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Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Abyei

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to paragraph 27 of Security Council resolution 2230 (2015), in which the Council requested me to continue to inform it of progress in the implementation of the mandate of the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA) and to bring to its immediate attention any serious violations of the Agreement between the Government of the Republic of the Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement on temporary arrangements for the administration and security of the Abyei Area, of 20 June 2011 (S/2011/384, annex). The report provides an update on the situation in Abyei and on the deployment and operations of UNISFA from the issuance of my previous report (S/2015/700), on 11 September 2015, to 31 October 2015, as well as on progress made in the implementation of the additional tasks mandated under Council resolution 2024 (2011) relating to the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism. It recommends, for the consideration of the Council, an additional six-month extension of the Force's mandate.

II. Security situation

2. The security situation in the Abyei Area remained calm during the reporting period. No clashes occurred between the Ngok Dinka and Misseriya communities, with the rainy season helping to keep the two communities apart for much of the period.

3. UNISFA continued to implement its robust and multifaceted conflict prevention and mitigation strategy from its rainy season deployment bases. It conducted 2,301 day and night special patrols and undertook 356 escorts. Company operating bases remained deployed in Dokura and Abyei in the central sector; Marial Achak, Athony, Banton, Tajalei and Agok in the southern sector; and Farouk, Diffra and Todach in the northern sector. The mission also facilitated 25 Joint Security Committee meetings with community leaders in the Abyei Area.

4. The Government of the Sudan continued to maintain approximately 80 to 110 oil police personnel inside the Diffra oil complex in northern Abyei, in violation of the Agreement of 20 June 2011 and multiple Security Council resolutions. In addition, as first observed on 23 August, the Sudanese authorities continued the earthwork excavation in Diffra, designed to improve the oil installation defences, in



the presence of approximately 30 armed policemen. UNISFA requested that the construction be stopped, as the building of security infrastructure and the presence of armed policemen were in violation of the Agreement. However, Sudanese national monitors maintained that UNISFA had no right to prevent a civilian company from carrying out work in Sudanese territory, and that any attempt to stop the work would be a breach of the sovereignty of the Sudan.

5. The Sudanese national monitors offered to withdraw the armed police, provided that UNISFA ensured area security for the earthwork. The mission informed them that this was not possible, as the construction work was being undertaken pursuant to a unilateral decision of the Government of the Sudan and had not been approved by the Abyei Joint Oversight Committee. No security activity was to be undertaken by either party unilaterally. To date, approximately 57 km of digging has been completed, carried out by a civilian firm with civilian-operated machinery guarded by armed policemen. On 29 September, a UNISFA patrol observed that the digging activity had been temporarily suspended owing to flooding. The digging remained suspended at the time of reporting.

6. On 8 October, UNISFA received a letter from a Sudanese representative of the Abyei Joint Oversight Committee informing it of a contractual agreement between the Government of the Sudan and a foreign company to drill 19 water wells in northern Abyei. In the letter, the representative also requested that UNISFA provide protection and security for the workers and equipment. The communities that would benefit from the project include Al Askar, Dari, Mekines, Goli, Al Shamam, Abu Gazala and Al Radiyah. On 30 September, drilling commenced in Dari and Mekines, with approximately 15 armed security guards observed on site, in violation of the Agreement. UNISFA is not in a position to provide security for the drilling operation, as it is unilateral and has not been agreed upon by the Committee.

7. On 1 September, UNISFA troops on patrol in the general area of Baloom, in the northern sector, arrested two Misseriya men in possession of two AK-47 rifles, two rifle magazines and 54 rifle cartridges. The patrol team disarmed the men and handed them over to community leaders. On 21 October, UNISFA troops disarmed one Dinka man found carrying an AK-47 rifle in the general area of Agok. The man was disarmed by the patrol team, and his weapon was taken to the Athony company operating base for destruction. On 26 October, a UNISFA patrol found unexploded ordnance near a water point in the Dari area, close to Diffra town. The item was removed by Ethiopian light field engineers and the United Nations Mine Action Service verified that the item was a partially detonated smoke grenade, reportedly used by the local community for fishing purposes.

