

Speech: “Fifteen years of violence there have shown that there can be no military solution to the conflict.”

Thank you Mr President.

I would like to thank the Prosecutor for her 25th report on the situation in Darfur, the continued commitment of the Prosecutor and her Office to this investigation, and for her statement today.

At the outset, let me express the United Kingdom’s full support for the International Criminal Court and for its vital work challenging impunity and bringing to account those responsible for the most serious crimes of international concern.

We appreciate the important role you play, often amid difficult conditions on the ground.

This is clearly the case in Darfur. Fifteen years of violence there have shown that there can be no military solution to the conflict. A lasting peace can only be realised with the agreement of a permanent ceasefire and an inclusive political settlement that addresses the root causes of the conflict.

The UK had welcomed the reduction in military confrontation between the Government of Sudan and the Darfur armed movements and the announcements of unilateral cessations of hostilities by the Government, the Sudan Liberation Army -Minni Minawi and Justice Equality Movement in recent months. We were hopeful that this signalled the parties’ willingness to engage genuinely in the peace process. We are therefore deeply concerned by reports of renewed clashes between the Government and SLA-MM in recent weeks and the detrimental impact this ongoing risk of violence has for the safety of civilians and the overall stability of Darfur.

We also continue to be extremely concerned at the use of sexual violence in the conflict, although note the recent reduction in instances.

We urge all parties to show restraint, to abide by the unilateral cessations of hostilities and to focus their efforts on the peace process, under the auspices of the African Union High Level Implementation Panel.

Mr President,

On a more positive note, the UK welcomes the improvements in access for UNAMID and humanitarian actors in Darfur, particularly to Jebel Marra and urges the Government of Sudan to strive for unfettered access throughout Darfur. This will enable the Prosecutor to carry out her investigation and UNAMID to carry out its mandate to protect civilians and facilitate humanitarian assistance. Like the Prosecutor, we remain concerned by reports

of continued attacks against internally displaced persons and that some access restrictions remain in place.

In light of the fragile security situation in Darfur, the UK urges that any changes to UNAMID during the upcoming mandate renewal are done in a manner that is gradual, flexible and retains the Mission's ability to continue to protect civilians.

Mr President,

Over the course of twenty-five reports, the Prosecutor has consistently made it clear that the Court needs the cooperation of States and the support of this Council in order to move forward on this situation. We all need to look carefully at what more we can do to ensure that the Court receives the support that it deserves. The United Kingdom will continue to call on the Government of Sudan to meet its obligations under resolution 1593, to cooperate fully with the Court, to execute outstanding arrest warrants and to fulfil its international obligations.

The United Kingdom is frustrated that fugitives of the Court, including President Al-Bashir and Mr Hussein, continue to travel unhindered. We appreciate that States may sometimes have conflicting commitments to other regional and international organisations, but we join the Prosecutor in urging those States to consult with the Court. For our part, we will continue to raise our concerns with the relevant governments with the ultimate goal of achieving justice for the thousands of victims in Darfur. We renew our call on all States Parties to cooperate with the ICC and to abide by their Rome Statute obligations.

Mr President,

We welcome the renewed vigour with which the Office of the Prosecutor is approaching this investigation. The Office should be commended for the progress it has made on the investigation, despite the fragile security situation, the access restrictions, the continued clashes and lack of cooperation.

Finally, the United Kingdom would like to offer its appreciation of the effort that the Prosecutor's Office has put into making the most effective and efficient use of the resources it has available, and takes this opportunity to reaffirm the UK's commitment to supporting the Court, as both a State Party to the Rome Statute and as a member of this Council.

Thank you Mr President.