resolution 2493 (2019)) reminded us that the time has come to implement all dimensions of the women and peace and security agenda, everywhere in the world. The United Nations must mobilize fully in support of States.

We welcome the efforts of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Horn of Africa, Mr. Parfait Onanga-Anyanga, in the area of women's political participation in that region. We also commend the efforts of the Prime Minister of Ethiopia to strengthen peace in the region, including his signing of an agreement with Eritrea and the actions he has undertaken in the Sudan with the African Union. We are delighted that he has been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. Ethiopia, which has a woman President and 10 women ministers, is a leading example in terms of women's political participation.

The situation in the Sudan is also encouraging, and France supports Prime Minister Hamdok's efforts to achieve lasting peace and to revive the economy. Sudanese women played a decisive role in their country's revolution. They have earned their rightful place in the transition. In that connection, we call for compliance with regard to the quota for women's representation that was set out in the Constitutional Declaration. The fact that there are four women ministers in the Government is positive, but that should only be the beginning.

Despite that positive momentum, significant challenges remain. We hope that South Sudan will be able to form a Government of National Unity by 12 November. In that regard, we call on all South Sudanese parties to respect the 35-per cent quota for women in transitional bodies, in accordance with the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan.

We also call for a rapprochement between Djibouti and Eritrea in order to enable those two countries to resolve the persistent problems between them. In that regard, we consider it necessary for the Security Council to continue closely monitoring the relations between those two countries.

Finally, in Somalia, while the recent progress achieved by the Somali National Army is encouraging, we remain concerned about the frequency and intensity of attacks by Al-Shabaab and the sexual violence that is being perpetrated in the country. We call for the resumption of dialogue between the Federal Government of Somalia and the federal member states, and believe that Somali women have a key role to play in that process.

I will conclude by reiterating that it is important to France that these transitions enable significant progress to be achieved on the ground with regard to the resolutions of the Council on women and peace and security.

Mr. Duclos (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): We congratulate you, Madam President, and the delegation of the United Kingdom, on assuming the leadership of the work of the Council for the month of November. We wish you and your delegation every success in your work.

We also commend the leadership of the South African delegation towards achieving our objectives during the month of October.

We appreciate the valuable information that has been delivered by the briefers. We also commend in particular the vision that the Deputy Secretary-General, Ms. Amina Mohammed, has shown in her efforts to engage closely with and understand the situation on the ground of women in the East Africa subregion, together with Ms. Bineta Diop, the African Union Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security, and other senior officials of both organizations. That partnership has endowed her with a comprehensive perspective and contributed to strengthening cooperation and synergies in that area.

Peru firmly believes in the importance of the leadership and active participation of women as agents of peace in all phases of conflict, the impact of which has proved not only positive but also crucial. In that regard, while the rapprochement with governmental and non-governmental actors in various countries of

the subregion has led to important advances, it has also revealed elements that still need to be strengthened with regard to the women and peace and security agenda in those States. For example, Somali women are being urged to play a leading role in the economic development of their country and in the fight against terrorism and violent extremism. In that connection, this past Friday the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1373 (2001) concerning counter-terrorism held a meeting aimed precisely at integrating a gender perspective into those objectives. We welcome the contribution made by women and young people in peace and security efforts in that country, which should also include their effective participation in the 2020-2021 federal elections and in the promulgation of a new constitution. We would like to learn more about the role and leadership of women's organizations in those processes.

We also highlight the role that women have played in the Sudan as a key component in the developments that led to the auspicious beginning of a civilian Government. Community leader Ms. Alaa Salah, who helped to mobilize people to achieve that end, briefed the Council last week (see S/PV.8649) and lamented the fact that women had been sidelined in the political process in the months following the revolution. We also appreciate the information that the Deputy Secretary-General shared with us today about the current situation about recent meetings with the leaders of that State.

From that perspective, we consider it essential to promote the participation of Sudanese women in the country's political and economic participation processes and mechanisms, including their greater involvement in decision-making through the creation of employment opportunities and access to Government posts. The same applies to women in Djibouti, Eritrea and the other countries of the subregion. To that end, the Council should maintain and strengthen the gender perspective and the women and peace and security agenda, especially in the drafting of mandates and in the subsequent follow-up to the recommendations that have been made in that regard.

In conclusion, I reiterate Peru's commitment to continuing its implementation of concrete measures in favour of women's participation in these processes, which, as we have said, tend to make them all the more successful and inclusive.

Mrs. Van Vlierberge (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): Madam President, I would first like to wish you every

success during your month as President of the Council. I would also like to thank South Africa for its successful presidency last month.

I commend and thank the Deputy Secretary-General and the African Union Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security for their useful briefings on their recent joint mission in the Horn of Africa.

Just a few days ago, Belgium welcomed Ms. Alaa Salah, Sudanese civil society representative, to the Council (see S/PV.8649). The role played by women in the recent developments in the Sudan is crucial and was recognized as such in the announcement that women were to be included in the transitional Government. The developments in the Sudan also effectively demonstrate, as our two briefers have illustrated, the role of the African Union in finding an African solution to an African crisis. For all of those reasons, Belgium warmly welcomes the initiative of the joint missions with the African Union and particularly appreciates their broad focus, which includes peace and security, development and humanitarian issues. We are keen supporters of increased cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union and of an integrated approach to countries in crisis and in transition.

In the space of a year, the Horn of Africa region has seen positive developments, although the outcomes are fragile. The meaningful participation of women in political processes is essential to consolidating those outcomes. Some first steps have been taken, such as the appointment of women ministers and the adoption of legislation on gender equality. President Sahle-Work Zewde is not only Ethiopia's first woman President, but also the only woman Head of State in office in Africa. She is also a strong advocate for women in her country and on the African continent. It is necessary to continue along this same path and to implement the decisions that have been made. Electoral deadlines are opportunities to ensure the meaningful participation of women. We will be focusing on that area, especially with regard to the first elections in decades to be held next year in Somalia.

