



Security Council

Seventy-fourth year

8473rd meeting

Wednesday, 27 February 2019, 10 a.m.

New York

Provisional

President: Mr. Esono Angue/Mr. Ndong Mba (Equatorial Guinea)

Members:

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| Belgium | Mrs. Van Vlierberge |
| China | Mr. Wu Haitao |
| Côte d'Ivoire | Mr. Adom |
| Dominican Republic | Mr. Singer Weisinger |
| France | Mr. Delattre |
| Germany | Mr. Lindner |
| Indonesia | Mr. Djani |
| Kuwait | Mr. Almunayekh |
| Peru | Mr. Meza-Cuadra |
| Poland | Ms. Wronecka |
| Russian Federation | Mr. Nebenzia |
| South Africa | Mr. Nkosi |
| United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland | Mr. Hickey |
| United States of America | Mr. Cohen |

Agenda

Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations in maintaining international peace and security

Silencing the guns in Africa

Letter dated 13 February 2019 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Equatorial Guinea to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2019/169)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations in maintaining international peace and security

Silencing the guns in Africa

Letter dated 13 February 2019 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Equatorial Guinea to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2019/169)

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representatives of Algeria, Angola, Benin, Botswana, Brazil, Canada, Congo, Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Finland, Ghana, Guatemala, Guinea, Hungary, Iceland, India, Ireland, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Latvia, Lebanon, Libya, Lithuania, Mali, Malta, Mauritius, Mexico, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Portugal, the Republic of Korea, Romania, Rwanda, Senegal, Serbia, Sierra Leone, Slovakia, Spain, the Sudan, Sweden, Switzerland, Togo, Tunisia, Turkey and Ukraine to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Ms. Rosemary DiCarlo, Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs; His Excellency Mr. Ramtane Lamamra, African Union High Representative for Silencing the Guns in Africa; and Mr. Vasu Gounden, Founder and Executive Director of the African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following persons to participate in this meeting; His Excellency Mr. João Pedro Vale de Almeida, Head of the Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations; His Excellency Mr. Maged Abdelfattah Abdelaziz, Permanent Observer of the League of Arab States to the United Nations; and Mr. Robert Mardini, Permanent Observer of the International Committee of the Red Cross to the United Nations.

I propose that the Council invite Monsignor Antoine Camilleri, Under-Secretary for Relations with States of the Holy See, to participate in the meeting, in accordance with the provisional rules of procedure and the previous practice in this regard.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

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

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2019/169, which contains the text of a letter dated 13 February 2019 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Equatorial Guinea to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, transmitting a concept note on the item under consideration.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2019/179, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by Algeria, Angola, Belgium, Canada, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, the Dominican Republic, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Germany, Guinea, Hungary, Iceland, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Mauritius, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Norway, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Poland, Portugal, the Republic of Korea, Romania, Rwanda, Senegal, Serbia, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Spain, the Sudan, Sweden, Switzerland, Togo, Tunisia and Ukraine.

The Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Belgium, China, Côte d'Ivoire, Dominican Republic, Equatorial Guinea, France, Germany, Indonesia, Kuwait, Peru, Poland, Russian Federation, South Africa, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The draft resolution received 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has been adopted unanimously as resolution 2457 (2019).

I now give the floor to Ms. DiCarlo.

Ms. DiCarlo: I thank you, Mr. President, for this opportunity to address the Security Council on silencing the guns in Africa. I would like to commend the presidency of Equatorial Guinea for organizing today's debate.

Silencing the guns is an initiative to promote the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts in Africa. It is critical not only for what it aims to do but also for what it says about the importance of African leadership in partnership with the global community. It was the African Union (AU) that pledged in 2013 not to bequeath the burden of conflict to the next generation of Africans and undertake to end all wars by 2020. The AU Peace and Security Council then took the lead in 2017 and developed a master road map of practical steps to silencing the guns by 2020. It was endorsed by the AU Assembly of Heads of State and Government in January 2018.

His Excellency Mr. Ramtane Lamamra, AU High Representative for Silencing the Guns in Africa, whom we have the honour to welcome here today, has worked closely with the United Nations to accelerate the implementation of the initiative, and this cooperation is wide-ranging. Indeed, the United Nations-African Union strategic partnership has become a cornerstone of United Nations peace and security initiatives in Africa.

The United Nations and the AU share a common mission: to prevent conflict. Silencing the guns also means keeping them from firing in the first place. In the past two years we have each strengthened our ability to detect and defuse crises before they escalate, in addition to strengthening our cooperation to help resolve them. Our partnership with the AU involves concrete action. In January 2018, among other initiatives, the United Nations kicked off a two-year project to support policy dialogue and technical assistance on conflict prevention and mediation in Africa.

The African Union and the United Nations partnership is bearing fruit in different countries on the continent. The AU, with United Nations support, shepherded the recent signing of the Global Peace Agreement in the Central African Republic. The signing of the revitalized peace accord in South Sudan, facilitated by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, with the support of the AU and the United Nations, has sparked renewed hope, even as more needs to be done to definitively silence the guns and end abuses, including sexual and gender-based violence in

South Sudan. The United Nations and the AU continue to work together in support of Somalia's State-building agenda, its fight against violent extremism and efforts to restore peace and stability in the country.

Furthermore, the United Nations continues to work closely with the AU and other partners to ensure the peaceful conduct of elections on the continent. The United Nations and the Southern African Development Community actively supported the good offices led by the African Union and Mr. Lamamra during the 2018 presidential election in Madagascar. Their efforts contributed to a peaceful process.

The United Nations has also increased its support to counter-terrorism efforts and prevent violent extremism in Africa. In June 2018, the United Nations signed with the AU a memorandum of understanding in this area to increase its cooperation and capacity-building support to the AU and several subregional organizations, as well as to Member States.

Silencing the guns for good requires the participation of all. As we assess efforts to increase women's leadership and meaningful participation in political processes, we see that progress has slowed, despite the combined work of the United Nations, the AU and civil society. We must redouble our efforts in this critical pursuit.

Building resilient societies is also key for silencing the guns. That implies strong institutions that respond to the needs of citizens, good governance and inclusive politics. The continent has made great strides in recent years in deepening democracy and democratic institutions, including through the implementation of the African Governance Architecture. However, numerous governance challenges remain, including the marginalization of certain groups from political processes, the prevalence of a winner-takes-all approach, corruption and the mismanagement of natural resources.

The United Nations continues to work with the AU and the regional economic communities in helping to build strong national institutions and addressing the root causes of armed conflict, including through support to democratic consolidation, upholding human rights, ending marginalization and promoting inclusive socioeconomic development, in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the African Union's Agenda 2063.

As the Secretary-General has stated, pointing to recent peaceful elections and truces, a wind of hope is blowing in Africa. Furthermore, across the continent, entrepreneurship is up, access to education has increased and child mortality has declined. One year ago, Africa's leaders launched the African Continental Free Trade Area. These and other positive developments are clear evidence that it is Africans, in partnership with the global community, who are leading the way to sustainable peace and prosperity on the continent.

In silencing the guns African countries have a central role to play in making the initiative a success, as do the African Union and Africa's private sector and civil society. But it is vital that the international community lend its support to Africa in achieving this objective. Let today's debate galvanize global support for these efforts.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Ms. DiCarlo for her briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Lamamra.

Mr. Lamamra: First of all, I would like to express to you, Mr. President, and through you to all members of the Security Council, my sincere thanks for your welcome and the kind words you addressed to me.

As the Council members well to know, I was called recently by the President of the Republic of Algeria, President Abdelaziz Bouteflika, to work in his office as Senior Minister and Diplomatic Adviser. I am therefore glad that I could be with Council members today to contribute to what appears to be a very significant achievement in Africa's endeavour to promote silencing the guns, that being one of the flagship programmes of our continental organization. President Bouteflika has particularly asked me to convey to the members of the Security Council his greetings as well as his high appreciation for their efforts to promote the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations in contemporary international relations. He assures the Council of Algeria's support for the emblematic and ambitious project of Silencing the Guns in Africa by 2020.

The Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Mr. Moussa Faki Mahamat, who has entrusted me with the mission of High Representative for Silencing the Guns in Africa, sincerely regrets not being able to participate personally in today's meeting. He asked me to share with the Council our vision for intensified joint

efforts by our two organizations in the implementation of their strategic partnership in peace and security. Together with Secretary-General António Guterres, the Chairperson Faki Mahamat intends to contribute to raising this great partnership to the highest level.

I wish to congratulate you, Sir, and His Excellency President Obiang Nguema Mbasogo on your successful presidency of the Security Council during a very busy month of February, with many achievements. In particular, I would like to express our deep appreciation to you for convening today's important debate and for your delegation's exemplary efforts in drafting and conducting the negotiations on resolution 2457 (2019), which the Council just unanimously adopted. I also take this opportunity to thank and congratulate all the delegations that so graciously sponsored the resolution. May I also thank all Council members for their support for the resolution, which testifies to their continued commitment to the Africanist agenda for freeing the continent from violent conflicts.

Since its adoption, the African Union (AU) flagship project to achieve a conflict-free Africa and make peace a reality for all our people has not remained a mere slogan. Instead, it has been pursued as one of the top priorities in the realization of African Union's Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want.

In line with the 2013 fiftieth anniversary solemn declaration, in which the African leaders pledged, among other things, to not pass along the burden of conflicts to the next generation of Africans and undertook to end all wars in Africa by 2020, the AU Assembly of Heads of State and Government adopted, in January 2017, the African Union Master Roadmap of Practical Steps to Silence the Guns in Africa by 2020.

To fulfil that objective, the African Union, in close partnership with the United Nations and the international community as a whole, has invested tremendous efforts to make peace a viable and lasting reality across the continent. As a result, notable progress has been made in preventing, managing and resolving conflicts throughout Africa. Many of the long-standing conflicts that have ravaged the continent are now seeing intensified collective efforts that will hopefully lead to their complete resolution. The recently concluded peace agreements in South Sudan and in the Central African Republic, the successful democratic elections in Madagascar and in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, as well as the historic positive developments in

the Horn of Africa, are all generating optimism about a continent emerging from the shadows and moving steadily to restore peace, stability and security, and make a decisive move towards integration and prosperity.

The African Union and its regional mechanisms have also enhanced their capacity to deal with conflict and crisis situations on the continent. In doing so, the African Union has developed the comprehensive African Peace and Security Architecture and the African Governance Architecture, which include a powerful set of instruments and practices. That has indeed helped the African Union and the international community enhance their collaboration and partnership, to the extent that today consultation and coordination among the AU, the regional economic communities, regional mechanisms, the United Nations and other partners to harmonize strategies and interventions have become the rule, rather than the exception.

In that context, I would be remiss if I did not recognize the impressive progress made in consolidating the strategic partnership between the African Union and the United Nations, which was given new impetus by the signing, in April 2017, of the Joint Framework for an Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security.

As the December 2020 deadline to end wars in Africa approaches, it is essential to bear in mind that there are still major challenges and constraints that need to be overcome in order to place the continent in a better position to be able to secure real gains and enjoy the dividends of peace.

Although the number of violent conflicts has significantly decreased in the past few years, a number of African countries still remain trapped in a vicious cycle of violent conflict and its deadly consequences as a result of, among other things, transnational crime, terrorism and the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. The effect of those challenges has been further exacerbated by the existence of ungoverned spaces that leave room for illegal activities, the persistence of corruption and illicit financial flows that facilitate funding for illicit weapons and conflicts, and the illegal exploitation of natural resources that contributes to funding insurgencies and rebellions, to mention a few.

Issues of governance and leadership also continue to be a major source of instability and conflict in Africa. Many experiences have shown the critical role of national governance institutions and

democratic practices in conflict prevention, especially election-related violence and disputes.

Those challenges serve to underline the urgent need to build a robust culture of conflict prevention, and in particular structural conflict prevention, that goes beyond the current trend of militarization of conflict resolution — as necessary as it may be in certain cases. They also serve to highlight the importance of all of us redoubling efforts to accelerate the search for peaceful and political solutions and maintain strong engagement in support of the implementation of peace agreements in Member States emerging from conflict.

To that end, our efforts will amount to too little if we do not endeavour to reduce the gap between strategic political and military efforts to prevent and resolve conflicts, on one hand, and to invest in economic and social development, on the other hand. At the African Union we remain convinced that peace cannot be achieved without development, and vice-versa, and that both peace and development cannot thrive without human rights and good governance.

Equally important is the need for the Security Council to respond positively to the African Union's long-standing and legitimate calls concerning access to United Nations assessed contributions to fund African Union peace support operations. By responding to multiple threats to peace and security, the African Union-led operations are indeed doing so on behalf of the United Nations and, in particular, the Security Council, which bears the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. This issue deserves renewed attention by the Security Council, in view of the ongoing efforts by the African Union, including the recent operationalization of its Peace Fund.

Last but not least, we also need to build and promote a culture of peace and tolerance. In that vein, my Office recently launched a media campaign to reach out to African citizens in member States, especially the youth, but also to the African diaspora. Furthermore, the decision taken by the African Union to annually declare September, until 2020, as Africa Amnesty Month for the surrender and collection of illicit arms and light weapons is one of many steps in the right direction that will contribute to peace and security on the continent. In that context, my role has been geared towards coordinating the various stakeholders and galvanizing the support necessary for deploying the

relevant conflict-resolution interventions and efforts. A plan of action supporting the Silencing the Guns by 2020 initiative in Africa is being developed with a view towards translating it into concrete deliverables.

In conclusion, let me thank members of the Security Council once again for giving us this opportunity to share the views of the African Union on such an important issue. I sincerely believe that today's open debate will significantly contribute to maintaining and further enhancing the positive momentum generated around the Silencing the Guns by 2020 initiative. I look forward to hearing members' views on how that can be done within the strategic partnership between the African Union and the United Nations. Despite the huge challenges ahead, I remain confident that our joint and genuine engagement will eventually pave the way towards a conflict-free and prosperous Africa. Our beloved African and world icon Nelson Mandela once said, "It always seems impossible until it is done." Let us therefore do it together.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Mr. Lamamra for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Gounden.

Mr. Gounden: I thank you, Mr. President, for inviting me to address the Security Council at this open debate on silencing the guns. Let me take this opportunity to congratulate the Government of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea for attaining the high office of the presidency of the Security Council for the first time in the country's 50-year history of independence. I would also like to congratulate you and your Government, Sir, for using this seat of power to focus on one of our major priorities in Africa — the prevention, management and resolution of violent conflict in all its manifestations.

Our contribution here today comes after deep reflection of our 27 years of involvement in assisting to resolve conflicts in Africa and around the world. Over the past 27 years, Africa has made huge progress in evolving a peace and security architecture that started with a fledgling conflict-management centre at the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and has today evolved into the African Peace and Security Architecture of the African Union. As the African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD), our organization has been involved with the OAU since 1993 under the guidance of then OAU Secretary-General Salim Ahmed Salim, and we have consistently worked with, and contributed to every incarnation of

the mechanism, inclusive of its current form. All of us who were involved, including Ambassador Lamamra, have learned a lot, but, unfortunately, conflicts do not remain static. Consequently, we have been, and continue to be, on a steep learning curve. I will point out shortly why today's open debate is so timely and why Africa's time is running out fast.

Many conflicts in Africa have been resolved over the past two decades, starting with my own country, South Africa, and its negotiated settlement, which culminated in its first democratic elections, held in 1994. We have since seen a wave of conflicts resolved through negotiations, including in Angola, Mozambique, the Sudan/South-Sudan, Madagascar, Liberia and Sierra Leone, and recently Ethiopia/Eritrea and the Central African Republic. Those were all seemingly intractable conflicts, but they were resolved through negotiation.

There is no doubt that huge progress in the area of peace and security has been made over the past quarter of a century in Africa, both in creating institutions and developing knowledge, skills and expertise to resolve conflicts. Our own institution, ACCORD — a specialized conflict-management organization — has trained more than 20,000 people in Africa, many of whom now occupy high office as presidents, ministers, senior Government officials, military generals and civil-society leaders. We have just been ranked by the annual *Global Go To Think Tank Index Report* of the University of Pennsylvania as one of the top 100 think tanks in the world, and the first in Africa. We are still learning, but we do not lack structures, skills, expertise or experience in Africa.

It might then be asked: Why do we continue to see the persistence of conflicts in parts of Somalia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the emergence of a South Sudan and Libyan civil war, an increasingly ungoverned Sahel region and violent street protests across many relatively stable countries in Africa, including my own country, South Africa? In this context of emerging new conflicts, can we silence the guns by 2020?

The answer is a resounding "no". Were the aspiration and vision correct? The answer must be a resounding, "yes". While explaining the 2020 deadline during the October 2018 high-level workshop in Addis Ababa on the Silencing the Guns by 2020 initiative Mr. Lamamra made the point that,

“In deciding the deadline, there was a need to balance seriousness and realism”.

However, today it is not important to debate the deadline, but more important to debate the modalities for silencing the guns. This debate on 27 February 2019, a year before the seventy-fifth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations, can be meaningful only if it recognizes that an initiative like Silencing the Guns by 2020 is merely a mitigation tool that, in the absence of good governance and the urgent transformation of the structural drivers of conflicts, will be meaningless. Many parts of Africa are reaching a dangerous tipping point, and we are currently in a race against time. Transformation to deal with the root causes and the deep structural challenges will take from 20 to 40 years to address. In the meantime, protracted conflict ranging from violent street protest to civil war and from radicalized terror insurgencies to criminal insurgencies will characterize large parts of the continent. Robust mitigation, including silencing the guns, has to be an immediate priority if we are to arrest the violence and conflict and allow socioeconomic transformation to take place. Anything short of that will result in the gradual collapse of law and order and a deterioration into civil war that will push Africa’s transformation even further back.

The deep structural challenges I speak of are not new. We are all aware that the vast majority of countries in Africa have not dealt with poverty, unemployment and inequality. We have made some progress, but we are still steeped in poverty, unemployment and inequality. The main reason is that skills development and employment creation have not been successful because there has not been a fundamental transformation in the structure of Africa’s economies for decades. Most African countries remain largely subsistence agricultural economies, which have made little to no progress in moving towards an industrial or services economy. That occurs amid an exponentially growing population that is rapidly urbanizing into unplanned cities that offer no prospects for proper housing, health care, education, sanitation, water and so on.

That is the main challenge in Africa today. Introduce guns into the equation and you light the proverbial time bomb waiting to explode. That is why we must silence the guns today. That is why we, Africa, said by 2020, because we knew the urgency of silencing the guns in the light of impending conflicts. The threats posed by terrorism, criminal syndicates and separatist

movements will continue to challenge our collective expertise as our Governments fail to exercise sovereign control over their entire territories.

However, they will be even more challenged in urban areas, where they generally exercise sovereign control but fail to deliver the essential social goods because of a failure to transform their economies; because of poor or non-existent leadership and governance; because of corruption and because they are just overwhelmed at times with challenges. Our prognosis five years ago was that the theatre of conflict would shift to urban areas over the next two decades. Urban conflicts that are badly managed will result in higher levels of civilian casualties and make Governments that lose control over law and order become more authoritarian. That cycle will have a negative effect on development, thereby creating a new wave of internally displaced people and political refugees. That is no longer a prognosis. It is today’s reality.

I know that Council members adopted a resolution today (resolution 2457 (2019)), but what will they do beyond that? Will they summon the political will of their member States to halt the flow of illicit weapons, almost all of which are not produced in Africa? Will they provide more resources for conflict prevention and peacebuilding and for building local and national capacities for conflict prevention and management so that women, young people, Government leaders, religious leaders, business people and others can all be trained to manage conflicts at their source and prevent the escalation of those conflicts? Will they ensure that their Member States encourage their private sectors to turn Africa’s extractive industries into productive industries, while ensuring that competitive beneficiation benefits local employment and eliminates poverty and inequality?

We have said much recently, at the World Economic Forum and in this one, about the fourth industrial revolution. But will the people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo again contribute only their materials and muscle, or will they also benefit from the fourth industrial revolution? They will make one of the largest contributions to the fourth industrial revolution with the minerals they possess, which are vital to the revolution.

Unless Council members take collective action so that each representative here today exercises national interest through the global responsibility the Chamber

demands, they will not silence the guns. They will silence only their powerful voices.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Mr. Gounden for his briefing.

I shall now make a statement in my capacity as Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea.

I would like to begin by saying that it is indeed a great honour to be here presiding over today's important and historic open debate on a theme of such significance for Africa — silencing the guns in Africa by 2020. I convey greetings from His Excellency Mr. Obiang Nguema Mbasogo, Head of State of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea, who congratulates all countries that helped to adopt resolution 2457 (2019) and thanks them for their support during Equatorial Guinea's presidency of the Security Council.

I commend Ms. Rosemary DiCarlo, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs and Peacebuilding, for attending today's meeting. I also commend Mr. Ramtane Lamamra, African Union High Representative for Silencing the Guns in Africa and Mr. Vasu Gounden, Executive Director of the African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes, for agreeing to participate in today's meeting and offer insightful briefings at today's solemn and momentous meeting on an issue affecting the African continent. I would like to acknowledge His Excellency Mr. Walter Lindner, State Secretary of the Federal Foreign Office of the Federal Republic of Germany, who is here with us today. I also extend congratulations to all dignitaries and delegations present.

The unanimous adoption of resolution 2457 (2019) attests to the commitment and support of the international community, expressed through this organ, for Africa's efforts to achieve sustainable peace and stability. Resolution 2457 (2019) will undoubtedly help safeguard peace and security on the African continent. We hope that it will also mark a turning point in Africa's future.

Small arms and light weapons, including anti-personnel mines, pose a great danger to human survival, yet thousands of such weapons continue to exist with the potential for use or proliferation. There is an urgent need for Africa to accelerate the process of combating, preventing and eradicating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects. It is

well known that most of the world's armed conflicts are in Africa.

Agenda 2063, which is the African Union's legal framework for inclusive growth and sustainable development, is in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the sustaining peace agenda and the fiftieth anniversary solemn declaration of the African Union Heads of State and Government. They all include a commitment to achieve the goal of a conflict-free Africa, that is, making peace possible for all African peoples, while ridding the continent of wars and violent conflicts and not bequeathing the burden of conflict to future African generations.

The goal of silencing the guns by 2020, entailing their complete, effective, controlled, verifiable and transparent elimination through international and regional legal instruments, is of vital importance to Africa and must have the support of the international community, especially the Security Council. It cannot be achieved without involving those most directly affected by the scourge of conflicts, which are our peoples. That fact becomes a collective responsibility of all African countries, which must prioritize the participation of citizens in political and economic processes, promote equity and prevent violence at all levels of our people's lives.

The current reality of, and the threat posed by, the illicit manufacture, circulation and trade in small arms and light weapons, including anti-personnel mines, is a fact that challenges us all. We must be aware of that reality and assess the damage and horror those weapons cause to the whole of humankind, especially in Africa, knowing that those weapons and explosive devices do not come from another planet. Silencing weapons in Africa by 2020 is not just a desire; our lives depend upon it. Conflicts are the main cause of our problems, as they touch on all aspects of our lives.

Africa must therefore address both the symptoms and the root causes of conflict. In paying attention to the current problems of peace and security, we must also work to eliminate the source of those problems by improving efforts to accelerate development and reduce poverty, thereby eliminating the breeding grounds for conflict and violent extremism. The flashpoints involve complex national, ethnic, religious and social tensions. Fundamentalists, criminals and terrorist and mercenary organizations advantage of those problems to spread terror throughout our lands and increase piracy and

transnational organized crime at sea, as already seen in the Gulf of Guinea.

Equatorial Guinea therefore appeals to the international community, particularly Africans themselves, to pool their efforts to help Africa implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, together with the African Union's Agenda 2063, as avenues for sustainable economic development, that is, to begin working on the establishment of solid structures in the areas of health, education, the economy, trade, peaceful inter-ethnic coexistence and good governance, among others, and focus on addressing with determination the problems that affect youth, children, women, refugees, immigrants, including employment among others. Leaving those issues pending would lead us to the risk of endless conflicts.

If we do not find definitive solutions to the causes of the current conflicts that plague our continent, or if we do not succeed in strengthening the mechanisms for the effective prevention of such conflicts, we will continue to address African problems in a rhetorical manner without conclusive steps towards concrete objectives. That is why peacekeeping operations on African soil must be at the forefront of those efforts, and in that endeavour cooperation with the United Nations and partners is key. We must continue to strengthen United Nations peacekeeping efforts in Africa. The draft resolution on the financing of peacekeeping operations in Africa, pending adoption by the Security Council, is momentous. The hope for silencing the guns in Africa will be a utopian one if it is not accompanied by that important step.

I would therefore like to take this opportunity to appeal to the Council to achieve unity, as was possible on the occasion of adopting resolution 2457 (2019) today, so that we can sooner rather than later adopt and celebrate that other important part in order to complete the equation that will be resolved only through the adoption of both resolutions. That would represent the solid ground necessary to genuinely and solidly begin building Africa's tomorrow, free of conflicts and weapons, in which its citizens would be concerned only with how to face the daily challenges in an atmosphere of peace and stability.

The African Union itself must be able to optimize the preventive diplomacy mechanisms and tools it already possesses, including the Panel of the Wise and the Continental Early Warning System, and ensure an

immediate response to any threat that may arise. That is a step in the right direction, but work still needs to be done to operationalize the African Peace and Security Architecture, particularly the African Standby Force and its rapid deployment capability. African countries have worked closely in recent years to address African problems in an African way, thereby contributing significantly to the maintenance of peace and security on the continent.

The recently concluded thirty-second Summit of the African Union reaffirmed its determination to redouble efforts towards better and more effective conflict prevention action in order to preserve the African Union's commitment to address critical points in Africa, continue to strengthen African capacities for peace and security, strengthen Africa's collective security mechanism and enhance African peace and security.

It is true that progress has been made in conflict prevention, management and resolution in Africa. Many of the long-term conflicts that devastated the continent have been resolved. The African Union and its regional mechanisms have also improved their capacity to deal with conflict and crisis situations on the continent.

Let me share my optimism. Let me say to those present that somehow we have already begun silencing the weapons on our continent. Equatorial Guinea greatly celebrates the latest achievements in both the Central African Republic and South Sudan, where long-lasting conflicts have seen the signing of agreements that solely benefit those two brother countries, with which they will be able to begin their journey towards progress.

We also commend the achievements made in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Madagascar, where elections were held under very complex conditions and allowed for a peaceful transition of power in those countries. Let us also not forget the progress made in the Horn of Africa, or the success of programmes on disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and security sector reform, both crucial elements of stabilization and recovery, which are an integral part of the African Union Master Road Map of Practical Steps for Silencing the Guns in Africa by 2020.

The only entities that should have a monopoly over armed forces are legitimate Governments, and they must use that only in accordance with the law and with

respect for the rights of their citizens, with the ultimate goal being to defend them.

I wish to conclude my statement by calling for the spirit of unanimity that we have witnessed in the Council today, which has resulted in the adoption of the historic resolution 2457 (2019), to be preserved in order to support the praiseworthy initiatives in Africa, as silencing the guns on the African continent does not only require the involvement of Africa, but rather the necessary international cooperation of us all, given that peace and stability in Africa means peace and stability throughout the world.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I shall now give the floor to the others members of the Council.

Mr. Lindner (Germany): At the outset, I would like to thank my colleague and friend from Equatorial Guinea, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, for convening this timely debate, as well as the speakers who have already spoken on the topic and those who will speak later today.

(spoke in Spanish)

I thank you for your initiative, Mr. President — you and your country have my full respect.

(spoke in English)

I have come to this debate to express our support for the topic. I spent a number of years in Africa during my career, having been Ambassador in Kenya, Somalia, Burundi, South Africa, Eswatini, Lesotho and, during the Ebola crisis, in Sierra Leone, Liberia and Conakry, Guinea. This is a topic that is very close to our hearts and to my heart personally, which is why I wanted to come to express our support.

Our African partners have set themselves an ambitious goal for ending conflict, as the founder of the African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes already mentioned: no more arms on the continent by the year 2020. I suppose that is an illusion, but equally, as Mr. Gounden expressed, it is important to set that goal because it makes us all aware that there is something to be done. The progress already made has been tangible — there has been some progress. The African Peace and Security Architecture provides a framework, and the implementation of the action plan to silence the guns in Africa is well under way.

In all of those efforts, the African Union (AU) is an indispensable partner, and we welcome the Joint United Nations-African Union Framework for an Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security.

I also wish to commend Equatorial Guinea for the resolution that was just been adopted unanimously (resolution 2457 (2019)). The framework of the resolution is quite broad and comprehensively addresses the root causes of conflict and puts emphasis on prevention and peacebuilding. In particular, we welcome that it addresses climate change, natural resources — or rather, the misuse of natural resources — terrorism and organized crime as well as human rights. We fully support that it also highlights the need to enhance the role of women in all aspects of political life.

Let me highlight four areas in which my country works hand in hand with African partners and the African Union to further peace and security in Africa.

First, we support the strengthening of the African Union's capacity to prevent and respond to conflict. A major challenge is to secure lasting conflict resolution on the ground. We often see a resurgence of conflicts that we thought had been deemed resolved or at least contained. That proves that it is crucial to address the whole conflict cycle, as Under-Secretary-General Rosemary DiCarlo mentioned, starting with early-warning mechanisms, crisis prevention, civilian capabilities, mediation support and the African capacity to respond to security threats. All of that constitutes a cycle wherein we have to address every stage.

In that respect, Germany is an active supporter of mediation efforts in the Sudan, South Sudan and a number of other countries. We also support the Mediation Support Unit of the African Union, which increases the efficiency of African-led mediation efforts, as well as the African Peace and Security Architecture, as mentioned by the President of the Council. We also provide training and specialized equipment to a large number of African troop and police contributors. We have expanded our support to peacekeeping training institutes in Mali, Ghana and Kenya. Our Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Heiko Maas, has just landed in Mali, where he is visiting a training camp at which an assault with weapons was carried out against peacekeepers a few days ago. I believe that it is important that we see the dangers out there and do something about them. Germany is also

the largest contributor to the European Union's current involvement in seven African peace missions.

Secondly, Germany has made fighting the proliferation of weapons and ammunition, which are the hard fuel of conflicts — without them, the conflicts would not be as deadly — a priority of its Council membership, which began two months ago. We fully support the AU action plan to silence the guns in Africa by 2020 — for example, through involvement with the Mines Advisory Group and the Small Arms Survey. We also welcome the African Union Strategy on the Control of Illicit Proliferation, Circulation and Trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons, which was developed under AU leadership in close cooperation with subregional African organizations.

