



Security Council

Seventy-fourth year

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Monday, 7 October 2019, 10 a.m.
New York

Provisional

President: Mr. Matjila (South Africa)

Members:

Belgium	Mrs. Van Vlierberge
China	Mr. Zhang Jun
Côte d'Ivoire	Mr. Moriko
Dominican Republic	Mr. Singer Weisinger
Equatorial Guinea	Mr. Ndong Mba
France	Mr. De Rivière
Germany	Mr. Schulz
Indonesia	Mr. Djani
Kuwait	Mr. Alotaibi
Peru	Mr. Ugarelli
Poland	Mr. Radomski
Russian Federation	Mr. Nebenzia
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Allen
United States of America	Mrs. Craft

Agenda

Peace and security in Africa

The centrality of preventive diplomacy, conflict prevention and resolution

Letter dated 2 October 2019 from the Permanent Representative of South Africa to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2019/786)

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The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Peace and security in Africa

The centrality of preventative diplomacy, conflict prevention and resolution

Letter dated 2 October 2019 from the Permanent Representative of South Africa to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2019/786)

The President: In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representatives of Ethiopia and Namibia to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Her Excellency Ms. Liberata Mulamula, Visiting Scholar and Associate Director of the Institute for African Studies at the Elliott School of International Affairs at George Washington University; Ms. Naledi Maite, Programme Manager of African Women in Dialogue, South Africa; and Ms. Linda Vilakazi, Programme Manager of the Zanele Mbeki Development Trust.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I also invite the following to participate in this meeting: Her Excellency Ms. Fatima Kyari Mohammed, Permanent Observer of the African Union to the United Nations; and Her Excellency Mrs. Jeanne d'Arc Byaje, Permanent Observer of the Economic Community of Central African States to the United Nations.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2019/786, which contains a letter dated 2 October 2019 from the Permanent Representative of South Africa to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, transmitting a concept note on the item under consideration.

I wish to warmly welcome the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. António Guterres, and give him the floor.

The Secretary-General: I am grateful for the opportunity to brief the Council on the United Nations work on preventive diplomacy, conflict prevention and resolution in Africa.

All our work on conflict prevention and resolution relies on partnerships with Member States, regional and subregional organizations, regional economic communities and others. The African Union is our key strategic partner across the continent. I welcome the leadership of His Excellency Mr. Moussa Faki Mahamat, Chairperson of the African Union Commission, who has participated in so many of our debates.

We are making progress on conflict prevention, together with our partners, in many parts of Africa. In the Gambia, for example, joint action two years ago by the African Union, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the United Nations and neighbouring countries prevented a political crisis from spiralling and supported a peaceful and democratic transition. In Madagascar, we worked with the African Union, the European Union, the Southern African Development Community and the International Organization of la Francophonie to facilitate dialogue that contributed to the peaceful presidential election in that country this past year. Our good offices efforts, together with those of the African Union, the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries, ECOWAS and the European Union, have been instrumental in addressing political tensions in Guinea-Bissau. I urge all parties to work towards a peaceful, transparent, free and fair election in that country next month.

In Cameroon, my Special Representative for Central Africa is working with the authorities and with national and regional stakeholders to support efforts to address, through an inclusive dialogue, the root causes of the crises in the North-West and South-West regions. The conclusions of the national dialogue in Cameroon have just been published. The recent agreement in the Sudan, brokered by the African Union and Ethiopia, is an opportunity for the international community to support peace at a delicate time, in a country that has seen terrible conflict and suffering. My Special Representative for West Africa and the Sahel has also conducted joint efforts with ECOWAS and the African Union to support peaceful and inclusive election processes in Sierra Leone, Nigeria and Senegal.

(spoke in French)

Terrorism is a growing threat to the entire continent of Africa and has serious implications for global peace and security. In the Sahel, terrorist groups regularly attack local and international security forces — there was yet another death yesterday — including our United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) peacekeepers. The violence is spreading to the coastal States of the Gulf of Guinea. In Nigeria, Boko Haram and its splinter factions are terrorizing local communities and attacking security forces, despite the efforts of the Multinational Joint Task Force. We are seeing terrorist networks spread throughout Libya and North Africa, extending across the Sahel to the Lake Chad region, and appearing in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Mozambique. This is a battle that we are not winning. It is not just a regional issue, but a clear and immediate danger to global peace and security. I welcome the ECOWAS summit that was held this past month in Burkina Faso, as well as the renewed commitment of ECOWAS member States to participating financially and militarily in the fight against terrorism.

We must recognize that the impact of the crisis in Libya is growing and spreading throughout the region as weapons and fighters continue to constantly cross its borders. As the Council is aware, my Special Representative is working with national, regional and international partners to prevent a further escalation of violence and encourage a return to the political process. I have also already sent the President of the Security Council a copy of the letter from the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, in which the proposal from the African Union Peace and Security Council is presented to the Council. In that regard, I look forward to enhanced cooperation with the African Union on Libya.

Peace in Mali is also essential to peace in the Sahel. Despite the terrible attacks in the Mopti region this past week, I hope plans for an inclusive political dialogue will facilitate the implementation of the 2015 Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali. Our peacekeeping Mission, MINUSMA, plays a critical role in supporting implementation of the agreement and requires consistent and strong support.

African military operations, including the African Union Mission in Somalia, the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5 Sahel) and the Multinational

Joint Task Force against Boko Haram, among others, deserve our full support. I welcome the decision to lift geographic restrictions on provisions by MINUSMA to the G-5 Sahel Joint Force, but we must understand that this alone is not enough. I once again urge the Council to provide African peacekeeping and counter-terrorist operations with clear mandates, backed by predictable and sustainable financial support through mandatory contributions.

Sustainable, inclusive development is an end in itself; it is also the most effective way to address the underlying causes of conflict, extremism and terrorism. Tackling poverty and inequality, strengthening State institutions and civil society and promoting human rights are critical to preventing conflict and building resilient communities and societies. These goals are central to both the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the African Union Agenda 2063. We are working harmoniously with the African Union, through our joint framework for sustainable development, in order to build a peaceful and prosperous Africa with a strong focus on inclusivity, women's rights and gender equality. The meaningful participation of women and women's leadership will strengthen our responses and are essential to lasting peace.

Addressing the climate crisis is another vital preventive measure. Climate-related risks, including droughts, floods and changing rainfall patterns, often intersect with political, social and economic factors. We must urgently reduce our emissions to prevent consequences that would be catastrophic for sustainable development and security across Africa and step up support for the countries that are worst affected. Today, it is indisputable that climate change has aggravated security challenges, particularly in the Sahel.

Nearly half of Africa's population of 1.3 billion people are under the age of 15. Education, training and job opportunities for this generation must be central to any development strategy. As we saw most recently in the Sudan, women and young people are the key builders of peaceful societies. I urge the Council to work with them and for them far more effectively.

(spoke in English)

When prevention fails, the United Nations works with our partners to reduce suffering, resolve conflicts and build sustainable peace. We strongly support the African Union's Silencing the Guns by 2020 initiative as a basis for advancing peace and security and offering a

safer and better future. I commend the Security Council for its resolution 2457 (2019) on this initiative and for emphasizing the role of young people. Our enhanced strategic partnership with the African Union on peace and security is based on the Joint Framework for an Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security agreed in 2017. It was demonstrated again in February when the Council unanimously adopted resolution 2457 (2019), on steps towards ending conflict in Africa through enhanced international cooperation and partnership (see S/PV.8473).

Our largest peacekeeping missions are on the African continent, where more than 80,000 peacekeepers are serving. Africa is now the largest troop-contributing region. We owe these Blue Helmets our strong and united support through robust funding and strong mandates. I commend the Council's cooperation with the African Union, including with its Peace and Security Council. Across the continent, the United Nations is working in steadfast and close cooperation with the African Union and African subregional organizations to prevent and resolve conflicts.

The Central African Republic is just one example of this. The United Nations, the African Union and others are cooperating in support of the historic Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation reached in February to end violence against civilians, strengthen the extension of State authority and bring social development to that conflict-ravaged country.

Conflict prevention is difficult to quantify and may not make the news, but no news is good news for the people we serve. Prevention brings enormous rewards. Conflict prevention and resolution depend on the engagement of the parties involved. Beyond that, they require a united international position and a commitment to shared goals. The Council's strong engagement in prevention efforts on the African continent, in collaboration with regional and subregional partners, is needed and appreciated more than ever.

The President: I thank the Secretary-General for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Ms. Mulamula.

Ms. Mulamula: At the outset, allow me to express my gratitude to you, Mr. President, for organizing this extremely important debate on the centrality of preventative diplomacy, conflict prevention and resolution in addressing the agenda for peace and

security in Africa. I am so honoured and humbled to be among the invited briefers and to have been given the first opportunity to share with the Council my experience and appeal with regard to the role of women in peacebuilding and conflict resolution. Before I do that, I wish to congratulate you, Sir, on presiding over the work of the Council during October, which is an important month in the history of the United Nations.

The entire world is witnessing the erosion of multilateralism and its contribution to making the world a better place for all of us to live. The fact that the Council is debating the primacy of preventive diplomacy is a stark reminder that we have not lived up to the *raison d'être* of the United Nations, in which we the peoples declared our determination to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war. As the Council deliberates on the important steps required to strengthen preventative diplomacy, allow me to flag some of the issues arising from my own experience and the various peace processes I have been involved in, as well as the women's platforms in which I have had the privilege of participating.

I come from Tanzania, a country that has played an extraordinary role in conflict resolution, preventive diplomacy and peacebuilding in the Great Lakes region and beyond. Therefore, I wish to state here that my career path has exposed me to conflict resolution, managing conflicts and seeking negotiated solutions. I had the privilege to serve as the first Executive Secretary of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region. The evolution of that organization can be traced from the Rwandan genocide and the wars that embroiled the Great Lakes region between 1994 and 2004. This regional framework constitutes regional responses to the violent conflicts and genocide that plagued the region.

Every single peace initiative, intervention, mediation process, concept, framework and legal instrument has been tried in the Great Lakes region. The signing of the Pact on Security, Stability and Development in the Great Lakes Region, which established the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, was seen as a milestone that demonstrated the strong political will of States of the region to build the structures and expand the scope of responsibility for prevention beyond Governments. This brought civil society and women and youth groups on board. The follow-up mechanisms that were established, including the Summit of Heads of State, the Regional Ministerial

Council, the Secretariat and national coordination mechanisms, were put in place to ensure appropriate measures to prevent conflicts escalating to violence and mass-atrocity levels.

The complexity of the issues involved in the cyclical violence requires that any meaningful attempt to address issues of peace and security in the region and on the African continent be based on a regional framework and approach, because the countries of the region are likely to have a better understanding of the situation on the ground than external actors. Although over time the assessment of legitimacy and the role of the countries in the region that share common interests have been called into question — and scholars have written a great deal about this — I want to emphasize that despite the few politically unstable situations that remain, as well as the many unresolved issues, at least the guns have been silenced in that part of the region for now.

I had the enormous responsibility of sustainably transforming legacies and cycles of violent conflicts and genocide into peaceful coexistence between the communities and countries of the region. It was not an easy task, but as the saying goes, if you want to get something done, give it to a woman, and if you want it well said, give it to a man. My task was to facilitate dialogue to prevent, contain and manage situations likely to affect peace and security, and to seek to identify potential triggers of intra- and inter-State hostilities.

In reading one of the *United Nations Conflict Prevention and Preventive Diplomacy in Action* reports, I am sorry to see that the use of the Secretary-General's good offices by deploying special envoys and representatives in conflict areas is aimed more at attempting to prevent conflicts or crises from escalating than preventing them from occurring altogether. There have been successful cases reported in Mali, Burkina Faso, Colombia and elsewhere, but it is usually a case of too little, too late. I want to remind the Council that at the peak of the political crisis in Burundi, the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) country configuration was supposed to undertake a mission there. On the ground, we were eagerly awaiting reinforcement from the PBC. But the mission was cancelled at the last minute because of what was termed the security situation in the country, while leaders from the region were flowing into Burundi.

I will now turn to the agenda on women and peace and security, because in view of the briefers around the table I assume that it will be one of the focus areas of today's debate. At the 2005 World Summit, world leaders reaffirmed the important role of women in conflict prevention and resolution and in peacebuilding. They called for the full and effective implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security, and for the first time accepted the existence of interlinkages between development, peace, security and human rights. In addition, and further to the obligations under resolution 1325 (2000), in February 2013 the United Nations and the leaders of the Great Lakes region — the one I know best — signed the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region and its Women's Platform. The Women's Platform for that volatile region, of which I am an integral part, provides a framework for promoting the important role of women in the peace and political processes in the region, and contributes to achieving much-desired stability by participating in the creation of the requisite conditions for peace and development in the region, among other things.

The remarkable thing, worth reporting here, is that although the platform was initiated and launched by Mrs. Mary Robinson, then Special Envoy of the Secretary-General to the Great Lakes Region, her successors, Ambassador Djinnit and the current Special Envoy, Ambassador Xia, who are both men, have made this their flagship programme for preventive diplomacy and peacebuilding in the region, with tremendous success. The joint peace missions of the African Union (AU) and the United Nations conducted in Burundi, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Sudan would not have been possible without their full support in terms of resources and political will. I want to salute them for being outstanding models, in both words and deeds, in the HeForShe campaign.

Despite the many instruments, national action plans and implementation mechanisms, women do not yet have equal representation or demonstrable influence on policies relating to peace and security. Violence against women remains perhaps the most pervasive human rights violation in the African continent and the Great Lakes region in particular. The lack of African women's participation in formal mediation processes, and at the negotiating table in peace processes in particular,

reflects an important area of the resolution 1325 (2000) agenda that remains poorly implemented.

