

Mrs. May (United Kingdom): I thank you, Prime Minister Desalegn, for convening this debate and coordinating resolution 2378 (2017), on an issue of great importance to the United Kingdom. I am pleased to see its unanimous adoption. I thank our briefers — Secretary-General Guterres, His Excellency Mr. Moussa Faki Mahamat and His Excellency Mr. José Ramos-Horta. The Secretary-General has made the reform of the United Nations approach to peace and security a priority, and rightly so. The Security Council has a solemn responsibility that we must uphold.

The Secretary-General has called for the United Nations to become more coordinated in its approach to conflict, while seeking to prevent outbreaks of violence before we are forced to send in peacekeepers. I share the Secretary-General's vision for sustaining peace and fully support the steps he is taking to deliver it.

For our peacekeepers to succeed, we must have a clear political strategy for resolving conflicts. For no matter how bravely our peacekeepers fulfil their mandate, peace will come about only when we get the politics of conflict right. I am therefore encouraged that resolution 2378 (2017) recognizes the vital political role of the Council and of the Secretary-General's good offices in resolving conflict.

However, politics do not stop with the peacekeeping mission on the ground. Just like peacekeepers, the Council must be willing and capable of discharging its duty. Too often we are in deadlock and unable to act. Too often we cannot agree to give a strong message of condemnation when our resolutions are not implemented by States. The Council's own performance in responding to the situation in South Sudan, where there has been conflict for five out of the six years the country has existed, has been found wanting. Therefore, just as we want to monitor the performances of our peacekeeping missions, we should monitor our own performance too.

The United Kingdom is proud to be a champion of peacekeeping reform. In September 2016, in London, we held the United Nations Peacekeeping Defence Ministerial Meeting, a landmark event with a communiqué signed by 64 countries, which set out a path to better peacekeeping. As we look ahead to the next such meeting, to be held in Vancouver in two months' time, we must concentrate on delivering the vision we agreed upon in London and continue the progress made since the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations issued its report (see S/2015/446), two years ago. We want to see better planning of peacekeeping missions, more pledges of the personnel and equipment that the United Nations needs, and stronger performance by peacekeepers on the ground. I am delighted to see those points reflected in this resolution, and will cover each of them in turn.

First, with regard to better planning, to plan our missions effectively, we must be clear-sighted as to what they are there to achieve so that we know when we are making progress and when it is time for the mission to go. That requires the different parts of the United Nations — peace and security, development and humanitarian — to work as one to build a shared understanding of

the situation and coordinate our efforts to resolve it. When the circumstances on the ground change, we must be agile in reviewing our missions and adapting them quickly.

Secondly, with regard to more pledges, collectively we have generated over 80 new pledges of personnel and capability in the past two years. That is fantastic, but pledging is only the first step. We must all turn those pledges into troops on the ground. In early July, United Kingdom troops officially opened a field hospital in Bentiu, South Sudan. In doing so, I am proud that delivered on our pledge to double the number of British forces deployed in United Nations missions. That required patient and determined effort, delivered hand in hand with our colleagues in the United Nations.

Pledges are crucial so that the United Nations can always deploy troops on basis of who is best for the job, not just who is available for the job. The quicker that we all turn those pledges from words spoken around a table into real women and men on the ground, the quicker we realize that goal. I am glad that this resolution reinforces that.

Work is also under way to improve strategic force-generation. As we reform peacekeeping into just mandates, we need to be sure that we have the right troops with the right capabilities at hand and ready to deploy. That is why the United Kingdom and France will hold a debate on this very issue next month.

I am also pleased that the resolution recognizes the vital role that women play in peacekeeping, as well as our commitment to double the number of women serving in peacekeeping by 2020. At the London Ministerial Meeting, we reaffirmed that goal and agreed that 15 per cent of all military observer and staff officer roles should be filled by women.

Thirdly, with regard to stronger performance, I salute what United Nations peacekeepers have achieved in often horribly difficult circumstances, and I pay tribute to those who have lost their lives. We ask a lot of them. We must give them every chance to succeed through high-quality training, functioning equipment and capable and decisive leadership. But when those standards are not met, we must also have accountability. The huge contribution made during peacekeeping's 70-year history is undermined with every failure to protect civilians and every instance of sexual exploitation and abuse. This resolution breaks ground by calling for the collection of performance data so we can better monitor peacekeeping performance and evaluate success. Let me be very clear: sexual exploitation and abuse cannot continue to happen. We fully support the Secretary-General's zero-tolerance policy on sexual exploitation and abuse and the Council's resolution 2272 (2016). That is why I joined the Secretary-General's circle of leadership and the United Kingdom signed the Voluntary Compact against Sexual Exploitation and Abuse.

I would like to conclude by recognizing the importance of the partnership between the United Nations and the African Union (AU) in delivering lasting peace on the African continent. A secure funding arrangement for African Union-led operations can help us to achieve that goal.

Resolution 2320 (2016) and the African Union's commitment to fund 25 per cent of AU peace-support operations provide a basis for us to work towards part funding on a case by case basis by the United Nations. I welcome further discussion to establish the role of the Council in deploying and ending peace operations and ensuring that we achieve common performance, conduct and financial management standards across all United Nations and AU operations. We must also find a creative solution to ensure funding for the African Union Mission in Somalia on secure basis, beyond 2018. All options should be on the table so that the Council can make an informed decision that is acceptable to all.

I thank all delegations for the vital contribution their countries have made to United Nations peacekeeping. I again thank Ethiopia for organizing this debate, and our briefers for addressing it. Together we can deliver better peacekeeping, and this resolution is an important step in that direction.