We all know that implementation is key. We have partnered with the AU to cut the flow of weapons into areas of conflict, improve the control of arms and ammunition in fragile States and train a new generation of experts to take the lead in arms control. We need to mobilize additional donors to give implementation another push ahead of the symbolic year 2020. Germany stands ready to support the AU in that endeavour.

Thirdly, as mentioned by the Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, we support strengthening the protection of human rights. Human rights violations are often initial indicators that a country is heading towards conflict. We need to monitor such situations and prioritize preventive measures. The failure to protect human rights is closely intertwined with the aggravation of conflict. Tackling that nexus is another priority of our membership of the Security Council during the next two years.

In order to prevent abuse and strengthen compliance with international humanitarian law and international human rights law, we must promote transparency, the rule of law and the effective regulation of commercial security providers. Germany welcomes initiatives such as the Montreux Document. We encourage all States and stakeholders to align themselves with it. Peacekeeping operations have a special responsibility to protect the most vulnerable. Adequate human rights components play a crucial role in preventing grave violations against children in armed conflicts, as well as women, as I mentioned earlier. We therefore strongly encourage the inclusion of appropriate child protection provisions in all United Nations peacekeeping mandates, including for regional peacekeeping operations.

Fourthly, Germany is a long-standing partner of Africa in development cooperation and efforts to advance beyond it. Given that armed conflicts are linked to social, political and economic grievances, it is critical that efforts to silence the guns be aimed at enhancing reconciliation, social cohesion and, in particular, economic development. Private sector engagement in that area is of key importance. Job opportunities, investment and growth must be assured by that. Germany has therefore launched initiatives such as the Group of Twenty Compact with Africa in order to spur economic activities with and in Africa.

In conclusion, we remain committed to supporting the African Union and regional and subregional organizations under a multilateral approach to sustaining peace. Whether it be in the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Peacebuilding Commission or the Human Rights Council, we must use synergies and work closely together in order to efficiently expend our scarce resources, maintain coherence and avoid duplication. Our meeting today illustrates the value of a cross-cutting discussion on threats to peace and security with the African Union, subregional organizations and donor countries. The root causes of violence and conflict in Africa deserve the close attention of the Council. Germany is committed to keeping this topic on the agenda. We wish to reiterate what was said by the Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs: may the wind of hope we are seeing in Africa become a long-lasting one.

Mr. Singer Weisinger (Dominican Republic) (*spoke in Spanish*): We wish to thank the Permanent Mission of Equatorial Guinea for having convened this important open debate and putting before the Security Council the African Union initiative Silencing the Guns in Africa. We also commend the good offices involved in the drafting of the resolution adopted today (resolution 2457 (2019)). We are also grateful to Ms. Rosemary DiCarlo, Mr. Ramtane Lamamra and Mr. Vasu Gounden for their briefings.

At the outset, we wish to underscore the importance of the Silencing the Guns in Africa initiative. It is a somewhat ambitious initiative, but at the same time one that is necessary owing to the high number of conflicts and wars that have enveloped large parts of the African continent. In the same vein, we commend the progress made by African Union member States in the implementation of the road map of practical steps to achieve that overarching objective. There are various

reasons for which States find themselves embroiled in continuous conflicts, but among the most common we would mention economic crisis, bad governance, scant institutionality, fighting for access to and control of natural resources, human rights violations, ethnic and religious differences and the effects of climate change, among others. That diverse range of factors makes it necessary to address the issue of security and development in Africa from a broad and comprehensive perspective.

Mali, the Sudan, Libya, Nigeria, Kenya and Somalia have demonstrated that the threats faced by the African continent must be tackled globally, while maintaining the view that the future of the region is the fundamental responsibility of African countries, with the cooperation of the international community. While it is true that the reasons for conflicts are distinct for each country, it is equally true that in each and every one of the conflicts on the African continent and throughout the rest of the world there is an inevitable presence of the illicit proliferation of small arms and light weapons. Such weapons are cheap and easy to use, transport and hide, thereby representing the main element used in conflicts. It is those weapons that are favoured for use in civil wars and for carrying out criminal activity, organized crime and terrorism. The illicit trafficking in those weapons represents a scourge that exacerbates conflicts and undermines the stability of those States that at one point or another managed to emerge from conflict but have ended up immersed once again in crisis.

We therefore encourage African Union States to fulfil their domestic and international legal commitments, including the effective implementation and monitoring of arms embargoes put in place by the Security Council, as well as the various international instruments that advocate for peace, disarmament and the realization of lasting international security, in particular through the full implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.

We also call on non-signatory States to the Arms Trade Treaty to sign and ratify it with a view to its full universalization. In that regard, with the support and assistance of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa, we call for measures to be established in order to strengthen citizen security and combat the illicit trade in small arms and light

weapons by implementing security sector reforms and draft laws for the control and regulation of firearms, munitions, explosives and their related materials.

The primary objectives of those projects and reforms should be to prevent and control the use of weapons by the civilian population and the weapons used by the military and police outside the scope of regulation, as well as promoting the gradual disarmament of the population through the implementation of a legal system that establishes crimes that do not exist in current criminal legislation, in addition to promoting institutional strengthening, capacity-building, reinforcing control measures for arms acquisition, developing adequate procedures for the management of stockpiling, physical security and the marking, registration and tracking of such weapons. In that regard, we also recognize that the effectiveness of weapons-collection programmes and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes depend, *inter alia*, on providing sustainable opportunities for ex-combatants and on the ability of State institutions to foster an inclusive environment in which people feel safe and protected, as expressed in resolution 2220 (2015).

Another aspect that we would like to highlight is that the African continent has achieved positive developments with regard to the various protocols and resolutions that have been adopted on women and peace and security. However, Governments must remain committed to gender equity, particularly by ensuring women leadership in peace and security processes and mechanisms and by making efforts to guarantee their implementation, as they are catalysts for successfully achieving the objectives of Agenda 2063 of the African Union and a continent free of conflict by 2020.

We believe that investment and multilateral cooperation in Africa and among the countries that comprise it, as well as investment in education, the greater participation of women and young people in various sectors of society and the participation of civil society and a focus on human rights, among other aspects, would allow countries across the continent to capitalize on their vast human capital and natural resources and thereby achieve the socioeconomic development that they yearn for.

The Dominican Republic, as a country that firmly believes in young people as transformers of societies that are more just, inclusive and peaceful, supports the recommendations of the fourth report of the Peace

and Security Council of the African Union in the implementation of the road map for the participation of young people and women throughout the full cycle of peace processes across the continent. We also welcome the designation by the African Union of a special envoy for youth, peace and security.

Other issues that we must analyse include the challenges generated by the effects of climate change on the African continent, particularly for agriculture, which represents the economic linchpin of a large part of the population. All estimates suggest that a significant part of the continent will become more arid and experience greater climate variability. Several African countries are already experiencing those effects as a result of reduced rainfall, soil degradation and the depletion of natural resources.

In particular, it is worth mentioning the increased desertification of the Sahel, which could lead to greater regional instability and an increase in northward migration to the Maghreb region and Europe, while an increase in adverse weather events in East Africa and a decrease in rainfall in North Africa could affect the Sudan and cause food shortages in Ethiopia and Somalia, which would increase tensions in the Horn of Africa. It is also predicted that climate change will have a considerable effect on the spread of diseases, which will contribute to aggravating existing tensions.

As we can see, the main threats to the African continent are not isolated but rather interrelated, meaning that a joint effort is necessary in order to effectively confront them through strategies for conflict resolution, development and economic and environmental sustainability. Governments and armed groups should also renew their commitments and focus on overcoming the great challenges they face in implementing existing peace agreements in countries such as Mali and the Central African Republic, among others, and should adopt measures for the effective implementation of those agreements.

It is also important that the international community, the Economic Commission for Africa and regional and subregional organizations support and assist the regional defence cooperation frameworks with a view to achieving their overall objectives.

Finally, the Dominican Republic reiterates its commitment to achieving and maintaining international peace and security. We therefore extend our support to the African Union member States in their efforts

to achieve a continent free of conflicts. It is the responsibility of the entire international community to ensure the well-being of its citizens and guarantee collective security in a sustainable manner.

Mr. Delattre (France) (*spoke in French*): I would first like to welcome the presence among us of the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Equatorial Guinea and that of the State Secretary of the Federal Foreign Office of Germany.

Allow me to begin by thanking you, Mr. President, on behalf of France, for organizing this important debate, and to commend the excellent work carried out by Equatorial Guinea during its presidency of the Security Council in the month of February under the unanimously appreciated leadership of its Permanent Representative to the United Nations. I also wish to welcome the unanimous adoption of resolution 2457 (2019), submitted by Equatorial Guinea on behalf of the three African members of the Security Council and the African Union, which France co-sponsored, and to warmly thank Ms. DiCarlo, Mr. Lamamra and Mr. Gounden for their particularly enlightening briefings.

For France, the partnership between the United Nations and the African Union is of strategic importance today for the prevention and resolution of crises in Africa. The development of that partnership is in our view one of the main drivers of consolidating and strengthening the multilateralism that we all yearn for, so that supporting and strengthening the partnership between the United Nations and the African Union is one of France's top priorities.

The strength of that partnership is as robust as it is promising. The past year has been testimony to the important results that have been achieved thanks to the joint initiatives of the United Nations and the African Union — initiatives driven by the exemplary collaboration between the Secretary-General and the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Mr. Moussa Faki Mahamat.

Without being exhaustive, I would mention in particular the recent signing of the peace agreement in the Central African Republic, the peaceful transition of power in the Democratic Republic of Congo, the signing of the peace agreement in South Sudan in September 2018 and the historic rapprochement under way in the Horn of Africa since the end of last June. Of course, these positive developments should not conceal

the fact that crises and conflict situations remain on the continent. In that context, while the partnership between the United Nations and the African Union is of strategic importance to France, we also note the rise of African peace operations.

In line with what has already been said, in particular by Mr. Lamamra and the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Equatorial Guinea, we fully support the initiative of the African Union for the sustainable and predictable financing of African peace operations, including mandatory contributions from the United Nations. President Emmanuel Macron recalled France's resolute commitment in this area during the most recent general debate of the General Assembly (see A/73/PV.6) and, as the Council is aware, African peace operations are also a priority for the current French presidency of the Group of Seven.

African peace operations and the military response to crises on the continent are of course only part of the solution. To echo what has already been said by several speakers, in particular by the State Secretary of the Federal Foreign Office of Germany a few minutes ago, we believe that a broader approach is essential both before and after crises. That is the goal of the Silencing the Guns by 2020 initiative, which was launched by the African Union and its member States and which we fully support. That is another area in which the partnership between the United Nations, the African Union and African subregional organizations is of major importance to us.

In the area of prevention, concrete results have been achieved, in particular in the Gambia, where the combined efforts of the United Nations, the African Union and the Economic Community of West African States made it possible to prevent the post-electoral crisis from turning into a conflict, the victims of which would have been the country's population. More recently, successful work was carried out by the African Union High Representative for Silencing the Guns in Africa by 2020, Mr. Lamamra, in cooperation with the Southern African Development Community, the United Nations and the European Union in preventing a major crisis from arising during the organization of the presidential elections in Madagascar.

Finally, the African Union has adopted a number of instruments in recent years, notably the African Peer Review Mechanism, the Panel of the Wise and the Network of African Women in Conflict Prevention

and Mediation of the African Union. I would like to reiterate that the role of women in conflict prevention and resolution and their participation in political processes is an absolutely crucial factor in achieving lasting peace — that is certainly something that France is fighting for.

More broadly, all of the actions undertaken by the African Union and its member States to address the root causes of conflict are now key elements of long-term crisis prevention and avoiding the recurrence of crises. In that regard, we welcome the efforts undertaken by the African Union, its member States and African subregional organizations in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063 of the African Union, as well as in launching the Continental Free Trade Area, developing the governance architecture of the African Union, promoting respect for human rights, investing in the education of the younger generations and implementing the Paris Agreement on Climate Change — we are all aware of the extremely serious threat to the continent posed by climate change. France wholeheartedly supports all of those priorities.

Lastly, let us not forget the importance of mobilizing efforts to combat the illicit arms trade in Africa, which continues to fuel conflict and exacerbate armed violence while aiding organized crime and terrorism. In this regard, we welcome efforts to universalize and fully implement all the relevant instruments, which should be a priority.

I would like to conclude by echoing the words of Léopold Sédar Senghor, who stated that there is no such thing as an armed peace, peace under oppression or fraternity without equality. Those words should guide us all in our resolute support to our African partners and friends in their goal of ending the crises on their continent. They can be assured of France's unwavering commitment in that regard.

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We are pleased to welcome you today as President of the Security Council, Sir. We would like to thank the Equatorial Guinea presidency, both in terms of its performance of its functions throughout this month and for organizing today's meeting on a subject whose significance for the work of the Security Council is difficult to overestimate. And we are grateful to our briefers, Ms. Rosemary DiCarlo, Ambassador Lamamra and Mr. Gounden, for the information and assessments they have provided.

The African Union's Agenda 2063, adopted six years ago, is predicated on achieving peace on the African continent by that date. It is encouraging to see that Africa's leaders have not stopped at that unquestionably noble but long-term goal but have rather committed to making every possible effort to put an end to armed conflicts in Africa as early as 2020. Needless to say, there is a whole tangle of complex problems causing long-term instability in Africa and hampering the achievement of that ambitious task. Resolution 2457 (2019), adopted on the initiative of Equatorial Guinea, focuses on many of them. We believe that the right thing to do in our meeting today will be to put the emphasis on discussing the efforts of African countries themselves to solve the problems they are facing in the area of peace and security and the ways that the international community may be able to help them to do that.

Despite the fact that African issues continue to occupy the greater part of the Security Council's agenda, we should not fail to note the significant progress that has been made in resolving various crises, particularly during the past year. Important peace agreements have been reached in South Sudan and the Central African Republic. Thanks to bold steps on the part of the leaders of Ethiopia, Eritrea and Somalia, the situation in the Horn of Africa has improved, and a number of African countries, including the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Nigeria, have held generally peaceful and democratic elections.

However, the situation in many African countries remains difficult. We are particularly concerned about hotbeds of tension in Mali, Burkina Faso, the Niger, the Central African Republic, Somalia, the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Lake Chad basin region. In that regard, we welcome the activities of the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel and the Multinational Joint Task Force in fighting Boko Haram. It will be crucial to continue to build on efforts to halt the increasing terrorist activity in Africa. Terrorists are returning to countries in the region from Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan, and Libya, which became a haven for terrorists of all stripes after the intervention in 2011, is increasingly becoming a base for their activities. We support the African Union's desire to raise its profile in the settlement of the situation in Libya, including by organizing a joint international conference with the United Nations on reconciliation there.

We note the operationalization of the African Standby Force within the framework of the establishment of the African Peace and Security Architecture. The African Union is currently mobilizing efforts to prevent conflict, including by utilizing the potential of subregional organizations and the good offices of prominent African leaders. We greatly appreciate the mediation efforts of Mr. Lamamra, African Union High Representative for Silencing the Guns in Africa, and hope to see productive work coming out of the recently established African Union Centre for Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development.

We believe that adequate assistance on the part of the international community is essential to ending the conflicts in Africa. That support should be provided on the basis of strict compliance with the Charter of the United Nations and respect for the principle of non-interference in the affairs of sovereign States. However, Africans themselves must take the leading role in resolving crises, in accordance with the principle of African solutions to African problems. We want to point out that Russian assistance in ensuring security and stability in Africa has always been provided with the approval of national Governments and on a basis of regional and continental peace initiatives. With the aim of enabling African States to form their own anti-crisis forces, we will continue our bilateral training programmes for military and law-enforcement personnel, as well as our instruction for African peacekeepers at specialist Russian institutions.

We welcome the mutual willingness of the United Nations Secretariat and the African Union Commission to expand the cooperation between the two organizations on peace and security, including by holding an annual high-level conference and increasing the number of joint missions to conflict zones. We consider the Security Council's focused attention to African initiatives to ensure sustainable financing of African peacekeeping operations under the auspices of the African Union to be justified. We note the progress made in replenishing the African Union Peace Fund, which affirms the determination of African leaders to take on their share of support to peacekeeping missions' budgets.

As many speakers have said today, ensuring stability in Africa is closely linked to resolving the most important socioeconomic issues facing the continent. Issues related to overcoming lagging industrial development, building modern infrastructure and creating new jobs, including for young people, are especially urgent. It will

be essential to minimize the negative consequences of problems related to refugees and internally displaced persons, uncontrolled migration, famine, poverty and epidemics. All of this demands increasing the efficiency of public administration and training highly qualified personnel in various fields. In that regard, Russia intends to continue contributing to training specialists from African countries by providing State scholarships for education in Russian institutions in medicine, education, advanced technologies, transport, geology and other areas.

Ms. Wronecka (Poland): I would like to commend the presidency of Equatorial Guinea for organizing this timely debate aimed at ending the conflicts on the African continent. We are very pleased to see you today, Sir, as President of the Council, and we appreciate the work of the Equatorial Guinean diplomats here. I would also like to thank Under-Secretary-General Rosemary DiCarlo, Mr. Ramtane Lamamra, African Union High Representative for Silencing the Guns, and Mr. Vasu Gounden, Founder and Executive Director of the African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes, for their very informative interventions.

Poland believes that a conflict-free Africa is an ambitious goal that can only be achieved with African ownership. We perceive the Silencing the Guns initiative and today's debate as clear evidence of this ownership. There is no doubt that Africa deserves great credit for making efforts to end the violence that has plagued the continent. Particularly in recent years, the African Union has taken on important responsibilities and its role in promoting peace and security across the continent has only expanded.

However, there is also no doubt that a lot remains to be done in order to achieve the goal of a conflict-free Africa. Strong commitment is needed to make peace a reality for all people and to rid the continent of wars, civil conflicts, human rights violations, humanitarian disasters and violent conflicts and to prevent genocide, as stipulated in the African Union's fiftieth anniversary solemn declaration. Let me focus on certain crucial elements that are of particular importance from our point of view.

We believe that additional efforts have to be made to counter the illicit transfer, destabilizing accumulation and misuse of small arms and light weapons in Africa. The illicit proliferation of arms destabilizes the continent and negatively impacts its

development. Therefore, I would like to encourage African partners to ratify the Arms Trade Treaty and follow its provisions, and the United Nations to stand ready to offer its expertise and assistance. We cannot cease to underline the significance of all levels of implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. We highlight action at the national level, which plays a decisive role. Regional approaches and interaction also create the necessary input in support of those instruments.

It is equally important to provide necessary technical and financial assistance to conflict-affected countries in the processes of security sector reform, as well as demobilization, disarmament and reintegration. Therefore, we commend the efforts of the African Union Commission aimed at providing support to such countries. The strengthening of African capabilities in the area of early warning, mediation and conflict prevention, including the Panel of the Wise, as well as the adoption of confidence-building measures, are of the utmost importance. Enhanced cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union remains crucial, and continued United Nations support to the African Union in its efforts to equip itself with the capabilities, capacities, tools and means necessary for effective action is also critical.

Conflicts in Africa are complex and so are their root causes. Social, political and economic inequality still exists in Africa, along with unemployment, lack of education and population pressure. There is also a historical pattern of conflict and battles for control over natural resources. All of these elements must be addressed in order to secure durable peace on the continent. Tackling the root causes requires concerted efforts, the ownership of African Governments and local communities and support from the international community.

Last but not least, let me stress the importance of yet another element that is central to preventing and managing conflicts: good governance and functioning State institutions. African Governments have to continue to develop institutions that are accountable and responsive to citizens, that promote the rule of law and ensure political stability. In this context, I would like to stress that lasting peace will not be possible without ensuring inclusiveness and the participation of women and youth in peace processes and political life. It is our strong belief that African women and youth

can play a vital role in peacebuilding and reconciliation efforts, as well as in forging the continent's resilience.

We also bear in mind that people with disabilities are disproportionately impacted by violent conflict and that it is important to include them in the conflict resolution and peacebuilding processes. They are able to bring their unique perspective, share their knowledge and contribute to peacebuilding activities to ensure more inclusive and equitable societies, as well as more just conflict relief, assistance and long-lasting peace.

In conclusion, allow me to once again applaud Africa on the progress achieved so far in preventing, managing and resolving conflicts. Still, in order to silence the guns by 2020, a lot remains to be done. An efficient relationship between the United Nations and the African Union plays an important role in this regard. Let me assure you, Sir, that Poland will continue to support the African Union's vision for peace and prosperity, as well as the prevention and resolution of conflict and the maintenance of regional peace, security and stability. In this context, we welcome today's unanimous adoption of resolution 2457 (2019) as an important step towards the goal of a conflict-free Africa.

Mr. Adom (Côte d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank the Equatorial Guinean presidency for organizing this open debate on the African Union's ambitious Silencing the Guns by 2020 initiative and for its outstanding leadership of the work of the Council.

Allow me also to welcome your presence among us, Sir, which testifies to the leadership and commitment of your country to the efforts made by our States to make a reality of the noble African ambition of silencing the guns on our continent by 2020.

I would like to express my delegation's appreciation to our briefers for their wise analyses and timely recommendations. I thank Ms. Rosemary DiCarlo, Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs; His Excellency Mr. Ramtane Lamamra, African Union High Representative for Silencing the Guns in Africa; and Mr. Vasu Gounden, Founder and Executive Director of the African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes. I thank Secretary-General António Guterres and Mr. Moussa Faki Mahamat, Chairperson of the African Union Commission, whose commitment to conflict prevention and the maintenance and consolidation of peace and security in Africa is well-known.

Côte d'Ivoire welcomes the outstanding progress made since the adoption in January 2017 of the African Union Master Road Map of Practical Steps to Silence the Guns in Africa by the Year 2020 and welcomes the adoption today of resolution 2457 (2019), submitted by the Republic of Equatorial Guinea on behalf of the three African members of the Council, in accordance with paragraph 5 of the Peace and Security Council communiqué of 16 January 2017.

We congratulate our colleague Ambassador Anatolio Ndong Mba and his entire team for their excellent work throughout the month of February. We are convinced that the resolution marks an important step in the process of the assumption of ownership by the United Nations and its competent bodies of this important project, which is perfectly in line with the African Union's efforts to promote peace, security and development.

On 16 January 2017, the African Union Peace and Security Council of the African Union adopted the Master Roadmap of Practical Steps to Silence the Guns in Africa by the Year 2020, in line with Agenda 2063 of the African Union, towards the socioeconomic transformation of the continent. Since then, the pan-African organization has spared no effort to make a reality of the dream of a peaceful Africa, steadfastly on its way to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, as Ambassador Lamamra has just demonstrated.

Convinced that the coordinated efforts of all stakeholders constitute the best means of effectively implementing this important project, the African Union has tirelessly mobilized all member States, subregional organizations and African civil society, as well as the international community, including the United Nations. Indeed, the coordination of our strategies and the pooling of our resources are critical, even indispensable conditions for effectively leading the struggle against the increasing and evolving nature of conflicts in Africa, as well as the worrisome proliferation of arms trafficking.

While we cannot deny that combining our efforts is essential to silencing the guns in Africa, it should also be recognized that it is first and foremost the task of Member States to combat the ravages caused by arms through national legal and operational frameworks. Indeed, silencing the guns as a means of conflict prevention must be the primary responsibility of States under the Charter of the United Nations. It is in light of

this primary responsibility that Côte d'Ivoire, which has experienced the pain of post-electoral armed conflict, has implemented a relevant national legal framework stemming from the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons, Their Ammunition and Other Related Materials and the Arms Trade Treaty.

At the operational level, the fight against the illicit proliferation of and trafficking in small arms and light weapons has been carried out in conjunction with our disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) process for ex-combatants and security sector reform. In this regard, my country has created an authority on DDR, a national security council to lead the security sector reform and a national commission for the fight against small arms and light weapons. The DDR process, which was completed in June 2015, was financed with 72 per cent of our own funds and followed by community disarmament and a policy to reintegrate ex-combatants, which is essential for the sustainability of the gains we have made in peace, security and stability.

Côte d'Ivoire is of the opinion that the implementation of the African Union Master Roadmap of Practical Steps for Silencing the Guns in Africa by 2020 must also and above all be based on strong political and financial commitments in order to achieve our common goal of preserving future generations from the burden of war and violent conflict. It is therefore particularly important to insist on the decisive role of the regional economic communities, as defined in paragraph 4 of the African Union Peace and Security Council communiqué of 16 January 2017.

In this regard, I would like to cite and welcome the example of the positive cooperation among the national small arms and light weapons committees of ECOWAS member States within the framework of the Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons and the Arms Trade Treaty. Such cooperation facilitates the strengthening of national capacities in the fight against arms trafficking, as well as the regular exchange of experiences and good practices, thereby enabling member States to make excellent progress in monitoring, tracing and securing stockpiles of weapons and munitions.

Côte d'Ivoire also underscores the need for the African Union and international partners to maintain their multifaceted support in strengthening the capacities of regional organizations in order to increase

their effectiveness in the fight against the proliferation of arms, awareness-raising and community disarmament, alongside civil society organizations. In this regard, my country welcomes United Nations efforts undertaken through the United Nations Mine Action Service, the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, and the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons. We urge the United Nations to continue its cooperation with the African Union, in accordance with the Joint Framework for an Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security between the two institutions, to work towards conflict prevention in Africa.

Our commitment to silencing the guns in Africa by 2020 must take into account structural vulnerabilities, such as poverty and unemployment. Our coordinated efforts must take security and development concerns into account and provide young people in particular with alternatives to crime and illegal arms-related activities. We must also consider the need to further include women in our approach to security and development issues.

To conclude, I make an urgent appeal to the international community, including the Security Council, to support the African Union's Silencing the Guns initiative — an expression of the readiness of its member States to work towards the establishment of peace, security and development in Africa. Côte d'Ivoire will certainly play its part.

Mr. Djani (Indonesia): First of all, I would once again like to welcome you, Sir, as well as the State Secretary of the Federal Foreign Office of Germany, to the Chamber. I wish to convey our sincere appreciation to you for convening this very important meeting, as well as to congratulate you and your delegation on promoting the very important and historic resolution 2457 (2019) that we have just adopted. I do believe that this is an important resolution of the Security Council.

I would also like to thank the briefers for their presentations. Ms. Rosemary DiCarlo, Mr. Ramtane Lamamra of the African Union and, of course, Mr. Vasu Gounden have given us a prognosis of the situation on the ground, which I must say is an eye-opening reality.

The commitment of African countries to silencing the guns by 2020 is truly an important initiative, for armed conflicts in Africa have had great costs. Ten of

thousands of lives have been lost; 15 per cent of the gross domestic product is estimated to be lost annually; over 5 million people have been forcibly driven from their home countries; and armed conflict has also left millions of others internally displaced and in dire need of humanitarian assistance.

Now, the importance of this meeting goes beyond realizing a peaceful and conflict-free Africa. It is also important to promote sustainable development in the region — not only Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16.4 in particular, but the SDGs as a whole. Without peace there can be no development, and without development there can be no peace. It is therefore high time that African countries set the goal of a conflict-free Africa through this initiative and its road map. Allow me to underline some pertinent points in this regard.

First, combating the illicit flow of arms and ammunition is imperative, as illicit arms contribute significantly to the exacerbation of conflicts. Enhanced capacity in the areas of national legislation, law enforcement and judicial capacity is important. The international community must support the efforts of African countries in this regard. The capacity to safeguard national stockpiles of weapons should also be improved. Cooperation within the region is crucial. The joint management of borders, including through border security measures and information-sharing, needs to be strengthened.

Secondly, combating terrorism and transnational organized crime is also key. Terrorist activities have become a major security threat in Africa and the surge of terror attacks across Africa, both in number and in sophistication, has led to the loss of lives, undermined governance and institution-building, and torn apart the fabric of society. These terrorist activities are often closely related to other transnational organized crimes, including the illicit trafficking of drugs, humans and natural resources and maritime piracy. It is therefore crucial to combat terrorism, including by eliminating illegal activities that contribute to the funding of terrorist groups. Indonesia welcomes the leadership taken by African countries to spearhead joint efforts to combat terrorism. The Multinational Joint Task Force and the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel are two commendable examples.

To sustain such initiatives, support from the international community is needed, including

in capacity-building and predictable funding. Strengthening national and local institutions on conflict prevention is also an important factor. Regarding that subpoint, it is important to address the root causes and drivers of conflict. Indeed, it is not only guns that need silencing. Poverty, economic gaps and social inequality also require a response in order to reduce the occurrence of conflict and prevent the relapse into violence. Social cohesion and inclusion must be fostered. Indonesia therefore supports the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals in Africa, as well as Agenda 2063.

It is also important to build resilient communities, strengthen democratic and judicial institutions, include all sectors in socioeconomic development and promote the participation of civil society, women and youth. We in Indonesia stand ready to contribute to that effort, and we are pleased that the majority of beneficiaries of our South-South and triangular cooperation programmes are African countries. We also continuously strengthen economic ties, among others, through the Indonesia-Africa Forum, the Indonesia-Africa Infrastructure Forum, as well as other relevant forums. Our ties with Africa are centuries old. We also engaged Africa through the Bandung Asia-Africa Conference of 1955, and we will continue to do so in future.

Finally, I would like to commend the convening of this meeting under the agenda item “Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations in maintaining international peace and security”. Indeed, the role of regional and subregional organizations is crucial to ensuring the success of the Silencing the Guns in Africa by 2020 initiative. My delegation has continuously stated the fact that Africa knows what it is best for Africa. Indonesia can relate to this approach. In our region, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations has managed to transform a region formerly prone to conflict into a region of peace and progress.

While silencing the guns in Africa is not an easy task, it is not an impossible one. It is within our reach so long as all stakeholders join forces to support the initiative and the African Union Master Roadmap of Practical Steps to Silence the Guns in Africa by the Year 2020. We therefore call for enhanced partnership between the United Nations and the African Union, including through strategic dialogue and exchange of views, capacity-building and analysis, to contribute to the Silencing the Guns initiative.