8. With regard to seasonal migration, UNISFA troops reported Misseriya herders heading towards the Abyei Area slightly earlier than usual for the start of the new dry season. At the same time, some 150 displaced Ngok Dinka households were observed returning from Agok to their villages of origin, including Tajalei, Todach, Dungop and Noong, to prepare their land for the dry season. Owing to this season's relative lack of rain, rivers and water reservoir sources were significantly lower than they would normally be at that time of year, sparking concern that water table levels would not be sufficient to see local communities through the dry season, particularly in northern Abyei. UNISFA has finalized its dry season deployment plan and has started the preparatory activities for its implementation.

9. In order to fulfil the requirement for UNISFA to ensure security and confiscate weapons and ammunition in the Abyei Area, the Mine Action Service developed a mission-specific weapons and ammunition management policy. The policy provides guidance on standards for weapon and ammunition storage and destruction. The Mine Action Service also developed standard operating procedures for the safe handling, storage and destruction of weapons and ammunition. On 22 October, UNISFA troops handed over to the Mine Action Service 71 small arms and four grenades that were in their custody. The first batch of weapons stored in the mission headquarters camp in Abyei will be destroyed in November, once the Service's destruction facility has been finalized. The Mine Action Service route verification clearance teams and integrated clearance teams were mobilized into the mission's area of operations in September, to prepare for operations in the dry season. Those teams will facilitate safe movement for mission personnel and local communities.

10. Despite the absence of law and order institutions in the Abyei Area, the UNISFA police component continued its efforts to address the security vacuum in order to ensure the maintenance of law and order by enhancing the capacity of the community protection committees and conducting independent and joint community interactive and observation patrols with UNISFA personnel. During the reporting period, no serious criminal activity was reported.

11. On 2 and 3 September, the Senior Police Adviser of UNISFA visited Khartoum to discuss with senior Sudanese officials law and order challenges in the absence of the Abyei Police Service and the establishment of community protection committees in northern Abyei. During his visit, he met with the Sudanese Co-Chair of the Abyei Joint Oversight Committee, the Chief of Joint Operations and the Chief of International Relations in the Ministry of Defence and the Deputy Director-General for Police in the Ministry of the Interior. While the Senior Police Adviser's interlocutors conveyed appreciation for the mission's operation of UNISFA police team sites in northern Abyei to complement the military patrols, they expressed reservations about the capacity of the community protection committees to manage law and order without assistance from an established police service. Some interlocutors stressed that the Government of the Sudan would recognize only the Abyei Police Service and that, in the absence of its formation, UNISFA police should seek support from Sudanese national monitors to address any serious law and order issues. Without political support from the Sudan, the establishment and operationalization of community protection committees in northern Abyei have been delayed. Nonetheless, UNISFA plans to continue engaging with both Governments on the issue.

12. During the reporting period, UNISFA police conducted 75 independent and joint security observation and community interactive patrols with the military in the northern sector (Diffra), the central sector (Abyei-Central) and the southern sector (Agok). UNISFA police co-located with the local community protection committees in the central and southern sectors to mentor, advise on law and order techniques and improve efficiency during routine duties. UNISFA also developed a logistical support plan to implement its mandated activities under resolution 2205 (2015) and profiled another 75 Ngok Dinka members who had volunteered as community protection committee members.

III. Political developments

13. As part of its plans for the dry season, UNISFA continued efforts to promote grass-roots-level dialogue between the Misseriya and Ngok Dinka communities. In that regard, the mission held a series of separate meetings in September with leaders from both communities regarding the establishment of a common market, based on the desire of the two communities to resume trading activities and as a step towards building confidence, mutual understanding and peaceful coexistence.

14. The consultations culminated in a joint meeting between the two communities in Todach, an area between Abyei town and Diffra, on 7 October. The joint meeting was the first face-to-face dialogue held between the Misseriya and the Ngok Dinka communities to discuss issues of common concern since the assassination of the Ngok Dinka Paramount Chief in May 2013. While the two delegations found common ground on several issues, they did not reach agreement on the market's precise site and location. The Ngok Dinka representatives requested that the market be established at Goli or Baloom Junction, in northern Abyei, while the Misseriya representatives stated that their communities would support the market initiative only if it were based in Abyei town. Both communities viewed the common market initiatives as an opportunity to establish their presence in areas from which they were then absent. Both communities nevertheless agreed that UNISFA should continue the initiative and bring them together through separate mediation. The mission is currently engaging separately with the communities in an attempt to narrow their differences and achieve compromise, before bringing them together a second time.

