

Statement by Sudan at the Open Debate of the United Nations Security Council

Mr. Hassan (Sudan) (*spoke in Arabic*): First of all, I would like to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your presidency of the Security Council for this month. We would like to thank you for organizing this debate on the protection of civilians in armed conflict. We would also like to thank you for the concept note (S/2015/32, annex), which has made it possible to structure the debate on this very important topic.

You recalled rightly that 11 years ago the Secretary-General submitted his first report on the issue of the protection of civilians in armed conflict. In fact, the Security Council adopted its first resolution on that topic 15 years ago, in 1999. We continue to hope that the successive discussions of the Security Council on the topic will lead to the development of a holistic methodology and an objective strategy for the protection of civilians in armed conflict by avoiding the twin traps of politicizing the notion of the protection of civilians and selectivity in its implementation. We endorse the concept note's content, as we know that civilians continue to be the majority of victims in armed conflict. However, those civilians are generally targeted by insurgency movements who take up weapons against women and children in order to provoke the international community against national Governments and to intervene in the conflict.

That is why we would like the message sent by the Council to those movements to be entirely clear. I would like to return to the statement made by the representative of the United States with regard to the situation in Darfur. Let us recall the facts. The allegations raised were based on rumours spread by Radio Banga, a radio station led by the insurgents. So it is an outlet representing the views of those insurgents. The United Nations conducted a field visit. A report was drawn up rejecting those allegations. However, we see that even today that some continue to recall those allegations as though they were facts. It was a radio station controlled by militias. It is not reliable, especially when dealing with such serious issues. The mission recalled, as I just said, that those allegations were not justified. I would also note that many conflicts considered by the Council claim hundreds of thousands of victims, and the Council continues to not take any measures to deal with them. That is why I do not think we should be speaking of Darfur in discussing the issue of armed conflict. There is a great deal of misinformation, even among the parties to the conflict.

When we speak of the protection of civilians, I think we should prioritize peace processes and political settlements by forcing the armed movements to take part in the political process and peaceful negotiations in order to express their demands rather than resorting to military action and seeking to make civilian victims. I further recall that experience has shown that in many countries where there is no peace to be kept on the ground, peacekeeping operations are not able to protect civilians and fulfil their mandate. What truly protects civilians is peace for the entire population and the subsequent implementation of development, reconstruction, reintegration and disarmament programmes that then enhance programmes for the reintegration of returning displaced persons.

We have been speaking with the Council since last August regarding the withdrawal strategy of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur. I recall that we have not yet received the third United Nations delegation. Intense negotiations are under way between the Government of the Sudan, the African Union and the United Nations with regard to that peacekeeping operation. We ask the Council to support our withdrawal strategy, which would be implemented jointly by the Government of the Sudan, the African Union and the United Nations.

The principle of the protection of civilians in armed conflict is a noble idea. However, we would like to express our concern at seeing this concept used for political ends, in particular in terms of promoting the concept of the responsibility to protect. We would like to recall that the principle of the responsibility to protect, while it is part of the final outcome document of the 2005 World Summit (resolution 60/1), continues to have different interpretations among Member States because it is in contradiction with the fundamental principle of the Charter of the United Nations concerning respect for the sovereignty of Member States, their legitimacy and their full responsibility for the protection of their citizens. I recall that the right of civilians

to protection in armed conflict is just one among a number of rights and obligations highlighted by the World Summit Outcome, including the right to development, the fight against poverty and the prevention of conflicts by dealing with their root causes.