



Security Council

Seventy-sixth year

8851st meeting

Wednesday, 8 September 2021, 10 a.m.

New York

Provisional

<i>President:</i>	Mr. Byrne Nason	(Ireland)
<i>Members:</i>	China	Mr. Dai Bing
	Estonia	Mr. Jürgenson
	France	Mr. De Rivière
	India	Ms. Lekhi
	Kenya	Mr. Kiboino
	Mexico	Mr. De la Fuente Ramírez
	Niger	Mr. Aougi
	Norway	Ms. Juul
	Russian Federation	Ms. Evstigneeva
	Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	Ms. DeShong
	Tunisia	Mr. Ladeb
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . .	Mr. Kariuki
	United States of America	Mrs. Thomas-Greenfield
	Viet Nam	Mr. Dang

Agenda

United Nations peacekeeping operations

United Nations transitions

Letter dated 24 August 2021 from the Permanent Representative of Ireland to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2021/756)

In accordance with the procedure set out in the letter by the President of the Security Council addressed to Permanent Representatives of Security Council members dated 7 May 2020 (S/2020/372), which was agreed in light of the extraordinary circumstances caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, this official record of the Security Council will be supplemented by a compilation of annexes (S/2021/783) containing the statements submitted by interested non-members of the Council.



The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

United Nations peacekeeping operations

United Nations transitions

Letter dated 24 August 2021 from the Permanent Representative of Ireland to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2021/756)

The President: In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Her Excellency Mrs. Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, former President of Liberia; and Ms. Safaa Elagib Adam, President of the Community Development Association of the Sudan.

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

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2021/756, which contains the text of a letter dated 24 August 2021 from the Permanent Representative of Ireland addressed to the Secretary-General, transmitting a concept note on the item under consideration.

I wish to warmly welcome the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. António Guterres, to whom I now give the floor.

The Secretary-General: My thanks to Ireland for convening today's debate on the important issue of peacekeeping transitions.

As the Security Council knows well, United Nations peacekeepers are an extraordinary group of women and men who put themselves in harm's way to protect people, create space for dialogue and political trust and plant the seeds of peace for the future. But their missions are never intended to be permanent, and transitions do not come with an on-off switch.

Transitions are complex processes that are individual to each country's context. They involve a careful reconfiguration of the presence, strategy and footprint of the United Nations in a country. They begin not only when a mission is nearing its end, but when the first boots hit the ground. Success depends on

early and sustained collaboration among field missions, host Governments, United Nations country teams and local and global partners. It also depends on building trust with the people and communities that we are there to serve.

The drawdown of United Nations peacekeeping can be an exciting moment for a country emerging from conflict and looking forward to peace, but it is also a moment of heightened risk. Years of peacebuilding and protection gains are at stake. Global attention and focus, including perhaps the focus of the Council, can vary. There is still work to do to make sure the seeds of peace can blossom.

Consolidating peace, building resilience and averting conflict relapse are at the heart of my prevention agenda. Three years ago, I launched the Action for Peacekeeping initiative to make our operations more efficient and impactful, including after mission transitions. Earlier this year, I launched the Action for Peacekeeping Plus initiative to focus on key areas of work and protect hard-won gains as countries make that shift. We are committed to constantly improving the transition process and learning from the lessons of past missions.

The first lesson is that political engagement needs to be sustained throughout the transition and beyond. After the transition, we need to intensify our focus on collaborating with local and national Governments to rebuild vital systems. The work of the Peacebuilding Commission, United Nations country teams, regional offices and envoys is more important than ever.

For example, the tireless work of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel was critical to sustaining engagement in Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia and Guinea-Bissau. In the Sudan, the United Nations managed one of the most complex reconfigurations in recent history, drawing down the peacekeeping mission while scaling up a special political mission. That mission was dedicated to a sustainable and nationally owned peace process as the country continues its journey towards recovery and sustainable development.

That brings me to the second lesson, namely, the importance of national leadership and ownership of the transition. Peacekeeping missions can help put the country on the right track, but only national stakeholders can keep it there over the long term. That idea is at the heart of our Action for Peacekeeping Plus initiative. We want to make sure that national Government

institutions, partners and civil society groups, especially those representing women, minorities and young people, are all working together to carry peace forward and build truly representative, responsive and accountable institutions.

For example, the conclusion of the mandate of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in the Kasai provinces was followed by a detailed benchmark transition plan for full withdrawal by 2024, should the conditions for peace be met. The plan was developed with the national Government, working shoulder to shoulder with the United Nations country team and the Council. It also includes support for the Democratic Republic of the Congo as it strengthens economic, security, legal and justice systems and institutions for the future. The leaders and the peoples of countries in transition must be the ultimate architects of peace, with the United Nations and the global community playing supporting roles.

The third lesson is the importance of sustainable transition financing. As global attention wanes, the attention of donors can soon follow. The closure of a United Nations mission often coincides with shrinking and less predictable aid flows. That financial cliff can be a huge risk for a country still taking those first tentative steps towards sustainable peace and development.

The Peacebuilding Fund is aimed at partially closing those gaps. Support for transitions is one of the three priority windows for the Fund, with a target of 35 per cent of annual investment dedicated to that context. However, many more resources will be needed.

I welcome the General Assembly's decision to convene a high-level meeting on financing for peacebuilding next year. As demand for support from the Peacebuilding Fund continues to outpace available resources, we must build momentum. We need to match the commitment of Member States to peacebuilding with concrete outcomes in how the commitment is financed.

The first lesson is to support national authorities as they protect people and rebuild for the future. When a United Nations mission closes, the risks to civilians and vulnerable groups do not simply vanish. We need to help Governments establish security and protection systems. We need to ensure that parties to conflict live up to their obligations under international law. We need the help of the Council to address any remaining

threats to civilians. For example, the situation in Darfur is a stark reminder of the need to remain vigilant. The Juba Peace Agreement, signed in October 2020, was an inspiring sign of progress but the drawdown of the peacekeeping mission and the establishment of the political mission have been accompanied by recurring intercommunal violence.

Those and many other deeply concerning situations remind us that peace is a long process. The path is seldom straightforward. The role of the world and the global community remains essential as those countries continue their journeys. Peace is possible. Peace is necessary. Peace is the only pathway to a sustainable future. I therefore look forward to working with the Council to continue strengthening the transition process and pursuing our shared goal of peace for all people in all countries.

The President: I sincerely thank the Secretary-General for his statement.

I now give the floor to Mrs. Johnson-Sirleaf.

Mrs. Johnson-Sirleaf: Please allow me to stand on the existing protocols and congratulate you, Madam President, and through you, the Government and the people of Ireland, on your country's assumption of the leadership of the Security Council for the month of September.

May I also thank the Government and the people of India for their leadership of the Council for the month of August. Interestingly, both Ireland and India, and many other nations represented around the table, contributed troops to the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL). I and all Liberians are forever grateful to the friendly countries, Governments and peoples.

I am honoured today to respond to the request to brief the Security Council on the important consideration of transitioning in peacekeeping, and to share this opportunity with His Excellency the Secretary-General. I thank the Secretary-General for the leadership he has demonstrated in reforming United Nations peacekeeping.

As a former President of a country that shares common borders and strong friendships, I start with Guinea, pointing to the condemnation of the coup d'état by the leaders of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the commitment to a democratic society dedicated to constitution adherence and the rule of law.

As the global guardian of the world, peacekeeping intervention by the Security Council continues to be most sought after in parts of the world that are conflict-prone. While costly, in terms of lives and resources, it is important that peacekeeping interventions be viewed as successful, not only in restoring security but also in enabling sustainable peace. It is worth noting the tremendous contributions made by the States Members of the United Nations, especially working with the Security Council, to guarantee the continued success of the United Nations in its peacekeeping and peacebuilding roles. We are of the firm conviction that true peace must really be in the hearts of men and women of any nation. It is important for the peoples of any war-ravaged country to adopt peace afterwards as a way of life.

With the Council's indulgence, I will now turn to Liberia. Members may recall that over a 15-year period, the United Nations Mission in Liberia was, at some point, classified among the largest deployments of peacekeepers in the world, consisting of up to 15,000 military personnel. At its peak, 180,000 peacekeepers, 16,000 police officers and more than 24,000 civilian staff worked at various times over the period of war. UNMIL is viewed nationally, regionally and internationally as successful.

The success was due in large part to strong regional support and engagement with the 15 member States of ECOWAS. The Council may recall it was the regional body that first constituted the Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group, which transformed into the ECOWAS Mission in Liberia that became the progenitor of UNMIL. That was due to the strong support of Liberia's international development partners, such as the United States, Sweden, India, Ireland and the European Union. We deeply thank the Government of India for the inclusion and involvement of an Indian women contingent, which had a positive impact on the Liberian Government's efforts to attract women to the country's security system.

We commend the efforts made during the period of the Mission's mandate for coherence and cooperation across the United Nations system with regional and international partners. In her remarks in Liberia on the occasion of the closure of Mission, the Deputy Secretary-General referenced the plans of the Secretary-General to enable the whole United Nations system to deliver as one — more coherently, cooperatively and in a more integrated manner, with

timely support to national Governments. We thank the Secretary-General for those reforms, now in the One United Nations system. I am pleased to report that today, the United Nations system in Liberia functions as he had envisioned and operates more coherently, while ensuring more effective relationships, integrated support and productive partnerships with national stakeholders. However, I would be less than honest if I were to say that operations were fault-free.

