

Security Council Open Debate on Preventive Diplomacy Tools: Prospects and Challenges in Africa
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Statement by Ambassador Čolaković, Permanent Representative of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the United Nations

At the outset, I would like to commend you, Mr. President, and the mission of Nigeria for organizing this debate to discuss this pertinent topic. We would also like to thank the Deputy Secretary-General and Ms. Sarah Cliffe for their very informative briefings. T

This issue is of particular importance for our increasingly globalized world, in which social and political crises have the potential to create an atmosphere of tension that can erupt into acts of violence or lead to instability for countries or regions. In the past decade, peacekeeping has become the most important instrument of the United Nations in solving disputes and conflicts. Overstretched as it currently is, peacekeeping must encompass new initiatives and innovative methods for solutions helping to preserve or maintain peace. Those measures not only represent a peaceful alternative but are also less costly.

Addressing and solving contemporary conflicts requires an integrated approach with complementary tools such as mediation, negotiation, dialogue or conflict resolution and management. Bosnia and Herzegovina emphasizes the role of intercultural and interreligious dialogue in advancing regional cooperation and solving some of the difficulties. We are convinced that this is a necessary measure in order to build confidence and trust.

The links between security and development are mutually reinforcing. Therefore, conflict prevention should address the root causes of conflict in a comprehensive manner, including the promotion of sustainable development, good governance, rule of law, national reconciliation and poverty eradication. Building preventive diplomacy capacity involves national, regional and, finally, United Nations expertise. The assessment of early warning information coming from the United Nations system should be timely in order to enable good policy options and decisive actions.

Bosnia and Herzegovina attaches great importance to enhanced cooperation between regional and subregional organizations and the United Nations. Strengthening cooperation and strategic partnership among the United Nations, the African Union and the European Union is of key importance for enabling early responses to disputes or emerging crises.

Pursuing effective peacekeeping and peacebuilding strategies should be based on flexibility and on making use of each partner's comparative advantages. This is relevant not only in terms of knowledge on the ground and exchanges of experience, but also for the training of military experts and the development of civilian expertise.

We welcome the progress made in recent years in the implementation of the Ten-Year Capacity-Building Programme. We urge the United Nations to increase its engagement to make African Peace and Security Architecture fully operational as soon as possible, in particular in the areas of early warning, conflict prevention, peacekeeping and training. Furthermore, we consider it crucial for the African Union to ensure leadership and ownership of the process.

The United Nations and the Security Council, which have the primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security, should invest more effort in conflict prevention, through such means as fact-finding missions, mediation and confidencebuilding measures and the appointment of special representatives, who could provide useful recommendations for the peaceful settlement of disputes prior to preventive deployment or enforcement measures.

We are convinced that support for regional mediation initiatives, in close consultation with regional and subregional organizations, is an important element of ensuring peace and security, not only within countries but also between countries. It is of vital importance that the Security Council be provided with regular reports and analyses on developments in regions of potential armed conflict in Africa, as well as on ongoing preventive diplomacy initiatives.

Regional conflict management structures should provide the Security Council with timely and rapid information to facilitate adequate and proper decision-making.

We must not exclude or underestimate negative developments in the economic, social and security sectors. Special attention should be given to monitoring tensions arising from economic and social issues and actions against the illegal exploitation of natural resources and high-value commodities.

Particular emphasis should be placed on programmes for the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of former combatants, as an integral element of peacebuilding activities. Strengthening the role and capacities of civil society groups and **women and their involvement in post-conflict peacebuilding activities** are necessary for the promotion of a culture of peace and economic empowerment.

In conclusion, cooperation should be strengthened in the deployment of peacekeepers and to more closely involve regional and subregional organizations in peacebuilding, post-conflict stabilization and reconstruction processes through the framework of the Peacebuilding Commission. Linking United Nations expertise and experts from regional organizations will significantly contribute to increasing the pool of available expertise.

Multilateral endeavours and actions should be focused on conflict resolution in a more transparent and open way. Short-term solutions should only pave the way for long-term approaches that require proper understanding of the root causes of conflict, which often lie in political grievances, underdevelopment, backwardness, lack of good governance or concerns related to the preservation of ethnic, cultural, national and religious identities.

Bosnia and Herzegovina believes that enhancement of consultations between the Secretariat and its counterparts at the regional and subregional levels will enhance complementarity and minimize duplication of efforts. Strengthening the input of regional organizations in decision-making and the peaceful settlement of disputes is crucial. At the same time, regional organizations can act as bridges when the ownership of peace processes is transferred from international to domestic authorities.