The United Nations can and must lead by example by working towards real parity in its missions and representation. We also call on troop-contributing countries to redouble their efforts in that direction. If we are humble in our approach, all of us in the Chamber will be able to evaluate our own shortcomings. It is by keeping this issue on its agenda that the Council will

be able to make a difference. I would be interested to learn from the Deputy Secretary-General what follow-up will be given to this joint solidarity mission and what support the Security Council could provide in order to encourage our partners in the region to pursue their commitments.

Mr. Lewicki (Poland): First, let me congratulate you, Madam President, on assuming the presidency of the Security Council. We wish you every success and you can count on our support. I also wish to thank our South African colleagues for their very able stewardship of the Council's work in October.

Let me express our appreciation for the very informative briefings delivered by the Deputy Secretary-General, Ms. Amina Mohammed, and the Permanent Observer of the African Union to the United Nations, Ambassador Fatima Kyari Mohammed.

We welcome the joint mission of United Nations and African Union representatives to the Horn of Africa. We see it as a practical implementation of the partnership between the United Nations and the African Union in addressing Africa's peace and security challenges in a coordinated and comprehensive manner. Over the years, the Horn of Africa has been perceived as a volatile and conflict-ridden region of the continent. Today, we are witnessing new, promising political dynamics. The Horn of Africa now has a unique opportunity to finally overcome its history of conflicts and poverty and collectively work together to forge a future of peace and progress.

In order for those transitions to be successful and for peace in the region to be durable, the meaningful participation of women is crucial. The meaningful and full participation of women in the peace process and broader political processes is about not only ensuring that women and men will be equally represented, but also the quality of that participation. It is all about women's leadership. The women of the Horn of Africa deserve an equal seat at every table at which decisions are made. We encourage the region to ensure that women have a strong voice in decision-making, from the initial peacemaking process to the establishment and development of local and national governmental institutions. We know that there are women who are adequately trained for those roles, that women are available for high-level appointments and, further still, that qualified women are everywhere.

In that context, we welcome the recent appointment of women to senior decision-making positions in the Sudan. In the case of Somalia, we hope that the authorities will secure a 30 per cent quota for women in the upcoming elections, which will offer a historic opportunity for women to participate in the first universal suffrage elections that the country has held in 50 years.

The evidence shows that security efforts are more successful and sustainable when women contribute to prevention and early warning, mediation, peacekeeping, post-conflict resolution and rebuilding. If we are serious about our commitment to a more peaceful, sustainable and prosperous Horn of Africa, there is simply no alternative to investing in women, giving them a voice in all relevant decision-making processes and supporting their political, social and economic empowerment. Poland believes that the Security Council will remain united in encouraging the participation of women in political life in the Horn of Africa, and by doing so will continue to contribute to achieving durable peace and development in the region.

Mr. Singer Weisinger (Dominican Republic) (*spoke in Spanish*): First, I would like to congratulate the delegation of South Africa on its presidency of the Security Council for the month of October and at the same time take this opportunity to wish every success to the United Kingdom during its presidency of the Council for the month of November.

We thank Ms. Amina Mohammed and Ms. Fatima Kyari Mohammed for their testimonies, assessment and recommendations regarding the implementation of the various pillars of the women and peace and security agenda and its subsequent impact on the development of each country in the subregion. We strongly welcome the cooperation between the African Union and the United Nations in the pursuit of stability, peace and sustainable development in the region.

Capitalizing on the moment of hope that the subregion is enjoying following the peace agreement between Ethiopia and Eritrea, the recent visit of the Deputy Secretary-General sheds light on the critical role of women in matters of peace and security and represents an important moment in the promotion of the women and peace and security agenda. We note the significant progress made in Ethiopia, such as gender parity throughout the Cabinet, including a female President, and the representation of women in

the Federal Parliament, which stands at almost 40 per cent. The role of women and their leadership, including that of young women in peace processes, should be encouraged and supported so that we may deliver peace, security and development dividends.

Laying the foundations for inclusive politics and strengthening respect for the rights and representation of women in the political system is key. In that regard, we are concerned that Somalia's draft constitution does not guarantee due representation to women. However, we see it as a positive step that the Government has committed to ensuring the participation of women in political decision-making by completing its constitutional review by June 2020. We would be grateful if the Deputy Secretary-General could elaborate on whether additional measures were proposed to the draft constitution during the deliberations, which would ensure the representation and inclusion of women in the coming electoral process in Somalia, in accordance with the principle of one person, one vote.

During the recent open debate on women and peace and security (see S/PV.8649), Ms. Alaa Salah — a young woman and symbol of the protests in the Sudan — addressed the Council and gave us recommendations to ponder and follow up. We know how women and young people were at the forefront of those transformative protests, and Ms. Salah emphasized that although women were at the forefront of the revolution, they are currently being relegated. We would like the Deputy Secretary-General to inform us as to whether her recent discussions addressed the measures being taken by the Government of the Sudan to implement its national action plan on women and peace and security and to address the concerns raised by Ms. Salah. We understand that the renewal of the mandate of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur will allow us to rethink an exit strategy focused on preserving the mission's capacity to protect civilians, particularly women and children, and monitor human rights abuses.

We call for such missions to continue to be carried out in order to strengthen cooperation between the African Union and the United Nations, thereby allowing for a better and greater implementation of the women and peace and security agenda in the region, at a juncture at which we face so many significant challenges, such as climate change — the adverse effects of which have a particular impact on women and represent a multiplying factor of threats to peace and

stability. We underscore the role of women, including young women, in achieving these goals.

Given that this is his last week in the Council, I take this opportunity to wish every success to Ambassador Jonathan Cohen in his new role. It truly has been an honour to serve on the Council alongside him.

