

Ms. Kuspan (Kazakhstan) (*spoke in French*): I thank the French presidency for convening this open debate on the issue of the protection of civilians in peacekeeping operations. Today, armed conflicts are marked by systematic violence and mass atrocities against civilian populations. Therefore, the protection of civilian populations constitutes a major challenge to the ability of the United Nations and of its peacekeeping operations.

My delegation would like to share a few thoughts in response to the four issues identified in the concept note of the French presidency. Kazakhstan already supports the effective implementation of three United Nations reviews, namely, on peacekeeping operations, on the peacebuilding architecture in 2000 and on resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security. In order to improve the effectiveness of peacekeeping missions in the protection of civilians, it is necessary to ensure a close synergy of the Security Council with those missions well before preparing their mandates. In particular, it is important to define the nature of the threats that a mission will have to deal with on the ground, the duration of the operation and the goals that must be achieved to clearly plan a multidimensional or hybrid mission.

The Security Council should adopt a strategy focused on crisis management planning, which involves military personnel and is then supported later by the Department of Political Affairs. The special representatives of the Secretary-General must have a clear and strong mandate to protect civilians. This will allow the host countries to become involved and firmly commit themselves. The local teams on the ground, together with the intergovernmental organizations; donor countries; and humanitarian, human rights and civil society organizations should reach an agreement as stakeholders.

The Special Representatives of the Secretary-General, their deputies and mission personnel at all levels, the force commanders and the countries deploying their personnel should know what their respective capacities are and ensure that their personnel receive special training courses through the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations, as well as by Member States.

It is essential to focus on capacity-building in host countries, while adopting a road map for the protection of civilians at national and local levels. This requires a greater awareness among community leaders, women, young people and local communities to mobilize them to participate in peacekeeping operations. It also requires adequate resources and competent trainers. The training modules developed by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, together with United Nations agencies and international non-governmental organizations, such as the International Committee of the Red Cross, Oxfam and Save the Children, can be effectively used in this regard.

Kazakhstan proposes a broader use of the French language through an appeal for more of French speakers in peacekeeping operations. That will enable us to better communicate with the local population in certain countries.

The protection of civilians cannot be limited to physical defence; it must also protect the human dignity of women and children. The behaviour of peacekeepers must be impeccable with zero tolerance with regard to sexual exploitation and abuse, in accordance with the guidelines issued by the Secretary-General.

A conflict environment is almost always asymmetrical and dynamic. Peacekeeping operations are frequently called upon to protect civilians under very difficult and changing conditions. They are often faced with new threats which can only be addressed with the appropriate equipment — be it airborne, health- related or logistical. Their capacity to react should not be impeded by a low technical level.

The use of advanced technologies, such as unmanned aerial vehicles or digital satellite imagery, together with good media coverage, is fundamental to the success of such interventions. The recommendations of the Expert Panel on Technology and Innovation in United Nations Peacekeeping show that clearly.

Inspired by the strong involvement of France, Kazakhstan joined the code of conduct proposed by the ACT group. As an observer country of the African Union, Kazakhstan is contributing to the protection of civilians by providing its highly trained military observers to the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara and to the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire. Before deploying on the ground, our military complete an appropriate United Nations training programme. We think that our presence will increase in the future.

In the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (General Assembly resolution 70/1) and Agenda 2063, Kazakhstan believes in a broader concept of peace and stability aimed at non-military and people-oriented security. It includes food, water and energy security, which together with nuclear safety, are the major pillars of our candidacy for a non-permanent seat on the Security Council for the period 2017-2018.

On 31 March, the President of Kazakhstan published a manifesto, entitled “The World in the Twenty-first Century”, in which he called on world leaders to put an end to all wars by creating fair global structures. This document is important in the context of the protection of civilians.

I would like to conclude by assuring the Council that Kazakhstan is committed to working together with the United Nations make the protection of civilians a top priority, in line with the Charter of the United Nations.