15. During the reporting period, UNISFA also helped to facilitate the attendance of an Ngok Dinka delegation at a conference held in Aweil, South Sudan, from 17 to 19 September, on soft border management and peaceful coexistence. The conference was funded by the United States Agency for International Development and hosted by the Northern Bahr el Ghazal State authorities. It included delegations from the Dinka Malual, Dinka Rek and Dinka Twic, the Raja community and the Misseriya Awlad Kamil, Misseriya Fiyarin and Rizeigat. The Ngok Dinka attended as observers. UNISFA also participated in the conference as an observer. The gathering provided an opportunity for the communities to share their experiences, best practices and information on practical arrangements put in place to peacefully administer the annual Misseriya and Rizeigat dry season migration in the Dinka homelands of the Bahr el Ghazals, in South Sudan. All interlocutors spoke in favour of ending the recurring cycle of conflict in the border region and of starting a new chapter of reconciliation and peaceful coexistence. They agreed to focus their efforts on local, grass-roots-level dialogue to achieve mutual respect for each community's culture and livelihood and committed to a series of follow-up conferences. UNISFA will work closely with both the Ngok Dinka and Misseriya communities to build on the outcomes of the conference and to facilitate similar dialogue between the two communities. Regrettably, the Abyei Joint Oversight Committee has not met since March 2015, and a date has not been set for the rescheduled traditional leaders' dialogue meeting proposed by the African Union.

IV. Humanitarian and recovery situation

16. The difficult economic situation and ongoing conflict in the region continued to have an impact on the Abyei Area during the reporting period. United Nations agencies, funds and programmes and non-governmental organizations continued to provide humanitarian and recovery assistance to 89,300 internally displaced persons and returnees in central and southern Abyei. The delivery of humanitarian and recovery assistance also continued for 15,000 vulnerable agropastoralist Misseriya in northern Abyei. United Nations agencies, funds and programmes and non-governmental organizations began their planning for the resumption of assistance to Misseriya seasonal migrants during the dry season. In September, the food rations of the 150 Ngok Dinka displaced households returning from Agok to their villages of origin in and around Abyei town were transferred accordingly. More displaced persons are expected to return in the coming months.

17. United Nations agencies, funds and programmes and non-governmental organizations also continued to provide humanitarian assistance to 6,800 people displaced from Unity State and 1,200 people displaced from Gogrial County, Warrap State, in South Sudan. The number of conflict-affected South Sudanese displaced persons from Unity State who used Diffra in northern Abyei as a transit point to reach other Sudanese locations increased during the reporting period by 500 to 1,500. They were provided with basic relief assistance by relevant United Nations agencies, funds and programmes during their short stay in Diffra, facilitated by UNISFA through the provision of force protection and the transportation of supplies.

18. United Nations agencies, funds and programmes and non-governmental organizations are preparing to shift from general food distribution to more recovery-oriented interventions, such as Food for Assets, Food for Education and nutrition programming. In order to ensure a smooth transition, a number of consultations with the community leadership and potential implementing partners have been put in place, covering the entire Abyei Area.

19. Efforts to support livelihoods continued alongside the provision of food aid. Key activities included vocational training in carpentry, masonry, tailoring and small-business skills as well as cash-for-work activities. Recent graduates of skills training programmes established a cooperative in September, and a new round of skills training began in October.

20. A total of 3,640 households in southern Abyei benefited from the distribution of locally sourced sorghum seeds. Agricultural inputs, including tools and vegetable seeds, had been stocked for distribution to 1,500 households by the end of the rainy season. In northern Abyei, 20 community animal health workers were trained and provided with livestock kits in September. Following the training, around 1 million head of livestock in northern Abyei were to be vaccinated in November.

21. A number of UNISFA-funded quick-impact projects, including the construction of a community hall and a market, were completed in October. Other similar small-scale projects are in the implementation phase, covering the specific needs of the sedentary communities as well as of the agropastoralist and seasonal migrants.

22. In the health and nutrition sectors, 20 health facilities, including a new clinic supplemented by mobile clinics and community malaria projects, continued to provide basic health and nutrition support services throughout the Abyei Area, covering the needs of both the host communities and displaced persons. There has been a continued increase in malnutrition rates in the entire area, mainly among children from the displaced communities of South Sudan who have entered the Abyei Area. Displacement, food shortages and diseases were the leading causes of the spike in malnutrition rates.

23. Owing to the conflict in 2011, some schools have been abandoned and the children moved to southern Abyei to attend schools in the safer southern area of the Kiir River. The small number of trained teachers available and the overcrowded schools in the areas of displacement have had an impact on the learning environment for children in the Abyei Area. The education of girls has been particularly affected, with high drop-out rates in higher primary education.

