

Mr. Loedel (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): First of all, Uruguay expresses its solidarity with all those countries that in recent days have fallen victim to violent climatic events — including Mexico, which suffered a second earthquake yesterday that caused death and destruction.

I would like to thank the Ethiopian presidency, in particular the Prime Minister of Ethiopia, Mr. Hailemariam Desalegn, for convening this timely and important debate on the process of reform of United Nations peacekeeping operations. I also welcome the open and transparent way with which Ethiopia conducted the negotiations for the adoption of a resolution as important as that adopted today (resolution 2378 (2017)).

I welcome the statement by the Secretary-General, and I thank him for the clarity of the concepts contained therein, which bring the vision of the Secretariat on this issue of great importance to the membership.

Similarly, we thank the Chairperson of the African Union Commission and the representative of the High Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations for their briefings.

Allow me to reaffirm once more the commitment of my country to peacekeeping operations, a commitment that was made even before they were called peacekeeping operations. Despite its small population, Uruguay has deployed more than 43,800 personnel in its extensive history as a contributor of contingents and police in more than 20 operations around the world. Today the contribution of Uruguayan troops places our country among the major contributors in the Americas and among the top 20 in the world. That decades-long effort has provided our country with very rich experience in peacekeeping operations, especially bearing in mind that more than 80 per cent of our generals, more than 70 per cent of officers and 70 per cent of our troops have already participated in such operations.

Our country has followed the evolution of peacekeeping operations in the debate and on the ground. As an elected member of the Security Council, we take this opportunity to state Uruguay's support of the reform process, whose objective is to make peacekeeping operations more efficient and effective, and to ensure that they can continue to fulfil the mandates for which they were designed.

Peacekeeping operations continue to be the most efficient and economic way that the international community has to contribute to peace. Therefore, we should be conscious that budgetary decisions and policies must always go together, so as to prevent one or the other from rendering a mandate non-viable. In that regard, I should like to share some considerations that are central to my country at a time when there is talk of reforming the process. They reflect the national position, which we have systematically made known and defended during our 21 months in the Council.

First, we believe that there are two documents that constitute the absolute starting point of the current reform process. Those are the report of the High Level Independent Panel on Peace

Operations (see S/2015/446) and the subsequent report of the Secretary General on the implementation of the recommendations (S/2015/682). The contents of both documents remain valid and current. Although there has been progress in the implementation of the recommendations contained therein, much remains to be done, bearing in mind above all that the way forward should be based on the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the basic principles of peacekeeping.

Secondly, we believe that the success of a peacekeeping operation depends, to a great extent, on the plans made by four parties with shared responsibility, namely, the Security Council, the States or parties in control of the territory in question, the troop- and police-contributing countries, and the Secretariat. The Council must remain united when agreeing on political strategies that allow for the design of operations that encourage national actors in conflict to make real commitments to lasting and peaceful political solutions. That must be in addition to more flexible and adaptable operations, with clear mandates based in real and appropriate priorities and resources. There have been improvements in those areas, but they are insufficient.

Once an operation is deployed with a valid mandate, the Council has the responsibility to demand and obtain from the host States full respect and compliance with the terms agreed in the status-of-forces agreements. Those documents guarantee the protection of the personnel that a country voluntarily contributes, and ensure the functionality of the operation. We must prevent any State, least of all a State that is part of an operation, from obstructing missions established by the Council.

As a historical troop-contributing country, Uruguay attaches particular importance to the responsibilities of troop- and police-contributing countries, with the understanding that they are the ones active in the field and the ones who should implement the mandates. In that regard, the training of what in our country is called “the peace worker of the twenty-first century” is essential, that is, training in the complexity of the tasks to carry out the whole of the mandate. That includes avoiding the absence of command, avoiding refusal to obey orders, avoiding the failure to protect civilians, or insufficient equipment, to mention some of the issues that should not be tolerated.

We have seen more than we would wish of that, in particular when it comes to protecting civilians in pressing situations. I am not going to relate the national position on this issue now, because it is well known and respected. But I would like to emphasize the contribution of the Kigali Principles on the Protection of Civilians to the reform process, given that they refer to efficiency in the protection of civilians derived from training and conduct in the field and accountability.

As for the Secretariat, its role is decisive in terms of guidance and recommendations, its capacity to bring together basic and higher criteria regarding the operation and fulfilment of the mandates, and the determination of the reconfiguration needs of the missions. The recent

budget and staff cuts force Uruguay to reaffirm that any reconfiguration should be evaluated on a case-by-case basis and with the full evaluation of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations.

Thirdly, I would like to relate our position on the evolution of the reform process. We believe that the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations (C-34) has an important contribution to make, as do the Fifth Committee, the Security Council Working Group on Peacekeeping Operations, and the Secretariat. We believe that we must begin to overcome the rivalry between bodies or committees, which slows the process, since each one has specific tasks that, when summed up, make a positive contribution. We understand that the efforts of the Secretary-General point to this in his initiative to reform the peace and security architecture of the Organization.

I wanted to make an express reference to the C-34, since our country has consistently defended its work, for it carries out substantial and relevant work that, in our view, deserves special mention, in particular that having to do with consideration of the recommendations of the reports of the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations and of the Secretary-General.

Finally, I wish to speak on how to ensure the implementation and follow-up of the reform. The resolution we adopted today includes elements that will allow the Council to be more active, in particular through the consideration of reports of the Secretary General on progress made, as well as the holding of open annual debates. We applaud these elements.

In conclusion, reaffirming the ongoing and unchanged commitment of Uruguay, I wish to recall that without making systematic the participation of women, peacekeeping operations will be unable to achieve optimal efficiency or success.