

Mr. Pecsteen de Buytswerve (Belgium) (spoke in French): I thank Egypt for organizing today's debate.

Belgium associates itself with the statement to be delivered by the observer of the European Union.

I will focus on three aspects: first, integrating a long-term vision for a mission from its start; secondly, the importance of ensuring that all support is inclusive, especially with regard to the central role of women and young people; and, lastly, the importance of keeping the root causes of conflicts in view at every stage of action.

A lasting peace requires an overall vision. The objectives to be attained should be defined at the very beginning of an intervention in a country so as to enable peace operations to withdraw as soon as those objectives have been met. In that context, as soon as a mission is launched it must begin to provide the tools that will later enable the country to manage its security alone. A reliable security sector is an important aspect of sustaining peace. In many situations on the Security Council's agenda, the security sector must be reformed in order to strengthen a country's capacity to respond to challenges to peace. At the beginning of next year, based on its experiences in this area, including in Mali, the Central African Republic and Somalia, Belgium plans to launch an analysis drawn from the lessons it has learned. Where it is possible, we welcome and encourage more regular use by peacekeepers of joint patrols with the local armed forces.

My second point concerns the role of women and young people in creating lasting peace, which demands everyone's participation in the decision-making process, women as well as men. Too often, important decisions in peace processes are still made by groups of men alone. If we are to ensure that women's specific needs and aspirations are taken into consideration, we must enable them to participate in making decisions about issues that are likely to have an impact on their lives. Resolution 1325 (2000) paved the way in this area, and Belgium is pleased to be launching its third action plan on women and peace and security. Resolution 2250 (2015), on youth and peace and security, complements it, underlining the importance of young people in efforts to promote peace and security. In that regard, equal access to an inclusive education and to decent jobs, for example, are decisive factors. As the Peacebuilding Commission's youth focal point, Belgium ensures that the youth dimension is positively integrated into the Commission's activities.

I would also like to stress the importance of the link between mediation, including at the local level, and peacekeeping operations. Belgium supports the Secretary-General's efforts to increase mediation expertise in missions and strengthen partnerships with local and national mediation actors. The use of mixed military, police and civilian teams, including for human rights, is an important tool in that regard. It enables missions to increase their contact with local authorities, traditional and religious leaders and other relevant actors on the ground, in order to

prevent local tensions from fomenting conflict and to consolidate peace more positively through local reconciliation.

My third point is that we believe it is important to pay particular attention to the root causes that give rise to conflicts. Peacekeeping operations' mediation and reconciliation activities, as I have said, are a key element. Humanitarian and development interventions, programmatic spending and rapid-impact projects should be organized simultaneously with a view to making the peace dividend for the population a tangible thing while targeting those root causes as far as possible. The aim is to support the authorities in recreating a strong social contract through which the State can provide basic services. Apart from that, the various trafficking activities of armed groups often end up becoming a conflict's *raison d'être*. Peacekeeping operations could play a more significant and proactive role in combating such trafficking. Lastly, cooperation with the country teams is crucial. Their work on fundamental issues such as governance, the judicial system, elections and transitional justice is essential to sustaining peace and complements the peacekeeping operations' efforts.

In conclusion, I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his efforts to improve the work of the Departments of Political Affairs and Peacekeeping Operations and to translate the approach of resolution 2282 (2016) into concrete action. My delegation looks forward with interest to the report on peace and security reform and the new proposals it will make to go even further in implementing the recommendations of the reports of the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations (S/2015/446) and the Advisory Group of Experts on the Review of the United Nations Peacebuilding Architecture (S/2015/490) in order to achieve lasting peace.