24. During the reporting period, 12 water points in villages south of the Kiir/Bahr El Arab River were rehabilitated, benefiting at least 3,000 people, and hand washing facilities were regularly maintained in public facilities. Around 2,000 hygiene kits were distributed to the most vulnerable people. Latrine use remained a key challenge in the entire Abyei Area, although 27 latrines, 15 in schools and 12 in internally displaced persons sites, were constructed in August and September. Activities to ensure the protection of the most vulnerable from violence, exploitation and other abuses also continued throughout the Abyei Area. Those activities included family tracing and reunification exercises, the monitoring of children in foster care, support for children in contact with the law, training for community-based child protection networks on the protection of children and the provision and management of child-friendly spaces and child-friendly protection units at police stations, support for vulnerable children with both food and non-food items, mine risk education and ongoing monitoring of the protective environment within villages.

25. United Nations humanitarian organizations have developed an inter-agency contingency plan for humanitarian assistance in the Abyei Area for the six-month dry season. The humanitarian community is facing many operational challenges, and a lack of implementation capacity is being felt across all sectors. At present, only one local non-governmental organization is operating in northern Abyei, while two international non-governmental organizations in southern Abyei are facing serious funding shortages. Additional challenges include prevalent intercommunal tensions, necessitating the continued reliance by United Nations agencies, funds and programmes on UNISFA protection; delays in the issuance of travel permits and restrictions on the movement of personnel and supplies into the Abyei Area by the Sudanese authorities; high implementation costs owing to security and logistical constraints; and the non-availability of northern Sudanese staff for safety and security reasons.

V. Status of the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism

26. On 14 October, an extraordinary session of the Joint Political and Security Mechanism took place in Addis Ababa, under the facilitation of the African Union

High-level Implementation Panel for the Sudan and South Sudan. The session was the first to be held since May 2013. At the conclusion of the meeting, the parties accepted the map of the Safe Demilitarized Border Zone presented to them by the Panel in November 2011, and agreed to its centreline as the location of the separation line between the armed forces of the Governments of the Sudan and South Sudan. In addition, the parties agreed to activate all mechanisms relating to the Joint Political and Security Mechanism as provided for in relevant agreements, in particular the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism, in coordination with UNISFA and consistent with Security Council resolution 2024 (2011). The parties stated that their recognition of the Safe Demilitarized Border Zone and its centreline would not have any bearing on the definitive and final location of the boundary between the two countries, and would not affect the current administrative arrangements obtained in any area in the Zone. They also agreed that either party might raise a concern about any point of the centreline through the Joint Political and Security Mechanism in order to arrive at a mutually agreed adjustment that addressed the concerns of that party.

27. During the meeting of the Joint Political and Security Mechanism, the UNISFA Force Commander briefed the attendees on the status of the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism and the challenges of supporting the implementation of the agreements of 29 June 2011 and 30 July 2011 relating to the monitoring of border security between the Sudan and South Sudan. The parties deferred discussion on the status of the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism to the next ordinary session of the Joint Political and Security Mechanism, which is scheduled to take place in Khartoum in November.

28. In line with the assessment of May 2015, no further infrastructural investments are currently being planned for the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism, beyond initial operating capability, pending the demonstration by the parties of a greater commitment to the implementation of their border arrangements. In the meantime, UNISFA will continue its attempts to engage with the Government of South Sudan to address the existing restrictions on aerial monitoring and landing permissions and the deployment of a force protection company to Gok Machar.

29. During the reporting period, the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism continued to face numerous challenges in the implementation of its aerial verification and monitoring mandate. A number of Mechanism patrols did not take place owing to the denial of landing permissions by the Government of South Sudan, in violation of Council resolutions 1990 (2011) and 2024 (2011) and the status-of-forces agreements, signed by the Governments of the Sudan and South Sudan in 2012. The restrictions on aerial monitoring of the Safe Demilitarized Border Zone in the western sector also continued. Only three of seven planned missions were conducted during the reporting period, in the eastern sector of the Abyei Area. To date, the Mechanism has been able to conduct only 57 of the 140 planned aerial monitoring patrols. The deployment of a force protection company from Kadugli to Gok Machar remains suspended owing to the refusal of landing permissions by the Sudan People's Liberation Army division and brigade commanders in that area. The troop strength in the Gok Machar camp remains at 64 of the authorized 265, which is not sufficient for even basic camp security and administration.

