

Mr. Skau (Sweden): I would like to align myself with the statements to be delivered later this morning on behalf of the European Union and the Nordic countries.

Maintaining international peace and security is at the core of the Organization's mission. Peace operations have been the most visible — and by many measurements successful — means by which we have sought to deliver on this aim. The important work of reviewing the United Nations role in peace and security that has taken place over the past two years has underlined the need to improve our efforts to prevent conflict from emerging, in managing and ending conflicts when they do, and in preventing a slide back into conflict when peace is achieved. It is clear that peace operations are integral to this work of sustaining peace.

I would like to thank the Egyptian presidency of the Council for scheduling today's open debate, which creates the space for a frank and ambitious discussion in support of the Secretary-General's efforts to create a United Nations system ready to meet the challenges of sustaining peace in the twenty-first century. I would also like to thank the Deputy Secretary-General, Amina Mohammed and their excellent and prominent briefers for their important contributions, which have helped frame today's discussion.

Let me make three points on how we believe the Council and the United Nations system can best organize itself to not only respond to conflict, but more importantly, prevent it.

First, neither conflict nor peace emerges from a vacuum. The drivers of conflict and the enablers of peace are essentially political. For this reason, we must recognize the primacy of politics in our strategies for the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts. Long-term political strategies that aim to prevent conflict and sustain peace by addressing root causes are essential. Effective political strategies should tie together all the international community's efforts in an integrated and mutually reinforcing way.

Our work, including peace operations, needs to be people centred and results oriented. Improving the daily lives of people is paramount, including through core tasks such as protection of civilians' physical safety and their human rights. Peacebuilding should be truly inclusive, involving Governments and societies, and take into account local and national perspectives, which are crucial to enable informed decision-making. Lasting peace requires the involvement of the entire population, meaning that the full, equal and effective participation of women should be hardwired into all of our efforts towards sustaining peace. Building political strategies requires high-quality, context-sensitive and inclusive analysis across the whole of the conflict cycle. That should be prepared jointly by the whole of the United Nations system.

Let me also mention here the role of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) to contributing meaningfully to the Council's efforts to adopt a sustaining peace approach in peacekeeping operations. Unlocking the full potential of the Peacebuilding Commission, not least during mandate discussions and transitions of peace operations, will require more informal and frequent interactions between the Council and the PBC on a wider range of issues. The Commission is uniquely placed to convene international actors for the kind of coordinated and strategic response for sustaining peace that we know full-well is needed.

Secondly, as part of an integrated response aimed at building long-term peace, the peace and security instruments of the United Nations must work in tandem with development, human rights and humanitarian efforts from the start of every mission. Human rights violations can be drivers of conflict, and restoring respect for human rights will often contribute to addressing root causes and to sustaining peace. From the outset, the United Nations system must simultaneously

promote development, including social service delivery, and aim to build the national capacities needed to address those challenges.

As members of the Council, we have a responsibility to ensure that mandates are realistic, context-tailored and flexible. Within mandates, tasks need to be prioritized, sequenced and adjusted over time. Effective implementation of mandates also requires well-trained and well-equipped peacekeepers. A clear vision of a sustainable end state should guide integrated mission planning and leadership from the outset. How the United Nations system is working together to that end should be an everyday question in a conflict setting — not only a question of an exit strategy.

Thirdly, when it comes to sustaining peace, we must never leave the job half done. Putting in place the essential building blocks I have mentioned today will allow the United Nations to better sustain peace before and during transitions and the drawdown of peace operations. Early and integrated work across the United Nations system can ensure the sustainability of gains and that transitions are transformative and forward looking processes. In Mali, the Council has sought to achieve that by requesting a mission-wide strategy with a view to — among other things — handing over relevant tasks to the United Nations country team as part of a long-term exit strategy. In times of transition, national Governments and partners need to be fully engaged to ensure their ownership of the process. In Liberia, for example, we can draw useful lessons from the recent peacebuilding plan — a process that engaged both the wider United Nations system and the Liberian Government, with the full support of the PBC.

When the Council asks United Nations country teams to step up, which we often do, we have a joint responsibility to ensure that they have sufficient capacity and, not least, the resources to do the job. We must find ways to avoid the financial cliff seen in many transitions, most recently in Côte d'Ivoire, Darfur, Liberia and Haiti. For instance, strengthening rule-of-law institutions is often a focus of missions in transition. The United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti is one such example. Ample resources are needed to continue to underpin that focus, in which consideration of the full chain of rule-of-law institutions is important.

The landmark resolution 2282 (2016) on sustaining peace provides us with a foundation for our work. We look forward to the Secretary-General's report on the steps taken so far to implement the sustaining peace approach across the United Nations system, as well as next steps. That includes concrete options for more predictable financing for conflict prevention and sustaining peace, including from assessed contributions. We will continue this discussion with our partners in the African Union during our visit next week, as well as during the high-level event during the General Assembly, organized by Ethiopia. Those discussions will help us as we prepare to take stock together at the high-level meeting next spring.

The range and nature of threats to international peace and security are evolving and multiplying. They now include terrorism and violent extremism, the effects of climate change and the actions of transnational organized crime, to name but a few. Such challenges beg the question of whether existing reform ideas go far enough to bring the United Nations conflict management machinery into the twenty-first century. Our focus should not only be to adapt to today's challenges, but also to anticipate how conflicts will evolve. Prevention must be the new watchword. That means understanding and getting ahead of events, ahead of the curve, rather than merely reacting to them.