I wish to conclude by underlining that we need to aim for the sky to reach the ceiling. While silencing the guns in Africa by 2020 is a noble and essential aim, it must be pursued with practical and measurable steps. We should aim to get rid of the guns and not only provide silencers so that the sound of the gun is not heard. All stakeholders should take part in this important initiative, to save the upcoming generations from the scourge of war. I just want to underline what Mr. Vasu Gounden mentioned. Africa does not produce guns; the guns come from abroad. Therefore, this is not only an African problem; it is a problem for us all. I would like to conclude by quoting an old and wise proverb from Uganda: “When there is peace in the country, the chief does not need shields.” In the same light, if there is peace and development in Africa, the guns will be silent forever.

Mr. Cohen (United States of America): I thank Ms. DiCarlo, Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs; Mr. Lamamra, African Union (AU) High Representative for Silencing the Guns in Africa; and Mr. Gounden, Executive Director of the African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes, for their briefings today.

Today’s debate and vote on resolution 2457 (2019), supporting the AU Silencing the Guns by 2020 initiative, is intended to advance the goal of creating an African continent that is free of conflict. As we have stated before, the goal of a conflict-free Africa is ambitious and worthy, but it will not be easy to implement. Nevertheless, the resolution and gatherings like today’s open debate demonstrate the willingness of the African Union and its member States, as well as the broader international community, to take on the challenge.

The factors contributing to violence in Africa are complex. Poor governance, corruption and underdevelopment create fragility that feeds cycles of conflict. Additionally, poor management of natural resources can contribute to the problem. The proper management of natural resource endowments should bring prosperity and social development; but in too many countries natural resource wealth does not translate into improved livelihoods for citizens but feeds corruption, violence and conflict.

As most other speakers have also noted, the trafficking in and circulation and use of small arms and light weapons remain key drivers of conflict in Africa and are responsible for a majority of deaths in conflicts.

Small arms are illicitly acquired through various means, including diversion from national stockpiles, attacks on military posts and trafficking and sales by networks willing to sell weapons to non-State actors. Those activities often violate United Nations arms embargoes or contravene United Nations sanctions regimes. Corrupt officials who turn a blind eye to the pilfering of unsecured weapon stockpiles also facilitate the smuggling of arms.

Weak criminal justice systems, weak border and maritime controls, inadequate physical security and poor stockpile management further exacerbate the problem. These are just a few of the many factors that propagate conflict in Africa today. Today we must ask ourselves what actions we can take to combat those drivers of violence.

First, we can strengthen existing mechanisms to anticipate the outbreak of conflict, whatever the cause, and support mediation and prevention efforts. Empowering the continental early warning system by giving additional political weight to its analytical findings and endorsing diplomatic responses that address potential crises in their infancy are two critically important examples. Taking action as a result of the warning systems is often politically difficult but can be key to reducing the potential for violence.

Secondly, States can partner bilaterally with countries across the continent to address arms control in Africa. The United States is assisting Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda and Uganda to meet their commitments under the Nairobi Protocol. In Somalia, United States programmes bolster the security of Federal Government of Somalia stockpiles against attacks by Al-Shabaab and other armed groups. The United States has also worked to stabilize the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo by destroying excess and poorly secured weapons and ammunition and by improving physical security and stockpile management for the Congolese army and national police. Additionally, the United States funds a multimillion-dollar responsible minerals trade programme aimed at breaking the link between conflict and the mineral trade in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The United States has also consistently supported many objectives of the African Union Agenda 2063. The Agenda includes important goals such as improving access to and the quality of education, investing in infrastructure, protecting the environment

and strengthening democracy and the rule of law. We are concerned, however, by language committing to reducing food imports, which could have a negative impact on food security and may not be consistent with the trade obligations of African members of the World Trade Organization. We hope to hold further discussions with the AU on that issue.

Thirdly, the international community should continue to look for ways to bolster cooperation with the African Union, other regional organizations and individual African States to prevent and mitigate crises, resolve conflicts and prevent mass atrocities and the displacement of populations. Strong African leadership and commitments to addressing the underlying causes of violence will facilitate that cooperation. Today's resolution is a good example of that type of partnership.

Finally and perhaps most importantly, we can expect Governments in Africa to hold each other accountable to provide security to all their citizens, regardless of race and ethnicity and in a way that respects and values human rights. Societies that promote and protect human rights are more resilient. The United States also recognizes the role of women's empowerment and leadership in preventing conflict. It is particularly troubling when armed State security forces repress and abuse citizens, as we have seen recently in countries such as Zimbabwe, where earlier this year State security forces were responsible for at least 13 deaths, 600 victims of violence and torture and at least 600 arbitrary arrests. We call on Governments, including that in Zimbabwe, to hold accountable those State security forces who misuse their positions to commit human rights abuses and violations.

The escalating crisis in the anglophone regions of Cameroon is also of concern. We urge both sides in the north-west and south-west regions of Cameroon to renounce further violence and to allow unfettered access for humanitarian and health-care workers. We call for immediate and broad-based reconciliatory dialogue, without preconditions, between the Government of Cameroon and separatists in the north-west and south-west regions.

In the Sudan, President Omer Al-Bashir has declared a year-long state of emergency and dissolved national and provincial Governments in response to protests calling for his removal from office as a result of months of economic and political crisis. At the same time, the repressive tactics of the Sudanese

security forces, including the use of live fire, arbitrary detention and torture, threaten to further destabilize the Sudan. There is an urgent need for political and economic reform in the Sudan that is fully inclusive and that addresses the legitimate grievances expressed by the protesters.

The United States recognizes that lasting stability, prosperity, independence and security on the African continent are in the national interests of the United States and of the countries represented in this Chamber and around the globe. We will continue to be a close partner of the African Union and its member States in addressing the underlying causes of conflict. With the collective support of the Security Council, we look forward to continuing to work together to silence the guns and end conflict on the African continent.

Mr. Nkosi (South Africa): At the outset, allow me to convey the apologies of our dear sister Ms. Lindiwe Sisulu who, due to other pressing commitments, unfortunately could not join today's special discussion. My delegation wishes to join previous speakers in expressing its profound appreciation to the rotating presidency of the fraternal Republic of Equatorial Guinea for convening this important open debate on silencing the guns in Africa.

We wish to take this opportunity to express our gratitude to Ms. Rosemary DiCarlo, Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs; our dear Ambassador Ramtane Lamamra, African Union (AU) High Representative for Silencing the Guns in Africa; and our compatriot Mr. Gounden, Executive Director of the African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes, for their extremely insightful briefings this morning.

This debate is timely, as it follows immediately upon the successful conclusion of the thirty-second ordinary session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union held in Addis Ababa, where the AU considered issues of utmost importance to the continent, including progress with regards to AU aspirations outlined in Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want.

Since its creation, the United Nations has consistently recognized the valuable contributions of regional and subregional organizations to peace and security. Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations underscores the need to enhance the partnership between the United Nations and regional organizations

in the prevention and peaceful settlement of disputes. The cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations has over the years produced tangible results, as has been seen for example on the African continent with the deployment of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur.

South Africa welcomes the progress that has been made over the years in strengthening the partnership between the United Nations and the AU, including the adoption of the landmark resolutions 1809 (2008) and 2033 (2012), among others. Indeed, this cooperation is strategic for promoting the principle of comparative advantage, complementarity and burden-sharing. It is therefore imperative that the United Nations continue to work closely with the AU and regional organizations to achieve sustainable peace on the African continent.

South Africa has consistently underscored the view that the use of United Nations assessed contributions provides the most reliable, sustainable and predictable means for United Nations-mandated AU peace operations. It was indeed heartening to sit here and listen to the representative of the French Republic indicating that France subscribes to the notion that AU peace operations need to be supported from the regular contributions of the United Nations. We shall work with the French Republic and other delegations to ensure that we fulfil that objective.

Reliable and sustainable funding for the AU has been a persistent challenge for the African Union over the past two decades, with an overreliance on funding from international donors. That has resulted in a subordinate role for Africa in decision-making, particularly in the area of peace and security. In order to address that historical problem, and as part of the recently approved AU institutional reforms aimed at ensuring that the continent achieves greater autonomy, ownership and self-reliance in addressing its peace, security and development challenges, the AU has established the Peace Fund. The Peace Fund is structured around three thematic areas that cover mediation and preventative diplomacy, institutional capacity and peace support operations.

At the recent thirty-second Assembly of the AU Heads of State and Government, it was noted that since 2017, 50 AU member States have contributed to the Peace Fund on the basis of the existing scale of assessments, and that a total amount of \$89 million

has been contributed. That indeed demonstrates the high-level commitment by the AU membership to fully operationalizing the Peace Fund.

Overall, significant progress has been made in recent years to establish peace, security and stability on the African continent, resulting in positive peace dividends and strong and sustainable economic growth and positive development outcomes for many African countries. As has been said and noted by many representatives who spoke before me, we have witnessed a tremendous peaceful transition in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We recently also witnessed peaceful elections in Madagascar. Furthermore, we have witnessed a very historic breakthrough in the Horn of Africa with the rapprochement between Ethiopia and Eritrea and now between Eritrea and Djibouti. We also witnessed the peaceful conclusion of agreements in the Central African Republic and in South Sudan. However, pockets of conflict and instability in a number of countries run the risk of eroding the positive gains made, and in so doing, risking a relapse into conflict in countries that have emerged from conflict.

Through the 2013 solemn declaration marking the fiftieth anniversary of the Organization of African Unity/AU, African leaders renewed their resolve and commitment to tackling the peace and security challenges confronting the continent by adopting the AU Master Roadmap of Practical Steps for Silencing the Guns in Africa by 2020, as part of the flagship projects and programmes of Agenda 2063. Since the adoption of the AU Master Roadmap, the continent has made significant strides to reduce violent and armed conflict, as has already been mentioned. South Africa's approach to peace, security and sustainable development resonates strongly with the aspirational goals adopted by the AU Assembly.

The AU Master Roadmap is indicative of the strong resolve of African leaders to ensure continental ownership and sustainable solutions for Africa's challenges. South Africa believes that it is imperative, therefore, that we accelerate efforts to strengthen and capacitate the African Peace and Security Architecture. My delegation is of the view that the African Peace and Security Architecture should be the central framework through which Chapter VIII engagement with the AU on peace and security matters should take place. All of us, including the Security Council, must gear our efforts towards the effective operationalization of the pillars dealing with conflict prevention, crises and

conflict management, post-conflict reconstruction and development and strategic security issues.

My delegation is confident that the Master Roadmap, as well as its monitoring and evaluation mechanism, will greatly assist us in achieving our goal of a conflict-free Africa. A multidimensional approach that helps to take Africa to an era of peace should be adopted. That approach should include, among other things, promoting inclusive socioeconomic development and resilience, promoting access to resources and economic opportunity, and promoting and entrenching democracy and good governance.

The scale and magnitude of the challenges involved and their intersectionality require not only the availability and allocation of significant resources, but also the establishment of strong, sustainable and vibrant partnerships at the national, regional, continental and international levels. The effective implementation of the Roadmap requires strong regional and continental architecture in which regional economic communities and regional mechanisms will be instrumental to advancing our quest for a united, prosperous and integrated African continent that is free of conflict and underdevelopment. South Africa supports ever-closer cooperation between the AU and the United Nations in that area through the efforts of the AU Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development Framework and the United Nations Peacebuilding Commission.

In conclusion, South Africa reiterates its belief that an Africa free of war and conflicts and at peace with itself is critical to continental efforts to advance the achievement of both the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the African Union Agenda 2063. We therefore encourage the Security Council and the broader international community to support our continent to achieve those vital development objectives.

My delegation expresses its utmost appreciation to the delegation of Equatorial Guinea for its inspirational leadership, which has resulted in the unanimous adoption of resolution 2457 (2019) on silencing the guns in Africa. We believe that the adoption by the Council of this resolution is yet another step forward that should move us closer towards ensuring that Africa is at peace with itself. The momentum towards silencing the guns is indeed unstoppable.

Mr. Hickey (United Kingdom): I would like to thank our briefers of today — Ms. DiCarlo, Under-

Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs; Mr. Lamamra, African Union High Representative for Silencing the Guns in Africa; and Mr. Vasu Gounden — for their valuable insights. The United Kingdom warmly welcomes Equatorial Guinea's initiative to schedule a high-level debate on this important issue.

I was particularly struck by Mr. Gounden's thought-provoking briefing. I very much agree with him that we all need to take action to tackle good governance and other structural causes of conflict if we are to turn this aspiration into reality. I was also struck by the comments of my United States colleague, who focused on a number of country-specific issues. I also agree with him that we need to prioritize those country-specific issues — whether it is Zimbabwe, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Sudan or Cameroon — if we are to move towards this ambitious goal.

The United Kingdom believes that it is vital that we translate the noble goal of silencing the guns into concrete initiatives that will make a tangible difference in the lives of ordinary people across Africa. With that in mind, I would like to highlight four priorities to follow up on.

The first is strong and effective partnerships. Those are crucial in ensuring that the sum of our efforts is greater than its parts. The United Kingdom is committed to our strategic partnership with the African Union to support peace, stability and development. In doing, so we will continue to take a holistic approach, recognizing that there is a mutually reinforcing link between security and prosperity. We will also continue to support efforts to strengthen and deepen the partnership between the Council and African regional and subregional organizations.

As the Secretary-General sets out in his sustaining peace agenda, effective early warning and conflict prevention mechanisms require close cooperation among all relevant stakeholders. Together, we can and should scan the horizon for signs of emerging conflicts and crises in Africa, sharing our insights and analysis, and we should collaborate to take meaningful action at an early stage whenever opportunities arise to de-escalate violence and advance political solutions.

Secondly — and a number of Council members have referred to this today — we should give our full backing to effective preventative diplomacy, good offices and mediation as indispensable elements of

regional and subregional efforts to promote peace and stability. The value of this work has been demonstrated in the African context, for example in the efforts of the Economic Community of West African States to enable a peaceful transition of power in The Gambia in 2017, or the support of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development for the revitalization of the peace process in South Sudan. That is why the United Kingdom is partnering with the African Union to support the development of continental early warning capabilities in order to enhance preventative diplomacy efforts.

Thirdly, as the representatives of Germany and Poland have already highlighted today, and as the Silencing the Guns by 2020 initiative rightly recognizes, strengthening women's participation is another vital element of effective conflict prevention and resolution. That is reflected in the United Kingdom's current national action plan on women and peace and security, which includes a commitment to support the implementation of national action plans in a range of partner countries, including Nigeria, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and South Sudan. The United Kingdom is also a proud member of the Friends of FemWise group, supporting the African Union's FemWise initiative to strengthen the network of African women involved in conflict prevention and mediation. We also attach great importance to the role of civil society and community initiatives to advance women's participation in conflict prevention and peacemaking. The example of Liberian Nobel Peace Prize laureate Leymah Gbowee and her fellow activists shows that when women campaign for peace at the grass-roots level, their activism can have a truly catalytic effect.

Finally, and as many other speakers have mentioned this morning, peacemaking and peacebuilding efforts should be complemented by a robust approach to countering the proliferation of weapons, especially small arms and light weapons. Small arms and light weapons have a role to play in ensuring legitimate defence and security, but their misuse costs hundreds of thousands of lives every year, undermines security and development, and fuels conflict, crime and terrorism. That cannot be achieved without the effective functioning of peace and security institutions at the national level, but it also relies on strong cross-border and regional cooperation. The United Kingdom looks forward to continuing to work with the African Union on improving management of small arms and light weapons and ammunition in Africa. That should support and complement existing

work through the United Nations, as well as other arms control treaties, conventions and regimes, including the Arms Trade Treaty. We urge all States in the region that have not yet done so to become party to the relevant international arms control instruments, demonstrating their commitment to countering the proliferation of illicit weapons.

The United Kingdom will remain a staunch supporter of African initiatives to foster peace and security across the African continent. We look forward to hearing from other Member States in the course of today's debate about efforts in hand to deliver progress against the road map for silencing the guns to 2020 and beyond.

Mrs. Van Vlierberge (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): First of all, we would like to thank Equatorial Guinea for organizing today's open debate. We would also like to thank the Under-Secretary-General, the African Union High Representative, and the founder and Executive Director of the African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes for their insightful briefings this morning.

Today's open debate on the African Union's Silence the Guns in Africa by 2020 initiative is an excellent opportunity to reflect on the deepening of the strategic partnership between the United Nations and the African Union. Today, I would like to focus on three main messages.

First, Belgium welcomes this important initiative. It demonstrates, once again, the importance of African leadership and ownership on peace and security issues on the continent. It also demonstrates how strong the partnership between the African Union and the United Nations is. We share the same challenges and we have a collective duty to provide answers.

Secondly, we must certainly continue to reflect on the issue, but we must first and foremost act in the field. The ambition of the initiative to silence the weapons by 2020 reminds us of the magnitude of the challenges on the ground. At the international level, we must redouble our efforts to improve the regulation of the international trade in conventional weapons and to prevent and combat illicit trafficking in weapons. We must also seek better coordination between the various regional and international arms-control systems and mechanisms. At the same time, at the national level, we must also ensure that we ratify and implement existing instruments, such as the Arms Trade Treaty.

Finally, for Belgium, and for many colleagues who have spoken before me, it is essential to maintain a holistic approach to this initiative. This initiative aims first and foremost to create an African continent free of armed conflict. But it also makes it possible to deepen the reflection on the continent's development and on its further integration. In this context, this initiative must pay attention to the deep roots of conflicts, be they political, economic or linked to the violation of human rights.

While the political challenges, including the importance of good governance, participation and inclusion are well known, the economic challenges are less so. In this context, Belgium calls for particular attention to be paid to the problem of the exploitation, trafficking and illegal trade in natural resources, particularly conflict minerals, such as tin, the 3T, gold, diamonds, coal and wildlife. These have contributed to the outbreak, intensification and continuation of many armed conflicts. That is why we encourage organized, transparent and sustainable management of natural resources, including through the promotion of responsible practices throughout the chain of supply.

This initiative must also recognize the crucial role of women and young people. Belgium considers it particularly important to strengthen access to justice for women in conflict or post-conflict situations, as well as to ensure adequate reparations for victims. We must also recognize the important and positive contribution of young people in conflict prevention and resolution and in post-conflict situations.

Mr. Meza-Cuadra (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to thank Equatorial Guinea for convening today's meeting, and express gratitude to Ms. Rosemary DiCarlo, Mr. Ramtane Lamamra and Mr. Vasu Gounden for their briefings. We also welcome the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Equatorial Guinea to this important debate, in which we are recognizing the importance and significance of the African Union Silence the Guns in Africa by 2020 initiative. We also welcome resolution 2457 (2019) and the role played by Equatorial Guinea in its important adoption.

We believe that this common effort by African countries is a symbol of the commitment, will, responsibility and unity of African peoples and leaders around the ambitious goal of building a conflict-free continent as an essential basis for its development. We support this initiative which, in line with Agenda 2063

of the African Union and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, seeks to build a stable, peaceful and prosperous continent. In particular, we recognize the importance in this context of SDG 16, which commits us to promoting the rule of law and strengthening institutions with a view to achieving peaceful and inclusive societies.

We consider it positive that the progress achieved in many countries in this region can be shared through good practices and lessons learned with those who continue to face serious challenges and threats driven or exacerbated by acts of violence by armed groups, illicit arms trafficking, the fight for illegal control of natural resources, interethnic violence and the limited presence of the State. In this regard, we wish to stress in particular the importance of eradicating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, which contributes significantly to exacerbating insecurity and violence in various parts of Africa. Regional cooperation and cooperation between neighbouring States are essential for strengthening the intelligence work and border controls required to confront this scourge. We stress the need to fully implement existing international instruments in this area, including the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, and the Arms Trade Treaty.

In addition, in order to achieve a conflict free zone, it is necessary to address the root causes thereof, including poverty, inequality, climate change and weak institutions, applying a multidimensional approach that privileges the strengthening of capacities and institutions established to promote human rights, the rule of law and sustainable development. In this regard, the need to promote education and create employment opportunities for women, young people and children. To this end, the simultaneous implementation of the African Peace and Security Architecture and the African Governance Architecture, as well as the road map to silence weapons by 2020, will be vital.

It must be stressed that this initiative must have the support of the international community as a whole. It will be necessary to promote greater cooperation and synergies between the African Union and the United Nations system, especially joint work between the Security Council and the Peace and Security Council of the African Union, particularly in peacebuilding processes, as well as with other regional and subregional

organizations, in accordance with resolution 2320 (2016).

As was mentioned by the Secretary-General when he took part in the recent Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the African Union, the relationship between that organization and the United Nations, while having been significantly strengthened in recent years, is capable of generating an even closer and more efficient alliance. The resolution that we have just adopted is a sign of the Security Council's firm commitment to this goal.

Mr. Wu Haitao (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China welcomes His Excellency Mr. Simeon Oyono Esono Angue, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Equatorial Guinea, who is presiding over today's meeting. I also thank Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo, the African Union High Representative for Silencing the Guns in Africa, Mr. Lamamra, and Mr. Gounden for their briefings.

Home to the largest number of developing countries, Africa is also the most dynamic continent, with the greatest development potential in the world today. Peace and stability in Africa is key to security and development around the world.

Over the past few years, the African Union (AU) and African countries have been vigorously implementing Agenda 2063 and the Silencing the Guns in Africa by 2020 initiative, at the same time as the continent's peace and security situation has steadily improved. At the thirty-second AU Summit, held recently, a number of decisions were adopted in such areas as establishing the African free trade zone and strengthening the African Union Peace Fund, which fully demonstrates the resolve of the AU and African countries to work together for self-empowerment in order to resolve African issues through African-led processes. China applauds those efforts.

However, the situation remains fragile in some regions of Africa, where traditional security threats are intertwined with non-traditional ones and other prominent issues persist, such as intercommunal tensions, terrorism, transnational organized crime, high levels of poverty and unemployment and refugee crises. In addition, regional collective security mechanisms are underfunded and face other constraints. Those are the ongoing challenges to achieving the goal of silencing the guns in Africa by 2020. In that context, China wishes to highlight the following three points.

First, United Nations-African Union cooperation must be strengthened. Recent years have seen a deepening of the United Nations-AU partnership, following the signing of the Joint United Nations-African Union Framework for Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security and intensified cooperation in jointly tackling issues of regional peace and development. The United Nations should fully leverage its own strength and provide greater assistance to Africa. In the spirit of the Joint Framework, the two organizations should collaborate more closely on conflict prevention and mediation in the pursuit of lasting peace by addressing the root causes of conflict, among other things.

The Security Council and the AU Peace and Security Council should further enhance their communication and coordination with one another. The Security Council has just unanimously adopted resolution 2457 (2019), on silencing the guns in Africa, which China welcomes. That resolution can help the United Nations lend greater support to the AU's Silencing the Guns by 2020 initiative and bring the United Nations and AU closer together in their joint endeavours.

Secondly, we should continue to support Africa's capacity-building in the areas of peace and security. The AU's peace and security operations are becoming a critical means of responding to crises in the continent and complementing United Nations peacekeeping operations in important ways. The United Nations should actively assist the AU and other regional and subregional organizations in bolstering their mission planning and management capacities in their good offices, peacekeeping and disarmament tasks, including by supporting African countries in resolving African issues the African way. China supports the United Nations by providing sustainable and predictable financial support to AU peace and security operations and by working with the AU to overcome funding issues concerning their peace and security operations.

Thirdly, we must scale up assistance to Africa for its economic and social development so as to eradicate the root causes of conflict. International partners should increase their contributions in priority areas, such as agriculture, health care, education, economic development and trade, connectivity and other infrastructure sectors, and should lend effective support to African countries in the region to help them achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, reduce poverty, develop their economies and improve livelihoods. It will also increase the capacity of

African countries to achieve sustainable economic and social development.

The international community must also pay close attention to such issues as youth, women and children, as well as refugees and employment in Africa. The issue of internally displaced persons was included in the theme of the 2019 AU Summit. The international community should provide humanitarian assistance in line with the needs of the AU and African countries. The United Nations should provide constructive assistance by fully utilizing the United Nations Development Programme, the Peacebuilding Commission and other mechanisms.

From the outset, China has supported peace, security, prosperity and development of African countries and peoples. China has adhered to President Xi Jinping's proposals on what should guide our relations with Africa — the principles of sincerity, practical results, affinity and good faith, combined with the values of friendship, justice and shared interests. We have stayed actively engaged in matters pertaining to Africa's peace and security.

China announced the establishment of the China-United Nations Peace and Development Fund in 2015, which covers a 10-year period and amounts to \$1 billion. Thanks to China's active efforts, the Fund has focused on Africa's peace and development and has provided financial support to many projects related to the Silencing the Guns by 2020 initiative.

At the Beijing Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation held in September, Chinese and African leaders unanimously adopted the Beijing Declaration — Toward an Even Stronger China-Africa Community With a Shared Future, in which Sino-African peace and security cooperation is defined as one of the eight cooperation priorities and in which China pledges, in no uncertain terms, its continued support for the Silencing the Guns by 2020 initiative.

In addition, China will establish a China-Africa peace and security cooperation fund to encourage greater Sino-African cooperation on peace, security, peacekeeping, sustaining peace and the maintenance of stability. China is ready to continue playing a constructive role in promoting peace, stability and development in Africa.

Mr. Almunayekh (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): I welcome you, Mr. President, as you preside over our meeting today. I would also like to thank the

briefers — Ms. DiCarlo, Mr. Lamamra and Mr. Gounden. I thank them for their detailed and valuable briefings, which included a wealth of information on various aspects of the Silencing the Guns in Africa by 2020 initiative, the African Union Master Roadmap of Practical Steps to Silence the Guns in Africa by 2020 and the challenges and obstacles that could prevent the African continent from implementing that initiative by the target date.

The concerns and aspirations of the African continent are on the agenda today — not only in the Security Council but throughout all United Nations organs and specialized agencies in Africa. That reflects the importance of the African continent for the international community and international organizations.

The African Union (AU) has achieved many accomplishments in its efforts to resolve a number of African issues, which enables the United Nations to build upon them. The cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union, under Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations, is an exceptional and commendable development. If we review the various aspects and kinds of cooperation we have seen in recent months, we will note that there is substantial progress, such as the signing of joint frameworks for sustainable peace and development, as well as holding annual meetings between both organizations at the highest levels, which has been institutionalized, in addition to the Joint Statement on Support for United Nations Peacekeeping Operations and increased cooperation between the Security Council and the AU Peace and Security Council. The two Councils hold annual meetings, and additional meetings are held between the AU Peace and Security Council and the Peacebuilding Commission. Recently, the AU Commission and the United Nations Secretariat also held for the first time a dialogue on human rights.

We call for the preservation of that momentum, which led to many gains, and for building upon them, especially the initiative related to maintain peace in order to enable peace missions to be more efficient, better equipped, safest and stronger. Undoubtedly, that requires robust Security Council mandates and sustainable and predictable funding. The positive developments that we have seen in the Security Council on a number of agenda items well exemplify the outcome of constructive cooperation between the two organizations.

It is important to pool efforts in responding to the challenges that threaten peace and security through preventive diplomacy and mediation as a first line of defence to prevent the outbreak of conflicts, for which there are several examples. In that regard, the best way by which to silence the guns in a lasting manner lies in building sustainable peace. There is no peace amid a turbulent climate, and no prevention of conflicts without working on establishing the foundations of peace, which can be done only through establishing societies whereby all citizens can effectively participate in building those foundations, achieve lasting peace and implement the Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda. It is therefore necessary to resolve the root causes of conflicts before they erupt.

The African Union's Agenda 2063 envisages a number of factors that would prevent the emergence of conflicts as well as resolving them. That would require establishing a culture of peace and tolerance through educating children and young people about peace, the principles of good governance, democracy, human rights, the rule of law, access to justice and addressing the root causes of interrelated and complex differences.

Development — together with peace, security and human rights — is one of the main pillars of the United Nations for achieving lasting peace. Accordingly, the State of Kuwait has attached great importance to that pillar in partnership with all African States, based on its conviction that Africa is of strategic importance for the international community, especially the Arab world. As was mentioned a while ago, peace and security in Africa are imperative to the international community. The State of Kuwait, as an observer State in the African Union, will continue to support development in Africa, whether at the governmental or grass-roots level or through the institutions linked to the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development. We believe that Africa is an important region with regard to our activities.

In conclusion, the State of Kuwait relies on the United Nations and its relevant organs in promoting the potential of African countries to implement the Silencing the Guns by 2020 initiative and Agenda 2063 in cooperation with donor countries. We were pleased to work with all Council members on resolution 2457 (2019), related to silencing the guns in Africa. We are also pleased to sponsor and implement that resolution, as well as to reap its benefits in the near future.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): May I remind all speakers to limit their statements to no more than four minutes in order to enable the Council to carry out its work expeditiously. Delegations with lengthy statements are kindly requested to circulate their texts in writing and to deliver a condensed version when speaking in the Chamber.

I wish to inform all concerned that we will be carrying on this open debate right through the lunch hour, as we have a large number of speakers.

I now give the floor to the representative of Guatemala.

Mr. García Sáenz (Guatemala) (*spoke in Spanish*): Guatemala thanks the delegation of Equatorial Guinea, in its capacity as President of the Security Council, for convening this open debate, which provides us with an opportunity to exchange views on an issue as important as cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations to silence the guns in Africa.

We are also grateful for the concept note (S/2019/169, annex) provided for this debate, with which we fully agree, as it states, in paragraph 1, that this initiative is intended to

“achieve the goal of a conflict-free Africa, to make peace a reality for all our people and to rid the continent of wars, civil conflicts, human rights violations, humanitarian disasters and violent conflicts, and to prevent genocide”.

We recognize that, over the past two decades, the African Union and its regional mechanisms have ramped up their capacities to address crisis situations and conflicts on the continent, while contributing to the creation of conditions that are conducive to the growth and development of their populations, with the ultimate goal of achieving peace in the region. Despite progress pertaining to conflict prevention and their management and settlement, however, Africa continues to face various crises that jeopardize human, national and regional security. At the same time, it is appropriate to mention that the region to which my country belongs also faces the same challenges.

Moreover, the proliferation of small arms and light weapons sets the stage for the commission of mass atrocity crimes. The consequences of the devastating impact of the illicit transfer of small arms and light weapons is a problem that is severely affecting the

African continent and is a global phenomenon. Consequently, it requires international and multilateral responses and commitments — that is to say, a strong and determined resolve.