30. Three newly contracted patrol support teams of the Mine Action Service were deployed to the Mechanism sector 2 headquarters in Kadugli, the Sudan, on 19 August. In addition, two patrol support teams were in the process of deployment to the Mechanism sector 1 headquarters in Gok Machar, South Sudan. In preparation for planned ground patrols, the Service also delivered various training modules on integrated ground patrols for 85 Mechanism personnel, including national monitors from the Sudan and South Sudan, international military observers and elements of the UNISFA force protection unit.

VI. Personnel deployment and mission support

31. During the reporting period, the UNISFA military component stood at 4,515 personnel (224 military observers/staff officers and 4,291 troops), of an authorized strength of 5,326. The strength of the UNISFA police component stood at 23 police officers (18 men and 5 women) from six police-contributing countries, of an authorized strength of 50. The total number of civilian staff stood at 233. The Government of the Sudan issued 123 visas for UNISFA personnel; 98 visas for civilian and military staff remain pending.

32. Regarding logistical planning for the deployment of the Mechanism, necessary construction work, including office and living accommodations and kitchens, have been concluded, a perimeter chain-link fence for the Gok Machar camp has been completed, and skeletal fuel services are now operational for the Gok Machar sector 1 headquarters force protection company. However, as noted above, the continued denial of landing rights by the South Sudanese authorities has prevented the timely deployment of Mechanism personnel.

33. The Government of the Sudan continues to restrict the delivery of construction materials for the development of roads and infrastructure in and around UNISFA camps. The construction of new accommodations, camp expansion earthwork, work on the perimeter wall and the completion of the Athony Airfield are all pending owing to the non-availability of construction materials. Despite discussions between UNISFA and senior government representatives, the issue has remained unresolved since January 2015 and is significantly increasing the cost of UNISFA operations. Troop rotations must be conducted by means of expensive rotary-wing air transport from Abyei to Kadugli, and then by fixed-wing aircraft to Addis Ababa, instead of the much cheaper option of fixed-wing rotation from Athony to Addis Ababa. The use of the Athony Airfield will also be critical for the proposed fixed-wing reconnaissance patrols in support of the Mechanism.

VII. Financial aspects

34. The General Assembly, by its resolution 69/294, appropriated the amount of \$268.3 million for the maintenance of the Force for the period from 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2016. As at 3 November 2015, unpaid assessed contributions to the Special Account for UNISFA amounted to \$17.8 million. Total outstanding assessed contributions for all peacekeeping operations at that date amounted to \$1,503.1 million. Reimbursement of troop costs has been made for the period up to 31 July 2015, while reimbursement of the costs of contingent-owned equipment has been

made for the period up to 30 June 2015, in accordance with the quarterly payment schedule.

VIII. Observations and recommendations

35. The signing, on 17 and 26 August 2015, of the Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan and the prospect of an end to the conflict there offer a fresh opportunity to refocus attention on Abyei in order to advance the implementation of the Abyei Agreement of 20 June 2011 and the agreements on border security of September 2012. I am hopeful that the new positive momentum witnessed in the relations between the two Governments can resuscitate the implementation of the Agreement of 20 June 2011 and translate into a sustainable improvement of border security. UNISFA, in partnership with my Special Envoy for the Sudan and South Sudan and in support of the African Union High-level Implementation Panel for the Sudan and South Sudan, will continue to promote and support stable and peaceful relations between the two countries and engage with both Governments to encourage progress on all outstanding bilateral issues.

36. In this regard, I warmly welcome the holding of the meeting of the Joint Political and Security Mechanism in Addis Ababa on 14 October, and hope that it will spur renewed commitment by the parties to implement their agreements and kick-start their engagement in operationalizing the required mechanisms and committees. That extraordinary meeting paved the way for the resumption of normal meetings, which are much needed for the provision of effective and regular direction to the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism. I welcome the parties' decision to convene an ordinary meeting of the Joint Political and Security Mechanism in November in Khartoum, and urge the two parties to allow the mechanism to meet on a regular basis.

