

Security Council Open Debate on UN Peacekeeping: A Multidimensional Approach, January 21st 2013, Security Council Chamber

Statement by Mr. Ajawin, Permanent Mission of South Sudan to the United Nations.

At the outset, my delegation would like to express its profound thanks and appreciation to Pakistan and the members of the Security Council for convening this important debate on the theme “United Nations peacekeeping: a multidimensional approach”. Equally, I would like personally to extend my Government’s appreciation and gratitude to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for continuous support to my Government in ensuring that peace, stability and development are realized in our nascent State.

Since the independence of the Republic of South Sudan from the Sudan, on 9 July 2011, our nascent State has confronted enormous nation-building and development tasks. In addressing issues pertaining to nation-building and developmental challenges facing the country, the Government of South Sudan and the United Nations embarked immediately on a peacebuilding support plan. The plan emanated from resolution 1996 (2011), which mandated the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) to elaborate a peacebuilding support plan. Subsequently, the Secretary-General produced a report with the idea of putting in operation paragraph 18 of the resolution, in which the Secretary-General requested his Special Representative to work with the Government of the Republic of South Sudan, the United Nations country team and bilateral and multilateral partners, including the World Bank, to produce a plan for United Nations system support for specific peacebuilding tasks.

The underlying objective of the plan was to undertake security sector reform, police institutional development, the rule of law, justice sector support, human rights, capacity-building, early recovery, the formulation of national policies related to key issues of State-building, development and establishing a conducive environment for economic development that would be consistent with national priorities, with a view to contributing to producing a common framework for monitoring progress in those areas. Some measurable progress has been achieved one year after UNMISS began operations in South Sudan. Nevertheless, much remains to be done, especially in the following areas.

First, with regard to the protection of civilians, in the past year my country witnessed an unwarranted and unprovoked attack by the Government of the Republic of the Sudan, in particular aerial bombardment and other border incursions. Those aggressions led to many civilian casualties, especially among innocent women and children. Although the duty of civilian protection is one of the Government’s priorities, my Government would like to see a more robust mechanism put in place by UNMISS to protect vulnerable civilians from aerial bombardment.

Secondly, with regard to communication and coordination with the Government, my Government understands that communication and coordination with UNMISS is of critical importance, especially in achieving the objectives set out in the mandate. The issue of the movement of UNMISS personnel across the country is critical. The lack of such communication with the Government and security organs sometimes results in potentially dangerous situations.

Allow my delegation to take this opportunity to express our condolences to the Government of the Russian Federation and to the families of the crew involved in the helicopter incident that took place in Jonglei on 21 December 2012. We assure them that the Government of South Sudan is carrying out a fair and credible investigation into the incident. We await its findings.

Thirdly, concerning the issue of infrastructure, UNMISS has managed to achieved some progress in infrastructure development. Nevertheless, my Government believes that it is equally important that the Mission achieve more in the area of infrastructure development, especially with regard to quick-impact projects, with UNMISS operational sites at the country level, such as police facilities and community centres. Given the impassibility of roads in South Sudan, we encourage UNMISS to construct more accessible roads at the national, state, and local Government levels.

Fourthly, with regard to the rule of law, the Government of the Republic of South Sudan appreciates the work of UNMISS, especially in the areas pertaining to the rule of law. However, to achieve greater success and measurable progress in that area, UNMISS should consider, first, the need for greater support and capacity- building for judges and legal advisers and, secondly, the fact that our police forces need to be certified for international recognition so as to be able to participate in regional coordination events.

In conclusion, the experience of UNMISS in South Sudan has been an enriching one and will continue to be so. It has enormously helped our Government to overcome many of the teething problems associated with a country's emergence from the post-conflict stage. To improve the effectiveness of UNMISS under its Chapter VII mandate, it would be prudent for the Security Council and the Government of South Sudan to continue building on what has been achieved so far, while working on the gaps and challenges that the Government has identified with regard to the operation of the Mission.