

Mr. Van Oosterom (Netherlands): I thank you, Sir, for organizing this timely and important debate. In honour of Egypt's presidency of the Security Council, let me try to say this in Arabic:

(spoke in Arabic)

I thank you very much, Mr. President.

(spoke in English)

The Kingdom of the Netherlands aligns itself with the statement made by the observer of the European Union and welcomes, Sir, your excellent concept paper (S/2017/692, annex) for this debate. Furthermore, in the context of the split-term with Italy in the Council, let me also endorse the statement made by my Italian colleague earlier today.

I shall address three topics today: first, the need to get the mandate right; secondly, the need for benchmarks to measure progress; and, thirdly, the need to strengthen force generation.

With regard to the subject of the right mandate, I should like to draw an analogy between medical treatment, on the one hand, and peacekeeping operations, on the other. Prevention is always better than needing a cure, but once somebody falls ill, the right prescription is required. Mandates need to be crafted with equal surgical precision. There is no one remedy for all ills. A United Nations mission must be based upon a careful diagnosis of the situation at hand, whether a small and focused political mission or a full-fledged peace operation. As stated in the first paragraph of the concept note, current security challenges "necessitate a more robust, coherent and comprehensive United Nations approach". Once a mission has begun, adaptations to the mandate may be necessary, depending on changing needs on the ground. The United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali is a good case in point illustrating the United Nations flexibility, which it showed, by changing the geographical focus the moment at which the security situation in central part of Mali worsened. In that context, let me highlight that the Government of Mali should do more to bring security, stability and development to the northern part of the country.

My second point concerns benchmarks. To an important extent, in continuing with my metaphor, the responsibility for one's health lies with the patient, and the responsibility for sustaining peace equally lies with the host nation. Furthermore, United Nations missions have an important role to play in enabling host nations to recover and prevent relapse. We therefore need an integrated approach, as was mentioned in the concept note, entailing a coherent United Nations with comprehensive delivery by all pillars of the United Nations system. In our view, the Council should enable a well-managed exit and help prevent relapse. Therefore, mandates must include clearly defined political and governance benchmarks against which the success of a mandate can be measured. Such benchmarks could include inclusive institutions, human rights, the status of women, the protection of civilians and countering human trafficking, where appropriate. In our view, the Security Council should be firm with host nations that are not cooperating with

the United Nations, and even firmer with those that attack their own citizens and deliberately obstruct the work of the United Nations. That is simply unacceptable. Host nations must be held accountable. A case in point is South Sudan, where that problem is persistent.

In continuing with my metaphor, I will address my third topic — force generation. Just like a medical doctor, the peacekeeper needs the right instruments. Peace operations must be as robust as needed to fulfil their mandate. We therefore must modernize United Nations peace operations. Our missions now often lack the means, the quality and the capacity to carry out their jobs effectively. We send out Blue Helmets without proper protection, while knowing full well that they run a high risk of being attacked. Medical transportation and facilities and force protection are not always up to standard. One of our most important priorities should be to strengthen force generation and to encourage more countries to pledge more troops and capacity. The Council should also intensify action with the troop contributing countries (TCCs), which our colleague from Bangladesh just pointed out. We underline that point. Furthermore, we call on those TCCs that have not done so to subscribe to the Kigali Principles for peacekeeping. We pay tribute to Rwanda's leadership in that regard.

We are one of the hosts of the United Nations peacekeeping defence ministerial meeting to be held in Vancouver in November, to which we look forward. We hope that it will give this process an extra boost. Furthermore, we support the United Nations and the development of rotation schemes. That should make it possible for TCCs to provide missions with highend capabilities for a predetermined period. We pay tribute to the work of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations in that respect, for instance on helicopter rotation in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA). Peace operations need to have enablers and state-ofthe-art equipment in order to conduct some of today's most difficult operations. In that regard, let me highlight the enhanced use of information sources in MINUSMA initiated by the Netherlands, among others.

In conclusion, sustaining peace requires our continued efforts, politically and financially, from the start of a mission to its very end and beyond — from preventive care to daily care and after care. The Kingdom of the Netherlands wholeheartedly supports efforts to modernize United Nations peacekeeping. We stand ready to join the Council in doing its part as of 1 January 2018.