



## Security Council

Distr.: General  
11 January 2021

Original: English

---

### Letter dated 8 January 2021 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council

I have the honour to enclose herewith a copy of the briefings provided by His Excellency the Secretary-General, Mr. António Guterres; His Excellency Mr. Moussa Faki Mahamat, Chairperson of the African Union Commission; and Her Excellency Ms. Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, former President of Liberia, as well as the statements delivered by Their Excellencies Mr. Kaïs Saïed, President of Tunisia; Mr. Uhuru Kenyatta, President of Kenya; Mr. Mahamadou Issoufou, President of the Niger; Mr. Ralph E. Gonsalves, Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines; Mr. Marcelo Ebrard Casaubón, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Mexico; Ms. Ine Eriksen Søreide, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Norway; Mr. Jean-Baptiste Lemoyne, Minister of State for Tourism, French Nationals Abroad and Francophonie, attached to the Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs of France; Mr. Thomas Byrne, Minister of State for the Department of the Taoiseach and the Department of Foreign Affairs of Ireland; Mr. James Cleverly, Minister of State for the Middle East and North Africa of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland; Mr. Le Hoai Trung, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Viet Nam; and Mr. Harsh Vardhan Shringla, Foreign Secretary of India, as well as the statements delivered by the representatives of China, Estonia, the Russian Federation and the United States of America in connection with the video-teleconference on “Maintenance of international peace and security: Challenges of maintaining peace and security in fragile contexts”, convened on Wednesday, 6 January 2021.

In accordance with the understanding reached among Council members for that video-teleconference, the following delegations and entities submitted written statements, copies of which are also enclosed: Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Belgium, Denmark, Ecuador, Egypt, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Malta, Morocco, Pakistan, Peru, Portugal, Qatar, the Republic of Korea, Slovakia, South Africa, Switzerland and Ukraine.

In accordance with the procedure set out in the letter dated 7 May 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council (S/2020/372), which was agreed in the light of the extraordinary circumstances caused by the coronavirus disease pandemic, these briefings and statements will be issued as an official document of the Security Council.

*(Signed)* Tarek Ladeb  
President of the Security Council



**Annex 1****Briefing by the Secretary-General**

[Original: English and French]

I thank the Tunisian presidency for having organized this debate.

Addressing the links between fragility and conflict is an essential component of international peace and security. Fragility and conflict are among the greatest obstacles to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Even before the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, the conflict landscape was deteriorating. Conflicts have become more complex, fuelled by greater regionalization and the proliferation of non-State armed groups and their linkages with criminal and even terrorist interests. They last longer and become more difficult to resolve.

According to the World Bank's report entitled *Fragility and Conflict: On the Front Lines of the Fight against Poverty*, one of every five people in the Middle East and North Africa lives in close proximity to a major conflict. As a consequence, humanitarian needs have multiplied, reaching the highest levels since the Second World War. The number of people at risk of starvation has doubled, and international conflict-management mechanisms have been stretched to the breaking point.

Those trends have placed a number of countries in a vicious circle. Conflict continues to breed poverty and foster institutional fragility, which in turn decreases the resilience of those societies and the prospects for peace. The World Bank estimates that by 2030, two thirds of the world's extreme poor will live in fragile or conflict-affected countries.

The COVID-19 pandemic has further exacerbated those trends. In 2020, for the first time in 22 years, extreme poverty was on the rise. The contraction of economic activity in fragile and conflict-affected settings is expected to push an additional 18 to 27 million people into extreme poverty. The gender equality gap is widening, and women's labour force participation — a key driver of inclusive growth — has been set back decades.

The climate emergency is a further driver of insecurity. It is no coincidence that of the 15 countries most susceptible to climate risks, eight host a United Nations peacekeeping operation or special political mission.

From the Sahel and Central Africa to the Horn of Africa, variability in rainfall patterns is disrupting long-existing patterns of transhumance, resulting in tensions and recurring clashes between communities, including across national borders. If we are to break the cycle of poverty and conflict, we need a more ambitious approach based on two principles enshrined in the Sustainable Development Goals.

The first principle is that of interdependence. The 2030 Agenda recognizes that there can be no sustainable development without peace and no peace without sustainable development. A holistic approach to building and sustaining peace, with targeted and tailored investments across the humanitarian-development-peace nexus, is essential.

In the Sahel, for example, the United Nations Integrated Strategy has sought to close the gap between humanitarian needs and development imperatives. It has focused on helping to reassert State authority throughout the Sahel countries, thereby reversing the pattern of the growing marginalization of poor rural societies, with particular attention to women and youth.

The second principle is that of inclusion. The pledge to leave no one behind must be at the centre of our efforts to promote sustainable development as well as to prevent and resolve conflicts. More than 20 years ago, the Security Council recognized, in adopting resolution 1325 (2000), the need for the increased participation of women in peace processes. That promise has yet to be fully realized.

Guaranteeing equal opportunities, protection, access to resources and services and participation in decision-making are not simply moral and legal obligations. They are a necessary condition if countries are to truly break out of the conflict trap.

The linkages between conflict and fragility have been particularly visible on the African continent. In the Horn of Africa and the Sahel, fragility has been exacerbated by transboundary threats such as climate change, terrorism, transnational organized crime and the proliferation of armed groups.

In the Great Lakes and Central African region, limited State authority, the continued presence and activities of armed groups, human rights violations, the illicit exploitation of natural resources and unemployment continue to drive instability. To address those trends, the United Nations has worked closely with the African Union (AU) and regional economic communities.

The United Nations-African Union joint frameworks on peace and security and on sustainable development have been key instruments to prevent and sustainably resolve conflicts in Africa, as well as to strengthen the resilience of States to withstand current threats.

One month ago, Chairperson Mahamat and I co-chaired the fourth African Union-United Nations Annual Conference, a clear demonstration of the value that we attach to our partnership and to our strategic cooperation. The meeting was an opportunity for us to identify ways to support the AU's Silencing the Guns initiative, a groundbreaking effort to address the root causes of conflicts on the continent, including economic and social disparities. My call for a global ceasefire goes hand in hand with that flagship initiative of the African Union.

The United Nations also remains committed to supporting the African Union's ambitious Agenda 2063. In that context, we have decided to establish a joint United Nations-AU group on the implementation of the Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063, including with regard to COVID-19 recovery.

We know that prevention and peacebuilding save lives and are cost-effective, especially when strategies come together across the peace, development and humanitarian nexus in support of national priorities. But they also require national leadership, political commitment and financial support.

Yet the international community continues to underinvest in those areas. That is why I have repeatedly called for increased financing for prevention and peacebuilding. The Peacebuilding Fund is well placed to help link our responses to multidimensional crises. On 26 January, I will co-chair a replenishment conference for the Fund, and I look forward to the strong support of Member States at that crucial moment.

Another area where the lack of sustainable funding continues to hinder our efforts to resolve conflicts relates to the deployment of African peace enforcement operations authorized by the Security Council. In a number of circumstances, African Member States have heeded the calls of the international community to respond to major crises with significant regional and global implications, from the deployment of the African Union Mission in Somalia to the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel and the Multinational Joint Task Force against Boko Haram.

African Union peace-support operations authorized by the Security Council require predictable, flexible and sustained financing through assessed contributions. I call on the Council to finalize its discussion on this matter.

Partnerships with international financial institutions are another critical way to ensure that adequate funding reaches key areas. I welcome the World Bank's Strategy for Fragility, Conflict, and Violence 2020-2025, which opens the way for much deeper investment in nationally led prevention efforts.

Our country teams and missions on the ground are working closely with Governments and the World Bank in some 40 countries affected by fragility and conflict. Together we are focusing on food insecurity, supporting displaced people and host communities, and creating opportunities for women and young people. I want that partnership to grow in the years ahead.

The Security Council has a critical role to play in addressing the links between fragility and conflict. By acting early and preventively, engaging strategically to address the root causes of conflict and speaking with one voice, the Council can mobilize the international community's political and financial support, spotlight critical areas of need and foster the commitment of conflict actors where needed.

I look forward to continuing our engagement in this area.

---

**Annex 2****Briefing by the Chairperson of the African Union Commission,  
Moussa Faki Mahamat**

I would first like to take this opportunity to express to you, Mr. President, as well as to all members, my best wishes for peace, security and health, especially in these trying times of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19).

I would like also to congratulate the President of the Republic of Tunisia on his assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of January 2021 and to thank him for including on the Council's agenda this important item devoted to the challenges of peacekeeping in fragile contexts. This issue is at the heart of the concerns of the African Union, since it is in Africa that the issues of the fragility of States and the challenges facing peacekeeping are most acute, as can be seen in the Lake Chad basin and the Sahel. The Niger reported more than 100 deaths a few days ago; we express our condolences to the Government and the people of that country.

Current breaches of or threats to international peace and security posed by factors such as conflict, terrorism, violent extremism, radicalization, transnational organized crime, the serious consequences of climate change, deadly infectious diseases and multiple pandemics have far-reaching consequences, especially for the most fragile States and the most vulnerable populations. With the current expansion of the COVID-19 pandemic, those tragic realities have come to a head. We have clearly seen the impact of the devastating health and socioeconomic effects of all kinds on fragile States.

State fragility remains a major obstacle to development in Africa. Overcoming that challenge is therefore a top priority for the African Union and one of the pillars of the international agenda.

Soon after its creation, the African Union adopted a number of policies, instruments and mechanisms aimed at supporting its member States and strengthening their capacity to prevent conflicts and tensions, which pose obstacles and threats to their peace, stability and development.

The establishment in 2002 of the African Peace and Security Architecture and the African Governance Architecture, as well as the related twofold master plan to promote peace, security and stability, effectively cover the various aspects of conflict prevention, management and resolution, as well as post-conflict stabilization, reconstruction and development.

The various vectors of the African Peace and Security Architecture, including the African Union Peace and Security Council, the Panel of the Wise and the Mediation Support Unit, have opened up a broad field of action that should enable considerable progress to be made in approaches to and the settlement of conflicts on the continent.

The AU's peacemaking and preventive diplomacy efforts, supported by the particularly effective use of special envoys and representatives, high representatives and liaison offices and missions across the continent, continue to play an active role in the achievement of those objectives.

Convinced that it could not remain silent in the face of African tragedies and that moreover it could not let others decide the fate of Africa, the Union has focused its tireless efforts on realizing the principle of African solutions to African problems. That approach has allowed for the resolution of many conflicts and crises across the

continent, as it makes it possible to address the underlying causes of conflicts and in turn the sources of fragility.

The framework agreements signed with the United Nations and the European Union on the fundamental issues of peace, security, governance and development have laid the foundations for fruitful cooperation in those crucial areas. In that regard, the United Nations-AU partnership, supplemented by the agreements of April 2017 and January 2018, focus on the necessary consultation and strategic mobilization process with a view to eradicating the root causes of the fragility facing many African States and countries, in order to provide appropriate, coherent and decisive responses to prevent and manage conflicts in Africa. The close consultations between the United Nations Security Council and the AU Peace and Security Council seek to promote that objective. Such consultations increase our common understanding of the challenges that we face and enhance our response mechanisms, including through preventive diplomacy. They contribute significantly to the development of a multilateralism that has been undermined by national self-interest and the weakening of humanity and channels of international cooperation.

I would therefore like to congratulate this organ, the Security Council, on its contribution to that effort by adopting resolution 2457 (2019), which, among other things, calls for the mobilization of the United Nations and its institutions to support the African Union in implementing its noble goal of Silencing the Guns in Africa. The results achieved to date through that collaboration are highly commendable. You will agree with me, Mr. President, that only by pooling our collective expertise and resources will we be able to respond to the challenges that beset us.

While some progress has been made, in close coordination with subregional organizations and with the strong support of the United Nations, we must recognize that a number of challenges continue to undermine our ability to effectively carry out our mandate. Those include access to predictable and sustainable resources in support of operations initiated, or led, by the African Union that have a clear and robust mandate. In that regard, we remain mindful of the primary responsibility of our member States to prevent and resolve conflicts peacefully and through dialogue, as well as to protect civilians and promote human rights.

In our approaches to crises and peace and security issues, in our view exclusion is one of the key drivers of those crises and tensions. The only strategy for addressing fragility is to resolutely succeed in our policies to empower women and boldly integrate young people into a genuinely inclusive synergy of those vital forces in our societies. That requires other innovative dynamics and less inflammatory rhetoric. The hopes and expectations that we cherish from today's debate are to see strong momentum emerge from our common efforts to triumph in our fight against exclusion, social injustice, unilateralism and the mistrust of cohesion, which is the foundation and essence of our common humanity.

---

**Annex 3****Briefing by the former President of Liberia, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf**

I am grateful for this opportunity to make a few points that I believe to be relevant to the purpose of this meeting. I would first like to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your country's presidency of the Security Council for this month and on your leadership of this high-level open debate on the maintenance of international peace and security in fragile contexts.

This is only the first week of 2021 — a year to which the whole world has looked forward. There has probably never been a time when so many people wanted, and needed, the previous year to end, while clinging to the hope of a new year of promise and cautious optimism.

This open debate must therefore also be faithful to that promise and commit to new and bold steps. The members of the Security Council, one of the most important organs of the United Nations, have the power in their hands to help to end the vicious cycles of conflict, displacement and despair that so many have faced for so many years. They can look beyond narrow interests and recognize that peaceful, just and inclusive societies have benefits far beyond their own borders. They know that unattended issues in societies fester and deepen fragility, which often leads to violent conflicts. They also know that early interventions to support local responses to governance and poverty fault lines can build resilience. They have seen that women peace and security actors can help to put out a small smouldering fire before it becomes a major conflagration.

I express my gratitude once again for the support for interventions in my own country, Liberia, and would like to highlight the three keys to ending our brutal armed conflict. First was the desire for peace by ordinary Liberians, tired of war. The second element was the robust mandate of the regional peacekeeping force and its understanding of the threats posed to regional security. The third factor was the subsequent international support for the final peace agreement and the timely partnership as we pulled ourselves up, albeit exhausted, bruised and battered.

However, prevention is always better than cure and, in nearly every case, interventions are almost too late. As in most situations that spark into active conflicts, the signs are usually there long before any helpful actions are taken. They include persistent torture, extrajudicial killings, ethnicity used to consolidate power, women and girls targeted as the loot of war, deepened poverty and inequalities, the disruption of social services and dismantled and disrespected traditional conflict resolution mechanisms.

In Liberia's case, the regional peacekeeping force took us into an electoral process, which, while highly flawed, was a step on the path to peace. The United Nations international peacekeeping mission was a partner in the implementation of the final peace agreement, ensuring the protection of civilians during the sporadic but persistent outbreaks of conflict by new armed militias seeking to remove contested winners of the elections.

Another key was women's leadership. Women from all walks of life literally sat for peace, following the male combatants as they lurched from one failed agreement to another. Without the Liberian women, Liberia would not have peace today.

Today peacekeepers must also battle the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) while supporting peace and containing conflict. As with multilateralism, countries are questioning the efficacy of peacekeeping operations and the costs of running them, often for years at a time.

I disagree and remain a strong advocate for peacekeeping. However, like everything else, the architecture must change, with the flexibility to respond to challenging circumstances and in consonance with the recognition of, and support for, local capability and leadership when the warning bells ring. Just think what the outcome would be if some 25 per cent of financing for peacekeeping were allocated to a technical training contingent of peacekeepers dedicated to training young, unemployed potential militants.

Last year we celebrated the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations. We recognize the Secretary-General, particularly for his strong advocacy on climate change and his call for silencing the guns to be able to battle the COVID-19 virus more effectively. We now need his equally strong words to national authorities for their actionable response to his advocacy.

This year commemorates the seventieth anniversary of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the United Nations refugee agency. While we commend the leadership and staff of that agency, its continued existence is a mark on our collective conscience. It means that we have not pursued peace or addressed fragility. What will we utter now at the beginning of this year of promise — more platitudes?

I plead yet again. The United Nations, with its many entities, especially the Security Council, was established to lead the process of global development and global equity. The United Nations must represent more than hope. It must be an active mechanism for peace and scaled-up support for the fragile nations that for too long have been left behind.

Finally, the COVID-19 pandemic is a painful human tragedy. I extend my deepest condolences to all who are grieving for loved ones and pray for the speedy recovery of the infected. We hope that we can see peace in this new year and an end to the ravages of the pandemic through an equitable distribution of the vaccines.

---

**Annex 4****Statement by the President of the Republic of Tunisia, Kaïs Saïed**

The choice of today's topic flows from our strong determination to identify drivers of fragility that fuel violence, lead to prolonged conflicts and, unfortunately, pave the way for the outbreak of new conflicts. Those drivers contribute to undermining the foundations of States and the efforts undertaken to promote democracy and social and economic progress in many parts of the world, especially on the African continent, which has long suffered marginalization and wars. They also deepen humanitarian crises and complicate the development and stability tracks in post-conflict situations.

We firmly believe that ending wars, while of the utmost importance, does not necessarily and automatically lead to a lasting peace. Likewise, ceasefires do not mean the end of conflicts but count as a necessary first step towards a peaceful settlement. Preserving and consolidating the outcomes of peace and strengthening the foundations of stability require a comprehensive, multilateral and long-term approach that focuses on addressing the deep structural causes of conflicts, in particular the root causes of fragility.

Such drivers extend from poverty, unemployment, marginalization, exclusion, a decline in human development indicators, the ineffectiveness of State institutions, which is of great danger, and poor governance to terrorism, violent extremism and transnational organized crime activities, as well as the effects of climate change, the scarcity of resources and the impact of pandemics. Those factors are self-reinforcing and conducive to violence and conflicts. They contribute to the erosion of social cohesion and cause flows of refugees and irregular migration, thereby seriously hindering the efforts of national Governments and the international community to build peace and achieve stability in post-conflict phases.

From that standpoint, the effectiveness of peacebuilding processes requires providing assistance to countries and populations to maintain stability and gradually move from contexts of fragility to recovery, development and prosperity. Such processes need a more comprehensive vision of the concept of peace that takes into account the interplay of the various threats and focuses on providing the necessary guarantees to maintain international peace and security through the promotion of human rights, democracy, good governance and broader political participation, especially among women and young people.

Many regions on different continents, particularly on our African continent, which we consider to be the pillar of the world's security, stability and prosperity, have endured violence, conflict and the accumulation of many drivers of fragility, which have generated complex and multidimensional challenges and threats. They have led to a state of security, humanitarian, development and health emergencies and made those regions vulnerable to violence and terrorism.

We may not have enough time to go through the different challenges and conflicts that arise from such situations, but, in all cases, the Security Council needs to adopt a more comprehensive approach to international security that takes into account the interaction between fragility, on the one hand, and violence and armed conflicts, on the other hand. Overcoming such challenges also requires multidisciplinary responses, with the contribution of various international actors in a coordinated and integrated effort.

While we highly appreciate the important role that the African Union and subregional organizations have been playing to overcome fragility, for instance through the Silencing the Guns in Africa initiative, the United Nations, with its

broad institutional framework and responsibilities, remains a key actor in addressing the root causes of insecurity, violence and conflict in an effective and efficient way. A joint international, regional and national effort in that area is certainly of the utmost importance to all.

