

Mr. Ntwaagae (Botswana): My delegation joins others in congratulating the Arab Republic of Egypt on its assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of August. We also commend you, Mr. President, for convening this very important open debate today on the topic “United Nations peacekeeping operations: their potential contribution to the overarching goal of sustaining peace”. We also thank today’s briefers for the invaluable insights they have shared with us on this subject.

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

It is the considered view of my delegation that United Nations peacekeeping operations play a critical role in building and sustaining peace and international security. Over the years, peacekeeping has proven to be the most effective tool employed by the United Nations to provide transitional support to war-torn countries. It has also provided such countries an opportunity to transition from conflict to sustainable peace.

However, we acknowledge that the scope, objectives and nature of peacekeeping have been highly dynamic and have evolved over the years, in parallel with the changes in the nature of conflicts, thereby making the success of any operation less guaranteed. In that sense, my delegation welcomes the fact that one of the main focuses of Secretary-General António Guterres’ term of office has been the review of peacekeeping operations, peacebuilding and the involvement of women and children in conflict.

It is our view that the full participation of women is essential to the success of any peace process. We therefore agree that it is the responsibility of the United Nations to ensure that political solutions promote preventive approaches, mainstream human rights and foster inclusive engagement and empowerment of women and girls.

In our support for resolution 2282 (2016) on postconflict peacebuilding, we wish to emphasize that in order to bring about sustainable peace in a society emerging from conflict, some of the key activities should be efforts to prevent the escalation, continuation and recurrence of conflict. We therefore support a wide range of activities that extend from conflict prevention to the maintenance of sustainable peace and are included within the scope of United Nations peace operations. Addressing the root causes, building the foundations for peaceful, inclusive societies, assisting parties to end hostilities, ensuring national reconciliation and working towards recovery, reconstruction and development are critical to preventing and resolving conflict. Such efforts should, therefore, be the number-one priority for us as the international community. Peacekeeping in itself should complement existing national, regional and international efforts aimed at advancing and encouraging dialogue and national reconciliation and strengthen national capacities and institutions for sustaining peace.

As for Botswana, our desire to see peace prevail in our region and beyond has been one of the key objectives of our foreign policy. We have and remain actively involved in efforts to bring

about sustainable peace in countries in our subregion and beyond. Botswana has in the past provided military and police personnel to United Nations and other multilateral operations in countries such as Somalia, Rwanda, Mozambique, Lesotho and Darfur, to mention just a few.

Although Botswana is not a troop- or police-contributing country, we have, over the years, faithfully maintained our contributions to the United Nations regular budget, as well as the peacekeeping budget, as a testament to our unwavering commitment to the United Nations system and to contributing, in our own small way, to the maintenance of international peace and stability. Furthermore, in view of our own values and principles relating to democracy, good governance, accountability and strong institutions, Botswana has also been instrumental in promoting dialogue. The country played a leading role in mediation efforts in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mozambique and Lesotho, to mention only a few.

Botswana also continues to share its experiences and knowledge on those issues, as is evident in our involvement in South Sudan. Members of the Council will recall that our former President, His Excellency Mr. Festus Mogae, who is a familiar figure in the Council in his capacity as Chair of the Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission on South Sudan, is making a significant contribution to facilitate the resolution of the conflict in that country. My Government also provides significant support to election observation in our region, including supporting political, and development activities that focus on the smooth transfer of power and contribute to sustainable peace.

We also recognize ongoing efforts and collaboration between the United Nations and the African Union through the Joint United Nations African Union Framework for an Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security, which was recently signed by the Secretary-General and the Chairperson of the African Union Commission.

Let me conclude by reaffirming Botswana's commitment to playing its part and to our unwavering support for efforts by the international community aimed at the promotion and protection of international peace and security.