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<i>President:</i>	Ms. Pierce/Mr. Allen	(United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)
<i>Members:</i>	Belgium	Mr. Kende
	China	Mr. Liu Zhiguo
	Côte d'Ivoire	Mr. Akiapo
	Dominican Republic	Ms. Batista Díaz
	Equatorial Guinea	Mr. Sipaco Ribala
	France	Mr. Olmedo
	Germany	Mr. Gugel
	Indonesia	Mr. Situmorang
	Kuwait	Mr. Alajmi
	Peru	Mr. Talavera
	Poland	Mrs. Skowrońska
	Russian Federation	Mr. Polyanskiy
	South Africa	Mr. Sithole
	United States of America	Mrs. Smith-Levy

Agenda

Peacebuilding and sustaining peace

The role of reconciliation in maintaining international peace and security

Letter dated 11 November 2019 from the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2019/871)

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The meeting resumed at 3.05 p.m.

The President: I wish to remind all speakers to limit their statements to no more than four minutes in order to enable the Council to hear from all speakers who are on the list this afternoon. If delegations have longer statements, they are kindly requested to circulate the texts in writing and to deliver a summarized version when speaking in the Chamber. The red light on the collar of the microphone will begin to flash after four minutes have elapsed.

I now give the floor to the representative Rwanda.

Mr. Rutikanga (Rwanda): First and foremost, I congratulate the United Kingdom on its presidency of the Security Council for this month. I thank you, Madam President, in particular for organizing today's open debate and the manner in which you have framed this important topic. In sharing Rwanda's experience of reconciliation and lessons learned, my points will touch on key elements conveyed in the concept note (S/2019/871, annex).

In the case of Rwanda, the most important driving force for reconciliation has been the genuine and consistent political will of the country's leadership to ensure that unity and reconciliation form the bedrock of all national reconstruction efforts. The first practical lesson that we can observe is that political will is indispensable to ensure that reconciliation efforts work.

After the genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda, the National Unity Government created the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission, which has subsequently played a leading role in establishing various homegrown initiatives aimed at promoting national unity and the fight against divisive ideology. The reconciliation model in Rwanda is nationally oriented and is both backward- and forward-looking. It is a process through which a society moves from a divided past to a shared present and future for the country. All approaches to national reconciliation have been developed with the deep understanding of the past. Allow me to share a few key practical peacebuilding approaches that contributed to reconciliation in my country.

With respect to transitional justice, the concept note rightly states that reconciliation has been closely associated with transitional justice and its restorative dimension. That is what Rwanda's homegrown restorative justice model, commonly known as Gacaca,

aimed to achieve. Given the nature of the genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda, during which perpetrators turned against their closest neighbours, it was imperative that justice for the victims be accompanied by restorative aims.

With regard to the role of women, after the destructive genocide of 1994, there was a great need to mobilize and assist the population in rebuilding their lives, as well as their communities and the country as a whole. Rwandan women in different leadership positions played critical roles in mobilizing fellow women and men to live together and find common solutions to their own problems and those of their country. Women initiated and led community dialogues, which helped to heal relationships among different groups, particularly survivors and former prisoners.

Turning to the repatriation, resettlement and reintegration of refugees, after the genocide the Government acknowledged that national unity among the people of Rwanda could not be achieved without a definitive solution to the problem of Rwandan refugees. It should be acknowledged that the return of refugees to their country and their proper reintegration is an absolute right and represents a factor of peace, unity and national reconciliation.

On the demobilization and reintegration of former combatants, the true reintegration of former combatants, after being demobilized, in fact lied mainly within the realm of the socioeconomic dimension. Demobilization and reintegration in Rwanda reinforced reconciliation. The process was conducted in a manner that built trust and confidence among combatants and made them feel accepted by the community. It was based upon building capacity to earn a living or have assets that could form a source of livelihood, so that they began to feel a part of society.

In conclusion, let me stress the importance of national ownership of the reconciliation process. All communities have traditional mechanisms of conflict prevention and reconciliation. Some may have been eroded due to historical reasons, but it is important that the international community support nationally led initiatives based on domestic perspectives.

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

Mr. Fifield (Australia): We thank the United Kingdom for convening this debate.

Reconciliation is fundamental to building and sustaining peace and must be seen as central to Member States' sustaining peace agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The Security Council and the General Assembly decided in their twin resolutions (Assembly resolution 70/262 and Council resolution 2282 (2016)) that sustaining peace is a shared task and responsibility. It is to be fulfilled by Governments and all other national stakeholders. It flows through all three pillars of the United Nations engagement at all stages of conflict and in all its dimensions.

Furthermore, all nations are working towards the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly SDG 16, on the establishment, protection and maintenance of peace, justice and strong institutions. That requires putting reconciliation at the centre.

An inclusive approach to national conversations is essential in efforts to build and sustain peace. Australia prioritizes reconciliation when working with partners in the context of its overseas development programme, as well as in our own national policies and strategies, bringing stakeholders and affected communities together. Reconciliation is not just a concept or a practice for countries with recent experience of conflict. It is a work in progress in different contexts for all countries.

Domestically, Australia is walking the path of reconciliation between indigenous and non-indigenous Australians. Australia's framework, which is known as Closing the Gap, includes a number of measures to bridge that divide, including economic opportunities for indigenous Australians through an indigenous procurement policy, which seeks to leverage the Government's annual multi-billion-dollar procurement spend. This drives demand for indigenous goods and services, stimulates indigenous economic development and grows the indigenous business sector.

The private sector also plays an important role in reconciliation. The Business Council of Australia and major corporations are to be applauded for creating the Raising the Bar programme, which is aimed at seeing more than \$3 billion Australian dollars spent by major corporations with indigenous suppliers over the next five years. The Australian Government also supports work with the corporate sector to deliver reconciliation action plans. These plans support organizations in considering how they can contribute to reconciliation between indigenous and non-indigenous Australians. That delivers jobs, culturally aware workplaces and

businesses and helps to develop future generations of indigenous leaders.

Reconciliation is a key focus of Australia's international efforts. An example of that is our support to peacebuilding in Bougainville island, as part of our bilateral partnership with Papua New Guinea. Working in partnership, the role of community leaders and faith-based organizations, and ensuring women's involvement have been key in advancing reconciliation and building and sustaining peace. For example, the Nazareth Centre for Rehabilitation has been an important contributor to the ongoing peace and reconciliation process, and Australia has been proud to be a long-term supporter.

We urge that United Nations assistance to Member States focus on and integrate reconciliation needs, including in the context of comprehensive analysis, which Member States have decided should be delivered under the sustaining peace agenda and United Nations reform. We welcome the use of the Peacebuilding Commission and other United Nations forums to learn lessons from national experiences and provide a platform for the discussion of effective approaches to reconciliation for the purposes of sustaining peace. We look forward to continuing to promote reconciliation, nationally and internationally, in partnership with the United Nations, its Member States and civil society, to further efforts to achieving Sustainable Development Goal 16 and the sustaining peace agenda.

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

Mr. Auväärt (Estonia): Estonia welcomes the opportunity to explore the ways that contribute to successful reconciliation processes. Estonia aligns itself with the statement to be delivered by observer of the European Union.

Our intervention focuses on the role of justice and international courts as a tool to reconcile communities that must learn again to live together in a single society. The need for reconciliation often follows a violent armed conflict. Even when conflicts come to a physical end, suffering, pain and humiliation continue to occupy the minds and souls of those affected. The risk of resurgence of conflict is especially high in cases of large-scale human rights violations. A society can start healing only when reliable and objective diagnoses of the conflict are provided, the truth is told and justice is served. Former Secretary-General Kofi Annan once said that if we do not have justice and people do not

feel that their grievances have been dealt with, it is extremely difficult to get serious reconciliation.

In order to ensure justice, the Security Council has established or assisted in the establishment of several ad hoc international courts and tribunals to try those responsible for the most serious crimes committed during previous or ongoing conflicts. The establishment of the International Criminal Court expresses the equally strong conviction of the international community that justice is an intrinsic part of building peace, security and the well-being of society. Estonia recognizes that these justice mechanisms can provide a valuable platform for elucidating the truth of what has happened, giving victims the opportunity to have their voices heard and providing accountability. At the same time, we recall that it is the primary duty of States to prevent and respond to international crimes and that international mechanisms must complement and not replace national courts.

First, ensuring that perpetrators are held responsible for the atrocities they have committed and delivering justice to victims of their crimes, in particular sexual and gender-based crimes, assists in tackling and preventing the stigmatization of victims by the rest of society. Justice and accountability mechanisms offer victims an objective and public forum where the atrocities committed are, perhaps for the first time, not denied or even depicted as national victories. These platforms give the victims an opportunity to have their stories and grievances heard and to bring a lawful closure to the conflict. We would also like to stress here the need to fully include the gender perspective in peace processes and reconciliation efforts.

Secondly, the ruling of an international court or tribunal expresses the strong condemnation by the international community of the crimes committed. That kind of condemnation has the effect of stripping perpetrators of their influence and power and thereby preventing them from sustaining violence and hatred, which could lead to further conflicts.

Thirdly, beyond the specific cases that are submitted to international courts and tribunals, the authority of those bodies contributes to establishing guidelines for justice and respect for the rights of victims, which serve as guidance for all States in the area of atrocity crimes. That is how the work of international criminal justice mechanisms contributes to strengthening peace and security throughout the world.

To conclude, Estonia recognizes the contribution that justice in general, and the international courts and tribunals in particular, can make to reconciliation. We firmly believe that the delivery of justice creates conditions that are conducive to reconciliation and that the Security Council needs to play its role in ensuring that justice prevails.

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

Mr. Ochoa Martínez (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): We are grateful for the convening of this open debate, which is particularly relevant in the light of the five-year review of the peacebuilding architecture that will take place next year. That process will allow us to review the functioning of the peacebuilding structure and other components, such as the special political missions. National reconciliation is fundamental to conflict prevention and sustainable peace. Creating favourable conditions for achieving peace, establishing and consolidating democratic institutions, ensuring that an independent and impartial judicial system can flourish, respecting human rights and ensuring the minimum guarantees for social coexistence all constitute conditions that are crucial to national reconciliation processes.

National reconciliation represents a complex phase of mourning aimed at healing the wounds of societies and give way to a new stage in the development of a common and collective plan for the future. This process, like any healing process, requires not only dialogue, but also historical truth. That is where transitional justice plays a fundamental role in reconciliation. Access to truth and accountability are key to rebuilding the social fabric, especially in post-conflict situations. Transitional justice dictates that the respect for the rule of law must be at the centre of the conversation, given that it constitutes a fundamental element of sustainable peace. In that regard, we recall the presidential statement on the rule of law, adopted under the Mexican presidency of the Security Council in June 2010 (S/PRST/2010/11), in which this organ expressed its determination to fight impunity and uphold accountability with all appropriate means and drew attention to the full range of justice and reconciliation mechanisms to be considered, including national and international criminal courts and tribunals, truth and reconciliation commissions, national reparation programmes for victims and traditional dispute resolution mechanisms.

Mexico reiterates the provisions of the Declaration of the High-Level Meeting of the General Assembly on the Rule of Law at the National and International levels, adopted in 2012 (General Assembly resolution 67/1), on the importance of having a comprehensive approach to transitional justice that covers the full range of judicial and non-judicial measures, aimed at ensuring accountability, rendering justice, providing recourse to victims, promoting reconciliation, establishing independent entities to monitor security systems, restoring confidence in State institutions and promoting the rule of law. Accountability for those responsible for violations of human rights and international humanitarian law in conflict and post-conflict situations is essential for preventing the repetition of such violations and for seeking peace, justice and reconciliation. Access to justice and support for victims are central, interlinked elements that underpin genuine national reconciliation.