An UNMIL report says it squarely — the challenges faced in the country were nothing short of daunting, to lead a country exhausted from three decades of civil strife, with destroyed infrastructure, a collapsed economy, a non-existent security sector and State institutions capable of providing basic services to its people. To add to those challenges, the country faced a sharp decline in the economy from the effects of Ebola and the loss of significant financial support in the withdrawal of peacekeeping forces. That suggests the need for transition plans to recognize the specificities and special circumstances of countries, particularly in post-conflict situations and to have flexibility in those plans to address such conditions, despite the fact that the prime responsibility is that of the Government.

Yet I am pleased to report that today, more than three years since the final withdrawal of UNMIL from Liberia, on 30 March 2018, our country remains largely at peace with itself and with its neighbours. Moreover, Liberia is proud that it contributes a contingent to the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali.

On behalf of the people of Liberia, I thank all Member States, and particularly the Security Council, for the support extended to Liberia when we desperately needed it. The Security Council must continuously re-examine and assess opportunities for more successful models of peacekeeping operations and meet its global responsibility to maintain international peace and security — but not necessarily in a one-size-fits-all jacket, as the colour and the helmet remain universally recognizable as Blue Helmets. It is therefore critical for successful transitions that the peacekeeping process be nationally owned, integrated, coherent and sustainable. A successful transition goes a long way to actually defining a mission's overall success.

One way the Security Council can support those important ingredients for success is to include them in a mission's mandate and further require that they be

considered in the regular briefings and update reports of a mission to the Council. Specific measurable activities, including with civil society organizations, as well as women and youth groups, ought to be developed, supported, monitored and reported on as part of a mission's overall intervention report to the Council.

As many have rightfully observed, restoring and sustaining peace is more than silencing the guns and disarming belligerents and/or ex-combatants. It extends to enabling the conflicted society to deal successfully and sustainably with the drivers of conflict long after the process has ended and long after the peacekeeping mission is officially closed. In order to do that effectively, the Council may consider practical and measurable indicators that will register deliberate engagement involving all the relevant stakeholders of a society, especially civil society, women, youth and minorities.

It must also be said that the experience of the active participation of women in the peacekeeping operations in Liberia offered Liberian women a needed sense of renewed hope for the Mission's success, as well as the opportunity to exchange experiences, leading to changes in attitudes and long-held perceptions about the value of women. That brought about a renewed appreciation of women in Liberia. Even if that did not necessarily translate into complete trust, their presence inspired some measure of confidence, especially when the Blue Helmets were no longer around. Memories of that still linger.

One of the milestones of transition planning must be the institutional measure of reforms of national security and the rule of law. Invariably, the breakdown in the capacities of institutions to fairly and justly seek adherence to, and enforcement of, the rule of law are flashpoints for triggering new conflicts or igniting old ones. Transition planning must therefore ensure both a responsible, orderly drawdown of United Nations troops and that the national Government and its security sector are prepared to stand up for and protect all inhabitants, especially civilians, under a fully owned new programme, with active citizen participation at various levels on the rule-of-law continuum.

This highlights the importance of integrating peacebuilding quite early in peacekeeping intervention planning. As Liberia proved, when the two are enabled to work together and deliver as one, the overall margin for success of a peacekeeping mission is considerably

higher and a return to conflict is considerably lower. I thank the Secretary-General for effecting the necessary changes in that regard. I also thank the Security Council for recognizing the value of, and providing better support for, peacebuilding commissions through assessed contributions.

Peacebuilding helps countries prevent conflicts. Perhaps we need to more closely consider some regions of the world for early engagement in peace and conflict resolution. Close to \$8 billion was spent on peacekeeping operations in Liberia. With a new focus, we might spend less in preventing new conflicts in countries like Cameroon and Myanmar, where the warning sounds are growing louder and louder.

Finally, our world is embattled with the devastating effects of the coronavirus disease pandemic and current challenges of climate change. Under these two broad canopies, global inequities and injustices are being exposed. Multilateralism has been under threat. Indeed, we face the urgency of acting together, more inclusively, to confront the realities of our changing world.

Indeed, our world continues to change. The nature of conflicts and challenges to our peaceful cohabitation on Mother Earth have changed. How we pursue conflict resolution in existing conflicts and how we prevent conflicts where they seem likely to occur remain one of the biggest challenges for the Council, in my humble and considered view. The important mandate of maintaining international peace and security must also change. The change we seek is a change we must believe in so as to ensure that it occurs. Nowhere is that reality more pronounced than around the Security Council table, which holds the power of the world.

As an African, I cannot conclude without taking this opportunity to address this important organ of the United Nations and to remind it of the common sense position of the African Union, as expressed in the Ezulwini Consensus, for the improved and increased full representation of Africa and other countries and regions of our world on the Security Council. Not only does Africa deserve such consideration for permanent representation, but it is also among the regions generally requiring peacekeeping operations. We believe that, with such a change — with more equity in the composition of the Security Council — we will have more successes in meeting the global purpose of our world for its existence. It is time for the Council to

change. It is hard to adopt change, but it is necessary for the success of a better world.

The President: I thank Mrs. Johnson-Sirleaf for her briefing.

I now give the floor to Ms. Adam.

Ms. Adam: I thank the President of the Security Council and the Government of Ireland, Secretary-General António Guterres and the members of the Security Council, as well as Mrs. Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf. I also note the presence of Ms. Diop and other women whom I know and work with.

I am honoured and pleased with the very strong speeches delivered by senior stakeholders at the international level, as well as with the spirit of this meeting. I am pleased to reflect on my modest experience of being in the conflict zone in the Sudan and to amplify the voices of Sudanese women from their struggle, during the revolution and prior to that during the armed conflict in Darfur, to bring about sustainable peace. I thank the Security Council and hope that this will be my testimony.

The Sudanese people impressed the world with the vital role of women and youth in leading the non-violent historic revolution of December 2019. The revolution ended Al-Bashir's brutal military regime after 30 years of war and political unrest in different parts of the Sudan and Darfur. The change resulted in a tough negotiation between civilians and the military to reach a mixed deal on civilian-military Government through the Constitutional Declaration. That marked the way for governing the Sudan's transition period within a framework of liberty, peace and equality. In that regard, I salute all the young people who participated in the process, which was meant to lead to a democratic transformation.

After the transition in the Sudan in 2020, the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan (UNITAMS) took on a new mandate, under Chapter VI of the Charter of the United Nations, to engage in peacebuilding and help the Sudanese people finalize the establishment of peace, with the objective of building and helping to move towards a democratic transformation during the transitional period in the country. I bear in mind what has been contributed by previous speakers. At the same time, the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) — a peacekeeping mission under Chapter

VII with a protection mandate — left the Sudan under a hurried exit strategy, leaving Darfur in a situation of no peace/no war and with a fragile security situation.

Those two missions, one with a peacekeeping mandate and one with a peacebuilding mandate, provided many lessons learned.

We recognize the crucial role played by UNAMID during its presence in Darfur, with the support of the international community and the African Union. However, owing to many factors, we consider it a missed opportunity for making maximum use of the mission —as follows.

First, the lack of political will on the part of the previous Al-Bashir military regime presented obstacles in attaining that objective, as did the partially signed peace agreements, the fragmentation and spread in the region of many armed groups and militias and the proliferation of weapons. Facing that situation, UNAMID assumed the role of a peacekeeping mission, and that created many constraints for it, which could be a point for discussion.

As I said, the UNAMID exit strategy was carried out in a hurry, which left behind a fragile security situation in Darfur, coupled with tribal conflict. That situation continued during the transitional Government — currently mostly in Darfur — and with the presence of UNITAMS. A peacebuilding mission with no protection mandate, UNITAMS continues to face the same challenges, that is, a fragile security situation and a partial peace deal — the Juba Peace Agreement is not yet comprehensive. Without a protection or peacekeeping mandate, it cannot respond to the current fighting in Darfur or incidents of killing, rape of women and girls and the looting of villages by armed militias. As is the case in other countries in Africa, women are the victims of the conflict.

I would like to highlight that people are more concerned about the gaps in protection and security for civilians in conflict and about the situation of women and girls in camps for internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees. That frustration increased in Darfur, in the Sudan, especially after UNAMID's withdrawal as a peacekeeping mission with a mandate to protect civilians. Incidents of killing, the looting of villages and the rape of women and girls in conflict areas and during tribal clashes occur frequently. Community women, men and youth are calling for a civilian democratic Government where the role of the security

sector, the army and the police is to protect civilians and the Constitution, help with the election and provide security during the constitutional transition period.

A source of frustration for the Sudanese people in Darfur, especially women, is the exclusive nature of the security process and the reluctance of the military to accelerate the security sector reform process. Moreover, we think that members of civil society and women should be part and parcel of security sector reform and monitoring of accountability, with a view to democratic transformation and in accordance with the Juba Peace Agreement. Moreover, transitional justice issues concerning the victims of the war are another crucial competent for a more coherent and integrated transition process. Victims are waiting for the rule of law and transitional justice.