Mr. Wu Haitao (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I would like to begin by congratulating the United Kingdom on assuming the presidency of the Security Council for November. China is also grateful to South Africa for its practical and efficient work as President of the Council for October.

China thanks Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed and Ms. Fatima Kyari Mohammed, Permanent Observer of the African Union (AU) to the United Nations, for their briefings.

We welcome the AU-United Nations joint solidarity mission to the Horn of Africa and commend the United Nations and AU for attaching importance to the significant role of women in regional peace, security and development. Given the important strategic location of the Horn of Africa, maintaining stability in the region has a bearing on peace and development throughout Africa.

Recently, positive progress has been made on the political, economic and security fronts in the Horn of Africa, which have been widely acclaimed by the international community. Challenges nevertheless remain. In particular, the rights and interests of women in peace and development have yet to be effectively guaranteed, which necessitates continued international assistance. In that regard, I would like to underscore the following points.

First, there is a need to resolve differences through dialogue and consultation. The United Nations and the international community should act on the basis of respect for State sovereignty, actively mediate and facilitate peace talks, help regional countries build mutual trust, resolve hotspot issues politically and provide an enabling environment for the survival and development of women affected by conflicts. China has always supported African countries in seeking African solutions to their problems and supports their efforts to engage women as major players in conflict prevention and mediation, while ensuring their full involvement in decision-making and post-conflict peacebuilding and national development processes.

Secondly, there must be respect for the leading role of the countries concerned, which bear the primary responsibility of protecting women in conflict. They should adopt an integrated approach to providing security guarantees and humanitarian relief and resolutely combat violations of women's rights in conflict situations. The international community should fully respect, trust and support African countries and provide constructive assistance in response to the needs of the countries concerned. The Security Council, the Peacebuilding Commission, UN-Women and other relevant agencies should, in accordance with their respective mandates, maximize their respective advantages and strengthen coordination to jointly promote the important role of women in the field of peace and security.

Thirdly, due regard must be given to economic and social development. We must give top priority to those areas and strive to eliminate the root causes of conflict by promoting the comprehensive economic and social development of countries of the region. The Horn of Africa faces issues such as unemployment and refugees and needs help from the international community in meeting its development challenges, strengthening capacity-building and leveraging the role of conflict-affected women in contributing to regional peace and security. The United Nations should make full use of various mechanisms, including its country teams and the United Nations Development Programme, to provide constructive assistance, thereby improving the capacity of African countries to achieve sustainable economic and social development.

China and Africa have always been part of a community of shared future. China firmly supports African countries in their efforts to maintain regional peace and stability. China stands ready to work with African countries and the wider international community to bring the work of United Nations on women, peace and security to a new high and make new contributions to peace and development in Africa.

Mr. Alotaibi (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): We wish you, Madam President, every success during the course of your presidency of the Council's work for this month. We also thank Ambassador Matjila and the members of his delegation for their outstanding presidency of the Council last month.

I thank the Deputy Secretary-General, Ms. Amina Mohammed, and the Permanent Observer of the

African Union (AU) to the United Nations, Ms. Fatima Mohammed, for their briefings on their recent joint visit to the Horn of Africa.

I would like to focus in my statement on three issues: the centrality of African security; developments this year; and women and youth.

On the centrality of African security, the links between the Horn of Africa and peace and security are demonstrated in the convening of this meeting, following the awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize to the Prime Minister of Ethiopia, Mr. Abiy Ahmed. We reiterate Kuwait's congratulations to the leadership and people of Ethiopia on that merited prize. The visit also coincided with the annual joint meeting of the AU Peace and Security Council and the Security Council.

The social, religious, cultural, economic and security ties between the Arab peninsula and the entire Arab region and the Horn of Africa are historical and multifaceted and intimately link the security situation of those two regions. The League of Arab States plays an important role in the security of the African continent. Likewise, the AU and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) play a central role in strategic Arab security. We recall today with appreciation the achievements recently made in that regard, thanks to the leaders of the region, reflected by the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques and the leaders of Horn of Africa, with the aim of achieving rapprochement and making peace. We hope to see greater Arab-African cooperation in the near future, especially at the fifth Arab-African summit, to be held in Riyadh late this month.

With respect to this year's developments, we note the reconciliation between Ethiopia and Eritrea, the rapprochement between Eritrea and Djibouti, the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan, the crucial role of the United Nations and the AU in achieving peace in Somalia and the dialogue with armed movements in the Sudan. All of those developments show the willingness of both the leadership and the peoples of the Horn of Africa to achieve peace within one year. That is why we still have hope in seeing greater cooperation and regional integration among those peoples. The accomplishments of the peoples of the Horn of Africa towards making peace and healing the wounds of the past are examples to be followed and merit our attention, support and appreciation.

We welcome and encourage the visits of the United Nations and regional organizations to States of the Horn of Africa. We hope to see more such visits in the future, and we call for continued interest in that key region, whose security is closely tied to the security of international navigation and trade.

On women and youth, half of our society is made up of women while young people represent the future and, in many States in the region, are the largest strata of society. Those two groups have a central role to play in achieving and consolidating peace. The democratic change in the Sudan is not far-fetched. Women occupy leadership positions in the State as well as other sovereign positions, in addition to important ministerial portfolios in Ethiopia, the Sudan and South Sudan. That raises hope in the continued empowerment of women through their growing representation at the legislative level in the Sudan and South Sudan.

In her briefing, the Deputy Secretary-General provided us with information about the empowerment of women and their role in making and building peace. That draws our attention to the fact that investing in human beings, in particular women and youth, is not confined to issues of war or peace, but is an uninterrupted project of many interrelated issues. As the Security Council deploys multidimensional operations, while believing in the importance of dealing comprehensively with the issues of security and peace, the questions of women and youth are also closely related to peace and security.