In addition, it is also of paramount importance to count on the contribution of all countries and relevant stakeholders, such as the United Nations funds, programmes and agencies and their regional partners, along with international financial institutions and donors, in order to achieve a global and comprehensive strategy that focuses on capacity-building and national ownership of programmes that aim to put an end to poverty, conflicts and fragility. Those programmes must also bring about stability and implement the Sustainable Development Goals.

Prevention has always been one of the best means of maintaining peace. Hence the Security Council, in line with its responsibility in that regard, should support conflict prevention initiatives and enhance the rule of law and the efficiency of national institutions. We should also strengthen national and international efforts to attain development and a decent life for all populations across the world. That is not only the best choice in political and ethical terms, but also the least costly choice for the United Nations and for the international community. There can be no security and no peace without inclusive, fair and sustainable development that preserves human dignity and allows all people to uphold their rights, including their right to development.

As Council members are aware, the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, which ravaged the entire world during the past year and continues to do so, has destabilized all aspects of our lives. However, the impact of the pandemic has been much more severe in fragile and poor contexts, thus exacerbating the social and economic challenges, violence and human tragedies, as well as threats to international peace and security.

In the light of such circumstances, we would like to reiterate our call for further strengthening international cooperation in dealing with that unprecedented threat. It should be based on human solidarity, taking into consideration all factors that exacerbate and extend conflicts, especially in view of the fact that pandemics do not recognize borders and do not exclude anyone. As pandemics put the entire world in a state of fragility, all nations must work together. We would like to take this opportunity to underscore that COVID-19 vaccines and medicines must be made available to all, as no one is safe until everyone is safe.

We also take the opportunity of this meeting to call on all parties to conflicts throughout the world to respond positively to the Secretary-General's call for an immediate global ceasefire and to act in line with resolution 2532 (2020), which was submitted jointly by Tunisia and France and unanimously adopted by the Security Council on 1 July 2020. The resolution should pave the way for the international community to come up with an effective response to the pandemic.

We need to ensure that our work is effective and explore new ways to lead us towards a new future for all on an equal footing and without any kind of exclusion. On the occasion of our country's presidency of the Security Council, we would like to reaffirm the principled commitment of the Republic of Tunisia to peace, security and sustainable development so that we can meet the legitimate aspirations of all people to bring about a world that is fairer, more peaceful and more prosperous — a world in which no one is left behind. Among the legitimate rights that we must underscore and recall at every meeting and in all settings is the right of the Palestinian people to their land. We must all contribute to creating a new history for all humankind. Let us meet that challenge.

---

**Annex 5****Statement by the President and Commander-in-Chief of the Defence Forces of the Republic of Kenya, Uhuru Kenyatta**

Let me begin, Mr. President, by congratulating you, my brother, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of January 2021. I also congratulate India, Mexico, Ireland and Norway, with whom we have joined the Security Council as elected members for the period 2021-2022.

I thank Their Excellencies Mr. António Guterres, Mr. Moussa Faki Mahamat and former President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf for their informative briefings.

This high-level debate demands we revisit the very reason the United Nations exists: how multilateralism can be made fit for purpose in maintaining peace today. The fact that the bulk of the Security Council's agenda is devoted to conflicts in Africa is testament to the fragility of many countries and regions on the continent. If we are to be true to the founding Charter of the United Nations, it therefore follows that we should invest more in building more effective approaches or revitalizing existing mechanisms to maintain peace and anchor stability in Africa.

In the most fragile situations Africa, the capacity of the State has not sufficiently grown so that it can effectively control every part of its territory. The State's ability to deliver public goods to all citizens has also been limited. In the meantime, the most dangerous challenges facing countries have multiplied. Globalization may have expanded our economic opportunities but it has also further shrunk the role of the State. To add to the fragility, multilateral institutions have often lacked the resources, the know-how and fit-for-purpose mandates to effectively support States facing dire security challenges.

The competence and reach of the State is the single-most important national and global asset in maintaining peace in fragile situations. If we take, as an example, the responses to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, the biggest difference is not between Eastern and Western approaches, but between States that can provide a strong bridge for their citizens and economies to successfully navigate extreme crises, on the one hand, and those that cannot muster such an effort, on the other hand. In countries afflicted by war, or recovering from it, peace will be maintained only if they have the strength to win control of their territory and provide public services. The multilateral system as embodied in the United Nations will therefore need to help fragile States attain such capacities. Political processes that build peace together with binding resolutions from the Security Council should include measurable elements that strengthen States.

Let me conclude with four proposals for building a multilateralism fit for our times.

First, we must leverage the knowledge and buy-in of stakeholders closest to a crisis. That means listening to and empowering national actors committed to building bipartisan and non-partisan political bridges to peace and security. This focus should dovetail with the Security Council prioritizing closer cooperation with such mechanisms as the African Union and the regional economic communities.

Secondly, the Security Council and associated United Nations bodies should do more to strengthen the capacity of key State institutions during post-conflict reconstruction. The Peacebuilding Commission will play an invaluable role, which Kenya will strongly support over the next two years.

Thirdly, we should not let the COVID-19 pandemic be a major driver of insecurity. If fragile countries do not get prompt access to the vaccine, their economic

problems will likely turn into political and security challenges. Affordable and quick access to the COVID-19 vaccine should therefore be regarded as a valuable investment in peace. I commend you, Mr. President, for the pivotal role Tunisia played in the adoption of resolution 2532 (2020), by which the Council recognized the grave and devastating impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, especially in countries in conflict or post-conflict situations.

My fourth proposal is that we must strengthen the role of Africa and the global South in the multilateral system. The road to revitalizing multilateralism to effectively deliver global peace and security runs through a united Africa and an active and engaged global South. In this regard, I applaud our fellow elected member Saint Vincent and the Grenadines for becoming the “plus One”, which, together with three African members of the Security Council, form the A3+1. The group’s joint action allows the hundreds of millions in Africa, the Caribbean and other parts of the world to believe that their voice in the Security Council matters. That belief will lead to greater faith in the United Nations and its decisions. It is for this reason that I have charged our Mission to the United Nations with the task of being a strong voice for a united Africa and for the global South in the General Assembly.

## Annex 6

## Statement by the President of the Republic of the Niger, Mahamadou Issoufou

[Original: French]

Allow me to congratulate President Kaïs Saïed and the Tunisian presidency of the Security Council for the month of January 2021. I thank President Saïed for organizing today's important debate on the challenges of maintaining peace and security in fragile contexts. The people of the Niger will never forget that it was Tunisia that sponsored our country's entry into the United Nations on 20 September 1960, a little more than a month after gaining independence. This is one more reason to assure you, Mr. President, of the Niger's readiness to provide Tunisia with all the support it will need throughout its presidency of the Council and beyond.

As we all know, fragile contexts are very difficult to define. Fragility is more than a question of economic growth or an institutional issue or conflict. For example, the Fund for Peace calculates the Fragile States Index based on 12 criteria, including, inter alia, economic inequality, public services, demographic and migratory pressures, security issues, including terrorism, climate change, ethnic divisions, human rights, illegal financial flows, corruption, unfavourable business climates, new technologies.

The World Bank has developed a Country Policy and Institutional Assessment tool that measures economic management, structural policies, social equity and inclusion policies and governance policies. When a country falls below a certain threshold, it is considered fragile. Fragile States are also defined as those

“in which the poor lack essential services because the Government is unwilling or unable to provide them”

or as States with

“weak capacities to perform core governance functions and [that] lack the ability to develop constructive and mutually beneficial relationships with society”.

Countries that have hosted a United Nations and/or regional peacekeeping or peacebuilding mission in the past three years are also considered fragile. It is noted that situations of fragility, conflict and violence affect both low-income countries, which are referred to as “low-income countries in difficulty”, and middle-income countries, which are referred to as “fragile or failed middle-income States”.

A report by the African Development Bank, *From Fragility to Resilience: Managing Natural Resources in Fragile Situations in Africa*, shows that almost all States in situations of extreme fragility were, at the time the report was published, endowed with abundant natural resources, thereby proving that the poor management of natural resources is a conflict factor, and therefore a trigger of fragility, whereas, when such resources are well managed, they are the well-spring of resilience. One of the most emblematic examples is Sierra Leone, a country rich in diamonds. In its report, the African Development Bank states that fragility

“spans a broad spectrum that is varied in geographic scope and frequency of conflict, ranging from declared hostilities between warring parties to established states that experience sporadic violence. It can also be triggered by a failed or a flawed election, an attempt to modify the constitution for selfish political gains, a natural disaster and/or a [pandemic]”.

There were 58 fragile contexts worldwide in 2018.

Fragility appears to be one of the greatest challenges of the twenty-first century, especially as fragile contexts are increasingly the battleground of geopolitical rivalries. Conflict, terrorism, pandemics, forced displacement, disasters and famine are often rooted in fragility. These factors are both causes and consequences of fragility. Poverty is increasingly concentrated in fragile contexts. If nothing is done today, 80 per cent of the world's poor could live in fragile contexts, which is incompatible with the vision of the better world enshrined in the African Union's Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It is estimated that 65 per cent and 60 per cent of the world's population live in fragile States without access to water and adequate food. The current coronavirus disease pandemic is exacerbating the situation, threatening to wipe out decades of progress made in poverty reduction and development. In 2020, between 18 million and 27 million more people fell into poverty. In addition, the flow of internally displaced persons and refugees continues to increase.

We must acknowledge fragility and make addressing it a priority if we want a better world. We need to take into account its complexity and confront it in all its dimensions. We must never lose sight of the ultimate goal of bringing hope and a better life to all people living in fragile contexts. We will need to intensify our efforts aimed at prevention, peace and security with more resources, invest in more and smarter aid in fragile contexts, invest in data to better understand different states of fragility in order to foresee and strengthen the capacity of Governments to provide inclusive solutions to their own states of fragility in order to improve the resilience of communities. Strengthening the international and regional architectures for managing war and peace is of course necessary.

In short, the causes of fragility must be addressed. This requires greater collaboration among humanitarian, development, peace and security actors. Institutions such as the World Bank and the African Development Bank, which have Fragile States Facilities, should be encouraged to do more.

Africa is clearly the continent with the greatest number of fragile contexts. Helping Africa to implement Agenda 2063 as well as its plans and projects is the only way to lift the continent out of fragility. In particular, it is necessary to support the establishment of the African Continental Free Trade Area and plans for the development of infrastructure, agriculture and industry in Africa and to pay special attention to fragile regions such as the Sahel, where States are confronted with all the factors of fragility, including security, climate and demographic challenges. Now more than ever, we need strong democratic institutions in the region, strengthened means of defence and security and greater development. In particular, we need a Chapter VII mandate for the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel, as well as the widest possible participation of the international community in the international coalition against terrorism in the Sahel. We renew our call to all our technical and financial partners to finance the Group of Five for the Sahel Priority Investment Programme adopted in Nouakchott in December 2018. We thank Secretary-General António Guterres for his constant advocacy in favour of the peoples of the Sahel.

We hope that the Tunisian presidency of the Security Council will meet with great success.

---

**Annex 7****Statement by the Prime Minister of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Ralph E. Gonsalves**

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines commends the Republic of Tunisia for convening today's open debate. Addressing the root causes of fragility is fundamental to maintaining peace and security. To that end, we thank the Secretary-General and other briefers for sharing important insights on this salient topic. I am particularly grateful for the profound reflections on this subject by the Presidents of Tunisia, the Niger and Kenya — the three African members of the Security Council — whose countries Saint Vincent and the Grenadines has been working closely with in the Council as the “plus one” of the A3+1. I also thank my brother Uhuru Kenyatta, President of Kenya, for his kind words about my country.

The year 2020 has been an immensely challenging one. It offered many significant lessons, not the least of which is the importance of multilateralism. Against the backdrop of the continuously expanding public health, socioeconomic, humanitarian and security challenges experienced the world over, there is a clear and present need for practical and people-centred solutions that bolster national ownership in countries that require assistance. To be sure, there is no magic panacea for the root causes of fragility, which include, among other factors, the debilitating effects of climate change and environmental degradation, food and health insecurity, poverty and underdevelopment. But through solidarity and collective action, a better future remains within the grasp of those who yearn for it, from Haiti to the Horn of Africa, from the Sahel to Yemen.

During our presidency in November, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines hosted a high-level event on the contemporary drivers of conflict and insecurity (see S/2020/1090). We take the opportunity afforded by today's meeting to recall that, in their collective wisdom, our briefers, Council members and the wider United Nations membership called for a comprehensive and coordinated whole-of-system approach to addressing the root and proximate causes of fragility and insecurity, including those that have been left largely unsettled by the rapid process of decolonization.

The Security Council must continue to play a leading role as it works more closely with the other main organs of the United Nations system, namely, the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, to foster developmental solutions to the challenges of peace and security. We must also leverage with greater frequency the strategic advisory capacity and convening platform of the Peacebuilding Commission to mobilize multilateral partners, including regional and subregional organizations and international financial institutions, so as to assist States Members of the United Nations in building institutions, strengthening capacities and addressing the challenges of fragility.

As we advance together in this important decade of action to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, greater political will is needed by all Member States if we are to make good on the promise of leaving no one behind. We reiterate our appeal to developed countries to honour their overseas development assistance commitments; provide scaled-up support to conflict-affected countries through concessionary loans, debt relief and quick-impact projects; and provide greater support for climate adaptation and mitigation to alleviate climate-driven security risks in fragile contexts.

We also echo the calls of Sir Hilary Beckles, our keynote speaker in November, for the Special Committee on Decolonization to finalize its important work and for reparations to be provided for the historical crimes of native genocide, African slavery and violent colonization, which left severe legacies of underdevelopment

in their wake (see S/2020/1090). Reparatory justice must form part of any serious international development agenda.

Finally, we encourage all countries to adhere fully to the principles of international law and, in doing so, to refrain from all forms of unilateral coercion imposed on weaker nations. Even in the most difficult of circumstances, a firm commitment to the timeless principles of sovereignty and political independence, within the framework of a mature multilateralism, provides the greatest assurances against chaos and disorder.

The history of human civilization is punctuated by awesome challenges that brought people together and created much-needed catalysts for positive change. Just as the Second World War provided the impetus for the United Nations to emerge from the ashes of conflict, so too can the coronavirus disease pandemic provide a critical turning point from which we pursue, collectively and earnestly, a renewed and effective multilateralism that works in the interests of all nations and peoples. Let us seize this moment and fashion a better future for all of humankind. It is time for appropriate action.

**Annex 8****Statement by the Secretary for Foreign Affairs for the United States of Mexico, Marcelo Ebrard Casaubón**

[Original: Spanish]

I would first like to thank Tunisia for convening this open debate on the challenges of maintaining sustainable peace in fragile contexts, as well as the Secretary-General, the Chairperson of the African Union Commission and the former President of Liberia for their statements.

If I may, I would first like to express Mexico's condolences to the Niger and our strongest condemnation of terrorist acts, whatever their cause. On behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, I embrace the Niger and its people.

Without a doubt, it is necessary to address the issue of peace and security in fragile contexts in order to seek effective responses that address the conditions of fragility that can lead to or prolong conflict situations.

Threats to international peace and security are multidimensional and constantly evolving. Those threats are not merely military or political in nature but are related to issues of development, human rights, environmental phenomena and health.

In recent years we have witnessed new cycles of violence and increased conflict in contexts of fragility, which are aggravated by factors such as chronic poverty, persistent economic and social inequalities, environmental degradation and food insecurity, as well as human rights violations, discrimination and irresponsible arms trafficking and trade.

In 2020 those challenges were compounded by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, hence the need to have a broader, more supportive and humane vision that allows us to address the root causes and conflicts.

The international community has demonstrated that the stability of countries affected by conflict depends not only on improving security but also on strengthening the rule of law, respect for human rights and, above all, sustainable development.

Mexico recognizes that there are situations of fragility that are closely linked to the ability of States to meet the legitimate demands of their people. Peace cannot be maintained without promoting the strengthening of national institutions and the inclusive and active participation of all of society, particularly women and youth.

Mexico firmly believes in sustainable peace as the central pillar on which the prevention and peacebuilding architecture of the United Nations should be based. We welcome the recent adoption of the twin resolutions on the 2020 review of the peacebuilding architecture by the General Assembly (resolution 75/201) and the Security Council (resolution 2558 (2020)), which reaffirm that sustainable peace is fundamental to guaranteeing the three pillars of the Organization, in addition to being a shared responsibility of the United Nations system as a whole.

We must seek solutions with a focus on prevention that incorporates inclusive measures. The increase in protracted humanitarian crises arising from fragile contexts and the impact of the pandemic show us the magnitude of the challenges ahead. As noted in General Assembly resolution 74/274, the pandemic requires a global response based on unity, solidarity and multilateral cooperation to ensure universal access to drugs, vaccines and medical equipment to address COVID-19 in

order to mitigate negative effects and prevent outbreaks. General access to vaccines, which is not yet available, is a sine qua non for overcoming the pandemic.

While the Security Council has the capacity to address conflicts, it is necessary to recognize that it is the United Nations development system that has the capacity to contribute to creating conditions to prevent a resurgence of conflict and consequently achieve sustainable peace. Therefore, we must establish an effective and continuous dialogue between the Security Council and the entities of that system and strengthen strategic alliances with regional and subregional organizations, such as the African Union, to ensure that peacebuilding and peacekeeping strategies respond to regional and national realities.

We must also improve effective coordination with international financial institutions, the private sector and civil society to address the dynamics that affect countries in fragile contexts. As the Secretary-General has noted, it is less costly to invest in prevention than in managing conflict and creating peacekeeping structures that can last for decades.

We must make strategic use of the advisory role of the Peacebuilding Commission.

We need to recover from the current health and economic crisis with renewed commitment and international solidarity so as not to leave anyone behind. That will be possible only if we adopt new approaches that go beyond managing conflict and achieve a transition from situations of conflict and insecurity to placing countries on the path to stability and development.

In the context of the current pandemic, it is even more urgent that the Security Council ensure the creation of a sustainable peace in which people's well-being and security is always the primary focus of its actions.

## Annex 9

### **Statement by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Norway, Ine Eriksen Søreide**

At the outset, I would like to thank you, Mr. President, and Tunisia for organizing this important debate. Maintaining peace and security in fragile contexts requires a determined and long-term effort based on a solid understanding of the root causes of fragility.

First, poor governance and human rights violations, combined with a lack of development, a scarcity of jobs and poor prospects for the future, are indications of countries and regions moving into fragility.

Secondly, systemic corruption and inequality are mutually reinforcing and increase the risk of conflict and destabilization. That may in turn amplify the potential for terrorist groups to grow by providing them with funds and access to recruits.

Thirdly, there is substantial overlap between fragility and climate vulnerability. Of the 20 countries most vulnerable to climate change, half of them are also struggling with violent conflict. Assisting countries and regions in bringing conflicts to an end and laying the foundations for sustainable peace requires concerted action across all the pillars and institutions of the United Nations.

Norway supports the Secretary-General's call for a surge in peace diplomacy. We are convinced that the reforms that we have adopted are gradually making the United Nations more conflict sensitive and agile at the country level. The United Nations system is now better positioned to take a system-wide approach.

