

Mr. Petersen (Denmark): I am honoured to speak today on behalf of the Nordic countries: Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden and my own country, Denmark.

The threats posed by terrorism, radicalization and instability constitute a challenge to all countries. Addressing them requires strong cooperation between all the parties involved. African countries are on the front lines in meeting those challenges, along with their partners, including the Nordic countries. The African countries shoulder their part of the burden when the African Union (AU) assumes responsibility for peace operations, along with regional economic communities; when African countries join hands to create multinational forces, like the Multinational Joint Task Force to fight Boko Haram in the Lake Chad region and the Group of Five for the Sahel joint force to combat terrorism and transnational crime in the Sahel; and when African countries make vital contributions to United Nations peacekeeping operations to keep them engaged, despite very complex situations.

In the Nordic countries, we welcome those efforts to meet the challenge of terrorism, radicalization and instability. We believe the strengthened cooperation on peace and security between the AU and the United Nations is key to enhancing our efforts and address the challenges. The next step is to ensure predictable and sustainable support to AU operations. The report of the Secretary-General (S/2017/454) issued on 26 May sets out useful options for support and joint decision-making. The Nordic countries strongly encourage the Security Council to give its consent to use, on a case-by-case basis, United Nations assessed contributions to finance AU peace support missions mandated by the Security Council. That will also entail close United Nations involvement, as highlighted in the report of the Secretary-General.

We welcome the signing in April of the United Nations-AU Framework for an Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security. The Nordic countries are particularly encouraged by the emphasis on prevention and root causes, strong themes in our countries' long-standing partnerships and cooperation with African partners. The Nordic countries have supported, among other things, African mediation and early-warning capabilities.

When the rule of law prevails and the voice of the people is heard, conflict can be avoided. The peaceful transition in The Gambia demonstrated that. Together with Economic Community of West African States, a number of African countries stepped in with decisive support for a peaceful solution for the people of The Gambia. That support is an important signal of African unity and regional ownership of a process leading to a more prosperous and democratic continent.

Accountability and inclusive peace processes lead to better and more sustainable results. In the peace processes where women and young people are included and exert real influence, peace agreements are more likely to be reached and the peace is more likely to last. Where women are involved in peacekeeping, the operations gain more trust from communities and respond more effectively to the needs of the local population. The

Nordic countries support the AU and many African countries in their endeavours to train more women, and to ensure that their police forces are responsive to the needs of women.

Enhancing African capabilities in the area of peace and security is a key contribution to regional and global security, and it is a key contribution to achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Nordic countries are supporters of the efforts of the AU in that regard. We welcome a strengthening the peace and security architecture of the AU and we hope it will bring greater coherence and high-level focus to such important issues.