

**Security Council**

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Letter dated 8 July 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council

I have the honour to refer to the Security Council video teleconference convened on 2 July 2020 regarding the agenda item entitled “Maintenance of international peace and security: Implications of COVID-19”. Enclosed herewith is a copy of the briefings provided on that occasion by the Secretary-General, António Guterres and the President of the International Committee of the Red Cross, Peter Maurer, as well as copies of the statements delivered by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Estonia, Urmas Reinsalu; the Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs of France, Jean-Yves Le Drian; the Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs of Germany, Heiko Maas; the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Tunisia, Nouredine Erray; the Minister of State for the Commonwealth, the United Nations and South Asia of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Lord Tariq Ahmad of Wimbledon; the Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Viet Nam, To Anh Dzung; and by the representatives of Belgium, China, the Dominican Republic, Indonesia, the Niger, the Russian Federation, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, South Africa and the United States of America.

In accordance with the understanding reached among Council members for this video teleconference, the following delegations and entities submitted written statements, copies of which are also enclosed: Afghanistan, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Canada, Chile, Costa Rica, Cuba, Cyprus, Denmark, Ecuador, El Salvador, the European Union, Georgia, Guatemala, India, Ireland, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Italy, Japan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lebanon, Liechtenstein, Malaysia, Malta, Mexico, Morocco, Myanmar, the Netherlands, Nigeria, Pakistan, Portugal, Qatar, the Republic of Korea, Saudi Arabia, Sierra Leone, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland, Turkey, Ukraine and the United Arab Emirates.

Pursuant to the procedure set out in the letter dated 7 May 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council (S/2020/372), which was agreed in the light of the extraordinary circumstances caused by the coronavirus disease pandemic, the enclosed briefings and statements will be issued as an official document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Christoph Heusgen
President of the Security Council



Annex 1**Statement by the Secretary-General**

I thank the German presidency for convening this important discussion.

The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic continues to profoundly affect peace and security across the globe. The consequences can be seen even in a number of countries traditionally considered as stable. But the impacts are particularly apparent in countries already experiencing conflict or emerging from it and may soon engulf others.

The risks are diverse. Tensions are rising as a result of the severe socioeconomic fallout from the crisis. Trust in public institutions is being eroded further in places where people perceive that the authorities have not addressed the pandemic effectively or have not been transparent about its impact. As pre-existing grievances and vulnerabilities become more accentuated and entrenched, the potential for instability and violence only grows.

The pandemic is exacerbating gender inequalities, as women make up the vast majority of the sectors most affected. There has been an alarming spike in gender-based and domestic violence, and it is increasingly difficult for victims to report abuse, seek shelter and access justice.

In some countries, fragile peace processes could be derailed by the crisis, especially if the international community is distracted. In Darfur, for example, the pandemic and other challenges have led to the repeated extension of the deadline for the completion of the Juba peace process.

In other places, conflict actors — including terrorist and violent extremist groups — see the uncertainty created by the pandemic as a tactical advantage. In Somalia, Al-Shabaab continues to launch frequent attacks, with COVID-19 having no noticeable impact on its operational tempo. Rather, there is a risk that Al-Shabaab could increase such violence while the security forces focus, by necessity, on the pandemic.

Many countries have had to consider how to move ahead with elections slated for 2020 while trying to manage the health crisis. Since March of this year, 18 elections or referendums have been held since the onset of the pandemic and 24 have been postponed, while the initial dates for 39 elections have been maintained to date. In the Central African Republic, there are tensions due to attempts to use the pandemic as a pretext to postpone the holding of elections planned for the end of the year. Decisions on postponing or, indeed, proceeding with elections raise complex legal, political and public health challenges. Difficult as they are, such decisions are best made on the basis of broad consultations with all stakeholders to avoid fuelling political tensions or undermining legitimacy.

COVID-19 has also made diplomacy more challenging. Mediation can be a very personal endeavour, an almost tactile reading of a person or a room. With movement restrictions limiting such contacts and with online discussions often the only alternative, it can be harder to establish the trust and nurture the willingness to compromise that are at the heart of preventive diplomacy.

The pandemic also highlights the risks of bioterrorist attacks and has already shown some of the ways in which preparedness might fall short if a disease were to be deliberately manipulated to be more virulent or intentionally released in multiple places at once. So, as we consider how to improve our response to future disease threats, we should also devote serious attention to preventing the deliberate use of diseases as weapons.

The Biological Weapons Convention codifies a strong and long-standing norm against the abhorrent use of disease as a weapon and now has 183 States parties. I urge the 14 States that have not yet acceded to the Convention to do so without any further delay. We also need to strengthen the Convention, which lacks an oversight institution and contains no verification provisions, by enhancing its role as a forum for the consideration of preventive measures, robust response capacities and effective countermeasures.

Fortunately, the best counter to biological weapons is effective action against naturally occurring diseases. Strong public and veterinary health systems are not only an essential tool against COVID-19, but also an effective deterrent against the development of biological weapons. All of these issues must be on the agenda at the Convention's Review Conference next year.

At the moment, the Secretary-General's Mechanism for Investigation of Alleged Use of Chemical and Biological Weapons, established by the General Assembly and endorsed by the Security Council, is the only instrument that provides a framework for the investigation of alleged use of biological weapons. Resolution 1540 (2004) and its follow-ups remain a key component of the international non-proliferation architecture and have provided an overarching framework to prevent the nightmare scenario of bioterrorism.

Given the speed at which pathogens spread in an interconnected world, we must ensure that all countries have resilient and appropriate capacities to respond quickly and robustly to any potential global and deliberate biological event.

I am also concerned that the pandemic is triggering or exacerbating human rights challenges. My call to action for human rights is more relevant than ever and requires robust follow-up. We have seen the excessive use of force in relation to police lockdowns, curfews and other confinement measures. There are growing manifestations of authoritarianism, including limits on the media, civic space and freedom of expression. Populists, nationalists and others who were already seeking to roll back human rights are finding in the pandemic a pretext for repressive measures unrelated to the disease.

Meanwhile, stigma and hate speech are on the rise, and an epidemic of misinformation online has run rampant. To help counter the spread of untruthful and harmful information, the United Nations launched the Verified initiative to increase the volume and reach of trusted, accurate information surrounding the crisis.

Yet another risk for the long term is the shifting of resources away from gender equality initiatives, education and other economic sectors. Indeed, this could have intergenerational impacts, including on women's rights and participation in political and peace processes.

