



KINGDOM OF BELGIUM

Statement by

H. E. Mr Marc PECSTEEN,
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to the United Nations

UNAMID Briefing to the Security Council

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Mr President,

Belgium would like to thank the Under-Secretary-General, Mr Lacroix, for his speech, and we welcome the Permanent Representative of Sudan.

Mr President,

The last few months have been marked by positive and historic developments in Sudan. The Sudanese people, particularly women and young people, have managed to obtain unprecedented changes by demanding a peaceful, democratic and prosperous future.

Belgium wishes the new Sudanese authorities every success in the vital missions they will have to accomplish, as stated in the Constitutional Declaration of 17 August. We welcome the priorities set out by Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok during his speeches here in NY during the high-level week.

We particularly welcome the commitments regarding respect for the human rights and fundamental freedoms of the Sudanese people. In this context, we welcome the agreement signed by the authorities with the OHCHR on 25 September for the creation of an Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in Sudan. We encourage the authorities to implement this agreement in full and as soon as possible.

Belgium commends the vital mediation role played by the AU and the region, particularly during the recent meetings in Juba, and the support provided by IGAD, the United Nations and the entire international community. We encourage these actors to continue to support Sudan.

Mr President,

We have an unprecedented opportunity to build lasting peace in Darfur. As the report in front of us indicates, Darfur remains a fragile region, in which the deepest causes of the conflict, in particular access to land and the future of displaced persons, have not yet been resolved. We fully support, as the first priority of the Sudanese authorities, the ending of the existing conflicts and the introduction of peace in the first six months of the transition. In this context, the Juba Declaration of 11 September represents a formidable step. We call on all the parties, in particular the armed movements, to engage in constructive negotiations. This moment represents a unique opportunity to put an end to the many conflicts that have torn the country apart for too long.

The conflict in Darfur has had a number of repercussions at a humanitarian level. Civilians continue to suffer due to the clashes in Jebel Marra. It is essential to ensure the protection of civilians, including free and unhindered humanitarian access. I would also like to stress the importance of the fight against impunity in response to the violations against women and children.

Mr President,

Lastly, this Council will review UNAMID's mandate again before the end of the month. For Belgium, the UNAMID exit process is inextricably linked to developments in the rest of the country. In this respect, we noted with interest the conclusions and recommendations contained in the joint UN and AU report on the common political strategy for Darfur. The UNAMID mandate must be extended by six months, without reducing its military and civilian effects. Belgium advocates patience with regard to the exact conditions for the transition and for a carefully calibrated monitoring mechanism in Darfur. Our country welcomes the creation of the AU-UN-Sudan Joint Task Force which will study this issue and whose recommendations will allow the Council to make a more informed decision in the coming months.

Mr President,

Sudan is experiencing a historic moment, the result of the courage and the aspiration for freedom, peace and justice of its people. Important challenges to sustainable peace remain. This Council must continue to support the country as it continues its transition.

Thank you.