Mexico acknowledges the contribution made by criminal courts, in particular the International Criminal Court, not only in fighting impunity for the most serious crimes but also for their work to establish the truth for posterity and restore victims' rights and dignity. More than courts of law, those institutions play a vital role in cementing national reconciliation through justice.

There can be no national reconciliation without development, and no development without national reconciliation. Both elements are crucial for transforming conflict into conditions for stability and lasting peace. We acknowledge the intrinsic links between the Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and peace. We hope that the review process of the peacebuilding architecture scheduled for next year will produce recommendations on ways to strengthen the role of the United Nations, the Security Council and the Peacebuilding Commission in reconciliation processes.

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

Mr. Edrees (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, Mr. President, I wish to thank you and the Permanent Mission of the United Kingdom for having taken the initiative to convene this open debate on peacebuilding and sustaining peace and the role of reconciliation in maintaining international peace and security. I would also like to thank the Secretary-General and all the other speakers for the valuable statements this morning.

National reconciliation is very important as one of the main factors that assists in achieving lasting peace. This idea is at the heart of the two identical resolutions — resolution 2282 (2016) and the General Assembly resolution 70/262 — on the review of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture. Both resolutions highlight the shared responsibility of Government and other national stakeholders to achieve lasting peace with the assistance of, and support from, the international community. The aim is to address the root causes of conflict and help parties to conflict put an end to hostilities, achieve national reconciliation by launching inclusive national dialogue, and make progress along the path towards recovery, reconstruction and development.

Moreover, both resolutions consolidate the comprehensive approach to ensure sustainable peace and transitional justice in order not to relapse into conflict. They both list many key measures that should go hand in hand with reconciliation efforts, the most important of which are operationalization of the system of justice, accountability and the rule of law, prevention of impunity, and security sector reform so that it can play its role professionally, effectively and responsibly.

Equally, we must implement comprehensive programmes to disarm, demobilize and reintegrate elements of armed groups into society and restore legitimate State authority. In that context, the peacebuilding review process is an important opportunity to benefit from the best practices and expertise of the Peacebuilding Commission to ensure support for national reconciliation efforts in post-conflict countries and to enhance the advisory role of the Peacebuilding Commission in supporting those efforts.

Practical experience has led the United Nations to play a leading role in supporting post-conflict countries to achieve national reconciliation. On one hand, the Security Council has on many occasions entrusted peacekeeping operations and special political missions with tasks that include promoting comprehensive national dialogue in host countries in order to achieve national reconciliation. On the other hand, United Nations country teams have implemented a range of activities and programmes to that end. The Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Fund have also played a fundamental role in support of the national priorities of post-conflict countries, including in terms of achieving national reconciliation. However,

to enhance the effectiveness of the support it provides to national reconciliation processes, the United Nations system must strengthen coordination among its various bodies in order so make their roles complementary and put an end to isolation among them. Furthermore, it is important to strengthen partnerships and coordination between the United Nations and regional organizations, including the African Union.

As the Council is aware, post-conflict reconciliation is a long-term process that requires constant support from, and the commitment of, the United Nations and the international community, while taking into account the specificities of each context. There is no one-size-fits-all model that can be applied to all situations. National reconciliation also requires political will on the part of all stakeholders and taking accompanying measures that create an enabling environment to ensure successful reconciliation processes. Such processes also require the international community to respect the principle of national ownership of the reconciliation process.

Egypt is convinced that regional and international organizations have an important role to play in maintaining international peace and security in partnership with the United Nations under Chapter VIII of the Charter. In the same vein, Egypt, as Chair of the African Union, is working to open the African Union Centre for Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development, based in Cairo. Once operational, the Centre will support national priorities to tackle the root causes of conflict and consolidate and sustain peace across the African continent, based on the concept of African solutions for African problems. Moreover, on assuming the chairmanship, Egypt announced the launch of the Aswan Forum for Sustainable Peace and Development, which aims to be an African platform that brings together Africa's partners to discuss issues of peace, security and development. The aim will also be to find practical solutions to the different challenges in that regard. We are creating this forum based on our conviction that there is a linkage among peace, security and development issues and as a confirmation of the comprehensive approach to addressing the root causes of problems and challenges faced by Africa, from a perspective that strengthens the concept of national ownership of efforts to achieve lasting peace and development across the African continent.

Egypt has also actively participated in peacekeeping activities, including by contributing significant contingents of troops and police forces to

United Nations peacekeeping operations, primarily on the African continent. That reflects our commitment to our African brothers, and, in that connection, we wish to support efforts to achieve peace, stability and prosperity for all African peoples. We support the role of peacekeeping in assisting parties to conflicts with confidence-building and national reconciliation.

We reiterate the importance of having an overarching political framework in place alongside peacekeeping operations. Such a framework is necessary for these operations to fulfil the role entrusted to them.

In conclusion, we thank you, Madam President, for having convened today's important meeting. We wish the United Kingdom presidency every success this month in its efforts to guide the Council in carrying out its main responsibility pursuant to the Charter of the United Nations, namely, to maintain international peace and security.

The President: I must remind colleagues that the time limit for statements is four minutes. Otherwise we will not be able to get through the list of speakers. My delegation will pass the speaker a note once they reach the four-minute stage in case they do not see the microphone, but then I am afraid that I will have to interrupt to ensure that we can hear every speaker on the list this afternoon. I thank all colleagues for their understanding.

I now give the floor to the representative of Liechtenstein.

Mr. Wenaweser (Liechtenstein): Today's debate highlights the fact that it is not sufficient for the Security Council to simply put an end to conflicts, but that it should help to break the conflict cycle. In large part, this is, of course, a task we assigned to the Peacebuilding Commission when it was created in 2005. I will focus my brief comments today on how to ensure that reconciliation leads to genuine, sustainable peace. The process requires, among other things, eschewing impunity, fostering inclusion and addressing root causes.

Sustainable peace is only possible when opponents deal with the past and commit to a shared view of the future. Reconciliation must never allow for de facto or de jure impunity for the most serious crimes. Justice for atrocity crimes removes those most likely to go back on peace agreements from political life and deters them and others from committing similar crimes in future.

When reconciliation does include amnesties that prevent accountability for atrocities committed by politically powerful figures, it disregards victims' calls for justice and creates the conditions for divisive memory politics or even a new phase of conflict. We support the United Nations position that the peace agreements it endorses

“can never promise amnesties for genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity or gross violations of human rights” (*S/2004/616, para. 10*).

That being said, the Council's recent meeting on the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina illustrates the difficulties involved in ensuring that international criminal justice leads to long-term accountability, sustainable peace and meaningful reconciliation (see S/PV.8658). Achieving accountability often requires the inclusion of restorative justice, as well as such transitional-justice mechanisms as truth commissions. Key to this process is that each and every situation has an approach to accountability shaped by the needs of those seeking justice.

For reconciliation to last, it must include people from all parts of society. Participation in processes where reconciliation is sought must be gender sensitive and incorporate the perspectives of young people and of minority groups within a State. Civil society, religious leaders and indigenous representatives may also play significant roles. Inclusive reconciliation builds a broader constituency for a lasting peace.

Reconciliation must also grapple with factors at the root of division. There has been a significant growth in intra-State conflicts, many of which are based on claims by communities within a State to a greater measure of governance over their own affairs as an expression of self-determination, often on the basis of ethnic, cultural or religious identity. On this basis, we are currently working on a handbook for mediators, affected communities and States to bring together best practices in preventing and resolving these conflicts, based on five principles: self-governance, the protection of minority rights, inclusive reconciliation processes, the acknowledgement of historical context, and awareness of the role of affected third States. We hope that this will make a contribution to the successful reconciliation of conflicts and disputes over issues of self-determination.

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

Mr. Kakanur (India): Madam President, I thank you for convening today's debate on the importance of reconciliation and the process of peacebuilding. We appreciate the comprehensive and insightful briefings on the subject by the Secretary-General and the other briefers.

Reconciliation is a crucial step in stopping the cycle of violence and insecurity in post-conflict situations and in building sustainable peace. Given the immense complexities and unique local context of each post-conflict theatre, there can be no one-size-fits-all template for such dynamic situations. Reconciliation is a long and arduous process, and artificially imposed standards or timelines are unlikely to achieve success. My delegation is of the view that reconciliation has to be a truly homegrown process. The inherent limits on the breadth, depth and duration of any external peacebuilding mission suggests that the kind of deep-rooted sustainable change that peacebuilding seeks to bring about requires the long-term support and commitment of a critical mass of domestic actors, including civil society, youth, women and religious leaders.

Well-meaning reconciliation efforts of the United Nations or the wider international humanitarian community may not be in tune with the realities on the ground. Expecting domestic actors to uncritically embrace external norms and ideas as inherently superior to domestic ones is being unrealistic. Conflict corrodes and destroys human infrastructural and institutional capacities. Such capacities need to be rebuilt if national actors are to exercise a meaningful degree of ownership over events in the post-conflict period. While it would be a mistake to overlook domestic institutions and practices as sources of peacebuilding, it would be erroneous to uncritically romanticize them. It is therefore necessary that adequate capacity-building resources are made available for building robust institutions and State structures.

Peace and justice are the primary links in any post-conflict scenario. India supports enhanced international cooperation for the development and codification of international criminal law and to strengthen the rule of law as a whole. We also believe that, for a truly effective and credible international justice system, we must avoid selectivity, partiality and double standards in the application of rule of law at the global level. In this context, our view is that the United Nations must play a non-prescriptive supporting

and facilitating role. The United Nations must ensure the inclusiveness, ownership and participation of all stakeholders in the reconciliation process. Equally important is United Nations support for humanitarian assistance, the protection and promotion of human rights, and the facilitation of political reconciliation processes in accordance with the principles of neutrality and impartiality.

We reject an unwarranted reference by the delegation of Pakistan earlier today to the situation in an integral part of India (see S/PV.8668). Let me recall that both sides have solemnly agreed to resolve such issues through means agreed to by the parties.

In conclusion, if peacebuilding is to move beyond being an exercise in social engineering, we must acknowledge that peacebuilding resources exist within conflict-affected societies themselves.

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

Ms. Mudallali (Lebanon): I would like to congratulate you, Madam President, on assuming the presidency of the Council this month and thank you for choosing the topic of reconciliation for today's debate.

Under its Chapter VI, on the peaceful settlement of disputes, the Charter of the United Nations allows for the Security Council to call upon the parties to any dispute to settle it by means of, *inter alia*, negotiation, mediation and conciliation. These three tools for the peaceful settlement of disputes are essential to the preservation of international peace and security by offering a peaceful alternative to resolving conflicts. But reconciliation cannot happen in a vacuum and cannot be an end in itself. It is a process that is indispensable for the parties themselves to be able to turn the page on conflict and open a door to understanding, forgiveness and peace.

The Security Council has more than a dozen conflicts on its agenda, and there are dozens of disputes between countries and within societies around the world today where the cycle of violence makes it seem impossible to imagine that the people involved in such disputes could live together in harmony again. But they can: through a powerful reconciliation process, if it is done correctly and in the proper conditions.

First, we have to acknowledge that no two disputes are the same and no two peoples fit the same mould when it comes to resolving disputes. But there are

universal values and principles that must be present to offer the right conditions for a peaceful settlement of an issue and a successful reconciliation process. Accountability is an essential starting point for any process of reconciliation as the journey down the long road towards healing and peace begins. Justice must be served, because without justice there is no peace. Truth is very important for reconciliation.

You ask in your guiding concept note (S/2019/871, annex), Madam President, how the Security Council and the United Nations can most effectively support nationally owned reconciliation processes. The Security Council must start by ending conflicts. In many parts of the world conflicts are managed, not solved. The Security Council needs to tackle the reasons that people fight, and not focus only on how to stop the fighting. Addressing the root causes of conflict can go a long way in achieving durable peace and genuine reconciliation. Ending occupation and oppression and guaranteeing an equitable settlement are only a few examples of the prerequisites for peace — not only for one generation, but all future humankind.