Every day throughout the world, small arms and light weapons and their proliferation and illicit trafficking result in the deaths of hundreds of people, fuel conflict and exacerbate violence. Such trade is unscrupulous and unethical, which is why the Organization should devote efforts to its strict regulation. The manufacture of such weapons and their ammunition shows no signs of decreasing. It is linked to illicit markets and contributes to drug trafficking, organized crime and armed conflicts, thereby undermining security and standing in the way of creating an appropriate environment in which human, economic and sustainable development is fostered.

Guatemala supports initiatives that seek comprehensive and sustainable solutions to the problems afflicting our peoples, in particular with regard to effectively addressing current and emerging threats to international peace and security. Although that is the primary obligation of our Governments, we must also recognize that we are stronger when we work together and multilaterally, so that solutions are sought based on experiences and good practices in the implementation of the various relevant international instruments.

We therefore urge States that have not yet done so to accede to the Arms Trade Treaty, while recalling that it is a legally binding instrument that establishes a common regime for the international trade in conventional arms, as well as seeks to reduce the illicit proliferation of small arms and light weapons. It is therefore necessary to reduce the human suffering caused by illegal and irresponsible transfer of such weapons.

The Arms Trade Treaty contributes to improving regional security and stability, as well as promoting accountability by establishing better controls on the transfer of conventional arms. In addition to that Treaty, the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects is also a suitable platform for the exchange of capabilities, assistance and cooperation for the improvement of national laws on small arms and their import and export controls, as well as the proper management of stockpiles.

Guatemala firmly believes that peace and development go hand in hand. We therefore emphasize

the need to generate synergies linking instruments related to peace and security with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which represents the broadest consensus at the international level for achieving peaceful and inclusive societies.

In conclusion, I would like to recall that armed violence is an evil that affects our entire society, and vulnerable groups are the most affected — especially women, young people and children who are seeking a better future. That is why it is in our hands and our responsibility to take measures to ease the suffering of our peoples, thereby demonstrating our firm willingness to safeguard multilateralism and maintain peace.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Japan.

Mr. Kawamura (Japan): I thank you, Sir, for convening today's important meeting. We commend your leadership on the issue. We welcome the adoption earlier today of resolution 2457 (2019), which we co-sponsored. Let me also express my gratitude to the briefers for their insightful remarks.

The goal of silencing the guns in Africa by 2020 is ambitious and worthy. As Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo said in her briefing, it demands that we address the drivers and root causes of conflict and fragility in a holistic manner. With that in mind, my remarks today will focus on three issues — small arms, prevention and institution-building.

First, we must tackle the guns themselves. Small arms and light weapons are the greatest common factor among various types of security threats on the African continent. Such weapons are a force multiplier of instability that exacerbate and prolong the conflict in whatever arena they enter.

In that regard, Japan welcomes the newly established funding mechanism — the Saving Lives Entity, otherwise known as SALIENT, launched under the Secretary-General's disarmament agenda. Small arms issues are cross-cutting and affect the entire spectrum of conflict resolution. Japan believes that that approach, which enables the strengthening of institutional capacities for controlling small arms, will pave the way for a more coherent United Nations response. For that reason, Japan recently decided — and today announced — that we will disburse \$2 million to SALIENT.

Japan has also decided to provide more than half a million dollars to the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa (UNREC) in Lomé. Small arms and light weapons are borderless, and regional cooperation is imperative in combating their use. We look forward to seeing UNREC enhance the capacities of disarmament institutions in Africa through its coordination with regional partners.

In addition, most of the United Nations peacekeeping operations in Africa already have mandates associated with small arms. It would be useful for the United Nations and the African Union (AU) to look at the issue horizontally and synergize their efforts.

Secondly, just managing small arms is not enough. The United Nations and the AU need to boost prevention efforts. It is better to prevent a gun from being fired in the first place than to have to silence one that is already firing. Both the United Nations and the AU have preventive tools at their disposal, ranging from early warning and mediation to peacebuilding, which can and should complement each other in the quest for political solutions. Japan believes that a greater emphasis on prevention on the part of the Council and the AU Peace and Security Council will have a powerful impact on silencing the guns. We also highlight the role of the Peacebuilding Commission in that regard.

The recent peace agreement in the Central African Republic is a great example of the collaborative mediation efforts by the United Nations, the AU and subregional organizations. Japan contributed financially to the African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation for the Central African Republic through the AU Peace Fund.

Finally, strengthening institutional capacity is crucial. The foundation for sustaining peace is built on institutions that serve people. That is why Japan strongly emphasizes institution-building in Africa. We believe that the United Nations and the AU can leverage their strategic partnership to strengthen institutional capacity-building in Africa towards the goal of silencing the guns. Japan will do its part in promoting it, including at the upcoming seventh Tokyo International Conference on African Development in August.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Mexico.

Mr. Sandoval Mendiola (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): We thank Equatorial Guinea for convening

today's open debate on a subject that is very relevant to international security.

Conventional weapons account for the largest number of deaths and victims throughout the world and perpetuate armed conflicts, while hindering security, development and sustainable peace. All Member States have a responsibility to promote societies free of armed violence, because the uncontrolled proliferation of conventional weapons in various regions of the world poses a threat to international peace and security.

Regrettably, Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean absorb the greatest human cost of this problem, although we are not weapons manufacturers. Mexico is therefore particularly concerned about the irresponsible and uncontrolled arms trade, which fosters illicit trafficking across borders and cause weapons to end up in the hands of criminals.

In order to meet the challenge, it is essential to recognize that producers, exporters, intermediaries and recipients of weapons all have a shared responsibility. Cooperation and multidimensional efforts at the subregional, regional and global levels must be the vehicle that enables us to overcome the challenge, supported by full compliance with, and the proper implementation of, the arms embargoes imposed by the Council, as well as the promotion and implementation of effective programmes and mandates on the collection and registration of weapons.

Mexico welcomes the fact that the African Union has developed a vision and a continental strategy to put an end to armed violence and control the trade and trafficking in weapons in an effort to spur development. We in Latin America and the Caribbean have also promoted and implemented ambitious regional and hemispheric agreements.

For example, under the chairmanship of Mexico, the Conference of the States Parties to the Inter-American Convention against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives, and Other Related Materials held last year agreed on an innovative approach to action for its implementation and synergies with other international instruments and mechanisms in order to align national and regional efforts with the overall achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

A decisive fight against arms trafficking and diversion must be accompanied by strategies that make

development and sustainable peace the top priorities for States. The achievement of Agenda 2030 is particularly visible and relevant to the issue, not only as regards target 16.4 of the Sustainable Development Goals, on reducing illicit arms flows and combating organized crime, but also because the reduction of violence is imperative to achieving sustainable development, complying with Agenda 2030 and saving thousands of lives. We must forge inclusive societies with a healthy social fabric. Many of our societies are plagued by firearms, which groups use as tools to threaten the rule of law and the kind of society we all want.

Mexico urges all members to take full advantage of the proper implementation of the multilateral instruments at our disposal in order to achieve the universality and implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty and revitalize the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects for the purpose of holding comprehensive discussions on the issue and the complete cycle of weapons, including the indivisibility of the equal and proportional treatment of ammunition.

Within the framework of that discussion, we reiterate our call not to combine actions taken in response to organized crime with actions taken in response to the fight against terrorism, as both phenomena require dedicated and effective cooperation efforts that are bound to differ because the two issues are different in nature.

Mexico reiterates its support for the disarmament agenda proposed by the Secretary-General. Disarmament is not an end in itself but a means, or vehicle, to achieve peace, save humankind, save lives and save future generations, as proposed by the Secretary-General. We note the implementation of the multiparty voluntary fund to combat illicit arms trafficking and the strategy aimed at young people as agents for change in their communities.

Similarly, the concrete actions being taken in different regions are very important — the positive role of the regional disarmament centres stands out. As far as the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean is concerned, its activity is indispensable for the efforts of countries in my region, such as Mexico, which has benefited from various activities, studies and diagnostics for the implementation of public policies.

Economic resources that are diverted from sustainable development to purchase weapons could undoubtedly help our societies in a more humane and integrated way. Sustainable peace is the collective desire of the United Nations. Let us silence the guns in Africa — but also in other regions that suffer from armed violence and conflicts that are exacerbated by the proliferation of conventional weapons.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Benin.

Mr. Do Rego (Benin) (*spoke in French*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Group of African States.

At the outset, allow me to welcome to you to New York again, Mr. Foreign Minister, and to thank the presidency of Equatorial Guinea for organizing this important open debate on the Silencing the Guns by 2020 initiative. The Group thanks Under-Secretary-General Rosemary DiCarlo and Mr. Vasu Gounden for their briefings on that extremely important subject. I would especially like to commend Mr. Ramtane Lamamra, African Union High Representative for Silencing the Guns in Africa by 2020, for his tireless efforts in the service of peace and stability on our continent.

The African Group deeply appreciates the efforts made by the three African members of the Security Council, under the coordination of the President of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea, to carry forward the initiative to hold this open debate of the Security Council to consider resolution 2457 (2019) on silencing the guns in Africa. This debate demonstrates the United Nations commitment to the promotion of peace on our continent. In that regard, I would like to congratulate all the members on the unanimous adoption of today's resolution, which gives new impetus to the strategic partnership between the United Nations and the African Union in the area of peace and security.

The Group remains deeply concerned about the illicit trade, transfer and circulation of small arms and light weapons, as well as their excessive accumulation and uncontrolled proliferation in many parts of the world, particularly in Africa, due to their humanitarian and socioeconomic consequences. Africa continues to be at the forefront of the regions most affected by the illicit trade and transfer of small arms and light weapons, which are mainly manufactured outside the continent but acquired and used by unauthorized actors and illegal armed groups on the continent.

The African Group therefore sees the present meeting as a renewed opportunity for the international community to redouble its efforts to curb the phenomenon of the illicit flows of small arms during conflicts in order to create an environment that is conducive to peace, security and socioeconomic development. It is important to note that promoting the free and inclusive participation of States in global efforts to combat the illicit flow of weapons, particularly in Africa, will facilitate the effective implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the African Union's Agenda 2063.

In that context, the Group welcomes the Secretary-General's agenda for disarmament, reaffirms the validity and relevance of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, and underlines the importance of its full and effective implementation. We also stress that international assistance and cooperation are an essential aspect of its implementation. In that regard, the African Group welcomes the efforts of Member States and regional organizations to implement the Programme of Action and also calls for the full implementation of the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons in order to enable States to identify in a timely manner and reliably trace small arms and light weapons, thereby preventing their illicit flow.

The African Union's commitment to silencing the guns by 2020 has taken an important step forward in recent months. The Horn of Africa, which is one of the regions of our continent that has unfortunately been home to many conflicts, is delighted today with the rapprochement between Ethiopia and Eritrea — a new impetus that allows us to look to the future with optimism. As a concrete example of the successful exercise to peacefully end crises, I would also like to mention the recent peace agreements reached in South Sudan and the Central African Republic, as well as the peaceful elections held in both Madagascar and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Africa has the most to gain from international law and multilateral institutions. In the 16 years since the establishment of the African Union, we have seen the considerable benefits of our multilateral approach, which has led to the decline in conflicts and the increase in the number of democratic Governments

across the continent. In an international context marked by a tendency to question multilateralism and the international order based on the rule of law, it seems to me important to emphasize that point.

The African Group therefore wishes to highlight the significant work and progress made in the fight against the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons since the adoption of the Bamako Declaration on Small Arms Proliferation in 2000, as well as the Constitutive Act of the African Union; the Protocol relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union in 2002; the Solemn Declaration on a Common African Defence and Security Policy, adopted in Sirte, Libya in 2004; the Nairobi Protocol for the Prevention, Control and Reduction of Small Arms and Light Weapons in the Great Lakes Region and the Horn of Africa; the Southern African Development Community Protocol of 2004; the 2006 Economic Community of West African States Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons, Their Ammunition and Other Related Materials; and the efforts undertaken within the framework of the Community of Sahelo-Saharan States and the Arab Maghreb Union.

With the African Union's Agenda 2063 in mind, our Heads of State and Government launched the Silencing the Guns by 2020 initiative in 2013, alongside other relevant subregional initiatives to address that challenge on the continent. Although some believe that this initiative is too ambitious, we are convinced that the objective set remains achievable with the political will and commitment of all.

The African Group recognizes that the current regional pattern of conflicts on the continent presents new challenges, particularly in the Sahel-Saharan region, the Great Lakes region and a few outbreaks in the Horn of Africa, where the phenomenon of terrorism and cross-border crime threatens to undermine all gains achieved. Moreover, despite the progress made in recent years, the African Group continues to stress that international assistance and cooperation, on a larger scale, remain an essential element in permanently silencing the guns in Africa.

In that regard, the African Group calls on all Member States to strengthen their technical and financial cooperation with developing countries in order to achieve the overall objectives of eradicating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. The

Group believes that those efforts will promote national and regional initiatives and contribute to global efforts.

The African Group welcomes the efforts made by States parties to the Arms Trade Treaty since its entry into force, as well as the holding of the third Conference of States Parties to the Treaty in Tokyo in August 2018. The Group urges the States parties to the Treaty to implement it in a balanced and objective manner, ensuring that the interests of all States, and not only those of the main producing and exporting States, are protected, while avoiding any infringement of the legitimate right of States to meet their defence and security needs, in accordance with the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations.

The full implementation of the Treaty remains achievable with the cooperation of all its parties. The African Group recognizes that arms transfers to unauthorized recipients and illegal armed groups fuel the illicit trade and it urges all States to refrain from such transfers and to prohibit them to any recipient not authorized by a competent national authority of the importing State.

The African Group reaffirms the sovereign right of States to acquire, manufacture, export, import and retain conventional weapons, their components and parts necessary for their legitimate security and defence needs, in accordance with the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations.

The African Group appreciates the efforts of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa, its contribution to disarmament efforts and its assistance to African States in achieving disarmament, peace and security objectives. The African Group stresses the need to strengthen all United Nations regional centres so that they can fully carry out their mandates.

In conclusion, the African Group wishes to reaffirm the crucial importance of political will and transparency in addressing international disarmament and security issues. The Group calls on all stakeholders to work together to strengthen the cause of peace and prosperity in the world.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of India.

Mr. Akbaruddin (India): We thank the delegation of Equatorial Guinea for thoughtfully bringing much-needed focus on an issue that reflects our collective

resolve to work together. We also thank the briefers for their informative submissions.

We join in commending this unique and ambitious effort, for which the whole continent of Africa is committed to working together on the entire spectrum of issues, including on peace and security through the African Union (AU).

India welcomes the approach that provides for a leading role of Africa in addressing African problems, through African solutions. We also believe that this is a work in progress and needs to be supported. On the other hand, the maintenance of international peace and security is one of the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, which also entails the collective responsibility of Member States to extend mutual support for strengthening capacities and capabilities to address threats to international peace and security. Thus, the cooperation of the United Nations with African efforts is a natural progression. I will focus on three issues.

First, the AU is playing a critical role in its contribution to conflict prevention in Africa, with a focus on the prevention of the outbreak, escalation, continuation and recurrence of conflict. The mediation efforts by the AU and the regional and subregional organizations in Africa are showing positive results. We believe that such efforts, based on the interest, consent and commitment of all parties, will lead towards a sustainable and peaceful settlements. We appreciate the measures taken by all stakeholders towards the implementation of the AU Master Roadmap of Practical Steps for Silencing the Guns in Africa by 2020.

Secondly, as the African Union continues to make progress in addressing the resolution of conflicts, the need for peacebuilding and development becomes a priority. We believe that the commitment to support peacebuilding is an imperative for sustainable peace in Africa. While there is a broad consensus at the United Nations to strengthen the work of the Peacebuilding Commission, there is no agreement on increasing its funding to even a 1 per cent level of that of peacekeeping operations annually. Building peace cannot be a voluntary pursuit; it has to be the common objective of all.

For its part, India is a regular contributor to this effort. As part of the traditional South-South solidarity for development cooperation, at the Third India-Africa Forum Summit, India extended concessional

credit worth \$10 billion and doubled scholarships for African students to \$50,000 over a five-year period. India's partnership with Africa is based on a model of cooperation which is responsive to the needs of African countries. It is demand-driven, free of conditions and provided in a non-prescriptive manner.

Thirdly, ever-expanding terror networks have endangered the peace and security of the African region in unprecedented ways. From Boko Haram to Al-Shabaab, these terrorist networks are more and more connected to terrorist networks from all around the world. Our response to terrorist threats remains less than satisfactory. The price of that indifference has been immeasurable. A scaled-up response is required. No easy recipe exists. Scaling up requires working through additional partners, both regional bodies and States. Coalitions and bilateral relationships will be critical for completing key tasks. A strong, effective and coherent response that reflects the international community's collective commitment to defeat the scourge of terrorism is essential, in Africa as elsewhere.

The complex nature of modern conflicts makes it necessary to respond to the changing needs of our times. In the African Union, the United Nations has a willing partner. We hope the adoption of resolution 2457 (2019) today will lead to specific steps in that direction.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Norway.

Ms. Juul (Norway): I speak on behalf of the five Nordic countries: Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Sweden and my own country, Norway.

We applaud the aspirations of the Silencing the Guns by 2020 initiative and Agenda 2063 of the African Union (AU) for a peaceful and secure Africa. We commend the African Union and its member States for their ambition and active engagement. It will enhance our common future and collective security. Even though the conflicts on the African continent have primarily been intra-State conflicts, many have affected regional peace and security.

It is crucial that regional and subregional organizations and mechanisms, such as the Intergovernmental Authority on Development and the Economic Community of West African States, continue to improve the delivery of their mandates and that their capacity is further increased. This should happen in coordination with the African Union.

Ending armed conflict in Africa requires African solutions. We stand ready to support African leadership in this endeavour. We want a more transparent and representative Security Council that better reflects today's global realities. We support an increase in the number of both permanent and non-permanent seats for Africa in this Council. We welcome and support the strengthened partnership between the AU and the United Nations, not least between the AU Peace and Security Council and the Security Council. This includes securing the predictable and sustainable funding of AU operations. The Nordic countries are in favour of combining assessed contributions from the United Nations with funding from the AU. We also call for focused and accountable efforts to ensure protection of human rights and respect for international humanitarian law in all operations.

Achieving peace and stability in Africa requires conflict prevention as well as mediation. We actively support the implementation of the African Peace and Security Architecture, including improved capacity within the AU for preventive diplomacy, mediation and peacebuilding. The Nordic countries are long-term partners for development, addressing root causes and multipliers of conflicts, building stronger institutions through promotion of the African Governance Architecture, mitigating climate change and reducing inequality.

Protection of civilians is a fundamental concern in all our humanitarian efforts. It is also a key priority of Norway's presidency of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Treaty this year.

There can be no sustainable peace without women's full and equal participation. Women's involvement in peace efforts is key to enhancing trust, legitimacy and credibility. Women's participation in preventing and mediating conflicts makes solutions more effective and sustainable. That is why the Nordic countries are staunch supporters of resolution 1325 (2000) and related resolutions on women and peace and security. We will continue to work with such key partners as the Special Envoy of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission on Women, Peace and Security and the Network of African Women in Conflict Prevention and Mediation, FemWise-Africa, to achieve full inclusion. We will continue to be consistent partners, committed to contributing to our collective security and our common future.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I give the floor to the representative of Pakistan.

Mr. Khan (Pakistan): Mr. President, I would like to thank you for presiding over this important meeting. I also wish to thank the briefers for their insightful contributions.

Our world is confronted with unprecedented challenges. Many of the world's regions are witnessing prolonged periods of instability and conflict, growing turmoil, extremist violence and terrorism, and, of course, mass human dislocation and suffering. These challenges are compounded by persistent poverty, unemployment, inequality, water and food scarcity and human rights violations — factors that diminish the gains made so far and further exacerbate violence. Nowhere are these threats more pronounced than in Africa. Against this backdrop, we welcome today's meeting and hope that it will generate greater awareness of the challenges confronting the continent.

The fiftieth anniversary solemn declaration of the African Union (AU) importantly pledged to end conflicts in Africa. The AU Master Roadmap of Practical Steps for Silencing the Guns in Africa by 2020 presents a significant milestone towards achieving the aspirations of Africans for their continent.

Considerable progress has been made towards preventing, managing and resolving conflicts in Africa. Many of the devastating conflicts in Africa now stand resolved. Reconciliation between Ethiopia and Eritrea, agreements in South Sudan and the Central African Republic, and the holding of elections in Madagascar, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Mali are success stories that testify to the enhanced capacity of the African Union and its regional mechanisms for dealing with crises. With United Nations support, these efforts have contributed to strengthening peace and stability and creating favourable conditions for Africa's development in the last decade.

Despite these achievements, significant challenges persist. Parts of Africa remain mired in conflict, while new threats are emerging. Allow me to make five specific points.

First, addressing the root causes of conflicts in their widest dimensions is imperative for ending conflict as well as to prevent relapses into cycles of violence. The key drivers of violence, extremism and terrorism must be tackled.

Secondly, the illicit trade of small arms and light weapons exacerbates violence and insecurity and undermines development. A holistic approach, including international assistance and cooperation, is needed to address this challenge.

Thirdly, the eradication of poverty and inequality are essential to ending conflicts. Towards this end, the AU's partnership with the United Nations offers a strong foundation. Robust efforts are needed to strengthen the implementation of the AU's Agenda 2063, and to build on the synergies with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Mobilization of international support for Africa's development priorities and its inclusive transformative agenda are vital.

Fourthly, stabilization of conflict situations and resolution of disputes are critical for a peaceful, secure and prosperous Africa. A comprehensive approach to peacekeeping, relying on strong African Union-United Nations cooperation, is required. In this regard, the growing dialogue between the Security Council and the African Union for a better and more effective response to peace and security issues is a welcome development.

As one of the largest troop-contributing countries to United Nations peace operations, Pakistan's peacekeepers have served and continue to serve in Africa, contributing to many of Africa's success stories. We take pride in our contribution to bringing peace and security to Africa and remain committed to improving peacekeeping initiatives as environments and needs evolve. Investment in sustainable resources, formulation of achievable mandates and better utilization of triangular cooperation mechanisms are crucial for strengthening our efforts.

Finally, the African Union and its regional mechanisms have devised several useful instruments to prevent, manage and resolve conflicts. Sustained progress requires enhanced cooperation with relevant stakeholders, improvements in governance, the strengthening of existing mechanisms, the monitoring and evaluation of agreements, and ensuring adequate resources for their implementation. Most significantly, the role of women as key participants and decision makers in all aspects of conflict resolution and prevention must be fully promoted.

Pakistan remains committed to achieving a conflict-free Africa and will continue its cooperation to realizing the goal of lasting peace, security and development in Africa.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I give the floor to the representative of Estonia.

Mr. Jürgenson (Estonia): I would like to thank the Equatorial Guinean presidency for convening today's open debate on such a relevant and urgent topic.

Estonia aligns itself with the statement to be delivered by the Head of Delegation of the European Union. Additionally, I would like to make the following few remarks.

Silencing the guns in Africa by the year 2020 is without doubt an ambitious initiative, and only high ambition can really bring us closer to achieving this goal. Also, we clearly need to look beyond the year 2020 in terms of achieving a full and lasting peace in all the corners of the African continent.

Much remains to be done, and all efforts need to be made to that end. However, while looking at the challenges at hand and ahead, we also need to recognize the process already made. The partnership between the United Nations and the African Union has brought us closer to achieving lasting peace, with one of the latest examples being the signing of the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic just a few weeks ago. In order to not let this hard work and time go to waste, strong political commitment is needed from all sides to implement this and other important agreements.

While putting an end to ongoing active conflicts and crises is the most urgent goal, we must not forget that, if we want the guns to stay silent, we need to address the root causes of conflicts. The African Union's Agenda 2063 does that and highlights that forging synergies between governance and peace and security is crucial to addressing conflicts in a holistic manner. Estonia welcomes the African efforts on concrete structural conflict prevention initiatives, early warning, mediation and preventive diplomacy, and we very much encourage further efforts to that end.

Furthermore, better governance, creating strong and reliable State institutions and ensuring accountability and justice for the victims is the only way to move towards truly achieve lasting peace. To that end, it is critically important to include women and youth in all aspects of conflict resolution and political processes. Estonia stands ready to work with all our partners to enhance capacities and work on solutions, including digital ones, for conflict prevention and good

governance. That is also something we prioritize as we strive to become an elected member of the Security Council for 2020-2021.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Lebanon.

Ms. Mudallali (Lebanon) (*spoke in Arabic*): I am delivering this statement on behalf of the Group of Arab States.

First of all, I would like to welcome the Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Equatorial Guinea. I thank you, Mr. President, for convening this open debate. I also thank Ms. Rosemary DiCarlo, Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs; Mr. Ramtane Lamamra, African Union High Representative for Silencing the Guns in Africa; and Mr. Vasu Gounden, Founder and Executive Director of the African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes, for their briefings.

In Africa there is a saying that "It takes a village to raise a child". That applies equally to resolving the problems on the African continent. Africa's problems call for the planetary village to work together to resolve them. I speak on behalf of a group linked to Africa through history, geography, culture, language and religion. Africa's problems and prosperity are our own. Arabs have historically been interested in Africa and its people, as well as in progress and peace. The continent has long suffered from armed conflict, which has had a considerable impact on the humanitarian, economic and social situation of its countries and people.

The Arab Group reaffirms its support for the principles and objectives of the United Nations for the peaceful resolution of conflict, in accordance with Chapters VI and VIII of the Charter of the United Nations. At the core of the Arab Group, we have many African countries. We therefore reiterate the importance of the Silencing the Guns in Africa by 2020 initiative, as well as the Lusaka Roadmap, which advocates African solutions to African problems.

The peoples of Africa are determined to shoulder their responsibility for establishing security and stability in their continent, as well as for the resolution of ongoing conflicts. We commend the progress made in conflict resolution in order to realize peace and security in Africa. There are many examples of that, such as the signing of the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic in

Khartoum, under the auspices of the Sudan; the signing of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan; and the peaceful transfer of power in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Madagascar. However, the continent still faces many challenges, including non-traditional threats to peace and security, such as terrorism and organized crime.

The Arab countries, including Arab African countries, for years played a critical role in conflict resolution and in silencing the guns in Africa. Many of them have participated in national reconciliation and mediation processes with regard to conflicts in Africa. On 16 September 2018, reconciliation efforts between Ethiopia and Eritrea, with Saudi sponsorship, led to the Jeddah peace agreement between Eritrea and Ethiopia, after many decades of conflict. In 2007, Saudi Arabia helped reach a reconciliation agreement between the Sudan and Chad in order to restore stability to Darfur and neighbouring areas in Chad.

Similarly, Morocco has always supported preventive diplomacy efforts, mediation, peaceful conflict resolution and political dialogue to put an end to conflicts in Africa, including mediation to restore stability to the Mano River basin. It also hosted inter-Libyan political dialogue, which led to the Skhirat Political Agreement of 17 December 2015. In August 2009, Morocco hosted the Ministerial Conference of African States Bordering the Atlantic, which led to the Rabat Declaration against maritime piracy and transnational crime. In November 2013, Morocco hosted a regional ministerial conference on border security between Sahel and Maghreb States in order to bolster border security between the Sahel countries and the Arab Maghreb countries.

The State of Qatar sponsored negotiations between the Sudanese Government and the opposition factions, which led to the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur. The Security Council welcomed that document as a step towards reaching a comprehensive solution. Qatar also participated in mediation efforts to put an end to border disputes between Djibouti and Eritrea, and launched an initiative to deploy peacekeeping troops that maintained stability for an entire decade.

Algeria hosted negotiations between Malian parties and led international mediation, which culminated in 2015 with the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali, emanating from the Algiers process. Algeria continues to make efforts to implement the

agreement through its chairmanship of the Agreement Monitoring Committee.

The Arab and Gulf countries have also played a leading role in combating terrorism in Africa, with Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates pledging \$118 million and \$35.4 million, respectively, to support counter-terrorism forces in the Sahel and West Africa.

The Arab Group welcomes the strategic partnership between the United Nations and the African Union on issues of peace and security, economic and social development in the continent. We underscore the positive outcome of that partnership and coordination between them and hope to see it continue. We call on the international community to support that partnership in all its aspects. We commend the United Nations for its efforts to resolve the crisis in Libya and the African Union for its support to help bring peace and stability to Libya.

Africa continues to pursue the development of joint African peacekeeping forces across the continent. We must provide predictable and sustained financing to African peacekeeping operations.

The close link between peace and security, on the one hand, and economic and social development, on the other, requires all partners in the international community to reinforce the cooperation and synergy frameworks with the African Union and African countries in order to address the root causes of armed conflict, including economic challenges such as poverty, unemployment and food insecurity. National reconciliation will not be possible unless we address such challenges, including gender inequality, marginalization, the accumulation of wealth in the hands of the few and feelings of injustice and despair.

It is well known that Arab countries have played a critical role in bolstering stability in Africa to enable economic, social and human development. We have excellent and cooperative economic relations with Africa. The State of Kuwait, for example, through the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development, established over more than 56 years ago, has effectively strengthened sustainable development in many countries, including African countries. The Kuwait Fund cooperates with 42 African countries. During the fiscal year 2017-2018, the Fund provided them with 312 concessional loans.

The Arab Fund for Technical Assistance to African Countries, which was established at the seventh Arab Summit in Rabat in 1974, represents the Arab Group's commitment to the principle of Arab-African solidarity and common destiny. Since its inception, the activities of the Arab Fund have supported support economic and social development in the continent.

Cooperation between Arab States and the African Union is embodied in joint initiatives aimed at strengthening the pillars of peace, stability and development in Africa, exemplified most recently by the joint initiative between Qatar and the African Union to support the return of migrants to their countries of origin. We also stress the central role played by Arab communities in Africa, especially the Lebanese nationals living in Western African States, in the economic and social development of those countries. The migrant labour is also important as part of the economic and social ties linking Arab and African countries, in particular the Gulf countries.

Regarding investment, the United Arab Emirates, which is the second largest investor in Africa after China, invested approximately \$11 billion in the continent in 2016. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia intends to invest \$10 billion in South Africa's energy sector. It is also considered the biggest investor in the agriculture sector in Africa. The State of Qatar signed a contract of \$4 billion to manage the Red Sea port of the Sudan in 2018. It invests in the agriculture and food sectors in the Sudan.

