



General Assembly Security Council

Distr.: General
1 August 2017

Original: English

General Assembly
Seventy-second session
Item 67 (b) of the provisional agenda**
**New Partnership for Africa's Development: progress in
implementation and international support**

Security Council
Seventy-second year

Causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

In the present report, submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution [71/315](#), progress made since the submission of the report of the Secretary-General on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa ([A/65/152-S/2010/526](#)) is reviewed.

The present report covers the period from July 2016 to June 2017 and highlights major developments regarding peace and security and its interlinkage with sustainable development in Africa. Progress made by the United Nations system in implementing key priority areas identified in the review report is examined, as well as the support the Organization has been providing in the implementation of peace and security priorities contained in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063 of the African Union.

Consistent with the mandate of resolution [71/315](#) to develop policy proposals on persistent and emerging challenges confronting Africa, the role of regional organizations and their regional and international partners in sustaining peace in Africa, including the United Nations, as reflected in the Joint United Nations-African Union Framework for an Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security, signed in April 2017, is discussed in the present report. The importance of conflict prevention and the critical need to address the root causes of conflict in order to achieve sustainable peace are also highlighted. It is recommended, among other things, that the international community, including the United Nations, further strengthen political, substantive, institutional and financial cooperation with African regional and subregional organizations as first responders to conflicts on the African continent in their quest to sustain peace.

* Reissued for technical reasons on 15 September 2017.

** [A/72/150](#).



I. Introduction

1. In 1998, following a request from the Security Council ([S/PRST/1997/46](#)), the Secretary-General undertook a comprehensive analysis of the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa. In the subsequent report, he proposed specific measures to prevent, mitigate and reduce conflict, achieve peace and promote sustainable development on the African continent (see [A/52/871-S/1998/318](#)).

2. In its resolution [63/304](#), the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit a report reviewing the status of implementation of the recommendations contained in the 1998 report. Following broad-based consultations coordinated by the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, including with the United Nations system through the Interdepartmental Task Force on African Affairs, the Secretary-General submitted to the Assembly a review report ([A/65/152-S/2010/526](#)) outlining progress, recommendations and proposals for a renewed engagement with Africa.

3. In that report, it was highlighted that the United Nations system must establish the appropriate partnerships to enhance the capacity of African regional organizations as leading actors in the areas of peace and development on the continent. The African Union, in the solemn declaration adopted in 2013 on the occasion of its fiftieth anniversary, pledged not to bequeath the burden of conflicts to the next generation of Africans, and has been implementing the African Peace and Security Architecture. Furthermore, the concept of sustaining peace, including conflict prevention and post-conflict recovery, introduced in the report of the Advisory Group of Experts on the Review of the Peacebuilding Architecture ([A/69/968-S/2015/490](#)), confirms the interdependence of durable peace and sustainable development and the importance of promoting both sustaining peace and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

4. Against that background, the present report, prepared in consultation with the Interdepartmental Task Force on African Affairs, chaired by the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, provides an update on major peace and security developments in Africa (section II) and takes stock of key actions and initiatives undertaken by the United Nations from July 2016 to June 2017 to implement the recommendations of the review report (section III). The role of regional and subregional organizations in sustaining peace in Africa (section IV), as well as recommendations to enhance their role and their partnership with the international community, including the United Nations (section V), are also discussed in the present report.

II. Year in review

5. During the reporting period, Africa continued to make strong strides towards development, prosperity and peace. In line with the fourth aspiration of Agenda 2063, “a peaceful and secure Africa”, the African Union made the ground-breaking decision in July 2016 to institute and implement a levy of 0.2 per cent on eligible goods imported into Africa. The levy is intended to endow the Peace Fund of the African Union with an estimated \$400 million by 2020 with the aim of, among other things, providing reliable and predictable funding for peace and security and securing an equitable and predictable source of financing for the African Union, thus contributing to the establishment of the financial autonomy of the African Peace and Security Architecture. The decision was welcomed by the Security Council in its resolution [2320 \(2016\)](#). The African Union, under the leadership of

the President of Rwanda, Paul Kagame, also initiated an institutional reform process to transform the organization into a self-reliant continental body by 2018.

6. Member States of the African Union have devoted the year 2017 to harnessing the demographic dividend through investments in youth. In line with Security Council resolution [2250 \(2015\)](#) on youth, peace and security, in which the Council stressed the importance of creating policies on the engagement and participation of youth in political and peace processes, the African Union produced a road map in which it highlighted the need to invest in inclusive, representative and participatory political processes, under the pillar of rights, governance and youth empowerment. In January 2017, the African Union also endorsed a “master road map of practical steps to silence the guns in Africa by the year 2020”, which provides practical guidance to African countries, regional organizations and other partners in their efforts to promote peace and security on the continent.

7. With regard to governance, the African Peer Review Mechanism continued its revitalization process. In August 2016, various decisions and recommendations strengthening the human, financial and institutional capacity of the Mechanism were adopted at the African Peer Review Forum. Furthermore, in January 2017, African Union leaders expanded the mandate of the Mechanism in its monitoring and evaluation role for both the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063.

8. Overall, African countries achieved further economic growth, while at the same time addressing the root causes of conflicts, preventing and managing them, and in so doing, fighting against violent extremism and terrorism. Key economic achievements are outlined in the report of the Secretary-General on the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD) ([A/72/223](#)).

9. During the reporting period, seven presidential elections held in Africa saw the re-election of the Head of State in Cabo Verde, Gabon and Zambia and the transfer of power to another President in the Gambia, Ghana, Sao Tome and Principe and Somalia. Most of the presidential elections were conducted in an inclusive, transparent and peaceful manner, whereas a few other election results still posed challenges, adversely affecting political stability and socioeconomic development.