The issue of women's meaningful participation during the transition period is crucial. We know that Sudanese women created change through the revolution and through peace agreements — in Darfur and other parts, such as the Nuba Mountains. But meaningful participation means that women, including young women, participate equally not only on the second track of the peace process — they are always assigned the role of observers in peace processes — but as stakeholders and at the level of political parties. This must include women in the public domain — at the grass-roots level, in rural areas, in farmers and nomadic associations — as well as IDPs and refugees returning to their villages. They also need to be part of all commissions established through the peace deal, in governance reform and in rebuilding the Sudan. Despite the struggle of Sudanese women to have the gender dimension included in the transitional process, the current representation of women in the transitional Government is far below the 40 per cent floor of women's participation set forth in the Constitutional Declaration and Juba Peace Agreement. Resolution 1325 (2000) also provides for women's participation and protection.

UNITAMS is mandated to help in the democratic transformation, so it needs to push towards enhancing the political will of all parties to implement the Sudan's national action plan established pursuant to resolution 1325 (2000), which has been adopted by the transitional Government. That is one of the dividends of the revolution. The advocacy and engagement of women's civil society groups and networks should be part of the monitoring-mechanism process. Furthermore,

civil society groups and networks should be part of the implementation of the component designed to protect women from sexual and gender-based violence, especially in Darfuri IDP camps, with the consultation and inclusion of women's protection networks and groups to assist IDPs in Darfur and conflict zones, where the process is nationally owned and nationally led through meaningful participation.

The peacebuilding-activities component is indispensable to paving the way for Sudanese civil society, especially women, youth and war-affected groups, to get engaged in all livelihood activities, community-building and reintegration during the transition period. Moreover, peacebuilding activities will help affected communities to engage in the national democratic process through consultation and participation in constitution-making and the local governance system.

For the United Nations to assist the Sudan in establishing a national democratic process, it must help to implement the Juba Peace Agreement so that people can see the dividends of the Agreement when it is actually implemented in the ground, especially in Darfur and conflict zones, in terms of security, protection, justice and rule of law. Furthermore, it must help IDPs to return to secured camps and protected villages, especially in Central Darfur and West Darfur. In addition, the immediate implementation of security sector reform is crucial to encouraging the non-signatory parties to the Peace Agreement to develop trust and join the current peace talks in Juba. Through inclusive peacebuilding, which is one of the roles of UNITAMS with the support of the Security Council, conflicting Sudanese parties will move through non-violent dialogue towards democratic transformation to help shape the Constitution, with armed groups becoming political parties that would prepare for elections.

Assistance from the Security Council through UNITAMS is needed to help parties undertake immediate security sector reform and to fill the protection gap for civilians and IDPs left by UNAMID. This assistance should include technical support in arms control and collection during the security sector reform process. Capacity-building and gender training and code of conduct for security sector personnel must be provided. In terms of transitional justice, a victim fund providing compensation and reparation must be established, and psychosocial support for war victims provided.

UNITAMS should assist in engaging civil society in security sector reform and advocacy for a democratic transformation that will lead to building a civilian government. It must support building and enhancing civil society, including youth and women's groups, in preparation for elections and consultation for Constitution-making. It must support the implementation of the national action plan established pursuant to resolution 1325 (2000) to attain the meaningful participation of women at all levels during the transition. UNITAMS must help the transitional Government to finish establishing the government structure in the form of a legislature or parliament and the appointment of Government commissions, in particular a peace commission, a women's commission, the Constitutional Court and a justice-reform system.

Lastly, as to recommendations, bearing in mind that we have experienced the presence of civil society, a peacekeeping mission and a peacebuilding mission in our territory, we believe that the peacekeeping mission should be deployed where a final peace is agreed — not just partial peace. Learning from Darfur and the current UNITAMS mandate in the Sudan, a holistic or adaptable approach mixing peacebuilding and peacekeeping is highly recommended and needed in the current situation in the region. Such a holistic approach will help to fill the gaps in IDP and civilian protection in a fragile security context. We must keep in mind that without peace no democratic transformation will take place.

Funding for implementation of the Peace Agreement, for the development of civil society and for various peacebuilding activities is crucial. Providing livelihoods to and the economic empowerment of youth and women is critical, especially in the current economic situation in the Sudan.

The mandate of UNITAMS should be reviewed to include a protection component for the Darfur region and where a future African Union or United Nations mission at the highest level can strategically take on board the lessons learned from UNITAMS and UNAMID.

In any event, the people of the Sudan will still have the hope of attaining inclusive peace if the transitional Government players, on both civilian and military side, demonstrate the strong political will and desire to make this change through active dialogue and by setting up

a national consultation and engaging women and youth in the process.

Finally, without the international support that we enjoyed before, that is, without funding, none of the foregoing could happen. We therefore thank the international community for its funding and security support.

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

I now warmly welcome among us Her Excellency Ms. Meenakashi Lekhi, Minister of State for External Affairs of India.

Ms. Lekhi (India): At the outset, I would like to congratulate Ireland for assuming the presidency of the Security Council for the month September 2021. I also would like to thank the President for convening today's important open debate on United Nations peacekeeping operations with a focus on transitions. This is a timely initiative on a very significant aspect of peacekeeping, which we appreciate.

Let me thank the Secretary-General, Mr. António Guterres, for his comprehensive briefing. I also thank Mrs. Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, former President of Liberia, for sharing Liberia's experience with respect to United Nations peacekeeping and the subsequent transition. India has a unique bilateral relationship with Liberia, which we deeply value. Let me also express my appreciation to Ms. Safaa Elagib Adam, President of the Community Development Association of the Sudan, for her insights and for bringing the civil society perspective to today's debate.

Over the past seven decades, more than 1 million men and women have served under the United Nations flag in more than 70 peacekeeping operations. India joins other delegations in paying tribute to the men and women who have served and continue to serve in peacekeeping operations for their professionalism, dedication and courage. We also remember the 4,089 peacekeepers who have laid down their lives — and the courage and bravery of India's 174 peacekeepers who made the ultimate sacrifice in the line of duty.

India is the largest troop contributor to United Nations peacekeeping operations in cumulative terms, and, since their inception has deployed more than 250,000 peacekeepers across 49 United Nations missions. That attests to India's commitment to contributing a reliable, well-trained and highly professional peacekeeping force. As of today, nearly

5,500 Indian peacekeepers are deployed across nine United Nations missions. India was also happy to donate vaccines for all United Nations peacekeepers and upgraded two of its peacekeeping hospitals to combat the pandemic.

We take pride in the fact that the first-ever all women peacekeeping contingent was from India and stationed in Liberia. In virtue of their dedication, professionalism and motivation, the all-female formed policed unit proved to be strong, visible role models, gaining world-wide attention and illustrating the significant contribution that women can make to global peace and security. India's Female Engagement Team is today also playing an important role in the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

United Nations peacekeeping missions have been playing an important role in bringing about peace and stability in countries of deployment, despite numerous operational challenges. One of the major operational challenges that continues to hamper peacekeeping operations has been the transition phase from peacekeeping to peacebuilding. The drawdown of a United Nations peacekeeping operation and its reconfiguration into a minimal modified United Nations presence represents a critical phase for the success of any United Nations peacekeeping mission. For the host country, on the one hand, that signals progress towards political stability and new development opportunities, but, on the other hand, it also presents a real risk of the country relapsing into conflict.

The transition of peacekeeping operations and peacebuilding depends on several factors, including the way such transitions are envisaged, planned and executed by the United Nations. In order to be successful, that critical phase requires the active collaboration of all stakeholders. That was illustrated by the recent transition of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur into the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan.

In that context, I would like to offer several observations.

First, effective mandate-delivery by United Nations peacekeeping missions is critical to achieving the benchmarks for transitions. Peacekeeping missions should be given clear, focused, sequenced, prioritized and practically achievable mandates, and, most important, they should be matched by adequate resources.

Second, it is important that mission transitions be well planned, taking into account an objective assessment of various factors in the host country. The drawdown of peacekeeping missions should not be driven by the temptation for austerity. The cost of relapsing is always much higher than any short-term savings. In that regard, India welcomes the important advisory, bridging and convening roles of the Peacebuilding Commission, especially when the Council is discussing the mandates of peacekeeping missions.

Third, the primary responsibility to protect civilians across its territory lies with the host State. The Council should encourage and support the efforts of the host State towards the effective implementation of a national plan for civilian protection.

Fourth, full respect for the sovereignty of a country can never be over-emphasized. Transition strategies should recognize the primacy of national Governments and national ownership in identifying and driving priorities. The efforts of the host State towards security sector reform, capacity-building of the police, justice and correction and the promotion of the rule of law and good governance need to be supported and supplemented.

Fifth, a political solution to a conflict is paramount for achieving stability and sustainable peace. Political stakeholders should strive for the creation of political and administrative institutions that improve governance and inclusiveness and provide equal political opportunities for women and youth, as well as marginalized and underprivileged populations. Reconfigured peacekeeping operations have a crucial role to play in fostering a positive environment and encouraging collaboration among all relevant parties.