Regarding human support, the Arab countries, in particular countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council, engaged in charitable activities in Africa. Assistance to refugees on the continent is another element of Arab support for efforts to limit human outflows and lessen factors of instability in Africa. For example, the King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Centre contributed more than \$250 million to assist refugees in Djibouti in 2017.

In 2013, the State of Kuwait hosted the third Arab-Africa summit on the theme "Partners in development and investment". During the summit, His Highness the Emir of Kuwait, Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, announced an initiative involving five-year soft loans to non-Arab African States issued by the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development. That Arab partnership with the United Nations was made into reality by Kuwait's pledge at the Summit of

\$1 billion through the General Investment Authority, in cooperation with World Bank and its affiliated institutions, as well as the China-Africa Development Fund, with the aim of investing in the infrastructure of the African continent.

The Arab Group believes that greater focus should be placed on post-conflict reconstruction and development. We emphasize that the objective behind silencing the guns does not end with achieving political settlements but is closely linked to reconstruction and development. In that context, the Arab Group commends the announcement regarding the opening shortly of the African Union Centre for Reconstruction and development in the Egyptian capital, Cairo. That Centre will be involved in coordinating efforts and policies of the African Union in that regard.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the Head of Delegation of the European Union.

Mr. Vale de Almeida: I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union and its 28 member States. The candidate countries Turkey, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania; the country of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidate country Bosnia and Herzegovina; as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Georgia, align themselves with this statement.

I will focus today on what the European Union (EU) and its member States are collectively doing to further strengthen the range of tools of the African Union (AU) and its regional mechanisms in preventing, managing and resolving conflicts, while also illustrating how the AU-United Nations strategic partnership can be leveraged to help Africa achieve the ambitious goal of silencing the guns.

The European Union welcomed the adoption of the African Union Master Roadmap of Practical Steps for Silencing the Guns in Africa by 2020 and the launch of African Amnesty Month in the context of the Silencing the Guns in Africa by 2020 flagship initiative. We fully share the African Union's concern about the illicit proliferation of small arms and light weapons as a major source of insecurity. We therefore commend you, Mr. President, and your country for the initiative to use your presidency of the Security Council to hold today's open debate on how cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations can further contribute to its key effort of ending conflicts on the continent.

Agenda 2063 is a bold and ambitious strategic framework for the sustainable development of the African continent. The European Union is working closely with the African Union to make those ambitions come true, as witnessed by the AU-EU Summit in Abidjan in November 2017 and, more recently, by the first AU-EU annual joint ministerial meeting, held in Brussels in January 2018.

Peace and security during all phases of the conflict cycle are a central pillar of the AU-EU strategic partnership. Our memorandum of understanding on peace, security and governance, signed in May 2018, puts the EU-AU partnership on a solid and structured basis, taking into account the complexity of the emerging threats and the need to address their root causes. Our two organizations are also operationally active in the Sahel, the Central African Republic and Somalia. While cooperation is ongoing in all those theatres, it is particularly strong in Somalia, where the African Union Mission in Somalia is a key partner of the EU civilian and military missions. Moreover, the EU and the AU are exploring opportunities to further strengthen operational cooperation on peace and security, including between missions and operations. The same goal is being pursued with the United Nations and trilaterally. Progress in that area has the potential to contribute significantly to Africa's ambition to silence the guns by 2020.

Another important area where progress has been steady is the operationalization of the African Union Peace Fund, a clear sign of the AU's dedication to take charge of the continent's peace and security. We also see it as an important tool for the alignment of partners' support. We are honoured to be offered a seat on the Fund's Board of Trustees.

Under the African Peace and Security Architecture, the AU regional economic communities, regional mechanisms and subregional ad hoc coalitions are building tools to respond to a wide variety of crisis situations. The means range from diplomacy and mediation to peace support operations and post-conflict reconstruction and development. While peace support operations generally receive the most attention and resources, it is the quiet forces of diplomacy and mediation and structural attention to fragility triggers that contribute greatly to any successful intervention in preventing or resolving conflict. The European Union has therefore allocated €20 million for the continuation, until 2020, of the early response mechanism of the

African Peace Facility, making possible a range of African Union activities of both a preventive and a mediatory nature.

At the working level, the European Union and the African Union are engaged in conflict prevention dialogue. That is a dialogue of peers through which we seek to learn from one another. A number of subjects have been identified as entry points for cooperation, including joint analyses, conflict prevention, climate change, mediation and, last but not least — and particularly relevant in today's discussions — United Nations-AU-EU trilateral cooperation. The European Union is also committed to continue supporting a stronger linkage between the African Peace and Security Architecture and the African Governance Architecture in order to reduce fragility and foster political stability and effective governance across Africa for the benefit of all.

The prevention of violent conflict is our key endeavour. Beyond short-term actions to prevent an imminent outbreak of violence, fragile situations require tailored approaches and support to help create sustainable peace, while addressing the underlying causes of conflict. The successful prevention of violent conflict must aim at local ownership and at prioritizing the concerns of local communities. The protection of human rights and responsive and accountable political governance, as well as inclusive economic growth, are essential elements of addressing the root causes of conflict. Gender equality is a prerequisite for peace, security, sustainable development and justice, all of which positively influence our global, regional and national economies. Women's perspectives need to be equally represented, as do the hopes and aspirations of young people, who are ultimately responsible for the future.

Indeed, an active role for youth and women in the prevention, management and mediation of conflicts is of paramount importance. That is recognized in the declaration of the Abidjan Summit and is an area in which we would like to see greater trilateral AU-EU-United Nations cooperation. Building sustainable and peaceful societies will require the utilization of all African Peace and Security Architecture and African Governance Architecture components to ensure a comprehensive approach that brings together peace and security, sustainable development and human rights. Bringing those responsible for alleged violations and

abuses to justice and holding them accountable by ending impunity is essential to reconciliation.

Allow me to end by assuring the Council and, in particular, our African friends and colleagues that the European Union will continue to encourage concrete initiatives and bolster projects to support the African Union and its regional mechanisms in enhancing their capacity to deal with conflict and crisis situations on the continent and meet its ambition of silencing the guns by 2020.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the observer of the League of Arab States.

Mr. Abdelaziz (*spoke in Arabic*): Allow me, Mr. President, to read out the statement of Mr. Ahmed Aboul Gheit, Secretary-General of the League of Arab States, who would have liked to attend today's meeting in response to your kind invitation, but urgent circumstances required that he be in Cairo.

"I would like to begin my statement today by expressing our deep appreciation to you, Mr. President, for your pioneering initiative to convene today's high-level open debate. I thank you for inviting me in my capacity as Secretary-General of the League of Arab States to participate in the meeting.

"We welcome the briefings by Ms. Rosemary DiCarlo, Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs; His Excellency Mr. Ramtane Lamamra, High Representative of the African Union Commission for Silencing the Guns in Africa, whom we wish every success in his new post in Algeria; and Mr. Vasu Gounden, Founder and Executive Director of the African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes, whom we also congratulate on his achievements in Africa.

"We also congratulate you, Sir, on the unanimous adoption by the Security Council of resolution 2457 (2019).

"There is no doubt that the pioneering African Union initiative to silence the guns by 2020 is an effective framework for strengthening cooperation between our organizations. It is something I strongly emphasized at the thirty-second summit of the African Union, held in January in Addis Ababa. It was not only because half of the States members of the League of Arab States are prominent members of the African Union or because Egypt is the current

Chair of the African Union for 2019 — as Egypt is a founding member of the Arab League, the African Union and the United Nations — but because of a number of facts and common interests that require us to intensify our Arab-African efforts to achieve that noble objective.

"The Arab world represents the strategic and natural geographic extension of Africa, just as Africa represents the strategic depths of the Arab world. That has led the African Union and the League of Arab States to intensify their cooperation by convening four Arab-African summits, hosted in Cairo, Sirte, Kuwait and Malabo, in your brotherly nation, Sir. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia will host the fifth summit this year. It is all in an effort to achieve the common interests and objectives of our two organizations and work together to achieve the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the regional goals of Agenda 2063 of the African Union and the Arab goals determined by the Arab Summit resolutions.

"That will require us to intensify and coordinate cooperation on a number of fronts to overcome all challenges that prevent implementation. At the same time, the Arab world and Africa need strengthened cooperation to address the root causes of armed conflict. We both need effective measures to limit the proliferation of small arms and light weapons and to overcome the weak control systems for such weapons. We need to combat terrorist organizations, such as the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham (Da'esh) and the Muslim Brotherhood in the Arab world, as well as Boko Haram, Al-Shabaab and others in Africa. We both need great reform in the security sector to enable us to address developments in transnational organized crime, cybercrime, terrorism and violent extremism. We both need strengthened regional and subregional mechanisms to resolve conflicts and operationalize disarmament, demobilization and reintegration. We both need to strengthen early warning systems and preventive diplomacy to prevent conflicts, hold peaceful elections, ensure good governance and achieve lasting peace. The list goes on.

"The Arab League agrees with the conclusions of the report on silencing the guns, presented by Equatorial Guinea on behalf of the African Union Peace and Security Council at the most recent African summit, especially since the report included

the five comprehensive aspects of addressing the issue, namely, the political, economic, social, environmental and legal dimensions. The League also agrees with the importance of national ownership and of expanding popular participation in the implementation process through civil society and the private sector and with a focus on young people and women, backed by regional organizations and the United Nations.

“In that regard, the League of Arab States attaches importance to strengthening cooperation at the regional and international levels for implementation purposes by enhancing cooperation between the African Police Cooperation Organization and the Council of Arab Interior Ministers in silencing the guns. The effort includes support from United Nations disarmament and counter-terrorism entities, as well as from political and peacekeeping/peacebuilding mechanisms of the AU, the Arab League, the European Union and the United Nations, through various alternatives that were discussed at the high-level meeting hosted by Mr. Ramtane Lamamra in Addis Ababa on 11 and 12 October 2018. The Arab League participated in that high-level meeting in an effort to strengthen cooperation between the two organizations in that area.

“Within that important initiative, we must also invest in the reforms adopted by the United Nations based on the initiative of Secretary-General António Guterres, especially the adjustments that are being implemented within the African Peace and Security Architecture. In that regard, the Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and senior officials who specialize in Africa and the Arab region must cooperate and coordinate with one another and promote preventive diplomacy and conflict prevention. They should also enhance cooperation among the Security Council, the African Peace and Security Council, the EU Political and Security Committee, and the political and security committees of the Arab League in order to implement initiatives that lead to silencing the guns.

“An example of such action is the Africa Amnesty Month for the Surrender of Illegally Owned Weapons and Arms initiative, which began through a flagship project in various African States, including Burkina Faso, Madagascar, Mali,

the Sudan and Zambia. We look forward to its implementation and celebration on a regional level soon in order to reach a continental agreement on small arms and light weapons, in line with the provisions of the relevant resolutions of the Arab Interior Ministers Council. That topic, among others of importance, was discussed at the first Arab League-European Union summit, which was held for in Sharm el-Sheikh on 24 and 25 February, with a view to promoting cooperation among the Arab League, EU and AU.

“While Africa and the Arab world share the international concern with regard to the global challenges facing multilateral systems in the area of combating weapons of mass destruction as an extremely fundamental pillar to achieve international peace and security, we also underscore the importance of joint international efforts to establish a zone free of nuclear weapons, including weapons of mass destruction, in the Middle East. We must together implement the provisions of the Pelindaba Treaty, which is the basis for the maintenance of international peace and security at both the African and Arab levels.

“Similarly, and through that same effective partnership and joint efforts, we look forward to reaching a just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East in a manner that significantly contributes to silencing the guns through the establishment of an independent Palestinian State, with Jerusalem as its capital, and through peaceful settlements, free of guns, in Syria, Libya, Yemen, Iraq, Somalia, the Sudan and other Arab States.

“In parallel, our effective partnership continues to consolidate lasting and inclusive peace in Burundi, The Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Central African Republic and other African States, with the support of the United Nations and the European Union, as well as other regional and subregional organizations.

“We thank the representative of Lebanon, who spoke on behalf of the Arab Group, and we align ourselves with everything she said in her statement.

“We are confident in that regard that the cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations will lead to the desired results on the African and Arab levels.”

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Libya.

Mr. Elmajerbi (Libya) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like at the outset to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council this month, and to thank you for all the meetings that you have organized, especially those pertaining to Africa. We meet once again here in this Chamber to discuss an African topic, which is how to silence the guns and put an end to conflicts and civil wars in Africa?

I would like to touch upon a number of points.

The first pertains to the nation State. All social, ethnic and religious groups merge in a nation State to become a single nation of citizens with equal rights and responsibilities. A nation State is based on transparent and robust administration, with independent accountability mechanisms, an active security and military architecture, a strong army subject to strict military law and a strong economy. Those are all conditions for the peaceful coexistence of nations around the world. The nation State is the basis for stability and could put an end to all the root causes of conflicts and civil wars.

The lack of a nation State poses a threat to stability and peace, even more than international conflicts themselves. The alternative to the nation State is fragmented ethnic or religious factions that strive to survive through distorted economies based on conflict and ambiguous goals. There are numerous examples of the fact that States and nations cannot be built that way. Those who call for the fragmentation of nation States will reap what they sow.

My second point concerns national reconciliation. Individuals and groups can achieve reconciliation within a nation State. Reconciliation requires compromise and mutual concessions to tackle the root causes of a specific conflict or dispute. It is certainly important to achieve national compromise through a clear road map based on national interests, rather than foreign intervention. Reconciliation should take place at the social level first, and then move to the political level. Reconciliation rejects intolerance and hatred and calls for tolerance and peaceful coexistence in the interest of future generations based on fair foundations. It is not enough to have peace and security; the groundwork must be laid for the modern State.

Thirdly, with regard to foreign interference, guns will not be silenced by foreign intervention and we will never be able to silence guns if there is foreign intervention in domestic conflicts. Any kind of foreign intervention only complicates matters further. Foreign Powers often usurp and exploit the complexities of the social fabric, exacerbate domestic conflicts and aggravate historical disputes between various religious or ethnic groups within a specific nation. The outcome is therefore a conflation of priorities and a prolongation of conflicts. External players, including non-State actors, have always played a negative role in the escalation of conflicts and their evolution into international conflicts, rather than promoting the quest for solutions, due to competition among the various foreign players with diverging interests.

Fourthly, as to development and its political effects, Africa has an important global stature and history. It is rich in natural resources, people and heritage. However, many of its countries are facing conflicts, civil wars and acute divisions. That demonstrates the agency of historical, political and human flaws, in addition to the old and new versions of colonialism, which is also playing a role in that dynamic.

We would like to stress the following. We must recognize that Africa is not immature. It is not possessed by foreign Powers that dictate African policies. There should be a genuine will to stop conflicts and wars in Africa by enhancing the human, historic and legal responsibility of parties to a conflict. In that regard, civil society's capacities must also be strengthened, which is key to creating conditions that are conducive to reconciliation.

The economic downturn and climate change are also considered to be main causes of the outbreak of conflicts. Real development in Africa must take into account the specific features and characteristics of each country, leading to economic integration among the countries of the continent. It is also important to simplify bureaucratic complexities and provide administrative services throughout the African States with a view to achieving horizontal development, including the development of cities and villages, while supporting their capacities to achieve fair development. We also need to provide job opportunities dignified lives to the people for them to contribute to the development process. In addition, it is necessary to eliminate the phenomenon of corruption, promote good governance and achieve political and economic reform.

In conclusion, we would like to emphasize that the topic of today's debate, silencing the guns in Africa, touches on the situation in Libya. We underscore the importance of the partnership between the United Nations and the African Union to coordinate efforts in many areas, especially with regard to peace, security and stability. The African declaration to achieve the noble objective of a conflict-free Africa and make peace and security a reality, rather than an aspiration, is a step in that direction. We call on the international community to sincerely help without any hidden or overt agendas to find real solutions that tackle the root causes of conflicts before they escalate.

We also call on the international community to contribute effectively to the elimination of outlaw groups, organized crime networks and terrorist groups, especially in border areas. We stress the importance of implementing security agreements with neighbouring countries, particularly with regard to the Libya quartet border control and protection force. In that context, the efforts of the Libyan National Army in the south of the country will contribute immensely to implementing those security agreements with neighbouring countries and putting an end to the spread of transnational organized crime, such as trafficking in human beings and weapons, as well as to activities of terrorist groups. The Libyan National Army is working to impose State authority across the entire Libyan territory to achieve security and stability in the border areas with neighbouring countries and in the Sahel region as a whole.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Morocco.

Mr. Kadiri (Morocco) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, allow me to warmly congratulate the sisterly Republic of Equatorial Guinea on its outstanding presidency of the Security Council during this month of February and for its extremely positive contributions to the work of the Council. That you are presiding over this meeting, Mr. Minister, is a powerful testimony of the importance that Equatorial Guinea attaches to peace and security in Africa. I am particularly grateful to the presidency of the Council for having organized this open debate on a topic that is important to Morocco and the entire African continent, namely, the African Union (AU) initiative of Silencing the Guns by 2020. I would like to congratulate the delegation of Equatorial Guinea and the three African members of the Security Council for the unanimous adoption of resolution 2457

(2019), which Morocco co-sponsored. Finally, I wish to especially thank the briefers for their substantial and valuable contributions to our debate today.

Our continent, Africa, has experienced many conflicts but has managed to make great strides on the path to peace, led by strong African determination, which is in line with the principle of the pre-eminence of politics, necessarily implies unremitting efforts, involving compromise and gestures towards peace, unwavering commitment in good faith and strong support from all stakeholders. The success of the African initiative of Silencing the Guns by 2020 also requires stronger financial support from the international community for AU peace support operations as well as for multinational stabilization forces such as that of the Group of Five for the Sahel.

In the same vein, the African Union Military Observer Mission in Somalia and the Multinational Joint Task Force in the Lake Chad basin play major roles in maintaining regional peace and stability. Those operations, which are better adapted to their environments and therefore less burdensome, also represent effective means of countering new asymmetrical threats. Unfortunately, they still do not receive predictable or sustainable funding. That is why Morocco reiterates its strong support for the legitimate African demands for the funding of African peace operations that have been mandated by our Organization, through mandatory United Nations contributions. It is in that spirit that my country co-sponsored the resolution submitted by the three African members of the Security Council on this issue.

An Africa at peace is a strategic goal for the entire international community. We believe that goal is fully achievable. To that end, we must all further engage in strengthening and implementing the United Nations-AU strategic partnership. With that in mind, we welcome the signing and implementation of the strategic partnership agreement between the two organizations in 2017, the positive effects of which are already being felt on our continent.

Among the obstacles to the success of the initiative of Silencing the Guns by 2020, the issue of small arms and light weapons is a major one. Our collective awareness of the scale of the impact of the scourge caused by the circulation of small arms and light weapons demands new impetus to our actions and those of the United Nations and the African Union, given that it is now less

than two years until the December 2020 deadline. The deterioration of the global security environment and the emergence of new, more violent and deadly threats, such as terrorism and transnational organized crime, serve to highlight the relevance of the African Union initiative of Silence the Guns by 2020, calling on us to further bolster regional and subregional cooperation in the area of cross-border security. In that connection, Morocco hosted in November 2013 a ministerial conference of the Community of Sahelo-Saharan States for the strengthening of cross-border security between the Sahel countries and the Arab Maghreb Union. Our noble goal also includes full ownership of the African Union's Master Road Map of Practical Steps for Silencing the Guns in Africa by 2020.

The promotion of peace and security in Africa as well as the socioeconomic and environmental development of our continent constitute absolute priorities for Morocco under high instructions of His Majesty King Mohamed VI. My country is fully aware of the interrelationships and challenges linked to peace and security, climate change and economic and sustainable development. As an active member of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union, Morocco underscores the triad of security, development and regional integration, convinced of the fact that those three tracks are essential for lasting peace throughout the continent, which is perfectly in line with the philosophy promoted by the initiative of Silencing the Guns by 2020.

By the same token, Morocco's multidimensional commitment to peace on the continent goes back a long way in history, as evidenced by its continuous participation in United Nations peace operations in Africa since the 1960s. More recently, Morocco has strengthened its commitment to the Central African Republic and has been the largest troop contributor to the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic. Morocco has also been chairing the Central African Republic configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission for five years, having visited the country two weeks ago to mobilize the efforts of the international community, particularly in the light of the signing of the peace agreement on 6 February. My country maintains its multifaceted support to the authorities and people of the Central African Republic, both in terms of capacity-building and training and the financing of structural projects.

Furthermore, Morocco pays particular attention to mediation and conflict prevention, as evidenced by the many initiatives carried out by the Kingdom of Morocco across the continent, such as the Mano River Union, which enabled confidence-building measures among the countries of the Union and initiated a peace process. My country also hosted the intra-Libyan dialogue that led to the adoption of the Skhirat Agreement, which remains the reference framework for the resolution of the situation in Libya.

While fully aware of the negative impact of climate change on stability and development in Africa, Morocco organized — at the initiative of His Majesty King Mohammed VI, on the margins of the twenty-second Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change held in Marrakech in November 2016 — the Africa Action Summit. The Summit brought together approximately 50 Heads of State and Government as well as other representatives of African countries, establishing three commissions to address climate challenges across the continent, namely, the Congo River Basin Commission, which was operationalized in February 2018, the Island States Commission and the Climate Commission for the Sahel. The latter held its first conference at the level of Heads of State and Government two days ago in Niamey. In his address to that conference, His Majesty King Mohammed VI announced that the Kingdom of Morocco undertakes to take charge of the feasibility studies in order to finalize a climate investment plan for the Sahel region. Morocco also prioritizes cooperation with African countries to help meet the economic and social challenges on our continent. Moreover, Morocco is bound by no fewer than 1,192 agreements with a large number of African countries, within the framework of mutually beneficial South-South cooperation and contributing to the sustainability and consolidation of peace on our continent.

I would like to conclude by reiterating Morocco's unwavering commitment to promoting peace, security and sustainable development in Africa in order to achieve our common goal of permanently silencing the guns on our continent.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Namibia.

Mr. Gertze (Namibia): I wish to join colleagues in expressing our appreciation to you, Mr. President, for having convened this very important meeting

on silencing the guns in Africa. Namibia proudly co-sponsored resolution 2457 (2019), which was unanimously adopted here today. I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate you, Sir, on your excellent presidency of the Security Council for this month. I would furthermore like to thank the Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, Ms. Rosemary DiCarlo; the African Union (AU) High Representative for Silencing the Guns in Africa, Mr. Ramtane Lamamra; and the Founder and Executive Director of the African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes, Mr. Vasu Gounden, for their comprehensive and detailed briefings.

In thanking the Secretary-General, I also wish to welcome his report *Securing our Common Future — An Agenda for Disarmament*. It is alarming that in all cases it is civilians who are the most affected as a result of armed conflicts. The widespread availability of small arms and light weapons is of major concern to all of us. I cannot emphasize enough the harm caused to lives all across Africa by illicit arms and small weapons. We welcome the establishment of a multi-partner trust facility through the Peacebuilding Fund in order to provide a more sustainable solution, with a sharp focus on development, for the control of small arms and light weapons. We take note that the new facility will be designed to support inclusive, integrated and participatory approaches to small arms control at the country level, and in some situations at the subregional level.

My delegation firmly believes that peace and security is a prerequisite for development. Prosperity will therefore remain elusive if we do not seriously take charge of our peace and security architecture. Unfortunately, most of the peace and security issues brought to the Security Council are on Africa. As part of Agenda 2063 of the African Union and its first 10-year implementation plan, the fiftieth anniversary solemn declaration, of 26 May 2013, decided not to bequeath the burden of conflicts to the next generation of Africans, and they decided — we decided — to silence the guns by 2020.

As Chair of Southern African Development Community (SADC), I wish to share with the Council that the subregion emphasizes, through its decisions, the need to prioritize preventive diplomacy and mediation in approaching crises and conflict situations. Furthermore, SADC is in full support of the need to enhance the AU's prevention capabilities and tools in

the context of the aspiration of the AU to silence the guns by 2020. We are all aware that not all election processes go smoothly. SADC recently averted potential conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo following elections in that country. Equally, Madagascar experienced a peaceful transition of power from one leader to another. We cannot overemphasize preventative diplomacy, mediation and negotiations in peacebuilding and reconstruction.

I also wish to hail achievements reached in other regions of the continent. On 6 February, the Central African Republic Government and 14 armed groups came together in Bangui to sign a historic peace agreement, following negotiations held in Khartoum. That agreement is an important first step taken by all parties in the Central African Republic. The 2018 peace agreement signed between Ethiopia and Eritrea was also a landmark achievement. That peace deal brings hope to the Horn of Africa.

I also wish to emphasize the importance of women negotiators and mediators in peacebuilding processes, as espoused in Agenda 2063 of the African Union. It is apt for us that in 2000, during Namibia's presidency of the Security Council, the Council unanimously adopted the landmark resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security. That resolution formally drew global attention to the unrecognized, underutilized and undervalued contributions of women in preventing war and in peacebuilding and engaging individuals and societies to live in harmony.

We need to identify innovative ways and means to enhance holistic preventative approaches in efforts aimed at promoting peace and security. My delegation furthermore recognizes the ongoing peace efforts on the continent, and we commend the efforts of the United Nations, the African Union and SADC. We reaffirm our commitment to silencing the guns by 2020. And to put that into perspective for all of us, 2020 is next year.

Many speakers today have spoken about the ambitious plan of silencing the guns. But I am happy that some have reminded us of the wisdom imparted to us by the late Nelson Mandela: that it seems impossible until it is done. Allow me to remind us of a great African proverb that teaches us that: if we want to move mountains tomorrow, we must start by lifting stones today. Let us not be scared away by the fact that silencing the guns may be ambitious. Let us start now to implement it.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Italy.

Mr. Stefanile (Italy): Let me join previous speakers in commending Equatorial Guinea and you personally, Mr. Minister, for having convened this open debate. I also wish to thank the three briefers for their much-appreciated contributions.

Italy aligns itself with the statement made by the observer of the European Union.

A new wind of hope is blowing in Africa. After the historic rapprochement between Ethiopia and Eritrea, the continent is moving towards a new phase of regional stabilization and integration, as also shown by the revitalized peace agreement in South Sudan and the recent Bangui peace agreement for the Central African Republic. That should encourage us to step up our efforts in support of Africa, and should help African States to reach the objective of silencing the guns in Africa by 2020.

Notwithstanding those recent and inspiring developments, there are still major threats and challenges to peace and security in Africa — terrorism, transnational organized crime, violence against women and children in armed conflicts, poverty and vulnerability to climate change, to mention only a few. Addressing those challenges requires that the United Nations and the African Union (AU) keep working together closely, while involving regional and subregional organizations.

The AU-United Nations partnership has already proven to be of paramount importance. The successful conclusion of the peace talks between the Government of the Central African Republic and armed groups, which took place in Khartoum, is just the most recent example of how successful and effective that relationship can be. We have consistently supported the new impetus given by the Secretary-General to the further strengthening of cooperation between the United Nations and the AU, and we call on the two organizations to continue in that direction. We also attach importance to advancing the trilateral cooperation between the United Nations, the African Union and the European Union.

Italy commends the progress already achieved in operationalizing the African Peace and Security Architecture, especially the Peace Fund of the African Union, which is set to finance mediation and preventive diplomacy activities. Let me recall, in that regard, that

we remain in favour of using United Nations-assessed contributions for African-led peace operations, provided that appropriate standards are met in terms of troop preparedness, training, equipment, financial transparency, human rights compliance, conduct and discipline. At the subregional level, we deem it crucial to deepen the cooperation mechanisms between the United Nations and the relevant subregional organizations on the basis of complementarity and subsidiarity.

I now wish to focus on two major areas that we consider essential to reaching the objective of silencing the guns in Africa by 2020: the fight against the proliferation of small arms and light weapons and improving governance throughout the continent.

On the first point, Italy is strongly committed to multilateral efforts in fighting the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, which contribute to instability, violence and insecurity and undermine action towards sustainable development. Italy attaches the utmost importance to the universalization of the relevant multilateral instruments, such as the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, the Arms Trade Treaty and the United Nations Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition — the so-called Palermo Protocol.

Let me recall that Italy is currently financing the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime Global Firearms Programme with a view to assisting States in the Sahel region in the full implementation of the Palermo Protocol. Moreover, Italy supports any initiative taken and owned by the States of the region, such as the Kinshasa Convention and the Economic Community of West African States Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons, Their Ammunition and Other Related Materials, and fully supports the efforts of the African Union to define a continent-wide action plan to implement the Road Map of Practical Steps for Silencing the Guns in Africa by 2020.

On the second point — governance — we must be aware that the weakness of States' institutions and the lack of good governance, combined with socioeconomic inequalities, are recurrently indicated as major factors in fuelling the cycle of instability. Italy is actively engaged in capacity-building and training programmes in many African countries with the aim of promoting

political and economic partnerships, fostering peace and sustainable development.

In conclusion, let me reiterate Italy's full engagement alongside Africa in reaching the objective of the African Union's flagship initiative of Silencing the Guns by 2020. In that spirit, we welcome the unanimous adoption of this morning's resolution 2457 (2019), which we were pleased to co-sponsor.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Kazakhstan.

Mr. Umarov (Kazakhstan): I would first of all like to congratulate your delegation, Mr. President, on its very successful presidency of the Security Council and to express our appreciation to you, Sir, in continuing to preside over this very important debate, which shows your strong commitment to the signature event that your delegation chose during its presidency. I also thank the presidency of Equatorial Guinea for highlighting the important strategy of silencing the guns to bring peace and stability to Africa, as well as the leadership of the United Nations and the African Union for their insightful briefings. We are also honoured to co-sponsor the important resolution adopted earlier today (resolution 2457 (2019)).

Kazakhstan fully supports the Master Road Map of Practical Steps for Silencing the Guns in Africa by 2020. Despite the immense challenges, we are confident that the African Union's aspirations for a conflict-free Africa are achievable. Recently, the African Union's ability to resolve conflicts has been internationally acknowledged, especially in conflict-torn countries such as Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire, Sierra Leone, the Gambia, those in the Horn of Africa and other places. The African Union is now paving the way for peace in South Sudan and the Central African Republic. My delegation would like to make the following observations.

First, national and regional ownership is crucial for success. We therefore need to carefully listen to the guidance given by the African troika. At the same time, we must harness the comparative advantages of regional economic structures, such as the Economic Community of West African States and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development. That is because of their in-depth understanding of the dynamics and root causes of conflicts and capability to mobilize local financial and human resources. Likewise, parliamentarians,

religious leaders, women, youth and civil society are also important assets with whom we must engage.