Moreover, women's significant contributions to subnational and local mediation and conflict-prevention initiatives, and their strong role in them, continue to go largely unrecognized and weakly supported. It was against that backdrop that the African Union took landmark decisions leading to the establishment of the Network of African Women in Conflict Prevention and Mediation, officially referred to as FemWise-Africa. The modalities of its operations were endorsed by the AU Peace and Security Council on 13 March 2017 and by the Security Council on 27 March 2017, in an Arria Formula meeting. With the Council's indulgence, I would like to explain a bit more about FemWise-Africa, which I view as directly relevant to the objectives of this debate on preventive diplomacy and peace and security in Africa.

FemWise, as its name suggests, aims to strengthen the role of women in conflict prevention and mediation efforts in the context of the African Peace and Security Architecture. The Network provides a platform for strategic advocacy, capacity-building and networking aimed at enhancing the implementation of the commitments on women's inclusion in peacemaking in Africa. Among its priorities are professionalizing the role of women in preventive diplomacy and mediation on tracks 1, 2 and 3, and ensuring a channel for their meaningful and effective participation in peace processes. Overall, FemWise-Africa aims at bridging the gaps between mediation efforts on tracks 1, 2 and 3 and synergizing efforts towards inclusive peace processes with sustainable outcomes.

We were in Burundi in June on a joint peace mission of FemWise-Africa and the Office of the Special Envoy to the Great Lakes Region, carried out under the leadership of Ms. Catherine Samba-Panza, former interim President of the Central African Republic, and Ms. Speciosa Kazibwe, former Vice-President of Uganda, now a member of the Panel of the Wise of the African Union. The mission's objective was to engage the authorities in Burundi, the Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of the Congo in involving women, civil society and other stakeholders in dialogue. We thought it was timely to engage all stakeholders in such preventive diplomacy in Burundi in particular, as the country heads towards general elections next year.

What struck us most is how the Burundi have been receptive to FemWise-Africa and its localized efforts. With the support of the Ministry of Gender, they have formed mediation teams at the community level, drawing inspiration from FemWise-Africa to mitigate conflicts and tension among communities before they escalate to crisis levels. This is an example of a good practice of preventive diplomacy at the local and grassroots levels, which needs to be scaled up and supported if we are to achieve sustained peace and development in that country.

The AU involves women in its Silencing the Guns by 2020 initiative. We met in Constantine, Algeria, to see how to best we can play our role in ensuring that the African Union meets those aspirations. Next year, we will celebrate the anniversaries of those landmark aspirations, including 20 years of resolution 1325 (2000); 25 years of the Beijing Platform for Action, which is the model for the 30 per cent gender quota for women representation; and, of course, Silencing the Guns in Africa by 2020. The question is will the guns be silent in Africa come 2020?

The African Women Leaders Network, launched jointly in June 2017 by the African Union Commission and the United Nations, in partnership with the Federal Republic of Germany, here at United Nations Headquarters, is aimed at bolstering the leadership of women in governance, peace and security for Africa's transformation, including by participating actively in ensuring that women play a meaningful role in silencing the guns through advocacy and sensitization of communities. As a coordinator of the peace and security pillar of the Network, I call on the Council to recognize those efforts and support the Network with the resources necessary to make a difference.

I am proud to report that the Network, under the able leadership of Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed, Ms. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, Executive Director of UN-Women, and Ms. Bineta Diop, AU Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security, has set the goal of generating sustainable and concrete actions for women in Africa, in line with the African Union and United Nations commitments to prevention and the delivery of tangible solutions on the ground. Women do not need to prove their substantive impact to find solutions to the drivers of armed conflict and displacement. Instead they should reinforce their proactive role in peacebuilding and sustainable development.

I am encouraged by the Secretary-General's initiative for making prevention the overarching priority for achieving peace and development. Today's meeting is a clear testament to the commitment of States and the Council to take deliberate measures to prevent conflicts and mass atrocities in Africa and worldwide. My humble appeal to the Council is to put our money where our mouth is, that is, to invest in conflict prevention and efforts that target the root causes and drivers of violence.

It is high time to see women not as victims, but as agents of preventive diplomacy who are catalysts for peacebuilding. I am again privileged to be a member of the Secretary-General's Peacebuilding Fund Advisory Group, where women empowerment and youth programmes have been accorded priority. Nevertheless, we are still unable to effectively and meaningfully engage local women organizations, due to the hamstrung financial regulations and criteria that govern the Fund. Those need to be changed in line with the Secretary-General's commitment to ensuring that women play a meaningful role in preventive diplomacy, conflict resolution, peacebuilding and sustainable development.

Drawing from the aforementioned, let me conclude with a few recommendations.

First and foremost, as the Council deliberates on preventive diplomacy, there is no need to reinvent the wheel as the necessary mechanisms, frameworks and legal instruments already exist, including regional mechanisms such as the national action plans under resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security, which remain unimplemented due to lack of resources and, perhaps, political will.

Secondly, I need to emphasize that a regional or subregional approach is the most appropriate one and should be the primary response mechanism for preventive diplomacy in Africa.

Thirdly, we see that the annual costs of maintaining peacekeeping forces — more than \$1 billion, for example, in the case of the Democratic Republic of the Congo — would go a long way towards implementing national action plans that would translate commitments on women, peace and security into the national policies and programmes of many African countries.

Fourthly, I call on the Council to support and enhance the capacity of African regional organizations

and women engaged in conflict prevention and mediation through FemWise-Africa and other platforms for women. The focus should be on proactive conflict prevention, before conflict escalates, rather than reactive conflict prevention, preventing conflict that has occurred from escalating. The various initiatives taken at the international and regional levels will have no effect in ensuring local ownership for sustainability if they work in isolation from the local initiatives. As mentioned in the Secretary-General's statement, regional blocs have assumed a vital role in conflict resolution through mediation efforts despite the challenges they face. They need to be capacitated and supported.

Fifthly, there is a need to develop a holistic and inclusive approach that ensures that no one is left behind. The African Union Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development have placed women and youth at the centre of their aspirations. It goes without saying that collaboration and cooperation among various institutions and communities that are active in this field is essential. I participate in various preventative frameworks, including the Global Action Against Mass Atrocity Crimes, which is mentioned in the Secretary-General's report on the responsibility to protect (S/2019/463). It is a global, inclusive, State-led network of partners, with the support of the Swiss Government, that is engaged in atrocity prevention. It seeks to support States that wish to develop national architectures for the prevention of atrocity crimes. I invite the Security Council to work closely with such institutions.

Finally, dialogue and mediation are vital soft-power approaches that should be leveraged as the Council reflects on the centrality and value of preventative diplomacy.

As a woman peace activist and champion of women leadership, the subject that I teach, let me conclude here by quoting a famous saying in Burundi, "Nothing about us without us." We are here and ready and willing to be deployed in any peace mission, mediation or peacekeeping forces. There is no need to look far. The African Women Leaders Network and the FemWise-Africa network are at the Secretary-General's disposal if he needs able and qualified women to assist him in his good offices and diplomatic efforts.

The legendary South African singer, Yvonne Chaka Chaka, defined women as well-organized men. We are all in this together.

The President: I thank Ms. Mulamula for her briefing.

I now give the floor to Ms. Maite.

Ms. Maite: I thank you very much, Sir, for the opportunity to address the Council.

My name is Naledi Maite and I represent an organization called South African Women in Dialogue, commonly known as SAWID, which I became affiliated with at the age of 18. SAWID is an independent South African women's forum committed to providing a platform for every woman to be heard through dialogue in order to improve the status of women in our country.

SAWID was born out of an organic process of sisterhood and solidarity. The journey began in 2002, at the time of the Inter-Congolese Dialogue, which took place in Sun City, a conferencing and holiday resort in South Africa. As it may be recalled, this was the second attempt as the initial dialogue in Ethiopia had collapsed. We as South Africans, like the rest of the world, watched the proceedings on our television screens, hoping that a common peace agreement would finally be achieved. However, the marked absence of ordinary South Africans in and around the talks gave a group of women the idea to organize themselves and to drive to Sun City. On their arrival, the intention was not to meddle in the affairs of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. They came with one very simple message, namely, to pledge their solidarity with the struggle of the women of that country. For them, it was agonizing to watch the tensions and anxiety among the women participating in the process and how they were not central but peripheral to the talks.

As recognized in resolution 1325 (2000), in times of conflict it is women and children who are the worst affected. Having experienced their own political transition just eight years prior, that handful of South African women understood first-hand for whom the shoe pinches and what it feels like to want peace yet not to have a voice. The small civil society delegation was well received, which gave birth to a number of activities. Chief among them was the Congolese and South African women's dialogue, held in Johannesburg in March 2003, at the request of Congolese women, and endorsed by

the leader of the Inter-Congolese Dialogue facilitation team, the late Sir Quett Ketumile Joni Masire.

The dialogue was attended by approximately 120 Congolese women and 180 South African women and its purpose was twofold. The first was to facilitate dialogue among Congolese women. Tensions ran high at the start of the dialogue. As one can imagine, the women came from different warring parties and factions and dialogue was therefore difficult and almost impossible at the start. The second purpose was for the South African delegation to share experiences and strategies on institutional mechanisms and laws with a view to providing an environment for women's emancipation and equality in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Following the success of the dialogue, the Congolese women resolved to hold a follow-up conference, which took place in Kinshasa in May 2003. At the conference, they collectively created a framework for the Inter-Congolese Dialogue to integrate women and ensure their effective participation in the transitional process. Through the newly created collective, they pressured the various negotiating parties to sign a final agreement. Through the dialogue process, Congolese women, in spite of deep-rooted and historical divisions, demonstrated that even if one is affected by or a party to conflict, that does not mean that it is impossible to work towards a common goal, namely, that of peace and stability in their country.

Emanating from these interactions with the Congolese women was the realization by South African women of the need to reflect on their own journey since achieving democracy. The process with our sisters from the Democratic Republic of the Congo revealed to us that we had assumed the existence of our cohesion and unity, which was not necessarily the case. The women realized that post-1994, they had handed over their agency to Government, creating a void, particularly at the grass-roots level, and that there was an urgent need for a collective voice representing the interests of women in the new South Africa and enabling women to play a more active role in ensuring that we contribute towards nation-building and sustaining peace.

That is what led to the birth of South African Women in Dialogue, an event held in July 2003 and attended by approximately 1,000 South African women from all walks of life. Our carefully crafted dialogue model was based on three key guiding principles, which

were largely influenced by the lessons learnt from our interactions with our sisters from the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

First was the creation of a non-partisan platform where women were encouraged to express their own individual views and not those of the organizations they were affiliated with.

Second was the issue of diverse participation, which stems from the realization that women are not a homogenous group and that we are divided by many issues, such as ethnicity, religious beliefs, class and political affiliations, just to mention a few. It was also a way to move away from the global tendency of educated and middle-class women setting the agenda for and speaking on behalf rural and poor urban women. Such inclusion is the backbone of the model as there can be no legitimate outcome from a process that is not inclusive.

The third guiding principle was the facilitation of a private, self-reflective space away from the glare of the cameras, where women could unburden themselves, albeit momentarily, of current traumas and stresses. That created a communion of sisterhood and shared understanding of our commonalities and became the foundation of honest and effective dialogue.

From that moment, SAWID grew to become a formidable brand that was adopted wholeheartedly by South African women. It went on to host 10 national dialogues, which cascaded into many more provincial and community-based dialogues that adopted the SAWID model. Major local successes of SAWID include facilitating the inclusion of women's voices and experiences in the national development plan. SAWID also led and lobbied for the establishment of a women's ministry and lobbied for and presented a poverty eradication model, which it implemented jointly with the Government. Under its pan-African peace and reconciliation dialogue programme, SAWID also went on to facilitate peace dialogues with the women of Burundi, shortly before the 2004 elections, and with the women of the Sudan in 2007. It also facilitated an African Peer Review Mechanism dialogue in 2006 and has participated in election observer missions in various African countries.

Through those dialogues over the years, the efforts of the SAWID forum can be summarized as having facilitated partnerships between women and national and international bodies to shape community, provincial, national and continental agendas. Through

the use of dialogue, SAWID has contributed to strengthening solidarity and social cohesion with the aim of promoting and consolidating peace, security and stability in local communities and on the continent, thereby creating a conducive space for socioeconomic development and the eradication of poverty.

In closing, I would like to emphasize that SAWID believes that dialogue is an important tool for both conflict prevention and the overall consolidation of peace in developing and post-conflict societies. Most often, initiatives like SAWID are looked upon as soft approaches to maintaining peace and preventing conflict. As a result, most post-conflict strategies neglect such initiatives, often prioritizing the military, infrastructure and other development issues. Those are important issues to prioritize; however, it is essential for Governments to recognize that the project of rebuilding societal links, acknowledging the pain and trauma of citizens and actively investing in the healing of nations is also of paramount importance and is by no means a soft matter.

Investing in constructive dialogue mechanisms at all levels of society may be a saving grace for fragile and volatile communities. However, we would caution that, despite their efficacy, those dialogues should not be a grand one-off effort. Our biggest lesson from the South African Women in Dialogue interventions is that dialogue must be consistent and sustained in time, otherwise the positive benefits of the understanding and agreements reached during the dialogue can become diluted and violence can re-emerge.

The South African Women in Dialogue forum has been progressively evolving and continues to champion the interests of South African women. However, due to the lack of adequate resourcing, its scope has been dwindling. That diminished presence has once again created a void, and South African women are yearning for the forum's revitalization. The rate of violence against women and children, including femicide and rape, have reached unprecedented levels in South Africa, and we occupy a low ranking on the Global Peace Index. Those are just a few indicators of why initiatives like the South African Women in Dialogue forum must be preserved, especially at the grass-roots level.

The President: I thank Ms. Maite for her briefing.

I now give the floor to Ms. Vilakazi.

Ms. Vilakazi: Let me also add my gratitude for this opportunity to brief the Security Council. As already said, my name is Linda Vilakazi and I come from Johannesburg, South Africa. I am an African and care deeply about the equal treatment of all people, in particular women and their inclusion at all levels of society. I work at the Zanele Mbeki Development Trust, where I coordinate the African Women in Dialogue platform, which was launched in 2018.