Sixth, peacekeeping and peacebuilding are not mutually exclusive. It is important to actively support the post-conflict peacebuilding and recovery initiatives of host States. In that regard, the efforts of the United Nations in peacebuilding should be strengthened by providing it with adequate financial resources, if necessary, by engaging international financial institutions, the private sector and civil society organizations. I have just returned from a bilateral visit to Colombia. I saw for myself how the Government is making commendable efforts towards peace and reconciliation, with the support of the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia.

Seventh, technology, especially digital technology, can play a crucial role in post-conflict peacebuilding to improve public services, promote transparency in governance, enhance the reach of democracy and promote human rights and gender sensitivity. India has been a strong advocate for the urgent need to introduce new and advanced technology in peacekeeping missions. In the context of transitions in operations and post-conflict peacebuilding, technology is equally relevant.

India's contributions in the area of human-centric peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction work in Africa are well known. India's fundamental approach to peacebuilding efforts is to respect national ownership and be guided by host States' development priorities. We are convinced that human-centric, gender-sensitive and technologically primed solutions and the robust functioning of democratic institutions of governance that give all stakeholders a say in creating a better future are the biggest guarantee for the success of peacebuilding and sustaining peace. Going forward, India will continue to be a force multiplier for peacebuilding, with an emphasis on the human-centric approach.

Mr. Ladeb (Tunisia) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I express my deep appreciation to Ireland for its initiative of choosing this important topic for today's meeting. I also thank Secretary-General António Guterres, Mrs. Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, former President of Liberia and Ms. Safaa Elagib Adam, President of the Community Development Association of the Sudan, for their valuable briefings.

The main purpose of peacekeeping operations is to end conflicts and achieve sustainable peace that restores stability and lays the foundation for peaceful coexistence in an environment of trust among all parties following the withdrawal of a United Nations mission at the end of its mandate. We believe that the cessation of hostilities or violence does not necessarily mean the end of conflict and the restoration of peace. History is full of examples of conflicts that are reignited and revert to the cycle of violence after the exit of a peacekeeping mission. The transition from peacekeeping to peacebuilding is therefore a delicate and extremely important operation that must be prepared for thoroughly to create the necessary environment to ensure the sustainability of the peace process.

Tunisia stresses the pivotal role played by United Nations missions in creating the conditions necessary

to achieve sustainable peace and stability. We believe that enhancing peacebuilding capabilities after the exit of such missions must be based on integrated and coordinated transition strategies that draw on the gains achieved during the peacekeeping phase and on supporting national authorities, as needed, in their efforts to restore basic State functions — such as those involving policing, the judiciary, public infrastructure, the provision of basic services and ensuring protection for civilians — in addition to strengthening the economy and rebuilding State institutions, all the while emphasizing the fundamental responsibility of national Governments to that end.

As Chair of the Working Group on Peacekeeping Operations, Tunisia attaches great importance to the transition from achieving peace to building peace. We held a meeting on the topic in December 2020. At the meeting, we stressed the importance of adopting transition strategies with clear objectives, based on early planning and effective coordination among interconnected United Nations actors, in addition to establishing parameters and realistic benchmarks that measure the progress achieved in peacebuilding and provide the necessary financial and logistical capabilities.

Against that backdrop, Tunisia reiterates the importance of developing transition strategies for peacebuilding missions in a participatory and integrated way, in close consultation with national authorities, civil society organizations and all components of society, on the one hand, and regional and subregional organizations, relevant international financial institutions and United Nations funds, programmes and agencies, on the other.

We also stress the importance of the participation of women and young people as fundamental actors, especially in enhancing national peacebuilding capabilities and promoting the culture of peace and respect for human rights.

Furthermore, we value the role of the Peacebuilding Commission and the efforts of the Secretary-General to reform peacebuilding operations and render them more efficient and effective through his different initiatives, which highlight the importance of advancing political solutions, enhancing the protection of civilians, promoting the safety and security of peacekeepers and supporting the participation of women in peace processes.

Tunisia will continue to participate actively in United Nations peacekeeping and peacebuilding operations, in which it has been engaged since the 1960s, while emphasizing its commitment to serving international peace and security.

Ms. Deshong (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines): At the outset, I thank His Excellency Secretary-General Guterres, Her Excellency Mrs. Johnson-Sirleaf and the President of the Community Development Association of the Sudan, Ms. Safaa Elagib Adam, for their insightful remarks. I also commend the Republic of Ireland for convening this timely discussion. We also welcome the presence of Her Excellency Minister Lekhi of India.

Peacekeeping engagements are important political tools that shape and reconfigure the social, economic and civic landscapes of conflict-affected States. Despite their indispensable role, peace operations face a range of impediments that hinder their effectiveness and performance, including the changing character of conflict where asymmetric threats, including acts of terror, improvised explosive devices and other unorthodox but increasingly sophisticated tactics are used by combatants; the shifting priorities and competing political objectives of powerful actors, both local and foreign, that wield influence over peace processes; and the prevalence of risk multipliers, such as climate change, which exacerbate human suffering and breed new patterns of conflict.

Against that precarious and uncertain backdrop, mission transitions and exit strategies must always be conducted with the full consent and consensus of all stakeholders, particularly that of the host country. Regular triangular cooperation among the Security Council, the Secretariat and troop- and police-contributing countries is essential to ensure that all drawdowns and transitions are strategically sound.

Exit strategies should never be driven by budgetary considerations, but rather determined through a comprehensive review of the situation on the ground. In all circumstances, the needs and priorities of host countries must take precedence over any decisions to withdraw or reconfigure peacekeeping missions.

It is an oft-repeated mantra — but one that bears reiterating — that the peace and security and development challenges facing our world today cannot be solved in isolation of each other, and neither can they be sufficiently addressed by military means alone.

In all theatres of operation, there is an urgent need for comprehensive and inclusive development solutions to reinforce ceasefire agreements, buttress peace processes and provide conflict-affected countries, in particular their disenfranchised youth, with viable opportunities for life, living and production. Peace dividends provided through sustainable, gender-responsive and climate-friendly development initiatives pave the way for successful transitions and sustainable exits.

Through the institutional nexus involving the Security Council, the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, with the Peacebuilding Commission playing a bridging, convening and advisory role, greater coordination, coherence and complementarity across all peace and security, development, human rights and humanitarian activities must be pursued. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines encourages all Member States and international financial institutions to scale up their financial support to all peacebuilding initiatives and mechanisms, including the Secretary-General's Peacebuilding Fund.

We also underscore the invaluable commitments of regional and subregional organizations, especially the African Union, to peacekeeping and peacebuilding. In all settings, and at all stages of the conflict cycle, and we must strive to draw on the immeasurable expertise of local and regional actors whose political and community-level engagements are better suited than externally imposed one-size-fits-all approaches. Their contributions are crucial when devising, implementing and evaluating the rule of law, security sector reform and transitional justice initiatives, which prove vital to sustainable exits and reconfigurations. Cultural and religious leaders, academia and civil society representatives, particularly women, are indispensable stakeholders for successful transitions.

To conclude, my delegation emphasizes the need for focused, realistic and actionable mandates for both peacekeeping and peacebuilding, backed by adequate resource allocations to achieve the desired political impact. During drawdowns and mission transitions, when the risks of relapse into conflict are elevated, peacekeeping gains should always be supplemented and safeguarded by comprehensive development and peacebuilding solutions.

Mrs. Thomas-Greenfield (United States of America): I would like to thank Secretary-General

Guterres as well as former President Johnson-Sirleaf and Ms. Safaa Elagib Adam for their briefings. Allow me also to thank Ireland in particular for hosting this very important discussion on the topic of peacekeeping transitions. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank all peacekeepers who take on such important tasks.

During the December 2020 renewal of the peacekeeping mandate for the United Nations Mission in South Sudan, our top priority was to help formulate a strategic vision for the Mission. That strategic vision is our way of challenging ourselves, our fellow Security Council members and the United Nations itself to think beyond the mandate to the topic at hand, that is, transitions.

In order to truly plan for the future of a mission, including its conclusion, mission leadership must look beyond the time limitations of the mandate and plan for what is to come. Peacekeeping missions are not intended to be permanent, but many have become just that. A strategic vision means smoother, more sustainable political transitions with earlier and more holistic planning across the United Nations system.

No one understands that better than former President Johnson-Sirleaf, which is why I am so glad she has joined us here today. I had the great fortune of working with former President Johnson-Sirleaf while serving as Ambassador to Liberia, leading up to the decision to close the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL). I would like to expand on her comments here today.

After 14 years of a deadly civil war and 15 years with a peacekeeping force, Liberia held three successive free and fair elections and successfully turned over power to a second President in a peaceful transition. Today Liberia even contributes its own peacekeepers to the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali, as we heard earlier.

