

# The Governments of Sudan and South Sudan must act constructively

Thank you, Mr President, and thank you to both of our briefers this morning.

I would like to start by expressing the United Kingdom's support for the peoples and the Governments of Sudan and South Sudan in their efforts to respond to COVID-19.

As this Council discussed on Friday in relation to Sudan, the damaging impacts of this pandemic will only add to the already significant humanitarian and socio-economic challenges faced by both countries.

We welcome the quick responses of the Governments of Sudan and South Sudan to COVID-19 and their efforts to mitigate its effects. So far, the UK has contributed approximately \$6 million to the UN's COVID-19 preparedness and response efforts in Sudan and over \$4 million to the effort in South Sudan.

We know that the COVID-19 pandemic is also taking a toll on peacekeeping missions and the brave personnel serving in them around the world. In this regard, we once again commend the Ethiopian Government for its continued contributions to UNISFA. COVID-19 underlines the importance of ensuring swift medevac provision for UN personnel and the maintenance of supply chains. This is particularly the case for UNISFA, given its remoteness.

Mr President, we recognise that the COVID-19 response will dominate the agendas of the Governments in Khartoum and Juba for some time, as it is for countries around the world. But we continue to urge both governments not to lose sight both of their respective peace processes and of the importance of finding a final settlement on Abyei.

We welcome the progress made in South Sudan on the implementation of the peace agreement, with the formation of the transitional Unity Government, and in Sudan as the civilian government continues to implement the Constitutional Declaration.

And in Abyei, we welcome the efforts made by UNISFA on a range of activities, including engagement with the Governments of Sudan and South Sudan, the implementation of the Quick Impact Projects, mediation of local community dialogues, raising awareness of gender issues and the removal of explosive hazards.

But despite these efforts, Mr President, we remain very concerned by the fragile security situation in Abyei. Of particular concern is the increase in intercommunal violence and attacks on mission personnel. The recent episodes of heightened tensions, increased criminality and the presence of armed elements in UNISFA's areas of responsibility, have left civilians displaced and highlighted the continued absence of law and order in Abyei. All this underlines the need for progress to be made towards a final settlement. It is

a matter of deep regret that this has been lacking so far.

Turning to the Mission itself, Mr President, the United Kingdom supports the Secretary-General's recommendation to extend the mandate of UNISFA for a further six months. The mission continues to have a vital role not only in ensuring stability, but also in facilitating work towards a settlement to the situation in Abyei.

Mr President, this Council has long highlighted the need to boost the civilian and police components of the Mission in order to contribute to this effort. We welcome the update from Under-Secretary-General Lacroix on deployment of police to UNISFA, and like other Council members, hope to see further progress soon. We are disappointed by the delay in issuing visas for police, and urge the Government of Sudan to expedite this process.

In the meantime, Mr President, this Council should ensure that UNISFA remains adequately resourced to deliver on its mandated activities. We look forward to working with members of this Council to ensure that the mission continues to be able to maintain the stability of Abyei, and to assist in the achievement of a final settlement on its status.

Finally, Mr President, regarding the Two Areas, we welcome the commitment of the Government of Sudan and a number of armed movements to engage in peace talks aimed at achieving a comprehensive peace across Sudan. Here, we continue to urge all sides to engage constructively, immediately and without pre-conditions in these negotiations to deliver a peaceful and swift solution to the conflict areas, including the Two Areas. Meanwhile, we also continue to urge all parties to respect International Humanitarian Law and allow humanitarian actors to deliver aid to those most in need, without hindrance.

Thank you, Mr President.