Imposing settlements might work for a short time, but the seeds of conflict remain and germinate as soon as new conditions make it possible to resume. Reconciliation cannot happen when grievances persist and injustice lingers. Outside assistance for homegrown reconciliation processes has to respect cultural sensitivities and people's beliefs, instead of imposing ready-made formulas on populations. Local knowledge is very important. In multi-ethnic and multicultural societies, one has to make sure that the result of the reconciliation process is equitable, so that no party feels aggrieved. In Lebanon, after what was referred to as the 1958 revolution, the crisis ended with a formula, "No victor, no vanquished", which assured each party to the conflict that it had got what it wanted and political life could resume.

Concepts like dignity are very important for reconciliation. Settlements have to help people preserve their dignity — the dignity of not feeling humiliated by the conditions of any conflict resolution or reconciliation. Dignity is also culturally sensitive. Its meaning and scope are very much culturally defined, and any reconciliation has to take that into consideration.

Nelson Mandela, when speaking about reconciliation — a process he knew well — said that true reconciliation does not consist in merely forgetting

the past. He was right. It is not about forgetting the past and the pain; it is about imagining the future — a future of peace.

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

Mr. Kadiri (Morocco) (*spoke in French*): Allow me to begin by congratulating you, Madam President, on the United Kingdom's accession to the presidency of the Security Council for the month of November and thanking you for convening and choosing the topic of this debate. I thank the Secretary-General for his briefing, which confirms his resolute commitment to consolidating and sustaining peace. I would also like to thank the other speakers for sharing their views on this issue.

This debate is dedicated to a topic that is not often independently addressed at the Security Council, but nonetheless remains important, even crucial, for building and sustaining peace. Without successful reconciliation processes, the risk of relapsing into conflict significantly increases, which history has taught us to the detriment of our populations, who continue to suffer the horrors of conflict, in particular on the African continent. Morocco welcomes this opportunity to share its views on the issue by highlighting the following points.

First, as rightly pointed out in the concept note (S/2019/871, annex) before us at this debate, reconciliation has often been associated with transitional justice. That is extremely important in order to definitively turn the page on a conflict.

Secondly, the leading role of community and religious leaders must be highlighted. Especially in societies that could be described as traditional, those leaders enjoy a special status and command significant respect, which they do not hesitate to use for the benefit of their communities if conflicts arise. Their role is even more important in the case of a religious conflict. The simple fact of seeing representatives of different religions involved in a conflict holding information meetings and working jointly to raise awareness among the population about the benefits of living together can have a decisive impact on populations.

Thirdly, although no conflict or crisis is the same, it is important to draw on our broad pool of experience and expertise in reconciliation. However, what ensures success for any process based on past events is national

ownership. That cardinal principle makes it possible to adapt experiences to the specific situation of any given country. It also allows for greater involvement of country leaders and civil-society representatives — an essential component of the process.

Fourthly, Morocco welcomes the growing role played by women in reconciliation processes, in line with the women and peace and security agenda. The involvement of women, who are unfortunately often the first victims of conflict, remains fundamental to the success of reconciliation processes. We fully support the Secretary-General in his desire to promote women's participation in all areas, including in reconciliation processes.

The United Nations has, and continues to play, a key role in most past and ongoing reconciliation processes. Whether through its presence on the ground, the means at its disposal or by its good offices' services, the United Nations is equipped to provide decisive support to reconciliation processes. In that regard, I would like to align myself with the delegations that have cited the Peacebuilding Commission as one of the bodies that is best placed to address issues related to reconciliation. The main strength of our Organization is, of course, its impartiality and neutrality, which are essential components of any action supporting a reconciliation process. It also has the ability to compile and use best practices and, lastly, it can support other organizations that could benefit from their comparative advantages over the United Nations.

In conclusion, I wish to stress that any reconciliation process must operate at both the national and local levels. Dialogue at the local level must foster dialogue at the national level, thereby ensuring the inclusivity of the process and national ownership.

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

Mr. Mlynár (Slovakia): Before delivering my remarks, I would like to state that Slovakia fully aligns itself with the statement to be delivered by the observer of the European Union.

Reconciliation is aimed at rebuilding trust, strengthening resilience and forging a functioning relationship between the people and the Government, known as the social contract. It can be successful only if the process is representative and inclusive, embraces universal rights and values, such as freedom and

human dignity, and if that reconciliation focuses first and foremost on the people and their safety, security and welfare.

Recalling the twin resolutions on the review of the peacebuilding architecture (General Assembly resolution 70/262 and Council resolution 2282 (2016)), promoting healing and reconciliation and building a professional, accountable and effective security sector, including through its reform, are critical components to consolidating peace and security, promoting poverty reduction, strengthening the rule of law and good governance and preventing countries from relapsing into conflict. Let me focus on three important areas.

First, Slovakia is a keen advocate of the issue of security sector reform as an important instrument to help maintain peace and stability, particularly in countries recovering from conflicts and undergoing the processes of post-conflict reconstruction and reconciliation. In April 2018, South Africa and Slovakia, on behalf of the Group of Friends of Security Sector Reform, co-hosted a high-level round table on security sector reform and sustaining peace. The event underlined that security sector reform plays a key role in the successful implementation of both the sustaining peace agenda and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Given the vital role that security sector reform plays in conflict prevention, post-conflict reconstruction and sustaining peace, an expanded understanding of United Nations involvement and the contributions of security-sector reform to reconciliation is essential. We need a better understanding of, and education on, why peace agreements are often not fulfilled and why we are witnessing relapses into conflict.

Today it is more than evident that incorporating greater numbers of marginalized ethnic and religious groups into the military and police forces, security structures and rule-of-law institutions and fostering a cultural shift towards non-discriminatory and accountable public policy can help to alleviate grievances around security, especially in the aftermath of conflict.

Secondly, on partnerships with regional and subregional organizations for building and sustaining peace, Slovakia holds this year's chairmanship of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). Our three priority areas in that context have been preventing, mediating and resolving conflicts; building a safer future; and effective multilateralism.

As well as supporting peaceful settlements through inclusive political dialogue and mediation processes, we have placed a particular focus on easing the daily lives of the people affected by conflict. Peace processes, including mediation and reconciliation, must be inclusive. Everyone's voice must be heard, particularly that of the youth. Young people's perspectives and their active engagement are crucial to promoting and strengthening international peace and security.

Another important part of that, of course, is the context of Sustainable Development Goal 16, on building sustainable, peaceful and inclusive societies that are supported by a functioning and accountable institutional framework. I would like to highlight the development of the first OSCE guidelines on security sector governance and reform, which we consider as practical guidance and an important milestone in that respect. The third priority of our OSCE chairmanship has been effective multilateralism and, in that context, the importance of United Nations-OSCE cooperation and partnership, including through the important work of the United Nations Liaison Office in Vienna.

Lastly, Slovakia has presented its candidature to the Organizational Committee of the Peacebuilding Commission, which has a key role in bringing together the various actors of the United Nations system, including the United Nations country teams and civil society, which are instrumental in reconciliatory efforts in many settings. We believe that the advisory role of the Peacebuilding Commission to the Security Council could and should be better used and further drawn upon to ensure that appropriate attention is paid to reconciliation at all stages of the conflict cycle. In that regard, we look forward to further engagement between the Peacebuilding Commission and the Security Council.

Before concluding my remarks, let me also mention that, in just a few days, from 5 to 6 December, we will organize the OSCE Ministerial Council in Bratislava. Many of these issues are very high on the Ministerial Council's agenda. It is a unique opportunity for the largest regional peace and security cooperation organization to focus on important issues, including peacebuilding and reconciliation, and the participating States will review and assess the organization's activities, including on strengthening dialogue on security issues in all of the OSCE's three dimensions.

The President: I now give the floor to the observer of the European Union.

Mr. Gonzato: I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its member States. The candidate countries Turkey, the Republic of North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania; the country of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina; as well as Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova, align themselves with this statement.

The European Union welcomes the United Kingdom's initiative to explore the role of reconciliation in peace processes and sustainable peace. The discussion is particularly timely in the light of the challenges that peacemakers continue to face. Generations in Europe have felt and understood the devastating effects of violent conflict. Today war within the European Union is unthinkable, because we have worked hard to build confidence and trust. Yet, without continuous work to reconcile, there is no future for peace, even in Europe. The need to advance knowledge on reconciliation on a global scale is urgent. Today's conflicts repeat in cycles. Peace agreements fail more often than they succeed. We believe that we must arrive at a better understanding of why that happens.

Reconciliation is key to sustainable peace. It is a process that enables the restoration of social relations on the basis of fundamental values, such as human dignity and human rights, including the right to life and the right to physical and psychological integrity. It is a complex process that has to be considered from the outset in any peace-support efforts and requires a truly integrated approach.

In all those aspects, the Peacebuilding Commission has a central role to play by bringing together the various actors of the United Nations system. Moreover, the active advisory role of the Peacebuilding Commission to the Security Council could be further drawn upon to ensure that appropriate attention be paid to reconciliation at all stages of the conflict cycle.

Our policies and practices need to be continuously upgraded. For example, 75 per cent of Security Council-mandated missions aim for reconciliation, but no commonly accepted definitions or guidelines on what that means and how to achieve it exist. The concept of reconciliation needs to be sharpened in order to operationalize it more effectively. We are ready to contribute to that. We need to learn more about

how various elements of reconciliation have worked in different settings, and with what impact. In doing so, we need to gain better awareness of how to support national and local reconciliation strategies in countries emerging from conflict, whether and how to support reconciliation processes as part of exit strategies and how the Council can engage with other parts of the United Nations system, including the Secretariat, to support those processes.

We also need to recognize that neither the United Nations, the EU nor any other multilateral organization alone can advance reconciliation. Reconciliation happens at the individual and interpersonal level, the societal level and the institutional level. We are enablers; it is the conflicting communities that are the agents. We can provide a framework, tools and safe spaces, but to offer support, we need a solid, and preferably common, understanding of what makes reconciliation effective.

Religions should be factored into reconciliation approaches and our diplomatic practice. Diplomatic practices could benefit from improved religious literacy. The setting up by the European Union of an international exchange platform on religion and social exclusion is one example of how we are working on that; training and exposing our own diplomats to the many facets of religion in different parts of the world is another.

Peace agreements can become more sustainable by involving political and societal actors in peace negotiations, in addition to the primary conflict parties. Traditional and religious leaders and their networks are also seen as having the capacity and public trust to find solutions for sustainable peace. Women reconcilers often take the first steps towards mobilizing their communities and engaging with their enemies; their efforts need support. Youth movements are growing rapidly, and their perspectives and efforts must be learned from. Reconciliation and healing are usually associated with the post-conflict stage, but are also overlapping processes that take place during conflict and can prepare the ground for peace or can prevent further violence.

To conclude, we reiterate our determination to continue this important work on how to better support reconciliation processes both within peacekeeping and peacebuilding contexts.

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

Mrs. Azucena (Philippines): I am honoured to speak on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

The important role of reconciliation processes in the maintenance of regional and international peace and security can be gleaned from ASEAN's experience. ASEAN plays an important role in post-conflict situations. The Bali Concord II, signed in 2003, mandated ASEAN to find innovative ways to increase its security and establish modalities for the ASEAN Political-Security Community, including in the area of post-conflict peacebuilding.

Established in 2011, the ASEAN Institute for Peace and Reconciliation was envisioned to be ASEAN's knowledge hub and centre of excellence in building capacity on conflict resolution and further strengthening peace-oriented values towards harmony, peace, security and stability in the region and beyond. The ASEAN Institute for Peace and Reconciliation has successfully held a number of activities, namely, its Regional Youth Conference on Peace and Tolerance in 2018, in Jakarta, and a training series on mainstreaming peace and reconciliation in ASEAN this year, in Manila. We welcome the collaboration between the ASEAN Institute for Peace and Reconciliation and the United Nations in convening a workshop on ASEAN perspectives in conflict management and conflict resolution in the region, held in Jakarta, and look forward to more active initiatives at the Institute in the future. It also successfully launched its first research study, entitled *Lessons Learned from a Process of Conflict Resolution between the Philippine Government and the Moro National Liberation Front, as Mediated by Indonesia* and a seminar on the outcome of the project in September.