10. In the Gambia, the outgoing President rejected the results of the presidential election of December 2016, which increased political tensions in the country. In subsequent weeks, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the African Union and the international community, including the United Nations, undertook intensive negotiations leading to acceptance by the President to leave the country in January 2017, averting a military intervention by ECOWAS. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for West Africa and the Sahel engaged with all stakeholders concerned to help to resolve the crisis in the Gambia peacefully.

11. In Gabon, tensions remained high between the Government and opposition following the contested presidential election of August 2016. A Government-led national dialogue was launched amid a lingering crisis. Concerns raised by the opposition on the outcome of the dialogue further complicated reconciliation efforts and increased the risk of further violence. The United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA) remained actively engaged throughout the electoral crisis.

12. In the Central African Republic, progress in the political and security situation had mixed results. The Government has sought to drive reforms, re-establish key institutions and advance the dialogue process with all armed groups. The international community continued to provide critical support to the Government, including in the form of the African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation, led by the African Union with support from the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, the

Congo, Chad and Angola. The United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic also acted robustly to deter violence, protect civilians, support democratic institutions and foster political dialogue. The Mission will, through the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Central African Republic and Head of the Mission, continue to support national authorities in fostering peace and security, while UNOCA will advocate for constructive engagement to end the crisis at the subregional level.

13. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, political tensions rose as the second term of the President ended in December 2016. An interim solution was provided through a political agreement under the auspices of the Episcopal Conference of the Democratic Republic of the Congo in December 2016. The implementation of the agreement, however, has encountered numerous setbacks as a result of insufficient delivery on commitments and weaknesses in the organization of some political opposition actors. For instance, circumstances surrounding the signing of a special arrangement for the implementation of the agreement, the designation of a new Prime Minister and the formation of a new Government of national unity were denounced by parts of the opposition and increased political uncertainty. Meanwhile, armed groups in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo and militias in the Kasai regions continued to spread violence. The killing of two United Nations experts who had been conducting a Security Council-mandated investigation is now under investigation, while the Human Rights Council has established a commission of inquiry to look into broader allegations of violence. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Head of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) and the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes region remained fully engaged in supporting efforts to foster peace, security and development.

14. Somalia completed the transition to a bicameral federal parliament in which almost 25 per cent of the parliamentarians are women. Eighteen per cent of the parliamentarians are under the age of 35, while around half of those elected are new members. The parliament elected a new Federal President in February 2017. The seamless transition of power and swift formation of a new Government renewed momentum in advancing peacebuilding priorities. In March 2017, the Secretary-General visited Mogadishu and Baidoa in his first official field visit. He expressed his solidarity with the Somali people and praised their efforts towards the successful organization of presidential elections, despite the famine crisis caused by drought to which the Government had to respond with the assistance of United Nations system agencies and non-governmental organizations.

15. On the security front, the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) continued its fight against Al-Shabaab. As AMISOM reaches the tenth anniversary of its deployment in 2017, the building of Somali security institutions has become an urgent priority. In the past few months, consensus has emerged on a conditions-based transition from AMISOM to Somali security forces to allow for the establishment of a capable security sector.

16. There had been minimal progress towards implementing the Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan. In December 2016, the President of South Sudan announced the launch of a national dialogue initiative as a top priority for 2017. In view of continuing military offensives against opposition strongholds throughout the year, the announcement was received with considerable scepticism by opposition parties, civil society and faith-based organizations and still lacks credibility even after the swearing-in of an enlarged steering committee in May 2017.

17. The United Nations Mission in South Sudan continued to try to enhance the protection of civilians while facing considerable obstruction from government forces in conducting its operations. Although the alert of risk of famine in some areas has been lifted, 7.8 million people in South Sudan remain in need of humanitarian assistance. Military offensives and high levels of food insecurity have displaced more than 3.8 million people, making it the world's fastest-growing refugee crisis. The African Union High Representative for South Sudan and representatives of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) continue to be supported by the United Nations to promote a national dialogue and implement the peace agreement.

18. There was little progress during the reporting period with regard to efforts to improve and address outstanding post-secession issues between the Sudan and South Sudan. Progress has been lacking, in particular in the implementation of nine agreements signed between the two Governments on 27 September 2012. Despite continued engagement by the African Union High-level Implementation Panel, supported by the United Nations, no major progress has been achieved on temporary arrangements in the Abyei area or its final status.

19. Darfur has seen a considerable reduction in fighting between government forces and armed groups not party to a peace agreement. However, violent intercommunal disputes and widespread crime involving armed militias continue to generate insecurity and prolong large-scale displacement. The existing peace agreement has not been implemented fully, and negotiations with the non-signatories have stalled. The reconfiguration of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur is under way to reduce its footprint and focus on the protection of civilians and stabilization efforts.

20. In Guinea-Bissau, the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office and other international partners supported the ECOWAS-led mediation, which brokered a six-point road map, agreed on 10 September 2016, and the Conakry Agreement of 14 October 2016. ECOWAS prepared a viable way out of the crisis, but national actors have yet to take concrete steps towards the appointment of a consensual Prime Minister and the formation of an inclusive government. In June 2017, at a summit held in Monrovia, ECOWAS Heads of State and Government gave the parties to the conflict a further three months to break the political deadlock and extended the mandate of the ECOWAS security mission in Guinea-Bissau until the end of September 2017.

