

With realities shifting in Darfur, operations on the ground 'must change', urges UN official

The African Union-United Nations Hybrid Mission in Darfur “must change” in accordance with the shifting realities on the ground, the Organization’s top peacekeeping official said on Monday, highlighting the need to “closely link” the mission’s drawdown to the scaling up of both peacekeeping and development activities.

“The peacekeeping mission ([UNAMID](#)) should be directed to the area where it is most needed, namely at the site of continued conflict in the Jebel Marra,” Jean-Pierre Lacroix, the UN Under-Secretary-General for peacekeeping operations, told the Security Council on Monday.

“In the rest of Darfur, the UN system should leverage the capabilities of the agencies, funds and programmes best suited to tackling the problems that remain there.”

Presenting a [special report](#) from the UN Secretary-General and the AU Commission Chairperson, Mr. Lacroix outlined two “central concepts” behind a new two-year strategy – each supporting the other.

The first, dealing with peacekeeping, would focus on protection of civilians, humanitarian support and mediation of local conflict.

The second central tenet, would, in effect, bridge the evolution from peacekeeping to early recovery and development, in collaboration with the UN country team serving Darfur, he added.

“The whole-of-system transition concept focuses on addressing the critical drivers of conflict and preventing relapse,” explained Mr. Lacroix.

For the roadmap to be realized, the senior UN official underscored the need to have longer-term funding arrangements in place and increase voluntary contributions from donors.

In addition, funds from the assessed budget would need to be used during the transition and in close collaboration with the Peacebuilding Support Office, to access sufficient resources, he added.

Also vital is the need for continued engagement and partnership with the AU and backing of the Government of Sudan and UN Member States, he said.

“We believe that, working together, this new approach can help establish a future of UN and AU support to Darfur that will help to improve the lives of the Darfuri people now and in the long-term,” concluded Mr. Lacroix.