At the tenth ASEAN-United Nations summit, held in Bangkok three weeks ago, ASEAN and the United Nations reaffirmed their commitment to cooperate through the ASEAN Institute for Peace and Reconciliation. The United Nations and Viet Nam will co-host the seventh ASEAN-United Nations workshop and fifth regional dialogue on political-security cooperation and focused collaboration in support of the ASEAN Institute for Peace and Reconciliation in December in Hanoi.

We also welcome the establishment of the ASEAN Women for Peace Registry last year as a groundbreaking initiative to take stock of ASEAN women experts in the

field of peace and reconciliation, who may be called upon at times when specific expertise is required. This year, underscoring women's participation, we also welcome various initiatives and actions on women's roles in peace processes, namely, the convening of the ASEAN Women Interfaith Dialogue, held in Jakarta on the theme "Promoting understanding for an inclusive and peaceful society"; the first regional symposium on implementing the women and peace and security agenda in ASEAN, which was held in Phnom Penh; and a regional training on women and peace and security, held in Jakarta.

ASEAN stands ready, in partnership with key stakeholders and in solidarity with the community of nations, to identify more innovative and inclusive approaches to promote the United Nations peacebuilding and sustaining peace agenda, including reconciliation processes in the region.

I would now like to offer some insights in my national capacity.

For the Philippines, reconciliation is a long-term process that seeks innovative ways to address, integrate and embrace the painful past and the shared future as a means of dealing with the present. The foundation of that approach is an environment that builds, nurtures and embraces a culture of peace. For the Philippine Government, components of that environment include catch-up socioeconomic and development programmes in conflict-affected areas, conflict-sensitivity programmes and the continuous development of a peace constituency that is supportive of the peace process. Another integral component is the "people's peace tables" initiatives for the youth, indigenous peoples, women, sultanates and other stakeholders, which serve as a platform for conversations on peace and conflict issues. Finally, the Government's early recovery and rehabilitation programmes are implemented using a peace lens to ensure that the work delivers on physical reconstruction and rebuilds the torn social fabric of the community of nations.

To conclude, our experience with the signing of the Bangsamoro Organic Law for the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, in July last year, taught us that the signing of a peace agreement is just the beginning of the peace process. The process is completed when every Filipino owns the peace and the peace dividends of progress, security and a comfortable life are enjoyed by all.

The President: I give the floor to the observer of the Observer State of the Holy See.

Monsignor Hansen (Holy See): The Holy See wishes to thank the United Kingdom for convening this open debate on the role of reconciliation in maintaining international peace and security. The theme is both crucial for the peace and stability of present and future generations and central to the mission of the Catholic Church, which, throughout its history, has sought continually to be a sign and instrument of unity among peoples.

A powerful example of reconciliation came about after violence erupted in the Central African Republic and various stakeholders sought to amplify or, indeed, manipulate the religious nature of the conflict, so as to further compound artificial divisions among the population. Three men stood up and said “no”: the Catholic Archbishop of Bangui, an evangelical pastor from the city and an imam. They courageously set up an interreligious platform at the national level, the experience of which was repeated at the level of local communities across the country. In spite of the inevitable problems and difficulties encountered along the way, the initial and inspired vision of those three religious leaders remains. Furthermore, the visit of His Holiness Pope Francis to that divided and impoverished land, in November 2015, points to such efforts as the only way forward. It was and remains inconceivable for people of faith and members of major religions to make an unjust use of weapons for one group to dominate others.

Religious leaders must stand together and show to those in their pastoral care that diversity — whether that be ethnic or religious — need not be an obstacle to a nation’s unity and that divisions can be overcome when we commit to fraternity. The Pope’s invitation to the Imam of the Central Mosque in Bangui to ride with him and greet the people together from the Popemobile was a powerful sign and had an incredibly positive impact.

Reconciliation, of course, involves differences; it acknowledges divisions and seeks to overcome difficulties that all too often lead to people being killed and suffering violence and other violations against their human dignity, and it requires magnanimity to see the bigger picture, seek the common good and invest in a more just, humane and prosperous future. However, genuine reconciliation in no way minimizes the suffering; rather, it must deal with it. Genuine

reconciliation examines what led to dispute and conflict in the first place and uses appropriate means to find a way to a lasting and durable peace, which, of course, is not possible without justice.

Promoting reconciliation is not simply wiping the slate clean and can never be seen as an excuse for impunity. The guilty must be held accountable and those whose lives have been so sorely affected should receive some form of reparation. In that regard, societies that have been fractured should make use of mechanisms, such as transitional justice, to set the foundations on which the rule of law might be re-established and universal human rights be enjoyed by all. A key element in ensuring that peace may truly flourish is to guarantee that initiatives are also implemented at, and rise up from, grass-roots and community levels, in which church communities and religious leaders have an indispensable role to play — one that can never allow for ambivalence or political manipulation. In that regard, it is also important to engage all relevant actors, including members of civil society that were formed in, and who form, in their turn, cultures of peace.

The President: Let me just remind all colleagues to speak for a maximum of four minutes. That enables all to participate in the debate, which is the reason that we impose a time limit. Speakers can take it for granted that the presidency welcomes their thanks and gratitude for organizing the debate and their congratulations on assuming the presidency, which we have achieved by dint of alphabetical order, and we also welcome their appreciation of our wisdom in organizing this debate. As a result, speakers may cut all of that from their statements. I know that the next speaker will set an example in that regard.

I now give the floor to the representative of Canada.

Mr. Arbeiter (Canada): When Canadians think about reconciliation, at the forefront of our minds is, of course, our own colonial history, our relationship with indigenous peoples and our own painful and ongoing process. In 2017, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau addressed the General Assembly (see A/72/PV.12) and called the failure of successive Canadian Governments to respect the rights of indigenous peoples our great shame. We see our path towards reconciliation as a series of continuing actions, one of which was endorsing the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. At the heart of our journey is the opportunity for victims and survivors themselves to tell their stories

and be meaningfully listened to and heard across our country. That was a key component of Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission and Canada's national inquiry into missing and murdered indigenous women and girls.

From that experience, we know first-hand that unjust institutions and systemic inequality are not established overnight and are not dismantled in a day. We know that it will take time, investment, energy, humility and sustained political will to overcome those legacies and to jointly build new ones. We also know that there is no one-size-fits-all approach. But from our own experience and the experiences of others, there are a few common elements that we can all learn from.

First, we know that reconciliation is not an event or even a single process. Effective efforts towards reconciliation involve balancing concurrent demands, including peace and justice, reckoning with the past, moving forward, accountability for perpetrators and healing for victims. Secondly, successful reconciliation processes rely first and foremost on national ownership and domestic leadership. Thirdly, such processes are survivor- and victim-centric. They counter legacies of exclusion with inclusion, while engaging local communities in both the design of processes and the implementation of the recommendations that flow from them.

I would like to recognize Security Council member South Africa, which showed us that truly reckoning with the past can help to build an inclusive future. Theirs is an example of both the links between systemic inequality and instability and those between genuine efforts towards equality and stability. In that vein, we are very encouraged that we are seeing similar action today in The Gambia and the first inklings of what we hope to see in the Central African Republic.

(spoke in French)

The establishment of the Truth, Reconciliation and Reparations Commission in the Gambia marked a major break from the violations of the former regime. We commend the Commission's outreach efforts to ensure that more victims and witnesses can participate.

Canada is proud to have provided technical assistance for forensic investigations and financial support to local organizations to strengthen the participation of survivors of sexual and gender-based violence. Canada encourages the Gambia to follow

through on the Commission's recommendations to ensure accountability of those responsible for violations.

In the Central African Republic, we welcomed the signing of the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation. We appreciate that inclusivity, local-level dialogue and community engagement continue to be important parts of this process, particularly in increasing women's participation.

Combating impunity is vital to sustaining peace in the Central African Republic. We commend the work of the Special Criminal Court and encourage the establishment of the truth, justice, reparation and reconciliation commission as soon as possible, taking into account gender-balance policies.

Canada, South Africa, the Gambia and the Central African Republic are all distinct cases with their own legacies of oppression and exclusion, but there are common lessons to be learned.

Sustained political commitment is a prerequisite for effectiveness.

(spoke in English)

This is where Canada believes that the Security Council, regional organizations and other external actors have a crucial role to play. We commend the work of the African Union in particular for providing technical support to the Gambia and in brokering the peace process in the Central African Republic.

The United Nations Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) offers a valuable platform for strengthening these partnerships and for offering sustained attention and accompaniment. I would like to commend the Gambia, along with other countries, for regularly coming to the PBC to offer their frank assessment of challenges and opportunities for reconciliation.

As a longstanding member and a candidate to serve as the next Chair of the PBC and an aspiring member of the Council, Canada will continue to promote efforts to strengthen United Nations support for national reconciliation processes. Our willingness to listen, to learn and to adapt to meeting new challenges are among the assets that have prepared us for such potential future roles on both the PBC and, we hope, on the Security Council.

In closing, I would like to leave the Council with these words from the final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada:

“Without truth, justice, and healing, there can be no genuine reconciliation. Reconciliation is not about closing a sad chapter of Canada’s past but about opening new healing pathways of reconciliation that are forged in truth and justice”.

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

Mrs. Kocyigit Grba (Turkey): Peace is the core value and purpose of the United Nations, and we agree that reconciliation is part of our comprehensive approach to sustaining peace. In the absence of a commonly accepted definition or guidelines for reconciliation, we consider it both an objective and a process that encompasses all three pillars of the United Nations.

First, we need national and regional ownership to settle disputes. As such, reconciliation processes must come from within the interested parties. It is the primary responsibility of national Governments to identify, drive and direct priorities, strategies and activities for peacebuilding and sustaining peace. With that in mind, in order for the reconciliation process to be effective, the various narratives of the parties need to be taken into account so as to build confidence and mutual understanding,

Secondly, post-conflict reconciliation represents a long-term process that addresses the root causes of the conflict. That requires an understanding of the grievances that lead to conflict by taking into account the voices of women, young people and marginalized groups. Since every conflict is different, a variety of approaches are applicable, depending on the country-specific context. Most importantly, there cannot be a “one-size-fits-all” solution to promoting post-conflict reconciliation.

Thirdly, we need wider and more effective use of mediation and dialogue facilitation. We welcome the Secretary-General’s strong commitment to mediation, and we were pleased to host him and his High-level Advisory Board on Mediation in Istanbul, in conjunction with the Sixth Istanbul Mediation Conference at the end of last month. Panel discussions focused on the role of international and regional organizations as well as on that of emerging technologies, with participants from the field of peace and reconciliation.

There is a need for mediation at all stages of the conflict cycle, and mediation provides an important tool for reconciliation at different phases of that cycle.

Timely intervention to reconcile the parties to nascent hostilities before divisions become entrenched is crucial to our prevention efforts. Therefore, reconciliation should play an integral part in the overall conflict-prevention strategy of the United Nations.

Reconciliation is also crucial at the post-conflict stage in order to prevent the recurrence of conflict by building more peaceful and resilient societies. While formal reconciliation processes are critical to sustainable peace, some of the most powerful forms of reconciliation, in terms of restoring the social fabric, are to be found in everyday life. In critical situations, the starting point must be to ensure that adequate levels of humanitarian assistance are available. Long- or medium-term tools for reconciliation, such as education, health care and demobilization and disarmament, are often underfunded and can perpetuate social divisions in post-conflict societies.

The needs and concerns of women and youth as well as the reintegration of refugees and internally displaced persons should be brought into humanitarian planning and post-conflict responses at the strategic level.