21. In Burundi, two years since the crisis began, the impasse has further deepened and the political space has narrowed. Despite some improvements in the security situation, killings, disappearances, arbitrary detentions, forced abductions and paramilitary activities of the Imbonerakure, the youth wing of the ruling party, are reportedly continuing under the current Government and its security forces. As a result, the economic development and humanitarian situations have severely deteriorated and a steady stream of refugees have fled to countries in the region. In that context, a United Nations police component mandated by the Security Council will be deployed. Meanwhile, regional efforts under the auspices of the East African Community continue to promote inclusive political dialogue.

22. Terrorism and violent extremism remains a major peace and security threat in Africa. Civilian populations, including women and children, and security forces in countries of the Lake Chad Basin (Cameroon, Chad, the Niger and Nigeria), Burkina Faso and Mali continue to be the target of terrorist attacks. In the most-affected areas, particularly in north-east Nigeria, more than 2.5 million people have become internally displaced persons, refugees or returnees.

23. The Multinational Joint Task Force, established by members of the Lake Chad Basin Commission and Benin, made tremendous efforts in dislodging Boko Haram from its previous strongholds. In February 2017, a renewed support implementation agreement and a memorandum of understanding between the African Union Commission and Task Force troop-contributing countries were signed with the support of the United Nations Office to the African Union. A similar regional initiative by Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and the Niger in deploying a joint force for the States of the Group of Five for the Sahel, which aims to address violent extremism and transnational organized crime in the Sahel, was authorized by the Security Council in its resolution [2359 \(2017\)](#). Serious human rights concerns continue to be reported in the context of the fight against Boko Haram, including executions and arbitrary detentions; those concerns will need to be urgently addressed by the Member States concerned.

24. In Libya, the situation remains tense and the transition process has not been fully implemented as parallel institutions continue to exist. The loss of control by the central governing institutions led to numerous non-State extremist groups gaining de facto control over some areas, which translated into increased illicit trafficking activities. The United Nations Support Mission in Libya continues to implement its mandate linked to the implementation of the Libyan Political Agreement.

25. In Mali, there were some positive developments, with the implementation of the peace agreement, including the establishment of interim authorities in each of the five northern regions, the holding of a conference for national harmony and the launch of a constitutional review process. However, key institutional and political reforms specified in the peace agreement remain pending. Persistent delays in its implementation have hampered the redeployment of the Malian defence and security forces and the re-establishment of State authority in the north and centre of the country. Against that background, insecurity continues to spread into central and southern Mali as well as at its borders.

Enhanced focus on the nexus between peace and development

26. In January 2017, at the high-level dialogue convened by the President of the General Assembly on the theme “Building sustainable peace for all: synergies between the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and sustaining peace”, mutually reinforcing linkages between the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and sustaining peace were discussed. The 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 both underline the importance of the nexus between peace and development and promote a comprehensive approach to advance sustainable development and achieve durable peace.

27. On 19 April 2017, the Secretary-General convened the first United Nations-African Union annual conference at United Nations Headquarters with the Chairperson of the African Union Commission. During the Conference, the need to promote synergies and complementarity between the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 and the fact that both agendas take a holistic and integrated approach to the important nexus between peace and development and to good governance was agreed on.

28. To enhance the peace and development nexus at the intergovernmental level, in June 2017 the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat and the Peacebuilding Support Office organized a joint meeting of the Economic and Social Council and the Peacebuilding Commission on the situation in the Sahel. Participants in the meeting stressed the need to avoid a disproportionate emphasis

on security and to address the root causes of conflict that pertain to the social, economic and environmental areas.

III. Implementation of the recommendations contained in the review report

29. The present section highlights recent initiatives and actions undertaken by the United Nations system to implement recommendations contained in the comprehensive review report ([A/65/152-S/2010/526](#)).

A. Institutional cooperation

30. In December 2016, the General Assembly adopted resolution [71/254](#) on the Framework for a Renewed United Nations-African Union Partnership on Africa's Integration and Development Agenda 2017-2027. The partnership provides an overall platform for United Nations-African Union cooperation through the Regional Coordination Mechanism for Africa, which will enable the United Nations system to deliver comprehensive programmes of support to the African Union and regional economic communities with the effective, coherent and coordinated implementation of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda.

31. During the first United Nations-African Union annual conference, the Secretary-General and the Chairperson of the African Union Commission signed the Joint United Nations-African Union Framework for an Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security. The Framework is aimed at strengthening cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union through a more strategic, systematic and predictable partnership based on their respective comparative advantages and complementarity in peace and security, and at increasing coordination and operational synergies in addressing security challenges in Africa throughout the conflict cycle.

32. In October 2016, the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa co-organized with the Economic Commission for Africa and the Department of Public Information the 2016 Africa Week, on the theme "Strengthening partnerships for inclusive sustainable development, good governance, and peace and stability". The week-long high-level events were organized in collaboration with the African Union, the NEPAD Planning and Coordination Agency, the African Peer Review Mechanism, regional economic communities and members of the Interdepartmental Task Force on African Affairs. The week provided an effective and inclusive global platform for fostering sustainable development in Africa through strengthened partnerships.

B. Conflict prevention, peacekeeping and conflict management

33. On the basis of their respective mandates, entities of the United Nations system continued to provide support in addressing conflict in Africa. To re-establish intercommunal dialogue around land use, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) established a community-based animal health service in the disputed Abyei Administrative Area between the Sudan and South Sudan. This livelihoods project was focused on promoting social stability among the Ngok Dinka and Misseriya communities. It is being expanded to other border areas of South Sudan and its neighbouring countries.