Most immediately, humanitarian needs have surged. More than 1 billion children are out of school. More than 135 million people could be on the brink of starvation by the end of this year. Routine immunization services are being disrupted on an unprecedented scale, raising the likelihood of major outbreaks of diseases such as measles and polio.

The already acute vulnerability of refugees and internally displaced persons has grown more pronounced, particularly those living in confined and congested camps and detention facilities. Health-care workers and humanitarian personnel have themselves been targeted for unconscionable attacks. The health pandemic has fast become a protection crisis. These wide-ranging risks require an urgent and united response, including from the Security Council.

One hundred and eighty Member States and one non-member observer State endorsed my call for a global ceasefire, as did more than 20 armed movements and other entities and more than 800 civil society organizations. The call yielded some positive results, but these have since expired or in some cases broken down. The Council has an important role in bringing its voice and influence to bear on these situations, and I welcome its support, expressed in resolution 2532 (2020), adopted yesterday.

Our peacekeeping operations and special political missions continue to bring hope and stability to all corners of the world, supporting national authorities and vulnerable communities, including by ensuring that missions themselves are not a vector of contagion. We put in place a number of medical and other support measures to mitigate the spread of the virus within our missions and to protect our personnel. We also adapted the rotations of our uniformed personnel, for which we are grateful to troop- and police-contributing countries.

We are also adapting our tools to the new circumstances. In Colombia and Libya, for example, we have been able to maintain a good level of engagement with the parties and other actors, using virtual and other means. The Office of the Special Envoy for Yemen carried out a first-of-its-kind large-scale virtual dialogue with more than 500 Yemenis, 30 to 35 per cent of whom were women, on the opportunities and challenges for peace in the country. Through the Global Humanitarian Response Plan for COVID-19, we are addressing the most urgent health and humanitarian needs in 63 countries, although the plan is only 21 per cent funded and much more is needed.

Since the beginning of the crisis, the United Nations family has mounted a comprehensive response, providing medical and material support on the ground, advocating for a global economic and financial rescue package and offering policy analysis across the key dimensions of the emergency. The pandemic has brought us all to a wide-ranging reckoning. Collective security and our shared well-being are under assault on many fronts, led by a relentless disease and abetted by global fragilities. Our challenge is to save lives today while buttressing the pillars of security for tomorrow. I remain ready to support the Security Council in any way possible as this body carries out its essential part of the response.

Annex 2

Statement by the President of the International Committee of the Red Cross, Peter Maurer

I thank you, Mr. President, for the opportunity to brief the Security Council today.

Conflict zones are the sharp end of pandemics. Communities are already living in a difficult situation, where additional shocks can be catastrophic. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) is seeing first-hand how the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) and its economic aftershocks are deepening fragility, spiking humanitarian needs, accentuating the impact of violence and conflict, opening the doors to alarming levels of stigmatization, increasing global poverty, heightening instability and tensions and reversing hard-won development gains.

These are deeply complex and fragile places in which to launch a pandemic response. It is clear that pandemics cannot be addressed solely as health issues. Instead, the precondition is a political environment that provides for health systems, social supports, humanitarian action and simultaneous emergency and development approaches, as well as a fundamental change of behaviour of belligerents in conflicts.

Unquestionably, pandemics are changing humanitarian work. We already know that needs are vast and growing. According to our legal analysis, there are now approximately 100 armed conflicts around the world, involving 60 States, and more than 100 non-State armed groups as parties to those conflicts. This represents a steady rise in the total number of classified conflicts over recent decades.

The ICRC is drawing lessons from the impacts of COVID-19 across these conflicts, as well as the experiences of other infectious diseases, such as Ebola, cholera and tuberculosis. Today, I bring to the attention of Member States six essential lessons for a pandemic response in humanitarian settings.

First, international humanitarian law must be better respected to protect civilians and their infrastructure from multiple future shocks, including pandemics. Violations of international humanitarian law, such as cities bombed to rubble and mass displacement, are the enemy of a pandemic response. Countries where health services have been destroyed by war stand little chance of treating or containing COVID-19. Emergency-room mortality rates are spiking dramatically. Attacks, including cyberattacks, on health-care workers and facilities are continuing unabated.

Health workers and humanitarians are our first and last lines of defence, and they must be protected. Words and promises, including resolutions such as resolution 2286 (2016), which are agreed by the Council, are fruitless if they do not result in meaningful changes on the ground. Positive influence by those who have leverage over parties to conflict must be a priority. The ICRC is doing its part with millions of health workers around the world providing advice on implementing protective measures, fighting stigma and maintaining neutral and impartial services in the midst of war and violence.

Secondly, assistance and protection must be available to all those in need without the threat of politicization or manipulation. Under international law, impartial humanitarian aid cannot come with strings attached or be withheld from so-called enemy groups. People's needs are the only reasonable basis on which to respond. Misinformation and exclusionary responses can fuel unrest and instability. Today, the distribution of scarce medicine and protective materials is triggering violent flare-ups; tomorrow, the inequitable distribution of any COVID-19 vaccine could destabilize communities.

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement has joined the Secretary-General in calling for a people's vaccine that ensures no one is left out. Once vaccines are available, their equitable distribution will be critical. We are working to plan with States and with millions of Red Cross and Red Crescent and other humanitarian workers to help to mitigate against, potentially, very dangerous situations.

Thirdly, the response must go far beyond health needs and mitigate the wider secondary impacts of pandemics. Pandemic responses cannot be reduced to the delivery of masks or confined to emergency rooms. Communities need measures to guard against the multiple dimensions of fragility — health and sanitation systems, social safety nets and livelihoods.

There are no silver bullets, but where people are hit by the double burden of conflict and disease, context-specific, evidence-driven approaches will balance the imperatives of controlling infections and mitigating the secondary impacts. I warn against compartmentalizing the response into humanitarian or development. We must enable emergency and long-term responses and preventative and curative responses in sync. It is possible.

The ICRC has seen a growing recognition that inhumane conditions, for example in detention or in displacement camps, can become deadly during a pandemic not only for those interned but for host communities. In detention facilities in more than 50 countries, the ICRC is working with the authorities to strengthen health care and hygiene measures. We have seen such measures effectively prevent the spread of cholera and Ebola into places of detention in Guinea, Liberia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

By responding to health needs, it is possible to improve inhumane conditions over the longer term and defuse rising tensions in communities. The ICRC has delivered more than 200 confidential reports to the authorities concerned over the past few months on the conditions in detention facilities, making recommendations on system-wide improvements with regard to health, sanitation and hygiene services, overcrowding, family contact, ill-treatment and judicial processes. We commend the many authorities that have responded positively to our recommendations and have prevented a degradation of their security environment.