United Nations political missions, such as the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel, play a crucial role with regard to preventive diplomacy and mediation. We believe that the Security Council can benefit more from the combined resources of the new generation of Resident Coordinators and United Nations country teams in its efforts to sustain peace.

War and conflict hit civilian populations hardest. Norway remains deeply concerned that the humanitarian toll of conflict and fragility is continuing to rise, further exacerbated by the coronavirus disease pandemic. Protecting civilians must be at the core of our interventions, with particular attention focused on those who are most vulnerable. A lack of protection fuels conflict, displacement and mistrust.

Attacks against schoolchildren, such as those carried out by Boko Haram, are unacceptable. All children must be protected, have safe access to education and be safe at school.

In the midst of devastation and trauma, it is often up to women to rebuild what has been destroyed: trust and unity, infrastructure and institutions. In Mali, Norway has worked with a mandate from all signatory parties to support the increased, legitimate and representative inclusion of women in the formal committees in charge of implementing the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali.

The inclusion of women is a matter of rights and also a matter of results. No society can truly succeed without the active involvement of women. The Security Council has a mandate to prevent conflict using peaceful means that is based on the Charter of the United Nations.

We believe that the Council should have a stronger focus on early warning and pay more attention to fragile States threatened by conflict.

We must broaden analysis and strengthen the Council's capacity to act. Initiatives such as the informal situational awareness briefings and fact-finding missions are positive steps, but they could be used more actively by the Council to engage before conflicts erupt.

Efforts to avert and prevent conflict by peaceful means not only reduce human suffering but also save the international community the considerable financial costs of peace operations and rebuilding societies after conflict.

United Nations peace operations play a key role in addressing issues of fragility when implementing their mandates. That includes efforts to build the capacity of judicial and security enforcement institutions, address impunity and promote the rule of law. Those efforts are vital for maintaining stability beyond the lifetime of the mission.

The Peacebuilding Commission's role and resources could be better utilized, especially in transition situations in which peace operations are being phased out. Working together better equips the United Nations and regional organizations, such as the African Union, to understand and tackle emerging security threats, including the rise of non-State actors in conflict.

We commend the achievements of the African Union Mission in Somalia in securing areas previously controlled by Al-Shabaab. As an important supplement to military efforts, Norway took an early decision to make stabilization funds available to Somali authorities and institutions for service delivery. Norway's interests in, and respect for, international law, including international humanitarian and international human rights law, will form the foundation of our work in the Security Council.

As a member of the Council, we will use the knowledge we have gained from our engagement in peace processes to strengthen the Council's conflict prevention and resolution efforts, including in fragile contexts. We will use our commitment to the women and peace and security agenda to ensure that women's participation and rights are safeguarded in United Nations peace and security efforts. We will work to strengthen the protection of civilians, including children, and bring the perspectives of civil society organizations into the Council. Finally, Norway will work to ensure that the Security Council discusses climate-related security risks in specific country contexts and constantly assesses the potential impacts of climate change on all parts of the Council's agenda.

If we act today, we can prevent the crises of tomorrow.

**Annex 10****Statement by the Secretary of State attached to the Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs of France, Jean-Baptiste Lemoyne**

[Original: English and French]

At the outset, I would like to warmly congratulate Tunisia on its assumption of the presidency of the Security Council, congratulate the new members of the Council — India, Ireland, Kenya, Mexico and Norway — and welcome some familiar faces at the beginning of the year.

I would also like to convey to President Issoufou and the people of the Niger the condolences of France following the attacks perpetrated on 2 January in the villages of Tchombangou and Zaroumdareye, which caused the deaths of several dozen civilians and injured many others. France condemns in the strongest possible terms those heinous crimes, whose perpetrators must be brought to justice.

I thank you, Sir, for organizing this meeting. I also thank the Secretary-General, the Chairperson of the African Union Commission and the former President of Liberia.

This debate is similar to a debate we had in March 2018, during the presidency of the Netherlands, on the maintenance of international peace and security (see S/PV.8213). Today I would like to stress three points. First, an observation: I believe that we need to have a clear understanding of the factors of fragility and their consequences. Secondly, let us remember how far we have come, because our United Nations system has reformed. Thirdly, perhaps we should also talk about the ways in which our intervention frameworks have evolved.

Returning to the first observation, I believe that the analysis exercise to which you, Mr. President, are inviting us is essential, because the way in which the factors of fragility are understood has political consequences for the work of the United Nations system and its partners. Those factors of fragility, as was already said, are multidimensional. They can be sources of threats to international peace and security and can lead to endless cycles of crisis. I believe that the common denominator is the weakness of States. Such fragilities expose populations and United Nations staff to new risks, more dangerous environments and threats that transcend borders and flourish in a context of weakening institutional partners and even governance gaps, thereby providing fertile ground for the growth of terrorism and the weakening of peace processes.

I believe that such an observation should encourage us to decentralize our action. That is essential in dealing with crises in their regional dimension, while, in addition to crisis management, also focusing on prevention, State capacity-building and peacebuilding, as well as going beyond a security response. But we must also address the underlying causes of fragility as a whole. I am thinking of the impact of climate change and the situation of displaced persons and refugees — in other words, humanitarian and health challenges and the lack of inclusion of women and young people in political processes. France promotes such an approach at the United Nations and within the Security Council.

In the context of the health crisis that we are still experiencing, the call for the global ceasefire that the Secretary-General launched on 23 March 2020, followed by the unanimous adoption last July of resolution 2532 (2020), submitted jointly by Tunisia and France, were crucial milestones in the collective response that the international community should provide.

My second point is, as I said, to recall the progress achieved. Under the impetus of the Secretary-General, the United Nations system has indeed reformed itself to adapt to such challenges. In response to more demanding environments, I believe that peacekeeping operations have become more effective, more robust and more flexible. The protection of civilians is at the core of their mandate, as is the promotion of strict respect for human rights and international humanitarian law. To support peacekeeping operations, I believe that now more than ever we need mobile, responsive, well-equipped and well-trained troops, including in terms of language. I am thinking in particular of our work with French-speaking countries in terms of the French language, which sometimes makes it possible, in French-speaking theatres, to have a positive relationship with the populations. France therefore supports the Secretary-General's reform efforts through the Action for Peacekeeping initiative.

I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to the peacekeepers who died in operations, in particular the 60 soldiers who paid for that dedication with their lives in 2020. I also pay tribute to the resilience shown by peacekeeping operations in the context of the coronavirus disease crisis and the commitment of peacekeepers, alongside the host nations, to supporting the response to that unprecedented crisis.

Progress has also been made in the development and integration of peacebuilding instruments. The Peacebuilding Commission is playing an increasing support and monitoring role. The Peacebuilding Fund has become a major tool with proven effectiveness. For that reason, France will quadruple its contribution to the Fund. Peacekeeping operations have also sought to strengthen the integration of civilian and military components, which remains an ongoing focus.

My third point is that it is our responsibility to know how to improve our intervention frameworks. Crisis management must take the regional dimension into account. To deal with such crises, we must increasingly make better use of partnerships, in particular with the African Union. In that regard, I recall France's support for the sustainable and predictable financing of African peace operations, including through United Nations assessed contributions. Support for ad hoc operations must also increase. In that regard, the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel is an example to be encouraged. Our goal is for the Joint Force to become fully autonomous. To achieve that, it still needs the most extensive support possible, to which the Security Council must contribute.

Moreover, a lasting peace cannot take shape without it being deeply rooted in sustainable development, in anticipation of the risks linked to climate change. The climate dimension and the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development must be consistently taken into account. The Council knows how committed President Emmanuel Macron is to that aspect. We are only a few days away from the One Planet Summit, and that is the approach that we pursue with our partners in the context of the Coalition for the Sahel, the fourth pillar of which is the Sahel Alliance. In that regard, France supports the recommendation to entrust the United Nations with the task of analysing and providing early warning of the impacts of climate change on international security through a biennial report of the Secretary-General to the General Assembly and the Security Council.

Finally, the management of transitions clearly requires greater flexibility to prevent an abrupt withdrawal of the international presence when, for example, a peacekeeping operation is closed. The Security Council can contribute to that by establishing, for example, a special political mission to support the authorities after the peacekeepers' departure, as is the case in the Sudan. The monitoring role of the Peacebuilding Commission is also very useful in maintaining the focus of the international community and providing a regional response to crisis resolution. In that context, it is important that international donors can work together to bridge the

gap and that the country teams, under the leadership of the Resident Coordinator, be able to lead such a transition.

You, Mr. President, have invited us to engage in reflecting on an area where there are many challenges for the international community. The tools to meet those challenges are in our hands. At a time when the Security Council is celebrating its seventy-fifth anniversary, the Council can count on France to fully play its part in a decisive way, as always.

**Annex 11****Statement by the Minister of State for European Affairs of Ireland, Thomas Byrne**

I thank you, Mr. President, for organizing this important and timely debate, and let me congratulate Tunisia on its presidency of the Security Council. I also want to thank Secretary-General Guterres, Chairperson of the African Union Commission Moussa Faki Mahamat and former President of Liberia Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf for their very important contributions.

At the outset, I wish to extend my condolences to the people of the Niger following the dreadful attacks on civilians there. My thoughts are with those who have been affected.

This is the first time that I speak at the Security Council since Ireland assumed its seat on 1 January. Ireland takes the responsibility entrusted to it very seriously. We will be an active member and will use our efforts to ensure that the Council fulfils its vital role in maintaining international peace and security.

For its term on the Council Ireland has set three priorities, which, I believe, go to the heart of today's debate. Indeed, our priorities — building peace, strengthening conflict prevention and ensuring accountability — are prerequisites for transforming fragile contexts.

Let me first look at building peace. In Ireland we know from our own experience that peace is a process, not a single event. To save lives, the Security Council must therefore be proactive at every step of the process of building and maintaining peace. We need to heed early warnings of conflict and understand the underlying dynamics. To save lives, a united Council must engage with all parties to promote dialogue, mediation and the peaceful settlement of disputes. That is putting the Charter of the United Nations into practice.

The Council should draw on the resources available to it, not least the Peacebuilding Commission. Working with countries experiencing fragility, we can make a difference on the ground in building and sustaining peace. We know from our lived experience in promoting peace and reconciliation on the island of Ireland that peacebuilding efforts are stronger when they are inclusive. Therefore, the full, equal and meaningful participation from the outset of women and young people, who are disproportionately affected by conflict, and of civil society in peacemaking and peacebuilding initiatives is essential to long-term peace.

United Nations peacekeeping operations play a vital role in maintaining peace and security in fragile contexts and in creating space for political solutions. However, allow me to take this opportunity to remember the peacekeepers tragically killed in recent weeks and to acknowledge all those who lost their lives in the service of the United Nations in pursuit of peace. I would also like to acknowledge the passing of Sir Brian Urquhart, who made an immense contribution to the United Nations and to United Nations peacekeeping over many decades.

Ireland brings to the table more than 60 years of continuous service in United Nations peacekeeping, and we will draw on our experience in that work. To be fully effective, the mandates of such operations must be fit for purpose and properly financed, with clear transition strategies at the end of the mandates.

On the theme of strengthening conflict prevention, we believe that the Security Council must look beyond the traditional threats to international peace and security to the contemporary drivers of conflict and insecurity. Those include climate change, competition for natural resources, violations of human rights and

social and economic inequality. The coronavirus disease has shown us how major challenges can arise very quickly and can fundamentally affect lives and livelihoods on a global scale.

Changing weather patterns can contribute to fragility, and they drive conflict. In Somalia, the Sahel and elsewhere, populations displaced by extreme weather events can be vulnerable to recruitment by armed groups, fuelling conflict. But, conversely, early action to address climate change delivers a peace dividend, building the resilience of communities and fostering social cohesion.

To undertake such action, we need to improve coherence across the United Nations system, from the Security Council to the Peacebuilding Commission and United Nations country teams, as well as with regional organizations. Ensuring that such linkages work in practice can save lives and improve stability. Preventing conflict, fostering stability and building sustainable peace, for example, are at the very heart of the European Union's engagement in fragile contexts across the world.

The African Union's Silencing the Guns in Africa initiative is a practical example of a strong regional response that, among its measures, addresses key drivers, such as the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. By understanding and addressing the root causes of conflict today, we are much more likely to prevent conflict from occurring tomorrow.

The Security Council should also be cognizant of how its actions can support the delivery of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063 of the African Union.

On strengthening accountability, our third priority, Secretary-General Guterres recently reiterated how vital accountable, inclusive and responsive governance is to building and sustaining peace. Communities must have access to responsive and effective security and justice services and inclusive and victim-centred transitional justice processes. We must redouble our efforts to end impunity for conflict-related sexual violence and ensure holistic and survivor-centred approaches in addressing it.

Human rights violations are a root cause of conflict and insecurity, while a commitment to, and respect for, human rights is critical to ensuring peaceful, equitable and just societies. There is power in prevention and, when crises occur, we must take early action to protect individuals and communities, as well as to protect and promote international human rights law and international human rights. Where violations occur, accountability is key to ensuring that there is no impunity for those responsible. It follows that it is necessary that the Council uphold the international rules-based system, upon which we all depend for our security and well-being, and that the Council's own decisions be respected and implemented.

The Nobel Peace Prize laureate and my fellow countryman John Hume once reflected that, although "difference is the very essence of humanity", our shared humanity transcends our differences. That is the solemn responsibility that we around this virtual table face: to recognize and value difference, but not to let it lead to division in our pursuit of international peace and security.

As we look to the next two years, Ireland will work with all partners on the Council, and with the wider United Nations membership, in an open and constructive spirit to uphold the responsibility vested in the Council and to advance its vital agenda.

**Annex 12****Statement by the Minister of State for Middle East and North Africa of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, James Cleverly**

I thank you, Mr. President, for convening this timely debate. My thanks also go to Secretary-General Guterres, Mr. Moussa Faki Mahamat and Ms. Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf for clearly outlining the challenges.

All too often we see the devastating impact of conflict on a country and its neighbours. As the war in Syria rages on, more than 9 million of its people cannot afford basic food supplies. More than 6 million, including 2.5 million children, are refugees far from home. On either side of the border, the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) has only made their situation more precarious.

That fragility is a key challenge to the peace and security we all desire. By 2030, 80 per cent of the world's extreme poor will live in fragile States and regions. While our attention is still on the health impact of COVID-19, we know that its social and economic effects will magnify that trend. We also know that sustainable development and economic growth are just not possible without peace.

I want to highlight three key elements with regard to maintaining international peace and security: inclusion, partnership and an integrated approach to fragility and security.

On my first point, peace processes are often the domain of a small number of well-connected men. But we know that peace will not last if half the population is not represented at the negotiating table. Women and community leaders must have a seat from the start. Their meaningful participation can prevent conflict, support conflict resolution and maintain peace.

We need to protect and clear the way for women who speak up for their rights, their communities and their futures. The United Kingdom has supported the International Civil Society Action Network in developing a protection framework for women peacebuilders. As the Council's penholder on the women and peace and security agenda, we urge all Member States to commit to its recommendations.

Turning to my second point, the United Nations and the African Union are stronger together as partners for peacebuilding. The collaboration that delivered the Central African Republic peace agreement and the African Union mediation in the Sudan are just two examples of how our partnership promotes peace.

I commend the progress made by the African Union on silencing the guns and bolstering the African Peace and Security Architecture, the Panel of the Wise and FemWise.

Through the United Nations, the United Kingdom is helping train African peacekeepers. We recently deployed 300 military personnel to the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali.

I also welcome the recent extraordinary meeting of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development Heads of State to discuss regional security concerns. However, resolution will come not only with discussion but with difficult choices and action.

Thirdly, I want to state the importance of an integrated approach to preventing conflict. The recent twin resolutions on peacebuilding and sustaining peace (resolution 2558 (2020) and General Assembly resolution 75/201) show the international community's determination to address the causes before the guns

---

start firing. We have mechanisms to help us, like the African Union Continental Early Warning System, which the United Kingdom supports. Effective interventions need to span humanitarian, development and peacebuilding operations. The United Kingdom worked with the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development to develop the Recommendation on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus, which will guide future interventions.

It is also important that the United Nations and international financial institutions continue developing their working partnership. We welcome the cooperation among the United Nations, the World Bank, the European Union and the Government of Burkina Faso, which helped unlock \$700 million of World Bank funding.

To sum up, the challenges to maintaining peace continue to grow, and the costs of excluding women and failing to think holistically become ever-more apparent. But there is light. The United Nations has taken positive steps with respect to its ability to maintain peace in fragile settings, including through the Secretary-General's reform agenda.

The United Nations capacity to prevent and respond to conflict has been bolstered through the Peacebuilding Fund, the multi-year appeal and the peace and development advisers. The Peacebuilding Commission is now a critical forum for international cooperation on fragile States and regions.

Crucially, we better understand the importance of inclusive peacemaking and peacebuilding. We know we are more effective when we work with regional partners on complex challenges, and we know the value of tackling the drivers of conflict before a shot is fired. In an evolving world, as we continue to adapt, our partnerships are our strength, inclusion is our security and the prize is peace.

**Annex 13****Statement by the Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Viet Nam, Lê Hoài Trung**

I wish to thank you, Sir, for presiding over this open debate on a pertinent and important topic. I also thank the Secretary-General and the other briefers for their insightful statements.

If there is one impression that the year 2020 left behind, it is that the coronavirus disease has shown more clearly the severe fragility of our world and the acute limits of our capacity to address such global challenges. In January 2020, before the onset of the pandemic, we were already sharing concerns about continuing conflicts and violence in many regions of the world. Yet the shocks of the biggest health crisis in the past century have aggravated many conflict-affected situations, especially in sub-Saharan Africa, the Great Lakes region, the Sahel and the Horn of Africa. Poverty and hunger have risen for the first time in decades. Humanitarian crises abound, including those related to refugees and internally displaced persons.

Fragility is not limited within national or regional borders. It is deep-rooted in chronic poverty, food and water insecurity and climate change. Power politics, unilateral coercion, impositions or violations of international law make international peace and security more fragile than ever.

But 2020 was not without hope. Rarely has the call for international and multilateral cooperation been so strong and clear. Peace, cooperation and development remain the leading trend, rather than hostilities and unilateralism. Maintaining peace and security in fragile contexts requires a comprehensive, inclusive and systematic approach that cuts across all parts of the peace spectrum and is pursued by all relevant stakeholders. Let me emphasize a number of points.

First, the root causes of conflict and fragility should be at the centre of any long-term solutions. They must be addressed comprehensively. National ownership, with strong regional and international support, is essential for effective context-specific solutions. Developing countries and those in fragile contexts should be assisted with adequate resources, market access and capacity-building to cope with compounding challenges.

Secondly, given its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, the Security Council needs to adopt broad and holistic approaches, maintain unity and responsiveness and strengthen coordination with other United Nations organs and regional organizations to foster changes on the ground. The Council should make efforts to better utilize the tools at its disposal, including conflict prevention, preventive diplomacy, peacemaking, peacekeeping and peacebuilding. It should also pay more attention not only to conflicts but also to post-conflict situations, especially in addressing the consequences of conflicts for human well-being and sustainable development, such as problems relating to the explosive remnants of war.