34. A new joint programme on gender, natural resources and peacebuilding has been established by the United Nations Environment Programme, the United

Nations Development Programme, the Peacebuilding Support Office and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women). The initial pilot project has begun in North Kordofan. The Global Acceleration Instrument for Women, Peace and Security and Humanitarian Action of UN-Women mobilized \$6.7 million in its first year. In Burundi, women mediators, supported by the Instrument, remained a powerful force for conflict resolution, with over 600,000 people participating in local-level dialogues.

35. With regard to conflict prevention related to resource management, an African intergovernmental initiative on sustainability, stability and security, launched at the twenty-second session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, held in Marrakech, Morocco, in November 2016, is aimed at, among other things, preventing the emerging threats on natural resource depletion and mismanagement. The secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa, acts as the secretariat of the task force for the initiative.

36. With regard to prevention aspects related to child protection from violence, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict has developed an action plan to end and prevent child recruitment and use and to prevent sexual violence against children, signed with the Coordination des mouvements de l'Azawad in Mali, and an action plan to end and prevent child recruitment and use in the Sudan, signed with the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North.

C. Post-conflict peacebuilding and recovery

37. The United Nations system provided focused policy and project support to assist African countries with post-conflict recovery. In Mali, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) supported an "education for peace" project involving 355 schoolchildren in Timbuktu. A total of 495 other children were trained as "back-to-school ambassadors" to sensitize their own community through interpersonal communication and discussions around peace and social cohesion. Through community dialogues and radio programmes aimed at providing youth with the right tools to promote peace and understanding, the children contributed to disseminating their knowledge and influencing 325,000 parents on the importance of peace, cohesion and stability. The International Labour Organization promoted decent work as a tool for peacebuilding and resilience in Africa through the Labour Market Statistics and Analysis Academy, organized from 24 October to 4 November 2016 in Côte d'Ivoire.

38. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), in the *Economic Development in Africa Report 2017*, highlights that tourism has the potential to reduce the risk of conflicts, enhance peace through employment creation and promote socioeconomic development. The United Nations University-Maastricht Economic and Social Research Institute on Innovation and Technology assessed the unconditional cash-based assistance programme in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo and ascertained the programme's positive influence on household investments in livestock, increased school enrolment and improved resilience.

D. Sustained economic growth and sustainable development

39. To promote Africa's socioeconomic development and resilience to address the root causes of conflict, the United Nations system continued to provide a wide range of support. The Office of the Special Adviser on Africa and UNCTAD co-organized a high-level meeting on tourism and sustainable development in Africa in collaboration with the World Tourism Organization in July 2016. The meeting provided a unique platform for stakeholders in the tourism sector to discuss their contributions to Africa's achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. The Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States provided global platforms for knowledge-sharing on the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020 (Istanbul Programme of Action) in Africa by organizing meetings on sustainable energy in Dar es Salaam, United Republic of Tanzania, in December 2016 and on broadband connectivity in Dakar in February 2017.

40. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat provided advisory services to Guinea to develop e-governance in the country's sustainable development strategies and to bolster institutional and human resources to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. In South Sudan, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, in cooperation with Canada, implemented an \$11 million project supporting fishing communities and industries, aimed at improving food security, creating jobs and sustaining the fisheries sector. The International Fund for Agricultural Development has been collaborating with NEPAD under the Initiative for Food and Nutrition Security in Africa to support the delivery of effective multisectoral nutrition interventions by Governments.

E. Human rights and humanitarian affairs

41. Following decisions made at the World Humanitarian Summit, the United Nations country team in Nigeria, led by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, developed a joint vision and a "critical path" towards a coordinated platform for the delivery of humanitarian and development assistance in the north-eastern area of the country, transcending the humanitarian-development divide in line with the new way of working.

42. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights is providing technical, financial and human resources support to, among other things, the development of the 10-year action plan of the African decade of human rights (2016-2026) that will be submitted for adoption at the African Union summit in January 2018. The action plan is a continental action-oriented blueprint to advance the human rights agenda. Support and collaboration is also ongoing between the United Nations and the African Union with regard to the implementation of the United Nations human rights due diligence policy in joint action by the two organizations.

F. Governance, rule of law and the administration of justice

43. On the margins of the sixth Tokyo International Conference on African Development Summit, the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, together with the Government of Kenya, the African Union and the African Peer Review Mechanism secretariat, convened a high-level event on support by the Tokyo International Conference for good governance in Africa. The event advocated for the Conference

process to provide technological and financial support to the Mechanism and for the operationalization of the proposed African human security index, as outlined in Agenda 2063.

44. The United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali and UN-Women provided support to State authorities in Mali to restore the rule of law, improve women's access to justice and fight impunity. They also supported the Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission in Mali on gender and transitional justice. The International Maritime Organization is working with the Federal Government of Somalia and Somali regional authorities to re-establish a maritime administration, including the updating of the country's maritime code and associated legal and organizational frameworks.

G. Women's empowerment and gender equality in peace and security

45. FAO continued to work on issues related to food security and agriculture, which include gender equality, women's empowerment and protection from gender-based violence. For example, FAO-Dimitra Clubs, which represent a signature gender-sensitive approach for community-based participatory development, are deployed across hundreds of rural communities in African countries.

46. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights has been supporting the Special Rapporteur on the rights of women in Africa of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, as well as many initiatives on gender equality and women's rights with the African Union Commission, in areas such as gender and countering violent extremism and child, early and forced marriage. The Office is also promoting the development of standard manuals on human rights monitoring and incorporating human rights and gender perspectives in the African Union election observation manual.