Fourthly, responses must be built to reach the most vulnerable and marginalized community members. No one is safe from a pandemic until everyone is safe. Pandemics will affect some people more than others. We must ensure that responses reach those less visible and silenced, for example, displaced people, those working in the informal sector, those in areas controlled by non-State armed groups, people detained, people with disabilities, the elderly, racial minorities, women and girls as well as sexual and gender minorities.

We must look at the landscape of needs rather than creating trade-offs between the COVID-19 response and other responses. The war-wounded and those with chronic diseases must still be treated. Mental health and sexual violence responses must be scaled up to meet the dramatically increasing demand. Livelihood assistance and other social supports must be boosted as critical prevention measures. Failure to do so will nurture the cycle of exclusion, violence and conflict.

Fifthly, we must proactively guard against any rollback of civilian protections. Governments must not exploit the pandemic and set draconian precedents, which undermine international humanitarian law and international human rights law. Any exceptional measures to fight and contain the pandemic must be time-bound, non-discriminatory and proportional to public health needs.

We urge wider implementation of the good practice of granting exceptions to humanitarian organizations whenever possible. For their part, humanitarian organizations are ready to take additional precautionary measures in their work.

Given the mistrust and heightened tensions in areas of violence and conflict, States need to be especially vigilant to ensure that laws restricting the use of force are thoroughly applied. This should be followed through to ensure that rules of conduct and training are in place, as well as robust oversight of security forces. Checks and balances must be in place so that emergency measures, such as lockdowns or widescale data collection, are not used as abusive tools to control a population or to undermine public trust in health measures. Temporary restrictions on humanitarian access must not become fixed.

Sixthly, responses will be effective only if there is community trust and engagement. The global COVID-19 response is a game-changer for State-citizen trust. Health care at gunpoint is futile. Even in conflict-affected environments, local authorities can build trust by listening to communities and acting with transparency.

Responders also need to be trusted, and stigma combated. The ICRC, together with the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, and its existing community networks is often one of the few responders in contested areas. We see that there is no substitute for neutral and impartial humanitarian action that secures the trust of populations and that of the authorities across front lines and the so-called last mile of service delivery.

Trust can be achieved by listening to the plight of communities, by walking the talk and by engaging and cooperating with local leaders and faith-based organizations and religious leaders. On the front lines of fighting the pandemic, the convergence of health and security is not a matter of political debate but of simple and experienced truth.

Even in this uncertain time, we have the knowledge and the lessons on how to tackle COVID-19. Much can be done in the Council and beyond. The adoption of resolution 2532 (2020) represents a chance to reset and to translate the consensus reflected in the text into greater cooperation and action to protect civilians. The choices are there. Choose to respect the ceasefire, and choose to intensify diplomacy to make it happen. Choose to enable humanitarian access, including facilitating movement. Choose to follow the laws that Member States created in international humanitarian law. Choose to give space to first responders and local communities. Millions around the world are depending on the United Nations to make the choices that protect them from the health crises of the future.

Annex 3**Statement by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Estonia, Urmas Reinsalu**

I congratulate France on a successful presidency, as well as Germany on assuming the presidency of the Council in July.

Let me first express my sympathy to and solidarity with all the people and nations of the world suffering from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19).

The COVID-19 crisis has demonstrated how crucial multilateral cooperation is to our collective health, prosperity and security. Unfortunately, it seems likely that we are to remain seized of this crisis for quite some time. The global security implications of the coronavirus disease must therefore remain under our close and constant scrutiny.

It is truly important that the Security Council finally agreed upon resolution 2532 (2020), on COVID-19. This must be seen as a unified and clear call to now put the guns down. I thank particularly France and Tunisia for their leadership on this matter. This also confirms that the Council must remain regularly involved in the peace and security implications of COVID-19. It also means that we will listen to the wise advice and observations of Secretary-General Guterres. Allow me to congratulate Mr. Guterres on being a visible and vocal voice of the United Nations family during this ongoing crisis.

The COVID-19 outbreak has clearly highlighted how crucial it is to have a safe and reliable digital infrastructure and that we collectively work towards a more stable and secure cyberspace. Since the start of the pandemic, we have been observing with concern an increase in attacks against one of the most important infrastructure sectors — hospitals. Actors that use cyberspace for malicious purposes will be investigated and these attacks will not go unnoticed. We raised the cybersecurity topic at the Security Council Arria formula meeting in May, where the majority of participating States reaffirmed their commitment to following the commonly agreed rules of responsible State behaviour in cyberspace. We should all remain seized of this topic, including in the future.

The ongoing global pandemic has revealed serious risks brought by uneven digital transformation and weak digital infrastructure. The global digital divide must be rapidly addressed by all of us, including the private sector, which can drive the necessary innovation. That is why Estonia and the United Arab Emirates will cooperate to organize a global business summit, to involve the business sector in addressing the grave effects of the coronavirus disease. Digital technology and digital development can make societies more resilient to the outside shocks we are living through right now. That is why Estonia, together with Singapore, yesterday convened an international high-level meeting on the global digital divide and COVID-19. There, we also launched a Global Declaration on the Digital Response to COVID-19. That text remains open for co-sponsorship, and more than 30 countries have already joined it. I hope to welcome many more.

Annex 4**Statement by the Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs of France, Jean-Yves Le Drian**

Mr. President, dear Heiko, I would like to thank you, my friend, for instigating this meeting at the start of the German presidency of the Security Council.

I would also like to commend and thank the Secretary-General, the President of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the African Union Commissioner for Social Affairs for the outstanding work their respective organizations have done to collectively tackle this unprecedented public-health crisis.

The Security Council, which, under the Charter of the United Nations — the adoption of which we have just celebrated its seventy-fifth anniversary — bears primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, must address the destabilizing effect of pandemics. It was able to do so with HIV/AIDS in 2000 and with Ebola in 2014 and 2018.

I am pleased that, at the initiative of Tunisia — and I would like to commend Minister Nourredine Erray — and France, the Security Council has effectively addressed the threat to international peace and security caused by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic through resolution 2532 (2020), which it adopted yesterday. We now need to redouble our efforts to implement that resolution.

