

# Keeping peace in a changing backdrop in Sudan and South Sudan

Thank you, Mr President. We hope to see both governments seize the opportunities this offers for forging a lasting and comprehensive peace in Abyei, Blue Nile and South Kordofan. We are therefore encouraged by the recent talks between the governments of Sudan and South Sudan and express our hope that this momentum in bilateral relations will continue. A strengthened dialogue is key to securing a lasting resolution to the situation in Abyei.

We remain concerned that armed forces from both sides continue to occupy the safety militarized border zone. We therefore commend the recent commitment by both governments to withdraw all forces from this zone and urge swift implementation of this commitment.

Mr President, the UK welcomes the first round of preliminary peace talks between the government of Sudan and the armed movements. We encourage all parties to return to talks on 21 November, ready to engage constructively and without preconditions.

We also welcome the government of Sudan's moves to remove bureaucratic impediments on humanitarian actors. We hope this decision will be implemented in full, enabling unfettered humanitarian access across Sudan, including in Abyei and the two areas.

Mr President, against this changing backdrop, we welcome the continuing progress outlined in the Secretary-General's report at the mission level, including on human rights and judicial capacity-building. However, we recognise the persistent operational challenges the mission faces, including delays in issuing visas and entry clearances for mission assets. We regret that the civilian deputy head of mission has not yet been deployed, given the importance of this role in supporting progress on the political track.

Like others around the table, we commend the government of Ethiopia for its contribution to UNISFA. We condemn all attacks on mission personnel and reiterate our condolences to the government of Ethiopia and the family of the peacekeeper who lost his life on 16 July.

Mr President, as the security situation in Abyei remains fragile with an increasing criminality and sporadic presence of armed elements, we share the Secretary-General's assessment that UNISFA continues to have a vital role in maintaining stability. This council should ensure the mission is adequately resourced to deliver its mandate, including through strengthened civilian and police capabilities. This is vital if Abyei and the two areas are to benefit from the opportunities for peace created by recent political developments at the national level.

Thank you, Mr President.