H. Security sector reform and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration

47. The United Nations Office to the African Union and the World Bank supported the African Union in developing a programme proposal that gives strategic guidance as it moves into the second phase of its disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme (2017-2019). The proposals include the provision of operational support to disarmament, demobilization and reintegration interventions, the solidification of collaboration between the African Union, the United Nations and the World Bank on the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme, and the identification of strategic priority areas.

48. UNICEF supported the release of a total of 7,590 children associated with armed forces and groups through official disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes in the Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of the Congo in 2016. Around 12,600 other children associated with or suspected of association with armed forces and groups were released in the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Lake Chad Basin countries and Mali.

I. Combating the proliferation of illicit small arms and light weapons and transnational organized crime

49. The Office for Disarmament Affairs is contributing to the implementation of the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel through a three-year capacity-building project to combat illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons. Additionally, within the context of the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force, the Office is providing training on small arms control to Lake Chad Basin countries to prevent the diversion of weapons to non-State armed groups.

J. Countering terrorism and violent extremism

50. Facing growing threats posed by terrorism and violent extremism, the United Nations system provided reinforced support to Africa. The Office of Counter-Terrorism is providing assistance through projects to promote a strategic approach to capacity-building in the areas of border security and mitigating the foreign terrorist fighter phenomenon and kidnapping for ransom, among others. Support is also being provided to Eastern, Central and Southern Africa to develop and implement regional strategies in countering terrorism and violent extremism.

51. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime continued to promote the ratification and implementation of 19 international legal instruments on preventing and combating terrorism. It also delivered technical assistance and training to several countries of the Maghreb on counter-terrorism legislation and international cooperation on criminal matters.

IV. Persistent and emerging challenges confronting Africa: the role of regional and subregional organizations in sustaining peace

52. Pursuant to General Assembly resolution [71/315](#), the present section highlights persistent and emerging challenges facing Africa. As sustaining peace is one of the most pressing of these issues, the present report is focused on the role of regional and subregional organizations in achieving this goal. Since taking office early in 2017, the Secretary-General has shared his vision on prevention and sustaining peace and has been vigorously promoting and advocating for this agenda.

53. In its report, the Advisory Group of Experts on the Review of the Peacebuilding Architecture underlined the need for comprehensive approaches to conflict and stressed that sustaining peace should be treated not only as a post-conflict activity, but as a priority activity to be carried out during all stages of the conflict cycle. It also highlighted the necessity of fostering inclusive national ownership in sustaining peace and called for stronger partnerships with regional organizations. These salient points were reflected in Security Council resolution [2282 \(2016\)](#) and General Assembly resolution [70/262](#) on the review of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture, both adopted on 27 April 2016.

54. In Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations, the essential role of regional arrangements for the maintenance of international peace and security is recognized. As regional organizations are closer to conflict zones, their proximity often gives them a much deeper insight of the context and dynamics of conflicts in the region. Regional organizations would have stronger incentives to resolve conflict as it may easily spill over into neighbouring countries. While geographical

proximity may create national interests that may not have a positive impact on conflict resolution, proximity also reduces the cost of intervention.

55. In addition, the role of regional organizations in sustaining peace has become increasingly critical, especially in the face of emerging cross-border threats such as violent extremism, terrorism and transnational organized crime in the Lake Chad Basin, the Horn of Africa and the Sahel, among other areas, as well as in several post-conflict settings in African countries in which there is a relapse into conflict. Furthermore, a few fragile and complex emergencies are still bedeviling Africa and resisting all existing conflict management frameworks.

A. Sustaining peace and creating an enabling environment for peace in Africa: norms, policies and structures

56. In 2002, after the signing of its Constitutive Act, the African Union adopted the Protocol relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union, following which the African Peace and Security Architecture was established. The goal was to provide African solutions to African challenges on peace and security matters. The main pillar of the Architecture is the Peace and Security Council, supported by the Panel of the Wise, the Continental Early Warning System, the African Standby Force and the Peace Fund. The Protocol sets out various mechanisms to sustain peace, ranging from conflict prevention and management to post-conflict recovery.

57. The eight regional economic communities and two regional mechanisms for conflict prevention, management and resolution, which are the building blocks of the African Union, have become essential components to achieving peace and security in Africa. All eight regional economic communities have adopted protocols, charters, treaties and strategies to prevent conflict and sustain peace. For example, the Protocol relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security of ECOWAS, adopted in 1999, complemented by the Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance of 2001 and the ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework of 2008, is arguably the most comprehensive protocol of a regional economic community relating to peace and security. ECOWAS has also established relevant institutions and programmes to sustain peace.

58. The implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063 will help to address the root causes of conflict, including by promoting equality, justice and good governance, fostering economic growth, providing access to education and health services and equal opportunities, building just and inclusive societies, empowering women and youth as agents of peace, and leaving no one behind. In this respect, as implementing agents for Agenda 2063, the regional economic communities play key roles in setting policies at the subregional level, including by aligning their strategic plans with Agenda 2063, implementing programmes such as the Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa and instituting regional monitoring and evaluation platforms.

1. Sustaining peace

59. In accordance with Security Council resolution [2282 \(2016\)](#) and General Assembly resolution [70/262](#), sustaining peace encompasses: (a) activities aimed at preventing the outbreak, escalation, continuation and recurrence of conflict, such as preventive diplomacy, early warning activities and mediation, and also post-conflict recovery and reconciliation to prevent a relapse into conflict; and (b) activities that contribute to and create an environment conducive to peace and development by

addressing the root causes of conflict, including reconstruction, capacity-building and resilience activities. These two categories of activities are intertwined and mutually reinforcing, which reflects the importance of coherent, integrated and comprehensive approaches. Also, the promotion of inclusive and strong institutions may prevent conflict from erupting in a post-conflict country or a country that has not experienced conflict but where risks exist.