France supports the Secretary-General's call for a ceasefire, backed by nearly 180 countries and more than 20 armed groups as well as many regional and civil society organizations. This call must now be put into action. In Syria, Yemen, Libya, the Sahel and Afghanistan, the situation remains extremely unstable and civilian populations continue to suffer the consequences.

I would also like to commend the outstanding work of the Blue Helmets, at times conducted in very difficult conditions. We must collectively support peacekeeping operations so that they can fully implement their mandates. France has recently deployed a decontamination team to the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon to provide expertise and technical support in fighting the pandemic, and we are ready to treat foreign soldiers working in peacekeeping operations who have COVID-19 and are in need of urgent care in our military hospitals.

On a humanitarian level, I would like to pay tribute to the work conducted by humanitarian and medical personnel, especially ICRC workers. France, both through its bilateral support and its work in multilateral bodies, has contributed to humanitarian action regarding the COVID-19 pandemic and will continue working to meet needs in the weeks and months ahead.

Together we must continue to support the full implementation of the entire COVID-19 Global Humanitarian Response Plan, including by providing support to internally displaced persons and refugees and defending the sexual and reproductive health rights of women, who are on the front lines of the response to pandemics and whose rights must be upheld and reinforced. This will be one of the objectives of the Generation Equality Forum, which will be held in France in the first half of 2021 in partnership with Mexico and UN-Women, and will be another important step in promoting women's rights.

Moreover, everything must be done to facilitate humanitarian access to vulnerable populations and to ensure that humanitarian and medical personnel and infrastructure are not targeted in attacks. We must therefore continue working to ensure compliance with international humanitarian law. That is the reason behind

the Call for Humanitarian Action, led by France and Germany within the framework of the Alliance for Multilateralism, with the ICRC's support and backed by 45 States.

We must also strengthen access to reliable information and fight more effectively to stop the spread of false rumours, infodemics and hate speech, which can feed on collective fear in today's extremely fragile context.

We cannot ignore the considerable socioeconomic impact of this crisis. The root causes of conflicts will only be worsened by the crisis resulting in growing inequalities, increased unemployment, loss of confidence in institutions, tensions regarding the distribution of natural resources, disorganization or disruption of supply chains, and the climate crisis. It is our collective responsibility to rethink the post-COVID-19 world and mitigate the economic and social consequences of this crisis to the greatest extent possible. In doing so, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Climate Agreement must guide our action. This crisis has confirmed — if there were need for confirmation — the relevance of the Sustainable Development Goals by highlighting how interaction can be strong between health and environmental issues such as biodiversity and the climate.

We also need a multilateral health architecture that is better adapted to today's challenges. That means strengthening our collective alert capacity within the World Health Organization, the only universal public health organization, so that we can respond very swiftly to global crises. This also means that States must fully shoulder their responsibilities to ensure the effective implementation of the International Health Regulations, which is still too often lacking. We must also work to strengthen national health systems and their resilience. We need to continue our efforts to make universal health coverage a reality. These are all projects we need to get working on, drawing on all the lessons learned from the crisis we are going through.

At the Alliance for Multilateralism meeting on 26 June, we, together with Heiko Maas, stressed that it is only through strong multilateralism that we will together overcome these many challenges. Being a multilateralist does not mean being dogmatic or idealistic; it means advocating the only effective method, because there is no alternative to a united front and cooperation in dealing with our common problems. France is determined to continue working in that direction.

Annex 5**Statement by the Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs of Germany, Heiko Maas**

The world is facing its biggest crisis since 1945. More than half a million people have already died from a virus for which we do not yet have a cure. Many more could follow. The emergency braking in the global economy will deepen humanitarian crises and destroy trust in State institutions. We have heard from our briefers how conflicts are spiralling out of control, especially in Africa and in war-torn countries such as Yemen and Libya. At the same time, human rights violations are soaring.

The men and women who signed the Charter of the United Nations 75 years ago entrusted the Security Council with upholding peace and security. They drew the right lessons from the deadly reality they had just witnessed. The simple question before us today is: Do we?

Yesterday, the Security Council finally sent a sign of unity by endorsing the Secretary-General's call for a global ceasefire. Resolution 2532 (2020) was long overdue. Let us now implement it together by working towards country-specific ceasefires. We all know that they can facilitate humanitarian access and serve as entry points for political talks. Today's meeting can also be a launching pad to address major health risks and their security implications more systematically. To do so, we should agree on three lines of action:

First, we must address the effects that pandemics have on the conflicts and humanitarian crises on the Council's agenda. United Nations peace operations themselves will need to adapt by: monitoring the fast-changing dynamics of conflict; protecting the health of staff and local populations; and keeping the mission fully operational. That is why Germany, together with other European Union member States, has signed a letter assuring the Secretary-General that we will uphold our military, police and civilian contributions.

Secondly, safe, unhindered and rapid access for humanitarian workers and medical personnel is even more important during a pandemic. It is the obligation of the Security Council and other member States involved to make this happen.

We also heard the Secretary-General's call for immediate steps to ensure that the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) does not reverse progress achieved in gender equality and women's participation in peace processes. Germany therefore contributed €4 million to the COVID-19 emergency window of the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund, and we call on others to follow suit.

Thirdly, the Security Council must finally embrace a broader understanding of peace and security. The founders of the United Nations may well have had artillery, bombers and soldiers in mind when they drafted the Charter. Today, we know that a virus can be deadlier than a gun, a cyberattack can cause more harm than a soldier and climate change threatens more people than most conventional weapons. Closing our eyes to that reality means refusing to learn. What we need is early, preventative action, based on good reporting and adequate capacities in the United Nations system. That is what "maintaining peace and security" means in the twenty-first century.

A global crisis calls for a global response. It calls upon the United Nations and the Security Council. We should heed the call.

Annex 6**Statement by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Tunisia, Nouredine Erray**

Let me first congratulate you, Sir, on assuming the presidency of the Security Council in July, wish you the greatest of success and assure you of our full support.

We thank Germany for convening this high-level open debate on pandemics and security.

I welcome the Secretary-General, thank him for his briefing and commend his leadership in mobilizing the United Nations system and the international community in response to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic.

I also thank the President of the International Committee of the Red Cross and the civil society representative for their briefings.

