

Mr. Gertze (Namibia): I thank you, Mr. President, for convening this open debate, which offers the opportunity to share views on peace and security in Africa. Let me also thank our briefers for their invaluable contribution to this debate. Your country's focus on this important topic during your presidency is highly appreciated.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement to be delivered by the representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

Namibia applauds the continued cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union (AU) and particularly with regional and subregional organizations on the continent. We also welcome enhanced cooperation in peacekeeping in Africa. My delegation wishes to stress the need for the AU and the United Nations to outline their roles clearly according to their comparative advantages. Partnership between the United Nations and the AU offices, while essential, cannot substitute for ownership by Africa of its challenges. It is both pragmatic and right to seek out African views on conflict resolution and conflict prevention through formal and informal sessions between the two organizations.

We wish to underscore the important role that regional and subregional arrangements and agencies can play in the promotion of peace and security, as well as economic and social development.

In the wake of the historic adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change in 2015, peace and security have to underpin the delivery of an environment in which the development agenda can flourish.

The African Union has demonstrated its ability to take the lead in the effective resolution of conflicts. Over the years, the African Union member States have been able to step in promptly to help maintain peace and security. Namibia remains committed to contributing to peacekeeping operations. Indeed it is the presence of African peacekeepers that has provided international peace operations with political legitimacy on the continent.

The African Peace and Security Architecture road map for the period 2016-2020 also remains essential to provide legitimacy and effectiveness on the ground. We have noted that the organs of the Architecture are increasingly shouldering their responsibility under Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations.

African mediation and rapid response efforts are two areas that rely on support by partners such as the United Nations. In order to make the African Peace and Security Architecture more effective under the current challenging economic and other circumstances, it is important to make full use of available expertise and knowledge on the ground and at regional level. It is essential that actions taken are based upon African programmes already developed at high-level forums. These programmes speak directly to the needs identified by Africans themselves, are often gender sensitive, and will never be seen as imposed from the outside, and thus not succeed.

Namibia values the role that the United Nations Office to the African Union plays by providing technical advice on matters of capacity-building and operational support. However, further efforts to build institutional capacity would be crucial to bringing coherence to the consolidation of peace in Africa.

I would like to applaud the recent appointment by the Secretary-General of former German President Horst Köhler as his Personal Envoy for Western Sahara. We call on all parties to offer their cooperation and support in order to see genuine progress and resolution of this long standing conflict.

Finally, Namibia welcomes progress made in increasing the participation of women in leadership roles towards resolving conflicts. Indeed, it is imperative to integrate gender perspectives into institutional reforms in post-conflict countries. We encourage Member States in post-conflict situations to mainstream gender perspectives in institutional reform for the protection of women's rights and call for the incorporation of women in mediation processes.