

Mr. Gertze (Namibia):

As this is my first address since presenting credentials to Mr. António Guterres yesterday, allow me to thank you, Mr. President, for the opportunity to address the Council, while at the same time congratulating Sweden and you, Sir, on assuming the presidency and wishing you and the new non-permanent members of the Security Council all the best during this tenure. Let us make this year the year for peace, as the Secretary-General reminded us. In congratulating Mr. Guterres on his appointment as our new Secretary-General, may I take this opportunity to thank him for putting peace and conflict prevention as the priority coordinates on the compass for our work this year.

My delegation fully aligns itself with the statement made by the Permanent Representative of Venezuela on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

The Council will recall that for many years Namibia was a discussion point of the Security Council. Following our independence in 1990, we are now proud to say that Namibia is a child of international solidarity midwifed by the United Nations. We have gone through long and intense negotiations between the warring parties, and those, as well as our decision now to implement a policy of national reconciliation, have been at the heart of our stability for the past 26 years. Our efforts at conflict prevention have revolved around our policy of national reconciliation and ensuring the

rights of all Namibian citizens regardless of identity and despite our awareness of the deep divisions in society.

We have not forgotten the policies of deliberate oppression and disempowerment that resulted from colonialism and apartheid. However, we have chosen to celebrate our independence, embrace our freedom, and treasure peace and harmony to solidify a prosperous future for our children. If there is anything that we have learned through the Namibian experience, it is that unity and diversity are crucial to sustaining peace. To nurture this unity, open and honest dialogue in all societies is indispensable.

On 8 June 2014, Pope Francis said: “Peacemaking calls for courage, much more so than warfare. It calls for the courage [...] to say yes to respect for agreements and no to acts of provocation”.

Conflict prevention means committing to peace and making the deep changes needed to maintain peace, even when uncomfortable. Here at the United Nations, we must begin to make such deep and possibly uncomfortable changes for peace. Our structures at the regional, continental and global levels must be revisited and improved upon. Since the concept note (S/2017/6, annex) for this meeting observes that the tools for peace and for conflict prevention are available in the United Nations Charter, our core political solution

must begin here, at the United Nations. We must ensure that the benefits of democratic practice become normalized in a restructured Security Council and a revitalized General Assembly.

The 1995 Beijing Platform for Action declared that the full participation of women in decision-making, conflict prevention and resolution, and all other peace initiatives, is essential to the realization of lasting peace. My delegation is proud that Namibia sent the very first all-female police contingent to Darfur, and we aim to maintain that method of operation.

Namibia fully associates itself with the African Union and its African Peace and Security Architecture and the related road map focused on conflict prevention, conflict management and peacebuilding, which are all fundamental to silencing the guns by 2020. However, it also requires commitment to implementing the Sustainable Development Goals, including the threat posed by climate change to development.

Nuclear disarmament is central to conflict prevention. But to ensure its practicality, we must begin promoting the peaceful uses of nuclear technology, linking safety to the use of nuclear energy and sharing technology. Our future generations depend upon it.

Finally, allow me to remind the Security Council that Namibia continues to call for the recognition and implementation of the inalienable right to self-determination of the Palestinian people. In the same vein, I remind this House that the case of Western Sahara remains outstanding; that this is an issue which must be part of our discussions on conflict prevention; and that we must ensure that United Nations resolutions on that occupied territory are implemented forthwith.