Our collective experience gained through the successful 16-year-long journey of the South African Women in Dialogue platform, as already mentioned by my colleague Ms. Naledi Maite, led to the realization that an impressive number of African women occupy various important positions at the local and global levels, which we applaud and celebrate; however, we note that, as a continent, we have not yet built a mechanism to help us access and utilize their experience and expertise for the benefit of all.

That has made it even more clear to us that, as a continent, we lack a mechanism to meet as African women on African soil. Often, we are convened by others outside the continent, at their expense and on their agenda. For example, we meet at the annual Davos World Economic Forum, at the Commission on the Status of Women and in many other forums. Although such exposure is necessary, their outcomes do not often translate into real value for the masses of Africans back home, in particular marginalized women.

That realization motivated us to take the South African Women in Dialogue model, as shared earlier by my colleague, to the continent as a whole. From 19 to 23 November 2018, backed by many African women, we successfully launched the African Women in Dialogue platform, which was held over five days and attended by 1,000 women from 16 Southern African Development Community countries and beyond. The launch was held in Johannesburg. Bolstered by that successful inaugural launch, we are now ready to host the 2019 Dialogue, to be attended by another cohort of 1,000 women from all 55 African countries — an unprecedented achievement that will set the bar for future dialogues.

Like the South African Women in Dialogue model, the African Women in Dialogue platform is designed to be inclusive, open to all, non-hierarchical and non-partisan. Our inclusivity guide insists on 60 per cent attendance by grass-roots and marginalized women — the women we often speak about and purport

to represent. Our aim is to bring them into the room, because their experience, voice and power are among the key ingredients necessary to help us unite to heal our continent and move towards peaceful coexistence.

Women attend the dialogues as individuals, not representing any specific mandate except our personal views, which we use to find solutions to our various struggles. All women are treated as equals by the African Women in Dialogue, with no class distinctions; we do not stand on ceremony but instead we recognize the experience brought by each woman in the room. The African Women in Dialogue week becomes a festival of ideas, guided by an agenda for a peaceful, just and better continent, with women connecting, learning from each other and sharing as they showcase the incredible work of women from villages, towns and communities across the continent.

Our model is simple, yet it requires patience and resourcing and appreciation of the individuality of each woman attending. The model requires paying conscious and deliberate attention to the support needed to maximize the presence and contribution of each participant. Beyond the five-day dialogue, the platform seeks to continue an ongoing chain of women connected throughout the years, using dialogue to overcome barriers and find solutions.

We do that work fully aware that it is no easy task, that it is expensive, complex and obscured by stereotypes and requires hard work. As my colleague Ms. Maite already alluded to, dialogue has the benefit of helping us rise above our differences and seek that which binds us. It has been proven that dialogue spaces can be used as platforms for development, while acting as preventative systems for potential conflict and can bring about post-conflict resolution.

The agenda for the 2019 five-day African Women in Dialogue attests to that, as we cover a broad range of topics — from entrepreneurship and women's economic opportunities to unpacking the opportunities, challenges and even the inherent threats of the fourth industrial revolution and discussing issues of African feminism. We even train women on how to use dialogue as a tool for mediation and include self-mastery discussions. The African Women in Dialogue will review resolution 1325 (2000) and the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, among many other documents that we have discussed over time.

As we speak now, the team back home is finalizing logistics for the unparalleled 2019 African Women in Dialogue to be held from 4 to 8 November. It is possible that some of the African leaders present at this meeting will hear of the group of women back home challenging their officials to provide them with travel documents to go join other African women in Johannesburg. Some of those women have never travelled outside their villages and, as such, may first have to apply for a birth certificate and then a passport, followed by a visa, which are issues of identity and are still central to building peace on the continent. All of that is taxing and expensive in terms of finances, emotions and time. I ask that those leaders therefore please lend a hand if they come across such requests.

In essence, the African Women in Dialogue platform presents a unique, much-needed opportunity for all of us to be authentic about the involvement of African women in their diversity, as active players in conflict prevention and preventative diplomacy. It is a known fact that the ongoing conflicts in Africa continue to form the bulk of the items on the agenda of the Security Council, and we wish to change that for the better.

We therefore seek the support of the Council to help support and enable African Women in Dialogue processes, as located at the village, community and country levels, through its multilateral agreements. The commitments made by the Council on the topic “Peace and security in Africa: mobilizing youth towards silencing the guns by 2020” will remain an elusive ideal, among others, if women and youth are not adequately engaged as core participants in the ongoing peacebuilding process.

Chapter VI, Article 33, of the Charter of the United Nations states that parties to a dispute shall seek a solution through political means, including negotiation and mediation. For that to happen, we argue that supporting inclusive dialogue, as in the model of the African Women in Dialogue platform, should be the tool used to fulfil that Article. It is apparent that preventative diplomacy is, and has been, utilized by the United Nations system at large, and the office of the Secretary-General in particular through its role of good offices. However, that has not always been regarded as a central pillar of the work of the Security Council. As African women, we therefore hope that through the African Women in Dialogue platform this pillar can come to fruition, and I urge members of civil

society to join us and support grass-roots-level dialogue that is led by women in all their diversity and unity. We hope that following this briefing, the Security Council will resolve to embrace, support and adopt the practice of inclusive dialogue as a credible and viable tool for preventive diplomacy and thereby inspire others to do the same.

In conclusion, we believe that through this platform, African countries can build and maintain peace by engaging with all women as they operate from their local spaces, connected with others by their participation in the annual dialogue platform. In the final analysis, our objective is to enable communities to own and drive their peace processes, making this a lasting principle that underpins engagement for development and builds social cohesion across African borders. That is our story, our journey and our resolve to convene annually as African women on African soil, driven by an African agenda for inclusive development and the maintenance of peace in our communities.

The President: I thank Ms. Vilakazi for her briefing.

I now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements.

Mr. Alotaibi (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to express our sincere gratitude to you, Mr. President, for convening this important meeting on a vital and essential topic. I also appreciate the invaluable briefings by the Secretary-General and all of today’s briefers.

The resolution of conflicts through mediation is one of the means and manifestations of civilization for resolving international disputes by conducting constructive and meaningful dialogue among the various parties involved. The Charter of the United Nations contains many tools that promote the settlement of disputes through peaceful means, especially under the provisions of Chapter VI, which sets out steps for resolving disputes between parties to a conflict by, as Article 33 puts it,

“negotiations, enquiry, mediation, conciliation, arbitration, judicial settlement, resort to regional agencies or arrangements, or other peaceful means of their own choice.”

That was clearly demonstrated in the role that Ethiopia and the African Union (AU) played in assisting the parties concerned in the Sudan to reach an agreement concerning the transitional period between the

Transitional Military Council and the Forces of Freedom and Change. Chapter VI emphasizes the importance of the preventive role played by the Security Council and emphasizes its ability to call on the parties to a conflict to settle their disputes by such peaceful means. It may investigate any dispute or position that might lead to international friction that could endanger the maintenance of international peace and security.

Chapter VIII of the Charter promotes the peaceful resolution of local disputes through arrangements with regional and subregional organizations, because of their geographical proximity and historical knowledge of such disputes. In that context, we should pay tribute to the Charter-based cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union, which is steadily and commendably developing. Reviewing the aspects and patterns of that cooperation, we find significant progress in every aspect, especially between their two councils, the Security Council and the AU Peace and Security Council, which hold annual joint meetings. We look forward to the thirteenth of those meetings, to be held in Addis Ababa in the second half of October. We are also seeing continued cooperation between the Peacebuilding Commission and every African Union entity. We call for maintaining those gains and building on them, especially the Action for Peacekeeping initiative, with a view to ensuring that peacekeeping missions are better equipped and more efficient, secure and robust. That requires strong Security Council mandates with predictable and sustainable financing. In that regard, we commend the African Union's commitment to continuing to cover 25 per cent of the costs of its peace operations and look forward to the adoption of a resolution enabling the financing of peacekeeping operations under African leadership.

Based on Article 19 of the Charter, the Secretary-General plays a fundamental role that grants him the right to responsibility for preventing conflicts through his good offices or through his envoys and special representatives in conflict zones. As a demonstration of the priority that the Secretary-General gives the issue of mediation, since assuming his post he has established a High-level Advisory Board on Mediation as a tool for using mediation and preventive diplomacy in conflict prevention.

The Secretary-General's special envoys and representatives and their teams also play a major and commendable role in conflict resolution. In view of the significance that Kuwait attaches to preventive

diplomacy, and in recognition of its noble importance, a high-level debate on conflict prevention and mediation (see S/PV.8546) was organized in June during the Kuwait presidency of the Council, under the agenda item on the maintenance of international peace and security. We reiterate the importance of promoting the role of prevention and mediation in conflict prevention and resolution, as well as of cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations in the maintenance of international peace and security. We remain fully convinced that the Security Council can make use of many of the preventive measures offered in the Charter, including, for example, sending small missions of a few members of the Council, a measure that it has used in the past.

In conclusion, the Security Council, with all its accumulated experience, lessons learned and decades-long institutional memory, is undoubtedly capable of taking innovative and preventive measures and steps in the area of conflict prevention and mediation, which will inevitably contribute to the maintenance of international peace and security, through both its field visits and its sanctions regimes on individuals and entities. The success and effectiveness of the Council's role in preventive diplomacy depend on the timing of its interventions and its use of those tools. The earlier an intervention is made to ensure an appropriate response, the better the eventual outcome in terms of material losses and human casualties.

Mr. Ipo (Côte d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): My delegation welcomes the convening of today's debate on the importance of preventive diplomacy in conflict prevention and resolution, which is fully in line with the priorities set in the Joint United Nations-African Union Framework for an Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security. We commend Secretary-General António Guterres and today's briefers for their presentations, which among other things have informed the Council on the quality of the cooperation between the two institutions. My delegation also welcomes the participation of representatives of civil society in our debate and the relevance of their briefings.

The signing on 19 April 2017 of the Joint United Nations-African Union Framework institutionalized more predictable, systematic and strategic cooperation between the two organizations. It enables both institutions to intervene rapidly, coherently and decisively in order to prevent, manage and resolve conflicts on the continent. My statement will focus

on three areas — the importance of early-warning and rapid-response mechanisms as tools for anticipating and preventing conflicts; the need to support the efforts of regional and subregional organizations in the areas of mediation, peacekeeping and peacebuilding; and the importance of an inclusive approach to integrating civil society, women and young people in the prevention and resolution of conflicts.

The new types of threats to peace and security in Africa require a coordinated response from several actors, including the United Nations, the African Union (AU), subregional organizations and civil society. The efforts of those actors in the context of a preventive approach will be effective only if they are based on identifying the early signs of conflict through various sociopolitical, economic, climate and environmental indicators. It is on the basis of that condition that they can prevent crises from occurring, or, where they have already occurred, provide effective and sustainable responses. By placing the Continental Early Warning System at the core of the African Peace and Security Architecture, the African Union is demonstrating its willingness to increase its capacity to anticipate and prevent conflicts. Its interaction with the early-warning and rapid-response systems of the regional economic communities enables it to identify the signs and underlying structural causes of conflicts and develop more effective preventive responses.

In the same spirit of anticipation, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) has set up the ECOWAS Early Warning and Response Network, also known as ECOWARN, which, in synergy with its expanded implementation by States members, has enabled it to carry out numerous preventive diplomacy efforts in recent years. Alerts that are signalled during the run-up to elections, or at times when internal political tensions threaten to become open conflicts, enable mediation efforts and good-offices missions to be directed at the political actors and civil-society organizations in the countries concerned. Overall, despite the many challenges they face, including disparities and weak cooperation among central, regional and national systems and the gap between early warning and rapid response, the early-warning systems of the African Union and subregional organizations have made significant progress. They are now essential links in conflict prevention and resolution mechanisms in Africa and therefore deserve support.

My country believes that in order to be effective, conflict-prevention and -resolution efforts must be part of a collective and coordinated approach that enables the United Nations, the African Union and subregional organizations to align their initiatives. That is the case with the partnership between the United Nations and the AU, which among other things enables a shared understanding of the root causes of conflicts and joint visits, as we saw recently in the Central African Republic and Libya. Such concerted preventive diplomacy efforts facilitate support for political processes aimed at resolving crises and peacebuilding in countries emerging from conflict. Côte d'Ivoire is pleased to see the expansion of that cooperative dynamic in conflict prevention to African subregional organizations. That is why African Union representatives and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS) take part in meetings of the ECOWAS Mediation and Security Council, ministerial meetings and summits of Heads of State and Government, the main decision-making bodies on regional peace and security issues.

My country commends the exemplary cooperation between ECOWAS and UNOWAS, whose effectiveness was fully borne out in the prevention and management of crises in their successive interventions in Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Burkina Faso and the Gambia. That cooperation has helped to strengthen national and regional capacities in terms of conflict resilience, anchoring democracy, good governance and creating environments conducive to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

My delegation is of the view that the prevention of conflicts by building stable and resilient societies must necessarily take into account the indispensable contribution of civil-society organizations, women and young people. Women and young people should therefore be mobilized and their energy and creativity put to the best possible use by involving them more fully in negotiations and political processes aimed at ending crises, as well as in peacebuilding activities such as national reconciliation, social cohesion, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration processes, and security sector reform.

In conclusion, Côte d'Ivoire reaffirms its commitment to multilateralism as an appropriate framework for providing concerted responses to challenges related to the maintenance of international

peace and security. In that regard, we reiterate our call for solidarity on the part of the international community, as well as for strengthening cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations in their efforts to preserve or restore peace and stability.