Lastly, we welcome the historic visit to the Horn of Africa and hope to see greater progress and prosperity for the peoples of that region and throughout Africa. We also wish our colleague Ambassador Jonathan Cohen every success in his future endeavours.

The President: Before we continue, I would like to say that there will be another opportunity to pay a proper and full tribute to Mr. Jonathan Cohen later in the week. We will inform members of the Security Council when that will take place. For those who are going to Greentree, I believe that they will be able to do that there.

Mr. Djani (Indonesia): I hope to pay tribute to Ambassador Cohen at a later date.

At the outset, I would like to congratulate you, Madam President, as well as my brother Ambassador Jerry Matjila for the excellent South African presidency. I would also like to thank our sister Deputy Secretary-

General Amina Mohammed and Ambassador Fatima Mohammed for their briefings.

We have witnessed historic changes to the peace in the Horn of Africa, which has long been ridden with complex internal strife and conflicts. Rapprochement between Ethiopia and Eritrea last year triggered subsequent engagement between Eritrea, Djibouti and Somalia, better positioning the region to embrace friendship and cooperation. I recall that the Secretary-General has aptly said that “there is a wind of hope blowing in the Horn of Africa” and I am glad to hear that from the statement of my sister Amina Mohammed. She left those five countries with a sense of hope and optimism, and that is where we should start our discussion today. I would like to underline several points.

The first concerns the primacy of peaceful solutions to settle differences. We are fully aware of unresolved bilateral issues and unhealed wounds, with the potential to reignite tensions in the region. The international community must continue to encourage countries of the region to peacefully settle their outstanding disputes, while also providing space for them to further reconnect. Rapprochement in the Horn of Africa has demonstrated the virtue of African solutions to African problems. Dialogue is key to building confidence and to narrowing the differences in ways to resolve outstanding issues.

My second point concerns the need for a united front against common security challenges. Countries of the region are still facing many conflict-drivers, including socioeconomic difficulties, marginalization and weak governance. Terrorism remains one of the largest security threats to the region. Caution is needed to minimize the impact of conflicts in its proximity and to protect safe passage across the Red Sea. The United Nations has developed a comprehensive regional prevention strategy for the Horn of Africa. We look forward to seeing it support national efforts and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development prevention mandates.

Thirdly, economic cooperation holds the key to a lasting peace. The Horn of Africa is strategically located on one of the world’s major shipping routes and is blessed with vast natural resources. Countries of the region are among Africa’s fastest growing economies. Rapprochement should be used to further economic cooperation and intraregional trade, capitalizing on

the launch of the African Continental Free Trade Area. Furthermore, it could underpin the attainment of both the African Union Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. To this end, Indonesia is committed to enhancing economic and development cooperation with Africa, including through capacity-building and the convening of the Indonesia-Africa Forum and the Indonesia-Africa Infrastructure Dialogue.

My fourth point relates to the imperative for women's inclusive and meaningful participation. I think we have heard quite a lot this morning and I am pleased that the United Nations and African Union solidarity mission to the Horn of Africa sent a clear message on that particular issue. Women are powerful agents of peace. Their participation in peace processes is an important factor in its success. My delegation is encouraged to hear of the commitment of the region's leaders to reinforce women's contribution to politics and peacebuilding. We acknowledge a record of 50 per cent female membership in the Ethiopian Cabinet.

I would like to echo what the Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed said about paying tribute to women peacekeepers. During my visit in Dubai, I made contact with our Indonesian women peacekeepers and other women peacekeepers in other missions and the message I received was that we need to do more on the issues of deployment kits, living quarters and home leave because women also have obligations to their families back at home. That is an issue that I have been discussing over the last three years. In that regard, I would like to ask a simple question to the Deputy Secretary-General. What can we in the Council do and what particular, concrete incentives could we offer to enhance the number of women peacekeepers in missions? We cannot continue making statements without anything concrete to offer. The United Nations system offers, for instance, the simple case of those issues previously mentioned.

Mr. Adom (Republic of Côte D'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): I would like to begin by congratulating the United Kingdom on its assumption to the presidency of the Security Council and assure you, Madam, of the full support of the Republic of Côte D'Ivoire and our wish for your success. I also extend my warm congratulations to my friend and brother Jerry Matijila and his entire team for their remarkable management of the work of our Council last month.

My delegation welcomes the holding of today's briefings on the joint solidarity mission organized by the United Nations and the African Union in the Horn of Africa in October. We thank Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed and Ambassador Fatima Mohammed, Permanent Observer of the African Union to the United Nations, for the quality of their reports.

The recent positive developments observed in the Horn of Africa eloquently reflect the determination of the authorities of the countries of the region to be part of the momentum aimed at achieving stability and promoting sustainable development. However, despite the progress made, all countries of that region of Africa still face major challenges related to peace, security and development. Women are undeniably one sector of the population that pays a high price for the pursuit for stability.

The Republic of Côte D'Ivoire therefore welcomes the joint mission, which took place in a context of questions concerning cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union and the contribution of women to peace and security. Beyond its political nature, the visit was a tangible sign of the need to coordinate the efforts of both institutions to address the multidimensional challenges of the region, including the participation of women in peacekeeping and peacebuilding activities.

While strengthening women's contribution to peace and security is contingent on their increased participation in political decision-making, conflict-prevention mechanisms and policies for peacebuilding, their financial empowerment and their inclusion in the fabric of the national economy are a requirement for their meaningful contribution. To that, we add the difficulties regarding education, health and empowerment and independence of women and young girls to strengthen their social standing, thereby ensuring their more proactive participation in socio-political conflict-prevention mechanisms and for peacebuilding.

The recent visit of the members of the Security Council to the Horn of Africa; the clarifications offered last week by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Horn of Africa, Parfait Onanga-Anyanga; and all that has been said this morning offer hope for a better future in the Sudan and South Sudan and relations between Ethiopia and Eritrea, Somalia and Djibouti, Kenya and Somalia and so on.