Against that background, I would like to end by emphasizing that actions speak louder than words. It is time to put an end to the conflict in Syria, for example, which continues to pain the collective conscience of humankind. This is a conflict that has already caused the death of nearly 1 million people, displaced more than 12 million and forced half of them to leave the country.

It is imperative for the international community to support the peace corridor, which would enable the voluntary, safe and dignified return of the Syrian people to their homeland. We will continue to work towards the transformation of Syria into a democratic, secular and stable country with secure borders, in full respect of its territorial integrity and national unity.

Turkey stands ready to share its experience, gained through active involvement in and support for the recovery efforts of various post-conflict countries, from the Balkans and the Middle East to the Horn of Africa. We are committed to continuing our support for the enhancement of the efforts of the United Nations in that direction.

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

Ms. Byrne Nason (Ireland): Reconciliation is surely a critical issue for the Security Council. As we

have said before in this Chamber, peace is a process, not an event. Silencing the guns is fundamental but does not of itself bring societies together. Almost always, there follows a long process of acknowledging past wrongs, rebuilding trust and preparing for a shared future.

Ireland's understanding of reconciliation is shaped most profoundly by our own peace process, founded on the 1998 Good Friday agreement, which brought to an end some 30 years of violence in Northern Ireland, and where the work of protecting the peace and furthering reconciliation continues today. The Irish and United Kingdom Governments work in partnership within the framework of that agreement, which commits all parties to

“the achievement of reconciliation, tolerance and mutual trust, and to the protection and vindication of the human rights of all”.

True reconciliation is surely at the heart of all successful peace processes.

There can be little doubt that reconciliation in itself is not an easy process. We in Ireland have also learned that to be successful, it must be inclusive. One of the key women involved in building peace in Northern Ireland, Avila Kilmurray, spoke recently of the importance of the work of local women's community groups, groups such as the Foyle Women's Information Network and the Training for Women Network in Northern Ireland. Their brave efforts in their own communities to build shared understanding has been key to building trust on the ongoing road we follow to reconciliation.

It is precisely because we know the value of local community efforts to build reconciliation that the Irish Government established the Reconciliation Fund in 1982. Last year the Fund supported 153 non-governmental organizations, community groups and voluntary organizations, specifically to promote reconciliation and to create a better understanding between the people and traditions on the island of Ireland, and between Ireland and Britain.

The International Fund for Ireland was established in 1986 jointly by the United Kingdom and Irish Governments as an independent body to encourage contact, dialogue and reconciliation across the island of Ireland. That organization continues its essential work as part of our peacebuilding framework to this day. It has benefited from support from international partners including the United States, Canada, Australia, New

Zealand and, importantly, the European Union. As with achieving peace agreements, the deeper subsequent task of reconciliation can be significantly assisted through the support, perspective and cross-learning of committed international partners. While progress has been made on so many fronts in our own peace process in Ireland, challenges and obstacles remain.

While no two conflict situations are the same, it is useful to share experiences of reconciliation, from local processes and dialogue to national truth commissions. We believe that the United Nations should work to capture and share those experiences across contexts and across continents. Ireland supports principled, locally-sensitive approaches to accountability and reconciliation, which work to maximize peace and justice and guarantee victims' rights and incorporate what we like to call a critical analysis of the context in which conflict occurred.

Too often reconciliation is left as the last issue once the immediate violence has stopped and when the attention of the international community has already turned elsewhere. In particular, we see transitions from United Nations peacekeeping operations as an important moment to systematically ensure that we have a focus on supporting continued reconciliation efforts there and at all levels. We believe that this can be done through strengthened United Nations country teams, engagement with the Peacebuilding Commission and support for the Peacebuilding Fund.

Our view is that the Security Council, too, can and, frankly, must do more. As the resolutions on sustaining peace pointed out, investment in peace requires a cross-pillar approach, for which reconciliation is a fundamental critical element. Putting resources behind that work is a necessary and worthwhile investment, and we urge the Council to play its role. As an aspiring member of this body, we look forward to having our opportunity to step up to the plate and play our part in that endeavour in 2021-2022.

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

Ms. Al-Thani (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, Madam President, we congratulate your friendly country, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, on assuming the presidency of the Security Council this month, and thank you for holding today's important meeting.

The scourge of conflict and its high financial and human costs mean that conflict prevention and resolution are a moral and human imperative that requires a comprehensive approach if gains are to be preserved and the recurrence of conflict prevented. Such a comprehensive approach includes national reconciliation, addressing root causes of conflicts and early warning.

In the context of peacebuilding, sustaining peace is a task and responsibility shared among all national stakeholders concerned. In this regard, we refer to the vital roles that the Secretary-General, the Peacebuilding Commission and the United Nations in general, as well as relevant regional and international organizations and agencies, can play through partnerships and the building of local capacity and expertise.

If a reconciliation process is to be successful and lasting, it must be real, credible and inclusive. It must aim to consolidate lasting peace and address the root causes of conflicts, with the participation of religious leaders and civil society as a whole. In addition, we must strive to increase the participation, representation and contribution of women in all stages of conflict resolution and mediation, including reconciliation efforts, and adopt a gender perspective in reconciliation talks and conflict prevention.

Qatar also believes that young people can play an important role. We cannot of course talk about sustaining peace and the non-recurrence of conflict in future without the participation of future generations. In this regard, we would note that the State of Qatar is planning to host the second International Symposium on Youth Participation in Peace Processes next year.

In its desire for sustained peace, strengthened stability, non-recurrence of conflicts and national unity of States, the State of Qatar recognizes the importance of national reconciliation to the achievement of those objectives. We therefore attach great importance to supporting reconciliation in the context of its ongoing efforts to consolidate peace, including through mediation and humanitarian and development assistance, which bolster opportunities to achieve lasting peace. This is what has motivated the efforts made by Qatar to restore stability to Afghanistan, Darfur and other areas.

Key factors for the success, effectiveness and consistency of reconciliation processes include justice, accountability and impunity, particularly for genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and

gross violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law. Accountability is an important deterrent that contributes to the non-recurrence of or relapse into conflicts. Accordingly, we support the United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant and the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism to Assist in the Investigation and Prosecution of Those Responsible for the Most Serious Crimes under International Law Committed in the Syrian Arab Republic since March 2011. Documenting crimes and holding their perpetrators accountable are important factors in reaching the peaceful settlement of conflicts and in achieving lasting reconciliation.

In conclusion, we must give serious attention to efforts aimed at supporting peacebuilding and sustainable peace and at finding lasting solutions to conflicts. We must look into all factors for success and benefit from best practices so that future generations may be saved from the scourge of war and conflict.

The President: I now give the floor representative of Bangladesh.

Mr. Bin Momen (Bangladesh): We thank the United Kingdom presidency for organizing today's open debate on reconciliation for promoting peacebuilding and sustaining peace efforts in the larger context of international peace and security. We also thank the Secretary-General and other briefers for sharing their thoughts and valuable insights on the issue.

Reconciliation has proven to be a useful instrument for sustaining peace and preventing relapse into conflicts, both in inter-State and intra-State conflict situations. The Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) has a wealth of experience in this regard. In its advisory role, the PBC continues to inform the Security Council, the General Assembly and Member States about how better to support reconciliation with the aim of preventing the recurrence of conflict and promoting durable peace and security domestically, regionally and globally. We must work towards further integrating this learning into a comprehensive approach to peacebuilding and sustaining peace. Reconciliation involves a host of issues, from ensuring the rule of law, accountability and transitional justice to promoting sustainable economic growth, national ownership, social cohesion and gender equality and protecting human rights and fundamental freedoms, including religious freedom.

As one of the major troop- and police-contributing countries, Bangladesh has been supporting national and local reconciliation strategies in countries emerging from conflict. Under the astute leadership of our Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, we have also had the successful experience of reconciliation in the Chittagong Hill Tracts, which, in 1997, led to the signing of the Chittagong Hill Tracts Peace Accord, bringing about sustainable peace with our ethnic minorities in that region.

Drawing from those experiences, we believe reconciliation can be a critical enabler for resolving the Rohingya humanitarian crisis, the brunt of which we are bearing. We are convinced that the Security Council can play an important role in promoting peace in Myanmar's Rakhine state by ensuring reconciliation and the reintegration of the Rohingya community in Myanmar society, which can pave the way for repatriation. Certainly, it would require a robust enabling environment underpinned by dialogue among the Rohingya — and, for that matter, other ethnic minorities — the rest of Myanmar society, and the Myanmar authorities, and by a sustainable political process. We therefore tend to emphasize a more comprehensive approach, particularly through preventing violence against unarmed civilians, ending dehumanization narratives and addressing the root causes of conflict. There are many successful models for achieving truth and reconciliation and transitional justice, as we have seen in a number of countries, including Rwanda, South Africa and Sierra Leone, and these models may be followed. Reports of the various United Nations mechanisms on Myanmar would also be useful.

In addition, we wish to highlight a few points.

First, Myanmar must adopt clearly defined strategies for reconciliation so that the returning Rohingya can harmoniously coexist with others in Rakhine state. In this regard, the importance of appropriate confidence-building measures among the parties concerned cannot be overstated. A whole-of-society approach, with opportunities for civil society and media actors, is key.

Secondly, any reconciliation process in Rakhine must pass the rigours of transparency, objectivity, trust and confidence. Accordingly, it is important that regional or international actors are involved in the process. Success would largely depend on the

impartiality of the actors, their compliance with agreed norms and respect for diverse opinions and, more importantly, international law.

Thirdly, the Security Council has to encourage Myanmar to address core grievances and guarantee unhindered and safe passage of relevant humanitarian personnel and supplies to ensure the resettlement of civilians and the reduction of humanitarian suffering.

Fourthly, we have heard first-hand accounts of how sexual violence has been used against Rohingya women fleeing Myanmar. Children and young people have also borne a heavy brunt. Therefore, promoting meaningful reconciliation and the reintegration of the Rohingya community would require the active participation of women and young people in the process.

Finally, ensuring accountability and justice for serious violations of international humanitarian law and human rights law is of paramount importance. To that effect, the international community and the United Nations should make appropriate use of the tools at their disposal. As the Secretary-General said this morning, no reconciliation can work without justice.

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

Mr. Jinga (Romania): I will honour your request, Mr. President, to skip the first paragraph of my statement, in which I express my gratitude. Still, I would like to thank the briefers for their comprehensive and useful inputs to this debate.

Romania aligns itself with the statement delivered earlier on behalf of the European Union.

I will now make a few remarks in my national capacity.

Since the last time the Council held an open debate on this topic in 2004 (see S/PV.4903), the international peace and security context has changed significantly. Today, the increasingly complex and multifaceted nature of conflicts requires us to explore equally complex and innovative ways to conduct reconciliation processes. Reconciliation must acknowledge the wrongs of the past, restore victims' human dignity and hold perpetrators accountable. It must also be conducted in such a way that it improves future relationships between parties, creating a just and inclusive society that will not relapse into conflict.

While reconciliation processes are highly context \-sensitive, with no one-size-fits-all solution, there are some universally valid recommendations. Let me mention a few.

First, I highlight the importance of national ownership. We strongly believe that communities in conflict must play the primary role in assessing how to conduct reconciliation processes. Reconciliation should be nationally owned, since sustainable peace cannot be imposed from the outside. But, while primary responsibility lies at the national level, the international community and the United Nations can provide assistance. That may be done in the form of lessons learned and good practices from similar post-conflict situations, advocating for international norms and standards, providing capacity development for building effective democratic institutions, strengthening the rule of law and ensuring adequate assistance. The promise of a decent life offered by sustainable economic development can be one of the strongest incentives for pursuing reconciliation.