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We thank you, Mr. President, for organizing today's debate. We are grateful to Secretary-General António Guterres for his briefing, and we also thank Ambassador Mulamula, Ms. Maite and Ms. Vilakazi for their interesting briefings. We fully support the subject that our South African friends have placed at the centre of today's discussion. The task of preventing armed conflict was indeed conferred on the United Nations and the Security Council at the Organization's founding. Why it is not being carried out as it should be is a major question. The answer may be a question of political will, or the lack of it.

Yet the prevention of armed conflicts, especially on the African continent, is crucial to the process of ensuring global stability. Today preventive diplomacy and its main mechanisms — mediation and good offices — are more essential than ever. As Ms. Mulamula said earlier, we certainly do not need to reinvent the wheel. The United Nations has every necessary tool at its disposal as a basis for its work in this area: Chapters I and VI of the Charter of the United Nations, as well as a number of additional resolutions, including resolution 2171 (2014), which enshrined the fundamental principles of international assistance in this area. We welcome the Secretary-General's efforts to strengthen that capacity. The establishment in 2017 of his High-Level Advisory Board on Mediation, composed of authoritative politicians and diplomats, was an important element of that. We fully share the assertion of the concept note (S/2019/786, annex) that the voice of Africa must be taken into account on issues of peace and security on the continent. And we believe that voice must be decisive. In accordance with the principle of national ownership, it is important that African countries themselves play an important role in conflict prevention and resolution. The job of the international community is to support such efforts while respecting States' sovereignty and complying strictly with the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of others.

We are pleased to note that a number of mechanisms and instruments for conflict prevention on the continent

have emerged in the arsenal of African countries in recent years. They are all included in the African Peace and Security Architecture, whose main elements are the Panel of the Wise, the Continental Early Warning System and the African Peace Facility. In carrying out its mandate for conflict prevention, the African Union (AU) is following its plan of action to build its mediation capacity and Standard Operating Procedures in Mediation Support strategy. Important commitments in the area of preventive diplomacy are also enshrined in the Joint United Nations-AU Framework for an Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security, signed in 2017, and there have been practical results in this area. In particular, the African Union has made a major contribution to the achievement of comprehensive peace agreements in the Central African Republic and South Sudan, the holding of peaceful and democratic elections in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Nigeria, and improvements in the situation in the Horn of Africa. Recent examples include the successful work of the Special Envoy of the African Union Commission Chairperson, Mr. Mohamed El Hacem Lebat, in stabilizing the situation in the Sudan.

African subregional organizations, including the Economic Community of West African States, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the Economic Community of Central African States also play a significant role. In that regard, we should not fail to mention the recent successful prevention of a political crisis in Madagascar by the African Union, the United Nations, SADC and other partners. We fully support the strengthening of partnerships between the Security Council and the AU Peace and Security Council. The Ad Hoc Working Group of the Security Council on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa has great potential in that regard. We believe that such cooperation should be based on mutual respect and in line with regional initiatives. Preventive diplomacy should be founded on an impartial and balanced approach, free of mentorship and pressure on political processes in sovereign States. Only mediation that is based on bringing positions closer together, seeking areas of agreement and the achievement of mutually acceptable accords has any chance of success.

It is essential to maintain dialogue with all constructive players involved in a conflict. It is also imperative to bear in mind the fine line between preventive diplomacy and putting pressure on domestic

political processes. Often all that is necessary to prevent conflict is ceasing to interfere in others' internal affairs and refraining from lecturing them on how to build democracy and respect human rights. An example of an altogether useless case of prevention was the NATO operation in Libya, which was carried out in violation of a Security Council mandate and led to myriad problems and the spread of terrorism in Libya and the Sahara-Sahel region.

We do not need that kind of prevention.

Russia will continue to provide consistent political support for the efforts of the African community to prevent and resolve conflicts in Africa. We are ready to continue to support Africa in strengthening its own potential to counter crises in the future, including by training peacekeepers and law-enforcement officers from African countries at Russian educational institutions. We hope that the forthcoming Russia-Africa summit, the first in history, will serve as a catalyst for our cooperation with African countries and give impetus to normalizing the situation on the continent.

Mrs. Van Vlierberge (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): I would like to begin by greeting and thanking South Africa for having taken the initiative of organizing this debate. I also thank the Secretary-General, Ms. Mulamula, Ms. Vilakazi and Ms. Maite for their introductory remarks.

Belgium believes that regional and subregional organizations play a crucial role in conflict prevention, in particular in Africa, where ownership of security challenges on the continent has made unquestioned progress over the past 10 years. When a crisis is looming, neighbouring States, the subregion and the continent are often the actors best placed to respond rapidly and effectively.

Belgium supports regional integration, as our history has shown us that this is the best way to resolve cross-border and regional problems in a consensus-based manner in order to unify regions and create solidarity. I would like to once again stress that it is in all of our interests for the African Union to strengthen its peace and security toolkit. Ultimately, African Union peace operations will need to enjoy more predictable, long-term and flexible financing. In the division of labour and responsibilities between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations, our approach

is guided by the pursuit of the most appropriate model in a given context.

Two years ago in the Gambia, we saw an excellent example of a subregional organization taking a leading role. In Guinea-Bissau, complementarity was ensured on the ground through the action of the Guinea-Bissau Group of Five. In the Central African Republic, the African Union saw its efforts supported by the Economic Community of Central African States and the United Nations, efforts that led to the peace agreement in that country. Joint high-level African Union-United Nations visits, with the participation of a representative of the European Union, are an effective tool for monitoring the situation in the Central African Republic.

In Burkina Faso, the Niger and Nigeria, the United Nations Office in West Africa is contributing to building capacities for the prevention of conflicts between pastoralists and farmers as well as intercommunal conflicts. These issues require a regional approach throughout West Africa, and we welcome the determination demonstrated by the Economic Community of West African States during its Extraordinary Summit held last month in Ouagadougou.

Mediation is an area where complementarity comes into full play. Regional and subregional organizations bring their local knowledge and expertise to the table, while the United Nations brings its neutrality and authority as well as universal norms. We commend the progress made in operationalizing the Mediation Support Unit and in the development of the FemWise-Africa women mediators' network, whose vital importance the Secretary-General and the three briefers have just underscored.

Our responsibility is to do everything in our power to prevent conflicts before they erupt. We must continue with our early-warning exercises, including exchanges of information between the Security Council and the Secretariat. But in order for these exercises to be useful, we must be as open as possible and not rule out any option or any information. Many United Nations entities and agencies as well as research institutions and civil-society organizations are privy to extremely valuable and detailed information that can inform us about incipient conflicts. Let us be proactive and pay attention to them and include such information in our deliberations.

But we also need to go further: early warning is meaningless unless we also have the capacity for a rapid

diplomatic response. Such a response is not necessarily the preserve of the Security Council; it can also be the good offices of the Secretary-General and his Special Envoys, and of Resident Coordinators. It can also include independent United Nations initiatives, as is the case in Cameroon at the moment.

One thing is certain: we must make greater headway on this front. Belgium stands ready and determined to work in this direction within and outside the Security Council.

Mr. Ugarelli (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): We would like to express our appreciation for the convening of this meeting and for the informative statements made by the Secretary-General, António Guterres, and today's briefers. Their briefings have underscored the critical importance of the primary goal enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, that is, the maintenance of international peace and security, and of the commitments we have undertaken to take collective measures to prevent and eradicate, in a just manner, threats to the peace.

This is particularly relevant in a context in which these challenges are ever more complex and multidimensional, requiring a necessary shift towards preventive diplomacy at both the global and the regional levels, based on timely risk assessments, early warning and management plans.

Against that backdrop, we believe that it is vital to promote greater involvement on the part of regional and subregional organizations, from the preventive perspective and when it comes to the promotion of peaceful means for the resolution of disputes.

For that reason, we note with interest that in the framework of the African Peace and Security Architecture, mechanisms have been set up that are aimed at preventing conflicts from escalating, including a continental early-warning system, as well as mechanisms aimed at preventing structural conflict, which seek to focus on the root causes thereof and the promotion of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the African Union's Agenda 2063, in coordination with the United Nations.

It would be very useful to analyse the experience gained through these mechanisms, including on any potential logistical difficulties in obtaining sufficient information to undertake prevention work; the need for predictable and sustainable financing; and the need for

a greater involvement by the private sector or global or subregional bodies that can bring to the table a better understanding of the realities on the ground, in particular in border areas.

To that end, we deem necessary the establishment of innovative mechanisms aimed at overcoming potential difficulties on the part of some States in taking a preventive approach to crisis situations or to improve their policies in certain sensitive areas. We believe that this work is particularly relevant in terms of electoral processes, peacebuilding efforts and transition processes, with a view to preventing a relapse into instability. It would also be important to twin this approach with the setting up of national early-warning systems or bodies aimed at promoting options for the easing of tensions through an inclusive approach.

We acknowledge also the importance of harnessing mediation as a way of resolving disputes in the framework of preventive action. This useful tool enjoys a real capacity to provide positive alternatives for action before and during conflict, and, as it responds to a mandate of the parties, is helpful in taking account those parties' sensitivities.

Here we would note the role played by the United Nations Political Offices in this respect, as well as their use as a timely source of early warning. It is key that such mediation activities have increased in many countries of the region in recent years, on the basis of successful experiences, and that the African Union has established a Mediation Support Unit. In that regard, we believe that it is crucial to develop multidisciplinary mediation teams in which women and young people are represented, as the briefers, Ms. Mulamula, Ms. Maite and Ms. Vilakazi, have just reminded us. Such teams should also have the necessary logistical and financial support.

We would like to conclude by emphasizing that investment in developing and strengthening regional preventive capacities is currently one of the most important priorities for the efficient and effective exercise of our shared responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security.

Mr. Allen (United Kingdom): It is customary for all Security Council members to thank the President of the meeting for convening a debate on an important topic when they have chosen one, but I really mean it. Preventive diplomacy is a vital tool of the Council in maintaining and restoring international peace and

security, which we do not use often enough. We cannot simply pay lip service to the primacy of political solutions. Collectively, the Council should be willing to engage with slow-burning political crises before they flare up into open conflict. That is why, during the presidency of the United Kingdom last August, we held an open debate on mediation (see S/PV.8334). I therefore thank you, Mr. President, for convening this debate on an important issue.

Let me pay tribute to the efforts of the African Union (AU) and African subregional organizations in that regard. The AU took swift and decisive action in June in response to a brutal crackdown on peaceful protesters in the Sudan. The subsequent AU mediation was crucial to supporting the Sudan's transition to a civilian-led Government. I am pleased that the Council was ultimately able to express its support for the African Union's position on the Sudan in June thanks, in no small measure, to the leadership of our African colleagues on the Council.

Our conflict prevention and resolution efforts work best where the United Nations, the African Union and subregional organizations coordinate to leverage their comparative advantages. We have seen that in the Central African Republic, where the United Nations and the African Union continue to play a vital role in supporting the implementation of the peace agreement. I hope that we will see further such coordinated efforts and actions to encourage peaceful dialogue and political processes.

In South Sudan, we urge the regional Governments, together with the African Union, the United Nations and all interested actors, to encourage the parties to make further progress in implementing the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan ahead of the critical 12 November deadline. That should include further direct contact between President Kiir Mayardit and Riek Machar. I hope that the Security Council is able to play a helpful role during its visit under your leadership, Mr. President, and that of our United States colleagues later this month.

In Cameroon, the United Kingdom welcomes the national dialogue that took place last week as an initial step to bring parties together to work towards peace. Further inclusive discussion about the root causes of grievances is urgently needed and all parties must take action to address those grievances. We are often asked

to ensure space for African organizations to take the lead on African issues. We therefore call on the African Union and the Economic Community of Central African States to support an inclusive and peaceful resolution of the crisis in Cameroon.

In Burundi, I welcomed our briefers raising the situation there. We encourage Burundian and regional actors to work together in the spirit of the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement in order to make progress on a long-term solution to the political crisis ahead of the 2020 elections. I hope that the Council and the Peacebuilding Commission can and will remain fully engaged.

There is of course no one-size-fits-all approach to conflict prevention and resolution. In some contexts we can best make headway by ensuring alignment by actors behind United Nations leadership, avoiding duplication of effort. That is the case in the United Kingdom's opinion, for example, in Libya, where the international community should follow a single shared road map towards the resumption of a political process, aligning behind Special Representative Salamé's leadership. That emphatically does not mean marginalizing regional voices. Rather, it means maximizing the United Nations ability to leverage the support and expertise of all relevant actors, including the African Union, the League of Arab States and the European Union, behind a successful process.

Conflict prevention is of course preferable to conflict resolution but it requires effective horizon-scanning capacities. I therefore commend the work of the United Nations Secretariat and the African Union Commission on strengthening their ability to conduct joint analysis and reporting. I also commend the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs for the useful discussion on horizon scanning that we held on Latin America some time ago. I hope to see the next one soon and that such discussions take place more frequently hereafter. It is very good, I think, for members of the Council to have an informal opportunity to understand the situation in a range of countries not on the Council's agenda.

I also welcome the development of the African Union Continental Early Warning System, which the United Kingdom is proud to support, including by funding secondeed roles within the AU Commission.

As we discussed in our debate on mobilizing the youth last week (see S/PV.8629), inclusive approaches

to conflict prevention and resolution are key to a lasting peace. That means supporting women peacebuilders at the grass-roots level and ensuring women's meaningful participation in peace processes, mediation and intercommunal dialogue. We welcome efforts to that end, such as the AU's Network of African Women in Conflict Prevention and Mediation, which the United Kingdom supports enthusiastically, and the Women Mediators across the Commonwealth initiative, to which the United Kingdom is contributing \$1.5 million. We hope that more Member States will offer their support to such initiatives, including by supporting the Global Alliance of Women Mediators Network, launched recently on the margins of the high-level week by the Secretary-General, I believe.

Mr. Singer Weisinger (Dominican Republic) (*spoke in Spanish*): We would like to thank the briefers for the detailed information provided today.