With the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, the world has clearly embarked on a volatile and unstable new phase. For the first time in living memory, humanity is confronting a common threat that it must defeat collectively. Since the early weeks of the pandemic, at the initiative of Tunisia and France and with the support and help of the rest of 10 elected members of the Council, Council members started working on a draft resolution to address the impact of COVID-19 on issues under its mandate.

As we all know, the process was long and difficult. We all tried hard to go beyond our divergent views and concerns, and just yesterday, 1 July, we finally managed to prioritize the interests of the international community. That resolution, even though adopted after a delay of three months, bears the important message that consensus is possible with political will and a message of hope and renewed faith in multilateralism.

I take this opportunity to congratulate all Security Council members on the unanimous adoption of that important resolution, and thank them for their patience, support and constructive engagement.

In this regard, Tunisia shares the Secretary-General's assessment concerning the impact of the pandemic on peace and security, as outlined in his statement before the Security Council on 9 April. My country fully supports all the initiatives and measures he proposed to mitigate the potential impact of the pandemic, especially in conflict-affected areas, in particular his appeal for an immediate global ceasefire and the launching of the Global Humanitarian Response Plan for COVID-19 by the United Nations.

At the same time, we commend the leading role of the United Nations system in coordinating the global response to COVID-19, and we support, in this regard, the central contribution of the World Health Organization to these efforts.

The COVID-19 pandemic has reversed our assumptions about the current world order. It is telling us that the hierarchy of global security threats is changing rapidly, that we are dealing with new global enemies, and that no country, no matter how developed, will be immune to its impact. Obviously, we can expect the impact to be even more devastating in less developed countries and on vulnerable populations.

Tunisia profoundly believes that we will not be able to defeat this pandemic in each of our countries without solidarity and unity at the international, regional and national levels: solidarity because none of us can face this huge challenge alone; unity because the virus will use all weaknesses in our local, national and international systems to spread and kill. We should never forget that no one is immune until everyone is immune.

Beyond the heavy death toll of more than half a million persons and the immediate health consequences of the pandemic, the global economy is heading towards another great depression.

As food supplies come under strain, prices are getting higher and unemployment is rising, especially in fragile societies or less developed countries. This will translate into food insecurity, and could quickly escalate into political unrest, violence and conflict. Tensions are already flaring around the world, and not just in war zones.

In conflict settings, the situation could be even worse. The uncertainty created by the pandemic encouraged some actors to promote further division and turmoil, leading to escalation of violence and disastrous consequences on civilians and vulnerable persons, especially internally displaced persons and refugees.

I take this opportunity to pay tribute to all United Nations troops in peace operations, as well as to humanitarian actors and relief personnel providing support to contain the pandemic and to ensure the unhindered delivery of humanitarian assistance to those vulnerable populations, sometimes risking their lives in the context of the pandemic.

In conclusion, as we commemorate the seventy-fifth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations, it is important to recognize that humanity is today witnessing new types of threats to international peace and security, emanating not only from pandemics but also from climate change and cybercriminality.

As the nature and scope of threats evolve, we need to rethink security, and adapt our approaches and tools. It is clear we cannot face such dangers using the same tools we inherited from a bygone age. A change of paradigm is greatly needed.

Tunisia strongly believes that the Security Council needs to discuss these issues more in depth to be able to deliver on its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security.

Annex 7

Statement by the Minister of State for the Commonwealth, the United Nations and South Asia and Prime Minister's Special Representative on Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Lord Tariq Ahmad of Wimbledon

I wish to thank Germany for having convened this important meeting, and we wish you well, Sir, for your presidency of the Security Council.

It is important that we convene together to discuss this subject. In doing so, I join others in paying tribute, particularly at this time of a global pandemic, to the leadership of the Secretary-General and thank the President of the International Committee of the Red Cross, Mr. Maurer, and Ms. Elfadil Mohammad for their very helpful and constructive briefings this morning.

We all now know that, with the coronavirus disease (COVID-19), we face a crisis of unprecedented scope, and indeed complexity. Across the world it has triggered health, humanitarian, economic, development and security challenges, with ramifications that are both immediate and long-term. Those challenges are interwoven and require a coordinated, collaborative response.

Therefore, may I first welcome the unanimous adoption of resolution 2532 (2020) yesterday, and in doing so wish to thank both France and Tunisia for their efforts in that respect.

The full extent of this pandemic is still unfolding before our eyes. I know that we all fear its impact as it spreads in States that are vulnerable or affected by conflict. As we see around the world, in places such as Yemen, Libya and the Central African Republic, contested or fragmented Government authority severely restricts local capacity to respond effectively to the spread of the pandemic. Health systems are overstretched and underresourced and cannot detect, or indeed monitor, the spread of the disease.

As the impact becomes clearer, so we see evidence of COVID-19 compounding existing problems, such as in the Lake Chad basin and in the Sahel. Our efforts to prevent or resolve conflict are complicated by COVID-19. Peacekeepers themselves are quarantined, humanitarian access is restricted and impeded, and peace processes have been paused. So it is important that we act both to tackle the pandemic and to give an effective response to prevent or resolve conflict.

We must ensure a strong international health response led by the World Health Organization. In that regard, the United Kingdom has already committed £764 million to support humanitarian and public-health needs. We must ensure the development and equitable distribution of a vaccine. In that regard, the United Kingdom has already pledged more than £300 million in funding for research into vaccines, tests and treatment. And as many present know, last month we hosted a very successful global vaccine summit that raised more than \$8.8 billion to support the immunization of 300 million children against coronavirus and, indeed, other vaccine-preventable diseases.

At the same time, we must, of course, redouble our efforts on peace and security. The Security Council has a key role to play. We welcome the Secretary-General's call for a global ceasefire, and we should all stand firm on our peacekeeping troop contributions and, importantly, the resources they need.

The devastating impact of COVID-19 on fragile societies underlines the moral duty of outside parties that influence conflicts in Syria, and indeed elsewhere.

Importantly, everyone must come together to support peace. We need to also act smartly to prevent new peace and security crises from emerging. The pandemic has clearly demonstrated the importance of the coordinated and multidimensional international responses for which the United Kingdom has long argued. The United Nations must work smarter across its pillars and with partners. We commend the United Nations system for delivering under immense pressure. I think that we all acknowledge that more is needed to deliver a holistic response that limits instability in the face of complex challenges. We therefore recommend three actions.