Secondly, strengthened cooperation, unity of purpose and consolidation among all Member States and international organizations are essential for a conflict-free Africa. That calls for a reinforced institutional partnership between the United Nations and the African Union on peace, security and development. That requires new modalities for joint analysis, planning, assessment and reporting for a smoother and more effective partnership.

Thirdly, conflict prevention and mediation are priorities that require comprehensive, coordinated action. That should be aimed at strengthening the security-development nexus in order to implement the Secretary-General's reform of the United Nations development system. That should be accompanied by strengthening all existing African Union preventive diplomacy tools, including the guidance of the Panel of the Wise. For our part, we propose a three-fold strategy to prevent and address conflicts through an enhanced security-development nexus, a regional approach and the United Nations delivering as one.

In order to contribute to the United Nations reforms, we propose establishing an interregional United Nations modelling centre for the Sustainable Development Goals in Almaty, and look forward to forming partnerships with African countries. Through investments in education, health, welfare, employment, climate mitigation and refugee and migrant rehabilitation, we will be able to prevent illegal trafficking in small arms and light weapons and human beings and drugs, and combat transnational crimes, which fuel conflicts.

Fourthly, enhancing peacekeeping is another critical priority in preventing conflicts in Africa. The African Union-led peace support operations have been recognized as absolutely essential to the Security Council's responsibility for maintaining peace and security. The African Union forces and hybrid missions have also proven to be very effective owing to their familiarity with their own terrain, local conditions and the tactics of armed and militia groups. They have provided invaluable reinforcement for our global counter-terrorism action. We must therefore continue capacity-building by way of training and providing the latest equipment, as well as exploring different

sustainable predictable mechanisms for the financing of African Union peace operations.

In conclusion, I would like to once again reiterate that Kazakhstan, as an observer at the African Union, is strongly committed to helping African countries fulfil their vision for peace.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Egypt.

Mr. Edrees (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Equatorial Guinea and his brotherly country for having convened today's meeting on silencing the guns in Africa by 2020, which complements Equatorial Guinea's commendable presidency of the Security Council for the month of February by focusing on priority topics for the African continent and their implications for international peace and security. I would like also to convey to you, Mr. Minister, the greetings of your brother Mr. Sameh Shokry, who would have liked to participate in this debate but was unable to attend owing to prior commitments.

I also extend my sincere gratitude for the valuable briefings this morning by the Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, Ms. Rosemary DiCarlo; the African Union High Representative for Silencing the Guns in Africa, Mr. Ramtane Lamamra, whom I congratulate on his recent well-deserved appointment to a high-level post; and the Founder and Executive Director of the African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes, Mr. Vasu Gounden.

The launch, in 2013, of the African Union's initiative of Silencing the Guns by 2020 came about in the context of the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the Organization of African Unity and the subsequent adoption of the Lusaka Master Road Map as a means of implementing the initiative and achieving the overarching goal of silencing the guns. That reflects the principle of African solutions to African problems and complements joint African action aimed at freeing our continent of armed conflicts and focusing on economic and social development efforts in achieving the goals of Agenda 2063 of the African Union. In that context, I would like to pay tribute to the tangible progress made in resolving conflicts and achieving security and stability on the continent. Most recently, I would highlight the peace agreement between Ethiopia and Eritrea and the revitalization of the peace agreement

in South Sudan, as well as the signing of a framework agreement for peace in the Central African Republic and the peaceful elections held in Madagascar and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

But we must not stop there. Our continent still faces major challenges that are not only related to the continuation of traditional conflicts in certain regions, but also to the emergence of non-conventional and cross-border threats and challenges — mainly from terrorism, organized crime and trafficking in human beings. No country is safe from those new threats. Experience has shown that effectively combating those phenomena requires joint action at the international and regional levels in order to address their root causes.

The Council might agree with me that, in recent times, we have witnessed growing coordination between the United Nations and the African Union in line with Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations in the areas of peace, security and sustainable development. Agreements between the two organizations in that regard have encouraged us to build on the comparative advantages of each of them to push forward efforts for peace and security on the continent and to assist with the implementation of the African Union Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development through joint action plans.

I would like to stress in that regard that, during its presidency of the African Union this year, Egypt will work to promote coordination between the two organizations, both at the level of the Secretariat and the African Union Commission, as well as between the African Union Peace and Security Council and the United Nations Security Council. We intend to organize regular consultations between the two organizations to deepen the ongoing partnership by undertaking joint missions, exchanging information and strengthening constructive dialogue on the perspectives and assessments of each on issues of peace and security on the African continent.

Moreover, the issue of long-term and predictable funding for peacekeeping operations under the auspices of the African Union still requires an effective and innovative solution from the Security Council. That should be done on the basis of the principle of shared roles between the two organizations, while taking into account the comparative advantages of each and the primary responsibility of the Security Council for the maintenance of international peace and security.

The issue of reconstruction and development in post-conflict countries is an essential link in the chain of dealing with conflict phases. Egypt believes in the importance of this issue given the close relation between that link and the efforts to prevent countries emerging from conflict from falling back into its grasp, given that the goal of silencing the guns is not only to achieve a political settlement but also to create an environment conducive to building and sustaining peace. In that connection, Egypt was honoured that, at the African Union Summit held in February Addis Ababa, its President was chosen to lead the work on reconstruction and development in the post-conflict phase in Africa.

In coordination with the African Union Commission, Egypt will inaugurate in Cairo during 2019 an African Union centre dedicated to reconstruction and development. The centre will be an African platform to put reconstruction and peacebuilding policies and programmes in place, taking into account the specificities and priorities of the African countries concerned. In that regard, we welcome further coordination between the African Union, the United Nations and all other partners to activate and implement the African Union's framework policy for reconstruction and development.

I would also stress the close link between our efforts under the Silencing the Guns initiative and a particular focus on the root causes of conflicts and instability in different parts of the continent. That means giving special consideration to socioeconomic development, empowering young people and women, strengthening the participation of civil society and building the foundations of good governance.

In conclusion, allow me to renew our deepest appreciation for your initiative, Mr. President, to choose this vital topic as the theme of our debate today, which led to the consensual adoption of resolution 2457 (2019). We hope that this resolution will contribute to strengthening the partnership between the United Nations and the African Union, with a view to achieving our common goal of silencing the guns and strengthening the foundations of security and stability throughout the African continent.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the observer of the Observer State of the Holy See to the United Nations.

Monsignor Camilleri: The Holy See thanks the presidency of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea for

convening this open debate on silencing the guns in Africa by 2020, a noble objective to keep at the forefront of the international community's attention.

The African Union has also taken on the ambitious determination to achieve the goal of a conflict-free Africa and to make peace a reality for all our people and rid the continent of wars and civil conflicts. Indeed, this conviction corresponds to the frequent petitions made by Pope Francis himself in favour of peace and reconciliation:

“To all those who make unjust use of the weapons of this world, I make this appeal: lay down these instruments of death.”

Looking at the current situation on the continent of Africa, the winds of hope are blowing, as the Secretary-General himself has noted. Among the more demonstrative signs of peace is the historic agreement between Ethiopia and Eritrea, resolving a decades-long conflict and re-establishing diplomatic relations, as well as the agreement among leaders in South Sudan, restoring peaceful coexistence.

While those are most surely encouraging signs of hope for the African continent, there remain several areas that suffer from fundamentalist violence and other forms of conflict. There might be the temptation to dismiss the African Union's determination as unattainable, even utopian. To do so, however, would be defeatist. We must pay heed to the noble aspirations of African youth, who thirst for justice, peace and reconciliation, and to whom the African Union fiftieth anniversary solemn declaration pledges not to bequeath the burden of war. We must look for ways to work towards consolidating, as well as building, peace.

To envisage an African continent free of war and civil conflicts, we must first examine why it is that people have recourse to the instruments of death in the first place. The list is long, but among the most devastating causes are social and economic disparities, weak institutions, political instability and corruption, where battles over conflicting interests, both domestic and foreign, have the upper hand over social cohesion and the common good. The inequitable exploitation of Africa's myriad resources and other scourges contrary to human dignity — such as child soldiers and trafficking, piracy and the illegal trade in wildlife — often exacerbate those root causes. These are all sadly linked to the proliferation of arms and ammunition.

To help the African continent reach its laudable and ambitious goal to embrace non-violence and durable peace, the international community must keep its own commitments, particularly when it pledges help for humanitarian emergencies and regular development aid. In order to guarantee stability, financial and technical support must be sustainable and predictable. That works much better, however, when it is sensitive to and genuinely aware of specific needs on the ground, rather than imposed from outside in ways that are at times alien to African cultures and values.

To this day, far too many young Africans are more adept with guns and rounds of ammunition than with pens and schoolbooks. They are prevented from reaching their full potential, because their education is interrupted by conflicts that are not of their choice or making and they are caught up in self-perpetuating cycles of violence that sadly become a way of life. That must change. The proliferation of weapons simply aggravates conflict situations and results in unimaginable human suffering and material costs that profoundly undermine development, human rights and the search for lasting peace. Without greater international and regional cooperation, especially among arms-producing States, in controlling and strictly limiting the production and movement of weapons, an Africa free of wars and violent conflicts will remain an illusion.

While much remains to be done to silence the guns in Africa, the Holy See believes that this open debate is one more blow on the anvil towards the fulfilment of the prophecy of Isaiah, whose words are inscribed just across the street from these Headquarters.

“[T]hey shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.”

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Kenya.

Mr. Amayo (Kenya): I would like to sincerely commend you, Mr. President, for convening this important meeting. I also want to thank all the briefers today for their insightful remarks on silencing the guns in Africa. My delegation welcomes resolution 2457 (2019), adopted this morning, as a useful road map to be implemented alongside Aspiration 4 of Agenda 2063 of the African Union (AU), on building a peaceful and secure Africa. I have also noted with appreciation that virtually all the speakers before me

have expressed support for Africa's quest to silence the guns on the continent. The strategic partnership between the United Nations and the African Union will continue to be crucial not only in stopping the guns but also in eliminating wars and conflicts. It will also go a long way to preventing human rights violations and humanitarian disasters, as well as to addressing climate change and other common challenges.

To some extent, the continued impact of the illicit circulation and trafficking of small arms and light weapons, as well as of governance and global economic dynamics, relatively high unemployment rates, particularly for the young, the marginalization of various segments of society, competition for political power, and cases of the mismanagement and exploitation of natural resources, have all played their part in ensuring that the guns are not fully silent in Africa. But despite a picture that is far from rosy, we have also seen many positive steps. There have been major achievements in the area of mediation and support for peace processes across the continent, particularly at the subregional level in the Sahel, the Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes region.

Kenya has been at the forefront in supporting and promoting the objectives and activities of the AU Master Roadmap of Practical Steps for Silencing the Guns in Africa by 2020. We have signed and ratified the AU's and other regional instruments pertaining to peace and security, the facilitation of peace processes and efforts to achieve stability in our region. We have also taken measures to stop the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. We are currently in the process of implementing the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and its various protocols and regional mechanisms. In that regard, Kenya's national focal point on small arms and light weapons continues to foster enhanced regional and international cooperation in countering the problem of illicit small arms and light weapons, particularly by promoting good practices in marking, record-keeping and tracing small arms and light weapons. As a result, more than 98 per cent of firearms in Kenya are properly marked and can be accounted for.

If we are to succeed in implementing the AU Master Roadmap, there are three points that must be met and that my delegation would like to emphasize. First, we have to allocate more resources to address the root causes of conflict, including by strengthening national governance

institutions responsible for conflict prevention and the promotion of socioeconomic development.

Secondly, we must enhance national and international cooperation at every level in implementing the instruments available, as well as other measures. It will be crucial to ensure the universality of our collective efforts and proper outreach so that no one is left behind, because weakness in one State or region eventually weakens the entire system. This calls for proper weapon and ammunition management, effective legislative and regulatory frameworks and, more importantly, effective data collection, information-sharing, monitoring and evaluation. At the local level, the full participation of young people and women, civil society and other partnerships against gun violence is crucial to addressing the problem of the proliferation and use of illegal weapons, with a view to bringing such activities closer to the people as part of a general visibility and communications campaign.

Last but not least is the importance of capacity-building, so that African States can fully implement their commitments to ratifying international instruments, a crucial aspect of this issue. Our development partners must ensure that the trade in conventional weapons is properly regulated from the source countries in order to curb unregulated flows of arms into conflict zones inside Africa. At the same time, adequate support is needed to help build resilient national institutions that can regulate such flows.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Algeria.

Mr. Boukadoum (Algeria): I want to start by thanking you, Mr. President, for all the initiatives that Equatorial Guinea has taken during its presidency of the Security Council. I do not want to miss this opportunity to emphasize the role that your country has played since its tenure as a member of the Council began. It should make all Africans very proud. I would also like to thank you for the work that you have been doing that, proof of which we saw this morning with the unanimous adoption of resolution 2457 (2019). Needless to say, I am also grateful to Mr. Ramtane Lamamra, High Representative of the African Union for Silencing the Guns, for his informative briefing and shrewd insights. My thanks also go to Mr. Vasu Gounden for his valuable input and work.

We should never forget the simple baseline proposition that our job, our *raison de vivre*, in the

Security Council and beyond is to preserve and promote peace and ensure it is durable and sustainable, but also, now that awareness is sufficiently high, to prevent conflicts from occurring. Peace is not an abstract notion, and its meaning is as simple and as difficult as it appears — no more deaths, no more suffering or trials for the people. It demands that we work intensively and stubbornly together with the tools, methods and mechanisms that the Charter of the United Nations and regional organizations such as the African Union have defined. When they declared 2020 the year for silencing the guns, the leaders of the African Union leaders, while having no doubts as to the realities and possibilities, were well aware of the powerful symbolic nature of such a target. The message is clear and strong. Africa wants to take its peace and security challenges seriously and autonomously, with the uplifting goal of ensuring that all the ills currently plaguing the continent will not be bequeathed to the next generation.

Silencing the guns has several meanings and requirements. First, Africa is doing its long-sought homework by reshuffling its overall thinking, resources and mechanisms. I want to remind the Council that the starting blocks are the African Peace and Security Architecture, through which Africa has unleashed new ideas and new modes of action that are fit for purpose in every case of conflict in the continent.

Secondly, Africa is regrouping its forces with the aim of thinking and acting jointly at the regional and subregional levels in order to confront and deal with its dire realities. Here I would like to highlight the example of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), whose mandate, nature and significance are to be commended. By comparison with the many unfulfilled endeavours of the past, AMISOM is moving forward in the face of extraordinary adversities.

Thirdly, silencing the guns is definitely not meant to eliminate arms, whether they are small or not so small, but to make sure that all ordnance becomes redundant as soon as possible. But that will obviously not suffice and clearly highlights the necessity of tackling root causes. Africa is not thriving, and the Sisyphean task ahead of reaching a stage where the guns are silenced means that we must look at social conditions, governance and the welfare of our peoples. That does not depend solely on Africans. Silencing the guns goes beyond this and calls for the commitment of the international community, for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the African Union Agenda 2063 and their corollaries.

We need financing for development, disaster risk management and prevention through the Addis Ababa Action Agenda.

Fourthly, we must look at the areas of the global context that are having a direct effect on Africa. Climate change is one example, and I should remind the Council, by the way, that Africa has the least responsibility for the human-induced effects on the climate and yet is most affected by them. The undue exploitation of its natural resources and the forced migrations within or out of the continent, coupled with transnational crime, terrorism, arms smuggling and money-laundering mean that the causes and consequences overlap one another and continue to fuel both old and new conflicts.

I therefore want to conclude by stressing the truth that must be spoken as long as being candid is not considered a fault. Through its vow to silence the guns, Africa took a bold initiative to open a new pathway to solutions based on ownership and dedication to the issues that beset peace and security on the continent. Africa has therefore undertaken the responsibilities of promoting peace and preventing conflict, something that will surely benefit not just its own purposes but those of others, too. Africa needs outside support in achieving the solution it has arrived at for itself, and that undoubtedly concerns us all. I should point out that the pledges that remain unfulfilled with regard to the mode of financing for African-led peacekeeping operations already approved by the Security Council can be viewed as a test that we must pass. At this point we should not forget the hardships that still linger in our minds and that resulted in the challenges inflicted by the solutions imposed on African countries from outside with catastrophic consequences.

What is needed and long overdue is external support for African solutions, not just so that Africa's unrelenting woes can be overcome but for the sake of the whole world. By extending a hand to Africa when it is needed, for example by supporting the African Union Master Roadmap of Practical Steps for Silencing the Guns in Africa by 2020 from the very beginning, such efforts will serve as building blocks for the future. The international community, with the Security Council at its core, must extend this helping hand for the preservation of peace and security everywhere.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of the Sudan.

Mr. Elnour (Sudan) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to begin by congratulating you, Sir, and your friendly country on your presidency of the Council this month.

We also thank you for convening this important debate, as well as for the concept note on this topic (S/2019/169, annex) and your valuable briefing this morning. And I want to convey the apologies of Mr. Al Dirdiri Mohamed Ahmed Al Dikhairi, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Sudan, whose commitments prevented him from attending today's important debate. We thank Ms. Rosemary DiCarlo, Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs; Mr. Ramtane Lamamra, High Representative of the African Union for Silencing the Guns in Africa; and Mr. Vasu Gounden, Founder and Executive Director of the African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes, for their valuable briefings this morning.

On 1 July 2017, the African Union Peace and Security Council announced its African Union Master Roadmap of Practical Steps for Silencing the Guns in Africa by 2020 on the ground. In that regard, we want to express our full support for all the efforts of African States to find African solutions to African problems. That motto is evident in a number of African initiatives and we would like to cite some of the most important efforts that the Sudan has undertaken to achieve that pivotal objective.

First, we made significant diplomatic efforts within the Intergovernmental Authority on Development initiative for peace in South Sudan, which culminated in the signing of the Khartoum declaration on 23 June 2018, followed by further progress in the form of the signing in September 2018 of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan.

Second, the Sudan has been contributing major efforts in the context of the African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic, as a result of which an agreement on peace and reconciliation was initialled in Khartoum on 5 February and was finally signed in Bangui the following day.

Third, at the domestic level, an extended ceasefire has continued throughout the Sudan with a view to establishing an environment conducive to ensuring continued political negotiations, the protection of civilians and unobstructed humanitarian action.

Fourth, the Sudan approved all the proposals presented by regional and international partners for

the delivery of humanitarian assistance to areas under the control of insurgent groups, which rejected all these initiatives.

Fifth, the national weapons collection campaign in Darfur has been a great success in helping to stabilize the security situation, ensure the protection of civilians and normalize economic and social life.

Sixth, the Sudan has welcomed its brothers and sisters fleeing armed conflicts in neighbouring countries and in the Middle East, and is currently hosting more than 2 million foreign refugees.

Seventh, we signed a tripartite convention to deliver humanitarian assistance to populations affected by the conflict in South Sudan, an endeavour that began through the Sudan's territories in July 2014 in cooperation with the World Food Programme and the Government of our sister Republic of South Sudan.

With regard to enabling the initiative of Silencing the Guns by 2020 to achieve the best possible results, we want to highlight a number of important points. First, we emphasize the close links between peace and development. One is impossible without the other. In that regard, my delegation calls on the international community to strengthen its support for post-conflict objectives, the most important of which are the resettlement of displaced persons and refugees, the restoration of infrastructure, demobilization, disarmament and reintegration, the strengthening of national reconciliation and the social fabric, and the provision of job opportunities for young people.

Secondly, it will be vital to strengthen coordination and the exchange of information between the African Union Commission and the African Union Peace and Security Council on the one hand, and the United Nations Secretariat and the Security Council on the other, while enhancing coherence and integration between the work of the two organizations, as well as avoiding any conflict of effort between them, such as occurred during the peace process in 2018 in South Sudan between the Intergovernmental Authority on Development and the African Union on one side, and the Security Council on the other. A similar situation developed in Libya in 2011 between the African Union and certain members of the Security Council.

Thirdly, appropriate and sustained financing for the peacekeeping operations of the African Union must be provided through the United Nations, and the

obstacles that prevented consensus on a draft resolution presented by the three African members of the Security Council in December 2018 must be removed. We must also take into consideration the fact that African operations actually represent a significant investment in international peace and security, one of the main objectives of the United Nations.

Fourthly, we must work to effectively address the root causes of conflicts and security threats in Africa, foremost among them lack of development, the discrepancies between development levels in various parts of the continent, the impact of drought, desertification and climate change, poverty and weak State institutions in some of the African States.

Fifthly, the international community, as represented by States, regional and international organizations, should strengthen its contribution in terms of national capacity-building in African countries in the areas of conflict prevention, mediation, peacemaking, peacebuilding and sustaining peace.

In conclusion, my delegation hopes that all regional and international partners can intensify their efforts so that together we can achieve the grand objective of silencing the guns on the African continent.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Mr. Al Habib (Islamic Republic of Iran): I would like to begin by thanking you, Mr. President, for organizing this meeting. My thanks also go to Ms. DiCarlo, Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, Mr. Lamamra, African Union High Representative for Silencing the Guns in Africa, and Mr. Gounden, Founder and Executive Director of the African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes, for their valuable briefings.

We welcome this open debate, focused mainly on silencing the guns in Africa. The fact that the five largest peacekeeping missions of the United Nations are deployed in Africa proves the importance that the United Nations attaches to preserving and promoting peace and security in Africa. And the fact that more than half of the top 20 countries that contribute troops to United Nations peacekeeping operations are African shows that African countries are playing a decisive role in promoting international peace and security,

something that United Nations and the Council should acknowledge and greatly appreciate.

At the same time, in order to ensure that African countries and organizations can continue those contributions, they should be helped to preserve and promote their capacities for maintaining peace and security in Africa and other parts of the world. That is crucial, as some African troop-contributing countries and African Union peace operations are constrained in terms of financial resources and equipment, which limits their ability to respond to peace and security challenges.

However, when it comes to assisting African countries in conflict prevention and the promotion of peace and security, one basic principle should be observed, which is that African problems require African solutions. In other words, in order to promote peace and security on the African continent and in African countries, Africa's leading role in resolving its own security issues has to be fully respected.

From that perspective, one of the most important tasks is assisting African States in addressing the main sources of the occurrence, exacerbation and prolongation of conflicts in Africa. One such source is certainly the illicit manufacture, transfer and circulation of arms, particularly small arms and light weapons, along with their excessive accumulation and uncontrolled proliferation. That has a wide range of humanitarian and socioeconomic consequences and poses a serious threat to peace, security, stability and sustainable development in various parts of Africa. In that context, African countries need help in fully and effectively implementing the relevant international instruments, the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons. That is important when taking into account the statistics that show that the proliferation of small arms and light weapons is one of the biggest obstacles to Africa's security and development. More important, taking into account that there are also several relevant instruments and initiatives in Africa, African countries must be supported financially, technically and technologically to effectively implement such instruments and realize the goals of those initiatives.

In that regard, rendering genuine and sustained support to African States in realizing the objective of such an important initiative as silencing the guns in Africa should be accorded high priority. That would greatly contribute to the ambitious goal established by the African countries, namely, a conflict-free Africa, which will not be easily achievable. However, it does not mean it is impossible. Since African States have indicated their strong resolve to reach that objective, the international community should lend a helping hand to Africa to make it become a reality.

In conclusion, a conflict-free Africa would indeed be a place where durable peace, stability and prosperity can flourish. That is what Africa wants, and we should help it materialize.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Botswana.

Mr. Kelapile (Botswana): We congratulate the Republic of Equatorial Guinea, Mr. President, on its assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of February. We thank you for convening this very timely high-level debate on a theme that is very important to the African continent. We also thank the Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, the African Union (AU) High Representative for Silencing the Guns in Africa and the Founder and Executive Director of the African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes for their briefings.

Botswana places great importance on the overall objective of achieving durable peace and stability on our continent. We support the necessarily ambitious goal of silencing the guns in Africa by 2020, which demands the collective efforts of Africa and the assured support of the international community and other relevant stakeholders. We therefore welcome the unanimous adoption by the Security Council of resolution 2457 (2019) on this matter.

We believe that creating an environment conducive to addressing the root causes of conflict would obviate the need to place peacekeepers in harm's way, thereby avoiding further loss of life among innocent civilians caught up conflict situations. As we begin to approach the year 2020, the deadline set by the AU, our delegation finds this to be a rationale for engaging in a self-evaluative exercise to assess progress made in achieving a conflict-free Africa. This debate is an important step

towards taking the corrective measures required within the remaining time that we have leading up to 2020.

The questions raised in the concept note (S/2019/169, annex) are therefore critical to enabling us to re-strategize to ensure that Africa has its own tools to do the job, and if not to adopt new strategic partnerships to effectively dissuade our communities from engaging in violence and criminal activities. It is the difficult choices that those communities have to make that in themselves generate the high demand for guns. A proper diagnosis of the factors that create human insecurity is key to addressing the root causes of conflict on our continent.

The bigger picture of what constitutes Africa's existing challenges is already known. The intensity of conflict has shown a decline; however, measured against the Fragility States Index, the continent remains prone to conflict, and global alert levels are significantly high. We have observed marked improvements in certain countries, while others show a slight decline. Indications from comprehensive inequality studies conducted by such competent United Nations bodies as the United Nations Development Programme have identified ungoverned territories that are pockets of hardship and constitute conflict hotspots — big income gaps and multidimensional poverty are among the factors that drive conflict in Africa.

But to be fair, we must also acknowledge the positive indicators on which we can build. There is no doubt that Africa has great potential beyond its abundant natural resources. Although growth has not always been accompanied by meaningful social progress and inclusiveness, in recent years we have seen a sizeable number of African countries in the lead as some of the fastest-growing economies in the world.

Africa is also home to a good number of middle-income economies, including our own country Botswana, following sustained development efforts. The continent is blessed with a large population of young people, who, if properly harnessed, constitute a demographic dividend that is key to sustaining additional strong economic growth for our continent. We therefore share the concern that, if we do not manage those contradictions well, dissatisfied groups in our communities — including young people — will make the wrong choice of resorting to arms.

A mix of prudent measures, ranging from leveraging the potential of technological innovations to investing

in proper education, is essential to create an enabling environment for peace. We must empower women and youth as agents of peace and development by promoting participatory and accountable governance.

For Botswana an important part of achieving effective governance and development is through the effective management of the mineral sector as a catalyst for economic and social development. We therefore welcome the fact that, through the AU's Africa Mining Vision, Africa has recognized the need to work in unison in this area, thereby providing an ideal platform to share experiences. As the concept note before us indicates, the task of silencing the guns cannot always be delinked from the effective management of natural resources.

In order to maintain the momentum on legitimate trade in precious minerals, such as diamonds, our delegation takes this opportunity to encourage keen interest in the forthcoming Kimberley Process-driven General Assembly discussions on the role of diamonds in fuelling conflict. Action is expected on a draft resolution on 1 March.

Overall, our delegation agrees that Africa is doing its utmost through the AU and its regional mechanisms. For instance, beyond establishing some early-warning mechanisms and some standby forces, as I mentioned, Africa itself has also acknowledged the need to harness its demographic dividend through investing in youth. The adoption of such relevant instruments as Agenda 2063, the fiftieth anniversary solemn declaration and the AU Master Roadmap of Practical Steps for Silencing the Guns in Africa by 2020, among others, represent significant commitments. The ongoing implementation of institutional reforms and the enhanced effectiveness of AU peacekeeping operations are also key to the sustainability of the efforts to promote and maintain peace and security on the continent.

But beyond the existing threats that continue to fuel conflict, a significant emerging threat is climate change, which exacerbates conflict in Africa. We therefore welcome the recently updated multi-year appeal for the period 2018-2019 issued by the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs. The acknowledgement of this linkage is very important. Our delegation encourages continued attention by the Security Council to climate-related peace and security challenges.

In conclusion, the African Union and individual African countries cannot silence the guns by

themselves. In addition to existing partnerships, we welcome the recently concluded frameworks between the AU and the United Nations on peace and security, as well as on the Agenda 2063 and the 2020 initiative. We wish to also highlight and express our appreciation for the support of the United Nations for the AU Peace and Security Council initiative to declare September of each year until 2020 as Africa Amnesty Month for the surrender of illegally owned weapons and arms, in line with the Silencing the Guns by 2020 initiative.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Angola.

Mr. Gimolieca (Angola): We wish to join our colleagues and thank you, Mr. President, for presiding over this debate. We also wish to congratulate Equatorial Guinea for presiding over the Security Council for the month of February. This debate is just another example of the excellent work Equatorial Guinea has done with regard to consolidating the efforts of the international community to deal with some of the most pressing challenges facing our world today. This is an important step towards achieving our shared objective of ending wars, civil conflicts and human rights violations on the African continent, thereby allowing us to focus our efforts and resources on education, health care, social inclusion and economic development, among others efforts.

The Republic of Angola views the spread of violent extremism and terrorism in Africa and the humanitarian and human rights crises caused by armed conflicts as the most pressing challenges we face on the African continent. In order to achieve the ambitious political objective of silencing the guns in Africa, it is imperative that we address effectively some of the root causes of those conflicts, such as State fragility and weak State institutions, the illicit arms trade, the effects of rapid urbanization and youth unemployment, inequality and social exclusion, as well as illegal resource extraction and climate change.

To increase the chances of successful voluntary civilian disarmament and eradicate non-State armed groups in countries affected by conflict, the State and its various organs have to be seen to operate within a framework of good governance, the rule of law and respect for human rights. Institutions responsible for delivering justice and security in fragile and conflict-prone States are often weak or dysfunctional. Civilians

and armed groups will respond to a call for voluntary disarmament only if they are guaranteed security.

In that regard, the African Union (AU), in line with the African Peace and Security Architecture and in cooperation with relevant Member States, should increase its efforts to strengthen national and regional mechanisms in order to halt the illicit flow of weapons, especially small and light weapons, to non-State actors, which contributes only to exacerbating insecurity and violence and undermining social cohesion, socioeconomic development and the effective functioning of the relevant State's security institutions.

One of the first steps needed to eradicate this problem must be to ensure that States that manufacture and export conventional arms work with affected nations to ensure adequate control systems to safeguard against the illicit diversion of those arms. More important, in the context of non-interference in the internal affairs of States, we as an international community must be able to deal more effectively and severely with countries that deliberately arm non-State actors and armed groups in order to undermine democratically elected Governments.

