Mr. Allen (United Kingdom): I thank the briefers for their insightful contributions. Let me also today, through the Deputy Secretary-General, thank the women and men of the United Nations around the world for their service and courage.

The United Kingdom aligns itself with the upcoming statement of the European Union.

Conflicts rarely follow a predictable path. We must move beyond the idea of a set of sequential responses, which is why the United Kingdom supports the Secretary-General's vision for a more holistic and inclusive approach to conflict prevention, management and resolution. Sustaining peace requires that all of the United Nations system be aligned in every context and able to carry out multiple tasks simultaneously.

I would like to focus on two issues today related to sustaining peace.

The first is how peacekeeping missions should be situated within wider United Nations efforts. At the most basic level, the starting point for any peacekeeping mission should be from all of the information gathered by the United Nations family over the years, including what the United Nations has already achieved in the field. It should be clear what and how peacekeeping missions will deliver with United Nations partners during their deployment, and how they will hand over to other United Nations actors when they leave. For example, the United Nations Mission in South Sudan may be the second-largest in the world, but it is also only one of 20 United Nations bodies and agencies represented in the country.

We in the Council must reflect on these questions during mission mandating and planning. We need to take in clear views and understand ground truth from the field. The Council must be more disciplined in setting out strategic goals that can be translated through mandates into prioritized objectives, benchmarks for success and plans for mission drawdown once these have been achieved.

On the ground, the whole of the United Nations should have a joint analysis of the situation, common objectives and clarity over roles and responsibilities towards meeting them. In the context of Liberia's transition, a shared peacebuilding plan has gone some way towards achieving that. Moreover, a better balance of responsibilities between missions and country teams needs to be struck. Not every conflict driver can be addressed within the lifetime of a peacekeeping mission. Long-term change is best supported by United Nations country teams. They should be taking on responsibilities much earlier, not waiting until a mission drawdown looms. Important lessons will soon emerge from the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Darfur — contexts where more may be asked of country teams.

Support from the top is needed for an integrated approach. The coordinating role of the Strategic Planning and Monitoring Unit in the Executive Office of the Secretary-General is a welcome start. It will enable more integrated analysis and a more coherent cross-United Nations review of activity in-country. We would like to see the Unit regularly reviewing peace operations

and look forward to its contribution to the review of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Peacekeeping missions cannot create the conditions for their own exit without a sustainable political solution to conflict. As such, the second issue I should like to focus on is the primacy of politics.

Special Representatives of the Secretary-General need to be politically active, using their good offices and leveraging support from their missions and the wider United Nations system. We must accept that missions are political tools in themselves, both representative of the will of the Council and in their actions on the ground. The tasks of peace operations are never merely technical. For example, the re-establishment of effective States often situations at the centre of mission exit plans, but missions cannot improve the functioning of State institutions without an understanding of how these institutions will be used and by whom. Politically blind capacity-building efforts risk worsening the situation.

United Nations country teams integrated into the wider effort also have a role to play in promoting sustainable political solutions. Greater understanding of who does and does not benefit from development programming and how this is linked to political dynamics is critical. Let us face the facts — where political regimes are unaccountable, unresponsive to their own people and unrepresentative, including of women, appeals to national ownership will ring hollow.

Finally, we in the Council must be politically engaged and ready to speak. A Council united around a shared political strategy to de-escalate tensions could have a powerful effect, but even in the face of flagrant violations of its resolutions the Council too often finds itself deadlocked and unable to act. Gert Rosenthal notes that the Security Council rarely acts to prevent conflict. My own short experience here has shown that we are not willing to act even when, as in South Sudan, there has been conflict for five out of the six years of the country's existence, a third of the population is displaced, half are living in food insecurity, and United Nations resolutions and promises made have been repeatedly broken.

Peacekeeping is one tool in the sustaining piece toolbox. It cannot be used in isolation, and we are seeing progress towards more integrated approaches. Even the most coherent United Nations response will still be blunt without attention to the primacy of politics. In that regard, we have further to go.