Thirdly, as drivers of fragility can be international and interlinked, the multilateral system, with the United Nations at its centre, remains one of the very important means for coordinating global efforts. We must reaffirm and strengthen commitments to uphold the Charter of the United Nations and international law in inter-State relations. We should utilize the role of regional organizations within the global governance system and promote cross-regional cooperation in the development and implementation of measures to address fragility. It remains one of Viet Nam's priorities as a member of the Security Council in 2021 to promote stronger

cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations, especially those that address conflict prevention.

“Peace is our most precious value and the essence of our work.” Those were the words of the Secretary-General to the Council a year ago, in the first open debate of 2020 under Viet Nam’s presidency (see S/PV.8699). Viet Nam understands profoundly the threats to peace in fragile situations — whether they occur before, during or after conflicts and whether they arise from the emerging challenges of climate change and pandemics or from other international and regional crises. As a member of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and of the Security Council, Viet Nam stands ready to work with the international community to build a better, more resilient world. Let us hope that 2021 will witness even greater vigour and effectiveness in our joint endeavours to address common challenges and fragilities.

**Annex 14****Statement by the Foreign Secretary of India, Harsh Vardhan Shringla**

At the outset, I thank Tunisia for organizing today's open debate and acknowledge the presence of the President of Tunisia, His Excellency Mr. Kaïs Saïed, as the President of the Security Council. I extend my best wishes to Tunisia for a successful presidency of the Council in January. I also thank the Secretary-General, the Chairperson of the African Union Commission and the former President of Liberia for their briefings on this important topic.

I wish to convey our deepest condolences for the cowardly terrorist attack in the Niger. That attack yet again underscores the need for the international community to unite in its fight against terrorists and their sponsors.

At its core, fragility stems from the absence or breakdown of the social contract between people and their Government. Fragile States suffer deficits, inter alia, of governance structures, institutional capacity and political legitimacy, that increase the risk of instability and violent conflict. Extremist political ideologies can also cause the breakdown of the social contract, pushing a country into fragility. In addition, there is a strong correlation of the State's fragility with poverty; terrorism, radicalism and violent extremism; pandemics; or the predations of regional powers and international actors.

The regional impact of fragility is often underestimated. Fragile States have direct negative spillover effects on neighbouring States, including in terms of refugee flows and by providing safe havens for terrorists, organized crime, epidemics and weapons trafficking, among other things. Climate change, water scarcity and resource wars are adding new dimensions to the existing complexity.

While democracy is undoubtedly gaining ground in Africa, especially through peaceful transfers of power, African countries, particularly in the Sahel, Central Africa and the Horn of Africa, continue to face complex challenges. The principal driving factors are chronic political instability, weak governance structures, institutional weaknesses, ethnic divisions and the presence of terrorist and armed groups. Overexploitation of diminishing resources, mainly in the Lake Chad basin and Great Lakes region, are also exacerbating the problem. The Libyan conflict and the resulting instability continue to have a negative impact on that country's neighbours. The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has only made the situation worse in some countries.

Today's debate provides an opportunity to reflect on fragile situations, particularly in the African continent. In that context, I would like to make the following observations.

First, let us not fail to acknowledge that the legacy of colonialism constitutes the foundational basis of the current instabilities that plague the African continent.

Second, we should not paint all fragility issues with the same brush. We are primarily concerned with situations that directly affect the maintenance of international peace and security.

Third, full respect for national ownership can never be overemphasized. We should recognize the primacy of national Governments and national ownership in identifying and driving priorities, strategies and activities for sustaining peace.

Fourth, the Security Council should remain respectful of the regional approach adopted by countries, in collaboration with regional organizations, to address common challenges. The African Union has a leadership role to play in consolidating peace and post-conflict reconstruction in Africa. The collaboration

between the United Nations and the African Union and subregional organizations, such as the Economic Community of West African States, the Economic Community of Central African States, the Southern African Development Community and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, has yielded positive results. The African Union policy framework for post-conflict reconstruction and development, informed by lessons learned from past mistakes as well as best practices, offers a road map towards sustainable peace and development. African leadership has already undertaken important initiatives, such as the creation of the High-Level Panel on Fragile States, to respond to the needs of countries in a flexible and rapid manner.

Fifth, we need to ensure that the United Nations and its presence on the ground, its peacekeeping operations and special political missions are sufficiently mandated and resourced to implement a comprehensive understanding of peace and security. Having contributed significantly to United Nations peacekeeping in Africa for six decades, we have seen how peacekeeping missions are struggling to implement ambitious mandates. Peacekeeping missions should have a clear and well-thought-out exit strategy.

Sixth, it is important to actively support the post-conflict reconstruction agenda of Africa. In that regard, the Peacebuilding Commission's efforts should be strengthened. Their efforts should be to prioritize the focus of United Nations efforts and coordinate the role of international financial institutions, the private sector and civil society organizations.

Seventh, the role of technology, especially digital technology, to improve public services, promote transparency in governance and enhance the reach of democracy, human rights and gender sensitivity has not yet been sufficiently appreciated and factored in. COVID-19 has brought us unparalleled grief but also helped us to do things differently. We need to factor technology with a human face into that mix.

Finally, Africa is today facing serious challenges posed by the growth of terrorism, particularly in the Sahel and Horn of Africa. In that regard, initiatives such as the African Union Mission in Somalia, the Group of Five for the Sahel Joint Force and the Multinational Joint Task Force need more robust support from the Security Council and the international community.

From a broader perspective, the Council needs to consider that, while more than half of the country issues on the Council's agenda pertain to Africa, the African continent does not even have a single voice among the permanent membership to defend its own interests. We need to correct that historical anomaly and collectively support the Ezulwini Consensus.

The bonds between India and Africa have been forged over several centuries. Long-standing trade and diaspora links across the Indian Ocean, a shared colonial past and our common developmental challenges have shaped India-Africa relations. India has worked together with African partners to eliminate the evils of colonialism and apartheid. We have worked together for a fairer global governance system, including a more equitable global economic order. We have worked together on a development agenda for the benefit of our peoples.

Under our development partnership with Africa, India has reached out to 43 African countries; we have executed 189 development projects in 37 African countries; and about 77 projects are under execution, with a total outlay of \$12.86 billion. At the third India-Africa Forum Summit, held in 2015, India announced \$10 billion in lines of credit and \$600 million in grant assistance to African countries. We have committed \$1.7 billion as soft loans for solar projects, including in Africa, as our commitment to the International Solar Alliance. India has offered 50,000 scholarships to African students.

We are actively engaged with capacity-building of the security forces in several countries in Africa. Counter-insurgency and counter-terrorism training is one of the significant areas of our defence-training programmes.

Our ties are also driven by new partnerships in the digital domain. Premier Indian institutions and hospitals have been linked to 16 African countries to offer tele-education and tele-medicine services through the e-Vidya Bharati and e-Arogya Bharati portals.

India has supplied critical medicines to several countries in Africa to help them fight the COVID-19 pandemic. We also responded to the call of the Secretary-General and upgraded our peacekeeping hospitals in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and South Sudan during the peak of the pandemic.

India has always supported African entrepreneurship and market access. India was the first developing country to provide duty-free, quota-free market access to least-developed countries, which has been available over the years to 33 countries in Africa. India is Africa's third-largest export destination. Indian companies have invested over \$54 billion in Africa and created hundreds of thousands of employment opportunities. India is also extending debt relief to African countries under a Group of Twenty initiative.

India welcomes the evolution and rise of Africa as a key factor in the contemporary world. We are committed to supporting African countries in that endeavour, as per African priorities and without conditionalities. That is in keeping with the 10 guiding principles of India's engagement with Africa, as enunciated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in his address to the Parliament of Uganda in July 2018. India will continue to support Africa's aspirations and work towards empowering Africa for a future that is founded on the principles of inclusivity, sustainability, transparency and socioeconomic development with dignity and respect.

**Annex 15****Statement by the Permanent Representative of China to the United Nations, Zhang Jun**

[Original: Chinese]

China congratulates Tunisia on having assumed the presidency of the Security Council in January and welcomes the fact that President Saïed and Prime Minister Mechichi are presiding over today's meeting. I also thank Secretary-General António Guterres, Chairperson of the African Union Commission Moussa Faki Mahamat and former President of Liberia Johnson-Sirleaf for their important briefings.

The year 2020, which has just ended, was an extraordinary one during which the spread of the new coronavirus disease triggered a global crisis, exposing many vulnerabilities in global and national governance systems. The pandemic, together with factors including unilateralism, climate change, food insecurity, cross-border crime and terrorism, posed unprecedented and mutually reinforcing challenges to global peace and development, with African countries bearing the brunt thereof.

Throughout that turbulent year, we felt more deeply than ever that all countries are interdependent and share a common destiny. More strongly than ever, we believe strongly in the importance of adhering to multilateralism and cooperating to meet challenges. There are more reasons than ever to support the United Nations in playing an important role in maintaining international peace and security and achieving common development. In connection with today's topic, I would like to elaborate on the following three points.

First, there is a need to strengthen confidence and work together to fight the pandemic, which is resurging, and unity in fighting it is the top priority for the international community. All countries should uphold the supremacy of human life, respect science, join hands to advance international cooperation in the fight against the pandemic and strengthen joint prevention and control in order to overcome the pandemic as soon as possible.

We must promote the implementation of resolution 2532 (2020) and the Secretary-General's appeal for global ceasefire, strengthen mediation efforts, promote dialogue and the political settlement of issues in order to create a favourable political and security environment for countries to respond to the pandemic.

It is necessary to continue to actively provide anti-pandemic assistance to countries and regions in need to ensure that vaccines are equitably distributed as a global public good, for the benefit of developing countries in particular.

In the context of this global public-health crisis, China has actively participated and supported the global response to the pandemic; launched the largest humanitarian operation in history; provided anti-pandemic assistance to more than 150 countries and 10 international organizations; sent teams of medical experts to 16 African countries; and established cooperation mechanisms with counterpart hospitals in 42 African countries. The Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention headquarters construction project, assisted by China, began recently with the laying of the foundation. China is the first to promise to make the vaccine a global public good and will fulfil its promise in earnest by making contributions to help developing countries have access to affordable vaccines.

Secondly, we must increase investment to enhance development resilience. Underdevelopment is the root cause of many problems, especially in conflict-affected countries and regions. Increasing investment in the field of development to strengthen economic and social weak links is the fundamental way to eliminate

the various risk factors, laying a solid foundation for peace and achieving long-term stability.

Currently, the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is encountering tremendous new obstacles. Developing countries are facing numerous difficulties, threatening to further widen the gap between the North and the South. The international community should heighten its sense of urgency in tackling development issues and promoting the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in a comprehensive, balanced and vigorous manner. It is necessary to attach great importance to efforts in the field of peacebuilding in order to support post-conflict countries in formulating independent development strategies, strengthening Government capabilities, building social consensus and embarking on a path towards sustainable development that corresponds to their national conditions.

The focus should be on poverty eradication to prevent a major reversal of the results of global poverty-reduction efforts. It is necessary to support developing countries in shifting development resources towards education, health and infrastructure construction, inter alia; promoting economic and social reconstruction; and enhancing sustainable development capacity.

In the final analysis, climate change is a development issue. China will respond to climate change with firm resolve and a responsible attitude, striving to reach peak carbon dioxide emissions by 2030 and working to achieve carbon neutrality by 2060. We hope that all countries, including all members of the Security Council, especially the developed countries, will also take concrete actions to jointly promote the implementation of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change.

Thirdly, we must uphold multilateralism and leverage the important role of the United Nations. The United Nations embodies the yearning and determination of the peoples of the world to help one another in a spirit of solidarity and jointly build a better future. In the face of the increasingly complex and severe global challenges, no country can work alone. Achieving greater unity and progress under the banner of the United Nations is our only choice in dealing with the various uncertainties and vulnerabilities facing us and find solutions thereto.

We must reiterate our commitment to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, firmly safeguard the international system with the United Nations as its core, maintain the international order based on international law, fulfil our obligations as Member States, strengthen capacity-building by the United Nations and international institutions and support the United Nations in playing a central coordinating role in international affairs.

We must promote the strengthening and improvement of the global governance system; abide by the principle of extensive consultations, joint contributions and shared benefits; respond to traditional and non-traditional security threats in an integrated manner; and give greater prominence to new challenges such as public health and climate change on the international agenda in order to find more equitable, effective and lasting solutions.

The Security Council bears the primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security. Given the current situation, it must step up its efforts to promote the political settlement process, increase its good-offices and mediation efforts and better fulfil its responsibilities under the Charter. We must pay greater attention to African issues by increasing investment in Africa and supporting the efforts of the African Union and African countries to achieve peace. Given the various complex security risks and challenges facing us today, the Security Council, the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council, the Peacebuilding

Commission and the relevant regional organizations should carry out their respective functions, strengthen collaboration and forge synergies.

The process of achieving peace and security, the eternal aspirations of humankind, involves many complex challenges. China is ready to work with other countries throughout the world to hold high the banner of multilateralism and work together to build a peaceful, prosperous and beautiful home on Earth.

**Annex 16****Statement by the Permanent Representative of Estonia to the United Nations, Sven Jürgenson**

At the outset, I would like to offer our condolences to the Niger in connection with the devastating terrorist attacks that took place over the weekend in western Niger.

I join others in thanking you, Mr. President, for having organized today's debate, as well as our esteemed briefers for having shared their insights. Estonia attaches great importance to this topic, in particular to the issue of preventing conflicts from happening in the first place. The Security Council should treat the causes, not only the symptoms once violence has broken out. For that to be achieved successfully, it is important to take a holistic view, acknowledging the interdependence of security and sustainable development. Estonia recognizes this link, and we are proud to belong to the European Union, which is the world's largest donor, with the largest recipient continent being Africa. There is a lot to achieve by working closely together with regional organizations, such as the African Union and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, to address the drivers of fragility.

I would like to highlight three elements that Estonia considers important in the context of fragility.

First, climate change is not only exacerbating existing conflicts but is also contributing to the onset of new ones. Estonia is of the view that it is the responsibility of the Council to take climate-change-related threats to peace and security seriously. We hope that in 2021 the Security Council will finally be able to adopt a thematic draft resolution on climate and security; mandate the Secretary-General to report on the impacts of climate change on international security; and provide robust mandates to the relevant missions that the Council authorizes. For instance, the dedicated climate expert of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia is a good start, but we need to build on this example, as much more needs to be done in that regard.

Secondly, the rule of law, access to justice and human rights are essential for maintaining peace and security in fragile contexts. As the Secretary-General has emphasized in his call to action for human rights, there is a well-documented correlation between a society's enjoyment of and commitment to human rights and its resilience to crisis. At the same time, in order for communities to be peaceful and resilient, it is critical to acknowledge past and present violations and to provide redress to victims. State capacities also need to be strengthened to address intercommunal conflicts and promote reconciliation efforts. The Security Council should pay due attention to all those aspects in the relevant mandates that it authorizes.

Thirdly, an important antidote to fragile contexts is inclusivity. It is vital to include persons belonging to marginalized groups, especially women and girls. Against the backdrop of the coronavirus disease pandemic, the world is backsliding in the progress we have been making to achieve gender equality, and we simply cannot afford to let that happen. Data suggests that gender-equal societies are on average more peaceful. Equally, we know that peace agreements are more lasting when women are substantially involved. In addition, there must be more efforts made to win the trust of young people. The Council must ensure that all the relevant mandates that it authorizes are robust in those aspects.

Given the unique role of the Security Council in the world, the Council has the responsibility to constantly adapt to changing times. This includes being open to new topics that we now consider to be part of peace and security; being willing to employ new tools to tackle emerging issues; and reviewing its current practices as to make sure that these are the most effective. Estonia welcomes the new members to

the Council, and we look forward to a fruitful year ahead, seeing where together we can make a difference in the work of the Council. Let us all step up our game in 2021 in making sure that the Security Council is an institution that provides hope to the world, prevents people from suffering and offers solutions to the most urgent issues that humankind is facing.

**Annex 17****Statement by the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations, Vassily Nebenzia**

[Original: Russian]

We welcome the participation in today's meeting of the President of the Republic of Tunisia, Kaïs Saïed, and we would like to thank the Secretary-General, António Guterres; the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Mr. Moussa Faki Mahamat; and the former President of Liberia, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, for their briefings.

Of course, we express our condolences to the Niger in connection with the heinous and devastating terrorist attack that took place on 2 January.

The topic of this meeting, on the challenges of maintaining peace and security in fragile contexts, is extremely broad. I believe that all would agree that it is pertinent in terms of discussions not only in the Security Council but in other United Nations bodies as well. The leading role in resolving issues that are not directly linked to the maintenance of international peace and security should be played by those forums that have the relevant expertise and instruments necessary to develop long-term solutions.

Furthermore, collaboration among various United Nations bodies and aligning their efforts can be useful, but only when it is appropriate and when all Member States have agreed. It is also important to avoid any duplication of effort among United Nations structures.

The concept note for this meeting (S/2020/1296, annex) rightly states that some of the factors that undermine stability are the subject of debate in the Security Council. Combating climate change and its impact and other environmental issues require practical measures focusing on the instruments of the United Nations development system and the decisions taken in the context of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, as well as by the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council. Each United Nations body should operate in strict compliance with its own mandate. Effective action in the area of development will help to achieve the practical tasks of the United Nations field missions, in line with Council mandates.

Environmental degradation, inter alia as a result of climate change, may well have an impact on socioeconomic development, potentially leading to destabilization, particularly as concerns African States. Environmental issues, however, should be considered on a case-by-case basis, with due account taken of the specifics of each situation.

There should be no illegal exploitation of Africa's natural resources, inter alia by external players that exploit difficult social and economic situations to exert pressure on Governments in order to achieve their own aims and goals. The sustainable management of natural resources, including forests, water and the soil, and the provision of the relevant assistance to vulnerable States can help to ensure that environmental factors do not lead to social instability.

We do not deny that there are certain links between development, climate and human rights and threats to peace and security in some countries. However, we are against automatically linking them and positioning them as universal factors causing conflict. We are convinced that the efforts of the international community in that area should not be based on arbitrary interpretations of so-called indicators of potential crises. That would lead to potential abuse. Crisis prevention and settlement,

as well as peacebuilding, should not be used as pretexts for external interference, including the overthrowing of a legitimate Government and exerting pressure on it.

But what is undoubtedly a factor that is aggravating those already fragile situations is the imposition of unilateral coercive measures and illegal sanctions that bypass the Security Council. We talk about that constantly, and we are not alone in doing so. Some of our partners, however, choose to either ignore or downplay the obvious harm of those illegal measures. We absolutely agree with the Secretary-General, who calls for the lifting of unilateral sanctions, as prescribed by the resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council.

States bear the primary responsibility for responding to security challenges within their territories. The role of the United Nations and the international community should be to provide them with targeted support in accordance with their national priorities.

We wholeheartedly echo the Secretary-General's call to strengthen cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union. The challenges facing the African continent dictate the need to combine efforts and leverage the comparative advantages of both organizations. We consider it important to more actively use the potential of regional organizations to resolve conflicts on the continent, given their better understanding of the situation in their area of responsibility.

