

**KINGDOM OF BELGIUM**

Speech by H.E. Karen Van Vlierberge,  
Deputy Permanent Representative

to the United Nations Security Council

**Sudan/Southern Sudan (UNISFA)**

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Mr President,

Recent events show us that the improvement in relations between Sudan and South Sudan is a fact. I am, of course, referring to the peace talks held in Juba between Sudanese authorities and groups.

Belgium also welcomes the discussions regarding the Abyei Area that took place in Khartoum in September. This is another encouraging sign that there is a commitment to find a political solution to Abyei's status. However, these signals are not enough. A number of discussions need to be resumed, at several levels, in order to make progress on certain points. I am thinking in particular of the decisions taken by the Joint Political and Security Mechanism, the points concerning the Antony airstrip and the pending visas for police units.

The situation in the Abyei Area remains precarious. Belgium condemns the attacks against UNISFA and the violence between communities. These incidents, as well as those related to crime, highlight the current importance of maintaining security and police forces within the mission to ensure the rule of law and protect civilians. This situation reinforces our previously mentioned concern regarding the issuance of the expected visas for the

personnel of the three formed police units and the 108 individual police officers. Despite numerous calls from members of this Council in this regard, there is still a risk of understaffing and a lack of police personnel at most operational bases.

We commend the Mission's efforts designed to promote a dialogue for conflict resolution, for example involving local leaders. We also welcome the actions in favour of a greater role for women and young people in local political life. The European Union is also active in this area, for example, through the peacebuilding project funded by the European Union and implemented in partnership with the IOM, the NGO Concordis and the NGO Green String Network. This has recently made it possible to organise training courses in conflict resolution and negotiation for women and young people. We also note with satisfaction UNISFA's commitment to the issue of sexual violence, with several prevention activities.

In conclusion, without a resolution of the Abyei issue, the departure of the UNISFA cannot be considered, but the mission cannot replace the state indefinitely and so we call on the parties to redouble their efforts to close this chapter in the history of the Sudan.