Guaranteeing security by stopping the illicit flow of weapons and drugs is an important step towards the effective functioning of security institutions. Such measures, along with strengthening social cohesion and socioeconomic development, have been the focus of the new Government agenda of the Republic of Angola, which stresses the importance of effective governance by ensuring inclusive participation by women and youth, strengthening the rule of law to combat impunity and corruption, and promoting better management of natural resources in order to foster inclusive growth and reduce inequality.

That Government agenda is in line with Agenda 2063 — the AU's strategic framework for achieving growth and sustainable development — and the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It seeks not only to mount an effective policy response to the economic, social and environmental changes facing Angola but also to create a more resilient State and society that is able to manage the pressures of rapid urbanization, youth unemployment, inequality and social exclusion.

Given that climate change and environmental damage will act as multipliers of fragility, with the potential of creating conflict over diminishing land and

water resources, the Government of Angola is investing its human and material capacity not only to improve the governance of our natural resources, which are still our biggest source of revenue, but also to advance regional cooperation on the cross-border management and monitoring of natural resources, which is crucial to shared peace and can serve as an important tool for promoting greater regional integration.

In conclusion, our Government is fully committed to the objective of silencing the guns by 2020 in order to substantially contribute to achieving the goals of the AU initiative on the African Peace and Security Architecture roadmap for the period 2016-2020, a strategic document for realizing a conflict-free Africa.

We are fully aware that it will not be possible to end all conflicts on the continent by 2020, given the continued presence of terrorists in the north and the west and the illicit trafficking in human beings, drugs and weapons in certain regions. Therefore, we urge our partners on the continent to increase their financial and operational support to structures such as the African Standby Force, the Peace Fund and the Continental Early Warning System, which are meant to support the African Peace and Security Architecture as a regional mechanism for preventing, managing and resolving conflicts.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the Permanent Observer of the International Committee of the Red Cross to the United Nations.

Mr. Mardini: I thank you, Mr. President, for convening this important and timely debate on silencing the guns in Africa. This year we mark the seventieth anniversary of the Geneva Conventions, the very first article of which, common to all four Conventions, obliges States to respect, and ensure respect for, international humanitarian law. That duty frames the rules that govern the international arms trade, including the Arms Trade Treaty. Today's adoption of resolution 2457 (2019) is an important step. It highlights Africa's determination to rid the continent of conflict and strengthen arms control and disarmament, with the support of the international community.

Today I want to address two points — first, the humanitarian consequences of the uncontrolled availability of small arms and light weapons, and, secondly, ways the international community can reduce those consequences.

When conventional arms are poorly regulated and widely available, the humanitarian consequences are grim — prolonged conflicts, violations of international humanitarian law and human rights law and increased risk of death and injury for civilians. Suffering continues even after hostilities are over, as the widespread accessibility of arms fosters a culture of violence, undermines the rule of law and threatens reconciliation efforts.

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) witnesses those consequences at first hand on a daily basis. Armed conflict in the Lake Chad basin has forced more than 2 million people to flee their homes. In Libya, large parts of arms stockpiles remain outside any Government control, fuelling violence and exacting a heavy price from the Libyan people, who suffer death, injury, disability and displacement. In South Sudan, the peace agreement brings hope of an end to a conflict that had brought catastrophic humanitarian consequences. Untold thousands of children have been deprived of schooling, and many women suffered sexual violence. Humanitarian organizations like the ICRC bring much-needed relief to the many places in Africa and elsewhere in the world where peace remains elusive. But aid alone cannot solve the underlying causes of this immense suffering.

That brings me to my second point, which is how the Member States of the Security Council — and in fact all States — can act to silence the guns in Africa. They can do so by ensuring a responsible arms trade and preventing the diversion of weapons to the illicit market. To that end, solid frameworks, such as the Economic Community of West African States Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons, Their Ammunition and Other Related Materials and the Central African Convention for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons, Their Ammunition and All Parts and Components That Can Be Used for Their Manufacture, Repair and Assembly, and, at the global level, the Arms Trade Treaty, provide a blueprint for reducing human suffering. We urge States to join, implement and support those treaties. Responsible arms transfers improve the protection of civilians over the long term and, more broadly, lay the foundation for peace, security and stability.

We must make a difference on the ground. Words alone will not prevent the devastating and irreparable harms caused by weapons in the wrong hands. The ICRC's recent study *The Roots of Restraint in War*

found that integrating the law into doctrine, rules of engagement, training and compliance mechanisms increases restraint on the battlefield. The ICRC encourages States to commit to this task and offers its assistance to States wishing to promote respect for international humanitarian law by arms bearers — a role we have assumed, for instance, for the Group of Five States for the Sahel.

The appalling humanitarian consequences I spoke of earlier are preventable. When there is respect for international humanitarian law, there is a better chance for silencing the guns in Africa and in the world. The ICRC stands ready to support States to achieve that goal.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Portugal.

Mr. Duarte Lopes (Portugal): Let me start by congratulating Equatorial Guinea for today's timely debate, and also to thank our briefers, Special Representative Lamamra and Mr. Gounden.

Portugal aligns itself with the statement made by the Head of Delegation of the European Union and wishes to make some additional remarks.

Local security crises have global repercussions, and they need to be addressed through joint efforts. The African Union has assumed growing leadership in the search for African solutions to African problems. The strategic partnership established with the United Nations is a crucial step towards strengthening the chances of success, and it has already achieved promising results, as in the recent case of the Central African Republic.

We believe that the strong partnership among the African Union, the United Nations and other international partners, such as the European Union, is the best way to achieve peace and security, prosperity, environmental protection, gender equality, human rights and democracy. Those elements are all intertwined — when they concur, they are mutually reinforcing. The framework is already in place. The African Peace and Security Architecture, alongside instruments such as the African Governance Architecture and the African Union's Agenda 2063, provides a solid regional basis, which complements the existing multilateral framework. All of us must remain engaged and mobilized to provide the necessary support. Resolution 2457 (2019), just adopted, is a further contribution to that end.

Silencing the guns will also require strong determination in preventing future conflicts. We need to strengthen the role of women and young people in the prevention and management of conflicts, as well as their civic and political participation at all levels. We need to keep up our efforts to prevent the radicalization of young people, and we need to combat the illicit proliferation of small arms and light weapons. We therefore encourage an active African participation in instruments such as the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects, its International Tracing Instrument and the Arms Trade Treaty.

But security measures alone will not be effective if they are not accompanied by an effort to achieve social inclusion. Alongside more traditional threats, Africa also feels the strain of such global challenges as climate change, water and food insecurity, pandemics, terrorism and transnational organized crime. Therefore, we must tackle the root causes of conflict through a positive agenda, while combating poverty and promoting development. The implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) will be of crucial importance in this process.

Portugal maintains a very close relationship with Africa and remains engaged in contributing to these joint efforts, both bilaterally and at the level of the European Union, the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries (CPLP) and, of course, the United Nations. Portugal currently participates in missions in Mali, the Central African Republic, the Niger, Somalia, South Sudan and Darfur. We have technical military cooperation agreements with several African States, and we are engaged in development projects, including with the United Nations and the CPLP, aimed at the implementation of the SDGs. We have made a long-term commitment to the security and development of an African continent that is globally relevant at all levels and which undoubtedly deserves to increase its representation in the Security Council.

We will remain committed and mobilized. We must indeed silence the weapons of the present so that we can focus on the future, ensuring that the hands of young people will not be holding guns, but the tools to build a life that lives up to their legitimate aspirations.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Romania.

Mr. Jinga (Romania): I would like to commend Equatorial Guinea for convening this timely meeting on the theme “Silencing the Guns in Africa: cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations”.

Allow me also to express my deep appreciation for the informative briefings of Under-Secretary-General Rosemary DiCarlo; Mr. Ramtane Lamamra, African Union High Representative for Silencing the Guns in Africa; and Mr. Vasu Gounden, Founder and Executive Director of the African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes.

Romania aligns itself with the statement delivered by the observer of the European Union.

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

My country underscores the centrality of the African Union-United Nations strategic partnership and the trilateral cooperation between the United Nations, the African Union and the European Union, as they are essential frameworks for international security and sustainable development in Africa. We also commend the African Union Master Roadmap of Practical Steps for Silencing the Guns in Africa by 2020 as a flagship initiative that will contribute to making Africa a conflict-free continent.

Romania co-sponsored resolution 2457 (2019) on silencing the guns in Africa, which was adopted today. We also encourage a tailored approach that has African solutions for African problems as its guiding principle. During Romania’s chairmanship of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) in 2018, that principle led to the institutionalization of the annual meeting between the Peacebuilding Commission and the African Union Peace and Security Council.

In addition, during our chairmanship of the PBC, Romania placed particular importance on conflict prevention, including by promoting an enhanced regional approach in the work of the Commission, reinforcing partnerships with regional and subregional organizations and supporting conflict-affected countries through actions ranging from stopping the outbreak of conflicts to peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction.

During the field visits I conducted last year to West Africa and the Sahel and in all the meetings I had

with relevant national and regional African actors, the purpose was to identify ways to enhance cooperation on financing for peacebuilding and to strengthen cooperation, coordination and coherence in support of the respective countries. Romania remains committed to following the same path during our current mandate as Vice-Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission, as we attach great importance to prevention, mediation, peacekeeping, peacebuilding and working on post-conflict recovery and reconstruction.

Based on its deep understanding of the multidimensional root causes of insecurity in the region, Romania believes that the goals of the Silencing the Guns in Africa by 2020 initiative can be reached through partnerships between African countries and the international community. In that context, I hope that on Friday 1 March, the General Assembly will adopt, by consensus, the draft resolution on the role of diamonds in fuelling conflict, breaking the link between the illicit transactions and armed conflict as a contribution to the prevention and settlement of conflicts, which Romania will introduce in its capacity as President of the Council of the European Union.

I believe it is high time to permanently switch from the paradigm of blood diamonds to that of peace diamonds. In that endeavour, the effective implementation of 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and African Union’s Agenda 2063 for inclusive growth and sustainable development, with the full participation of women and youth, will remain fundamental.

Romania helps to increase opportunities for young Africans through the scholarships we offer for higher education and the training programmes we provide for professionals. Currently, Romania participates in United Nations missions in Africa on all relevant security segments — in six United Nations missions and operations in the Central African Republic, Mali, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Darfur, South Sudan and Libya.

At the same time, we are the only Member State that contributes close protection units to missions coordinated by the Department of Safety and Security. Starting on 15 October, Romania will provide the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali a military utility helicopter unit comprising four Puma helicopters and 120 troops.

Finally, we are glad that Equatorial Guinea has proposed the topic of collaboration with regional organizations on the Security Council agenda, since it was my country that promoted the very first United Nations resolution on cooperation with regional organizations (resolution 1631 (2005)) under the Romanian presidency of the Security Council.

Romania is now a candidate for a non-permanent seat in the Security Council for the 2020-2021 period. My country will remain fully engaged in sustaining peace in Africa and in enhancing cooperation with the African Union.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Djibouti.

Mrs. Hassan (Djibouti): At the outset, Djibouti is very grateful for the opportunity to address the Council on the theme “Silencing the Guns in Africa: Cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations”. In that regard, we welcome resolution 2457 (2019), adopted this morning, which my delegation co-sponsored. We are equally grateful for the quality of the insights provided in the presentations made by the briefers this morning.

(*spoke in French*)

Djibouti associates itself with the statements made by the representatives of Benin and Lebanon, on behalf of the Group of African States and the Group of Arab States, respectively.

The greatest threat today to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the African Union’s Agenda 2063 is undoubtedly conflict and violence. The persistence of many hotbeds of tension around the world continues to increase the death toll. Addressing the specific challenges of each will require the sustained attention of the international community. Indeed, according to some sources, some 30 million light weapons are in circulation in sub-Saharan Africa and, every year, that arsenal increases by eight to ten million weapons.

Unfortunately, those weapons are readily available; they trigger and perpetuate violent conflicts in the continent. It goes without saying that they constitute a threat to international peace and security. That is why we welcome the fact that the Council has agreed to organize, under your presidency, a thematic meeting devoted to analysing the challenges and identifying sustainable solutions.

The United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, chaired by France in June 2018, in which my delegation participated, enabled us to make progress in certain areas. The fourth Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty, which took place in Japan in August, reiterated the need for material, technical and financial support for developing countries.

Despite those tools, Djibouti is greatly concerned about the spread of terrorism and international organized crime, which complicate already fragile situations and require different responses than those proposed by conventional peace operations. That is why partnerships in regional and subregional cooperation are so essential if we hope to curb the cross-border movement of illicit weapons. We welcomed the Silencing the Guns in Africa by 2020 initiative, adopted by African Heads of State at the thirty-second ordinary session of the Assembly of the African Union commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of the African Union, the noble goal of which is to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war.

(*spoke in English*)

In response to your request to make specific contributions today, Mr. President, Djibouti would like to humbly make the three following observations.

First, we need to invest more in prevention and mediation. It requires special skills honed by experience. That is why Djibouti welcomes the creation of a platform for experience-sharing and learning among the members of the roster of mediators of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the African Union members of the Panel of the Wise and members of the Pan-African Network of the Wise from regional economic communities and mechanisms.

We take this opportunity to commend those involved in the elaboration of the strategic guidelines on mediation. Djibouti also applauds the Secretary-General’s establishment of the High-level Advisory Board on Mediation and urges the Council to lend it full support. States and international organizations called upon to mediate international disputes should be encouraged to seek the active involvement and assistance of the Secretary-General and the High-level Board.

(spoke in French)

Secondly, we need inclusive approaches to promote peace, while considering all the relevant stakeholders at all levels of society, including women, young people and traditional leaders, as well as faith-based organizations. To that end, there is an urgent need to mainstream the work of the African Union, including through the Panel of the Wise, the Pan-African Network of the Wise and the Network of African Women in Conflict Prevention and Mediation in promoting peace, security and stability on the continent.

Thirdly, there is no longer any doubt that the harmful consequences of the actions of groups motivated by extremist ideologies are in no way limited to national or regional spaces, but that they transcend borders and affect the whole world. The goal of radical extremists is to create what some writers have termed a panic civilization, in which every terrorist act not only destroys the lives of innocent civilians but also leads to a vast number of living but terrified hostages. Their goal is known and our determination must be unyielding.

In concert with the efforts of organizations, such as IGAD and the African Union, to prevent and combat violent extremism, the States of the region have quickly realized the importance of initiating consultations to develop a strategy to counter the ideas and narratives disseminated by extremist movements. With that perspective, we decided by mutual agreement to establish a regional centre dedicated to preventing and combating violent extremism in Djibouti.

(spoke in English)

In conclusion, Djibouti welcomes the recent positive developments in the Horn of Africa, in particular the historic rapprochement between Ethiopia and Eritrea. For peace to be comprehensive, thorough and sustainable, we emphasize the fact that it is urgent to resolve the 11-year-long border dispute and other related issues with the sisterly country of Eritrea. To that end, Djibouti reaffirms its commitment to negotiating in good faith with Eritrea through bilateral engagement, mediation or binding international arbitration. We should endeavour to maintain the positive momentum and not allow the conflict to fester. Djibouti underscores the importance of the continued oversight role of the Security Council, as stipulated in paragraph 57 of resolution 2444 (2018), until a full and final agreement is reached between the parties.

The President *(spoke in Spanish)*: I now give the floor to the representative of Rwanda.

Mrs. Rugwabiza (Rwanda): I congratulate Equatorial Guinea on its very productive presidency of the Security Council for this month, and I thank you, Sir, for organizing today's open debate, which is of the utmost importance to Africa, as it should be to the Security Council. I also thank Ms. Rosemary DiCarlo, Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, His Excellency Mr. Ramtane Lamamra, African Union High Representative for Silencing the Guns in Africa by 2020, and Mr. Vasu Gounden, Founder and Executive Director of the African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes, for their valuable and informative briefings.

At the outset, Rwanda associates itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Benin on behalf of the Group of African States.

The theme of this debate involves one of the African Union's aspirations under Agenda 2063 — a peaceful and secure Africa. Africa's quest is to build a secure and peaceful environment that is conducive to social and economic development for the benefit of all Africans. Silencing the guns in Africa is an ambitious yet achievable goal that can be reached by taking integrated approaches that extend across the nexus of peace and security, governance and development. Success in meeting that goal will require greater policy coherence and political commitment from all of us to implement the available mechanisms and tools.

The African Union Master Road Map of Practical Steps for Silencing the Guns in Africa by 2020 is an important framework that, once implemented, will contribute to an Africa free of violent conflicts. The recent positive developments arising from conflict resolution in the Horn of Africa and the recent peace agreements in South Sudan and the Central African Republic are important contributions to silencing the guns in Africa, even though the latter agreements have yet to be translated into the voluntary disarmament of armed groups under inclusive national security institutions.

Rwanda's contribution to today's debate will focus mainly on conflict prevention and resolution, security sector reform, peacebuilding and sustaining peace, albeit very briefly.

Preventive diplomacy and mediation are integral parts of conflict resolution and prevention. It is true that progress has been made in the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts on the continent. In many instances conflicts escalate or re-erupt as a result of weak or less resilient institutions and non-inclusive governance systems, which are not capable of taking over the management of peace once it has been achieved.

We need to focus our efforts and actions on the structural causes of conflict with the aim of strengthening the institutions and social mechanisms of States and communities, assisting affected States to develop more robust and inclusive institutions that can address the causes of conflict and prevent future ones.

Strengthening our efforts and strategies related to demobilization disarmament and reintegration is one such strategy that can significantly contribute to silencing the guns in Africa. That is our own experience as a country that has successfully reintegrated more than 70,000 former combatants who operated mainly — and some still operate — in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, causing chaos and insecurity for local populations.

Our recommendation therefore is that demobilization, disarmament and reintegration (DDR) need to be carried out at all stages of conflict resolution and post-conflict peacebuilding. Central to successful DDR is effective support for former combatants to reintegrate into civilian life. DDR is and should be perceived to be part and parcel of the political process to consolidate peace and stability.

Lastly, the illicit proliferation and possession of small arms and light weapons in Africa, including in countries on Security Council arms embargoes and sanctions lists, help perpetuate armed conflict on the continent. More effective monitoring of the implementation of arms embargoes will certainly contribute to creating an environment that is more conducive to conflict resolution.

The guns cannot be silenced nor can peace be sustained without development, inclusive governance and inclusive and effective institutions, as has been underlined by many speakers before me. The implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063 of the African Union remains the most effective way to prevent conflict and build lasting peace.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Ireland.

Ms. Byrne Nason (Ireland): I thank you, Sir, for organizing today's debate and the work of the Council on resolution 2457 (2019), which we are very happy to co-sponsor.

We are here because we think that this debate matters. Ireland believes that cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations is critical to conflict resolution and prevention; to building peaceful, inclusive societies; and, of course, as we have heard from many speakers, to achieving our shared Sustainable Development Goals.

We have seen first-hand direct evidence of the instrumental role that regional organizations in Africa can play in ending crises and building lasting peace. The role of the Economic Community of West African States in mediating the post-election crisis in The Gambia and the recent peace accord in the Central African Republic, achieved after intense negotiations led by the African Union, are for us both excellent examples of the success that we can all hope for when regional efforts deliver with wider international support.

On the island of Ireland, our own locally led peace process has benefited hugely from the sustained, generous and sensitive support of our own regional organization, the European Union. Indeed, simply put, our membership of the European Union played a key role in putting us on the road to ending violent conflict. Ireland applauds the African Union's recent advances towards silencing the guns through the development of continental early warning systems, the Panel of the Wise, special envoys and ad hoc mediation panels. We see that such steps make a tangible and incremental difference to conflict resolution and peacebuilding.

As Chair of the Commission on the Status of Women, I want to recognize the unique role African women play in silencing the guns. I am pleased to see that role cited in resolution 2457 (2019), adopted today. Specific reference to FemWise-Africa, the Network of African Women in Conflict Prevention and Mediation and the African Women Leaders Network strengthens and gives force to our message. We know from our own experience in Ireland that when women get involved, things start getting done.

Peacekeeping operations are the most visible and among the most powerful tools the United Nations

has to promote peace and stability. As the Member State with the longest continuous service to United Nations peacekeeping, of more than 60 years, Ireland is acutely aware of the challenges facing United Nations peace operations in different countries and regions. The diversity of such challenges underscores the importance of the work of coordinating with regional partners, such as the African Union, and of empowering local stakeholders.

The Secretary-General's reform efforts to bridge the peace-security-humanitarian nexus should also be an ambition for our partnership with the African Union. It is, of course, in step with the effective implementation of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

We all know that the proliferation of small arms and light weapons continues to inflame and prolong conflicts. Our colleague from the International Committee of the Red Cross underlined that point in his remarks earlier today. We share the Secretary-General's goal of restoring disarmament to its central role in building international peace and security. As a concrete manifestation of Ireland's support to the agenda for disarmament, yesterday our Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, Simon Coveney, announced that Ireland will act as a champion for three important actions outlined in the agenda. One of those actions is specifically aimed at silencing the guns by building understanding of the impact of arms on conflict management. We look forward to working with all States Members of the United Nations, and particularly with the African Union, to make progress.

Through Ireland's current membership of the Peacebuilding Commission and as a sincere candidate for a seat on the Security Council in under two years from now, in 2021-2022, we want to reassure members of our support. We would also like to say today that we believe that Africa needs greater representation at this table to correct the historic injustice that has been done to Africa.

Finally, rest assured, Sir, that Ireland will also work tirelessly to champion locally led, nationally owned and internationally supported peace processes. In his address to the African Union Summit in Addis Ababa, the Secretary-General said if that you want to see the winds of hope blowing, look to Africa. I think he is right. Let me close by underlining Ireland's unwavering commitment to working closely with the African

Union, the United Nations and all Member States to seize the momentum to silence the guns and see the great continent of Africa truly free from conflict.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Mali.

Mr. Konfourou (Mali) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, Sir, I would like to convey the apologies of your sister Her Excellency Ms. Kamissa Camara, Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Republic of Mali, who was unable to travel to New York owing to a scheduling conflict. She asked me to convey her warm congratulations to you, Sir, and to the entire delegation of Equatorial Guinea on a productive and successful presidency this month.

Before continuing, on behalf of the President of Republic of Mali, the Government and the people of Mali, I would like to reiterate the most heartfelt condolences to the Governments and families of the personnel of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali who have died in the line of duty in Mali. On this painful occasion, I pay special tribute to the brave Chadian, Sri Lankan and Guinean soldiers who were torn from our midst from January to date, not to mention the many injured, to whom I wish a speedy recovery.

I paid that well-deserved tribute to all of the victims of conflict — Malian and non-Malian, civilian and military — in order to highlight the relevance and timeliness of the theme of today's debate on silencing the guns in Africa. In that regard, I would like to share with members some food for thought as our contribution to today's debate.

I would like to start with peaceful options that I believe are the most appropriate for ensuring lasting peace and security. In my view, silencing the guns requires good governance, first and foremost, including justice and equity in the management of public affairs. It further requires the right balance to be struck between the issues of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States and the legitimate demands of populations for respect for their identity, culture and active and effective participation in the management of public and local affairs. Our States must promote national unity in diversity.

Secondly, another equation to be solved is to find the appropriate measures to enable people in remote areas, far from capitals, to truly live as part of the

national whole and feel part of the nation. In that way, we will be able to strengthen the legitimacy of our States in the eyes of our populations.

Thirdly, peacefully silencing the guns requires comprehensive responses to the root causes and aggravating factors of armed conflict, in particular inclusive sustainable development. We must work tirelessly to meet the basic needs of our populations, including education, health care, food security, water, energy and decent employment opportunities for young people, who make up the vast majority of African populations.

The ultimate peaceful tool to silence the guns is speech. In some conflict situations in Africa, we know that speech, when it encourages deliberate mischaracterization, stigmatization, hatred and violence, can lead to divisions by sowing the seeds of long-term conflicts, and even worse, it can lead to killing. We must convey messages of peace and national cohesion in our words and deeds.

In that regard, the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali, which was the outcome of the Algiers process, reflects the common resolve of the Malian parties to prioritize a peaceful settlement of the internal dimension of the Malian crisis. I would like to welcome Mr. Ramtane Lamamra, former Minister for Foreign Affairs of Algeria, who was the principal mediator in the negotiating process that led to the signing of the agreement in Algiers in 2015.

I turn now to security solutions. Faced with imminent and real threats, our States have no choice but to take military action to secure populations and their property, as well as their territories. That is what we are doing in Mali and the Sahel, with the support of international partner forces, including the French Operation Barkhane and the Group of Five for the Sahel, against terrorist groups, drug trafficking and transnational organized crime, including human traffickers.

Moreover, we must work towards the full implementation of the various international instruments on the flow of weapons, particularly small arms and light weapons, with a view to helping to silence the guns in Africa. I recall that, on behalf of the States members of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Mali annually submits a resolution to the General Assembly entitled "Assistance to States for curbing the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons

and collecting them", in support of the ECOWAS Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons, Their Ammunition and Other Related Materials. We also need to strengthen cooperation among States to combat the illicit trade in those weapons, which are causing more casualties on the African continent.

Lastly, the delegation of Mali welcomes the strengthening of the strategic partnership between the African Union and the United Nations, and remains convinced that it will add value to ongoing national and regional efforts to silence the guns, including the United Nations Support Plan for the Sahel. I welcome resolution 2457 (2019), which was adopted by the Security Council this morning on that issue.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Ghana.

Mrs. Pobee (Ghana): Ghana joins previous speakers in thanking the Equatorial Guinean presidency of the Security Council for convening this open debate on silencing the guns in Africa, a theme that underscores the shared agenda of both the African Union (AU) and the United Nations in building a peaceful, secure and stable Africa. We also thank Ms. Rosemary DiCarlo, Mr. Ramtane Lamamra and Mr. Vasu Gounden for their briefings and useful insights into that important subject.

Ghana associates itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Benin on behalf of the Group of African States.

The fiftieth anniversary solemn declaration adopted by African Heads of State in May 2013 spelled out the framework for achieving Africa's vision of an integrated, stable, peaceful and prosperous continent. The fourth aspiration of the African Union Agenda 2063, on silencing the guns, pledged to end all wars in Africa by 2020, thereby reaffirming peace and security as critical enablers for sustainable development and socioeconomic transformation.

My delegation is pleased to note that the African Union, through consistent and collaborative efforts with the United Nations and in keeping with its Master Roadmap of Practical Steps to Silence the Guns in Africa by 2020, has made progress in ridding the continent of a significant number of conflicts and in the management of others. While we applaud those achievements, we recognize that much more needs to be done to put Africa firmly on the path to achieving its targets in peace and security. Africa continues to

grapple with existential threats, including extreme poverty, the debilitating effects of climate change, violent extremism and the growing menace of terrorism, the illicit proliferation of small arms and light weapons, transnational organized crime, poor governance, inequality and marginalization, human rights violations and poor justice institutions. Those must be tackled if we are to consolidate the gains made so far.

The illicit manufacture and trade in small arms and light weapons is, perhaps, one of the biggest threats to peace and security in Africa. Addressing that challenge will require commitment to multilateral instruments, good practices, codes of conduct and standard operating procedures on illicit small arms and light weapons. We require new funding mechanisms and synergies in the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects; the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons; the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition; the Arms Trade Treaty; and regional instruments, such as the Economic Community of West African States Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons, Their Ammunition and Other Related Materials, in order to effectively address the illicit transfer, diversion, destabilizing accumulation and misuse of small arms and light weapons and their ammunitions.

Strategic and operational partnerships between the United Nations and the AU remain crucial to dealing effectively with the multidimensional nature of conflicts and threats to peace and security. In that regard, we welcome the Joint United Nations-African Union Framework for Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security, the Framework for Implementation of Agenda 2063 and 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and the joint declaration on cooperation in peace support operations. The convening of annual conferences, joint field visits by senior officials, regular consultations and coordinated action are welcome and must be further enhanced.

Ghana calls for support for the ongoing efforts of the African Union and subregional organizations, within the framework of the African Peace and Security Architecture, to strengthen capacity for peace support operations on the continent, in accordance with Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations,

particularly the African Standby Force and its Rapid Deployment Capability.

The lack of predictable, sustainable and flexible financing for AU-led peace support operations authorized by the Security Council remains a concern. Adequate resourcing of the peacebuilding components of the relevant United Nations peacekeeping operations and special political missions is critical to the continuity of peacebuilding activities and the sustenance of peace in countries coming out of active conflict.

We wish to reaffirm the role of women in conflict prevention, mediation and peacebuilding. The impact of the African Women Leaders Network and FemWise-Africa on those efforts is being increasingly recognized and must be supported as one of the concrete areas of collaboration and joint action between the United Nations and the African Union. The positive contribution of youth in Africa to peace and security must be given due currency in conflict prevention and conflict resolution through capacity-building and participation in peacebuilding.

The centrality of the rule of law, good governance and functional democracy as a preventive tool and in addressing the root causes of conflict cannot be overemphasized. Ghana is of the firm belief that measures to strengthen the rule of law, democracy and good governance, building accountable institutions, access to justice and respect for and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms should be at the core of our efforts.

In conclusion, I wish to reiterate the commitment of the Government of Ghana to peace and security within its borders and to playing a key role in subregional, regional and international efforts in mediation, the peaceful resolution of conflicts and peacebuilding. We see this as an important prerequisite for the socioeconomic transformation of Africa and to enable the continent to realize its potential and take its rightful place in global affairs.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Canada.

Mr. Arbeiter (Canada) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to thank Equatorial Guinea for having organized today's open debate on the African Union's Silencing the Guns initiative.

(spoke in English)

Guns are the weapon of choice in most conflicts around the world. For many communities across Africa, they are the true weapons of mass destruction. While firearms can be found almost everywhere, the specific reasons they pose problems in a given place are often tied to regional or national circumstances. It could be terrorism, organized crime, armed conflict or a combination of these or other factors.

In the past, we as an international community typically approached the firearms problem the same way we approached other weapons, such as nuclear or biological weapons, through broad international agreements. Canada continues to support this multilateral approach, but we have also learned that we need to look at the regional challenges of small arms and light weapons. They need a tailored and context-specific response.