A virtuous and hopeful momentum has been launched in the Horn of Africa. Our Council should work to strengthen it and ensure its inclusive character with a growing place not only for women but also for young people. To that end, the Council's vigilance and sustained attention must be ongoing.

Mr. Heusgen (Germany): I want to pay tribute to Ambassador Matjila. October was a very intensive month, with a week in Africa. I think I spent more time with Mr. Matjila than I spent with my wife last month.

I wish good luck to the United Kingdom, which is starting its presidency on a gorgeous day. I would have loved to see the curtains open and have some of those rays of sunshine come into the Chamber. Also, the United Kingdom separated us from our French brothers and sisters here for a month, the only consolation is that I now have the privilege of sitting next to the Permanent Observer of the African Union here.

Let me first thank the Deputy Secretary-General for her briefing. I think it was a fantastic idea to go to the Horn of Africa. The messages that the Deputy Secretary-General has brought us are all ones that we share with regard to women's empowerment and participation. She also mentioned sexual violence, which unfortunately continues to occur, and here I would like to pay tribute to Ms. Pramila Patten, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Sexual Violence in Conflict. The reason that she is here is due to the fact that this is still a concern.

I was also very encouraged by what the Deputy Secretary-General said about regional cooperation, particularly on how it is developing and how important it is. But I think the most important message here is that these joint missions and the cooperation that they represent between the African Union and the United Nations have now become a real and intense tradition. That was symbolized by the fact that when we in the Security Council went to Ethiopia to meet with the African Union Peace and Security Council, the Deputy Secretary-General was there at the same time, in a demonstration of the intensity of the contact between the African Union and the United Nations.

With regard to Ms. Fatima Mohammed's briefing, I fully concur with her key point, which is that peace and security do not stand a chance if women are excluded. I have to say that when we consider South Sudan, the one country that the Deputy Secretary-General did not visit, I believe that if there were greater participation

by women in the top levels of leadership, the situation there would be different. I am pleased about the opening of an Ethiopian chapter of the African Women Leaders Network, and in that connection, I would like to pay tribute to the President of Ethiopia, who spearheaded its launch. With regard to the President of Ethiopia, I want to echo my Belgian colleague, who pointed out that not only is she the only woman President of an African country, there are no female executive presidents or prime ministers in Africa, either. We earnestly believe that this must change. Some countries have constitutions that do not allow women to be president or prime minister, which I think is a serious deficiency.

With regard to the various places that the Deputy Secretary-General visited, we would of course like to pay tribute to Ethiopia, where the Security Council's meeting with the Prime Minister was so refreshing, but where we all realize how many problems he is facing domestically in terms of getting his reform agenda and message of national reconciliation adopted. This is therefore no time to be complacent.

With regard to the Sudan, Ambassador Singer Weisinger already mentioned the meeting last week at which we were briefed by Ms. Alaa Salah, a wonderful and very courageous woman (see S/PV.8649). The young women of Khartoum stood up and played a huge role in the peaceful protests. They were the backbone of the peaceful revolution in Sudan, but they are not adequately represented in the transitional Government or in the current peace talks. I can only echo Ambassador Singer-Weisinger's question, which was about what can be done to ensure that more women participate. Measures should also be taken to end female genital mutilation in the Sudan, another serious problem.

Turning to Eritrea, we have indeed witnessed some changes there. However, if we look closer, we see that its land borders are still not really open. Many citizens are still subject to the dreaded conscription into national service, including women in the paramilitary training conducted at the Sawa camp.

In Djibouti, we commend the efforts being made to promote the role of women in the country's political and economic life, but once again we believe that more must be done to tackle discrimination and violence against women, especially with regard to implementing laws and fighting impunity.

In Somalia, too, we believe it is important for women to play a major role in the country's reconciliation,

including the management and prevention of conflict. It will be important to ensure the strong participation of women in the 2020-2021 electoral process, as both candidates and voters. That will be a yardstick for what is happening in the country and the extent to which the women and peace and security agenda is actually being implemented. We will support that, and we truly hope that as the Deputy Secretary-General said, the winds of change are indeed blowing through the country. We once again thank her for leading this trip, which was extremely valuable both as a message and a measure.

Mr. Esono Mbengono (Equatorial Guinea) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, I would like to congratulate South Africa on its successful presidency in October and on the Council's adoption of resolution 2439 (2019), on women and peace and security. We wish the delegation of the United Kingdom a productive presidency and would like to assure it of Equatorial Guinea's steadfast collaboration and support. My thanks also go to the two briefers, my sisters Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed and Ms. Fatima Kyari Mohammed, for their informative statements.

We join others in commemorating the tenth anniversary of the establishment of the mandate of the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary General on Conflict-Related Sexual Violence. Our Government will continue to support the various elements of the United Nations architecture aimed at combating sexual violence in armed conflicts, the promotion of women's rights and the inclusion of women in decision-making processes.

The Republic of Equatorial Guinea believes that the enhanced cooperation between the Security Council and the African Union's African Peace and Security Architecture, which also strengthens subregional initiatives in the implementation of Council resolutions to advance the women and peace and security agenda, among other things, is an example of the type of alliance that should continue to be supported in a more predictable manner. In that regard, we would like to highlight the high-level visits led by the Deputy Secretary-General to the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Nigeria in 2017, the Niger, the Sahel, South Sudan and Afghanistan in 2018, and to Ethiopia, Djibouti, Somalia and Eritrea this year, not forgetting the visit to Cameroon in April. I would also like to acknowledge the dedication of the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict to mainstreaming this agenda,

while also encouraging the strategic initiatives within the Joint United Nations-African Union Framework for Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security concerning the prevention of and response to conflict-related sexual violence in Africa, bolstered by the support of UN-Women, the African Women Leaders Network and FemWise-Africa.