(i) *Preventive diplomacy, mediation and early warning*

60. Conflict prevention is essential to sustaining peace. The African Union has set conflict prevention as a key strategic priority since it is more effective, averts human suffering and costs far less in both human and financial terms than responding to conflicts. In the African Peace and Security Architecture, the Panel of the Wise and the Continental Early Warning System are key mechanisms to prevent conflicts. The Panel consists of five eminent persons who provide support to the Peace and Security Council and the Chairperson of the African Union Commission on preventive diplomacy. Since many regional economic communities have also developed structures similar to the Panel of the Wise, in 2013 the African Union and the regional economic communities established the Pan-African Network of the Wise to promote coordination between actors involved in preventive diplomacy and mediation.

61. Preventive efforts contributed to diffusing tensions in many situations in Africa. For election-related conflicts, the African Union and the regional economic communities have advanced prevention mechanisms, including pre-electoral political missions and electoral observation and monitoring missions, for example, in the successful engagement of ECOWAS, the African Union and the United Nations in the peaceful presidential elections in Ghana in December 2016. At the same time, the African Union Panel of the Wise often faces difficulties in coordinating various preventive diplomacy processes as many separate yet often overlapping initiatives of different panels, representatives and envoys are designated by the regional economic communities, the African Union and the United Nations to try to address the same conflict situations.

62. The African Union developed the Continental Early Warning System, which collects and analyses peace- and security-related information to advise the Peace and Security Council through the Chairperson of the African Union Commission. Many regional economic communities have also established subregional early warning systems. However, there continues to be a space for reinforcing coordination between continental and subregional systems as well as among subregional systems. Few early warnings are systematically integrated into decision-making processes in a way that has consistently led to early responses. The establishment of clear channels of communication on early warning reports to decision-making bodies, including the Peace and Security Council, is essential, as noted in the master road map of practical steps to silence the guns in Africa by the year 2020 of the African Union.

(ii) *Post-conflict reconstruction*

63. Post-conflict reconstruction and peacebuilding are crucial to sustaining peace and preventing countries from relapsing into conflict. Some post-conflict reconstruction activities, such as disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, are designed directly to sustain peace, while other efforts, such as institution-building and post-conflict reconciliation, serve to create an enabling environment for peace and development. Post-conflict reconstruction also needs to address livelihood opportunities across a variety of sectors to ensure that sustaining peace is viable.

64. Within the framework of the African Union, the Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development Framework and the African Solidarity Initiative, which was initiated for mobilizing resources for the Framework, provide a framework for the design of post-conflict reconstruction activities. The African Union foresees the adoption of regional post-conflict reconstruction and development policies in every regional economic community. While the African Union has been implementing various post-conflict reconstruction and development initiatives in post-conflict countries such as the Central African Republic, Liberia and Guinea-Bissau, such programmes, including the African Solidarity Initiative, face persistent and serious challenges in mobilizing financial resources to effectively implement recovery projects.

65. At the subregional level, some regional economic communities have successfully implemented post-conflict reconstruction and development programmes, such as the IGAD training programme on security sector reform and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration in South Sudan and the trading for peace programme of the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa in the Great Lakes region. Many regional economic communities have yet to develop their post-conflict reconstruction and development frameworks and to reinforce their implementation capacities. Additional challenges were noted in the African Peace and Security Architecture road map for 2016-2020, such as the lack of a clear definition of responsibilities of the African Union and the regional economic communities, as well as the lack of regular exchanges among the communities.

2. Creating an enabling environment for peace

66. Effective conflict prevention needs to address the root causes of conflict by promoting sustainable socioeconomic development, good governance and respect for human rights. The African Union has addressed the structural causes of conflict in numerous key instruments. With regard to good governance and human rights, it established the African Governance Architecture, which includes the African Peer Review Mechanism, the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights and the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights. Agenda 2063 and its implementing arm, the NEPAD Planning and Coordination Agency, has also been pivotal in addressing socioeconomic development issues, including agriculture, infrastructure, energy and power, and climate change.

67. The African Union also developed the Continental Structural Conflict Prevention Framework, endorsed by the Peace and Security Council in 2015, to strengthen its long-term prevention activities. It described the Framework and the development of the country structural vulnerability assessment as a voluntary process. These new tools will complement existing mechanisms, including the African Peer Review Mechanism, to reduce the conflict vulnerability of member States. It is also important to underline the need for conflict-sensitive approaches, rooted in conflict analysis, when dealing with a fragile or post-conflict environment on the basis of the principle of "do no harm".

68. At the subregional level, the regional economic communities, as key pillars of the African Governance Architecture, have been striving to promote good governance and respect for human rights. Initiatives of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) to promote democracy and good governance include the adoption in 2004 of the Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections. Since 2008, ECOWAS has had a conflict prevention framework for promoting conflict prevention and human security, including structural conflict prevention. In a recent review of the ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework, however, it was noted that development partner support had been heavily focused on operational conflict prevention activities, such as early

warning, while structural conflict prevention activities, such as youth empowerment and natural resource governance, had received relatively little or no support.

69. The regional economic communities are vital to the promotion of inclusive sustainable development. As they were initially established to facilitate subregional economic integration, they have developed various instruments to that effect and play a central role in promoting trade liberalization through the establishment of the Continental Free Trade Area. In the long run, the efficiency gains caused by trade liberalization are expected to lead to positive employment effects, including improved youth employment. This therefore further contributes to the achievement of sustainable development and the creation of an environment conducive to peace and stability.