Secondly, inclusivity is key. Just last month, in October, the Security Council held its annual debate on women and peace and security (see S/PV.8649). I reiterate that women should be placed at the heart of conflict-resolution and peacebuilding efforts. Equally important, young people play an essential role in reconciliation because they can challenge stereotypes and be agents of change in conflict transformation. Therefore, focusing on the implementation of the women and peace and security and the youth, peace and security agendas is essential.

Thirdly, partnerships play a critical role. The knowledge and expertise that regional and subregional organizations, such as the African Union, the European Union or the Economic Community of West African States can offer are of paramount importance. We also believe that strengthening partnerships inside the United Nations is necessary. In that regard, during Romania's chairmanship of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) in 2018, one of our priorities was to increase synergies between the PBC, the Peacebuilding Fund and the Security Council. The PBC has a unique position in sustaining reconciliation efforts, given its convening role in bringing together Member States, the United Nations system, international financial institutions, regional organizations and civil society.

Reconciliation is both a process and a goal, and while existing institutional and legal frameworks are absolutely indispensable, reconciliation requires a whole-of-society approach. The role of informal reconciliation, carried out at the individual and community levels, can be as important as formal processes in rebuilding trust and the fabric of society. One of the most prominent figures of successful reconciliation, Nelson Mandela, made that point extremely clear when he said:

“In the end, reconciliation is a spiritual process, which requires more than just a legal framework. It has to happen in the hearts and minds of people.”

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

Mr. Imnadze (Georgia): Let me join my colleagues in expressing our gratitude to the United Kingdom presidency for convening today's debate, taking up the issue of reconciliation and placing it high on the Council's agenda. We congratulate the United Kingdom on its assumption of the presidency.

Reconciliation is vital to achieving sustainable peace and, in today's continuous cycle of wars, violent conflicts and failed peace agreements, advancing the process of reconciliation becomes urgent.

Georgia is committed to the policy of peaceful conflict resolution, and pursues a reconciliation and engagement policy towards its occupied Abkhazia and Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia. Even as it confronts Russian occupation and creeping annexation along the occupation line in those two regions, the Georgian Government spares no effort to build trust and confidence between artificially divided communities and to enhance people-to-people contacts, including through the engagement of women in peace projects and confidence-building measures.

In 2018, in close cooperation with all relevant national and international stakeholders, the Georgian Government adopted a new package of peace initiatives entitled A Step to a Better Future. The initiative has sparked the interest of the local population in both Georgian regions of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali, and even with the artificial obstacles installed along the dividing lines, people-to-people contacts and interest in travel throughout Georgia have increased. The main novelty of the initiative is that, together with other tangible benefits and opportunities, for the first time the

initiative provides possibilities for economic activity and trade across the dividing lines. The peace initiative covers three main dimensions.

The first is facilitating trade across the dividing lines. The goal is to encourage joint business initiatives and to simplify and expand trade through the creation of new opportunities by enabling the products originating from or produced in Abkhazia and Tskhinvali to access the internal market of Georgia, as well as foreign markets, through the export opportunities available to Georgia. It also allows the supply of goods produced on Georgian-controlled territories, or imported into Georgia, to the occupied regions.

The second dimension is enhancing educational opportunities for the residents of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali by easing access to all stages of education throughout the area and expanding opportunities to participate in international educational programmes by simplifying access to international universities in a status-neutral way. Importantly, in partnership with the international community, the initiative seeks to protect the Abkhaz language so as to ensure education in the native language in Abkhazia.

The third dimension is easing access to State services by simplifying technical procedures for obtaining Georgian passports and life-cycle documents by the residents of occupied regions. Documents issued in Abkhazia and Tskhinvali, while being illegal, will be used for the purpose of identification and determination of facts of birth, death, marriage, divorce and residence in these regions, and necessary civil documents will be issued subsequently.

In order to support the implementation of the peace initiative A Step to a Better Future, on 12 August the Georgian Government established a peace fund. The fund issues grants for socioeconomic projects across the dividing lines, thereby facilitating dialogue, cooperation, reconciliation and confidence-building between divided communities, as well as the empowerment of conflict-affected populations living on both sides of the dividing lines and the improvement of their socioeconomic conditions.

Free health-care services are a key direction of the Georgian Government's peace and engagement policy, whereby the residents of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali regions are able to access various State health-care programmes. In particular, the State referral programme covers the medical treatment of persons

residing in the occupied regions free of charge. It is important to mention that the number of beneficiaries increases each year.

However, as we speak, the programme is under serious threat in the Tskhinvali region. Just a few weeks ago, we informed the Council on the recent cases of the borderization and closure of the so-called crossing points in the Tskhinvali region, particularly in Akhalkori district. As a result, we had yet another fatal accident when 70-year-old Margo Martiashvili, requiring urgent medical assistance, died because of the refusal by the occupying regime to open the so-called crossing point in order to access the nearest hospital.

Recently, on 9 November, Dr. Vazha Gaprindashvili from Tbilisi, while paying a visit to a patient in need of urgent care, was illegally detained by the occupation forces, sentenced to two months of pretrial detention, and remains in custody as we speak, on the allegation of so-called illegal border crossing and other concocted accusations. Dr. Gaprindashvili should be released at once. We call on the international community to take a firm and principled stance on that issue. This represents a clear attempt on the part of the occupying Power and the authorities in control to further destabilize the already grave security, humanitarian and human rights situation on the ground. It is even more alarming that illegal detentions, kidnappings, torture, killings and loss of life have become regular and no one is held accountable for those crimes.

The occupying Power is the sole party responsible for the situation on the ground. Therefore, the engagement of our partners and the United Nations, first and foremost to support our reconciliation efforts, will significantly contribute to achieving sustainable peace.

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

Mr. Dang Dinh Quy (Viet Nam): Viet Nam aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of the Philippines on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

Despite many efforts, prolonged and relapsed conflicts exist in many places in the world. One of the most important reasons for that reality is the lack of awareness or underestimation of the importance of reconciliation and the lack of investment in reconciliation. While we fully agree that reconciliation fundamentally is about building or rebuilding

relationships, we are of the view that reconciliation processes should be conducted with a great sense of tolerance, in a comprehensive manner and at all levels. I would like to emphasize the following points.

First, reconciliation must be nationally driven and owned. The parties concerned, who know best the root causes of conflicts, should be the main initiators and actors of reconciliation. Furthermore, the success of reconciliation hinges on trust and long-term goals, which can be achieved only through a comprehensive approach to addressing, among others, political, social, economic, cultural and justice issues.

Secondly, regional organizations, the best actors in reinforcing the strategic trust and mutual confidence among countries of a region, can be good parties to reconciliation processes. For example, the high contracting parties to the 1976 Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia agreed to constitute a High Council to provide the parties to disputes with recommendations on the appropriate means of settling such disputes, including reconciliation. Upon agreement of the parties to dispute, the High Council can also constitute a conciliation committee.

Thirdly, the United Nations should play a supportive role in reconciliation by advocating for normative change and promoting awareness. It must also enhance coordination and synergies within the United Nations system, as well as partnerships between the United Nations and other players, with due attention to encouraging the broader participation of all stakeholders. The United Nations can and should assist regional organizations and countries in strengthening their capacity for reconciliation and help share best practices among regions and countries.

In conclusion, we reaffirm our strong commitment to persistently pursuing the peaceful resolution of disputes and conflicts, with a view to achieving sustainable peace.

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

Ms. Ioannou (Cyprus): While peace agreements may treat the symptoms of conflicts, their causes cannot be fully addressed without the restoration, at the grass-roots level, of the fractured relationship that starts or fuels the conflict cycle. As the human pillar of conflict resolution, complementing its political and justice pillars, reconciliation is perhaps the only

process that can help a post-conflict society come to terms with brutal and irreversible historical facts. We would propose the following three elements as key for reconciliation to be credible as a project in the service of a peaceful future, through an organic process of overcoming a violent past.

First, reconciliation cannot be a substitute for justice or a disguise for impunity, both as a matter of principle and because the resentment created by the lack of accountability defeats the objective of achieving viable peace. Rather, reconciliation should act as a complementary accountability mechanism that compels perpetrators to take responsibility for their actions. Historically, individual and collective amnesties have been included in political agreements in order to end the conflict. However, no amnesties granted by peace agreements or as part of reconciliation processes can extend to the commission of supreme international crimes, such as war crimes and crimes against humanity. In that regard, the United Nations has both a moral and material responsibility, in particular with respect to peace agreements concluded under its watch.

Secondly, however difficult it is for a society to tackle uncomfortable historical truths, identity questions, prejudices and inequalities, a reconciliation process, if it is to be credible, must never be a vehicle for sanitizing or revising history.

Thirdly, with regard to timing, it is hard to envisage a reconciliation process before reaching a political settlement, given the difficulty of the desired outcome, which is nothing less than social transformation by enabling the peaceful coexistence of rivals, leaving no room for different historical narratives or for questioning the truth and creating unified social and political structures.

Lastly, our biggest challenge when it comes to reconciliation is broadening its scope, from a national process to one that can address grievances resulting from inter-State conflict, without prejudice, of course, to the administration of international criminal justice.

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

Mr. Umarov (Kazakhstan): Reconciliation in the maintenance of international peace and security is a most relevant theme because, together with mediation and diplomacy, it becomes an integral component of peacekeeping and peacebuilding processes. The

modern security architecture, which is based on the collective responsibility of all States Members of the United Nations, is undergoing a critical test. The lack of trust among great Powers, stark economic and social inequalities and underdevelopment have prevented progress in many parts of the world.

Kazakhstan has always been at the forefront of preventive diplomacy, conflict prevention, reconciliation and confidence-building measures, as they are the core principles of maintaining international peace and security. The best example of its practical implementation has been the creation, on Kazakhstan's initiative, of the United Nations Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia, which has been a successful instrument for preventively addressing the key challenges in our region for more than 10 years.

The prioritization of conflict prevention in the mandates of the United Nations and regional organizations is an essential tool for achieving reconciliation and maintaining international peace and security. In that regard, we note my country's successful experience convening the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia, which has been functioning for more than a quarter of a century now and uniting 28 countries.

Being aware that faith and religious leaders can play a significant role in reconciliation, Kazakhstan has been proud to convene the Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions since 2003. The added value of the Congress is that the forum brings together religious leaders, politicians, representatives of international organizations, as well as experts, non-governmental organizations and civil society on a common platform.

Believing that war can never be a lasting solution to any problem, Kazakhstan worked towards a viable, inclusive and Syrian-led political process and provided the platform for the Astana process on Syria. We are sure that the 13 rounds of Astana talks contributed to United Nations efforts to launch the Syrian Constitutional Committee, which, according to Special Envoy Geir Pedersen, "can be a door-opener to a wider political process that meets the legitimate aspirations of the Syrian people" (*S/PV.8628, p. 2*).

We make the following observations based on our experience.

First, reconciliation is a process and an outcome where confidence-building measures (CBMs) play an important role since they provide the incentive for parties to engage in constructive dialogue. Reconciliation cannot be successful without CBMs facilitating people-to-people contacts, promoting tolerance and enhancing minority rights and participation.

Secondly, reconciliation must take place with diverse interventions at all levels, from national leadership to grassroots, while taking into account a country's unique historical and cultural context. It is also clear that conflicts should be rectified through diplomacy and investments in development.

Thirdly, reconciliation cannot be imposed from outside. It must be worked out by all relevant stakeholders, including women and youth.

Finally, next year the United Nations family will mark its seventy-fifth anniversary. That important milestone represents a unique opportunity to take a critical look at the problems and challenges that confront us. My country has been and will always be at the forefront of diplomacy, mediation and reconciliation, using them as the strongest armaments for peace and security.

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

Mrs. Samarasinghe (Sri Lanka): It is important to recognize that social, economic and political conditions at the community and national levels could have profound and widely divergent effects on the world stage, impacting international peace and security.