Preventive diplomacy has become an essential tool of United Nations action. In that regard, as Member States, we have committed to establishing a culture of prevention in taking collective action to prevent and eliminate threats to peace. We welcome the progress made with regard to establishing an early warning system, the good offices of the Secretary-General, Special Envoys, the deployment of political and peace missions on the ground and regional offices, among others. Despite the fact that the United Nations has actors, tools and instruments to prevent the spread of conflict and the development of preventive diplomacy, the task of conflict prevention poses many challenges that require action to maximize the possibility of successful diplomacy.

The Security Council is responsible for maintaining international peace and security and therefore plays a leading role in the area of preventive diplomacy. It is precisely the Council that is responsible for finding solutions that allow for the challenges posed by situations of crisis to be overcome.

We would also like to stress the importance of regional bodies in the peaceful settlement of disputes set out in Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations. We must continue to strengthen strategic partnerships with regional and subregional organizations. The local knowledge of regional organizations is necessary for the adoption of effective measures in the context of preventive diplomacy. Collective action can be strengthened by involving regional and local authorities,

in particular in the areas of prevention, development and post-conflict.

The Dominican Republic firmly believes in the participation of young people in efforts to stabilize societies and the great potential of women to transform societies and contribute to peace. Their participation is therefore critical in all aspects of dispute resolution. We emphasize the importance of the Silencing the Guns in Africa by 2020 initiative. We therefore welcome the progress made by the States members of the African Union (AU) in implementing the AU Master Roadmap of Practical Steps for Silencing the Guns in Africa by 2020.

Efforts must be redoubled to continue supporting the region in that endeavour, bearing in mind that the aspirations for peace, security and stability in Africa and the Sustainable Development Goals are common priorities of both the African Union's Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which constitute a reinforced alliance for peace and security in the region.

Lastly, we must identify and combat the social roots of the violence. As the international community continues to struggle to cope with destabilizing conflicts and their repercussions, the need has emerged to establish guidelines to regulate the escalation of United Nations involvement in conflicts. Prevention work requires that the relevant actors make political commitments to addressing situations that by their very nature carry the risk of renewed or resurgent conflict. In that regard, the Dominican Republic reiterates its commitment to achieving international peace and security, the goal towards which we must work together in order to enable the United Nations to carry out its core tasks in a coherent manner.

Mr. Schulz (Germany): I wish to thank all the briefers for their interesting presentations. We welcome the Secretary-General's strong commitment to conflict prevention and resolution, including mediation. We greatly appreciate the work of the United Nations through its good offices, special political missions and mediation support, which often remain invisible and do not make the news yet are critical for conflict resolution and prevention. Germany is very committed to this agenda of the Secretary-General and does everything in its power to support those efforts in very concrete terms. Let me give two examples.

First, the Peacebuilding Fund is one example of a successful effort that can have a quick impact and incentivize further funding in addressing a number of African conflicts. Germany just announced a second contribution of €15 million for 2019, bringing our contribution to a total of €30 million for this year alone.

Secondly, there is the example of mediation, which is a key instrument for advancing the peaceful resolution of conflicts. We believe that the United Nations, in particular its Mediation Support Unit, should remain a strong mediation actor. The Secretariat, the Mediation Support Unit and the Group of Friends of Mediation have contributed greatly to the promotion of high standards and professional approaches in the field of mediation. We fully support that effort.

In addition to being one of the main donors to the Mediation Support Unit, we are the largest donor to the Joint United Nations Development Programme-United Nations Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs Programme on Building National Capacities for Conflict Prevention, which is also referred to as the Peace and Development Advisers programme.

We thank the President for organizing the present discussion on the centrality of preventative diplomacy and conflict prevention and resolution in the context of peace and security in Africa, the central question of which, I think, is how the Security Council can become more efficient in preventing violent conflict in that particular context.

I think our briefers have basically provided the answer today by pointing out that we need an inclusive and multi-track approach. In order to prevent conflict, make peace and achieve peacebuilding, we essentially need two things — we need to involve all the relevant stakeholders and we need to cover all the relevant aspects of the conflict. Allow me to make a few remarks on the relevant aspects that we need to take into consideration.

First, we need early warning and early action. If we want to act early, we can successfully prevent crises only if we have sufficient and relevant information, which needs to be transmitted to the Council so that it may react early to upcoming challenges. We would like to encourage all members of the Council to regularly invite civil society briefers to give us input to that end.

Secondly, there is the aspect of human rights and conflict prevention. We need clear awareness of human rights situations, because they are often crucial

to conflict prevention. A clear awareness of human rights situations helps identify grievances that, if left unaddressed, can lead to conflict. Human rights standards provide a framework for devising sustainable solutions to address those grievances.

Thirdly, there is the aspect of the security implications of climate change. Many briefers, as well as the Secretary-General, have referred to that in their briefings. Whether it is a question of conflicts between herders and farmers in the Sahel, disputes over scarce resources, especially with regard to water or food insecurity, or vulnerabilities that are exploited by terrorist groups — mitigating and countering climate change and its effects must be a key component of our stabilization and conflict prevention efforts. We believe that the specific security implications of climate change need to be better reflected in the Council's work.

Lastly, the aspect of sustainable development must be taken into account. Although not usually a Council topic, I think we should be aware that sustainable development is not only an end in itself but also one of the most effective tools we have to prevent violent conflict. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is our road map to creating resilient, stable societies and addressing the root causes of violence of all kinds.

In addition to those relevant aspects that we must take into consideration, we also need to involve all the relevant stakeholders in order to be successful in conflict prevention. Special emphasis is needed on civil society and mainstreaming women's rights and gender equality throughout our prevention and mediation work. The contributions of regional women mediators' networks such as the AU's FemWise-Africa Network and the African Women's Leaders Network constitute a very important development in that context, which we applaud and welcome. The protection of children's rights and the involvement of young people are equally important.

With regard to cooperation on a broader strategic scale, the cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union is undoubtedly the most important partnership that comes to mind in terms of building and sustaining peace and security on the African continent. Germany, jointly with its African partners, is committed to supporting and further developing the United Nations-AU partnership. We would like to see that partnership develop further to address all phases of conflict, from prevention and peace operations

to post-conflict peacebuilding. African ownership and expertise are crucial to addressing conflicts on the continent.

In that regard, we support African Union initiatives such as the Silencing the Guns in Africa by 2020 initiative and the push by African States for a stronger integration of AU-United Nations peacekeeping efforts. We believe that regional organizations in Africa, both the AU and others — such as the Economic Community of West African States and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, to name but a few — can and should play a much stronger role in preventing conflict and addressing its root causes. Increased cooperation between the Council and the AU Peace and Security Council should be at the centre of that effort, which is why we welcome and look forward to the annual joint consultative meeting to be held later this month in Addis Ababa.

Mr. De Rivière (France) (*spoke in French*): I would first like to thank the Secretary-General and the three briefers for their presentations.

It is more important than ever before to step up our investment in conflict prevention. The authors of the Charter of the United Nations gave the Security Council a clear mandate in that regard. Yet it must be said that we tend to focus on existing crises instead of trying to prevent those of tomorrow, although investing in pre-empting conflicts is much less costly in terms of human lives and suffering, of course, but also financially.

Significant efforts have been made in recent years. In that connection, I would like to commend the initiative of the Secretary-General in stepping up peace diplomacy and the reforms that have been undertaken to make the United Nations system more effective in that area, including the strengthening of mediation capacities and the early-warning role of United Nations country teams. I would also like to acknowledge the work of the office of Adama Dieng, Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide. That new momentum in favour of conflict prevention has enjoyed a remarkable success in recent years. For example, this past year in Madagascar, the mediation led by the Secretary-General's Special Adviser, Mr. Abdoulaye Bathily, in close coordination with the African Union and the Southern African Development Community, helped to avert a serious political crisis.

Yet we can do more — the Security Council should more often be seized of situations that present a risk of conflict. Bearing that in mind, we are continuing to keep a close eye on the situation in Burundi, since the destabilization of that country would have tragic consequences for peace and security throughout the entire region.

The Peacebuilding Commission should also focus more on situations that present a risk and make recommendations to the Council. The Commission's recent meeting on Burkina Faso demonstrated the extent to which that forum can establish a constructive dialogue with countries in fragile situations.

One of the great contemporary challenges for better conflict prevention is to take climate risks into account. The United Nations system must be able to take a comprehensive view of the risks of the impact of climate change on international security. We therefore recommend that a report of the Secretary-General be prepared with a view to providing a regular assessment of those risks, as well as concrete recommendations.

Finally, we must promote the meaningful participation of women, young people and civil society in mediation and conflict prevention processes. In that regard, I welcome the contribution of the FemWise-Africa Network, which makes it possible to deploy women mediators on the ground.

We must also work even more closely with African regional and subregional organizations. The strengthening of the partnership between the African Union and the United Nations under the auspices of Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations enhances the effectiveness of our preventive diplomacy. That partnership is of strategic importance to us, and we are therefore determined to support it.

In Burkina Faso in 2015 and in the Gambia in 2016, the coordinated and united action of the United Nations, the African Union and the Economic Community of West African States ensured a successful outcome. Earlier this year, in the Central African Republic, the United Nations and the African Union facilitated together the negotiation of the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic, thanks in particular to the strong and perfectly coordinated commitment of Mr. Jean-Pierre Lacroix and Mr. Smaïl Chergui.

It is essential that we better coordinate our efforts. In the Sudan, for example, it was the African Union and Ethiopia that had the highest chance of bringing about a successful agreement. The United Nations and all those friendly to the Sudan supported that mediation, while at the same time taking care not to create interference. African subregional organizations also play a leading role in such situations. I wish to refer here to the efforts of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development in particular, which led to the signing of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan one year ago.

Preventive diplomacy in Africa requires us to take advantage of all the tools at our disposal in a spirit of partnership and effectiveness. France is working in that spirit with its African partners, and the members of the Council can rest assured that we will continue to do so.

Mr. Zhang Jun (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China thanks South Africa for taking the initiative to convene this open meeting. We listened attentively to the briefings by the Secretary-General and representatives of civil society.

Peace and security in Africa are not only relevant to the well-being of the African people, but are also closely related to peace and stability throughout the world. Achieving stability, peace and security in Africa is a common aspiration of the African people, but is also the incontestable responsibility of the international community, in particular the Security Council. Preventive diplomacy is an important means of maintaining international peace and security. I would like to make the following points on how to put preventive diplomacy to good use.

We must fully leverage the role of African countries in solving African problems. All countries should uphold the principles of mutual respect, sovereignty and territorial integrity and non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries. We must place our full trust in the countries of Africa and have confidence in them, instead of taking it upon ourselves to solve their problems. Prevention should be carried out while respecting the will of the countries concerned and insisting on their ownership.

We should fully leverage the unique roles of regional organizations, such as the African Union, while remaining committed to addressing African issues through political and diplomatic means. We must make good use of Chapter VI of the Charter of the United

Nations, as well as the good offices and mediation capacity of our Organization. We must also avoid taking action by invoking Chapter VII of the Charter at every turn. Mediators and parties to conflicts and disputes should form a sense of community and shared destiny in tackling difficult problems through dialogue. We must promote security through cooperation and respect and accommodate each other's legitimate concerns. It is essential to fully leverage the roles of women and youth, shape a culture of peace and settle differences by seeking common ground, while putting our differences aside.

We must attach greater importance to addressing the root causes of peace and security in Africa, putting economic and social development at the forefront and — by developing prevention and the mitigation of social risks — laying a solid foundation for lasting stability. The international community should help Africa achieve development through pragmatic action. China is willing to dovetail the joint building of the Belt and Road Initiative with the African Union's Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, as well as the development strategies of African countries, in order to help African countries to strengthen connectivity, enhance their development capabilities and promote peace through inclusive development.

China has never been absent from efforts to help Africa maintain peace and security. As we speak, more than 2,000 Chinese peacekeepers are safeguarding peace in five United Nations peacekeeping missions in Africa. The Chinese Navy has been escorting vessels in the Gulf of Aden and in waters off Somalia for more than 10 years. It has completed more than 1,200 escort assignments for more than 6,700 vessels.

During the Beijing Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation last year, China decided to implement a Chinese-African peace and security cooperation framework and established a China-Africa Peace and Security Forum to provide a platform for exchanges in the field of peace and security. We established the China-Africa Peace and Security Fund to support cooperation between the two parties in peace and security, peacekeeping and stabilization.

The first batch of military assistance materials, worth ¥200 million, has arrived in Africa in order to support the African Standby Force and bolster African capacity to respond immediately to crises. We have also

provided ¥300 million in aid for the counter-terrorism operation in the Sahel and to support the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel.

We have actively supported the good offices and mediation of the United Nations by making donations over many years to United Nations prevention efforts. In addition, through the United Nations Peace and Development Trust Fund, we have provided support to United Nations mediation mechanisms, including the Secretary-General's High-level Advisory Board on Mediation and the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs crisis response system.

The Chinese people have always shared the same vision and destiny with the people of Africa. We have always shown respect, love and support to Africa on its path towards achieving peace and development. China will continue to stand shoulder to shoulder with Africa and march together with it, hand in hand.

Mr. Ndong Mba (Equatorial Guinea) (*spoke in Spanish*): Our statement aligns fully with those to be delivered by Ms. Fatima Kyari Mohammed, Permanent Observer of the African Union to the United Nations, and Her Excellency Ms. Jeanne d'Arc Byaje, Permanent Observer of the Economic Community of Central African States to the United Nations.

Allow me to congratulate and commend the delegation of South Africa for having included this important, relevant and timely debate in the agenda of its presidency. It constitutes a topic of vital importance in the efforts of the Security Council, in collaboration with the African Union, to maintain peace and security on the African continent, in particular, and the international security of all States Members of the United Nations, in general.

We also thank Secretary-General António Guterres, Ms. Liberata Mulamula, Ms. Naledi Maite and Ms. Linda Vilakazi for their extensive and informative briefings, which help us contextualize preventive diplomacy, conflict prevention and resolution and to maintain international peace and security, using good offices, dialogue and mediation as special tools.