70. The African Union and the regional economic communities have been making great strides in norm-setting and policy development for the creation of an environment conducive to peace. However, the domestication and implementation of these policies and frameworks at the national, subregional and regional levels have not been executed speedily enough to effectively address the root causes of conflict owing to limited political will, inadequate monitoring and financial and technical constraints.

B. Partnerships with subregional and regional organizations in sustaining peace in Africa

1. Political cooperation

71. Political cooperation between the regional economic communities, the African Union and the United Nations enabled the successful resolution of political crises following presidential elections, such as in Guinea in 2015 or in the Gambia in December 2016. On those occasions, the responses of ECOWAS, the African Union and the United Nations proved to be swift and decisive. The international community spoke with one voice, including through joint communiqués. In Burundi in 2015, when the President expressed his intention to run for a third term, there was more difficulty in advancing peace because there was no political consensus among the members of the East African Community, the African Union and the United Nations. Ultimately, the lack of consensus contributed to prolonged political and social instability in the country.

72. Coordination, coherence and complementarity of perspectives and responses to conflict among subregional, regional and international institutions remain elusive. In the case of cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union, the annual consultative meetings between members of the Security Council and the African Union Peace and Security Council are therefore critical as they help both organs to reach a shared vision on conflicts and challenges in Africa before key decisions are made. In that regard, the role of the three non-permanent African members of the Security Council has been growing in sharing Africa's vision, perspectives and common positions at Council meetings. Similar consultations between the Peacebuilding Commission and the African Union Peace and Security Council could also be enhanced to promote political cooperation, along with closer coordination between the Peacebuilding Fund and the Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development Framework of the African Union. In that regard, the meeting held in Addis Ababa in October 2016 between the members of the Peacebuilding Commission and the African Union Peace and Security Council to discuss ways to enhance cooperation was an important step.

73. The necessity to promote political cooperation includes intracontinental relationships between the African Union and the regional economic communities, as well as among the communities. For example, the relationship between the African Union and the communities is not fully defined in the Protocol relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union. As underlined in the African Peace and Security Architecture road map, there is a need to further promote dialogue between the Peace and Security Council and similar organs of the regional economic communities. At the subregional level, although overlap in areas of responsibility among regional economic communities sometimes causes political tensions within the institutions concerned, there are good examples of collaboration, such as between SADC and the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region in their efforts to sustain peace in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

74. Lastly, some new regional peace and security initiatives have been developed to address emerging regional threats, including the Multinational Joint Task Force to fight against Boko Haram, the regional task force for the elimination of the Lord's Resistance Army, and the joint force of the Group of Five for the Sahel to fight violent extremism and terrorism in the Sahel region.

2. Institutional cooperation

75. Institutional and technical cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union and regional economic communities, including through the United Nations Office to the African Union, is vital to addressing peace and security challenges. The Office provides timely, coherent and coordinated strategic, operational and technical advice in prevention and mediation efforts, as well as in the planning and management of African Union peace support operations. Moving forward, the implementation of the Joint United Nations-African Union Framework for an Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security is an important step towards further strengthening the strategic partnership between the two organizations. The Framework provides guidance for concerted decision-making as well as joint strategy development and action to prevent and respond to conflicts and address their root causes.

76. At the subregional level, the United Nations has steadily been developing its institutional cooperation with the regional economic communities on peace and security. UNOCA enhanced its partnership with ECCAS within the context of their framework for cooperation and plan of action for 2017. The United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel and ECOWAS are currently developing a joint security sector reform and governance support programme to enhance capacity for implementation and provide support to member States. The Department of Political Affairs of the Secretariat has been reinforcing its partnership with IGAD on the basis of a framework for cooperation, and with SADC through the establishment of a liaison office in the SADC secretariat. Similarly, United Nations system agencies also provide support to regional economic communities, including support from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to IGAD on the regional solutions for Somali refugees and FAO assistance to strengthen the capacities of the IGAD Conflict Early Warning and Response Mechanism. At the global level, the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, through the organization of annual briefings given by the regional economic communities to Member States, provides a platform to the communities for global advocacy.

77. Sustaining peace cannot be achieved through institutional cooperation in the peace and security sector alone. Therefore, it is vital to reinforce comprehensive, complementary, coherent and coordinated institutional cooperation on a wide range of issues. Anchored in Agenda 2063, the partnership on Africa's integration and

development agenda provides the overall platform for cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union through the Regional Coordination Mechanism for Africa, enabling the United Nations system to better deliver programmes of comprehensive support to the African Union as well as the regional economic communities through subregional coordination mechanisms.

3. Financial cooperation

78. African regional organizations have been instrumental in addressing emerging peace and security threats, although they have been facing capacity gaps, including limited staffing, deficiencies in equipment, inadequate logistics and, especially, financial constraints. As identified in the African Peace and Security Architecture road map, notwithstanding several decisions made in the establishment of the Peace and Security Council, the African Union, regional economic communities and regional mechanisms still encounter challenges in assuming financial ownership of the Architecture and are highly dependent on bilateral and multilateral partners, including the European Union through the African Peace Facility.

79. To overcome those challenges, the African Union decided to operationalize the Peace Fund through a levy of 0.2 per cent on eligible imports to African countries. The levy is intended to endow the Peace Fund with an estimated \$400 million in 2020. If achieved, it would allow for the African Union to meet its own commitment to finance 25 per cent of the cost of its own peace support operation.

80. Direct financial support was provided by the Peacebuilding Fund to the African Union Commission to support African Union human rights observers in Burundi in May 2016, a pioneering step forward in legal and financial cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union towards conflict prevention and recovery. This catalytic funding ended in February 2017 following the decision by the European Union to support African Union observers in Burundi.