The recent attacks in Sri Lanka on Easter Sunday demonstrate how effectively the global can be localized and the local, globalized. The Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant-inspired domestic terrorists responsible for those attacks — some of them foreign-educated and hailing from affluent, politically influential families — were radicalized abroad and through social media. For Sri Lanka, with its multi-ethnic, multicultural and multi-religious composition, and following a decade of peace during which we have forged ahead towards reconciliation, transitional justice and economic development, the Easter Sunday attacks were particularly devastating.

In today's intensely globalized world, extremism is digitized and those who have lost territory elsewhere are seeking new pressure points to ignite. Conflict

and violence in one nation may tear apart societies in other nations and create schisms in the rich mosaic of our collective civilizations. It is therefore vital that the international community join forces in renewing our efforts in that regard and help to establish restorative frameworks at the community and national levels, leading to genuine reconciliation and sustained peace. In doing so, it must be recognized that reconciliation mechanisms and transitional justice initiatives cannot be imposed on nations by external forces.

National reconciliation efforts must also be based on meaningful public participation, including that of Government, national legal professionals, women, minorities, affected groups and civil society. Without public awareness, consultations and education campaigns, national reform efforts will remain vulnerable and weak. In that regard, the United Nations could play an important role in facilitating these processes and assisting with capacity-building and non-conditional funding through its peacebuilding architecture in order to build community resilience at the grass-roots level.

Having experienced for nearly 30 years a brutal onslaught of terrorism, Sri Lanka is conscious of the value of a nation built on the principles of democracy and the rule of law. To that end, Sri Lanka has already taken several steps to rebuild its democratic institutions and create a framework for reconciliation, under which the Office on Missing Persons and the Office for Reparations have already been operationalized and the Right to Information Act passed into law, as part of those efforts to strengthen institutions and frameworks. Furthermore, given Sri Lanka's multi-religious culture, the country has sought to encourage interfaith dialogue and harness religious leaders to act as early warning systems so that the Government may be alerted to radical behavioural patterns in a timely manner.

Above all, national ownership and leadership are needed if the parties to a conflict and society as a whole are to work towards reconciliation and sustained peace.

Finally, it is important to acknowledge the United Nations field missions, which work closely with national stakeholders and local communities, in accordance with mission mandates. Their importance to the overall United Nations peace and security architecture cannot be overstated, especially at a time when the United Nations and multilateralism in general are facing multiple threats and challenges that are testing our

collective ability to respond. It is therefore important that field missions enhance cooperation with host Governments in order to cement national ownership.

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

Mr. Carazo (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): We are pleased to participate in today's open debate on the topic of reconciliation — a topic that, despite having been rarely addressed in this format by the Council, is a concept and practice inherent to the maintenance of peace and understood to be an objective and a process of building a common vision of society, ensuring that the needs of all sectors of the population are taken into account, as defined in Council resolutions.

"Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed", states the UNESCO Constitution and the preamble of the Declaration on a Culture of Peace. Some 20 years after the adoption of the Declaration, that maxim remains as valid as ever before. In myriad cases and national contexts, history has shown us that peace is not automatically achieved in the absence of conflicts, and that reconciliation is not a mere shift from conflict towards non-violent coexistence. Both peace and reconciliation must be nurtured, promoted and facilitated constantly and in a lasting manner. Reconciliation is a process; it is not a state of being. There is no magic formula or unique recipe for peace, inasmuch as it is people who are called upon to build their own history.

Seventy years ago in Costa Rica, following a conflict that, despite its brief duration, had profound impacts on the unity of the Costa Rican people and the fracturing of its social fabric, the Founding Junta of the Second Republic took one of the most momentous decisions to abolish the army as a permanent institution, on 1 December 1948. That was not a decision born solely in the mind of a single person or those of a few, but was already part of a political culture in which the bayonet seldom shone brighter than words in defending ideas.

Above all, that decision was rooted in a deep conviction, best expressed by the Costa Rican educator Joaquín García Monge:

"The only way to prevail and bring men together is the love that is born from a mutual understanding of the qualities of understanding and of the heart."

Years later, when José Figueres Ferrer, who had abolished the army in 1948, was asked about the reasons for doing so, he replied simply:

“After a short but gruelling fraternal war, I found myself before two armies — one victor and another defeated. But both were comprised of young Costa Ricans who had only one desire: to return to their homes. I understood then that it was time to dissolve both armies.”

But it was not the decree abolishing the armed forces that healed the wounds of a fractured nation, but the process by which the State placed people, their well-being and their dignity at the centre of its action, by means of creating effective, inclusive and transparent institutions with a mission and vision of their *raison d'être* that went beyond the political pendulum. The stability of our democracy and political system was not born of that decree or of the holding of regular elections, transparent though they may have been. It was born of a sustained and progressive investment in universal health care, public and free education and an environment that is healthy and ecologically balanced.

Reconciliation, like peace, is not a political project but the conviction and capacity of men and women to resort to dialogue and understanding as the tools for resolving any dispute. For that reason, the responsibility of all States in promoting and sustaining a culture of peace is not only in the prevention of conflicts or threats to peace, but in the fulfilment of human rights for all, without distinction of any kind, in compliance with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals, in particular Goal 16; in the creation of robust and inclusive institutions that respond and adapt to the needs and demands of people; and through national and global narratives that build collective meaning and inclusion.

We are living in times of mistrust and division among peoples, communities and institutions. The peoples of the world are expressing with greater vehemence the lack of response to their demands, the inequality of their societies and the wealth of the elite. In that context, reconciliation ceases to be a process anchored in societies torn apart by war and violent conflict, becoming instead the legitimate demand of peoples that they be recognized as equal, and the State is no longer a Leviathan but a channel for inclusion, education, justice and dignity. If we want peace, we should prepare not for war but for peace.

The President: I wish to remind all speakers to limit their statements to no more than four minutes so that everyone has the opportunity to speak today.

I now give the floor to the representative of Azerbaijan.

Mr. Aliyev (Azerbaijan): The consistent position of Azerbaijan with regard to the topic under consideration has been stated on numerous occasions, including in the Security Council. This position stems from the experience of facing continued armed aggression and ethnic cleansing and, above all, from my country's keen interest in contributing to the achievement of sustainable peace in our region and worldwide.

The unlawful use of force against the territorial integrity and political independence of States, the increased brutality of armed conflicts, growing terrorist and separatist threats, the highest level of forced displacement, racism, intolerance and discrimination on ethnic and religious grounds continue to represent the most serious challenges to peace, security and sustainable development.

In their twin resolutions on the review of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture, adopted in 2016 (General Assembly resolution 70/262 and Security Council 2282 (2016)), the General Assembly and the Security Council have emphasized the importance of reconciliation and stressed the need for the joint work of Member States to sustain peace at all stages of conflict and in all its dimensions.

In a number of situations, dedicated efforts have helped move peace and reconciliation processes forward. At the same time, more concerted actions and synergy, along with closer strategic and operational partnerships between the United Nations and Governments, are required to end the conflicts of today and direct greater attention to preventing the conflicts of tomorrow.

First and foremost, it is critical to ensure that peace efforts, including reconciliation processes, and conflict settlement frameworks are not used as a tool to consolidate the situations achieved by the unlawful use of force and other egregious violations of general international law. Justice is a fundamental building block of sustainable peace. It is essential to address conflict-related violations by all available means. Such efforts must be free of selectivity and politically motivated objectives.

Unfortunately, in some situations of armed conflict, including those of a protracted nature, accountability has not received proper attention and perpetrators not only continue to enjoy impunity for the most serious crimes but are ostentatiously glorified at the State and society levels. Accountability for such crimes is essential not only for the purpose of bringing those responsible to justice but also for ensuring the sustainability of conflict resolution, truth, reconciliation, the rights and interests of victims and the well-being of society at large.

Intercultural and interreligious dialogue at the national and international levels is one of the important avenues within the broader objectives of peacebuilding, sustaining peace and reconciliation. Azerbaijan is keen to continue its efforts towards promoting mutual understanding and respect for diversity, including through the Baku process and the World Forum on Intercultural Dialogue, which have received wide global recognition since their inception. The continued support of the United Nations for successful initiatives of this kind on the culture of peace and multiculturalism is essential in the context of building relationships, overcoming stereotypes and misconceptions and implementing development frameworks and policies.

In conclusion, it should be emphasized that the United Nations plays a central role in ensuring the uniform application of the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. Support for that role of the Organization and for safeguarding its collective security, political and humanitarian mechanisms is crucial to addressing conflicts and to achieving the goals of peace, inclusive sustainable development and human rights for all. **The President:** I now give the floor to the representative of Bahrain.

Mr. Alrowaieci (Bahrain) (*spoke in Arabic*): First and foremost, I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for having organized this meeting. In such a volatile international context, it is essential to emphasize the importance of national reconciliation in the peaceful settlement of conflicts in order to maintain international peace and security. We would also like to thank Secretary-General Guterres for his briefing this morning.

This month we celebrate the International Day for Tolerance, given its importance in the lives of peoples as a key means of achieving peace, prosperity and survival for all humankind. Tolerance is a civilized behaviour that is embodied in peaceful coexistence

among the different religions and cultures through the consolidation of constitutional principles and national legislation, which must condemn all forms of violence, hatred, extremism and discrimination against any group because it is different.

Article 33 of the Charter of the United Nations states that

“any dispute, the continuance of which is likely to endanger the maintenance of international peace and security, shall, first of all, seek a solution by negotiation, mediation, conciliation, arbitration, judicial settlement, resort to regional agencies or arrangements, or other peaceful means of their own choice”.

That is why the Kingdom of Bahrain believes that no effort to achieve peace will be successful if States continue to fuel conflicts as a way of imposing their hegemony over other States. It is therefore crucial to implement the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations and the relevant resolutions of the Organization. Such resolutions reiterate that interference in the internal affairs of States must be avoided and that mutual respect, good-neighbourliness and the peaceful settlement of disputes must be supported.

We must also cooperate in the fight against extremism and terrorism, in particular cross-border terrorism, which prevails in various parts of the world. We must also strengthen collective efforts to provide the necessary humanitarian assistance to peoples and countries and to combat the agendas of those who seek to destabilize national and international stability.

I also wish to refer to the report of the Secretary-General on the prevention of armed conflict (S/2001/574), in which he stresses that the achievement of peace requires the coherent political participation of women and young people in reconciliation efforts. In that regard, we note the good offices of the Secretary-General, the various Special Envoys and Special Representatives, and other senior advisors.

Another report of the Secretary-General (E/2019/68), on progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), sheds light on the importance of SGD 16, dedicated to the promotion of peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, the provision of access to justice for all, and building effective, accountable institutions at all levels.. However, progress in these areas continues

to face many challenges. Leaving no one behind is another international initiative to protect and promote human rights. That is why it is imperative to follow a certain number of policies that are conducive to the achievement of just and lasting growth.

Lastly, the international community must support effective reconciliation efforts, the rule of law and respect for the dignity of individuals and disseminate concepts promoting a culture of peace among peoples in order to prevent the scourge of war. The Kingdom of Bahrain reiterates that it will work with international partners and the United Nations to achieve these noble goals.

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

Mr. Camilleri (Malta): Malta fully aligns itself with the statement delivered earlier by the observer of the European Union.

We would like to add a few remarks in our national capacity.

Time and time again, we have seen countries descend into chaos, owing to a peace process that did not give reconciliation the attention it deserved. A peace agreement must primarily unite all sides to the conflict, as well as the victims, and instil in them the willingness and conviction to invest in a common future. Imposing solutions, especially from the outside, will most likely lead to resentment and deepen divisions. On the other hand, understanding and addressing the grievances of all sectors of society greatly increases the odds of achieving lasting peace.

Reconciliation is an integral part of maintaining and, more important, of building peace. While we all know that there is no magic formula for that, we also know that there are elements that apply in all cases. Giving women a central role in the peace process is a case in point, and no country or community can hope to achieve just and comprehensive peace if half of its population is excluded. Youth also has a crucial role to play. Apart from being the future, every generation has its own unique perspective. Those elements, too, should be adequately reflected.