**Annex 18****Statement by the Permanent Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations, Kelly Craft**

I would like to thank President Saïed and his country's delegation for organizing this open debate. This is a timely issue to discuss as we begin a new year of work in the Security Council. I would also like to thank the Secretary-General, the Chairperson of the African Union Commission and the former President of Liberia for their comprehensive overviews this morning.

Fragile States are often characterized by their vulnerability to armed conflict, large-scale violence or other forms of instability, including the inability to manage transnational threats. Fragility can result from ineffective and unaccountable governance, weak social cohesion or corrupt institutions or leaders who do not respect human rights.

Fragile States are particularly susceptible to destabilizing violence and armed conflict. The rise of terrorist activities and violent extremism makes them even more vulnerable. The coronavirus disease pandemic has exacerbated that fragility, undermined public health, contributed to mass unemployment, threatened food security, increased violence against women and reinforced — or even created — political and social divisions.

Within fragile States, weak institutions, corruption, diminished respect for the rule of law, and authoritarianism increase the risks for violent conflict and instability in the long term and open the door to more cycles of political subversion and violence. Externally, malign actors are seeking to weaponize instability against other States. Iran, for example, is undermining the stability of its neighbours by using fragile States or non-State actors as proxies, thereby contributing to protracted conflicts and complex humanitarian crises.

Fragility and conflict have given rise to historic levels of displacement and humanitarian need. There are now an estimated 51 million internally displaced people globally, while the number of refugees has doubled to 20 million people. Humanitarian needs continue to outpace available resources by billions of dollars every year, and in 2021 a record number of people — at least 235 million — will need humanitarian assistance.

For those reasons, we must help fragile States improve their internal stability lest they become failed States. Each of us has a critical role to play because problems in fragile States do not remain inside their borders. Fragile States can export their fragility to their neighbours, since violence, pollution and similar issues do not stop at boundaries and can threaten wider international peace and security.

We must refine the role of the Security Council in addressing conflicts and State fragility. United Nations missions that operate in complex emergencies or conflicts must not be politicized. Instead, we should strive to make them more effective. That means providing principled humanitarian assistance that is timelier and more efficient through greater burden-sharing and improved coordination of our humanitarian, development and peacekeeping efforts.

The United States has reaffirmed its commitment to preventing conflicts and addressing fragility through the 2019 Global Fragility Act and the recently released United States Strategy to Prevent Conflict and Promote Stability. That important strategy places local solutions, ownership and accountability at the heart of the United States approach to preventing conflict, stabilizing conflict-affected areas, promoting partnerships for long-term stability and building resilience and self-reliance in States.

The United States supports locally driven political solutions to address the political factors that cause fragility, and we target our foreign assistance accordingly. Seventy per cent of all assistance provided by the United States Agency for International Development goes to fragile States, accounting for roughly 50 per cent of all United States foreign assistance.

Over the past five years, the United States has provided approximately \$30 billion in foreign assistance to the 15 most fragile countries, as identified by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). In November, the OECD commended the United States for its prominent role in fighting transnational corruption, which undermines good governance and responsive State institutions. The United States will continue to be a leader in providing such assistance, and we welcome increased efforts by our partners in that regard. We will continue to encourage other Governments to contribute to the collective response against complex crises and fragility.

Countries with higher rates of gender inequality are more vulnerable to conflict. We therefore prioritize the meaningful participation of women in efforts to prevent and resolve conflicts. The United States demonstrated our global leadership and commitment through President Trump's signing of the United States Women, Peace, and Security Act of 2017 and the Administration's release of our bold and innovative women and peace and security strategy in June 2019. The new United States Strategy to Prevent Conflict and Promote Stability incorporates women and peace and security principles into all elements of country and regional planning processes.

Peacekeeping operations are a key tool for both advancing international peace and security and creating the space for States to address the root causes of conflict. As part of our efforts to help address fragility, the United States continues to lead the world's contributions to United Nations peacekeeping operations, contributing 25 per cent of the Organization's peacekeeping budget.

I thank Tunisia again for convening today's debate. The Security Council's mandate to address threats to international peace and security, including threats deriving from intra-State conflict, means that we must be prepared to address those issues in practical terms, beyond just these useful debates. We must turn our words into actions; we look forward to working with one and all to do just that.

**Annex 19****Statement by the Permanent Mission of Azerbaijan to the United Nations**

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

At the outset, we would like to congratulate Tunisia, a fellow country of the Non-Aligned Movement, on its assumption of the presidency in the Security Council for this month. We would also like to express our gratitude to Tunisia for having organized this open debate and for submitting the concept note on the topic (S/2020/1296, annex).

We welcome all the newly elected members of the Security Council — India, Ireland, Kenya, Mexico and Norway — and wish them success. We are also grateful to the Dominican Republic, Indonesia, South Africa, Germany and Belgium for their contributions to the work of the Council during their term.

Promoting and sustaining international peace is a key issue for the Non-Aligned Movement. The Movement and its member States have historically opposed war and supported peace.

At the eighteenth Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement, held in Baku on 25 and 26 October 2019 on the theme “Upholding the Bandung Principles to ensure a concerted and adequate response to the challenges of contemporary world”, the Heads of State and Government of member States reaffirmed the validity of the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the principles and norms of international law as indispensable to preserving and promoting peace and security, the rule of law, economic development and social progress and human rights for all.

The Movement reaffirms and underscores its principled position and commitment with regard to the promotion of the pacific settlement of disputes in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, international law and relevant United Nations resolutions, including those adopted by the Security Council.

The Non-Aligned Movement is committed to supporting and promoting the purposes and principles of the Charter and the principles and norms of international law, including those relating to the territorial integrity of States and the inviolability of their international borders, the inadmissibility of the use of force, non-interference in the internal affairs of States and the right to self-determination of peoples under foreign occupation and colonial or alien domination.

Every State has the duty to refrain, in its international relations, from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any other State and from behaving in any other manner inconsistent with the purposes of the United Nations. The threat or use of force constitutes a violation of international law and the Charter and will never be recognized as a lawful means of settling international issues.

The member States of the Movement highly emphasize the importance of taking effective measures to suppress acts of aggression or other breaches of peace, as well as to defend, promote and encourage the settlement of international disputes by peaceful means in a manner that does not jeopardize international peace, security and justice.

The Movement denounces — and demands the repeal of — unilateral coercive measures against Member States that are not authorized by the Security Council, in accordance with the Charter, or are inconsistent with the principles of international

law or the Charter. Such measures are illegal, have extraterritorial implications, violate human rights and prevent the full economic and social development of the peoples subjected to them.

We emphasize the significant role played by the International Court of Justice, the principal judicial organ of the United Nations, in promoting and encouraging the settlement of international disputes by peaceful means in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter of the United Nations and the Statute of the Court. The Movement urges the Security Council, the General Assembly and other organs of the United Nations, as well as its specialized agencies that are duly authorized to do so, to make greater use of the International Court of Justice as a source of advisory opinions and interpretation of international law within the scope of their activities.

Faithful to its commitment to strengthening its role as an anti-war and peace-loving force, the Movement reaffirms its determination to work for the establishment of a peaceful and prosperous world and a just and equitable world order. We also renew our determination to work for a multipolar world through the strengthening of the United Nations and multilateral processes, which are indispensable to our efforts to promote the interests of our nations and humankind as a whole.

Allow me to conclude with the following remarks in my national capacity.

In our numerous statements and communications, we have consistently brought to the attention of the Security Council the challenges emanating from the unresolved Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict, stressing, *inter alia*, that peace, security and development are achievable only if the consequences of Armenia's aggression are addressed, its armed forces are completely withdrawn from the occupied territories of Azerbaijan and the right of internally displaced persons to return is ensured.

In 1993, the Security Council adopted resolutions 822 (1993), 853 (1993), 874 (1993) and 884 (1993). Those four resolutions condemned the use of force against Azerbaijan and the occupation of its territories; reaffirmed respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Azerbaijan; asserted the inviolability of international borders and the inadmissibility of the use of force for the acquisition of territory; and demanded the immediate, complete and unconditional withdrawal of Armenian occupying forces from all the occupied territories of Azerbaijan.

Nevertheless, Armenia has not implemented the relevant resolutions, and the mediation efforts conducted within the framework of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe has yielded no results. On the contrary, Armenia has used military force to occupy the territories of Azerbaijan and has never engaged in negotiations in good faith. Instead, it has directed all its efforts to consolidating the occupation and colonizing the seized territories. Moreover, Armenia has repeatedly resorted to armed provocations on the ground, which have caused numerous casualties among Azerbaijani civilians and military personnel.

On 27 September, Armenia committed yet another act of aggression, subjecting the positions of the armed forces of Azerbaijan along the front line and the adjacent populated areas of Azerbaijan to intensive fire. The ensuing combat lasted 44 days.

As a result of the successful counter-offensive operation launched by the armed forces of Azerbaijan in the exercise of their inherent right to self-defence, the districts of Fuzuli, Gubadly, Jabrayil and Zangilan, the city of Shusha and more than 300 Azerbaijani cities, towns and villages were liberated from occupation and Armenia was forced to disengage.

The November statement of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia and the President of the Russian Federation put an end to the almost three-decades-old armed conflict between

Armenia and Azerbaijan. The implementation of that agreement resulted in the cessation of all military activities and the deoccupation of the Aghdam, Kalbajar and Lachyn districts of Azerbaijan.

The new realities on the ground offer a unique opportunity for consolidating peace and stability, restoring peaceful coexistence and promoting development and mutually beneficial cooperation in the region. The end of aggression and occupation was a triumph of justice and international law. It underlined again the necessity of States' strict compliance with their international obligations and demonstrated the critical importance of cooperation with regional actors in addressing peace and security.

---

**Annex 20****Statement by the Permanent Representative of Bangladesh to the United Nations, Rabab Fatima**

I thank the Tunisian Mission for organizing today's open debate. I also thank the President of Tunisia, His Excellency Mr. Kaïs Saïed, for presiding over today's debate, as well as the briefers for their insightful remarks.

Fragility and conflict usually move in a circular direction. While conflicts are often created by fragility, the unresolved and unaddressed drivers of fragility tend to exacerbate their impact. Addressing conflicts without looking into such drivers could result in a relapse of those conflicts.

What are the factors that lead to fragility? As a contributor to peacekeeping missions in Africa, our experience has shown that there are many different kinds of drivers, including chronic poverty; weak and ineffective national institutions; systematic discrimination and inequality; illegal exploitation of natural resources by internal and external entities; violence; organized crime; terrorism; and violent extremism. Moreover, such drivers are interconnected, and lately the pandemic has also exacerbated them.

As such, the maintenance of peace and security in fragile contexts, such as Africa, requires sustained investments in peace, including by addressing threats to peace through concerted action and inclusive, nationally owned and sustainable processes. That is particularly important in post-conflict situations, in which national institutions suffer from acute trust deficits and economic recovery is heavily dependent on international cooperation.

However, such efforts do not require any new policy framework or new approaches. Instead, the concept of sustaining peace and its implementation, as reflected in the relevant twin resolutions (Security Council resolution 2282 (2016) and General Assembly resolution 70/262), needs to be strengthened. In that regard, we would like to make the following points.

First, achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development should continue to be the primary tool for addressing drivers of fragility. The Sustainable Development Goals are meant to take care of all aspects of human life by creating an inclusive society where no one is left behind. Such a society would make violence and conflict unprofitable.

Secondly, addressing the root causes of all drivers of conflicts is essential for breaking cycles of violence. That will require policies and actions by Governments aimed at the economic emancipation of individuals and the empowerment of national institutions.

Thirdly, early signs of instability must be paid heed. Systematic discrimination based on race, religion and other identities often leads to violence and humanitarian situations. We must treat the symptoms before it takes over the body.

Fourthly, all relevant United Nations entities have a responsibility to collectively support national Governments in the pursuit of sustaining peace. As such, their efforts should be coherent, coordinated and tailor-made, taking into account the sociocultural context of conflict-affected countries and their specific needs. Cooperation with regional organizations, and the African Union in particular, would benefit all stakeholders.

Fifthly, the participation of all sectors of society, especially women and youth, in peacebuilding has no alternative. Civil society, the business community and other national and grassroots organizations play a vital role in this regard.

Sixthly, United Nations peacekeeping and stabilization missions can help address certain drivers of fragility in conflict-affected countries by protecting civilians as well as by supporting institution- and capacity-building, with adequate mandates and corresponding resources.

Finally, sustained, adequate and predictable financing to support initiatives that are aimed at addressing fragility in conflict-affected countries in Africa must be ensured.

**Annex 21****Statement by the Permanent Representative of Belgium to the United Nations, Philippe Kridelka**

Belgium thanks His Excellency Mr. Kaïs Saïed, President of the Republic of Tunisia, for the opportunity to discuss this topic. Indeed, Belgium believes that the Security Council cannot turn a blind eye to factors exacerbating the multiple dimensions of fragility, which can lead to situations of instability, turmoil and even violent conflict.

Undeniably, one such factor is climate change. This phenomenon can reinforce existing social, political, economic and environmental drivers of conflict and worsen existing vulnerabilities and inequalities. Belgium supports an increased role for the Security Council to address climate-related security risks. Belgium's primary focus has been on mainstreaming these risks into relevant Council action, for instance, by making Security Council mandates climate-sensitive. The United Nations needs to report on this issue, while the Council needs to be better informed and act on it. The Council's informal expert group on climate and security, which has just been created, will play an instrumental role.

More broadly, Belgium believes that the Council should remain alert to all early-warning signs. Belgium is in favour of the Council regularly receiving ad hoc briefings by the Secretariat outlining certain countries' and regions' risks for triggering or exacerbating root causes of fragility, conflict or humanitarian crisis, while taking into account elements of conflict sensitivity. Again, a better-informed Council will enable it to improve support to prevention or mitigation measures, be it mediation, transitional justice processes, inclusive sustainable development with special attention to Sustainable Development Goal 16, creating space for civil society and other non-governmental actors or addressing human rights issues.

It does not necessarily mean that the Council or the United Nations themselves must take action: other actors, such as regional or subregional organizations, may be more relevant. In the same spirit, Belgium is also in favour of inviting more civil society briefers, including from private companies and universities, to Council meetings to add a different perspective to the discussion. We also believe that the new generation of Resident Coordinators, with a broad horizontal vision of the situation in one given country, could contribute to the Security Council's discussions on how to address situations of fragility and better prevent violent conflict and contribute to building resilience within countries and communities towards sustained peace.

Early-warning signs can be better detected and addressed when working in partnership. The Security Council can deepen its synergy with other United Nations partners. To the already mentioned Resident Coordinators, we should add the Peacebuilding Commission and its well-known advisory role to the Council, but also other United Nations bodies. The Secretary-General himself engages regularly with the Council. Beyond the United Nations, regional organizations are important partners, especially in Africa, where, unfortunately, many countries are in contexts affected by fragility and conflict. Belgium welcomes the continuous dialogue between the Security Council and the African Union Peace Security Council. We also recognize the role and engagement of subregional organizations in discussing fragility and acting to defuse conflict situations.

Nationally and as a part of the European Union, Belgium stands ready to help countries in fragile and conflict-affected situations in strengthening their resilience. A deep commitment to promoting human rights and the triple nexus of humanitarian support, development and peace are part and parcel of that engagement, as are sustained efforts to fully realize the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals.

**Annex 22****Statement by the Permanent Representative of Denmark to the United Nations, Martin Bille Hermann**

I have the pleasure to submit this statement on behalf of the Nordic countries — Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden and Denmark.

As we turn the page and look back on a most extraordinary and challenging year, we have an occasion to renew and strengthen our joint resolve to address drivers of conflict and fragility to achieve stability and sustainable peace. We welcome today's debate on how to address the challenges to peace and security in fragile contexts, and, consequently, how the Security Council can play its part in this important effort.

The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has exposed and exacerbated existing local, regional and global conflict dynamics and drivers of fragility. As you have done, Mr. President, we will focus particularly on Africa. As the African continent is battling the combined consequences of the current pandemic, key existing and underlying challenges persist. The consequences for the poorest and those in vulnerable situations are most severe. Furthermore, the spread of conflict and violent extremism in parts of Africa, exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, has seriously affected countries' development and in some areas led to unprecedented levels of displacement.

For many African nations, the pandemic has already reduced Government revenue and increased health expenditure. We risk that hard-earned development progress being undermined and Africa's progress towards attaining the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals further constrained. As we strive to build back better and greener, an integrated approach must be at the heart of our efforts to address the drivers of fragility in order to attain international peace and security. That includes addressing the challenges of chronic poverty, socioeconomic inequalities, human rights violations, the marginalization of young people and of women, sexual and gender-based violence, weak governance and institutions, and security risks related to climate change and environmental degradation. Strong African leadership in responding to those multifaceted challenges on the continent remains key.

We must ensure closer and more systematic cooperation between the Security Council and the Peacebuilding Commission as well as with the Human Rights Council and the Economic and Social Council, including in briefing and advisory capacity. In that connection, we wish to reiterate our support for the Secretary General's sustaining peace agenda, as well as the Action for Peacekeeping initiative. Following the informal interactive dialogue between the Security Council and the Peacebuilding Commission, we encourage the Security Council to adopt peace-operation mandates that are adequately resourced, adaptable to changing conflict dynamics on the ground, and plan from the outset for transition to broader peacebuilding efforts. That will enable those operations to contribute to breaking the vicious cycle of fragility and violence.

We see an increased number of protracted crises, exacerbating humanitarian needs, internal displacement, refugee flows and irregular migration, not least on the African continent. We strongly support the Secretary-General's call for a global ceasefire to provide space for efforts to ensure sustaining peace. We know that efforts to prevent conflict and sustain peace are more effective when we also consider sustainable development, human rights and inclusive approaches. We must therefore accelerate a coherent and integrated approach across the humanitarian, development, human rights and peace nexus. Our efforts to address fragility must at all times be coupled with a strong emphasis on protecting and promoting human

rights and ensuring women full, equal and meaningful participation in societies as well as in peacebuilding, peace processes and conflict resolution. We know that peace is more sustainable when women participate. Advancing the full implementation of the women and peace and security agenda must remain a priority. It is also critical to ensure the full participation of youth in all efforts to sustain peace.

In order to handle an increasingly complex set of interrelated conflict and fragility drivers, we must ensure close cooperation and coordination between United Nations peace operations and other United Nations entities, as well as with broader humanitarian, development, human rights and peacebuilding efforts. That requires strong coordination and collaboration among all partners on the ground, not least the United Nations, the African Union, the European Union, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, regional banks and regional economic communities. In that regard, we must draw on the lesson learned from the historic and recently completed African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur to protect civilians and help build peace in Darfur. The Security Council must ensure it engages with all relevant actors, especially civil society and local actors, so that we can understand the specific drivers of conflict and fragility and tailor mandates and adapt approaches to achieve sustainable peace.

In conclusion, the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated existing fragilities around the globe. The impact of the pandemic also increases the obvious need for the United Nations and global actors to foster increased cooperation to ensure women's full enjoyment of human rights and their equal and meaningful participation in all aspects of peace and security, bolster institutions, leverage regional and continent-wide capacity and support, and prohibit current socioeconomic challenges from become reinforcing cycles of fragility. We all have an obligation to ensure that human rights and the rule of law are upheld.