That remarkable transition started with early, close and frequent coordination among me, the former Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Liberia — Ms. Ellen Margrethe Løj — and former President Johnson-Sirleaf. We knew that UNMIL's leaving could cause challenges for stability and safety, and we therefore developed a vision long before it was necessary to make that transition. We used that vision to share a common message with the people of Liberia. We made sure everyone stayed committed to the purpose. That meant engaging frequently with civil society, local

stakeholders, the United Nations country team and international partners, both diplomatically and in the broader non-governmental organization community. Key to our vision was ensuring that the Government of Liberia was also prepared, as was building confidence in the local security institutions and their services.

The United States worked with the Liberian armed forces, the United Nations and the donor community to help make the Liberian National Police more responsive and accountable to the Liberian people. UNMIL built capacity in Liberia's courts and trained judicial personnel to lead institutions that could effectively protect Liberians. Local efforts to sustain peace were equally important. Liberian civil society, including religious leaders, women's groups and journalists, worked to prevent and mitigate conflict at the local level. We worked with local officials to monitor the Government's implementation of the peacekeeping plan. They observed elections to ensure that they were free, fair and credible. All those efforts were guided by an inclusive vision and a strategic plan, focused on addressing the needs and interests of everyday people. UNMIL worked tirelessly to protect civilians and ensure a drawdown that did not lead to increased violence.

At this point, if I may, I would like to commend India for providing women peacekeepers. They were very important as role models for young Liberian women and girls, who saw the power of women in uniform. I thank India for that. That also required the United Nations country team, the host Government and civil society to step up to create sustainable mechanisms for protecting civilians after the peacekeepers withdrew. We hope to see that inclusive approach in Darfur now that the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) has drawn down and during upcoming Council discussions regarding the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in Sudan.

Transitions are successful only if they are supported by committed and accountable host Governments. We appreciate the reform efforts of the Government of the Sudan. However, we remain very concerned about the intercommunal violence occurring in Darfur and the resulting number of people displaced from their homes. We urge the Government of the Sudan to implement its national plan to protect civilians and help ensure that the transition from UNAMID is a success.

Successful transitions show the best of what the United Nations can accomplish and honour the service of peacekeepers in peacekeeping missions. But transitions really take real vision and long-term planning. I hope we can use the lessons learned from Liberia and Darfur and develop clear strategic visions focused on the interests of everyday people to guide future transitions.

Mr. Kariuki (United Kingdom): I thank you, Madam President, for convening today's debate. I also thank the Secretary-General, Her Excellency Mrs. Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf and Ms. Adam for their powerful briefings today.

I would like to thank you, Madam President, for leading us today in paying tribute to those killed or injured in the service of the United Nations. Our peacekeepers serve in some of the most challenging circumstances—supporting peace processes, protecting civilians and building the conditions for the transition to lasting peace. Many make the ultimate sacrifice. We must therefore ensure that all peacekeepers have the necessary training, equipment and support, including the right medical capabilities, to perform at their best. They should be assured that we have done our utmost to enable and build on their work.

Last year, the United Kingdom deployed peacekeepers to the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), delivering a capability that directly improves the reach, agility and responsiveness of the Mission, particularly in protecting civilians. Working alongside Bangladeshi, Swedish, Nigerien, Irish and German partners, among others, the forces of the United Kingdom have engaged with Malian communities that had never before met United Nations peacekeepers to understand their needs and concerns. They have gathered intelligence to support mission planning and improve overall mission performance and responsiveness to threats. Peacekeepers from the United Kingdom, working closely with Mission planners, have helped Malian officials and civilian human rights colleagues in MINUSMA to increase their reach — a powerful example of the military support in the United Nations system and of promoting local governance.

United Kingdom troops and their partners fulfil our expectations of peacekeepers — preventing violence, building host State capacities and laying the foundations for long-term peace and a sustainable mission transition. However, no matter how effective our operations,

long-term peace and successful transitions in Mali and elsewhere rely on finding sustainable political solutions. That requires our collective, coherent and consistent response at all levels — multilateral, bilateral and regional. I welcome the Secretary-General's focus on the issue through the Action for Peacekeeping (A4P) agenda and his A4P+ priorities.

For our peacekeepers' efforts to be worthwhile, we must continue reinforcing our support for such solutions long after peacekeeping missions draw down. In the Sudan, as we have heard, the establishment of the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in Sudan, following the drawdown of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur, has enabled the continuation of international support to the Sudan's efforts to build lasting peace and security in Darfur.

Sustainable transitions require United Nations peacebuilding structures, the peace and security architecture and the development system to work together. The United Kingdom welcomes the Secretary-General's directive to United Nations missions, country teams and Headquarters entities on early joint planning and financing, operational support and staffing. Sustaining peace relies on robust national ownership, host States building their own capacities, with the right international support and making plans for transitioning responsibilities with clear benchmarks for a desired end state, not an end date.

As we have heard today, the voices of women, youth and civil society are essential if transitions are to be sustainable. In Mali, bilateral funding from the United Kingdom helps increase the participation of women in the peace process and helps strengthen civilian coordination in order to facilitate humanitarian access. More broadly, the United Kingdom is a strong supporter of the Peacebuilding Fund, having contributed more than \$300 million since its inception. The combination of peacekeeping efforts and wider support from the international community are key to creating the conditions for sustained peace.

Effective transitions require all actors across and beyond the United Nations system to plan together to consolidate peace and to follow through in support of political solutions. In doing so, we can safeguard the legacy of all our peacekeepers and ensure their sacrifices are not in vain.

Ms. Juul (Norway): First, allow me to thank Ireland for calling attention to a topic that deserves more focus. Let me also thank the Secretary-General, President Johnson-Sirleaf and Ms. Adam for their very pertinent and informative briefings.

Transitions pose particular challenges for peacekeeping. To overcome them, it is crucial to sustain our momentum in the implementation of the Secretary-General's reform initiative, Action for Peacekeeping. If we succeed in following up on all eight priority areas, transitions will be made easier, which ultimately benefits all parties involved.

As Security Council members, we have a shared responsibility for crafting mission mandates that call for planned gradual and sequenced transitions from the outset. Norway strongly believes that transitions should depend upon progress along clear political, security, judicial and humanitarian benchmarks. They should be based on an exit strategy developed collaboratively among the United Nations, host State authorities and civil society. The transition process should be guided by a view of transitions not as a withdrawal, but rather as a reconfiguration of the United Nations country presence.

Transitions must therefore entail close coordination with, and adequate financing of, other United Nations entities that assume additional functions as missions draw down. That should include country teams, resident coordinators and regional offices, as well as the Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Fund. To ensure sustainable peace, transitions must consolidate progress on all aspects of mission mandates. Allow me to briefly note four areas of particular importance.

The first is the protection of civilians. Transitions can have a destabilizing impact on the security environment, potentially endangering vulnerable populations as a mission's protective capabilities diminish. It is critical to establish a protective environment during transitions.

The situation in the Sudan is a case in point. During a recent visit to the Sudan by our Minister of Development, the increased level of violence and alarming protection challenges were highlighted by all humanitarian partners. That is also reflected in the Secretary-General's latest report (S/2021/766) on the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan, where he observes that insecurity and lack of protection of civilians remain issues of

concern. Norway takes note of the steps taken so far by the Government of the Sudan to implement its national action plan for the protection of civilians. At the same time, we would like to stress the urgency of speedy follow-up and underline the importance of continued United Nations engagement.

The second area is women, peace and security. Transitions must be planned and carried out through inclusive processes that include the full, equal and meaningful participation of women and are based on gender-transformative approaches. The aim should be to consolidate and sustain pretransition gains on the women and peace and security agenda.

The third area is climate and security. A United Nations country presence should incorporate the implications of climate-related security risks in its reconfiguration strategy. To that end, it must ensure that adequate analytical and programmatic capacity remains to support host communities in addressing risks and building resilience.

The fourth and final area is peace diplomacy. As the resolution adopted today reaffirms, lasting peace can be achieved only through political solutions. It is therefore vital that United Nations support to host-State peace efforts continue during transitions.

The goal of transitions should be to help host-State authorities consolidate political and security gains and sustain peace through strong institutions, the rule of law, human rights and sustainable development. To achieve those goals, it is imperative that the Council continue to advance peacekeeping reform and that we help consolidate the reforms of the United Nations development system, in particular the key role of the reinvigorated resident coordinator system. This will ensure that we are equipping ourselves to effectively implement transitions as truly one United Nations.

Mr. Dang (Viet Nam): At the outset, I would like to thank Ireland for taking the initiative to convene this debate. I would also like to thank the Secretary-General, Mrs. Johnson-Sirleaf, the former President of Liberia, and Ms. Adam for their informative briefings. I welcome the Minister of State for External Affairs of India to today's meeting.

Transition is a crucial phase in the peace continuum from peacekeeping to peacebuilding and sustaining peace. When United Nations peacekeeping missions are withdrawn or reconfigured, it is often a sign of

progress, indicating the capability and readiness of post-conflict countries to achieve sustainable and lasting peace. But transitions also pose challenges and risks. As mentioned by the Secretary-General, at times the international community pays less attention and provides fewer resources and inadequate support to the country concerned. Socioeconomic instability, lack of development and existing causes of conflict can risk reversing hard-won gains. In that regard, we would like to emphasize the following points.