The strategic importance of the Horn of Africa and the generally positive evolution of events in the region made a joint visit of the United Nations and the African Union more than necessary. These visits are becoming something of a tradition for the two institutions, which complement one another in the quest for solutions to issues affecting life on the African continent. Equatorial Guinea has always applauded the cooperation between the two organizations in Africa, given that their partnership is a valid formula that is bound to have positive results. The promotion of the women and peace and security agenda must continue to be united in its criteria and actions with a view to making more room for women at the negotiating and decision-making tables and benefiting from their unique perspective. Only in this way, and with the support of subregional institutions such as the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, will it be possible to make progress in terms of conflict resolution and peacebuilding in the subregion and throughout the continent.

The participation of women in the quest for solutions to the problems affecting the region should be encouraged. Women, together with young people, must be at the heart of those efforts in order to forge sustainable peace and development and seek out lasting solutions in a context of humanitarian crisis. And women must always play a principal role in post-conflict situations.

Mr. Polyanskiy (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I would like to begin by welcoming you to the presidency of the Security Council, Madam, and wishing you and your team every success this month. We are also grateful to our South African colleagues for their leadership of the work of the Council in October.

We would like to thank today's briefers, Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed and Ms. Fatima Mohammed, Permanent Observer of the African Union to the United Nations, for their information on the outcomes of the joint solidarity visit by representatives of the two organizations to the Horn of Africa. We consider such visits useful, as they fully reflect the firm

commitment of the United Nations and African Union secretariats to forging united approaches to Africa's toughest problems.

The Horn of Africa is currently going through a critical period in its history in which differences between Governments are being dismantled and direct contacts between countries revived. The awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize on 11 October to Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed of Ethiopia for his efforts in the peace settlement between Ethiopia and Eritrea and in the normalization of the situation in the region in general is a striking confirmation of the epoch-making nature of the developments in those countries. We also see the process of normalization in relations between Eritrea and Djibouti continuing. The situation in the border areas remains stable. While we are aware that progress on their bilateral cooperation has stalled somewhat, the fact is that the resolution of that issue lies in sustained dialogue with the potential mediation of regional actors, foremost among them Ethiopia. On the whole, this issue no longer poses a threat to international peace and security, and we see no need for keeping it on the Security Council's agenda.

The situation in Somalia continues to be troubled. The increased activity of the Al-Shabaab terrorist group in the centre and south of the country is particularly worrying. In our view, the principal mechanism for combating Al-Shabaab is still the African Union Mission in Somalia. Given the difficult humanitarian situation, we intend to continue providing aid to Somalia and Somali refugees in neighbouring countries through earmarked contributions to the relevant World Food Programme (WFP) funds. We will also continue training Somali civilian personnel with funds from our federal budget.

We welcome the normalization of the situation in the Sudan. A constitutional declaration has been signed, a Prime Minister elected and a transitional Government formed. The task now facing the international community is helping the country with its economic recovery. We support the Deputy Secretary-General's call for lifting the remaining unilateral restrictive measures on the Sudan.

We note the positive developments in the situation in South Sudan. However, the prospects for complying with the provisions in the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan aimed at the formation of a transitional

Government by the 12 November deadline are still uncertain. We hope that the parties to the conflict will make additional efforts to deal with the issue within the agreed time frame.

We agree that the resolution of peace and security issues in the region should be supported by efforts to promote the socioeconomic development of its countries, and we value the coordinated work of United Nations bodies in that area. Economic development issues are an integral and high-priority component of our country's relations with the States of Africa, as was reaffirmed by the first Russia-Africa summit, held in Sochi in October. As an international development assistance donor, Russia provides support to African partners through bilateral and multilateral channels. Part of that work is carried out through earmarked contributions to international aid programmes for Africa. Just recently, my Government decided to increase the amount of its annual voluntary contributions to the WFP by an additional \$10 million. Those funds will be directed to the WFP's funds for African assistance every year, and we are working on other measures as well.

Mr. Matjila (South Africa): At the outset, I would like to congratulate the United Kingdom on assuming the presidency of the Security Council for the month of November. Please be assured of South Africa's support for your efforts this month, Madam President. On a slightly different note, I would also like to congratulate the England rugby team on their performance in this year's Rugby World Cup and final. In all sports our teams have historically had a healthy competitive spirit, and that was again illustrated during the Rugby World Cup matches this year and the past weekend.

We would like to thank Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed and Ambassador Fatima Mohammed, Permanent Observer of the African Union (AU) to the United Nations, for their briefings. We commend the joint visit to Sudan, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Eritrea and Somalia led by the Deputy Secretary-General together with Ms. Bineta Diop, the AU Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security, and Mr. Parfait Onanga-Anyanga, the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Horn of Africa. The focus of the joint United Nations-African Union trip on women and peace and security, and on the international commitment to peace, stability and credible elections in those countries, was important. South Africa would also like to commend the role that the African Union, the Intergovernmental Authority for Development

(IGAD) and other international partners have played in facilitating State-building and peacebuilding processes in the Horn of Africa.

As we have seen in the recent past, the winds of positive change are blowing in the Horn of Africa. The frontiers of peace and peaceful neighbourliness are expanding, and in the process are touching many nations and ordinary people. Though still fragile, they augur well for the goal of silencing the guns in Africa by 2020. It is in that context of peaceful overtures ahead that South Africa thanks the Deputy Secretary-General and Ambassador Mohammed, and their colleagues both at the United Nations and the AU, for their extensive visits and numerous engagements held with policymakers, activists and ordinary people in their successful trip to the Horn of Africa. We also want to acknowledge the role played by Abiy Ahmed, Prime Minister of Ethiopia and the current Chair of IGAD, in facilitating the peace agreement and transition processes in the Sudan, as well as his own country's rapprochement with Eritrea.