81. The aforementioned example proves that the international community, including the United Nations, can provide reinforced financial support to complement Africa's efforts in sustaining peace. With regard to peace operations, the Security Council, in its resolution [2320 \(2016\)](#), expressed its readiness to consider options in response to the African Union proposal to finance 25 per cent of the cost of such operations by 2020. This represents significant progress in advancing long-standing discussions between the two organizations on supporting operations. The updates and proposals requested by the Council were submitted by the Secretary-General in May 2017 (see [S/2017/454](#)) and the Chairperson of the African Union Commission in June 2017.

V. Conclusions and recommendations

82. The role of African regional and subregional organizations in sustaining peace has become more vital than ever given the evolving security landscape and the regional dynamics of conflict in Africa. Sustaining peace requires coherent, comprehensive and integrated interventions by African Member States, regional and subregional organizations and international partners. To prevent the eruption of armed conflict, conflict prevention and risk mitigation through early warning are crucial to address the root causes of conflict, particularly in fragile countries and post-conflict situations.

83. As first responders, the African Union, regional economic communities and regional mechanisms have been playing an increasingly proactive and fundamental role in addressing peace and security threats through the steady implementation of

the African Peace and Security Architecture. The international community needs to further strengthen cooperation with those actors through increased political, institutional and financial support. This would entail a bold vision and initiatives to explore innovative solutions and provide a better anticipation of needs on the continent.

African countries, the African Union and the regional economic communities

84. Sustaining peace requires enhanced and inclusive national ownership and leadership. This entails African countries strengthening the capacities of pre-existing local infrastructure for peace and establishing national policies to lay the foundations for sustaining peace. It also requires the full participation of partners and all segments of society, in particular women and youth, as well as other actors, including African regional and subregional organizations, in peace and political processes and governmental efforts towards sustaining peace.

85. To address the root causes of conflict, African countries are encouraged to proactively participate in the existing mechanisms such as the African Peer Review Mechanism and the country structural vulnerability assessment of the African Union. It is also crucial to domesticate international and regional norms and policies, including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063, and to promote their effective implementation. Similarly, to advance implementation of both agendas, it is necessary to further reinforce institutional interlinkages at the continental level among the African Peace and Security Architecture, the African Governance Architecture and the development architecture of the African Union, such as NEPAD and other regional initiatives.

86. Enhanced links between early warning mechanisms and early responses are key to preventing conflict. The Constitutive Act of the African Union provides for the right of the Union to intervene in a member State, even against the will of the Government concerned, in case crimes against humanity are committed. To reinforce early warning systems, African countries and the regional economic communities are encouraged to further develop partnerships with the United Nations and civil society organizations, including youth and women associations, as well as faith organizations and traditional and religious leaders. Key actors at the grass-roots level often possess first-hand information on how to tackle the root causes of conflict and achieve peace and security.

87. With a view to generating a common understanding on sustaining peace in the country concerned, regional economic communities could play an interface role between national and subregional initiatives in a manner that is coherent with broader continental and international support.

88. To effectively address cross-border threats, including violent extremism and terrorism, regional economic communities should further develop political and institutional cooperation among themselves. To that end, reinforced collaboration among ECOWAS, ECCAS and the Lake Chad Basin Commission was encouraged by the Security Council in its resolution [2349 \(2017\)](#) through the development of a comprehensive strategy to address the root causes of the emergence of Boko Haram. The cooperation among the regional economic commissions could be replicated in addressing the root causes of conflict in the Sahel and other regions.

International community and the United Nations system

89. The international community, including the United Nations system, should strengthen its support for African regional organizations with regard to early warning systems, conflict prevention, including mediation, post-conflict recovery, capacity-building, resilience and other related issues. Technical support, such as

information-sharing and communications technology, should be provided for the reinforcement of early warning systems at all levels on the continent. Support for conflict prevention activities has often been overlooked by the international community, including in situations of humanitarian crisis.

90. The United Nations needs to provide more coherent, comprehensive, integrated and coordinated support to African regional organizations, especially through the implementation of the United Nations-African Union partnership on Africa's integration and development agenda. In that respect, all United Nations entities are encouraged to strengthen partnerships and collaboration at all national, subregional, regional and international levels through existing mechanisms. Development partners that intervene in a fragile or post-conflict setting should also integrate conflict-sensitive approaches, based on the principle of "do no harm", to their programmes and strategies.

91. As conflict situations become more complex and intractable, collaboration between the United Nations, the African Union and regional economic communities should be reinforced to strengthen their preventive efforts. The role of other stakeholders, including Special Representatives and Special Envoys of the Secretary-General, should also be reinforced. In that regard, collaboration among those players remains crucial for political consensus.

92. Notwithstanding the positive evolution of the African Union and the strengthened United Nations-African Union partnership, including on financing, as well as the commendable efforts of the African Union towards marshalling additional resources from African countries, the operationalization of the African Peace and Security Architecture still relies heavily on the support of the international community.

93. The United Nations will continue to work towards a shared vision for implementing sustaining peace in Africa and building a better future for its people. This vision needs to articulate clearly the objectives and roles that the United Nations and the African Union can play in a mutually reinforcing way. To assist African subregional and regional organizations in their efforts to strengthen the financial autonomy of the African Peace and Security Architecture, the United Nations and other partners are encouraged to develop innovative frameworks to mobilize funds for long-term and sustained financial engagements. Reinforcing the capacity of African countries and regional organizations on domestic resource mobilization would require support from international and regional financial institutions.