The Nordic countries remain committed to supporting the United Nations in preventive diplomacy, mediation, peacemaking and peacebuilding by effectively addressing the drivers of fragility. As we embark on a new year, we have a renewed opportunity to turn the tide on conflict and insecurity and build sustaining peace and a more sustainable future towards realizing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Declaration on the Commemoration of the Seventy-fifth Anniversary of the United Nations (General Assembly resolution 75/1) is guiding us in the way forward, and we stand ready, together with other Member States, to support its implementation.

**Annex 23****Statement by the Permanent Representative of Ecuador to the United Nations, Cristian Espinosa Cañizares**

[Original: Spanish]

I wish to acknowledge the work of the countries that served on the Security Council until 31 December 2020, and to congratulate Ireland, Norway, Mexico, Kenya and India, whose contributions over the 2021-2022 term will be crucial.

I am grateful to Tunisia for organizing this meeting on the challenges of maintaining peace and security in fragile contexts. Just one year ago, we embarked on the decade of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and began activities celebrating 75 years since the founding of the United Nations with a ministerial debate in the Security Council on upholding the Charter of the United Nations (see S/PV.8699).

Although already facing a challenging international security context, through this Organization we prepared diplomatic mechanisms to help alleviate the existing tensions at various levels, prioritizing prevention efforts, under the auspices of the Review of the Peacebuilding Architecture, completed a few weeks ago.

The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic changed the road map that we had drawn up and became a determining factor, exacerbating the situation of populations in conflict zones, limiting humanitarian assistance capacity and access, undermining potential for dialogue and even weakening the social fabric and degrading the living conditions of populations in vulnerable situations. That increased the number of fragile situations.

This year, in 2021, we have the opportunity to champion understanding and peaceful solutions. We have the opportunity to implement Secretary-General António Guterres's call for a global ceasefire, which in a number of places can be the first step towards lasting peace, as endorsed by 172 countries in the joint declaration of 22 June 2020, which Ecuador helped initiate.

The Security Council has a particular responsibility to ensure the implementation of resolution 2532 (2020), on COVID-19, adopted on the 1 July 2020, and even to extend its provisions over the coming weeks.

We have only nine years left to achieve Goal 16, on peace, justice and strong institutions, of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Agenda, and we have less time to overcome the factors that lead to fragile contexts, such as climate change, extreme poverty and inequalities.

We agree that peace and development are mutually reinforcing. Now we need to move forward in a coordinated international response. As an Organization, we must promote efforts to enhance the security of health systems and infrastructure. We must promote access to drinking water and sanitation.

Amid worldwide crisis, to keep the sustainable peace agenda healthy we need to take cross-cutting action. For the agenda to be effective will also require capacity-building across all regions of the world, which will also enable us to better tackle pandemics in future and to overcome the challenges of fragile contexts in the present.

**Annex 24****Statement by the Permanent Mission of Egypt to the United Nations**

At the outset, I would like to congratulate the Republic of Tunisia on assuming the presidency of the Security Council and extend my wishes for a very successful tenure. I would also take this opportunity to congratulate all the newly elected members of the Security Council — India, Ireland, Kenya, Mexico and Norway — and wish them success during their terms. Similarly, I wish to recognize the valuable contribution of the outgoing members of the Council, namely, Belgium, the Dominican Republic, Germany, Indonesia and South Africa.

I thank the Tunisian presidency for today's timely reflection on the challenges of maintaining peace and security in fragile contexts. Today's debate offers us an opportunity to explore ways to address drivers of fragility with a view to building back better and sustaining peace in the context of the ongoing coronavirus disease pandemic.

Sustaining peace necessitates addressing root causes of fragility through a holistic approach and using a variety of tools tailored to specific contexts and needs in such a manner as to strengthen national ownership and leadership. There is therefore a need for a paradigm shift in the global mindset if we are to effectively tackle the multidimensional challenges facing humankind.

We are of the view that the multidimensional and emerging challenges to international peace and security require a more robust, coherent and comprehensive United Nations approach throughout the various stages of United Nations engagement with countries affected by or emerging from violent conflict. In this regard, the United Nations reforms must put an end to silos, duplication and fragmentation of efforts and impart greater coherence within the United Nations system, at a time when the Organization needs to respond to multifaceted security challenges.

At a ministerial breakfast convened by Egypt during its presidency of the Security Council in May 2016, the participants emphasized the imperative of having a continuum of United Nations response across different stages of conflict in order to ensure sustainable peace and development. Likewise, the Aswan Forum for Sustainable Peace and Development, a signature annual event launched by the Egyptian presidency of the African Union in 2019, highlighted that the nature and scope of the opportunities promising to transform Africa's security and development landscape, and the challenges undermining these transformative developments, underscore the imperative of a paradigm shift from crisis management to sustainable peace and development by means of a peace-development continuum.

The role of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) cannot be overstated. It serves as a bridge inside the United Nations and allows wider engagement with outside partners, including international financial institutions. It also provides a vital platform for conflict-affected countries and countries in states of fragility to mobilize international support for their national peacebuilding priorities. As a newly re-elected member of the PBC and the Africa-endorsed candidate for the Commission's chairmanship, Egypt stands fully ready to engage positively in that regard.

Last but not least, partnerships with regional and subregional organizations remain key to advancing complementarities and leveraging the comparative advantage of each organization in support of countries in states of fragility. In that vein, the African Union-United Nations strategic partnership is of the utmost importance to ensuring better strategic, policy and operational coordination and coherence of efforts, including through capacity-building and financing.

In conclusion, I wish to reiterate our thanks for the Tunisian presidency's convening of today's important open debate.

**Annex 25****Statement by the Permanent Mission of Italy to the United Nations**

Italy thanks the Government of Tunisia for organizing today's open debate, which offers an opportunity to discuss how to address the interplay between fragility and conflict.

As the Secretary-General said recently,

“The [coronavirus disease (COVID-19)] pandemic has demonstrated the fragility of our world. It has laid bare risks we have ignored for decades: inadequate health systems, gaps in social protection, structural inequalities, environmental degradation [and] the climate crisis.”

Despite the profound and devastating impact of the pandemic, we should seize the opportunity to build back better in 2021 and create more resilient societies. In doing so, we need to tackle the root causes of instability and insecurity, especially across the African continent, where a wide array of factors creates a risk of violence and conflict.

Italy believes that increasing our support to the most vulnerable countries remains an absolute priority, and we will promote that priority in the context of the Italian presidency of the Group of Twenty (G-20) in 2021, under the motto “People, Planet, Prosperity”. As one of the promoters of the Debt Service Suspension Initiative in 2020, Italy has decided to include the issue of the sustainability of debt in fragile economies on the G-20 agenda this year, with the objective of extending the Initiative, expanding it to middle-income countries and improving cooperation between public institutions and the private sector.

Global health remains a fundamental precondition for peace, stability and prosperity. From the very beginning of the current global emergency, Italy has strongly supported international solidarity by actively advocating an international alliance to advance research on a vaccine against COVID-19. In the same spirit, together with the European Commission, Italy will host the G-20 Global Health Summit in 2021.

Food insecurity is another driver of conflicts and a precondition for peace. Italy is committed to supporting the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Fund for Agricultural Development, the World Food Programme and all relevant United Nations actors in their efforts to prevent a global food crisis. We have been promoting a food coalition through the FAO to mobilize expertise, provide policy support, establish a space for dialogue and promote initiatives focused on the creation of more resilient and sustainable food systems. Italy is also actively contributing to making this year's United Nations Food Systems Summit a success.

During the Italian presidency of the G-20 and in the framework of our partnership with the United Kingdom for twenty-sixth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP26), we will strive to ensure that climate action will be the foundation of the post-pandemic recovery. As part of the COP26 programme, Italy will organize a special event dedicated to Africa, where the impact of climate change on security is most acute.

The destabilizing accumulation, illicit transfer and misuse of small arms and light weapons has been consistently denounced by the Secretary-General as a primary driver of armed conflict and pervasive crime, both in Africa and in other parts of the world. The humanitarian impact of the illicit flows of such arms remains

a cause of serious concern. In this respect, it is important to recall that the Secretary-General, in May 2018, launched a new agenda for disarmament — Securing Our Common Future: An Agenda for Disarmament — that prioritizes disarmament that saves lives. We commend the African Union’s Silencing the Guns initiative and the recent decision to extend its implementation for 10 years.

Building sustainable and long-term partnerships is the spirit in which Italy will keep strengthening its relationship with Africa. Our geography, our common history, our friendship and our shared destiny make the African continent a primary focus in our foreign policy. In this spirit, in December, our Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation presented a new policy document entitled “The Partnership with Africa”, which defines the priorities and principles of Italy’s action vis-à-vis the African continent. Our long-term engagement with our African friends is and will remain a priority.

Partnership is also a crucial element to allow the United Nations to be more effective in managing drivers of fragility, especially in Africa. We have consistently supported the new impetus given by the Secretary-General to the African Union-United Nations partnership, and we call upon the two organizations to further strengthen this strategic cooperation. It is also crucial that the cooperation mechanisms between the United Nations and the relevant African subregional organizations be deepened based on notions of complementarity and subsidiarity. We also attach importance to advancing the trilateral cooperation among the United Nations, the African Union and the European Union.

Investing in prevention is absolutely key. In these challenging times, the centrality of the peacebuilding work must be acknowledged and adequately financed because it is the glue that keeps development, humanitarian and security efforts on a sustainable path. We believe that the Security Council should further strengthen its relationship with the Peacebuilding Commission, which is uniquely placed to mobilize coordinated support to peacebuilding priorities and developments plans, particularly in Africa.

In conclusion, Italy remains fully committed to contributing to efforts to address the root causes of conflicts and unattended issues of fragility, especially in Africa. It seeks to do so not only bilaterally but also by being actively engaged in all relevant international forums. The year 2021 must be the year dedicated to identifying and implementing shared, coordinated and equitable responses to this global crisis.

**Annex 26****Statement by the Deputy Permanent Representative of Japan to the United Nations, Osuga Takeshi**

I would like to express my appreciation to His Excellency Mr. Kaïs Saïed, President of the Republic of Tunisia, and to the Permanent Mission of Tunisia to the United Nations for convening today's open debate and for giving us an opportunity to renew our commitment to building and sustaining peace in the new year.

Allow me to share Japan's perspective through four points relating to the link between fragility and conflict and on concrete ways to address issues of fragility related to conflict.

First, Japan understands the term "fragility" in a broad sense, as a situation whereby the survival, livelihoods and dignity of individuals are being broadly challenged. In this sense, the drivers of fragility include, inter alia, the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, climate-change-related disasters, extreme poverty and widening inequality. Unless appropriately addressed, these issues could jeopardize social stability and potentially become factors that aggravate violent conflict and obstruct peacebuilding and sustaining peace.

Secondly, the drivers of fragility are multifaceted, and many are beyond the purview of the Security Council. That is why we need to pay closer attention to the interlinkages between peace and security, development, human rights and humanitarian needs, and to pursue more integrated, coherent and coordinated approaches. Different organs of the United Nations, including those engaging in operational activities, should at minimum share information on their work to tackle the issue of fragility. The Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) should serve as a platform to discuss fragility and the root causes of conflict in country- and region-specific contexts as well as on cross-cutting themes. Japan believes that the Security Council could also actively engage with the PBC to contribute to the system-wide efforts to tackle the fragility behind each conflict.

Thirdly, Japan has consistently underscored the importance of institution-building as a means of addressing the fragility that may lead to social unrest and eventually to violent conflict. Japan believes that only by building effective, accountable and inclusive national and local institutions can Governments address political, security and socioeconomic challenges on their own and win their people's trust. It is particularly important to strengthen security and judicial institutions to provide protection and the rule of law, as well as to build systems to deliver such basic social services as health and education to populations.

Fourthly, Japan puts into practice the perspective I have just outlined within the framework of the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD). Japan launched the New Approach for Peace and Stability in Africa (NAPSA) at the seventh TICAD, in 2019, as an initiative to address the root causes of conflict and the drivers of fragility. Looking ahead to the eighth TICAD, which is to be held in Tunisia next year, Japan will further promote its efforts under NAPSA.

Finally, in the face of the prolonged pandemic, the international community must recall the appeal for a global ceasefire by the Secretary-General and join hands to tackle the human security crisis and fragility caused by COVID-19. Only by acting together to protect our collective gains can we overcome the current difficulties and bring more stability to the world.

---

**Annex 27****Statement by the Permanent Mission of Latvia to the United Nations**

At the outset, we would like to congratulate the five incoming non-permanent members of the Security Council — India, Ireland, Kenya, Mexico and Norway. Their work will be crucial to maintaining international peace and security. We also thank Tunisia, which assumed the presidency of the Security Council for January 2021, for organizing today's timely debate.

Since we last convened in this Chamber to discuss the maintenance of international peace and security, at the beginning of the last year (see S/PV.8699), disconcerting events have come to pass all around us, exacerbating existing vulnerabilities and creating new, unprecedented challenges. Although we have made some progress since the horrors of the Second World War, after which the Charter of the United Nations was written, much remains to be done to alleviate strains created by security threats, political instability, socioeconomic inequality, poverty, discrimination, social exclusion, violence by armed groups, terrorism, violent extremism, environmental distress and climate change — many of which are now secondary impacts of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and principal drivers of fragility. We attach particular importance to combating misinformation, disinformation and hate speech, both online and offline, all of which can be catalysts for destabilization and conflicts.

The pandemic has had many long-term ramifications and is negatively affecting the trajectories of many conflicts across the globe. We are deeply concerned about the security situation in the Sahel, the Great Lakes region and in Ethiopia and the latter situation's potential effects on the stability in the Horn of Africa as a whole. A strengthened link between security and development is key in this regard. Only by improving bilateral and international coordination and cooperation will we be able to overcome challenges in the areas of terrorism, migration, economic development and climate change in sub-Saharan Africa.

The spread of COVID-19 continues to aggravate the persisting conflict in Yemen across multiple front lines, which is fuelling the world's largest humanitarian crisis and many gross human rights violations. The risk of famine and the overall humanitarian situation remain critical, which can be brought to an end only through an inclusive political solution. Consequently, it is essential to continue the United Nations-led efforts to broker a nationwide ceasefire and resume the peace process.

The civil war in Syria has been going on for a decade and has only exacerbated the suffering of civilians. Also there, the United Nations-led peace process is the means of reaching lasting and credible peace in line with resolution 2254 (2015) and the 2012 Geneva communiqué (S/2012/522, annex), while holding accountable under international law those responsible for crimes and gross human rights violations and ensuring a safe territory for the dignified and voluntary return of refugees and displaced persons.

Although we have been witnessing certain positive steps in Libya recently, much remains to be done to reach a sustainable political solution that enables us to embark upon the path of recovery and reconstruction in the country.

The long-standing political, economic and social crisis in Venezuela continues to fuel migration, incessant human rights violations and suppression of the political opposition. The non-democratic elections to the National Assembly on 6 December is another step by the regime towards the total collapse of democracy in Venezuela. Those events have had a gruesome impact on the humanitarian situation in Venezuela

and the region. The beginning of a Venezuelan-led transition process and restoration of democracy is crucial to avoid further deterioration of the situation.

Russia's annexation of Ukrainian Crimea and Sevastopol and its covert and overt aggressive actions in eastern Ukraine clearly violate the fundamental principles of territorial integrity and the prohibition on the use of force in the Charter of the United Nations. Consequently, the maintenance of international peace and security is further aggravated. In that regard, we call on Russia to fully comply with its commitments under the Minsk agreements and to restore Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

We are concerned by the ongoing provocations by the Russian Federation and the breakaway regions of Georgia's Abkhazia and South Ossetia and the continued borderization activities along the South Ossetian Administrative Boundary line, which have continued unabated amid the COVID-19 pandemic. Such actions are completely unacceptable. We reiterate our strong support for the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Georgia within its internationally recognized borders.

So-called "frozen conflicts" intensify fragile contexts. The situation in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, Transnistria and Nagorno Karabakh should be resolved by peaceful means and based on generally recognized principles of international law, sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Disregard for human rights and basic democratic freedoms in Belarus, including the violence against peaceful demonstrations, is troubling and unacceptable. We believe that the will of the Belarusian people should be respected, since only they can decide the future of their own country.

While the negative trends I mentioned shine a light on the growing gap between sustained fragility and sustainable peace, we believe it is our responsibility, including that of the Security Council, to employ all the tools at our disposal to close it. In that regard, smaller countries come with their own set of tools and experience that can substantively contribute to the maintenance of international peace and security and the work of the Security Council. For instance, when the world was impatiently waiting for the Security Council's resolution to address the pandemic and to help bridge the gaps in a fragile context to no avail, smaller countries took the lead to achieve that. They contribute to improving the transparency and working methods of the Council itself, while providing unique perspectives that help address fragility.

The pandemic has taught us the value of cooperation, because no country has been left untouched by its repercussions or been able to overcome them alone, irrespective of hitherto military and economic prowess. Latvia is a long-standing champion of strong multilateralism and a rules-based international order. We are convinced that, now more than ever, it is the only viable path towards lasting global peace and security. Therefore, it is essential to halt further escalations and create space for diplomacy to address the root causes of fragility and achieve lasting peace, while upholding international law and the role of the United Nations in the process.

The active inclusion of women, who often suffer from the effects of fragility and conflicts, should be at the forefront of peacemaking and peacebuilding. We are committed to strengthening gender equality, empowering girls and women, protecting the rights of women and children and eliminating gender-based violence to break the vicious circle of conflict and violence.

In conclusion, we need to create and allow for a space for addressing fragile contexts and their root causes. Indispensable principles of international cooperation, the peaceful settlement of disputes, human rights, the rule of law and the prevention of conflicts must remain a guiding light of the United Nations — the gatekeeper of

international peace and security. We should not stop striving for universal respect for those principles, as they are essential for maintaining international peace and security against a backdrop of serious threats and growing turmoil in many regions.

**Annex 28****Statement by the Permanent Representative of Liechtenstein to the United Nations, Christian Wenaweser**

Liechtenstein is grateful for this opportunity to consider the particular challenges fragile contexts pose to the Security Council's efforts in the maintenance of peace and security. Focusing on the concept of fragility as a broader frame for efforts to uphold peace and security underlines the point that the Council's work can be successful only if it takes on a similarly broad paradigm of human security. Attempts to restrict the Council to so-called "hard security" issues of armed conflict, terrorism and comparable threats result in a myopic focus on militarized causes of, and solutions to, conflict instead of sustainable and comprehensive conflict prevention and resolution.

If the Council is to uphold security threats in all their aspects, the challenges resulting from the ongoing coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and climate change urgently require its attention. On both of those issues the Council has the mandate to act, but as it stands Council members lack the necessary political will to avert impending catastrophe.

The COVID-19 pandemic has led to wide-ranging human rights restrictions and increased risk of mass poverty and hunger, massive negative impacts on education, rising inequality and heightened social tensions, as well as the erosion of trust in institutions, resulting in fragile contexts. Liechtenstein is pleased that the Council has addressed COVID-19, albeit in a limited manner, and encourages it to build on that precedent through a human security-centred approach.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) remain our blueprint for building back better — a road map for sustaining peace based on international law, human rights, cooperation, solidarity and multilateralism. Challenges to the rule of law and attempts to undermine democratic processes, even in societies with long democratic traditions, must be met by responsible leadership, long-term policy thinking, stronger commitments against corruption and organized crime and an honest discussion about information and the role of social media. The fulfilment of SDG 16 in particular is key to achieving sustainable development and to ensuring that the Council lives up to its mandate.