First, United Nations responses must be more sensitive to conflict risk and build this into strategic planning, prioritization and financing.

Secondly, there needs to be joint risk assessment and planning with the international financial institutions to combine macroeconomic, social and political considerations.

And, thirdly, we need to focus on what works to build a country's resilience to shocks. Strong, inclusive and accountable institutions, the rule of law, good governance and human rights are the fundamental basis of that very resilience. We need to see this in our coordinated response and in our planning to build back better.

This pandemic has brought into sharp focus the urgent need for efforts towards the development objective. Sustainable peace and security cannot be solved as separate issues, and they cannot be solved alone. Together, we have this expertise. Together, we have the resources. We must use them and respond to this challenge. And together, we will succeed.

Annex 8**Statement by the Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Viet Nam,
To Anh Dung**

I would like to sincerely thank the German presidency for having organized this open debate on pandemics and security, and the Secretary-General and other briefers for their comprehensive briefings.

Over the past months, the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has spread across the globe, both in intensity and in scope, and has had far-reaching implications for every aspect of the international situation. This greatest challenge ever to the United Nations has vividly shown us how a global health crisis and non-traditional security threats to a larger extent could have profound consequences for the peace, security and the prosperity of every Member State.

No single country can win this war against COVID-19 unless and until everyone wins. At this critical juncture, we should spare no effort to strengthen international solidarity and cooperation towards a prompt response to pandemics and sustainable socioeconomic recovery. Multilateral institutions, particularly the United Nations at the centre, could play a pivotal role in leading and coordinating global efforts.

To promote the corresponding role of the Council, my delegation wishes to make the following points.

First, protecting the health and lives of our people, particularly the most vulnerable, from the impacts of pandemics remains the utmost priority and, indeed, the primary responsibility of every State. We therefore call on all parties to conflict to heed the Secretary-General's call for an immediate global ceasefire and facilitate humanitarian activities to combat the COVID-19 pandemic. Within its mandate, the Council should send a strong message to ensure that this appeal resonates and take every action needed to help de-escalate tensions, build trust, reconcile and promote peaceful dialogues towards lasting conflict settlement. In that connection, we welcome the adoption of resolution 2532 (2020) and appreciate France and Tunisia's leadership and determination in promoting the initiative, to which Viet Nam actively and constructively contributed.

Secondly, the Council should closely monitor and instruct United Nations peacekeeping missions and special political missions, in collaboration with United Nations country teams and specialized agencies, particularly the World Health Organization (WHO), to ensure the safety, security and health of all United Nations personnel on the field and to effectively assist host countries in dealing with the pandemic and prepare for future infectious-disease outbreaks. Viet Nam commends the ongoing efforts by United Nations peace missions and other United Nations agencies, as well as first-line responders, in the fight against the coronavirus.

Thirdly, we strongly support the Secretary-General's appeal to waive sanctions that can undermine countries' capacity to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. We also encourage the Council and Member States to work out appropriate measures to facilitate humanitarian assistance to countries under sanctions to enable them to address this overwhelming health crisis more efficiently, in the best interests of civilian populations.

Being fully aware of the hazard of the pandemic, Viet Nam took very early actions against it. On the basis of the whole-of-Government approach, we have achieved encouraging initial results in keeping the pandemic under control and returning to normal socioeconomic activities. As the 2020 Association of Southeast Asian Nations Chair and a non-permanent member of the Security Council, Viet

Nam has put forth initiatives and joined efforts in coordinating the regional and international responses to the pandemic and beyond. To the utmost of our capacity, we have provided timely and practical assistance and shared our experience with various countries, and also made a financial contribution to WHO's COVID-19 Response Fund.

Viet Nam is confident that, with global solidarity and strengthened multilateralism as a common denominator, we will overcome the hurdles ahead and seize new opportunities to build the brighter future envisaged in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Annex 9**Statement by the Permanent Mission of the Dominican Republic to the United Nations**

We would like to thank the briefers for their statements and valuable considerations.

The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic caught us by surprise, without warning, and the measures to face and halt it simply overwhelmed the world. As we navigate the current sort of suspense mode that we are in, we cannot be sure whether the aftermath will be even worse than the pandemic itself.

But before we continue, the Dominican Republic would like to express its deepest condolences to the families of all those who have lost the battle to the virus, including, very sadly, 754 Dominicans.

COVID-19 is racing around the world. The potential and unprecedented magnitude of its outbreak globally constitutes a threat to international peace and security and could critically harm human security across the world. It is already strangling the world's economy and putting enormous strain on health resources.

International cooperation is essential and should continue to be strengthened. We reiterate that a coordinated, global and people-centred response, with a renewed sense of solidarity and common humanity and with particular emphasis on those most vulnerable, is crucial.

In that regard, we commend the Secretary-General, the World Health Organization and other humanitarian organizations for their leadership and efforts to organize and coordinate a global approach to this global pandemic, which has brought to the surface existing needs and created new ones; it has added yet another layer of suffering for the already extremely vulnerable populations that live in a state of humanitarian crisis.

People living in conflict situations are deeply vulnerable to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly persons with disabilities, children, women, older persons, refugees, internally displaced people and those in overcrowded detention centres, camps and densely populated areas.

We must ensure not only that their protection and needs are prioritized and that ongoing humanitarian aid distribution and access are in line with international humanitarian law, but also the safety and health of aid workers and first responders.

If appropriate prevention and response measures are not put in place urgently, food security is more at risk now than ever before. Yemen, already weakened by hunger and disease and with a health system devastated by the conflict, is now bracing for the impact of the threats associated with COVID-19.

Similarly, in Afghanistan and many other contexts, including in Latin America and the Caribbean, COVID-19 is developing into a complete nightmare for millions of people, including children.

We welcome the \$2 billion global humanitarian response plan to fund the fight against COVID-19 in the world's poorest countries, which also should take into account countries in transition, and we also commend the efforts that the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and the Peacebuilding Fund are making in this respect.

Developing countries must be able to count on better access to COVID-19 research data and affordable access to medicines, vaccines and medical equipment,

as outlined in General Assembly resolution 74/274, which was proudly endorsed by the Dominican Republic.

Education has been harshly impacted around the world. While the closing of schools and universities is part of the mitigation measures, alternative educational opportunities should be put in place.