In terms of the peace process in South Sudan, we would like to note the progress made so far towards implementing the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan. We want to highlight how important it is that the parties strictly adhere to the deadline of 12 November to form a revitalized transitional Government of national unity and emphasize that there can be no delay or postponement of that deadline, which arrives in eight days' time.

My delegation further wishes to underline the importance of ensuring that the political process in the Horn of Africa is sustained. In that regard, South Africa reiterates that the gains achieved can be strengthened and sustained only through continued dialogue and cooperation among the countries of the region. We emphasize that the steps taken so far are a major milestone in Africa's efforts to quiet the guns by 2020 and deepen regional and continental integration, in line with the African Union's Agenda 2063.

We agree with the Deputy Secretary-General in her statement to the African Union Peace and Security Council in Addis Ababa on 21 October, when she emphasized that women's inclusion contributes to the development of responsive decision-making processes that ensure sustainable development. We also share her view that in situations of conflict, and in preventing

violence, women's mediation and peacemaking efforts have been proven to be more effective.

The involvement of women in United Nations peacekeeping roles within the military, police and civilian components in conflict remains negligible, despite the adoption of resolution 2242 (2015), which calls for doubling the number of women in the military and police contingents of United Nations peacekeeping operations over the next five years, a period that has now almost run its course. We were encouraged, however, by the Council's unanimous adoption, on 29 October 2019, under our presidency, of resolution 2493 (2019) urging States to recommit to the women and peace and security agenda, including by creating safe environments for women leaders, peacebuilders, human rights activists and political actors around the globe.

We must continue to support the narrative that women, including young women, are agents of change. As we have heard today, and as we have seen in many examples all over the world, they have the greatest potential for transformative effects on societies, including in peacebuilding and nation-building. We must work to provide the necessary resources for holding elections and implementing peace agreements, as we are seeing in the processes taking place in the Horn of Africa and elsewhere in the world.

The President: I thank the representative of South Africa for his kind words about England's rugby team.

I shall now make a statement in my national capacity.

I wanted to say that we share the strong support that has been expressed for the visit by the Deputy Secretary-General and Ambassador Mohammed. I think that it has been a fantastic venture in highlighting how central the women and peace and security agenda is to African peace and security. The United Kingdom strongly supports all our colleagues who have called today for increasing the numbers of women in political processes in general and in peace processes in particular. In turn, I think that means that there must be an even greater focus on the issue of girls' education so that we can start to help young girls and women take their rightful place at the top tables of their communities and nations. I would like to mention several country-specific examples.

The United Kingdom has a strong partnership with Somalia in serving and protecting women and girls. We work to include women in reconciliation efforts, security reform and political dialogue and to address sexual and gender-based violence, and we support access to comprehensive sexual and reproductive health care. I very much endorse what others have said today about the full, equal and meaningful participation of women in Somalia's upcoming elections. We encourage Somalia to maintain its commitment to the 30 per cent quota for women in Parliament, and we hope to see the bills on sexual offences and female genital mutilation making swift progress through the Somali legislature.

Turning to the Sudan, I think that the Security Council wishes the Sudan well and wants to do everything it can to support it. The United Kingdom feels the same way. At the General Assembly in September we were delighted to hear the Prime Minister reiterate his commitment to women's full participation in Government (see A/74/PV.10). We have all referred to Alaa Salah's very important contribution to last week's open debate (see S/PV.8649), and I think we look forward to even greater engagement and participation in public life for women.

We were very pleased that the Deputy Secretary-General was able to visit Eritrea. There is a clear opportunity for real change in United Nations and African Union engagement with Eritrea, following its historic agreement with Ethiopia and the lifting of sanctions. We believe that it is essential that increased international engagement deliver further improvements in regional security and concrete progress on human rights there.

Finally, with regard to Ethiopia, I join other colleagues in paying tribute to Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed and the award to him of the Nobel Peace Prize, which is an important testimony to his role in promoting peace in the region and political reform at home. What everyone has said about the Ethiopian President is extremely important. It is very good that 50 per cent of Ethiopia's Cabinet positions are reserved for women, and that may be a lesson for all of us. We hope to see Ethiopia build on that progress and promote women's participation as voters and candidates in upcoming elections, as well as reforming security and justice institutions to make them more responsive to the needs of women and girls. The continued outbreaks of violence in Ethiopia are concerning, however, and

they highlight the need for all actors to work to reform institutions and the importance of peaceful dialogue.

We wanted to make this meeting interactive. I therefore would like to ask a few questions, if I may, in addition to those that my colleagues have already raised.

First, with regard to girls' education, how can we make sure that increased investment in girls' education translates into women's economic empowerment? I think the Indonesian Ambassador already asked what practical steps would improve women's participation in peacekeeping. The Deputy Secretary-General has given us some, but if there is more that can be said in that regard, we look forward to it. Besides that, what additional support do our briefers think women mediators and civil-society actors need so that they can strengthen their participation in political dialogue?

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I would like to invite first the Deputy Secretary-General and then the observer of the African Union to respond to the good number of questions that have been asked today. I will be happy to repeat them if necessary.

I give the floor to the Deputy Secretary-General

The Deputy Secretary-General: I would like to once again express my deep appreciation to the Security Council for giving us this opportunity to share what I think was not just a visit to the region but one that left us with a lot of homework to do when we came back, particularly considering that the Council is underscoring the urgency with which we need to see actions at scale to support the Horn of Africa. I would also like to add my voice to the congratulations on the leadership of our colleague from South Africa during his presidency in October. It was an important month for women and peace and security, and beyond that the Security Council's visit was critical to reinforcing our presence in the Horn of Africa, and now under your leadership for November, Madam President, we are starting off with a resumption of the open debate on women and peace and security.

We have had a number of initiatives proposed in the United Nations since we have been discussing the visit with our colleagues and asking what more we can do. First, with regard to very specific issues that were raised during the visit, our peacekeeping departments are already looking at what we can do with regard to the uniform list and the kits being issued, for instance.

