

Mr. Hamachi (Japan): Japan highly appreciates the French initiative to afford us this opportunity to discuss this topic frankly at an open debate of the Security Council. My appreciation also goes out to Secretary- General Ban Ki-moon, Mr. Peter Maurer and Mr. Faustin Archange Touadera for their insightful briefings.

The protection of civilians is now one of the most important mandates given to United Nations peacekeeping operations. However, there is a persistent gap between the mandates conferred by the Security Council and their implementation in the field. Japan commends the various efforts by the United Nations to address that issue. They include the development of guidelines and training programmes aimed at enhancing the implementation of mandates on the ground by promoting a common understanding on concrete actions in the field.

The protection of civilians should be undertaken by the entire mission, including not only military but also police and civilian personnel. On the one hand, physical protection with the use of force is necessary when the need for protection is most imminent. On the other hand, preventive efforts against attacks on civilians are equally important. In addition, improving access to humanitarian aid and creating safe environments for refugees and internally displaced persons are also important components of the protection of civilians. For example, Japan's engineering unit deployed in the United Nations Mission in South Sudan contributes to the implementation of its mandate through engineering activities, such as setting up protection-of-civilians sites and undertaking road maintenance and repair.

Japan shares the recognition that capacity- building for personnel is essential for the effective implementation of the protection-of-civilians mandate. To that end, Japan has provided financial support to the United Nations training-the-trainers course on the protection of civilians, in which Japanese trainers also participate. Furthermore, Japan assists in the development of training materials for women's protection advisers in missions, who play a critical role in protecting women. Finally, Japan also supports the development of an e-learning programme on the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse that targets all categories of field personnel, including military, police and civilian.

I would like to recall that the primary responsibility for the protection of civilians rests with the host country. In addition, harassment against civilians by the host country is unacceptable. Against that backdrop, it is crucial to clarify and promote understanding among local communities of what the United Nations can and cannot do. With a view to achieving the future departure of a United Nations peacekeeping operation, it is imperative to foster ownership on the part of the host country and to support its capacity- building. In that regard, institution- building, including security- sector reform, is essential. An open debate will be held next month under the Japanese presidency on the

topic of peacebuilding in Africa, with a particular focus on institution-building. We hope to carry over the results of today's fruitful debate to our open debate in July.

The international community is watching closely to see whether peacekeeping operations can effectively implement the protection of civilians, as well as what the Security Council can do in that regard. I would like to conclude my remarks by promising the Security Council that Japan will continue to apply its expertise and capacities to contribute to the protection of civilians, both here in the Council and on the ground.