First, national ownership is of key importance during transitions. The planning and implementation of transitions should take into consideration the unique and specific contexts of the host country. There cannot be a one-size-fits-all model. Transitions should be a close collaborative exercise between the United Nations and the country concerned, with international support. The goal is for the host country to own its problems and to develop the capacity to solve them and own its future in a sustainable way.

The United Nations should adopt a comprehensive approach in order to tackle the root causes of conflicts and hostilities, promote State capacities and preserve achievements. That process should also seek to protect the role and needs of various socioeconomic actors, including women, children and other vulnerable groups.

Secondly, continuity and sustainability should be ensured. Transition can be deemed successful only when the successes before it are translated into sustainable successes after it. International assistance is greatly needed to support the political processes and national institutions of countries where United Nations missions are in transition, and must be provided through consultations, taking into account each country's particular circumstances, priorities and needs.

The United Nations should maintain a comprehensive and coherent role in transition processes and beyond by remaining closely engaged in supporting the countries concerned, including through United Nations country teams, so that they can address the challenges related to sustaining peace and achieving economic growth and sustainable development. In particular, assistance can be enhanced through the Peacebuilding Commission, which has an important role — to provide advice to the Security Council and peacebuilding assistance to States.

Thirdly, cooperation with regional and subregional organizations should be enhanced. Their in-depth and

unique understanding of their region and the countries within is critical to addressing international peace and security challenges. In that connection, regional and subregional organizations have the potential to provide support in transition processes, as needed, through dialogue and coordination with the United Nations, peacekeeping missions and countries concerned.

On the whole, partnerships between international and regional and subregional organizations, as well as among international organizations, including international financial institutions, should also be strengthened. New partnership opportunities should be explored, with a focus on preserving development gains and strengthening the capacities of countries in fragile contexts of transition.

In conclusion, we call for enhancing deliberation on this important issue with a view to ensuring effective and sustainable transitions in the interest of peace, stability and development for all countries and people concerned.

Mr. De Rivière (France) (*spoke in French*): I thank the Secretary-General, President Johnson-Sirleaf and Ms. Safaa Elagib Adam for their briefings.

France supports the approach of the Secretary-General. The success of transitions indeed depends on the ability of the actors to meet their responsibilities.

First of all, it is up to the host States to demonstrate the political will to fulfil their obligations. The protection of civilians, respect for human rights, the full participation of women and the restoration of State services are obviously essential. That is the challenge facing, for instance, the Sudanese transitional authorities today, with the support of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID).

The United Nations, for its part, must meet the challenge of integration between civilians and soldiers, consolidation and peacekeeping, and humanitarian and development actors. France welcomes the emphasis placed on that objective within the framework of the Action for Peacekeeping initiative and its A4P+ continuity strategy.

Finally, the Security Council itself has the responsibility of defining strategic orientations sufficiently upstream and of defining clear mandates that take into account the reality on the ground. France is working systematically to that end on all mandates. Our goal must be to avoid disruptions in terms of

international support. In more than 70 years, the United Nations has established 71 missions, 59 of which have been completed. These past transitions offer lessons.

We must work upstream in conditions that allow a withdrawal to be considered at the appropriate time. Mandates must therefore require support for strengthening the capacities of States, the restoration of basic services to populations, the reform of the security sector and the participation of all in peace processes. In Mali, for instance, the participation of women in the implementation of the Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation has improved since that goal was enshrined in the mandate of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali.

We must also endow the special political missions that take over from peacekeeping operations with the mandates and resources to effectively support the authorities of the host State. I am thinking, for example, of the establishment of the United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti, which seeks to coordinate the efforts of the international community and in particular to maintain support for the police and the judiciary.

It is essential to support the withdrawal of peacekeeping operations through enhanced cooperation with United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, including the Peacebuilding Fund. The liaison office model set up by UNAMID in Darfur is an example of flexibility that must be able to continue after the withdrawal of the peacekeeping operation.

France is convinced that transitions can be successful only through a partnership with regional and international players. That is the approach we are pursuing in the Sahel, where the Coalition for the Sahel seeks to respond to all the dimensions of the crisis and to ensure the complementarity of the efforts of the United Nations, the European Union and the countries of the region.

Regional engagement is also decisive in the Central African Republic, where the African Union, the Economic Community of Central African States and the International Conference of the Great Lakes Region play a decisive role, alongside the United Nations, in supporting the implementation of the Political Accord for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic.

Ms. Evstigneeva (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We thank Ireland, which this year has the honour of hosting the annual debate on peacekeeping reform, for drawing attention to the important topic of transition in peacekeeping operations. We thank the Secretary-General for his informative briefing and for the special focus he placed on the key role of national leadership and national responsibility in peacebuilding. It is difficult to overestimate the contribution to the discussion of former President of Liberia Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, whose country overcame a very difficult period of conflict and post-conflict reconstruction with the active assistance of the international community. We are also grateful to Ms. Safaa Elagib Adam for her assessment of the situation in the Sudan. We welcome the participation of the Minister of State for External Affairs and Culture of India, Ms. Meenakshi Lekhi, in today's exercise.

Every conflict has its own unique set of causes and, therefore, every individual case requires a delicate and impartial approach, a patient analysis and a search for a unique solution, above all at the national level. We are convinced that high-quality, meticulous political and mediation efforts play a key role in advancing international peace and security. Regardless of the form of international support for a country in conflict — be it a peacekeeping operation, a political mission or the good offices of the Secretary-General — such efforts will be limited in their effectiveness without a political agreement.

In that regard, we believe that the best transformation of the mandate of any United Nations mission is the complete transfer of responsibility to the State itself, both to prevent and address the consequences of conflicts, and to sustain peace and move towards recovery and development, while taking into account the interests and rights of the country's entire population.

Unfortunately, such a result can rarely be achieved, especially in a short period of time. In today's world, peacekeeping operations remain among the most important tools for ending armed confrontation in order to create conditions in which the parties can achieve a definitive reconciliation. The Blue Helmets help the host country to take the first step on the path from conflict to sustainable peace and play a key role in the early stages of peacebuilding. An important part of peacekeeping mandates is assisting the Government in establishing control of the territory of an entire country,

protecting civilians, strengthening State institutions, implementing disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes, and reforming the security sector.

While in recent years peacekeeping mandates have become excessively complex and include many non-peacekeeping tasks, we are convinced that providing States with long-term assistance in the areas of development and human rights through peacekeeping organizations is not appropriate.

As peacekeeping missions fulfil their core functions and stabilize the situation on the ground, they should be drawn down in a timely manner and transformed into other formats of international assistance. At the same time, as missions are downsized or closed, their continuity must be ensured in order to prevent relapses into conflict during the transition period. In any case, the opinion of the host country should be key in considering the withdrawal of peacekeepers. In that context, we note the close work undertaken with the Sudanese authorities to draw down the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur and to determine the mandate of its successor, the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in Sudan (UNITAMS). We trust that the activities of UNITAMS will build Khartoum's capacity in key areas, in particular peacebuilding, and will support the conduct of economic reforms, sustainable security sector reform and the maintenance of domestic peace and the rule of law. It is important to build the country's economic potential to resolve those key tasks. Supporting the mobilization of resources is also an important part of the mandate.

We have consistently advocated that international support for building and sustaining peace, if needed, should be provided only at the request or with the consent of the Government, in accordance with its priorities, without dictating and with unconditional respect for State sovereignty. We do not believe that one-size-fits-all or automatic approaches are suitable. We do not consider it necessary to overburden the Secretariat and host countries with a predetermined set of goals and general parameters, which are often not directly related to the resolution of the crisis situation in a particular country.

Of course, there is a certain connection between peace and security, development and human rights, as enshrined in the resolutions on peacebuilding. However, that cannot serve as a pretext for mixing the mandates

of United Nations organs and offices of the Secretariat. In that context, we emphasize the unique role of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), which coordinates and consolidates the efforts of national and international actors to achieve long-term peace and development. We support its work and call for the strengthening of that important organ of the Organization.

Liberia, as the former Liberian leader noted earlier, is a unique example of a productive partnership between the United Nations and national participants in peacebuilding.

The PBC has also demonstrated its potential to draw the attention of the international community to national priorities in the areas of peacebuilding and development in Liberia, which was in need of international assistance, and it provided a platform for moving from theory to practical work in the spheres of peacebuilding and sustaining peace.

Mr. Aougi (Niger) (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank the Secretary-General, Mrs. Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf and Ms. Safaa Elagib Adam for their briefings.

As the Security Council well knows, the most difficult thing is not to come between warring parties and silence the weapons in a conflict, but to leave the host country in a peaceful climate that is favourable to recovery and sustainable development. The latter objectives can only be achieved if peacekeeping succeeds in leaving the host country authorities with an environment conducive to peacebuilding. Indeed, a precipitous withdrawal or a poorly prepared reconfiguration of peacekeeping missions carries enormous risks of relapse into violence, which could wipe out all hopes for peace.