It is increasingly possible that the next five years will see the world reach 1.5°C of warming — a threshold deemed the point of no return during the Paris negotiations and a frightening portent for our fragile world. Liechtenstein is pleased that the Council increasingly recognizes the value of addressing secondary impacts of climate change, such as involuntary migration, poverty, the loss of livelihoods and tensions between farmers and herders, and is supportive of the Council's efforts to tap into expertise across the United Nations development system, such as the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs-United Nations Development Programme-United Nations Environment Programme Climate Security Mechanism. The inaugural meeting in November of the Informal Expert Group on Climate and Security of Members of the United Nations Security Council is also a significant step forward for the Council's work. Nevertheless, systematic references to the impact of climate change on Council situations remain long overdue. Going forward, the Council must also address the root cause of those impacts. A small minority of its members combined are responsible for more than half of global carbon dioxide emissions, and all States must uphold their responsibilities to present and future generations by urgently working to reduce them.

---

**Annex 29****Statement by the Permanent Mission of Malta to the United Nations**

I begin by congratulating your country, Tunisia, on assuming the presidency of the Security Council and by thanking you, Mr. President, for organizing today's meeting on this important and topical issue. We strongly believe that fragile countries need to be given due attention by the Security Council and the international community to ensure that they have all the tools and support they need to deal with challenges in an adequate manner and continue on the right path that leads to peace and long-term stability.

Global challenges need to be addressed in a collective manner, especially during the current pandemic. Major drivers of fragility cannot be dealt with in isolation. Transnational organized crime is intertwined with illicit activities, such as violations of United Nations arms embargos and the trafficking of persons. Those criminal networks are often a step ahead, and it may be difficult for a single country to map a financial transfer with an illicit activity that does not take place within its jurisdiction. Malta has hosted enforcement officials from central Mediterranean partners on a frequent basis to try to bring national enforcement actions together in a region that faces many well-known challenges.

Over the past few years, we have seen an increase in the number of issues that require our full and collective attention. Climate change, a deadly pandemic and terrorism are all leaving a devastating effect on communities around the globe. Unfortunately, those issues are having a disproportionate impact on poorer countries by taking away opportunities for growth and development and opening the door for extremist forces, violent conflict and subsequent regional instability.

The resolutions on the review of the peacebuilding architecture that were adopted just a few weeks ago by the Security Council and the General Assembly (resolution 2558 (2020) and resolution 75/201, respectively) stress the importance of prevention. That is a fundamental aspect in the maintenance of international peace and security and something that Malta remains strongly committed to.

The international community needs to continue to invest in the resilience of States and societies, particularly in Africa. The importance of transparent and efficient State institutions cannot be overstated. Development, through the sharing of good practices, needs to be at the core of a comprehensive plan for the African continent. That can be done through several practices, such as official development assistance, through which Malta channels most of its funds to the African continent. More ambitious engagement with Africa, which continues to break away from an exclusively aid-driven approach, to engage more effectively through trade, development and diplomacy is required. The commencement of the African Continental Free Trade Area provides a golden opportunity to that end.

We highlight and stress the role of women and youth and the need to make sure that they are included in a meaningful manner. Women and youth are fundamental pillars of any society, and their tangible contribution to peace and stability can be seen in several countries that were going through political turmoil.

Regional and subregional organizations have a crucial role to play in assisting fragile countries in their respective neighbourhoods. They can add great value in identifying and addressing the root causes of conflict in a particular country through their unique insights and shared experiences and can serve as a driving force towards cooperation and development. They also have an important role to play in supporting fragile States in the implementation of peace agreements and development commitments.

United Nations peacekeeping operations play a vital role in stabilizing conflict zones and countering fragilities, which affect the ability of countries to rebuild. Increasing terrorist activities, including human trafficking and arms sales, are real concerns that continue to persist in various conflict and post-conflict situations. United Nations peacekeeping missions are indispensable tools in aiding affected countries in integrating the right policies and providing the necessary training, including in the civilian sphere, to counter increased terrorism and crime-related activity. Police training, establishing accountable justice systems and supporting all-inclusive political solutions are but examples of the contributions that can be made in effected countries to break the cycle of conflict and violence.

Malta supports the extensive work being undertaken by the United Nations towards addressing the various issues that plague fragile States. The United Nations has always sought to promote opportunities and simultaneously address challenges through a tailor-made approach. However, we firmly believe that more focus needs to be placed on better addressing sensitivities. Today more than ever, as we seek to counter and address the effects of the ongoing pandemic, we need to ensure that perseverance is upheld and that we continue to work together towards addressing current challenges and a future of peace and development.

**Annex 30****Statement by the Permanent Mission of Morocco to the United Nations**

[Original: French]

At the outset, the Kingdom of Morocco would like to warmly congratulate Tunisia on its assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of January 2021. Morocco also welcomes the timely and relevant topic of this high-level open debate on the subject “Challenges of maintaining peace and security in fragile contexts”, especially after a year that shed a great deal of light on the protracted effects of global crises in the world and, more specifically, in peacebuilding situations. Morocco warmly thanks Tunisia for its welcome focus on this important aspect of the work of the United Nations and the Security Council.

The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic very quickly turned out to be a multidimensional global crisis that combined pre-existing, chronic and new challenges. This destructive and unprecedented combination highlighted two important points.

First, there is consensus on the exacerbating effect of crises of global magnitude, particularly on entire countries and regions. In Africa, for example, a series of threats, including deteriorating economic conditions, climate change and the resurgence of terrorism, still prevail. It is also a fact that most active peacekeeping operations are located in those fragile contexts.

Secondly, it demonstrated the undeniable potential of those challenges to erode or destroy decades of peacekeeping and peacebuilding efforts, or even fuel old and new conflicts.

Furthermore, the heavy dependence on information and communication technologies due to the demands of social distancing measures has introduced a new era of cyberthreats to peace and security that can undermine States and critical infrastructure and lead to the spread of infodemics, or fake news. These new forms of challenges test notions of national borders and sovereignty and can truly undermine social cohesion.

This situation has led the international community to realize that the risks of eroding the edifice of peace and security is real, thereby reinforcing the notion of the security-development nexus.

That is why Morocco, pursuant to the high royal guidelines of His Majesty King Mohammed VI, has always been committed to the pursuit of peace and security at the regional and international levels. It is also committed to exploring all levers of cooperation — bilateral, triangular, South-South and multilateral — to overcome challenges that undermine the peace, stability and security of States, especially sister African countries that are valiantly facing a series of multifaceted threats. This national commitment flows from the conviction that modern history has taught us that global crises require comprehensive and integrated responses to effectively preserve peace and security.

Morocco therefore welcomes the momentum and the collective awareness of the magnitude of contemporary, new and old risks. In that respect, the early mobilization of the Secretary-General and the countless initiatives he has launched are particularly welcome because they contribute substantively to overcoming challenges to the maintenance of peace and security, and commit the United Nations to fulfil its primary role, at a fundamental level — preserving peace in all its forms in support of countries and regions in fragile contexts.

Morocco also wishes to commend Tunisia and France for their continued mobilization, which led the Security Council to recognize that the unprecedented scale of the COVID-19 pandemic threatens the maintenance of international peace and security. The adoption of resolution 2532 (2020) will be historic in several respects, particularly with regard to the role of the Security Council in addressing the challenges to the maintenance of peace and security.

These are important gains, in addition to the adoption, on 21 December, of the new identical General Assembly and Security Council resolutions (resolution 75/201 and resolution 2558 (2020), respectively) on the review of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture. In that regard, Morocco takes the opportunity of this important open debate to commend the excellent and ongoing work of the Peacebuilding Commission in drawing and maintaining the attention of the international community to countries and regions in fragile contexts.

The contribution of the Peacebuilding Fund in support of those countries and regions is also essential, as evidenced by the ever-increasing demands on the Fund. Morocco therefore welcomes the forthcoming high-level replenishment conference for the Peacebuilding Fund, to be held on 26 January 2021, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 75/201.

The response to this important open debate indicates the need to promote cooperation, synergies and partnerships at the centre of the efforts of the United Nations and its Member States. That includes greater efforts in conflict prevention, the peaceful resolution of disputes and multilateralism in order to address the challenges to the maintenance of peace and security and to better support fragile contexts.

In conclusion, Morocco reiterates the importance of strengthening partnerships with the World Bank, whose outstanding efforts to address fragility in recent years are commended by all, and with other international financial institutions and regional and subregional organizations.

**Annex 31****Statement by the Acting Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the United Nations, Mohammad Aamir Khan**

Let me begin by congratulating Tunisia on assuming the presidency of the Security Council and convening this very important and timely open debate.

The mandate of the Security Council is to preserve international peace and security. It also encompasses the prevention of conflict and threats to world peace and security. The Council must therefore address the root causes of conflict in our world today. The received wisdom is that weak governance, political instability and underdevelopment often lead to violence within and among States and societies. Those are the presumed fragile contexts mentioned in the theme of this debate.

Unfortunately, that hypothesis overlooks the deeper causes of such fragile contexts: the centuries-old legacy of colonial occupation and exploitation, racism, inequality and the oppression of peoples. It is that legacy that has led to poverty, inequality, exploitation, external interventions, environmental degradation and weak governance, which are the real drivers of conflict in our world today.

The foremost of those root causes is rampant inequality both within and among nations. While structural problems within a fragile State contribute directly to that inequality, it is also enabled and incentivized by an international system of vested power and exploitative profit. The dimensions of the exploitation of developing countries are illustrated by the \$1 trillion in illicit financial flows from the poor to financial havens, mostly in rich countries.

If we are to truly decolonize our world and bring an end to such neoimperialism, we must dismantle those exploitative national and international structures. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) provide an excellent framework and blueprint to end exploitation, inequality, poverty and underdevelopment. The SDGs must be promoted by the international community as vital economic, political and strategic goals.

Environmental degradation is another driver of fragility for countries that are already impoverished. The environment crisis is the legacy of profligate consumption in the industrial world over the past two centuries. The warming planet, receding biodiversity and the increased frequency and severity of disasters are signs of the world's degrading ecosystems. They threaten all the essentials of our existence: water, food security, energy, infrastructure, the health of individuals and societies and national and global political and economic stability. Poor and fragile nations are at the gravest risk.

Another ghost from the past also threatens world peace and stability: the rise in intolerance, prejudice, racism and xenophobia. The economic and atavistic anxieties of people in certain nations have led to the resurgence of right-wing populism, violence, discrimination and hatred. Moreover, the misuse of information and communications technologies and State-sponsored misinformation campaigns and subversive propaganda are adding more fuel to the fire of prejudice, hatred and conflict.

A clash of cultures and civilizations must not be allowed to become a self-fulfilling prophecy. The rise of fascism in the past has shown us that nations are fragile social constructs and that, even in democracies, people can be manipulated and channelled into the tunnels of hate, bigotry and prejudice. The rise of such exclusionary ideologies and extremist groups in some mature and some self-proclaimed democracies threaten peace and stability in several regions of the world.

While conflicts affect many parts of the world, some of the most complex and protracted conflicts, unfortunately, afflict the Islamic world. Foreign occupation, intervention and aggression have led to the untold suffering of millions in the Muslim world. Many Muslim peoples, such as the peoples of Jammu and Kashmir and Palestine, continue to fight for their inalienable right to self-determination and the end of foreign occupation. A series of foreign interventions has increased instability and eroded socioeconomic development in the Muslim world. Anti-Muslim prejudice also turned the war on terror overnight into a veritable war on Islam, which was then used as a pretext to invade Muslims countries.

As a leading voice of Muslims, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) can play an important role in highlighting the root causes of the conflicts that have beset the Muslim world, and can act as a trusted interlocutor to apprise the international community of the legitimate concerns of the Muslim world, including the resurgence of Islamophobia. The United Nations and the OIC should develop common strategies and plans to find workable, just and sustainable solutions for some of the most complex and protracted challenges that threaten world peace and security.

The suffering caused by the coronavirus disease pandemic reminds us that no one is truly safe and secure until everyone is safe. That is the fundamental premise of the concept of collective security, as enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. Member States must mobilize the necessary political will to transform that concept into a reality.

**Annex 32****Statement by the Permanent Mission of Peru to the United Nations**

[Original: Spanish]

We welcome the initiative of the Tunisian presidency to convene this high-level debate, and we thank it for the concept note (S/2020/1296, annex), which invites us to consider the factors that feed into contexts of fragility on the African continent with a view to addressing them in a more comprehensive and effective manner that is compliant with the Charter of the United Nations. We also thank the briefers for their lucid presentations.

Peru recognizes the commitment, vision and unity of African States in the exercise of their responsibility to prevent and resolve conflicts on their continent based on a comprehensive analysis of their root causes. That task is all the more urgent in the present context, marked by the global challenges posed by the coronavirus disease pandemic and its impact on international security.

In view of this delicate scenario, we consider that the international community should pay renewed attention and provide assistance to countries facing situations of acute fragility. We believe that this necessary support is particularly relevant during electoral processes and transitions in order to avoid a recurrence of periods of instability. It is important to complement that approach with the creation of national early-warning systems or bodies aimed at promoting alternative ways of easing tension through an inclusive approach.

It is essential to continue to promote synergies between the United Nations system —particularly the Security Council — and the African Union and subregional organizations, such as the Economic Community of West African States, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development and the Southern African Development Community, with the shared objective of institutionalizing and making the architecture of peace and security in Africa more effective and coherent.

It is also crucial for the Security Council to make the most of the advisory work of the Peacebuilding Commission and to explore new forms of interaction and cooperation with it, especially on issues relating to the mandates of United Nations missions in contexts of transition and when addressing the resurgence of conflict.

In the same vein, we consider it essential that the Peacebuilding Commission and the United Nations country teams intensify their support to national authorities in building inclusive institutions that recognize and address the legitimate aspirations and expectations of the population and protect and promote their human rights.

We also encourage the mutual reinforcement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the African Union's Agenda 2063, with the ultimate goal of fighting corruption, addressing the adverse effects of climate change, promoting economic growth based on the rule of law and encouraging the participation of women and youth as agents of change in their respective societies.

We also note that transitional justice is critical to repairing and revitalizing the social fabric in post-conflict scenarios. It must be rendered in a balanced manner, as excessive emphasis on prosecution or a perceived climate of impunity could deepen social wounds and thus be counterproductive.

The concept note appropriately suggests that we reflect on the possible contributions of peace missions in fragile contexts. In that regard, it is critical that such missions promote greater rapprochement with local governments and communities in order to know their needs in detail and cultivate a relationship of trust, since only a close link with the population will allow for a full understanding

of potential or real situations of conflict. The design and implementation of adequate communication strategies is especially useful for that purpose, as is the strengthening of the analytical capacities of operations.

Finally, we believe that peace missions also have a central role to play in preventing and combating the illegal exploitation of natural resources as a factor that exacerbates fragility, as well as in reducing violence against women and girls in conflict situations and in building local security capacities.

**Annex 33****Statement by the Permanent Representative of Portugal to the United Nations, Ambassador Francisco Duarte Lopes**

Portugal would like to congratulate Tunisia on its assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of January and for convening this very timely meeting.

Portugal aligns itself with the statement presented by the European Union (EU) and, in its national capacity, would like to add the following points.

The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic is having a devastating impact on communities and economies. Yet again, those who are in the most vulnerable situations are the ones who suffer the most. Institutions and populations in fragile contexts face accrued challenges in their fight against the pandemic and its indirect effects, which may exacerbate existing drivers of conflict and undermine social and economic resilience.

Health crises, the effects of climate change, human rights violations, the illicit exploitation and trade of natural resources, as well as illicit financial flows — all those factors worsen already precarious situations, functioning as multipliers of fragility and fuelling the vicious cycle of fragility and conflict.

Tackling non-traditional threats to peace and security and addressing the root causes of conflict is therefore of paramount importance. In order to achieve it, an integrated approach is fundamental, taking full advantage of the synergies across the three pillars of the United Nations — human rights, development and peace and security.

Violent conflict is increasingly concentrated in fragile contexts, making it vital to address the causes of fragility and build the resilience of local actors across all phases of the peace continuum. Building inclusive societies based on the protection and promotion of human rights and gender equality remains the best defence against fragility, conflict, poverty, inequality and exclusion.

We need to keep focusing our collective efforts on conflict prevention. The human and financial costs of responding to crises instead of preventing them are evident. Comprehensive cross-pillar approaches are therefore fundamental to fostering resilience and sustaining peace.

Many of the current peacekeeping operations are deployed in contexts of fragility, and we reaffirm our long-standing commitment to United Nations peacekeeping, in particular in Central Africa and the Sahel, as exemplified by the presence of Portuguese troops and security forces in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic and the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali.

Portugal underlines once again the important role played by Tunisia and France in the adoption of resolution 2532 (2020) in July 2020, which expressed, in its third preambular paragraph, grave concern about “the devastating impact of the COVID-19 pandemic ... in countries ravaged by armed conflicts, or in post-conflict situations, or affected by humanitarian crises”. In that context, we reiterate our support for the Secretary-General’s appeal for a global ceasefire, which was recognized in resolution 2532 (2020), as an essential step towards properly addressing the pandemic and its different impacts and fostering resilience.

Having assumed on the presidency of the Council of European Union on 1 January, Portugal is committed to supporting and reinforcing the EU’s efforts and

measures to strengthen the response to the pandemic in the countries most affected and that have frailer health-care systems.

The reallocation of both financial and human resources to fight the pandemic has had an impact on States' ability to deal with security issues, as well as on their capacity to respond to the needs of their populations and communities. The further weakening of State institutions and their capacity to deliver public goods could endanger the hard-fought peacebuilding gains in several regions, notably in Africa.

No single humanitarian, development or security actor can tackle the issue of fragility on its own. Partnerships are essential in that regard. The convening role of the Peacebuilding Commission is a decisive tool for that purpose, as is the action of the Peacebuilding Fund in supporting resilience and prevention.

The international support provided during and in the aftermath of the pandemic in contexts of fragility must not neglect the importance of State- and institution-building, as well as social cohesion and good governance. The economic recovery phase following the pandemic should also be an opportunity to boost resilience through reforms in key areas such as health, education, social protection, climate change, good governance and the fight against corruption and impunity, thereby achieving a more sustainable response to fragility-inducing factors.

The interlinkages between fragility and conflict know no borders. Individualized answers will inevitably fall short of addressing the challenges we are faced with. We therefore reiterate the call for global solidarity and a unified collective effort.

**Annex 34****Statement by the Permanent Representative of Qatar to the United Nations, Alya Ahmed Saif Al-Thani**

[Original: Arabic]

We congratulate Tunisia on assuming the presidency of the Security Council and wish it every success. We are pleased to see His Excellency Mr. Kaïs Saïed, President of the Republic of Tunisia, presiding over this important meeting. We welcome his choice of topic and thank him for preparing the concept note (S/2020/1296, annex).