37. The Joint Political and Security Mechanism remains the principal oversight body for the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism. The United Nations has expended considerable effort and spent over \$26 million on the development of infrastructure in support of the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism. As I have stated in previous reports, the United Nations is no longer prepared to further develop the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism beyond its initial operating capability if the two parties do not address the impediments to its full realization, demonstrate the necessary political commitment and invest in the implementation of their agreements. In my report of 16 June 2015 (S/2015/439), I noted that the continued investment of UNISFA in achieving full operating capability would be based on a set of conditions that the parties must meet in order for the Mechanism to achieve its objectives. The United Nations stands ready to amend the concept of operations of the Mechanism to increase its operational effectiveness, as set out in my previous report, once the parties have met the conditions and recommitted themselves to their border security agreements.

38. At the same time, there is a need for both parties to the Abyei Agreement of 20 June 2011 to respect their accord, related Security Council resolutions and the resolution adopted at the ninth meeting of the Abyei Joint Oversight Committee held in March 2015, which reiterated the need for the Abyei Area to be a weapons-

free zone. In that regard, I call on the parties to emulate the renewal of Joint Political and Security Mechanism meetings and resume the Abyei Joint Oversight Committee meetings, only one of which has been held in the past two years. It is important that the two parties revitalize a viable political process that will lead to the implementation of the Abyei Agreement of 20 June 2011. They should hold as a matter of urgency the traditional leaders' dialogue meeting proposed by the African Union, which was postponed in June.

39. I am encouraged by the efforts of actors on the ground to seek dialogue and reconciliation. The consultative conference on soft border management and peaceful coexistence, held in Aweil, Northern Bahr el Ghazal State, South Sudan, in September, was an important event. I applaud the State authorities for this initiative, which sets out key arrangements that have successfully governed the peaceful migration of the Dinka Malual and the Rizeigat in recent years. I call on the Dinka, the Misseriya and the Rizeigat delegations at the conference to follow through on the results of the meeting and build a genuine and sustainable grass-roots peace process encompassing all their communities along the Sudan-South Sudan border. UNISFA will continue to do all it can, within its mandate and capabilities, to further the aims of the conference and will work to implement dialogue and reconciliation initiatives between the Ngok Dinka and Misseriya peoples.

40. I also commend the efforts of UNISFA to initiate dialogue through the establishment of a common market between the Misseriya and Ngok Dinka communities. I welcome the holding of the first joint meeting between the two communities in the Abyei Area since the assassination of the Ngok Dinka Paramount Chief in May 2013. This is an important step forward. I call on the two communities to continue this initiative with UNISFA and find a compromise and common ground on the issue of the market. This is exactly the type of initiative that is needed to rebuild trust and confidence between the two communities. I hope that the communities will grasp this opportunity to work towards a future of tolerance and understanding in which both the Ngok Dinka and Misseriya communities can reap the rewards of reconciliation and peaceful coexistence.

41. I take note of the reservations recently expressed by the Government of the Sudan about my decision to appoint a civilian Head of Mission to UNISFA, which was welcomed by the Security Council in its resolution 2205 (2015). While discussions between the Government of the Sudan and the United Nations on this matter are ongoing, I urge the Governments of the Sudan and South Sudan to focus on how to move forward with the implementation of all provisions of the Agreement of 20 June 2011.

42. In addition, I renew my call on the Sudanese authorities in Khartoum to provide increased levels of support to UNISFA. This includes the timely issuance of visas, relevant permissions to allow the delivery of construction materials for the development of roads and infrastructure, and the granting of the necessary permission to conclude the construction work at the Athony Airfield. Without such support, the mission's efforts to implement its mandate in the communities of Abyei will be seriously constrained. Similarly, the South Sudanese authorities in Juba must provide UNISFA and the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism with all the necessary cooperation and full freedom of movement to enable them to carry out their mandated tasks.

43. As the Security Council considers the renewal of the UNISFA mandate, I am encouraged by the outcomes of the Joint Political and Security Mechanism meeting held on 14 October and the agreement to hold a further meeting in November. I therefore request the extension of the mission's mandate for six months in order to maintain the momentum recently created.

44. Finally, I wish to extend my gratitude and appreciation to the Head of Mission, Haile Tilahun Gebremariam, the Force Commander, Lieutenant General Birhanu Jula Gelalcha, and the military, civilian and police personnel of UNISFA, who continue to work, often in challenging circumstances, for peace and stability in the Abyei Area. I also wish to thank my Special Envoy, Haile Menkerios, the former President of South Africa and Chair of the African Union High-level Implementation Panel, Thabo Mbeki, the African Union Commission and the Government of Ethiopia for their continued commitment and support in the search for peace and security in the Abyei Area.