One of the fundamental purposes of the United Nations, and an essential element of its mandate, is the maintenance of international peace and security. Since the founding of the Organization, 74 years ago, it has on many occasions prevented controversies from degenerating into war by persuading disputants to come

to the negotiating table and engage in dialogue instead of resorting to force, and when conflict has broken out, it has helped restore peace.

The most effective way to mitigate the human suffering, immense economic cost and the aftermath of conflicts is to prevent them from occurring in the first place. In that regard, the United Nations, through the General Assembly and the Security Council, together with regional and subregional organizations, has an important role to play in conflict prevention. The use of diplomacy, good offices and mediation, special envoys and political missions to the field, peacekeeping operations, coercive measures, preventive disarmament and recommendations of the Secretary-General, in accordance with the Charter, provide a range of tools for conflict prevention.

Strengthening international cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union is absolutely essential, since the development of Africa, a continent abundant in all types of resources, human and economic alike, is a precondition for peace and harmony throughout the world. It should be a priority for the entire international community to finance multinational missions deployed by the United Nations and the African Union to maintain peace and security in the region, which are crucial for stability on the African continent. That is why sustainable and predictable financing is required in support of peace missions led by the African Union, as the case may be, with budgets managed through the United Nations.

The Republic of Equatorial Guinea is firmly persuaded of the importance of, and believes in, preventive diplomacy, having participated in such efforts in various African countries through consultations and mediation with the direct participation of President Obiang Nguema Mbasogo, who played a decisive role in normalizing the post-electoral situation in the Republic of the Gambia in early 2017. Our delegation therefore reiterates its gratitude to the South African presidency for holding a debate on this topic, which is very well aligned with the efforts of the three African members of the Security Council and the importance we have attached over the past two years to cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union on peace and security issues.

Members will recall that, during the presidency of Côte d'Ivoire in December 2018, we held an open debate on cooperation between the United Nations and regional

and subregional organizations, with a focus on the role of States, regional arrangements and the prevention and resolution of conflict by the United Nations, especially in Africa (see S/PV.8414). During the presidency of Equatorial Guinea in February, the Security Council held an open debate on cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations, with a focus on silencing the guns in Africa by 2020, exploring the mechanisms whereby the United Nations and the African Union could collaborate to end conflicts in Africa (see S/PV.8473). That open debate culminated in the unanimous adoption of resolution 2457 (2019), relating to silencing the guns in Africa, encouraging the United Nations and the African Union to strengthen their cooperation to coordinate efforts in conflict prevention and resolution in Africa.

A ministerial conference on silencing the guns will be held in November in Malabo, to which the members of the Security Council, among other countries, will be invited. The conference will provide a unique opportunity to tackle in depth the topic we are discussing here today, namely, the central importance of preventive diplomacy and conflict prevention and resolution. Silencing the guns in Africa is the right mechanism to end conflicts in Africa.

I should like to conclude my statement by highlighting that the time is now ripe to assert the important role women have to play in preventive diplomacy and the prevention and resolution of conflicts by peaceful means. It is therefore necessary to ensure that women are always involved in conflict-prevention mediation and dialogue processes.

In conclusion, in the realm of conflict prevention, I recall the dedicated efforts made by President Obiang Nguema Mbasogo of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea, where, in his capacity as Chair of the African Union in 2011, he sought to prevent the conflict in Libya and various African Presidents to travel to Tripoli to urge then-leader Muammar Al-Qadhafi to leave the country. Unfortunately, many did not agree with this African initiative, and Libya was plunged, as we know, into the sad situation that this fellow African country is facing today.

Mrs. Craft (United States of America): I appreciate the Secretary-General's engagement and the briefings from our three guests.

I would like to start by reading a passage that caught my attention this past weekend.

“There is broad consensus that conflict prevention, management, or resolution in Africa requires that Africans themselves act as a rudder, guiding peace processes forward and working with local disputants to bring about conciliation. Outside parties such as the [United States] can contribute by providing support to propel the search for peace forward, but peace cannot be imposed from abroad. Yet conflicts in Africa have international ramifications, evident in refugee flows and environmental damage, for example, but also in purely humanitarian terms.

“Broad consensus also exists that the old adage of ‘an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure’ is especially applicable to conflicts in Africa.”

Those words were not written recently. They were not written this year, or even this decade. They are from a 1994 United States Institute of Peace report on conflict prevention in Africa. Twenty-five years later, we are still talking about this. Are we still going to keep having this same conversation? Are we content with this?

The Security Council meets practically every week to discuss areas of the world affected by conflict and instability. But far too often we issue statements, impose sanctions, create commissions and establish peacekeeping missions to address conflicts after they break out. It seems to me that we have got this a little bit backwards. Therefore, if there is one message I want to communicate, it is that there is more the Council can, and should do, to address conflict before it erupts. There are four actions we can take get out ahead of conflict.

First, we should use resolutions and statements to target the drivers of conflict. Our resolutions need to organize specific actions directed at root causes, not merely assemble pleasant words on paper.

Secondly, we should utilize early-warning systems and the analytical tools at our disposal to inform our debates and regional visits. In doing so we will ensure that we are focused on areas where conflict could emerge, not where it has already emerged. As fellow Kentuckian George Clooney stated last month in comments on South Sudan, “if you don't care [about the problems in that country], its problems will end up on your doorstep.” He is absolutely right.

Thirdly, because neighbouring countries often bear the burdens of spillover from conflict, we should increase coordination with regional and subregional bodies.

Finally, the Security Council must continue to integrate the women and peace and security agenda in all of its work. As President Trump reminded us in his remarks to the General Assembly, nations that empower women are wealthier, safer and more politically stable (see A/74/PV.3). Women's meaningful participation in peace processes will translate into more sustainable peace agreements. And as Ms. Mulamula noted, "if you want to get something done, give it to a woman".

The United States is encouraged to see countries like the Niger working proactively to prevent violent conflict. Using domestic resources and international assistance, the Niger has made progress in preventing violent extremists from moving freely along its border with Mali. It has also deftly managed ethnoregional tensions in order to deny terrorist groups new pools of potential recruits inside its borders. We look forward to working closely with the Niger to highlight those best practices when it joins the Council in January.

In addition, the Council should focus on more countries like Burundi and Cameroon, where societal divisions and weak Governments threaten stability. Upcoming elections could also exacerbate political tensions and security risks. We should visit and publicly focus on potential hot spots to proactively shine a light on areas that could descend into conflict. We have already done that, to great effect, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

For our part, the United States is deeply committed to long-term stability and security in Africa. These are not just words to us; they are the fundamental reality of our financial and political choices. Much of our bilateral engagement on the continent focuses on preventive diplomacy. In Burkina Faso, the United States is piloting a \$13.5 million programme to prevent conflict. Later this month, a United States delegation will travel to Burkina Faso to develop programming alongside the Government, civil society and other local and international partners.

The United States also invests millions of dollars in development aid each year to complement our diplomatic efforts. In dozens of African countries, we provide funding and technical assistance to cultivate accountable governance, encourage inclusive economic growth and support local efforts to seek peaceful alternatives to conflict.

We have provided similar technical assistance to the African Union, the Economic Community of West

African States, and several Member States as part of our support for the Continental Early Warning System.

We have had the same conversation about this issue for as long as we have because our approach to problem solving is often too reactive. That may be the case simply because the work of conflict prevention is demanding and even burdensome. I do not deny that. But it is the right work to do. It is the smart work to do. And it is the work the Council is called to do — not merely talk about.

Mr. Radomski (Poland): Let me begin by thanking today's briefers for their very informative briefings. I would also like to thank the South African presidency for organizing this debate, which addresses the core element of the Security Council mission — the maintenance of international peace and security.

Poland recognizes the importance and centrality of preventive diplomacy in conflict prevention and resolution, especially with regard to the United Nations peacekeeping missions on the African continent. As it has already been noted during today's meeting, preventive diplomacy is and has been utilized by the United Nations system at large. However, it has not always been regarded as a central pillar of the work of the Security Council. Nevertheless, we believe that tackling the complexity arising from the evolving nature of conflicts requires a wide range of activities, which should address the conflicts in a comprehensive way, while using all of the available instruments and embracing all actors on different stages, from local communities to the highest political level.

With regard to the processes themselves, Poland believes that it is essential for the work to be framed within the three main pillars of the Organization — first, in peace and security processes, with the meaningful participation of women and minorities; secondly, sustainable development, which goes hand in hand with building resilience; and, thirdly, consistent respect for human rights and the rule of law. In addition, we believe that it is crucial to extend the cooperation in conflict prevention to the private sector in order to align the core business community with the strategic goals of the international community. In that respect, when thinking of such practical options as resource-pooling in conflict prevention, we should consider leveraging more private resources for development, possibly in the form of blended, private-public financing. Promoting good economic performance and a propitious

macroeconomic climate will significantly help to combat tensions on the social and political fronts, boost investment and ensure stability for the long term.

Poland believes that all stakeholders should continue to invest in new methods of generating financial resources and innovative tools for gathering information and analysing data to better determine the most urgent risks and threats to peace and security and where the assistance of the international community is most needed. Let me underline the importance of enhanced cooperation among the United Nations, the African Union (AU) and other regional and subregional organizations in conflict prevention and mediation, as outlined in the Joint United Nations-African Framework for an Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security and in the Silencing the Guns in Africa by 2020 initiative. In that context, we refer to Chapter VIII, Article 52, of the Charter of the United Nations and the Constitutive Act of the African Union, which highlight the importance of regional bodies in the peaceful settlement of disputes and the primacy of preventive diplomacy as a first step towards conflict prevention and resolution.

While we reflect today on conflict prevention and resolution, let me stress the importance of mediation. In that regard, I would like to refer to the words of European Union High Representative Federica Mogherini, who said recently in New York that there is a need for a new generation of mediators, especially those who understand technology and can use it for the greater good. Furthermore, we are pleased to see that, thanks to Finland and Turkey, the initiative of the Group of Friends of Mediation, is thriving and expanding every year.

In conclusion, let me once again emphasize that conflict prevention and mediation are core principles of the United Nations Charter and should be more prominently reflected in the work of the Security Council. I believe that today's meeting contributes to this goal.

Mr. Djani (Indonesia): I wish to begin by condemning the attacks against the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali yesterday, which resulted in the loss of life of yet another United Nations peacekeeper from Chad. I would also like to express our deepest condolences to the family of the victim and to the Government and the people of Chad.

We thank you, Mr. President, for convening this important meeting. Indonesia welcomes the briefings by the Secretary-General, Ambassador Mulamula, Ms. Maite and Ms. Vilakazi.

Challenges to peace in many conflict situations in Africa are complex, volatile and characterized by unprecedented civilian casualties, forced displacement and setbacks to peace processes. Far too often, however, we are so busy reacting to conflicts that we are unable to prevent them and address their root causes. This approach is not sustainable and is proving to be very costly. I wish to underline three points.

First, shifting to a culture of prevention is a necessity. From day one, the Secretary-General has emphasized conflict prevention as one of his priorities, and my delegation is very supportive of this shift. Indonesia also endorses the concept of sustaining peace, which emphasizes a system-wide approach to conflict prevention. We must foster synergy between the Security Council and other entities of the United Nations family and harness their comparative strengths to comprehensively address drivers of conflict.

The United Nations does not lack proper tools for preventing conflict. The United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime have been assisting developing countries in promoting good governance, and the Peacebuilding Fund has been funding regional peacebuilding initiatives in Africa. Indonesia also values the role of the Secretary-General's good offices and of United Nations regional offices and encourages the Secretary-General to utilize every instrument in his preventive toolbox to avoid the recurrence of conflict.

Secondly, the United Nations cannot prevent and resolve conflicts in Africa single-handedly. Through Agenda 2063 of the African Union (AU), the people of Africa aspire to a conflict-free Africa. In realizing this noble goal, the AU and subregional organizations have been increasingly taking charge of peace and security matters on the continent. Robust partnership between the United Nations and such organizations is therefore quintessential, and, in fact, various forms of collaboration already exist, ranging from the deployment of a United Nations-AU hybrid peacekeeping mission to United Nations support for regional counter-terrorism initiatives.

Thirdly, it is necessary to make full use of each organization's comparative advantages. The AU and

subregional organizations have unmatched knowledge on conflict on the continent and familiarity with relevant stakeholders. The United Nations must always listen to them. They also have geographical proximity to conflicts, which gives them a strong incentive to resolve them, and the ability to be first responders. The United Nations should engage with them from the earliest signs of conflict to identify workable approaches.

Meanwhile, the United Nations could provide policy advice, political backstopping and logistical support to AU missions. It could provide adequate resources to ensure that the AU can complete its critical endeavours, including by financing AU-led peace operations. In addition, the United Nations and regional organizations could also team up in mediation efforts. Strategic discussion is needed on how the United Nations could better support the development of regional mediation capacity in Africa.

To keep peace in our region, the countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) have been working tirelessly to promote the ASEAN Way, with its fundamental reliance on preventive diplomacy. Indonesia believes South-East Asia and Africa have much to learn from each other in preventing and resolving conflicts.

I should like to conclude by underlining that, even when regional organizations are fully determined to play their role, there is a limit to what they can do if the Security Council is not united or ready to take up its primary responsibility under the Charter of the United Nations, namely, to maintain international peace and security. We should ensure that resources are available for peacekeeping and peacebuilding. Expecting our special political missions as well as our peacekeeping missions, which, as the Secretary-General mentioned, are mostly on the African continent, to be able to do their noble duty with limited support is to set a mission impossible.

As the largest troop- and police-contributing country in the Council, I should like to pay tribute to the brave Blue Helmets in the field, including those from Africa, which, as a continent, is the largest collective troop-contributor on the continent.

