

Progress towards peace, prosperity and democracy in Sudan

Thank you Madam President. Let me begin by thanking Special Representative Perthes, Undersecretary-General Khare and Ms. Khair for their briefings.

Madam President, Prime Minister Hamdok and his government have continued to make progress on the path towards peace, prosperity and democracy. The formation of a new Council of Ministers to include signatories of the Juba Peace Agreement, exchange rate reform, the ratification of the UN Convention against Torture, and the Government's cooperation with the International Criminal Court are all noteworthy. As we have heard from Ms. Khair today, civil society, women and youth have a vital role to play in all aspects of the transition process. And we look forward to the establishment of the Transitional Legislative Council with a quota of 40% women in this context.

The United Kingdom stands ready to work with the Government of Sudan as it continues its transition to democracy. During his visit to Khartoum in January, Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab announced the United Kingdom's intention to provide a \$456 million bridging loan to help clear Sudan's arrears with the African Development Bank. This is in addition to the \$55 million already contributed to Sudan's Family Support Programme.

Madam President, after months of delay, the United Kingdom welcomes the deployment of Special Representative Perthes and Deputy SRSG Lo N'Diaye. We also welcome the initial cooperation between the Government of Sudan and UNITAMS.

We recognise that the success of Sudan's transition requires sustained efforts in a number of areas. It is therefore vital for the Government to work with UNITAMS, including its integrated Country Team, to identify priority areas for UNITAMS to provide support in line with its mandate. In order to harness the full potential of UNITAMS's support, we urge the Government of Sudan to work with the UN swiftly to finalise the Status of Mission Agreement.

The United Kingdom has provided \$500,000 in voluntary contributions to UNITAMS. We are the first member state to do so and we encourage others to provide support for UNITAMS efforts to support the Government of Sudan's work.

Madam President, whilst the Government of Sudan has taken many steps to overcome the challenges facing their country, significant obstacles do lie ahead. We cannot ignore the escalation of intercommunal violence in Darfur in recent months. More people have been displaced in Darfur in 2021 than in all of 2020. We are also concerned by the destruction of yet another former UNAMID site on 23 February, after it was handed over to the Government of Sudan.

We echo the Secretary-General's call for the Government to expedite implementation of the National Plan for Civilian Protection, the Juba Peace Agreement and other efforts aimed at preventing and reducing violence at the community level. We also call on the Government of Sudan to secure sites handed over to them by the UN so that they can be used to consolidate peace across Darfur.

I also reiterate our call for those who remain outside the peace process to engage without pre-conditions, to conclude swiftly negotiations on a comprehensive peace agreement.

Finally, Madam President, the United Kingdom continues to closely monitor the situation on the Sudan-Ethiopia border. We call on both sides to engage in dialogue to prevent further escalation, which could have significant ramifications for regional peace and security.