Lockdown exacerbates the vulnerability of women and girls in armed conflict, bringing about other types of dangers, such as gender-based violence. The pandemic has wider impacts for gender-based violence prevention and response efforts. Therefore, all decision-making related to COVID-19 must involve the participation of women, youth and civil society.

Young people are mobilizing their communities to help stop the spread of the virus, building trust and triggering community action. Partnerships with young people to shape the response must be prioritized.

We must articulate lessons learned and best practices, departing from those of the Security Council in addressing SARS and HIV/AIDS and responding to the Ebola outbreak crisis.

Finally, we reiterate the call made by the Security Council in its resolution 2532 (2020), adopted yesterday, for all parties to conflict to put an end to all hostilities and facilitate the much-needed humanitarian operations that serve the needs of the peoples affected.

Annex 10

Statement by the Permanent Representative of Indonesia to the United Nations, Dian Triansyah Djani

First, I would like to welcome His Excellency Minister Heiko Maas and the honourable Ministers from France, Tunisia, Estonia, the United Kingdom and Viet Nam to this important meeting.

I thank France for its successful presidency in June and congratulate Germany on having assumed the presidency of the Security Council this month. I would also like to thank the Secretary-General, Mr. António Guterres; the President of the International Committee of the Red Cross, Peter Maurer; and the African Union Commissioner for Social Affairs, Amira Elfadil Mohammed, for their briefings.

This meeting is taking place as we are entering the so-called “new normal”. As that term implies, the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) has touched many aspects of our lives in a profound way: the global economy is predicted to contract by 6 to 7 per cent, and the humanitarian situation continues to deteriorate. The Secretary-General has also been clear on how the COVID-19 pandemic has far-reaching impacts, including on the maintenance of peace and security. We have to come to terms with this new reality and do our utmost to prepare for the occurrence of pandemics in the future.

The pandemic is raging as we celebrate 75 years of the United Nations. So the biggest question is: will we be able to emerge stronger together? I would like to outline three lessons learned.

First, we must formulate a coordinated international response. The United Nations, as a multilateral body, must rise to this task.

Indonesia, along with five other Members of the United Nations, took the initiative of launching the first General Assembly resolution on global solidarity to fight the coronavirus — resolution 74/270.

Indonesia fully supports the Secretary-General’s call for an immediate global ceasefire, which has received a great deal of support. We welcome the unanimous adoption of resolution 2532 (2020) by the Security Council just yesterday in support of that call, albeit long overdue. We thank Tunisia and France as well as the others that made this possible. We must ensure that this call translates into real action by all parties to put armed conflict on lockdown.

We should also support the efforts by the Secretary-General and his representatives to resolve conflict and pursue sustainable peace.

We commend the efforts of the United Nations peacekeeping missions on the ground in assisting host countries during the pandemic in close consultation with the countries concerned. We underline what the Secretary-General mentioned on the importance of ensuring the safety of missions and peacekeepers.

We also agree with the Secretary-General on the issue of biological conventions, as well as on the importance of resolution 1540 (2004).

We have always championed community engagement and are quite happy to hear that position echoed just now by Mr. Maurer, President of the International Committee of the Red Cross, particularly with regard to the importance of building trust and ensuring effective responses.

Secondly, we must manage disruptions following the pandemic. We still only have raw data, and projections are still unclear on when the pandemic will dissipate.

While there is ongoing research to find a cure and develop a vaccine, the impact of COVID-19 will likely persist long after and will create disruptions in many areas.

If not carefully managed, countries in conflict or post-conflict situations may see the reversal of gains due to the pandemic. In addition, the implementation of mitigation and containment strategies may have unintended results, including greater strain on the capacity of States to ensure the security of their people, and the perpetuation of conditions that could lead to insecurity and instability. That is why it is critical to effectively address likely scenarios and pressures in the coming period.

Thirdly, we need a long-term comprehensive strategy. The COVID-19 pandemic has made us reluctantly aware of our fragility. Many countries that faced instability before the pandemic are aware of the myriad political, economic, social and security challenges. We must continue to equip ourselves to address and prevent such challenges by developing and implementing a long-term comprehensive strategy to alleviate the humanitarian situation, to ensure the provision of basic needs, including health-care facilities and treatment, and to improve people's socioeconomic conditions.

Lastly, the main lesson we must learn the hard way is that the pandemic is a test of our solidarity and ability to reach multilateral solutions. No one is immune, and no one alone can prevail. We must work together and enhance international cooperation — not only for now but for the long haul — in order to be safe and healthy, and to find a cure, develop a vaccine and produce them for distribution.

We must ensure the transfer of knowledge from vaccine producers to others in order to encourage the development of affordable vaccines and create a fair mechanism for its distribution so that countries obtain fair and equitable access to vaccines and medicines. I am glad this important point was also highlighted by Ms. Mohammed, Observer of the African Union.

We must ensure that all people from every corner of the world, from remote regions to conflict areas, are given a fair chance to face these pandemic-related challenges. Only through concerted efforts can we tackle these enormous challenge in this unprecedented time. No one should be left behind. We are in this together. Multilateralism now is being tested more than ever.

Annex 11**Statement by the Permanent Mission of the Niger to the United Nations**

The Niger congratulates your delegation, Sir, on assuming the presidency of the Security Council for this month.

The participation of many ministers in today's open debate is a testimony to the timeliness of its choice of theme — the impact of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic on international peace and security.

I also wish to thank the Secretary-General and Mr. Maurer for their briefings.

We have witnessed how, in a short period of time, the COVID-19 pandemic has overwhelmed the capacities of countries — some with the most advanced health-care systems. To date, 10 million people have been infected and half a million, unfortunately, have passed away. We would like to extend our deep gratitude to all front-line workers in the fight against this scourge and convey our condolences to all those who have lost loved ones.

As COVID-19 has spread, one of its inevitable consequences has been its impact on the international conflict resolution mechanism and the humanitarian aid sector. The privilege bestowed upon the Council as the most important crisis-management entity in the world, with the power to pass enforceable decisions binding on all Member States, has also suffered greatly. However, despite the three-month delay, we align ourselves with, and welcome yesterday's adoption of, resolution 2532 (2020) in support of the Secretary-General call for a global humanitarian ceasefire as part of the fight against the pandemic. We thank France and Tunisia for bringing us there.

Unfortunately, the Secretary-General's ceasefire appeal has gone mostly unheeded by belligerent parties on the ground, as is the case in the Sahel, where terrorist groups are trying to take advantage of the pandemic to destabilize Governments by ramping up their attacks on civilian and military targets alike. Those actions have resulted in the loss of innocent lives and major disruptions to the delivery of basic social services to the population.