As the last Council member to speak before the President, and having heard the statements of various colleagues in the Chamber, I think it is quite clear to all of us that we all support conflict prevention. What is needed now is to faithfully implement preventive

diplomacy, with wisdom and vigour. Furthermore, I second the statement by the Ambassador of the United States exhorting us to take action. Africa is awaiting us all.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of South Africa.

First, I would like to join those colleagues who condemned the attack against our peacekeepers yesterday in Chad. I thank Secretary-General António Guterres for his statement. I also extend my gratitude to the following for their insightful and extensive briefings this morning: Ambassador Liberata Mulamula, Visiting Scholar and Associate Director of the Institute for African Studies, Elliott School of International Affairs, George Washington University; Ms. Naledi Maite, Programme Manager, African Women in Dialogue, South Africa; and Ms. Linda Vilakazi, Programme Manager, Zanele Mbeki Development Trust.

This debate, the first of the second week of South Africa's presidency of the Security Council, is symbolic, as it places our emphasis on the centrality of preventive diplomacy, conflict prevention and resolution in the African continent. It is in this context that we continue our diplomatic efforts to seek solutions to the challenges in the Sudan, South Sudan and the Central African Republic, and in other conflicts around the world. We believe in this centrality because conflict prevention and resolution is less costly than peacekeeping, in monetary terms and in terms of loss of life, destruction of infrastructure and displacement of people. In his essay *Clear the Obstacles and Confront the Enemy*, which he wrote on Robben Island prison in 1976, Nelson Mandela reminds us why negotiation is preferable when he said the following:

“[w]hen we have fought it out and reduced this country to ashes it will still be necessary for us to sit down together and talk about the problems of reconstruction — the black man and the white man, the African and the Afrikaner”.

We pay tribute to the Secretary-General's reform agenda, especially the peace and security pillar, which prioritizes preventive diplomacy, mediation and the development of nationally owned peace agreements and their early implementation. South Africa believes that cooperation and coordination among the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations could play an important role in conflict prevention. In that regard, South Africa calls for enhanced and continuous

strategic and operational coordination of preventive diplomacy, conflict prevention and resolution efforts by the United Nations, the African Union (AU), the regional economic communities and other international and local partners.

South Africa pays tribute to the United Nations-AU mediations efforts in the Central African Republic, South Sudan, the Sudan and elsewhere on the continent. The recent operationalization of the AU Peace Fund will further boost the AU's capacities and efforts in mediation and conflict prevention on our continent. The Peace Fund is structured around three thematic windows, namely, mediation and preventive diplomacy, institutional capacity, and peace support operations. In that regard, AU member States should be commended for their efforts to contribute to the Peace Fund, whose endowment currently stands at \$115 million. African leaders have demonstrated their political will to deal with and resolve conflicts on our continent.

The role of women and youth in conflict prevention and mediation cannot be emphasized enough. It is common knowledge that, where women are involved in peace processes, those processes are more legitimate, sustainable and effective. We welcome the role already been played by African Women in Dialogue, the Association for Women's Rights in Development and the Network of African Women in Conflict Prevention and Mediation, and many other similar initiatives, in anchoring conflict prevention and resolution by holding grassroots-level negotiations. We urge the Secretary-General to deploy more women mediators, peace envoys and special representatives to assist in conflict resolution and mediation across our continent. South Africa has presented a draft resolution on the women and peace and security agenda to ensure the implementation of our previous decisions regarding the role of women in peace and security.

As we approach the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations, we urge Member States to renew their commitment to the principles and objectives of the Charter of the United Nations insofar as the resolution of disputes is concerned. The time has come for the United Nations and the Council to put in more effort and resources in response to Chapter VI of the United Nations Charter, on the pacific settlement of disputes.

South Africa is convinced that peace and stability in the world will remain elusive if we do not address the nexus between security and development. The 2030

Agenda for Sustainable Development gives recognition to that vital link. In that context, consideration of the interdependence between security and development requires that the different principal organs of the United Nations work together, in a complementary manner, within their respective Charter mandates, to ensure a holistic and integrated approach to sustainable development and durable peace.

I wish to conclude with yet another quotation from Nelson Mandela.

“We were expected to destroy one another and ourselves collectively in the worst racial conflagration. Instead, we as a people chose the path of negotiation, compromise and peaceful settlement. Instead of hatred and revenge we chose reconciliation and nation-building”.

South Africa appeals to our sisters and brother on our continent of Africa to adopt a similar mindset; instead of hatred and revenge, let us choose reconciliation and nation-building. Once more, we urge the Security Council to allocate more resources to preventative diplomacy.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I give the floor to the representative of Namibia.

Mr. Gertze (Namibia): As this is the first time this month that I take the floor, I join colleagues in congratulating you, Mr. President, on assuming the presidency of the Security Council for the month of October. I furthermore wish to express our appreciation to you for convening this very important meeting on the centrality of preventive diplomacy and conflict prevention and resolution in Africa. I would also like to thank the Secretary-General and our briefers for their comprehensive, insightful and detailed briefings on the issue at hand.

Upon its establishment, in 1945, the Security Council was charged with ensuring international peace and security. Since then, Council members have authorized numerous peacekeeping missions, including in Timor-Leste, Lebanon, Haiti, Cyprus and my own country, Namibia. The Namibian experience is proof that those missions are designed to help countries navigate the difficult path from conflict to peace. Next year we will celebrate 30 years of that treasured peace in Namibia, and we thank the United Nations for its role in bringing that peace to my country. The implementation

of Council resolutions is also key to solving conflicts. I take this opportunity to recall that unresolved issues require the full support of the Security Council to ensure the full implementation of its resolutions.

The nature of conflicts has changed since the Security Council was created. The role of the Council must therefore also adapt. The Council must at all times guard against not simply being reactive. It must be proactive. It must play a stronger role in preventing wars and conflicts from occurring. Misery, human suffering, starvation, intolerable living conditions and human rights abuses are among the early warning signals for which we must all look out. Success in that requires strong cooperation with regional and subregional organizations, which are more familiar and in tune with the situations in their respective regions. I would also like to add that we must focus on external factors as well, such as climate change and food insecurity. Those are early warning signals of problems to come as far as peace and security are concerned.

The signing, in April 2017, of the Joint United Nations-African Union Framework for an Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security provides guidance for deepening cooperation between the two organizations at all levels in peace and security. That vital partnership has since then gone from strong to stronger. In that regard, Namibia firmly supports the call by the African Union (AU) and the African members of the Security Council for predictable financing, through United Nations-assessed contributions, for AU-led peace support operations authorized by the Security Council.

The strengthening of the United Nations-AU partnership was concretely demonstrated in recent months with the signing of peace agreements, notably in the Central African Republic and South Sudan notably. The Sudan is also an excellent example of the power of preventive diplomacy and conflict prevention and resolution. The upcoming Security Council visit to the African Union headquarters, where consultations will be held with the AU Peace and Security Council, also demonstrates the importance of the United Nations-AU partnership.

The need to prioritize preventive diplomacy and mediation in approaching crises and conflict situations was continuously emphasized during Namibia's chairmanship of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) from August 2018 to August 2019. Concrete examples of that policy include the

successful and peaceful elections held in both the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Madagascar. SADC has been assisting in finding a political solution in Lesotho, and we are optimistic that through dialogue that sisterly country is moving in the right direction. SADC fully supports the need to enhance the AU's prevention capabilities and tools, in the context of the AU's aspiration of achieving its Silencing the Guns by 2020 initiative. We cannot overemphasize preventative diplomacy, mediation and negotiations in peacebuilding and reconstruction.

I also wish to emphasize the importance of women negotiators and mediators in peacebuilding processes, as espoused in the AU Agenda 2063. It was in 2000, during Namibia's presidency of the Security Council, that the Council unanimously adopted the landmark resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security. That resolution formally drew global attention to the unrecognized, underutilized and undervalued contributions of women in preventing war and in peacebuilding and engaging individuals and societies to live in harmony. According to the International Peace Institute, when women participate in peace processes, the resulting agreement is 35 per cent more likely to last at least 15 years. That number alone should encourage parties to ensure that women are part of the conversation. We, as the international community, can only benefit from recognizing the fundamental role of women in peace and security. To that end, Namibia will be launching an international women's peace centre, and we welcome commitments by other Member States on concrete deliverables in the coming years, such as Commitment 2025 on women's inclusion in peace processes by Finland and Spain.

To conclude, I would like to underscore Namibia's commitment to preventive diplomacy and conflict prevention and resolution. My delegation furthermore recognizes the ongoing peace efforts on the continent, and we commend the efforts of the United Nations and the AU, as well as subregional organizations and regional economic commissions. We firmly believe that taking a more proactive approach by using preventive diplomacy and conflict prevention will bring an end to violence on the African continent. As our founding father in Namibia once said,

"A people united, striving to achieve a common good for all members of society, will always emerge victorious".

In making that wisdom relevant, I believe that the Council would see much greater success.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Ethiopia.

Mr. Amde (Ethiopia): At the outset, I wish to congratulate South Africa on having assumed the presidency of the Security Council for the month of October. Our delegation wishes to assure you, Mr. President, of our fullest support and cooperation during your tenure. Let me once again thank you, Mr. President, for having organized this critically important debate. We hope that it will rekindle our aspirations for strong cooperation between the United Nations Security Council and the African Union (AU) Peace and Security Council, especially in building capacity for preventive diplomacy.

We thank Secretary-General António Guterres, Ambassador Mulamula and the two civil society representatives — Ms. Linda Vilakazi and Ms. Naledi Maite — for their comprehensive briefings and reflections.

Ethiopia strongly believes that conflict prevention and mediation are critical tools for sustaining peace and development. Preventing the outbreak of conflicts and their recurrence are also the central pillars of the African Union Peace and Security Architecture. We believe that the fundamentals of cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union also lie in the need to promote conflict prevention and in the primacy of political solutions, which centre on properly implementing the objectives of the Peace and Security Architecture, including through projects such as the African Continental Early Warning System, the targeted activities of the AU Mediation Support Unit and the work of the AU Panel of the Wise. At this juncture, I wish to recall that discussions in the Council are not showing satisfactory progress on the importance of strengthening the AU Peace and Security Architecture, including on the need for sustainable and predictable funding for AU peace support operations through mechanisms such as United Nations-assessed contributions.

On balance, the use of preventive diplomacy by the United Nations system — particularly the Secretary-General's good offices — remains indispensable but underutilized in avoiding and containing crisis situations. The Security Council must also do more to support and promote national and regional conflict-prevention efforts. That is highly important given that

the nature of modern conflicts tends to be transnational, especially where borders are porous, as is the case in many parts of Africa. It therefore goes without saying that both the humanitarian and material losses resulting from conflicts are too great. That is why they should be stopped or minimized through conflict prevention, mediation and preventive diplomacy, which are by far the best tools we have at our disposal to avert the outbreak of crises.

We recently witnessed the significance of mediation in our region. The collective wisdom of the Sudanese people and the endeavours of the African Union, Ethiopia and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) resulted in facilitating peace and stability in the Sudan — blessed be the peacemakers. We again witnessed that conflict prevention and resolution are less costly, bringing hope, nurturing cooperation and giving us the momentum and serenity to reflect on wars being destructive and peacebuilding life and harmony.

We believe that inclusivity and building national consensus are a foundation for successful conflict prevention in intra-State disputes. Peace endures when development is inclusive, when citizens' security is guaranteed, when women and young people are actively involved in decision-making and when barriers to their economic advancement are removed. We have seen the power and potential of young people as agents of positive change all across our region, most recently in Ethiopia and the Sudan, as well as across West African countries. We must listen to young people — their hopes, aspirations and concerns. The meaningful participation of youth in peacebuilding activities will deny armed and terrorist groups such as Al-Shabaab the chance to thrive by exploiting development and governance gaps. In some of the conflict zones on the African continent, the total absence of State structures and functioning institutions, as well as corruption and maladministration, have pushed a sizeable number of young people to consider joining those terrorist groups. It is therefore critical to continue to invest in youth empowerment and to bolster State capacity and good governance initiatives at the local level, including in ungoverned spaces.

Ethiopia is committed to the implementation of the African Union's Peace and Security Architecture, as well as its flagship vision of Silencing the Guns in Africa by 2020, both of which emphasize conflict prevention and the pacific settlement of disputes on the

continent. In our subregion, Ethiopia has championed the goals of IGAD's Conflict Early Warning and Response Mechanism, which aims to prevent violent conflicts through structured and consistent early warning and early response. At the national level, over the past year and a half, Ethiopia has prioritized building peace, including by setting up a Cabinet-level ministry to ensure the implementation of peacebuilding measures in order to strengthen the rule of law and bolster the capacity of our security sectors. In addition to empowering local communities, we are anchoring our peacebuilding initiatives on indigenous traditions such as the use of elders' councils and religious leaders, with the objective of reaching national consensus. We recognize that those efforts will not succeed without the active participation of women and youth.

We would once again like to reiterate that, despite significant progress in recent years, these regional and national conflict-prevention objectives cannot be met by Africans alone, not least because of a lack of material and financial resources. The international community, particularly the Security Council, whose primary function is the maintenance of international peace and security, should actively support national, regional and subregional efforts, based on the view that prevention is better than cure. In that regard, we urge members of the Security Council to further strengthen United Nations-AU partnership around peace and security as a platform for conflict prevention and mediation on the continent.

The President: I now give the floor to Mrs. Byaje.

Mrs. Byaje: At the outset, let me thank you, Mr. President, for convening this debate on peace and security in Africa, with a focus on the centrality of preventive diplomacy, conflict prevention and the resolution of conflicts. We also wish to thank you, Sir, for providing this platform and opportunity to review the efforts made in this particular field with a view to enhancing collaboration and building more ties while also opening up opportunities for closer operational cooperation. The Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) highly appreciates the contributions shared during this debate.

