

Mr. Donoghue (Ireland):

I thank Sweden for convening today's debate. I also thank Secretary-General Guterres for making clear his strong commitment to conflict prevention and sustaining peace.

We need to see the adoption in April last year of the two resolutions on sustaining peace (resolution 2282 (2016) and General Assembly resolution 70/262) as a turning point for the United Nations. Collectively, we are now charged with the responsibility of bringing the United Nations back more closely to the reason of its creation in the first place, that is, to prevent war, rather than to react once war has been waged, and to solve conflict, not merely to manage it.

I associate myself fully with the statement delivered earlier by the observer of the European Union. I now offer four additional points in my national capacity.

First, conflict rarely comes as a surprise. Human rights violations, hate speech and inter-communal violence are early warning signs of conflict, which is often in clear sight. The challenge is how to respond effectively to such signs with timely action. However, we are making progress. The Security Council has increasingly used the various tools at its disposal, including field visits, emergency any-other-business meetings and statements, to place stronger emphasis on conflict prevention. In addition, the Human Rights up Front initiative has allowed quick decisions to be made, including in the case of South Sudan.

However, more can be done to advance the recommendations made by the three reviews of 2015 and the subsequent sustaining peace resolutions. We would like to see a stronger voice given to those best equipped to flag early warning signs of conflict and make recommendations for action by the Security Council. In addition, we must enhance the flexibility and predictability of the funding needed for interventions that can prevent conflict. If funding is decided on a year-to-year basis or is rigidly earmarked, our capacity to intervene early and quickly to stop conflict from breaking out is significantly diminished.

My second point is that the root causes of conflict can be many and far-reaching. Tackling such root causes is the smart thing to do and is key to sustaining peace. The interlinkages among issues such as poverty eradication, creating sustainable peace, building human security and combating inequalities are critical underpinnings of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. They should not be addressed in isolation.

While the implementation of the 2030 Agenda is not primarily the responsibility of the Council, it is clear that the successful achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals will over time remove, or lessen, many of the factors that give rise to conflict and other threats to international peace and stability. Debates and briefings in the Council Chamber

increasingly recognize that reality and factor in issues of institution-building, governance, economic growth, migration and even climate change.

We applaud the Secretary-General for the emphasis he has placed on the need to address the root causes of conflict. He has stressed that the work of sustaining peace cannot take place in a vacuum. We look forward to the leadership of the Secretary-General and of the Council as we all work together to implement the sustaining peace resolutions in complementarity with the sustainable development and human rights agendas.

My third point is that conflict affects more than the warring parties. To address conflict, we must include everyone, especially civilians. When States and societies are fractured, we need to listen to civil society organizations and to ensure their participation in the achievement of lasting peace. Women must be involved at all stages along the peace continuum — from prevention to peace negotiations and post-conflict governance. Furthermore, the youth, peace and security agenda should be utilized to support initiatives on conflict prevention. Sustaining peace is an objective for all generations.

Finally, the role of regional partners cannot be overstated. Our efforts towards sustaining peace will fall short if we fail to draw on the expertise and experience of regional and subregional bodies.

The United Nations is operating in a constantly changing world. It is unlikely that those who drafted the Charter of the United Nations considered phrases such as “international terrorism”, “non-State actors” or “national reconciliation processes”. Nevertheless, although the times have changed and the terminology is different, the principles of the Charter remain pristine and absolute. To ensure that we are all part of a United Nations that is fit for purpose, our deliberations on sustaining peace must be conducted in a transparent and inclusive manner. We must all keep our eyes firmly on the prize of peace and reach an enhanced understanding of how lasting solutions to conflict can be achieved.