That is why the Security Council, which bears the heavy responsibility for establishing and dismantling peacekeeping missions, should first and foremost ensure that the conditions that would justify disengagement are sufficiently met before deciding to disengage, since those decisions and/or timetables are unfortunately sometimes made in haste, at a time when vulnerable populations still need the United Nations presence in their territory.

The Security Council must make a thorough assessment of the situation on the ground before taking a decision to withdraw United Nations forces. It must also take into account the views of local and international actors on the appropriateness of the

withdrawal through success indicators set forth in their mandates. No United Nations withdrawal should take place unless national actors have the minimum capacity to manage transitions themselves, which, given the fragility of post-conflict environments, must be carefully planned.

It is clear that the complexity of peace-process implementation and ensuring that all related activities are rooted in the country contribute to the stabilization of a country weakened by conflict. Restoring, consolidating and maintaining peace — or building and strengthening State institutions — is a tedious, time-consuming task. Particular attention must therefore be paid to how a peacekeeping operation engages in integrated planning with local and national authorities, communities, civil society and the United Nations system as a whole, with a view to ensuring a successful transition.

As transition is clearly a period of transfer of power to local authorities, it is crucial that the host country identify its own priorities and take ownership of the gains and consolidate them. The reason the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire has often been cited as an example of a successful transition is that engaged Ivorian actors took ownership of the peace process in a meaningful way, developing consensual transition plans tailored to their needs. The recent transitions in Liberia in 2018 and in Darfur in 2020 offer lessons that can significantly contribute to improving transitions, even though each situation has its own specificities.

In order to obtain the commitment and support of local populations, they must be associated with all stages of the peace process. The people must be allowed to express their concerns, visions and needs. To achieve this end, it is essential that the United Nations develop effective communication with all local actors and local populations in all their diversity.

The planning of an exit strategy must necessarily be established in symbiosis with the national strategies they are supposed to support, which implies intense coordination with all actors — the host country, the United Nations system and the range of actors involved in the host country — in the diversity of their activities. Furthermore, given the impact and role played by civil society, in particular youth and women, in all their social organizations and economic and social development projects, the Council, if it really wants to achieve the success desired in peacebuilding, must ensure the strict

application of all relevant resolutions ensuring civil society groups' full and complete participation in the planning and execution of all strategies.

In conclusion, my delegation would like to remind the international community, and more specifically the donor community, of the need to endow transitions with the substantial financial resources commensurate with the multidimensional activities that are being undertaken as well as with all the challenges stemming from the fragile situations of regions in conflict.

Mr. Dai Bing (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China welcomes Ireland's initiative to hold today's meeting, and we thank Secretary-General Guterres and Mrs. Johnson-Sirleaf for their briefings. I have also listened carefully to Ms. Safaa Elagib Adam's briefing.

Peacekeeping operations (PKOs) are an important means for the United Nations to maintain international peace and security. A properly formulated and effectively implemented transition strategy is the key to the success of peacekeeping operations. It is also a common topic that requires Council members to take stock of lessons learned and continuously improve.

We must optimize the overall planning of peacekeeping operations. PKOs should always follow the political goals and, based on the evolution of the situation, make timely adjustments in terms of the scope of mandates and prioritization.

Protection of civilians, protection of human rights and transitional justice are all means to serve the political process, and they cannot replace the political process itself.

At the early stage of peacekeeping deployment, the Security Council should incorporate relevant ideas on peacebuilding and strive to lay the foundations for long-term peace and stability in the countries concerned. As the situation gradually stabilizes, a clear and feasible exit strategy needs to be formulated, as this is an important element in promoting a smooth transition. Accordingly, the transitions in Timor-Leste, Sierra Leone, Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia are success stories for the United Nations. We should make good use of such positive experiences and proactively promote their application in new contexts.

We must focus as a top priority on supporting the countries concerned in nation-building. Countries emerging from conflicts see their infrastructure in ruins. The transition from peacekeeping to

peacebuilding is the key to national reconstruction, which is primarily the responsibility of the countries in question. However, due to their vulnerability and fragility, post-conflict countries are hardly capable of independent development during the transitional phase. The United Nations and the international community must shoulder the responsibility of providing targeted support to these countries so as to build and improve their self-driven development capacity. It should be emphasized that political and social stability hinges on steady economic development.

In the transition strategy of peacekeeping operations, priority should be given to key sectors, such as infrastructure, agriculture, utilization of resources, accessibility of education, and poverty eradication, *inter alia*, as these are all important components of the long-term peace and stability of the country. What transpired recently in Afghanistan is proof that a “democratic transformation” imposed from the outside will inevitably end in failure. The international community and the United Nations should identify lessons learned and continue to provide effective and strong support to post-conflict countries, such as Afghanistan, in their reconstruction efforts.

We must persist in the formulation of transition strategies that are in line with local conditions. Post-conflict transitions involve, *inter alia*, rebuilding State institutions, national reconciliation and security sector reform. These are all related to national sovereignty and cannot be separated from the specific political, economic and cultural conditions of the country in question.

In designing the transition plan of a United Nations peacekeeping operation, we should fully heed and respect the wishes of the country so as to ensure convergence and complementarity with the national development strategies and priorities independently formulated and decided by the countries themselves. It is also essential to adapt in a timely manner to the evolving situation on the ground in those countries.

In the past 30 years, the United Nations has organized and deployed several missions in Haiti and has made a significant investment in there. Yet many problems pertaining to State governance remain in that country, which is disappointing. The current model for Haiti is unsustainable. The Haitian Government should shoulder its responsibilities and tackle them independently.

For many years, China has actively supported the reconstruction and development of post-conflict countries, especially developing countries, and has provided support in the areas of economic development, education, health and infrastructure, while focusing on helping them improve their independent development capacity and achieve a greater level of self-reliance and self-sufficiency. The China-United Nations Peace and Development Fund has actively supported the countries concerned in undertaking collaborative projects, countering terrorism, peacekeeping, good offices mediation and sustainable development.

China stands willing and ready to work with the international community to continue its positive contribution to helping post-conflict countries in achieving peace and sustainable development.

Mr. Jürgenson (Estonia): I join others in thanking the Secretary-General, President Johnson-Sirleaf and Ms. Safaa Elagib Adam for their briefings.

The aim of every United Nations peacekeeping mission is to end and make itself redundant, but, as past experience has shown, peace requires a multidimensional approach, which has been adopted by several United Nations peacekeeping missions. How the various dimensions enable peace, however, is different and, as such, require according particular attention to when and whether to end or transition them. That makes proper transitions into multi-year processes that require sustained political, security and programmatic engagements, bringing together the entire United Nations system in a different kind of configuration and United Nations support for the host country.

Transition planning has to take into account broad challenges, including risks to stability, governance and the rule of law, as well as the political, humanitarian and human rights context. In that regard, wide coordination with different stakeholders — including women, youth and those who protect and promote human rights — is crucial in order to ensure a successful pivot to post-conflict peacebuilding.

Integrated mission transitions require the transfer of a multitude tasks to a variety of actors, including international partners, host Governments and civil society organizations, while at the same time maintaining continuity. In the past, drawdowns have at times occurred amid incomplete political settlements, persistent threats to civilians and significant social and economic disparities.

Therefore, greater attention to transitions should be considered, and there should be periodical reporting on the status of transitions under way. Past experience has also demonstrated how changes in the mission footprint benefit from being accompanied by adequate attention to corresponding environmental and ecological impacts. Care must be taken to ensure that environment- and climate-related security implications are considered in transition assessments.

The protection of civilians and the promotion of human rights are central to the United Nations political strategy and dialogue with host-State authorities, and they remain just as relevant as the United Nations strategic goal shifts towards peacebuilding, with host-State authorities shouldering greater responsibility.

Finally, the overarching requirement in all transitions is the importance of national ownership, whether by the host country, local communities or civil society partners. As United Nations missions change their posture, the result should lead not to a reduction in the safety of people and the stability of peace, but greater local empowerment and resilience.

Mr. De la Fuente Ramírez (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): We join others in thanking you, Madam President, for convening this open debate. We are also grateful for the briefings by the Secretary-General, the former President of Liberia, Mrs. Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, and the President of the Community Development Association of the Sudan. In addition, we commend Ireland for submitting a draft resolution on this issue, which we have co-sponsored with full conviction and which we trust will provide greater clarity to the transition processes of peacekeeping missions.

Peacekeeping operations are key elements to the peacebuilding architecture. The 2015 and 2020 reviews on the subject made it abundantly clear that there can be no development without peace and no peace without development, and that focusing on the structural causes of conflicts is crucial to preventing and resolving them. The evolving nature of conflicts also means that the focus of the Security Council must turn towards designing effective and flexible transitions. As we have seen, transitions can determine the path towards stability or relapse into violence.

In that context, I should like to raise several points that pertain to assessing the transition or the reduction of a peacekeeping operations mandate:

The first concerns objectively determining when to end or substantially modify a mission's mandate. The decision to withdraw a mission must not be subject to considerations that are not linked to the reality on the ground. Artificial deadlines establishing the end of a mission must also be avoided. The experience in Haiti, for example, compels us to ask ourselves whether the decision to transition to the United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti was made at the right time.

