

Remaining committed to supporting Sudan's transition

Thank you, Mr President. Thank you SRSO Perthes for his briefing today. And it's very good to see my friend, the Chargé d'Affaires of Sudan, here as well today and have you participating in our meeting. And although it's a little late, let me say Eid Mubarak to you and to all the Sudanese people.

Mr President, the United Kingdom wants to commend the continued progress made by Prime Minister Hamdok and his government towards delivering all aspects of Sudan's transition. Progress on difficult economic reforms is particularly notable, with Sudan passing a second IMF review this month, and being on track to reach the first milestone of the Heavily Indebted Poor Country Initiative.

The United Kingdom is committed to supporting these efforts, including commitments to helping Sudan to clear its arrears at the World Bank, African Development Bank, and the IMF, unlocking access to much needed international finance.

And on the peace and security side, I want to welcome the signing of a Declaration of Principles with the SPLM-N Abdel-Aziz al-Hilu and the planned return to negotiations next week.

I also want, Mr President, to recognise the progress made by UNAMID in completing the closure and handing over of sites within a challenging context, as well as the efforts of the Government of Sudan to secure the sites handed over to them by UNAMID. And as this is the final Council session before UNAMID closes on 30 June, let me take this opportunity to thank all personnel who have contributed so much over the years to UNAMID's efforts to support peace and stability in Darfur.

Mr President, notwithstanding significant progress, many challenges remain. We are concerned by use of violence against protesters in Khartoum on 11 May. And I want to welcome the swift action taken by the Sudanese authorities to investigate. But this incident is a reminder that accountability for crimes committed before, and during, the revolution needs to be delivered if Sudan's transition is to succeed. It is vital that progress is made in this area, alongside progress on implementing the Juba Peace Agreement, good governance and constitutional reform. Only with such progress will all citizens across Sudan be empowered and benefit from the transition.

And I want to echo the Secretary-General's concerns about increasing intercommunal violence. We must prioritise peace and the protection of civilians, and I call on the Government to accelerate implementation of the Juba Peace Agreement and the National Plan for the Protection of Civilians. UNITAMS can play an important role in supporting these efforts.

As the Council discusses the renewal of UNITAMS mandate, I want to really

commend the work of SRSG Perthes and his team in recent months. UNITAMS is a partnership between the international community and Sudan, and we are really encouraged by the positive engagement and commitment of the Government of Sudan in working with UNITAMS in support of the transition. It was good to hear today that the Status of Mission Agreement is ready for signature, and let's hope that can be done as soon as possible.

In the coming weeks, colleagues, we hope the Council will renew UNITAMS' mandate, enabling continued support in line with the four strategic objectives identified in resolution 2524. I believe that Council members will want to ensure UNITAMS' support to the Government of Sudan's own priorities has the maximum impact over the coming year. We should ensure a prioritised and focused mandate to support UNITAMS in implementing its strategic objectives. UNITAMS support to Sudan should be underpinned by a whole-of-UN approach and I call on all to coordinate across the UN system and indeed with the International Financial Institutions (IFIs).

Mr President, this will be the last time that I speak on Sudan in this Council. I just want to reflect on the enormous changes that I have seen in my four years here. The Sudanese people showed incredible bravery and determination in their revolution to remove a military dictatorship. The African Union played a critical role. Not all permanent members of this Council supported the people of Sudan and the AU in their desire for freedom, but I am proud that the United Kingdom stood with the people of Sudan throughout and does so now.

But navigating a successful transition, with all the many priorities faced by the government, also requires courage and determination. Democracy and civilian rule remains fragile. And so I believe that it is more important than ever that the United Nations, both UNITAMS and the agencies, funds and programmes, prioritise support for Sudan. It is vital that the international community works in partnership, especially the IFIs and NGOs. And, finally, those of us who celebrated with the Sudanese people when they threw off dictatorship; those of us who believe in democracy, human rights and the rule of law; those of us who saw Sudan as a bright spot on this Council's agenda, must not be complacent. We must not be distracted. We must not lose focus. We must work to support Sudan's transition. We must not let Sudan's people down; and we must not let down all those across the world striving for their own freedom and measuring our determination in our response in Sudan.

Thank you very much, Mr President.