Accountability is an integral part of reconciliation. The consequences of atrocities committed during conflict leave indelible scars on victims and societies. Unfortunately, accountability does not turn back time and erase such actions. It does, however, strengthen and

legitimize institutions and serves as a reminder that justice will ultimately prevail. Furthermore, it gives communities solace in knowing that past atrocities will not be forgotten and that history will not be manipulated or rewritten.

The international community has a fundamental role to play in helping conflicting States and societies find common ground on which to build a stable and peaceful future. We fully appreciate the fact that that is by no means an easy feat, especially when taking into account the level of distrust that years of fragmentation and conflict bring with them. Nevertheless, history has shown us that, through reconciliation, humankind has the ability to take the ashes of conflict and transform them into the seeds of peace and cooperation, often against all odds.

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

Mr. Margaryan (Armenia): I would like to thank the United Kingdom presidency for its choice of theme for today's open debate. We thank the Secretary-General for highlighting the efforts of the United Nations to promote reconciliation among and within States and war-torn societies, and we took careful note of the remarks offered earlier by today's briefers.

In reflecting on the role and functions of the United Nations aimed at promoting reconciliation, we need to carefully address the challenges associated with and conditions generating gross violations of human rights in certain parts of the world. While we all recognize that reconciliation is vital to sustaining peace and security, it is obvious that crimes of exceptional scope and magnitude, such as genocide, require a framework of reconciliation, which entails the right to truth, justice, accountability and guarantees of non-recurrence.

The irresponsibility of inciting hate speech, racial and ethnic profiling and the glorification of hate crimes, especially at the instigation of political leaders, cultivate fertile ground for discrimination and marginalization, which if not addressed properly, can lead to mass atrocities. Attempts to deny, or to justify, the crime of genocide are not only reprehensible, but risk undermining the fight against impunity, reconciliation and efforts to prevent atrocity crimes in the future. Such challenges require the strong collective efforts of Member States, international organizations, religious leaders and civil society to overcome the cycle of violence and sustain peace on the basis of human

dignity, respect and human rights, including the right to life.

We agree that reconciliation should be incorporated into peace efforts throughout all stages of conflict. Preparing peoples for the return to peace and the restoration of their violated human rights and fundamental freedoms is crucial to promote confidence, trust and reconciliation and pave the way for the settlement of conflicts. Reconciliation is a process that must occur at the individual, societal and State levels.

We would like to stress the indispensable role of women and youth in promoting reconciliation. The meaningful and inclusive participation of women affected by conflict in peace processes is instrumental, as it has proven to increase the chances of achieving durable and lasting settlements and reconciliation. Genuine reconciliation should be anchored in drawing lessons from the dark pages of history. Dealing with the past can be meaningful if it proceeds from the unequivocal condemnation of previous crimes, thereby enabling the realization of the right to the truth.

Religious leaders play an important role in promoting tolerance, dialogue and peaceful coexistence and in opposing attempts to commit violence perversely in the name of religion. Therefore, the attacks on religious leaders, such as the recent killing by terrorists of two priests of the Armenian Catholic community of Qamishli in north-eastern Syria, should be resolutely condemned and the perpetrators brought to justice.

As a nation that has witnessed the horrors of genocide in its own historic homeland and continues to face the challenges of the denial and justification of past crimes, Armenia bears a special duty to promote the prevention of the crime of genocide. Derogatory statements, aimed at justifying genocide by means of denigrating and insulting the dignity of the victims and qualifying it as “the most reasonable act”, deepen misunderstanding and distrust and make genuine reconciliation and dialogue even harder.

Indeed, the recognition and condemnation of the Armenian genocide is essential to serving truth, historical justice and reconciliation. It is essential for the entire international community, and particularly the potential victims of identity-based crimes — people who are vilified simply because of their ethnic and religious origin.

Armenia also remains committed to advancing the prevention agenda through education and awareness-raising of gross violations of human rights and identity-based discrimination against all groups and peoples that, if not addressed, can lead to mass atrocities and genocide.

It is by acknowledging the truth and the commemoration of and tribute to the dignity of the victims of past crimes that we can pave the way for genuine reconciliation and sustainable peace.

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

Mr. Kanu (Sierra Leone): In the 1990s, Sierra Leone was embroiled in a brutal civil war, which left tens of thousands of people dead and hundreds of thousands displaced. At the end of the war, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission for Sierra Leone was set up to not only expose perpetrators and identify victims, but also to serve as a mirror through which all Sierra Leoneans examined their own roles in the conflict. The dialogue helped the victims to face their perpetrators, as well as to reconcile and move on with their lives.

The findings of the Commission encouraged Sierra Leoneans to believe that the past must never be forgotten. The Commission's recommendations touched on every aspect of the lives of Sierra Leoneans. Its final report served as a road map for building a new society in which all Sierra Leoneans can walk unafraid with pride and dignity. Together with the Commission, the Special Court for Sierra Leone was established, through the partnership and assistance of the United Nations, to bring to justice those who bore the greatest responsibility for the serious crimes committed during the war. It achieved that objective and completed its operations in Sierra Leone in 2013.

The Residual Special Court for Sierra Leone was established 2013 to oversee the continuing legal obligations of the Special Court for Sierra Leone. We are indeed grateful to United Nations Member States for their continued support in terms of the subvention to the Residual Special Court for Sierra Leone under the item “Proposed programme budget for the year 2020” on the agenda of the Fifth Committee of the General Assembly.

The Special Court represents an acknowledgement of the intrinsic link connecting reconciliation, justice,

the need to fight impunity, the promotion of the rule of law and the preservation of peace and stability in Sierra Leone. Sierra Leone is therefore proud to be a pioneer that puts into practice two transitional mechanisms. We took that unfamiliar path because of our genuine desire to consolidate peace and seek justice for victims. The two mechanisms have unquestionably been a positive force in terms of sustaining peace for our country.

It is critically important that we understand and address the ways in which mutual mistrust, suspicion, anger and animosity spill over into the priorities of national development, such as fighting corruption and attracting foreign investment. In that regard, my Government has identified strengthening national cohesion as a top priority for promoting unity within the country. With that in mind, in May we launched a presidential initiative that was heralded by a national conference on peacebuilding, diversity management and rebuilding national cohesion. That will soon be followed by the creation of an independent commission for peace and national cohesion, to be established by an act of Parliament later this year or early next year. The support of the United Nations in that regard will be highly appreciated.

In building peace and national reconciliation and avoiding polarization, it is critical that all stakeholders, citizens, Governments, politicians, civil society, the private sector, women and young people are all engaged in the national development process. Finally, as the old cliché goes, there can be no peace without development and no development without peace. Together we are stronger, and it is much easier to sustain peace with all stakeholders on board than when some are excluded and marginalized.

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

Mr. Gallegos Chiriboga (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): I congratulate the United Kingdom on assuming the presidency of the Security Council for the month of November and thank your delegation, Mr. President, for organizing this timely debate on the role of reconciliation in the maintenance of international peace and security. I would also like to thank the Secretary-General for his briefing, which showcased his leadership in this area.

Experience has shown us that reconciliation is not only important for the maintenance of peace, it is the only way to ensure lasting and sustainable peace

in post-conflict societies and therefore throughout the world. We have also learned that every case brings its own challenges. However, I would like to share some reflections that my delegation believes apply to all cases. Reconciliation is much more than a matter of a simple agreement or a fixed point that parties can reach. It is a broad process that if it is to be meaningful must be frank, participatory and comprehensive. It is neither a point of departure nor one of stasis, but a gradual process that waxes or wanes based on three aspects — first, the background and causes of the conflict in question, secondly, reparation efforts and thirdly, the inclusiveness of the process.

If we want reconciliation to play a crucial role for peace, we must ensure that women, young people and people with disabilities participate in all processes. I spoke about women's participation in peace processes during the Security Council's open debate in October (see S/PV.8649), and I reiterate Ecuador's commitment in that regard today. The participation of young people deserves another open debate, but I would at least like to underscore the importance of harnessing their resilience and understanding of diversity in reconciliation processes. That is also why education and the promotion of tolerance in all societies are vital. We must foster trust and a culture of peace. At the same time, we must avoid impunity, for which international courts and tribunals have a crucial role, including the International Criminal Court, of course. Ecuador supports every element of transitional justice. We must also continue to support special political missions.

The 2020 review of the peacebuilding architecture will offer us a new opportunity to equip the United Nations with the tools it needs. However, preventive diplomacy is the best tool we have for peace. As the international community, we must strengthen early-warning mechanisms and work to prevent and stop violations of international humanitarian law and human rights at all times, because any such violence during a conflict makes any future reconciliation process harder. For example, sexual violence in armed conflict, or the involvement of minors, undermines the chances of early reconciliation even when the violence has ceased.

My country, Ecuador, is a country of peace. That is why we promote multilateralism as a central element of sustainable peace and advocate for dialogue and the peaceful settlement of conflicts, and why Ecuador responds to violence with peace and to attacks with dialogue. We defend dialogue as the foundation of any

peaceful society. That is also why — although I am deviating from the subject of the debate — I should point out that in October, during violent demonstrations that sought to destabilize Ecuador and undermine peace, our national Government prioritized an inclusive and generous dialogue that put the common good and peace above every other consideration. Ecuador will continue to defend peace, development and human rights at both the national and international levels as a matter of priority.

The President: The representative of the Russian Federation has asked to make a further statement.

Mr. Polyanskiy (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): My colleagues informed me that in my absence Mr. Heusgen, our colleague from Germany, asked me some questions. I do not see him in the Chamber, but I hope that my responses will be conveyed to him. I will be very brief. By the way, Mr. President, this may be the result of the interaction that you have promoted here in the Chamber, but in my understanding, interactivity still implies making it clear that I should be asked questions when I am in the Chamber, not when I am at another event with the Secretary-General. That is, unless it is just from a desire to put one's interlocutor in an uncomfortable position. I have definitely been put in a somewhat uncomfortable position, considering that on the eve of the seventy-fifth anniversary of our Organization it now falls to the representative of Russia to explain to the representative of Germany what the Nuremberg trials were and why they were a good thing. However, I will try to do it as briefly as possible.

I want to affirm that we consider the Nuremberg trials to be a model of international justice in punishing war criminals who had unleashed an aggressive, predatory war, especially on the territory of the Soviet Union. To be honest, it is true that I did not think that the purpose of our meeting was making an excursion into recent history. However, if we are talking about the

present day, then everything that has happened in the past few years post-Nuremberg seems more by way of reprisals against various regimes or political opponents that someone does not care for. For example, the conclusion of the International Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) was an attempt to alter reality based on previously established verdicts. Suffice it to point out how the ICTY prosecuted the Kosovo-Albanians' case. We promise to explain the whole thing to the Permanent Representative of Germany, Mr. Heusgen, at December's upcoming briefing on the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals. At the same time we can go into detail about the project for the Kosovo Specialist Chambers and Specialist Prosecutor's Office sponsored by the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo, which for a ninth year has been unable to begin investigating the facts of the large-scale removal of vital organs and other crimes committed by Kosovo militants.

As for the International Criminal Court, one shameful decision about the refusal to investigate the coalition's crimes in Afghanistan, ostensibly in the interests of justice, is sufficient to show that it has forever parted company with its reputation.

I am sure that our German colleagues are perfectly familiar with all of these facts. Frankly, therefore, their almost masochistic desire to hear them again and again is astounding. And it definitely does not strengthen the approaches they advocate.

The President: There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers. I would like to thank our conference officers for their tireless work today, particularly rounding up Member States when they were perhaps not in their places when they should have been. As ever, I would like to thank our colleagues from the Security Council Affairs Division and, of course, our fantastic interpreters.

The meeting rose at 5.30 p.m.