The second involves taking into account existing capabilities so as to ensure the protection of civilians. As we have seen in the case of the Sudan, the closure of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur has had its challenges in that regard, and some of its consequences are to be regretted. It is therefore essential that the actual capacities of national actors on the ground be taken into account in order to ensure the protection of civilians and work with them on effective protection plans.

The third concerns focusing on the civilian aspects of any transition, from civilian capacity planning, particularly with regard to capacities in place for the promotion and protection of human rights, to gender equality, the rule of law, access to justice, security sector reform, the proper management of arms and ammunition, the reduction of community violence, reconciliation and strengthening electoral systems, among others.

The fourth concerns the need to involve resident coordinators and country teams. That is the only way to ensure inclusive peacebuilding strategies that allow for the restoration of the social fabric and responding to the interests of the societies and Governments of the countries that they are reaching out to. In that regard, we welcome the fact that, from its inception, the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan was established as an integrated mission.

Fifthly, there is a need to strengthen collaboration with the Peacebuilding Commission through a shared responsibility approach. The Commission has considerable capacity when it comes to convening all relevant actors in transition contexts and establishing strategic partnerships with regional organizations. It also makes it possible to keep conflicts under review without the perceived pressure of being under the scrutiny of the Security Council, as in the case of Guinea-Bissau or Burundi.

As has been repeatedly stated, the active involvement of women, young people and minorities as central actors in processes to prevent new outbreaks of violence and to promote political stabilization is indispensable.

Finally, I would like to note that the recommendations of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations have the great advantage of including the views of troop- and police-contributing countries in order to ensure that its proposals align with experiences on the ground and build on lessons learned.

Mr. Kiboino (Kenya): I want to join others in thanking His Excellency the Secretary-General, Her Excellency Mrs. Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf and Ms. Safaa Elagib Adam for their insightful briefings. I also welcome the presence of Her Excellency Ms. Meenakshi Lekhi, Minister of State for External Affairs of India.

Allow me also to commend you, Madam, for convening this debate and for leading us this morning in commemorating all those peacekeepers who have paid the ultimate sacrifice in the service of peacekeeping. We honour the memory of those valiant men and women and pay tribute to every peacekeeper, whether uniformed or civilian, serving or retired.

Today, peacekeeping largely deals with complex and protracted intra-State conflicts, often involving situations of active terrorist or insurgent groups that deliberately and indiscriminately target civilians and civilian objects. For peacekeepers to fulfil their mandate to protect the peace and civilians from such targeting, they themselves must be safe from being targeted.

In that regard, I reaffirm Kenya's support for the innovative efforts of the Secretary-General in his Action for Peacekeeping and Action for Peacekeeping Plus initiatives. We associate ourselves in particular with the key components of those initiatives, including strengthening protection of civilians, enhancing the safety and security of peacekeepers, promoting the women and peace and security agenda and advancing political solutions.

Kenya is proud to deploy peacekeepers who are trained for the existing environment. Our International Peace Support Training Centre is a regional facility of excellence that offers cutting-edge training in all aspects of peace support operations in complex security situations. From dealing with improvised explosive devices to building effective relations with

local communities, we are committed to growing the next generation of peacekeepers.

But even as we advocate for effective peacekeeping, we are drawn to today's topic on how to better handle transitions of missions as they exit the theatre. It is our strongly held conviction that the exit strategy defined as part of the original mission planning should include effective transitions. We note that conditions on the ground evolve, especially as missions take longer than originally planned. The longer the mission lasts, the more it impacts the social, economic and political environment. Disengagement must therefore take that into account so as to prevent new crises at the local and national levels.

Allow me to underscore a few points that we believe should be considered while formulating transitions and exit strategies in peacekeeping.

First, it must always be borne in mind that peacekeeping is not a substitute for conflict resolution. It must be undertaken alongside a well-resourced and highly prioritized political process to address the root causes of the conflict.

Secondly, peacekeeping missions create an economic effect from the supply chains they require. In time, they become drivers of employment and production and can have uplifting effects on local economies. Their departure can have the unintended effect of employment falloffs, which could be detrimental to peace and security. Transitions should therefore be planned and coordinated in collaboration with national, regional and international economic development bodies.

Thirdly, peacekeeping by definition is undertaken in fragile environments that are regarded as politically risky by investors. Transitions by United Nations missions should therefore be linked to investment promotion schemes that actively seek to de-risk investment and push it to comply with environmental, social and governance frameworks that are favourable to maintaining hard-won peace gains. That is where the Peacebuilding Fund that the Secretary-General referred to earlier comes in.

Fourthly, the Security Council should draw more advice from the Peacebuilding Commission to help ensure that the longer-term perspective required for sustaining peace is reflected in the formation, review and reconfiguration of peace operations.

Fifthly, the United Nations should, as far as possible, involve the host country in the negotiation and formulation of peacekeeping mandates, including transition aspects, to promote national ownership and responsibility. In addition, extensive consultations should be held with key national actors, as well as regional and international stakeholders.

Finally, as part of ensuring sustained peace in a post-peacekeeping context, efforts for the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of former combatants should be undertaken during and after mission mandates as the specific situation demands.

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

I want to start by thanking the Secretary-General for his insightful briefing. The Secretary-General's presence at the Council earlier today is a clear expression of his steadfast support for the thousands of peacekeepers working to build and sustain peace around the world. I also want to thank former President Johnson-Sirleaf. Liberia's journey from conflict to peace is a testament to her leadership and to the transformative impact of United Nations peacekeeping. Irish troops were proud to serve in her country as part of the United Nations Mission in Liberia. Finally, I want to thank Safaa Adam for her powerful testimony. Her voice, experience and recommendations are what this Council needs to hear.

For more than six decades, Irish women and men have served in United Nations peace operations across the globe. Every community on the island has bid farewell to a Blue Beret upon deployment and counted down the days to their return. Some have never made it home. Today, we remember and honour all those who have given their lives in the cause of peace.

At its best, United Nations peacekeeping is a remarkable and meaningful expression of multilateralism and international solidarity. These brave women and men work night and day in some of the world's most fragile contexts across the globe. They work to keep safe those who need protection, to resolve conflict and to create conditions for peace to thrive. As an Irish woman, I know from the experience on our island that hard-won peace can be fragile and that sustained commitment is needed for it to prosper.

The fact is, the end of violent conflict brings with it an opportunity to deliver sustainable peace, not a

guarantee. When that opportunity arrives, it is up to us, collectively around this table, to be ready and prepared to grasp it.

Peacekeeping can open the pathway to a peaceful future. A sustainable transition to peacebuilding can ensure that we do not falter along the way. Yes, the challenges are complex; they are interconnected; but they are not insurmountable. That is why Ireland has prioritised this issue, not only today but throughout our Council membership.

The draft resolution that will be voted on tomorrow, and which many members around this table have already co-sponsored, sends a clear and united message. It is the first stand-alone draft resolution on transitions. It will deliver a road map and a framework for how we approach and manage this critical and sensitive juncture in a country's history.

When the time does come for our peacekeepers to leave, it is vital that the United Nations system be ready to step up and to step in. To do that, it is important that the Council has a shared vision of what that means. For Ireland, we understand transition as a strategic process, designed to build towards the reconfiguration of the United Nations presence in the field. We see it as a gradual process, enabling and supporting long-term peacebuilding efforts.

Of course, we should not be naïve. The process will not always be linear. We have heard today from our briefers of the enormous challenges that can arise as circumstances on the ground change. However, with early and inclusive planning, incorporating a whole-of-United Nations approach, and with national ownership at its core, we can ensure that the foundations for peace created by peacekeeping are not lost, but rather are built upon.

Our discussions today are not merely technical matters. In fact, for thousands of vulnerable people, they are far from abstract. Those people are depending on the Council and the United Nations to work with their Governments to ensure their safety and to protect them from harm. When the Secretary-General was here, he highlighted the need for greater attention to be paid to the protection of civilians during the reconfiguration of United Nations presences.

We know that States bear the primary responsibility for the protection of their civilian population. The Council also has a role to play. It has a responsibility

to encourage and support Governments in developing and implementing national strategies that reflect the protection needs of all elements of the population. That means the full participation of local communities and stakeholders, including women, youth and civil society.

Today's debate has demonstrated that peace is not a moment. It is not the signature of a deal, nor is it the departure of a United Nations peacekeeping mission. It is a process; it is a commitment. It takes time, planning and forbearance, and it always takes hope. The Council must exercise its unique authority to organize, equip and structure reconfigured United Nations missions in a way that gives that peace the best possible chance of success. We owe this to our peacekeepers and to those they were sent to protect.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers.

I should like to thank once again all of the participants who have joined us in our discussions today, including for their recognition of Ireland's former President, Mary Robinson, who attended today's important debate.

I would also like to thank the following Member States that have so far submitted written statements on the subject of today's discussion: Belgium, Brazil, Colombia, Fiji, Germany, Indonesia, Japan, Jordan, Malaysia, Malta, Poland, Portugal, the Republic of Korea, Switzerland and the United Arab Emirates. We look forward to receiving more statements. Statements that are received by the end of today will form part of the compilation of statements from this meeting.

The meeting rose at 12.15 p.m.