The Silencing the Guns initiative is such a response, offering African solutions to problems faced by African countries. But we know that many of the challenges facing Africa did not start in Africa and have effects that go well beyond Africa. We therefore support local ownership of this initiative and recognize that all Member States have a stake in its success. Indeed, it is essential that all of us — Member States, the United Nations system as a whole, regional and subregional organizations — work together to realize this vision. In practice, this means strengthening our cooperation in conflict prevention, management and resolution, and joining forces to fully implement the Joint United Nations-African Union Framework for an Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security. As many delegations have already attested to today, this is an approach that enjoys full consensus. Moreover, we have seen that this is the kind of approach that deliver results. The recent signing of the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic very concretely demonstrated how close collaboration between the United Nations, the African Union and subregional organizations, working in partnership with local actors, can advance peace.

(spoke in French)

In seeking to silence the guns, we need to understand the disproportionate effect of conflict on women and the important role that women can play in the prevention and resolution of conflicts. In this regard, as the Permanent Representatives of Ghana and Ireland

have also underlined, we welcome the establishment of the FemWise-Africa network to strengthen the role of women in conflict prevention and mediation. It is also important to take the steps needed to address the financing issues related to peace operations led by African States. We should consider the use of United Nations-assessed contributions to address these issues.

Canada is actively engaged at the regional and national level in working towards the ultimate goal of silencing the guns in Africa. For example, with Sierra Leone, Canada is co-chairing the International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and State-Building. This is a partnership of the Governments of 20 countries affected by conflict and fragility, international development partners and civil society. In Mali, Canada has supported the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue to broker a ceasefire agreement that has helped to facilitate a disarmament process for local militias, in coordination with the Government of Mali. In South Sudan, Canada is supporting women's participation in the implementation of the revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict. With Ethiopia, Canada recently co-hosted a Peacekeeping Ministerial preparatory meeting on women, peace and security to increase women's meaningful participation in peacekeeping operations.

(spoke in English)

Canada was very pleased to co-sponsor resolution 2457 (2019), adopted earlier today. We will remain committed to the long-term success of the Silencing the Guns initiative. We share the principles underpinning the African Union approach — working together, including with multilateral organizations and regional groups, to sustain peace and protect our rules-based international order. This is an approach we hope to bring to the Security Council if we are elected to a non-permanent seat in 2021-2022. We are confident that, by working together, we can create a more prosperous, secure and inclusive world. We can silence the guns.

(spoke in Spanish)

Together, we can silence the guns.

The President *(spoke in Spanish)*: I now give the floor to the representative of Slovakia.

Mr. Mlynár (Slovakia) *(spoke in Spanish)*: I thank you, Sir, for having organized this important debate.

(spoke in English)

Let me congratulate you on your successful presidency of the Security Council and once again thank you for convening this very important open debate on the African Union Silencing the Guns in Africa initiative.

While fully aligning myself with the statement delivered earlier by the observer of the European Union, I would like to offer a few additional remarks in my national capacity.

My delegation supports the African vision of an integrated, stable, peaceful and prosperous continent. It is in this context that we welcome the African Union Commission's decision to silence the guns by 2020, which has great potential to contribute to peace, security and stability in Africa. In this spirit, we strongly support every opportunity to strengthen the cooperation between the African Union and the United Nations in support of African solutions to problems facing the continent. Naturally, Slovakia strongly supports every opportunity to strengthen the cooperation between the African Union and the United Nations in support of that particular endeavour.

In that context, we also decided to co-sponsor resolution 2457 (2019), which the Council adopted earlier. I would like to congratulate you, Sir, and all other members of the Security Council on that important step. Allow me to emphasize two points of substance.

First, we believe that all States should uphold their responsibility to protect populations by taking effective measures to address the root causes of violent conflicts, including the detrimental impact of small arms and light weapons trafficking. The consequences of the devastating impact of the illicit transfer of small arms and light weapons across Africa can be witnessed today, for example, in the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, South Sudan and elsewhere. I would like to highlight the importance of the Arms Trade Treaty, which contributes to improving regional security and stability, as well as the promotion of accountability, by establishing better controls for the transfer of conventional arms. Slovakia strongly encourages all Member States to ratify the Treaty.

Weapons are force multipliers. If the weapons situation is not consistently dealt with, exacerbation or relapse into renewed fighting remains a paramount risk. We therefore call for the full implementation of existing

international, regional and subregional instruments addressing the illicit trafficking and destabilizing accumulation and misuse of small arms and light weapons in Africa, including the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.

Today's concept note (S/2019/169, annex) noted that post-conflict countries' increased risk of relapse into conflict is also attributable to weak State institutions. We very much welcome that focus, which brings me to my second point. In that regard, I would like to highlight the important role of security-sector governance in conflict prevention and sustaining peace. In this respect, Slovakia welcomed the second African Union Forum on Security Sector Reform, convened in Addis Ababa on 22 October 2018, which discussed key challenges to moving this agenda forward in Africa. We were proud to be one of the international partners of the Forum, acting also in our capacity, together with our colleagues from South Africa, as Chair of the Group of Friends of Security Sector Reform, along with the African Union itself, the European Union and other partners.

During that initiative, we focused for the most part on similar issues, including the situation in the Central African Republic, which many speakers have mentioned today, and the recent signing of the agreement there, but also other issues, such as the role of women. In that context, I want to emphasize that in the next couple of weeks, two Groups of Friends — of Security Sector Reform and of Gender Parity — will co-convene an important event on 13 March that will focus on the issue of gender and the security sector and the nexus between them.

Returning briefly to the second African Union Forum on Security Sector Reform, I want to point out that it also identified challenges for the implementation of the security-sector reform component of the African Union Master Roadmap of Practical Steps to Silence the Guns in Africa by the Year 2020. The Forum recommended that the African Union Commission develop a three-year strategic plan on security-sector reform and establish a steering committee on the subject, in coordination with regional economic communities and regional mechanisms for conflict prevention, management and resolution. Along with the European Union, the United Nations is currently focused on supporting the African Union Commission in making progress in these activities in the context

of the triangular partnership that we have been very supportive of.

I want to further highlight the importance of the strategic partnership between the United Nations and the African Union on security-sector reform for the implementation of the African Union Master Roadmap. As a result of the Forum I just mentioned, the partnership remains focused on assisting the Defence and Security Division of the African Union Commission in finalizing the three-year strategic plan on security-sector reform. We welcome the development of the plan and urge all partners to support its implementation. It will serve as an important vehicle for advancing the African Union's leading role in security-sector reform. It will also mobilize assistance for implementing related security-sector reform tasks and the linkage to the AU Master Roadmap by 2020.

I want to once again congratulate you on this important initiative, Mr. President, and to assure you of our continued support in that regard.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Turkey.

Mr. Denktaş (Turkey): Turkey was a sponsor of resolution 2457 (2019), adopted this morning, and aligns itself with the statement made by the Head of the Delegation of the European Union. I would like to offer the following additional remarks in our national capacity.

I would first like to express our appreciation to the presidency of Equatorial Guinea for convening today's important open debate on an issue of great significance for all States Members of the United Nations. It testifies to the international community's willingness to pursue the ambitious but noble goal of creating an African continent free of conflict. We value the partnership between the United Nations and the African Union and other regional and subregional bodies on the continent. Turkey encourages the expansion of the United Nations-African Union partnership in areas such as institutional capacity-building, security-sector reform, the protection of civilians, human rights, gender mainstreaming and combating organized crime. This is crucial in tackling the root causes of conflicts, terrorism and violent extremism and fostering peace and stability. In that regard, the African Union initiative on silencing the guns by 2020 is a bold step in the right direction.

Peacekeeping is one of the areas where the collaboration between the United Nations and the African Union is most visible. Indeed, the African Union has become an established player in peacekeeping and peacebuilding efforts. We all acknowledge that restoring and maintaining peace in Africa is challenging. These efforts are being conducted in difficult security environments, as we have sadly seen in the recent attack near Bamako on peacekeepers from the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali. Here I would like to pay tribute to the United Nations peacekeepers who have lost their lives in the line of duty or who continue to put their lives at risk to that end.

We have already witnessed the positive effects of tangible cooperation between the United Nations and the European Union in a number of cases. Nowhere is that more evident than Somalia, where the African Union Mission in Somalia, working in collaboration with the Somali National Army, has created the political space that has helped to enable an environment for Somalia to lay the groundwork for restoring stability.

The international community must be vigilant in order to protect the hard-fought gains and investments in post-conflict areas recovering from devastating wars. Our commitment to supporting the positive changes on the continent should be unwavering. It will have far-reaching effects in improving the stability of the region, building a lasting peace and normalizing relations among the countries in the region. Again, the international community, the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations all have a role to play in helping to forge conditions that enable reconciliation through the various instruments at their disposal, including prevention, mediation and other conflict resolution approaches. We acknowledge the collaboration between the United Nations and the African Union as a model of cooperation that will offer useful lessons in the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts. In that regard, we commend the African Union's efforts to further strengthen all its existing tools for diplomacy, including the Panel of the Wise and the Continental Early Warning System.

I also want to underline, as have other speakers, the importance of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, as well as the Arms Trade Treaty, which Turkey has signed and hopes to ratify in the period ahead.

Mediation is at its best when we complement one another's efforts and facilitate ongoing endeavours rather than competing and duplicating. Together with Finland, Turkey co-chairs the Group of Friends of Mediation. With our extensive diplomatic network across the continent, we will continue to support diplomacy, mediation and other tools in the peaceful settlement of disputes in Africa. Turkey will continue to be an active member of the United Nations and a close partner of the African Union in the pursuit of silencing the guns and ending conflict on the African continent.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Tunisia.

Mr. Bougacha (Tunisia) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would first like to convey to you, Mr. President, and to our brother country of Equatorial Guinea, my sincere congratulations on your successful presidency of the Security Council in February. We also thank you for organizing today's open debate on cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union for the implementation of the initiative on silencing the guns in Africa by 2020.

I would like to thank Ms. Rosemary DiCarlo, Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, and Mr. Ramtane Lamamra, African Union High Representative, for their briefings. I also want to thank Mr. Vasu Gounden, who introduced the programmes undertaken in this area by the African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes.

African leaders announced their determination to put an end to wars in Africa by 2020 and make Africa a conflict-free zone. At the beginning of this month, they adopted the African Union Master Road Map of Practical Steps for Silencing the Guns in Africa by 2020, thereby reaffirming their collective political determination to prioritize the defusing of conflicts and overcoming other major challenges, such as fragile development, terrorism, organized crime, climate change and illegal migration, among other things.

Tunisia actively participates in the efforts of the African Union (AU) and the Security Council, in particular, and the United Nations, in general, to establish peace in Africa — from the 1960 Peacekeeping Mission in Congo to the deployment of an air transport unit in Mali at the beginning of this year. We have been contributing to the peaceful settlement of conflicts for decades. For example, a regional initiative launched in 2017 by President Essebsi, in coordination with

the Presidents of Algeria and Egypt, to support the comprehensive political settlement in Libya and give momentum to reconciliation and dialogue between Libyan brothers, as well as to support the efforts of the United Nations envoy in this fraternal country.

In addition to aligning itself with the statements made on behalf of the Group of Arab States and the Group of African States, Tunisia would like to underscore the following points.

First, the Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 2457 (2019), on supporting peace and security in Africa as well as supporting the African Union's Silencing the Guns by 2020 initiative. That is an important positive message from the Security Council, and the United Nations in general, of the very strong support for the African Union and the efforts of Africa and its leaders in conflict management. We co-sponsored the resolution to reiterate our support for all initiatives that ensure effective Council measures to maintain international peace and security, including in the African continent.

Secondly, the African Union currently has in place the necessary resources, mechanisms and political will to work in partnership with the Security Council in this vital area. It also works to further strengthen the existing means of preventive diplomacy at the African level, including the Panel of the Wise, the Continental Early Warning System and the African Peace and Security Architecture.

Thirdly, resolving the root causes of conflict is a key lever for protecting peoples and countries. We therefore reiterate Africa's efforts to achieve comprehensive, sustainable and inclusive development; to reaffirm democracy, the rule of law and good governance; and to promote human rights and the role of women and young people in all aspects of life.

Fourthly, the success of the Silencing the Guns by 2020 initiative is a sine qua non condition for the African continent to be able to fulfil the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the African Union's Agenda 2063.

Fifthly, institutional dialogue between the United Nations and the AU constitutes a solid foundation for an effective partnership that will be able to implement shared priorities. Undoubtedly, the genuine reforms undertaken simultaneously by both organizations demonstrate a shared vision and the importance

of adapting institutions to current situations at the international level.

The African Union Master Road Map of Practical Steps for Silencing the Guns in Africa by 2020 is one of the components of Africa's common action. The Road Map reflects Africa's aspirations to put an end to wars on the continent and focus on economic and development issues. We appreciate the Security Council's support for the efforts made towards the adoption of resolution 2457 (2019), which, we hope, will be followed by other resolutions along the same lines.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Eritrea.

Mr. Giorgio (Eritrea): Let me take this opportunity to thank Equatorial Guinea for organizing this open debate on the theme of silencing the guns in Africa, an important and timely topic for our continent. I also wish to thank His Excellency Mr. Simeon Oyono Esono Angue, Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Equatorial Guinea, for presiding over this Security Council meeting. Let me also thank Ms. DiCarlo, Mr. Lamamra and Mr. Gounden for their important briefings.

My delegation associates itself with the statement made by the representative of Benin on behalf of the Group of African States.

Africa is endowed with huge human and natural potential that can transform the lives of its people. The wave of decolonization in the twentieth century brought hope for collective work in the continent to ensure peace, justice and development and safeguard the independence and interests of African nations. In the intervening years, conflicts, political instability and undue external influence and interventions undermined national, subregional and continental efforts to translate that huge endowment into durable peace and sustained and inclusive development.

In Africa, from the East to the West and in the North, extremism and terrorism are spreading — taking advantage of State fragility and insecurity. The result is deteriorating conditions for millions of Africans, including intergenerational poverty and inequality, migration, environmental degradation and recurrent droughts. Nothing is more descriptive of the continent's situation than the fact that over 75 per cent of the Council's agenda is focused on Africa. Without discounting the complex challenges for the causes

and dynamics of inter-State and intra-State conflicts, Eritrea is a firm believer in Africa's potential to silence the guns and afford its citizens the life that they deserve. It requires political will to reclaim the priorities and the narrative of the continent.

There is a critical need for African nations to have a political space to chart their own development and political paths. What Africa needs is fewer external interventions and more partnerships. The region has to strengthen its own mechanisms for prevention, the peaceful resolution of conflicts and peacebuilding in order to avert violent conflicts and prevent post-conflict States from sliding back into conflict. Moreover, while the role of the Security Council in the maintenance of peace and security remains critical, it needs to revisit its approaches and interventions in Africa. There is a need for a paradigm shift. Trying to use the same approaches time and again will not help achieve better results.

The Horn of Africa is an example of a region that experienced decades of human suffering as a result of conflicts, with peace eluding many of its citizens for several decades. Yet, in recent months, the historic peace deal between Eritrea and Ethiopia has resulted in rapid positive changes marking the dawn of a bright era of peace, partnership and development for the entire region. The new-found peace has so far resulted in the opening of the border, allowed the movement of the two peoples across the common border, united families, sparked the resumption of trade, opened up communication links and avenues for cultural exchange, and more. An important takeaway from the new developments in the Horn of Africa is the importance of leadership, political will and ownership of conflicting parties to resolve their conflicts and move forward.

The recent peace has also opened doors for the consolidation of peace in the rest of the region. In the tripartite agreement signed among Eritrea, Ethiopia and Somalia, the countries agreed to cooperate in advancing the goals of their people, while promoting regional peace and security and building close political, economic, social, cultural and security ties. Moreover, at a separate meeting between the Presidents of Djibouti and Eritrea, they pledged to open a new chapter of cooperation in their relations. Those developments are the result of a courageous choice made to close the era of conflict and zero-sum games. The new peaceful dynamics in the Horn of Africa will give a huge boost for the ambitious objectives of the

Silencing the Guns by 2020 initiative. The citizens of the Horn of Africa have embarked upon an arduous journey of transforming the region for present and future generations. Determined to get it right this time around and make up for the lost decades and missed opportunities for peace and economic progress, there is a sense of great responsibility to ensure that what has been achieved so far is inclusive and sustainable.

In conclusion, while we hail the rapid progress of the past few months, we are mindful of the challenges in the region as also envisioned in Agenda 2063 in terms of sustainable development. We will be counting on the Council's solidarity to sustain the peace while yearning for the same for the rest of the African region.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of the Republic of Korea.

Mr. Cho Tae-yul (Republic of Korea): Please allow me to begin by commending your initiative, Sir, to convene today's open debate on this important topic. I would also like to thank all the briefers for their informative interventions. The Republic of Korea welcomes today's unanimous adoption of resolution 2457 (2019). As a sponsor of the resolution, we reaffirm our strong support for the African Union's (AU) Silencing the Guns by 2020 initiative.

Achieving a conflict-free Africa by 2020 is a very ambitious goal. However, over the past several years, much progress has been made in preventing and resolving conflicts in Africa. The list of successes includes peace agreements between the Government of the Central African Republic and 14 non-State armed groups and between Ethiopia and Eritrea, signed earlier this month and in September 2018, respectively. The role of the African Union in promoting peace and security on the continent has shown remarkable progress with its strengthened ownership and capacity in the context of the African Peace and Security Architecture. Regional economic communities and mechanisms are also playing an increasingly proactive role, as we saw when the Economic Community of West African States took the lead to help overcome political crises in the Gambia in late 2016 and deployed forces to maintain stability in the country.

Of course, conflicts in Africa are far from over, and the challenges facing peace and security on the continent are becoming increasingly complex. Persevering in confronting such challenges is a task that no single country, the United Nations or the AU,

can take on alone. Rather, it calls for collective efforts under a comprehensive political strategy that reflects individual region- and country-specific situations. It is against that backdrop that we believe the following three points should be highlighted in our efforts to silence the guns in Africa.

First, the partnership between the United Nations and the AU must continue to be strengthened. Both organizations should synergize their respective strengths. While welcoming the Joint United Nations-AU Framework for Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security, we believe that sharper focus should be placed on joint efforts to facilitate sustainable political solutions. A more effective division of labour among the United Nations, regional organizations and other stakeholders, and a closer alignment of the agenda between the Security Council and the AU Peace and Security Council, will help establish effective and durable joint decisions and actions. Furthermore, sustainable and predictable funding for AU-led peace operations will enhance their effectiveness, as would their compliance with the agreed norms pertaining to human rights, accountability and oversight. The Republic of Korea, for its part, is currently providing financial contributions to the AU Peace Fund. We are supporting the Office of the African Union High Representative for the Silencing the Guns by 2020 and the implementation of the AU African Union Master Road Map of Practical Steps for Silencing the Guns in Africa by 2020. We will continue to make our due contributions in those and other areas in future.

Secondly, as stipulated in the AU Master Road Map, more efforts should be made to address the root causes of conflicts, including economic and social disparities. Many of the crises and conflicts in Africa are being driven by poverty, human rights violations and inequality. Countries in transition to post-conflict reconstruction often relapse into violence, thereby finding themselves trapped in a vicious cycle of conflict. It is therefore critical to holistically address the entire peace continuum, from prevention to peacebuilding, to reconstruction and reintegration and to long-term development. It is also crucial to strengthen the nexus involving peace, development, and humanitarian assistance, thereby eliminating the structural factors that contribute to groups and communities relapsing into violence.

It is against that backdrop that the Republic of Korea, as Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission

in 2017, took the lead in assisting the Gambia in its peacebuilding efforts during its critical time of transition. The Commission also held a joint meeting with the Economic and Social Council to address the social and economic dimensions of the challenges of the Sahel, deliberating on how to better work with other stakeholders to bring about a cross-pillar, coherent and integrated approach to peacebuilding. Working with the United Nations, the AU and Mali, my Government also deployed a level 2 hospital in Gao, Mali, last year. The hospital, which treats both military personnel and civilians, aims to help the Malian Government fight violent extremism by winning the hearts and minds of the local population through improved provision of basic services. Furthermore, as a member of the Steering Committee of the Global Coalition for Reintegration, as well as the Group of Friends of Reintegration of Child Soldiers, the Republic of Korea will continue to play an active role in improving and garnering international support for the reintegration of former child soldiers in Africa.

Thirdly, priority should be given to addressing the illegal trafficking, circulation and use of small arms and light weapons (SALW). The proliferation of SALW puts civilians at risk, destabilizes communities and limits economic and social development. Furthermore, those weapons spill over into neighbouring societies, fuelling conflict and criminal violence. Over the past 50 years, Africa has suffered no less than 5 million fatalities, of whom 90 per cent were civilians, owing to the scourge of SALW. As such, comprehensive and collective efforts are urgently called for. We must spare no effort to fully implement United Nations arms embargoes, as well as the relevant international and regional instruments, including the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. The Republic of Korea, through its financial contributions to the AU Peace Fund, will continue to support AU programmes to tackle the illegal proliferation of SALW. It is also important to empower the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), which establishes common standards for the international trade in conventional weapons, to which the Republic of Korea is one of the original signatory States and a State party. We firmly believe that the ATT is a powerful tool against the illicit and destructive trade in SALW.

As we hold today's open debate, a significant effort towards achieving a nuclear-free and peaceful Korean

peninsula is taking place in Hanoi, Viet Nam. In hoping that regional peace initiatives in various parts of the world will inspire everyone in the quest for a peaceful and prosperous future, the Republic of Korea is committed to working closely with African States as well as the United Nations, the AU and other regional and subregional groups in moving towards our shared goal of silencing the guns in Africa.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Ethiopia.

Mr. Woldeyes (Ethiopia): We express our appreciation to the Equatorial Guinea presidency for organizing this open debate on an important agenda item the implementation of which has paramount significance for the peace and stability of our continent. We also commend your delegation, Mr. Minister, for its important role in facilitating negotiations on resolution 2457 (2019), which was unanimously adopted by the Council today. As a former African member of the Security Council and Chair of the initial debates on the issue of the Silencing the Guns by 2020 initiative at the African Union (AU) level in 2013, Ethiopia is pleased to have worked with you, Sir, in that endeavour. We thank Ms. Rosemary DiCarlo, Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, and Mr. Vasu Gounden, Founder and Executive Director of the African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Dispute, for their briefings. We are also very grateful for the briefing by Mr. Ramtane Lamamra, High Representative of the African Union for Silencing the Guns in Africa, whom we have always appreciated for his distinguished service in the field.

Ethiopia associates itself with the statement made by the representative of Benin on behalf of the Group of African States.

The issue of silencing the guns in Africa is very important. It is one of the building blocks of the African Union's Agenda 2063, its 2013 fiftieth-anniversary solemn declaration, and its strong Vision 2020, aimed at ending all conflicts on African soil by 2020. Today's debate builds on the important discussions held at the level of the Council's Ad Hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa, which Ethiopia chaired in 2017 and 2018. We should also recall that the three African members of the Security Council, together with other partners, organized an Arria Formula meeting on the topic last year. Furthermore, the issue was on the agenda of the twelfth

annual consultation between members of the Security Council and the African Union Peace and Security Council, in which the two Councils exchanged views on their possible cooperation in implementing the AU Master Roadmap of Practical Steps to Silence the Guns in Africa by the Year 2020.

Achieving the goal of a conflict-free Africa — making peace a reality for all our people, freeing the continent of wars, civil conflicts, human rights violations, humanitarian disasters and violent conflicts, and preventing genocide — is an important commitment that our leaders have made. As the concept note (S/2019/169, annex) rightly indicates, that is indeed the overarching objective guiding the efforts of the African Union to ensure a peaceful and secure Africa while laying a solid foundation for the implementation of Agenda 2063, the AU's strategic framework for inclusive growth and sustainable development. The AU Agenda 2063 is in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the sustaining peace agenda, and it will contribute significantly to helping to realize the solemn pledge in the Charter of the United Nations to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war.

We note the measures so far taken to implement the goal of silencing the guns in Africa by African Union member States and regional mechanisms, as well as by other relevant stakeholders. We particularly appreciate the adoption of the African Union Master Roadmap in the context of the implementation of the African Peace and Security Architecture and the African Governance Architecture. While we know that many have their doubts about the realization of this noble objective, there have indeed been recent positive developments that have rekindled our hope and optimism about the possibility of achieving the objective of silencing the guns in Africa. In our region, the signing of the revitalized peace agreement between the parties in South Sudan has restored belief in the possibility of ending the fighting that has been going on there for the past five years. We are confident that the recently reported clashes will not lead to an unravelling of the situation in that sister country.

The rapprochement between Ethiopia and Eritrea has not only ended the long-standing no-war-no-peace situation between our two countries, it also heralds a new era of regional peace and stability in the Horn of Africa. Our two countries are working to solidify the recent gains by taking concrete steps to cement the relations between our peoples. Djibouti and Eritrea

have also started to restore their bilateral relations, thereby also strengthening regional peace and stability. Ethiopia and the entire region remain actively engaged in facilitating the normalization of relations between the two countries. As the United Nations and the African Union have recognized, those positive developments represent a significant milestone with far-reaching positive consequences for the Horn of Africa and in the context of Vision 2020.

Besides this, the recent signing in Khartoum of a global agreement for peace and national reconciliation between the Central African Government and 14 armed opposition groups is an essential and decisive step forward, as Special Representative Parfait Onanga-Anyanga recently told the Council (see S/PV.8467). The peaceful holding of elections and transfer of power in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is also a welcome development. Those and other positive developments are not only encouraging us to do more but also enabling us to renew our efforts to silence the guns on our continent.

We know full well that there are no quick fixes or easy solutions to the complex peace and security challenges that we are facing, and that situation is further compounded by new and emerging challenges. That said, we have no option but to continue striving to achieve this noble objective in order to realize our aspirations for socioeconomic development. It requires that we strengthen the African Peace and Security Architecture, and the ongoing reform efforts in the African Union are also expected to help strengthen Africa's capacity in the areas of peace and security. In particular, the efforts being made to mobilize resources from within the continent through the revitalized Africa Union Peace Fund in order to finance Africa's needs in the area of prevention and mediation to ensure long-term peace and security are a significant step in the right direction.

We of course recognize that the building of a conflict-free Africa essentially rests with us Africans. That is why we will continue to strive to find home-grown solutions to our problems. That notwithstanding, international cooperation and partnership are vital to effectively addressing every threat to peace and security in Africa and to accelerating progress towards silencing the guns. That is the fundamental reason that we believe the partnership between the African Union and the United Nations is an absolute necessity. Implementing the important resolution (2457 (2019))

that the Council adopted earlier today will certainly go a long way to enhancing the partnership of the African Union and the United Nations in the areas of peace and security by strengthening their efforts to coordinate their engagement in a mutually supportive manner across the range of possible responses to conflict, from prevention and mediation, to peacekeeping and peacebuilding, and to post-conflict recovery and, subsequently, development.

In conclusion, we very much hope to see our organizations' enhanced cooperation and partnership in the coming years, and we appreciate the dedicated leadership of both Secretary-General António Guterres and Chairperson Moussa Faki Mahamat in that regard. We also hope the Council will move from rhetoric to action by taking concrete steps to strengthen its cooperation and partnership with the African Union Peace and Security Council. The adoption of resolution 2457 (2019) is a very important step. We trust that the Council will take a further decisive step towards the financing of African-led peace support operations in due course.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Brazil.

Mr. Giacomelli Da Silva (Brazil): At the outset, allow me to thank the Permanent Mission of Equatorial Guinea for organizing this open debate, as well as all the briefers and delegations for their valuable inputs reflecting on the ways in which the United Nations can contribute to the high aspiration of silencing the guns in Africa. I would like to highlight two positive innovations in the way that the United Nations is contributing to the peace process in Africa — the acknowledgement of the primacy of politics and the commitment to more continuous engagement aimed at improving the structural foundations of peace.

Brazil has always been a resolute supporter of the primacy of politics. We welcome the fact that there are currently peace agreements serving as platforms for reconciliation and political dialogue in all the United Nations peacekeeping settings in Africa. As shown during the negotiations of the peace agreements in Mali and South Sudan, regional actors and neighbouring countries often have a unique perspective of conflict dynamics and can play a decisive role in facilitating discussions and bridging positions between conflicting parties.

The fluid collaboration in the Central African Republic between the United Nations and the African Union was paramount in the signing of the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in Bangui earlier this month. The support given by the Peacebuilding Support Office to the mediation, led by the African Initiative, illustrates the commitment of the United Nations to more flexible engagement in building and sustaining peace in Africa.

We wish to highlight the indispensable role played by women in conflict prevention and resolution, as well as in peacebuilding. In that regard, Brazil welcomes the appointment of a Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security by the African Union to facilitate the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). We also hail the fact that 23 African countries have already developed their own national action plans to implement that agenda. Heeding the calls of civil society and young people can also contribute to better-tailored engagement efforts and more inclusive agreements, which will surely last longer.

In a growing number of debates at the United Nations we are finding overwhelming support for yet another important innovation in our collective contribution to peace efforts in Africa — a shift from a crisis-oriented approach towards more continuous engagement in longer-term efforts to build lasting peace. For instance, it is essential that, after the signing of peace agreements, their implementation receive strong support from the international community. When peace dividends are concretely experienced by local communities, the risk of a relapse into conflict decreases considerably.

From our experience presiding over the Guinea-Bissau configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission, we can attest that communities that have experienced conflict often have pressing and structural demands in terms of reconstruction and development. They therefore benefit greatly from sustained international support during a sequence of election cycles and Government administrations.

That is why it is so important that we remain committed to the strengthening of the peacebuilding architecture, in particular to achieving a quantum leap in the Peacebuilding Fund, and in that regard as well there is room for deepening our collaboration with African institutions that specialize in peacebuilding,

such as the recently created African Union Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development Centre in Cairo.

The ideal of silencing the guns in Africa indeed seemed to be an ambitious goal when it was established back in 2013, during the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of pan-Africanism. Brazil is proud of having participated in that process at the highest level and having witnessed such an inspiring demonstration of African solidarity.

It is even more inspiring to know that we have already come a long way since then and to realize that

the Vision 2020 finally appears to be within our grasp. Through the innovative cooperation channels between the United Nations and African institutions, we have achieved functional tools to meet peace and security needs across all phases of the peace continuum. Our best hope is that, by reinforcing our cooperation and strengthening non-military means to address security challenges, we might well realize the promise of an African continent free of conflict. What better legacy could we leave for generations to come.

The meeting rose at 5.45 p.m.