That is already something that we can take cognizance of. But what is important is how to get better feedback, such as this, that does not have to wait for a visit. I think that is what concerned us most. We should not have to wait for a visit to be aware of such challenges.

The capacity-building that we are providing is insufficient, and we need more of it for women peacekeepers. They need support in the cases where they have not had specific training — for example, the centres that our Ethiopian peacekeepers referred to, saying that they need more of that, and that we need to identify and map the whole range of relevant skill gaps. In our missions too, it would be helpful to have support for positions that are focused on better understanding those gender-specific aspects. We therefore want to encourage Member States, as they consider the resources envelope, to put more into that. It does not take very much, but it is not there right now.

In addition, peacekeeping has many trained mediators who are women, but we do not have the resources to deploy them, or the kinds of checks and balances that we need to determine the complement of women engaged in those negotiations right from the outset, when the seeds are being sown. We all have a role to play in that by asking those questions and trying to push the envelope further in order to see women at the table from the very beginning. That was particularly applicable in the Sudan, where peace negotiations have started, and the response to us was that they had only just started, they were not there yet and would include women eventually. But women need to be there from the very start. I think that was something that the Prime Minister was very enthusiastic and supportive of, but I believe that the rest of the community around the table should take it up quite quickly.

In other places, again concerning peacekeepers, some of the issues were from the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), which has more than 1,000 peacekeepers. The feedback we received in that regard, as we manage and support that Mission, was that we also need to be aware of some of the needs.

Regarding girls' education, which is a tremendously important part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063, without which we will not silence the guns, we must have educated young people, particularly women and girls, whether as part of the basic right to education at the beginning, second-chance education or a renewal of skills, which we found

among a number of adolescent girls who would like to join the marketplace and to be a better empowered to take such decisions not just for themselves but also since they impact the community. That reinforces what we saw in the cases of the Sudan and Eritrea, namely, that really looking at their plans and how inclusive the curriculum was of girls entering education was important. We continue to reinforce that.

The decade of action for the delivery of the Sustainable Development Goals is approaching. I think that this is something that requires that we undertake much more analysis and planning, taking into account the current context. Prevention and transitions are lenses that we look through in Africa in particular regarding girls' education. On the one hand, it is prevention but, on the other hand, there are very many girls and women who have been kept out of the space of being empowered, particularly through education. As we look towards the strategy for the Horn of Africa and for the plan in the Sudan, it is an important area of planning, including to see the investment that is going to be made in the line item that we put for girls' education.

I am not sure if there were any more questions that were asked, but we are following this up. Agency by agency, it also becomes a matter for the United Nations development system as well.

The President: I thank the Deputy Secretary-General for the clarifications she has provided.

I now give the floor to Ambassador Mohammed to respond to comments.

Ms. Mohammed: Before I comment, I would like to say that it is quite refreshing to have the opportunity to actually engage, and I hope we will have more such opportunities during this presidency. A number of questions were asked, which I will try and answer in general, with just a few country-specific comments.

First, regarding the Sudan, the implementation of the 17 August Constitutional Declaration, which was mentioned several times, needs to be encouraged and accompanied. But, most important, the sanctions need to be lifted in order for the Sudan to be able to move forward and, of course, we must continually encourage it to support more women's participation. Last week, the Council had such an opportunity by hearing first-hand from some of the actors that are actually on the ground (see S/PV.8649), and such engagements should be encouraged in order to raise their voices.

On South Sudan, something that has also been mentioned a couple of times is the need for accelerating the implementation of the revitalized peace agreement. The international community needs to maintain pressure. That also has to be supported, and the fact that there is a major humanitarian crisis in that country should not be overlooked. Women and children are the ones who suffer the most in that situation.

Regarding Somalia, which I believe was also mentioned a couple of times, and the resumption of the dialogue between the central Government and the federal member states, as I mentioned briefly last week also within the framework of our cooperation with the United Nations (see S/PV.8650), we have started exploring the development of a political strategy to facilitate coherence in our engagements in the country.

I would also like to express appreciation for the four points that were mentioned by Indonesia regarding the primacy of peaceful settlements and disputes, particularly the fact that we work with a united front and, by confronting some of these common challenges, we will be able to have more of an impact. Regarding encouraging more female peacekeepers, I think that the Deputy Secretary-General has addressed that point. However, I would also like to re-emphasize that whatever support and encouragement we give, we have to also consider the fact that there are some basic needs of that women peacekeepers have and that must be taken into consideration in Somalia. We heard from the African Union Special Envoy for Women, Peace and Security about basic needs, such as bathroom facilities that are exclusive to women and having privacy — for

example, sanitary towels and being able to have access to communications to speak that to their families on a regular basis. These are simple things that can easily be overlooked but make a huge impact in supporting them or encouraging them to actually stay on the ground, including when they are deployed.

My second to last point regards what the Deputy Secretary-General said about girls' education, which, I believe, clearly translates to women's economic empowerment. We have seen that in so many different country situations where it can be seen how, by educating girls, eventually even the mothers are educated by proxy just based on the experiences they have on the ground. So that should definitely be fully encouraged.

Finally, I believe the Peacebuilding Commission provides an opportunity. It is currently engaged in the greater Horn of Africa. I hope that with the upcoming review, opportunities such as with regard to coherence, financing and ownership will be explored, particularly at the regional level and working with the regional mechanisms and regional economic communities.

The President: I thank Her Excellency Ms. Mohammed for the clarifications she has provided.

I would like to remind colleagues about the five-minute rule regarding the delivery of statements. As it is difficult for speakers to see their own microphone flashing if they speak for more than five minutes but it is very visible to everyone else around the table, I would invite those sitting behind their Ambassadors, as a kindness, to make them aware.

The meeting rose at 11.55 a.m.