We congratulate the new members of the Security Council, namely, India, Ireland, Kenya, Mexico and Norway. We commend Secretary-General António Guterres; the Chair of the African Union Commission, Mr. Moussa Faki Mahamat; and the former President of Liberia, Ms. Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, for their stimulating briefings.

We agree that it is essential to face up to issues involving fragile contexts, particularly in the African continent. Such issues often exacerbate the cycle of violence, pose a threat to peace and security and hamper efforts to restore stability and reconciliation. Although each situation before the Security Council has its own specificities, it is worth working to comprehensively and objectively understand and discuss the causes of fragility and to seek out the most effective ways to tackle them with a view to achieving security and stability. That approach should be mainstreamed into strategies for the maintenance of international peace and security at every stage, whether peacemaking, peacekeeping or peacebuilding.

Qatar is therefore committed to taking a comprehensive and integrated approach as an active participant in international efforts to achieve sustainable peace. That approach is reflected in its commitment to consolidating peace, security and stability in tandem with its support for the Sustainable Development Goals. A considerable share of that support goes to the African continent. For instance, Qatar is an international partner of the Federal Republic of Somalia. It provides rapid humanitarian assistance, as needed, and funds long-term development projects including infrastructure and employment opportunities. It also supports the trust fund for peace and reconciliation in Somalia and provides other security and financial aid.

Qatar has repeatedly emphasized the need to uphold women's rights and involve them in peacemaking and in post-conflict phases, as those factors have proved to be conducive to the success of peacebuilding efforts. It is also important to support youth. Strengthening education and social development and creating employment opportunities are practical ways in which Qatar works to provide assistance at the international level.

Qatar plays a forward-looking and outstanding role in providing humanitarian and emergency assistance to alleviate the human impact of conflict. It supports the pivotal role of the United Nations as a humanitarian forum and a provider of assistance to beneficiaries around the world. Qatar also supports the Organization in the area of development, and hence plays a fundamental and active part in tackling the causes of fragility. Qatar will continue to fulfil that responsibility and to play a positive and active role.

Lastly, the task of building and sustaining peace is constantly evolving and gaining in complexity from several points of view. We need a coordinated, effective and comprehensive response that keeps pace with developments. We are pleased

that the Security Council is taking a growing interest in those issues with a view to fulfilling its important responsibility of maintaining international peace and security in the most optimal way possible.

**Annex 35****Statement by the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea to the United Nations, Cho Hyun**

My delegation would like to commend you, Mr. President, for convening today's timely open debate. As rightly pointed out in the concept note (S/2020/1296, annex), the fragilities caused by factors such as pandemics, climate change, socioeconomic inequalities and humanitarian crises aggravate existing security challenges. We appreciate that the members of the Security Council have increasingly taken a more comprehensive and inclusive approach to address that problem. In that regard, I would like to highlight four points that are of particular importance to my delegation.

First, considering the interlinkages between the various drivers of fragility and their impact across all three pillars of the United Nations, my delegation stresses the importance of the humanitarian-development-peace nexus and the "One United Nations" approach, as recognized in General Assembly resolution 75/201 and Security Council resolution 2558 (2020), on the review of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture. In responding to the interconnected challenges of today, the Republic of Korea encourages enhanced cooperation between the Council and the Peacebuilding Commission, whose unique role in promoting the nexus should be fully utilized.

Secondly, my delegation reiterates the importance of the Council's role in responding to the impact of global pandemics on international peace and security. The coronavirus disease has shown us the imperative need for a response based on global solidarity and multilateralism, and we urge the Council to step up its leadership role, building on the consensus set out in resolution 2532 (2020). The Republic of Korea, as co-Chair of the Group of Friends of Solidarity for Global Health Security, is ready to provide its full support for the Council's endeavours in that regard.

Thirdly, we believe the Council must respond to the challenges posed by climate change, which represents an increasing threat to international peace and security, in a more systematic and concrete manner. As recognized in numerous Security Council resolutions, climate change has adverse effects on the stability of fragile States, especially those on the African continent. That is why, in drafting Economic and Social Council resolution 2020/2, entitled "Support to the Sahel region", the Republic of Korea emphasized the effects of climate change on the security of the region and the need for long-term strategies to address them. As a country that has committed to reaching carbon neutrality by 2050, the Republic of Korea will continue to do its part in reducing and responding to climate-related security risks worldwide.

Fourthly, in our efforts to maintain peace and security in fragile contexts, we cannot emphasize enough the need for an inclusive approach that prioritizes the most vulnerable and marginalized populations, such as women, children and persons with disabilities. The drivers of fragility, especially in armed conflicts, disproportionately affect those populations, and we must strengthen our efforts to protect them and ensure that their needs are taken into account.

Maintaining peace and security is one of the main tasks of the United Nations, and it becomes increasingly critical in fragile contexts. My delegation commends the Secretary-General's active efforts to promote sustainable peace and security, including through his Action for Peacekeeping initiative. Sustaining peace will also be discussed as one of the main agendas at the ministerial conference on United Nations peacekeeping to be held in the Republic of Korea this year. The Republic of Korea hopes that the related discussion and pledges made at that ministerial

conference will contribute to stronger peace and security, especially for those in fragile contexts.

The Republic of Korea reaffirms its firm commitment to working with the United Nations and all Member States in their common efforts to bring lasting peace and security to countries in fragile contexts.

**Annex 36****Statement by the Permanent Representative of Slovakia to the United Nations, Michal Mlynár**

First of all, I would like to thank the Tunisian presidency of the Security Council for organizing this timely open debate to generate more focused attention on the various challenges faced by vulnerable countries and populations, in particular on the African continent.

The drivers of conflict that contribute to creating fragile contexts — including insecurity, intercommunal violence, terrorism, violent extremism, socioeconomic inequality, the illegal exploitation of natural resources, competition for scarce resources and climate change — are continuously changing. They also have the potential to contribute to armed conflict and exacerbate threats to international peace and security.

The impact of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic is also relevant. The direct consequences of the pandemic and the secondary consequences of its interaction with existing security and humanitarian crises are adding another layer of complexity to already fragile situations. Therefore, if we want to effectively prevent and respond to violence, we will have to continue to revise our understanding and adapt our approach.

Identifying and understanding conflict is crucial in determining the potential areas for interventions. Slovakia believes that the international community needs to strengthen its cooperative endeavours, starting from the earliest indicators of potential conflict and the planning of conflict prevention, and to build on that collaboration to strengthen cooperation throughout the subsequent stages of the response to conflict, including conflict management and resolution, post-conflict reconstruction and peacebuilding.

Slovakia strongly supports the full implementation of resolution 2532 (2020), of 1 July 2020, which demands an immediate cessation of hostilities in all situations on the Council's agenda, in support of the Secretary-General's appeal for a global ceasefire to combat the pandemic. We would like to stress the fact that the resolution also recognizes the risks to fragile States that have been affected by conflict, while cautioning that peacebuilding and development gains made by countries in transition and post-conflict situations could be reversed as a result of the pandemic.

In that context, the United Nations peacebuilding architecture needs to adapt to the new type of challenges that the world is facing. We welcome the wide participation in the 2020 review of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture, which offered an opportunity for adapting to the immediate challenges to sustaining peace in countries with high levels of institutional, security and social fragility.

We support further strengthening the ties between the Security Council and the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council, the Peacebuilding Commission and the Human Rights Council, as well as with civil society organizations and communities on the ground. Therefore, we appreciate that resolution 2558 (2020), unanimously adopted on 21 December 2020, together with General Assembly resolution 75/201, calls for further action by the whole United Nations system to advance coherence in peacebuilding efforts, as well as calling on the Peacebuilding Commission to continue strengthening its advisory and liaison roles in support of the national priorities of fragile countries emerging from conflict.

Slovakia, as a member of the Peacebuilding Commission for the term 2020-2021, especially welcomes the Commission's efforts to support national and regional responses to the COVID-19 pandemic. Many countries engaging with the

Commission are facing critical challenges, and the sombre perspectives resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic have amplified fragilities and increased the need for resolute action.

Slovakia is convinced that the security sector is a key component in the Government response to various challenges, including the COVID-19 pandemic, in many fragile countries and regions. Reviews of existing mandates of the United Nations missions in countries facing complex challenges must consider the establishment of exit strategies to help lay the foundations for long-term and sustainable peace.

For years Slovakia has identified security sector reform as one of the key elements for effective conflict prevention and successful post-conflict rebuilding and stabilization. The direct experience of many United Nations peace missions and operations, including in African countries, clearly shows that a nationally led and inclusive security sector reform is key to developing security sector institutions that are capable of effectively responding to specific security needs and can actively manage the drivers of fragility.

---

**Annex 37****Statement by the Permanent Mission of South Africa to the United Nations**

At the outset, South Africa wishes to congratulate Tunisia on assuming the presidency of the Security Council for the month of January 2021. We also extend our congratulations to the newly elected members of the Council and wish them well in their respective terms.

Our debate today on situations of fragility is more relevant now than ever for the work of the Security Council in the maintenance of international peace and security. In its 2014 report entitled *Ending Conflict and Building Peace in Africa: A Call to Action*, the High-Level Panel on Fragile States in Africa recognized fragility as a challenge to the preservation of peace and security on the African continent. Although six years have passed since the adoption of that report, it remains apt and relevant.

While the African continent has been able to make significant gains in resolving peace and security challenges through effective interventions by the United Nations and regional organizations, particularly the African Union, the risk and threat of new conflicts remains persistent, primarily owing to the fragility inherent to varying degrees in certain countries on the continent. It is therefore essential that more focused attention be placed on countries exhibiting increased vulnerability and potential to relapse into conflict.

In that context, we remain mindful that not all drivers of fragility fall within the purview of the Security Council. The issue of fragility reminds us of the nexus between development, human rights, and peace and security. Therefore, when attempting to maintain peace and security in fragile contexts, there must be a holistic approach involving all aspects of the United Nations system, including a specific focus on addressing the sustainable development of the countries concerned.

Consequently, our approach and strategy for dealing with the issue of fragility should be premised on the understanding of the situations that give rise to instability and violent conflict. The root causes of conflicts on the African continent include, inter alia, addressing the legacy of colonialism and subjugation, poverty, inequality, economic and social exclusion, lack of respect for human rights and the rule of law, poor governance and persistent external interference. Similarly, the drivers of fragility are common knowledge. Although they may vary and evolve over time, at present youth unemployment, migration, urbanization, communicable diseases and climate shocks are among the emerging and key drivers of fragility in many African countries, albeit with various impacts, but particularly in conflict and post-conflict situations.

Despite those developments, there are many commendable actions that African countries individually and as a collective have taken to deal with the situations that could give rise to the fragility conducive to violent conflict. Some of those actions include the institutionalization of regional and subregional early-warning systems, which are aimed at detecting, preventing and responding to conflict wherever it emerges. In that respect, prevention through early action becomes essential to addressing fragility. That is an area that the Security Council and the United Nations peacebuilding architecture ought to strengthen.

For many years, the international community has been seized with finding durable solutions to the causes of conflicts. There is a general consensus on the need to develop holistic approaches to resolving such challenges. The United Nations and the African Union (AU) have an abundance of normative frameworks aimed at guiding

States Members of the United Nations to effectively address such challenges through a range of human rights, economic, social, environmental and political instruments. However, the onus is on Member States to undertake proactive measures to translate some of those frameworks into tangibles that would deter the outbreak of conflicts, such as the realization of the objectives set out in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the AU's Agenda 2063. Those socioeconomic blueprints provide a solid foundation for assisting countries in building the resilience, capacity and institutions necessary to meet the demands of their populations.

An added challenge is the resource curse that many fragile countries face, which has unfortunately been abundantly obvious on the African continent. More effective action must be taken to permanently eradicate that lucrative driver of fragility, which often involves the inequitable distribution of natural resources and the discovery of new resources.

We must emphasize that, for countries to experience durable peace, all efforts to resolve the drivers of fragility must be nationally led and owned and must involve the various segments of the population at grass-roots levels, in particular women and young people. Inclusive peacebuilding, post-conflict reconstruction and adequately funded development activities are key components for achieving sustained peace and addressing inherent fragilities in conflict and post-conflict situations.

The international community, including the African Development Bank and other multilateral financial institutions, should provide the necessary support to promote peace in situations of fragility. Partnerships among relevant stakeholders in preventing conflicts and among the relevant bodies and agencies of the United Nations and regional and subregional bodies must be harnessed and strengthened, including through closer cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union. In addition to cooperation between the Security Council and the African Union Peace and Security Council, the cooperation between the United Nations Peacebuilding Commission and the African Union Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development Centre must be strengthened.

In conclusion, we believe that our objective of silencing the guns on the African continent is within reach as long as we continue to make an honest effort at introspection and assess what we have accomplished so far, with a view to undertaking additional proactive measures for further improvement. We thank Tunisia for facilitating this effort at introspection today.

---

**Annex 38****Statement by the Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the United Nations**

[Original: French]

Switzerland thanks Tunisia for organizing this timely debate, and the speakers for their contributions. Today's meeting reflects the constant attention the Security Council pays to contemporary factors that give rise to conflict and their complex interactions, as well as the need for a broad concept of security. It builds on the debates organized by previous Council presidencies — in July, September and November 2020 (see S/2020/663, S/2020/929 and S/2020/1090, respectively). Importantly, those deliberations reaffirm the relevance of a holistic approach to international peace and security, engaging all three pillars of the United Nations.

The third review of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture reaffirms the framework of sustainable peacebuilding to guide the efforts of Member States and the United Nations system as a whole at all stages of conflict and in all its dimensions. The Security Council continues to play a key role in the implementation of that agenda, including by paying constant attention in its deliberations and decisions to the linkages between conflict and fragility.

According to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development report *States of Fragility 2020*, 41 of the 54 fragile contexts for which data is available are not on track to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 16, on sustainable development. The absence of peace and the lack of effective, accountable and inclusive institutions are hampering the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The fragmentation of peacebuilding and conflict-prevention efforts is the greatest obstacle to the prevention of violent conflict. In addressing the global consequences of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19), it is even more imperative that the international community focus on fragile countries and regions so as to prevent violent conflict.

In order to bring greater coherence to peacebuilding efforts and address factors of fragility, the Security Council must use its entire toolkit in a concerted manner. We see a particular need for coherence in the following areas.

First, political and social achievements, such as important peacebuilding gains, are particularly at-risk during transitions. It is essential that the Council systematically apply best practices in the drafting and renewal of mandates and in the transition from mission to non-mission frameworks.

Recent reports have highlighted potentially serious protection gaps in conflict-affected areas in Darfur following the withdrawal of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur, which could in turn reinvigorate the drivers of conflict and fragility. A concerted effort by all relevant United Nations agencies and programmes is needed to avoid such a scenario.

Switzerland welcomes the recognition by the Secretary-General's Peacebuilding Fund of transitions as a priority for engagement. We call on the Council to make full use of the advice of the Peacebuilding Commission in all relevant contexts, in particular with regard to building accountable institutions, supporting inclusive political settlements and promoting inclusive, resilient and reconciled societies.

Secondly, in line with ongoing reforms, the United Nations should improve system-wide coherence through increased cooperation, collaboration and coordination across sectors. In mission mandates, the Security Council should specify the humanitarian, development, peace and human rights objectives to be

achieved in order to address all factors of fragility in a sustainable manner. Joint analysis and planning, developed under the leadership of the Resident Coordinator and taking risks into account, are essential to preventing and addressing crises, as the response to COVID-19 has shown.

Finally, human rights are essential for building resilient and inclusive societies in which everyone is protected, especially the most vulnerable. Human rights play a key role in conflict prevention and are important in early-warning systems. Switzerland therefore encourages the Security Council to integrate human rights instruments in all its activities, from joint analysis to decision-making and accountability. Those instruments include the Human Rights Council, the special procedures and the treaty bodies.

Switzerland welcomes the thematic focus on the linkages among peace and security, development, human rights and humanitarian affairs and calls for more systematic consideration of those issues in all situations on the Security Council's agenda. As a Vice-President of the Economic and Social Council, member of the Peacebuilding Commission and candidate for a non-permanent seat on the Security Council for the 2023-2024 term, Switzerland is fully committed to contributing to the coherence of the United Nations system.

---

**Annex 39****Statement by the Permanent Mission of Ukraine to the United Nations**

Ukraine welcomes the initiative of the Tunisian presidency of the Security Council to address the issue of fragility in the context of maintaining international peace and security and expresses its gratitude to all briefers for their briefings.

Efficient responses to conflicts and crisis situations include addressing the root causes of fragile environments before they devolve into conflicts. We note with appreciation that the issue of fragility drivers is receiving greater attention in the Council than ever before. That approach is helpful in properly determining and efficiently countering false narratives on the nature of a particular conflict or crisis situation. It is our observation today that the latter narratives are often disseminated by instigators so that they may avoid responsibility and impede conflict resolution.

We fully support the intention to focus today on the African continent in particular. The engagement of the United Nations with Africa has clearly shown that the Africa-related component of the responsibility to maintain peace and security should be seen as promising rather than as a challenge. We support the efforts aimed at enhancing cooperation among the United Nations, the African Union (AU) and African regional economic mechanisms as a practical framework for addressing the ongoing threats on the continent on the basis of principles of unity, complementarity and respect for African leadership. The support of the United Nations for AU-led operations should be developed further, including in relation to establishing mechanisms for sustainably financing them. As a contributor to four United Nations missions deployed on the African continent, Ukraine considers it essential that efforts aimed at advancing promising security initiatives such as Silencing the Guns in Africa be continued.

The coronavirus disease pandemic has also exacerbated existing challenges, of which climate change is among the most acute. Most of the African continent is experiencing the devastating impact of climate change, which disproportionately affects women and girls, especially those who are already most disadvantaged when it comes to the enjoyment of their rights, freedoms and opportunities.

Climate change, human rights, health emergencies, food insecurity and poverty, together with other drivers of fragility, should take their proper place in both the agenda of the Security Council and the mandates of missions on the ground. At the same time, the maintenance of international peace and security would hardly be possible without focusing on the main driver of insecurity in our world: systemic violations of international law. Such violations, of which armed aggression and attempted annexation are the most flagrant examples, serve as a breeding ground for most of the drivers of fragility referred to in the concept note for today's open debate (S/2020/1296, annex).

Hostilities by illegal armed groups, terrorism and violent extremism, large-scale human rights violations, organized crime, poverty and health crises — all of those are a sad reality, not only for conflict-torn areas on the African continent but for the occupied territories of Ukraine as well. Ukraine is suffering from an international armed conflict and aggression carried out by a neighbouring country that is completely denying the principle of the sovereign equality of States set forth in the Charter of the United Nations. The aggressor's readiness to violate international law for political, economic and territorial gains remains the most dangerous and disastrous driver of global fragility. Thousands have been killed in armed hostilities; millions suffer from human rights violations in the occupied territories.

It must be clear in that context that no human rights violator or abuser of fundamental norms of international law could be a reliable partner in addressing problems that affect peace and security across the globe, which is why we are convinced that we need strong institutions to protect international law, with members that are responsible and reliable contributors to safeguarding the rules- and values-based international order. Only strong institutions, in particular the Security Council, can safeguard international security and properly address the root causes of fragility at both regional and global levels.

---