

Ms. Power (United States of America): I thank Under-Secretary-General Ladsous, Special Envoy Menkerios, Ambassador Kamau and Ambassador António for their briefings today, and I offer a special thanks to Egypt for convening this meeting.

I would like to address four key features of the African Union (AU)-United Nations partnership today — mutual respect, financing, capacity-building and prevention.

I turn first to mutual respect. Given that more than 80 per cent of United Nations troops are deployed in Africa, we have a great deal to gain from enhanced communication between the AU and the United Nations. Given that African peacekeepers contribute more than half of the United Nations troops involved in peacekeeping on the African continent, it is both pragmatic and right to seek out African views on mandate formation, political mediation efforts and all the tools we deploy as the Security Council in the service of conflict resolution and conflict prevention. I would note, however, that it would be simplistic to suggest that the African view on any issue is a monolithic one any more than the views inside the Security Council are monolithic. But more communication and more listening to one another, more mutual respect and more supplementing of formal meetings with more informal conversations and brainstorming will make us each and together more effective.

Secondly, financing is a hot topic in the Council today. When it comes to discussing how to strengthen the United Nations-AU partnership, there is understandably a great deal of focus on how we can better support the deployment of African-led peace support operations to address urgent threats to peace and security. We know that the United Nations will not always be able or be best positioned to respond to a crisis. While the Security Council continues to be responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security, we also know that the AU can be a particularly effective partner in that pursuit, including when it comes to conducting offensive military operations in complex security situations where there is no peace to keep and armed groups threaten the civilian population. There is a clear need to improve the financial and operational arrangements that undergird AU-fielded, United Nations-authorized peacekeeping missions and that will reflect our shared ownership and responsibilities.

We think there can be progress on this long stalled issue. We hope that AU member States will fulfil their commitment to finance 25 per cent of AU peace operations while also developing a fiduciary framework to govern the use of those funds and establishing new approaches to mandating and overseeing those missions with the Security Council to ensure that they are effective and accountable. The proposals being developed by AU High Representative Kaberuka could be important steps in that direction. If we are able to make progress, we will need to agree on common approaches to mission mandating and planning processes and on transparency and accountability mechanisms. Those will

enable the Security Council and the African Union Peace and Security Council (PSC) together to monitor and promote strict adherence to international peacekeeping standards, which should include, of course, full respect for human rights norms and a zero-tolerance policy for sexual exploitation and abuse. By demonstrating that peacekeepers who commit abuses will be held to account, we strengthen the legitimacy of peacekeeping where it counts most, that is, with the civilians that peacekeepers are sworn to protect.

Thirdly, on capacity-building, improving the operational capacity of the relationship will also require ongoing efforts to build the capabilities of the AU, as envisaged in the African Peace and Security Architecture road map. Greater AU capabilities will translate into the AU delivering more effective peacekeeping missions. The United States has shown its commitment to that effort. We have strengthened AU command and control capabilities, supported multinational exercises for brigades and trained more than 250,000 peacekeepers since 2005. Two years ago, President Obama also established the African Peacekeeping Rapid Response Partnership, a major new initiative to build the capacity of key African troop-contributing countries so that they can deploy more rapidly to peacekeeping missions. That was something that they had requested of the international community many times.

Fourthly, and finally, prevention is the issue on which all of us can agree in the abstract. Who can be against prevention? But where the differences often emerge inside each of our respective Councils is when concrete cases — real countries and real circumstances — emerge. Members of both the United Nations Security Council and the AU Peace and Security Council must get better at dealing with the political drivers of conflict. That can be more politically sensitive for neighbours than it is for countries that are far removed, and we should not dance around that fact. All of us must recognize that it is highly destabilizing when political opponents are attacked, people's rights are violated, elections are hijacked and when Constitutions are ignored. We have seen those kinds of actions helping fuel conflict that then ends up on both of our respective agendas. Conversely, those States that prioritize investments in accountable and inclusive institutions that deepen the rule of law, that include women in decision-making processes and that otherwise pursue improved governance and more open societies are empirically far less likely to descend into conflict and to eventually threaten regional peace and security. Our partnership must advance those goals, and Member States must be quick and unified in their response when the roots of conflict begin to grow.

The situation in Burundi remains deeply perilous, with more than 400 dead and 250,000 refugees to date, the near collapse of the Burundian economy, rampant insecurity and the constant threat of a real spiralling into violence. The Security Council has often lagged behind the PSC in responding to the crisis.

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, five days ago the Government issued an arrest warrant for opposition leader Moïse Katumbi, soon after he announced he would run for President in elections scheduled for later this year. The Government has said that the elections will likely be postponed and that President Kabila Kabange, who is prohibited by the Constitution from running for a third term, will remain in office until they can be held. Civil society activists have been arrested or detained for protesting peacefully. Opposition leaders are planning nationwide protests for Thursday. Congolese security forces have in the past used repressive tactics, including deadly force, to prevent Congolese citizens from exercising their right to peaceful demonstration. This is a conflict-prevention moment. We know it. We see it. We know from history. We know from the present. It is imperative that we show a united front in calling on President Kabila Kabange to abide by the Constitution and step down when his term ends.

Marshalling a unified political front is equally important if conflict does break out. It is the sole way to maintain collective positions and to support meaningful actions. In South Sudan, the United Nations and the AU have supported the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) efforts to pressure both sides. Without those pressure points, without that leverage, it is hard to imagine the formation of the transitional Government that has occurred. The situation is extremely fragile, and sustaining momentum in the weeks and months ahead will require high-level attention and a continued, unified IGAD, AU, United Nations front.

By contrast, sadly, in the Sudan, the members of the Security Council and the PSC have been embarrassingly divided. We have failed even to successfully pressure the Government of the Sudan into permitting the delivery of supplies required by the soldiers and police who make up the beleaguered mission. Hundreds of containers of African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur and contingent-owned equipment are languishing in Port Sudan and Darfur regional airports, while attacks against the mission by militia and other armed groups continue. Rather than hosting indicted Sudanese leaders, United Nations and AU member States should be exerting all the influence possible to persuade Khartoum to change course. Even if we could make progress on ensuring more predictable funding for AU missions — something that I think we all agree is a priority issue — it will mean little if we cannot unite behind the delivery of food to peacekeepers who are risking their lives on the front lines. If we are to forge a more robust United Nations-AU relationship, we should seek more progress on those concrete cases that affect millions of civilian lives in the here and now.