Maintaining global peace and security requires collaboration among several actors. In that respect, ECCAS acknowledges the milestones achieved in addressing issues that are impeding peace and security, putting forward conflict prevention, preventive diplomacy and good offices through our strategic

partnership with the United Nations and the African Union (AU) and thanks to the assistance of our bilateral and multilateral partners, civil society and networks of women and youth.

In that regard, my contribution to this debate will focus on three major points. I will first give a brief historical background on the involvement of ECCAS in peace and security issues. I will then highlight areas of cooperation with other entities, before concluding by looking at the remaining gaps and challenges, calling for concerted actions to speed up the implementation of initiatives aimed at preventing conflicts.

Before delving into today's theme, allow me to revisit briefly the security situation in Central Africa — a region prone to all sorts of conflicts owing to its geographic location at the heart of a volatile geopolitical landscape that is regularly marked by recurrent conflicts that adversely compromise peace and security, with a negative bearing on the subregion's community.

It is worth mentioning that that alarming state of affairs has been in the making not as of today or yesterday, but mainly since the period from 1992 to 1998, during which seven of our 11 States members went through violent wars and devastating genocide, prompting the institution to embrace a new orientation in its objectives. ECCAS, which focused initially on the promotion and enhancement of harmonious cooperation and balanced and self-sustained economic and social development in all areas, with the ultimate goal of realizing regional integration, was then compelled to reinforce its objectives in February 1999 with the creation of the Council for Peace and Security in Central Africa (COPAX), whose core mission was to prevent and resolve conflicts in the subregion.

Since its inception, COPAX has focused its action on the area of conflict prevention, early warning mechanisms and, more recently, strengthening cooperation with civil society organizations active in the area of conflict prevention. Political and diplomatic actions have also been conducted to counter and control the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. In that framework, the Heads of State and Government have vowed to enhance the promotion of peace and security at the highest level as a prerequisite to improve citizens' living conditions, security and stability in the region.

However, preventing conflicts of different natures from erupting in the region, leading to social crises, and curbing systemic problems rooted in poverty and all sorts of exclusion, as well as governance issues at the root of political and institutional conflicts, have proven to be a tedious exercise. Tensions tend to escalate during electoral processes, while attacks related to terrorism and violent extremism and their corollary of forced migration, transnational crimes and maritime insecurity are on the rise, eating away all resources devoted to development. Worth mentioning are also cross-cutting issues linked with human trafficking, smuggling and illicit cross-border trade, as well as arms proliferation.

We note with concern long-standing traditions, such as transhumance and pastoralism, that have now become sources of conflicts, triggering instability and the resurgence of negative forces and armed groups looting natural resources. Battling those challenges in a holistic and inclusive manner has been promoted by all parties involved. In that regard, ECCAS lauds the meaningful involvement in preventive efforts by women and youth networks, which have proven to be a strong asset to rely on in order to achieve lasting peace.

ECCAS will therefore continue to work in tandem with the AU and the United Nations through the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa in building capacity to empower those agents of change, namely, women and youth, so as to ensure their equal participation in all efforts deployed to promote peace and security and in enabling them to play a central role in leadership and decision-making.

Collaboration among all those actors is also needed to curb and eradicate the proliferation of small arms and light weapons if we are to silence the guns by 2020, create the necessary conditions for development to thrive and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. It is urgent to realize that those changing realities of conflicts coming in sophisticated and multifaceted dimensions in the area of conflict prevention call for a drastic shift in our response. That is at the root of the new and innovative approach prompting the AU and its main pillars, namely, the regional economic communities and member States, to try to embrace other avenues and endogenous solutions to peace and security issues.

In order to achieve that noble goal, Africa is leaning towards financing a major part of its own operations

of maintaining peace while expecting assistance from this organ, which holds the responsibility of maintaining peace and security in the world. Pooling predictable resources to find adequate solutions to the challenges remains relevant in complementing efforts to be deployed.

Within the framework of subsidiarity, complementarity and solidarity, the AU, the United Nations, ECCAS and other regional entities have worked together to coordinate and harmonize their interventions in terms of prevention and addressing the root causes of conflicts. Allow me to illustrate some areas of collaboration and joint action conducted under regional arrangements with several examples that have yielded tangible results.

Progress has indeed been achieved through several mediation, good offices and political missions that have eased hostilities and recently resolved political crises. Some of the latest positive developments owing to the role played by regional organizations include the collaboration of ECCAS, the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region and neighbouring States in supporting the African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic. The panel of facilitators — made up of ECCAS member States and actors from neighbouring countries — as well as the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic and the engagement of the European Union in that process were instrumental in the implementation of the African Initiative road map and in easing tensions with armed groups, which led to the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic.

We witnessed a peaceful transition of power for the first time in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which has led to positive changes. The just-concluded national dialogue in Cameroon has sparked new hope in the resolution of differences affecting communities. At this juncture, it is important to mention that ECCAS is about to conclude an institutional reform that will boost the capacity of the Central Africa Early Warning Mechanism and the Central Africa Multinational Force, with a view to aligning them with the continental architecture. Currently, those two bodies are quite challenged, and their level of intervention minimized, despite their comparative advantage with regard to their proximity to the scene of action.

Among their stumbling blocks are the decision-making process and the lack of human, logistical and financial resources. There is therefore a great need to build their capacity to enable them to mount fast interventions in an emergency situation — often hampered by the tedious nature of decision-making, as it requires a green light from the Conference of Heads of State and Government to be put into motion.

In order to meet those challenges, ECCAS urges our economic and financial partners to enhance the capacities of the Central Africa Early Warning Mechanism and of the Central Africa Multinational Force in the image of the AU Peace and Security Council or the Security Council. In contributing to those initiatives, ECCAS will continue to push for regular COPAX meetings during the Summit of Heads of State and Government, while ensuring reporting on its work on a daily basis to inform the decision of Heads of State and trigger action if needed.

ECCAS commends the United Nations for recognizing the role of complementarity played by regional and subregional organizations, mainly in the pacific settlements of disputes. The AU reform gives an even more important role to the regional economic communities, and the ECCAS reform has taken into account all those changes and the contributions and new responsibilities assigned to them. ECCAS values the AU technical support for our organ of early-warning system, which will help it in reaching its operationalization to the level of other regional organs and enable it to deliver on its mandate.

In conclusion, let me reiterate the strong commitment of ECCAS to the importance of investing in the prevention of conflicts and relying on preventive diplomacy — instead of using force — in mediation efforts as the only viable path leading towards conflict resolution.

The President: I thank Mrs. Byaje for her briefing.

I now give the floor to Ms. Mohammed.

Ms. Mohammed: Let me start by congratulating you, Mr. President, on taking over the presidency of the Security Council for the month of October and by thanking you and the Republic of South Africa for having included this important item relating to peace and security in Africa, with a focus on the centrality of preventive diplomacy and conflict prevention, on the agenda of the Security Council. I would also like to

thank the Secretary-General and the briefers for their enlightening briefings, particularly on highlighting the role of women in preventive diplomacy and how we can leverage the relevant platforms and initiatives to promote better engagement.

The contemporary threats to peace and security on our continent and, indeed, globally are so complex and interconnected, with broad consequences, that no single organization alone can manage to provide the appropriate solutions. Consequently, the scale and complexity of the challenges we face today require the harnessing of the collective efforts of all our stakeholders. In this context, the centrality of preventive diplomacy as a peacemaking tool becomes indispensable in our peace efforts.

Today's debate is therefore all the more relevant because preventive diplomacy and conflict prevention remain a strategic priority for all of us. They perfectly illustrate the *raison d'être* of multilateralism and the various organizations that emanate from it. At a time when the credibility of our Organization is being questioned, this debate could serve as a basis for harnessing our collective commitment to devoting greater attention to the prevention tool, which remains by far the most profitable in the long term, but, unfortunately, the least resourced.

With this in mind, permit me to make the following three key points.

First, given its clear comparative advantage in this area, the African Union (AU) has over the last decades adopted several instruments, mechanisms and policy documents to boost its prevention capacities. As a result, Africa is well equipped, within the African Peace and Security Architecture and the African Governance Architecture as its twin blueprints, for promoting peace, security and stability.

The African Peace and Security Architecture is built on a continuum ranging from anticipation and prevention, conflict management and resolution, to post-conflict stabilization, reconstruction and development. As the Council is aware, the African Union Peace and Security Council is the nerve centre of the African Peace and Security Architecture. Since it became operational in 2004, the Peace and Security Council has covered significant ground and made considerable gains in addressing and resolving conflicts on the continent.

Another pillar of the African Peace and Security Architecture is the Panel of the Wise, which is the core of African Union preventive diplomacy. The Panel of the Wise, since its operationalization in 2007, has significantly contributed to enhancing preventive diplomacy in Africa. Stemming from this Panel, there are a number of arrangements in supporting subsidiary platforms, including PanWise, which is the platform of the African Union, regional economic communities and regional mechanism panels involved in preventive diplomacy.

Within the framework of enhancing preventive diplomacy, I would like to point out that the African Union Commission now has a functioning Mediation Support Unit to institutionalize and provide predictable and sustainable support to all AU-led mediation efforts. Furthermore, the African Union's peacemaking and preventive diplomacy efforts are also championed by special envoys, special representatives, high representatives and 13 liaison offices and missions across the continent.

While some progress has been made in close collaboration with the 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 deliver on our mandate, most notably the possibility of gaining appropriate entry points into tense situations likely to evolve into violent conflicts.

The second point I would like to make is on the importance of strategic partnerships. Indeed, the collaboration between the African Union and its regional economic communities and mechanisms and with the United Nations, as provided in the various frameworks, is addressing and resolving conflicts and has progressively gained momentum, as guided by the provisions of the African Union Peace and Security Architecture and the African Governance Architecture.

The Joint United Nations-African Union Framework for an Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security, signed in April 2017, is premised on the growing recognition that a stronger partnership between the African Union and the United Nations is a strategic necessity in the process of responding early, coherently and decisively to prevent and manage conflicts in Africa. In addition, the progressively deepening partnership between the Security Council and the African Union Peace and Security Council, through

their annual consultative meeting, is a testament to the tremendous progress that has been made in fostering our collective efforts to address the complex peace and security challenges in Africa.

Close consultations between the two Councils and the implementation of the Joint United Nations-African Union Framework for an Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security are improving our shared appreciation of the challenges with which we are confronted and is sharpening our response tools, including through preventive diplomacy.

I would also like to highlight the fact that the African Union's Agenda 2063 envisions a peaceful, prosperous and integrated Africa, which is consistent with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, on the Sustainable Development Goals. In line with the spirit of Agenda 2063, the AU is implementing its flagship project on silencing the guns on the continent.

In this respect, I wish to commend the Council for the contribution it made to this effort by adopting resolution 2457 (2019) earlier this year, in which, *inter alia*, it calls for the mobilization of the United Nations and its agencies to support the African Union in the implementation of the noble goal of Silencing the Guns in Africa by 2020. The results thus far obtained from this collaboration are quite appreciable, and the Council will agree with me that only by pooling our collective expertise and resources, leveraging our comparative advantages and working collaboratively can our two organizations realistically expect to have a positive impact on the ground.

My third and last point is on the importance of including women and young people in peace processes, which cannot be overemphasized. It is only by ensuring that they play decision-making roles not only in conflict resolution but also in mediation, including in the implementation of peace agreements, that we can truly address the issues vital to securing sustainable peace. The AU Commission, for its part, has created platforms for the empowerment of women in peace and security such as FemWise-Africa, which is a network of women mediators. This network has attracted many young women mediators, a good number of whom have been trained and are being deployed to some conflict and post-conflict areas to accompany the political processes in several countries.

In addition, in our efforts to enhance women's participation and leadership through the African Union

and the United Nations, we came together to help launch the African women's movement called the African Women Leaders Network in June 2017. The African Union has also recently launched the initiative of Youth for Peace, which aims at empowering young people and engaging them in peace processes on the continent.

In that regard, the Chairperson of the African Union Commission has appointed a Special Envoy on Youth, a young lady with the necessary experience and commitment who addressed the Council recently (see S/PV.8629). We are also undertaking regional consultations with African youth in order to further enlist their efforts towards building peace on the continent.

In our endeavours we are always conscious of the primary responsibility of our member States to prevent and resolve conflicts as well as to protect civilians and promote human rights, as provided for in the relevant African instruments and international law. This being so, I would like to highlight here the launch of the grand national dialogue in Cameroon, which is dedicated to finding an internal national solution to the crisis affecting some parts of the country. We welcome this initiative because we are convinced that local initiatives driven by people stand a better chance of reaching a lasting solution, in a spirit of compromise, for the preservation of peace, stability, harmony and national unity. In that vein, our collective peacemaking endeavours in the Sudan, South Sudan, Libya, the Central African Republic, Somalia, Mali and the Sahel, and the Great Lakes region, including the Lake Chad

basin and the Horn of Africa, are commendable and should be consolidated to enhance partnership between the African Union, the regional economic communities and the United Nations.

In conclusion, mediation as part of preventive diplomacy is indeed indispensable to the resolution of crises and conflicts. Improving shared analysis and appreciation of the challenges with which we are confronted is an important first step to providing coherent, effective and timely responses to conflict and crisis situations in Africa. In that context, we need to utilize all preventive diplomacy tools, among which are good offices, Special Representatives, Special Envoys and emissaries, to foster a collective approach.

Despite the gains made, more needs to be done to further enhance the effectiveness of preventive diplomacy. I would therefore like to stress the importance of continued collective and concerted efforts to respond to the existing and emerging threats, the relevance of partnerships and collaboration among Governments, civil society organizations and the private sector, as well as the sustained engagement of all stakeholders, including women and young people, in the decision-making processes relating to the promotion of peace and the advancement of socioeconomic development. Only by pooling our collective efforts, expertise and resources, together weighing our comparative advantages and working collaboratively can we realistically expect to have a positive impact and find durable solutions so as to ensure sustainable peace.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.