

Mr. Kamau (Kenya):

At the outset, I wish to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of January. I commend you, Sir, for the manner in which you have conducted the affairs of the Council so far. I thank you for organizing this timely debate on conflict prevention and sustaining peace and for providing us with a concept note (S/2017/6/annex) to frame it.

I thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive briefing on how we can prevent conflicts so as to achieve sustainable peace, as guided by the Charter of the United Nations. We believe that the priorities that he set out in his briefing, particularly on conflict prevention and sustaining peace, will re-energize and refocus our collective commitment towards achieving the objectives of the Charter. We agree with the Secretary-General that the world urgently needs a “surge in diplomacy for peace”. Kenya stands ready to play its role in that surge.

I also thank the previous speakers for their insightful statements.

We believe that, in order to succeed in our goal of sustaining peace, we need to reframe and reprioritize our responses. Sustaining peace must run through all our collective efforts, ranging from conflict prevention, peacekeeping, peacemaking, reconstruction to development. And we agree with the Secretary-General that the primary responsibility for conflict prevention lies with Member States.

The renewed approach to sustaining peace that the Secretary-General laid out today presents a solid opportunity for the United Nations to adapt better to today’s global realities. We need to reintegrate peace in our security, development and human rights agenda. We must place emphasis on conflict prevention and on addressing the root causes of conflict.

We know that the United Nations peace and security architecture has benefited from three reviews in 2015 on peace operations. Similarly, the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development provides us with a solid foundation for achieving and sustaining peace and prosperity without leaving anyone behind. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) provide the basis for addressing the root causes of conflict, including poverty.

Our strong, collective political will can help us in achieving lasting peace only when we invest financial and other resources in prevention. That will ensure that we are able to build a greater common understanding of conflicts, share early-warning information and develop the proper analysis of potential hotspots to guide timely early interventions.

The United Nations has an important and unique character that reinforces its role in

conflict prevention. It is the only truly universal entity that can guide and develop norms for guiding Member States as they seek to react to conflicts and prevent them. But for the United Nations to play its leadership role in conflict prevention effectively it needs to break down the silo mentality within its system, which undermines its ability to prevent conflicts. We therefore agree with the Secretary-General that United Nations responses remain overly fragmented.

Allow me to highlight a few areas and steps that we believe the Council can take to ensure more effective conflict prevention among Member States and across the United Nations system.

First, sustainable peace requires the development of national institutions with the capacity to address the root causes of conflict. National ownership and inclusive leadership of such institutions are key to achieving success in efforts to prevent conflicts and sustain peace. In designing special political missions, including mediation, peacekeeping operations, peacebuilding programmes and other preventative actions, strong coordination and cooperation between the United Nations and national authorities, based on mutual complementarity, are vital for success. The inclusive participation of youth and women in national institutions is also vital to sustaining peace.

Secondly, the United Nations, including the Council, should continue encouraging and reinforcing mutually supportive partnerships on conflict prevention with regional and subregional entities. Modern conflict is increasingly intra-State in nature, with cross-border tendencies in particular regions, occasioned by unique political and socioeconomic grievances. Regional entities have better knowledge of their areas of operation, including the minute details on conflict dynamics, whereas the United Nations has unique expertise and tools sourced at the global level to resolve the problems we face.

Thirdly, the Security Council, as the custodian of international peace and security, needs to prioritize the financing of conflict prevention, including through the Peacebuilding Fund, so as to ensure that sustainable and predictable funding is available. Flexibility in resource mobilization and partnerships with international financial institutions and regional development banks are key.

Fourthly, conflict prevention is impossible without effective early-warning mechanisms. It is essential for the United Nations, including the Council, to assist Member States and regional and subregional entities to develop capacities for early-warning analysis, information-sharing and the development of common approaches to prevent the eruption of violent conflict. That is normally far cheaper and more efficient in addressing conflicts than the usual reactive tools employed once violence has erupted.

Fifthly, it is essential to strengthen the interlinkages relating to sustaining peace and

conflict prevention among the various United Nations entities, including the Security Council, the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council. Unique intergovernmental bodies, such as the United Nations Peacebuilding Commission, should be strengthened so that they can play their role in conflict prevention and sustaining peace more effectively, while enhancing coherence in United Nations efforts.

In conclusion, I want to state that progress in prioritizing conflict prevention and sustaining peace will depend upon sustaining people's trust in political institutions, enhancing inclusivity, justice and the rule of law within credible national institutions and diversifying economies through the implementation of the SDGs in order to address the root causes of conflict. The primacy of politics in preventing and resolving conflicts is key to sustaining peace. The Council must therefore continue to strive to keep all solutions to conflict political.