

Ms. Meitzad (Israel): On behalf of my delegation, I thank you for your leadership, Sir, as President of the Security Council, and I commend you for convening this important debate.

In recent years, innocent persons across Africa have endured unrelenting conflict due to the proliferation of terrorist groups in their countries. From Boko Haram in Nigeria to Al-Qaida affiliates in the Sahel region, to Al-Shabaab in Somalia and Da'esh throughout the continent, terrorists continue to pose an urgent and increasing threat to peace and security in Africa. The consequences are devastating. Children are recruited into radical organizations, teenaged girls are forced to marry men often four times their age and countless innocent lives are stolen every day. While the dangers of terrorism pose immediate and obvious threats to security, the long-term effects can prevent crucial economic and social development in Africa.

Africa is a continent on the rise. Israel and Africa share many similarities in our experiences, especially as they relate to security challenges. It is in the strategic interests of Israel to build robust and lasting partnerships with Africa. As a young country in a region plagued by conflict, Israel was compelled to develop comprehensive counter-terrorism solutions. With Hamas and Hizbullah right on our doorstep, Israel is well-versed in the threats that terrorist groups, like Boko Haram and Al-Shabaab, can pose to peace. With unique know-how, technology, research and development, Israel seeks to contribute, as much as possible, to the global fight against terrorism, especially in Africa.

Israel supports the partnerships between the African Union, regional groups, partner nations and the United Nations to advance security collectively. Regional, local groups and initiatives can play a crucial role in countering terrorism and overcoming security threats by helping improve police and border control, confronting the financing of terrorism, halting the proliferation of weapons and more.

As many have stated in the past, there can be no security without development and no development without security. My country shares that understanding and will continue to share lessons learned with our friends and allies throughout Africa. Last year, Prime Minister Netanyahu visited East Africa to discuss counter-terrorism and development initiatives with regional leaders. This year, the Prime Minister had the honour to participate in last month's Economic Community of West African States Heads of State meeting in Liberia. In his address, the Prime Minister stated,

"Our goal here is not merely to join forces to fight the bad, but to work together to advance the good."

Collaboration in Africa should not focus solely on combating terrorism, but must also work to bolster development. African-Israeli partnerships have already internalized that lesson. Whether through official channels or non-governmental organizations, Israel is fully present and active in the effort to encourage innovative technologies, inspire entrepreneurship and empower communities.

Israel believes that, while talent can be found anywhere, opportunities must be created. Therefore, Israel's international development agency, Mashav, emphasizes the power of human capital — an abundant resource on the African continent. Mashav

programmes in Africa seek to empower communities, especially youth, strengthen high-tech know-how and capacity-building and provide specialized training.

It is the long-standing belief of Israel that the inclusion of women is key to sustaining peace, in Africa and around the world. In that regard, we commend the Secretary-General's initiative for prioritizing women's roles in peacekeeping in the United Nations. One of Mashav's critical projects, in partnership with UN-Women, reflects that view. Through its annual workshop, Mashav provides a platform for African women to engage actively in politics, peacebuilding, mediation and conflict resolution.

Along with Government efforts, civil society activities are a major driver for fostering development. Various Israeli non-governmental organizations have been working on the ground together with local communities to advance water, energy and health solutions. It is through such initiatives that youth and women become leaders, start-up founders and agents for change for sustainable peace and development in Africa. Support from the international community, regional organizations and partner States is vital to the development and stability of Africa. However, we believe it is equally important that African challenges be met with African-led solutions.

Israel is committed to working together with our friends in Africa to shape a safer and more secure and prosperous future.