In the meantime, it is impossible for mediators, Special Envoys and Special Representatives to travel and meet with the parties among whom they are trying to find common ground with regard to various conflicts areas. The delivery of much-needed humanitarian assistance is slowed by border closures and the many restrictions taken by Member States in their efforts to contain the spread of the pandemic.

Peace operations are being heavily impacted by the freeze in rotations and the risk of spread of the disease among the troops and the population they are protecting. We commend the United Nations for putting in place strict and effective measures aimed at minimizing and mitigating the impact of the pandemic in the various peace operations.

As we all know, even in the best of times, persons in conflict zones face vulnerabilities that render their livelihoods challenging. In the Sahel, an area where climate change, armed conflict and fragile health-care systems intersect, the pandemic has added another layer to an already existing dire situation, and has made the populations particularly vulnerable to the outbreak of diseases and hunger. In all, 3.5 million people are projected to face acute to severe food insecurity, of which 3.1 million are internally displaced, returnees or people at risk of statelessness.

In addition to its heavy human and health toll, the pandemic is seriously affecting the already fragile economies of the countries of the Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5 Sahel), with the risk of a serious contraction in gross domestic product that could reach 7 to 8 per cent in 2020 for some countries, as mentioned in the final outcome of the G-5 Sahel Summit, held in Nouakchott on 30 June. The global health crisis has become an economic and social crisis that generates sociopolitical and security crises, which could deepen if a second wave were to materialize.

We still believe that overcoming the current crisis requires a compassionate approach that includes the easing or suspension of economic sanctions to allow countries to sustain their medical and economic responses to the outbreak.

A crisis of this sort calls on our collective conscience to draw inspiration from recent experience and from all places to arrive at solutions. As harmful as the 2014-2016 Ebola epidemic was for Africa, lessons learned from it might have taught us how to better weather the current pandemic.

The watchword seems to be “invest in preparedness”, as we have seen with Ebola, because viral diseases move faster than emergency and funding mechanisms. The African Union and the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention worked early on with Governments across the continent to scale up a comprehensive and evidence-based intervention to reduce and slow down the virus transmission, help health systems better manage the surge of patients and communities to better adapt to the disruption of social, cultural and economic activities.

At the national level, the Niger continues to enforce and promote the protocols approved by the African Union and the World Health Organization. Despite the drop in cases, we remain vigilant and have ramped up surveillance, risk communication, community engagement and coordination among the member States of the Economic Community of West African States, currently chaired by the Niger.

Furthermore, the use of social media to spread false information and propaganda on the pandemic is a major source of concern. This fake news is impeding Government responses to COVID-19 by spreading conspiracy theories about the disease, stigmatizing groups of populations and inciting hatred. We welcome the United Nations launch of the Verified campaign, which is aimed at countering that misinformation with facts and scientific data.

As was the case during the Ebola outbreak in Africa, Governments must therefore build trust, be truthful with the population and ensure that the public receives accurate, timely and appropriate information in order not to repeat mistakes that were costly, in terms of allowing the disease to spread. In both crises, making sure that most of the information is locally contextualized and health experts are sharing it, in accordance with local customs and practices, was a priority.

As we celebrate the twentieth anniversary of the women and peace and security agenda, I cannot conclude my remarks without paying tribute to and stressing the important role women play in all viable response efforts. Not only do they make up the majority of health-care workers, thus putting them on the front lines of the infection, but they are also victims in crises like these. The current COVID-19 crisis has also laid the groundwork for another shadow pandemic, namely, domestic violence against women and children. In that regard, we can and must do better.

Annex 12**Statement by the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations, Vassily Nebenzia**

We welcome you, Sir, to preside over this meeting. We congratulate Germany on assuming the presidency of the Security Council for July, and wish you every success.

We carefully listened to the Secretary-General's briefing and would like to thank him for his initiatives on how to counter this serious challenge. I note that Russia supported the Secretary-General's call for a ceasefire the day after he issued his appeal.

We also thank Peter Maurer, President of the International Committee of the Red Cross, and Commissioner Amira Mohammed for their briefings.

We welcome the consensual adoption of resolution 2532 (2020), on coronavirus disease (COVID-19) and on the call for a ceasefire. In the context of the spread of the disease, from which we must draw new lessons, we need to use the experience of the international community in combating previous major outbreaks of infectious diseases, including the Ebola virus. Pandemics can exacerbate the humanitarian consequences of armed conflict. Among other things, they affect food security through the disruption of agro-food systems and supply chains. Important peace processes are being hindered by COVID-19-related restrictions.

United Nations peacekeeping missions are also experiencing additional difficulties in their work.

We are concerned that countries affected by armed conflict already face a deteriorating humanitarian situation, even before the pandemic. The prolongation of armed conflict is detrimental to the effective implementation of the required anti-epidemic measures. National health sectors also suffer physical damage on medical infrastructure, due to the hostilities, and must also face the inability of national Governments to reallocate additional critical funding for health care.

In that context, economic coercive measures have an extremely destructive effect on the ability of countries suffering under the burden of sanctions to purchase vital personal protective equipment and medications. The Secretary-General has repeatedly signalled, in his reports, the particular vulnerability of developing countries under unilateral restrictions. The current situation requires an urgent review and abolition of that illegal practice. Through its adoption yesterday of resolution 2532 (2020), the Council contributed to raising awareness of this problem.

We believe that the Council's efforts to help combat the pandemic should focus, first and foremost, on its impact on the functioning of peacekeeping missions, ensuring the continuity of peace processes and supporting the implementation of the Secretary-General's ceasefire initiative. The potential sharp deterioration of humanitarian situations in armed conflicts compounded by COVID-19 should be considered primarily in relation to the situation of specific countries on the Council's agenda. Moreover, over the past three months, the Council has been taking a nuanced approach to discussing the impact of the pandemic on the situation in a given country. Attempts to generalize such a discussion will clearly take us outside of the scope of the Council's mandate.

As for the medical aspects of the international response to the outbreak and the global response to its socioeconomic impact, they fall to the relevant United Nations entities and agencies, namely, the World Health Organization (WHO), the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council.

The Russian Federation has consistently advocated for the strengthening of the leading role of WHO in international efforts in the field of health and response to infectious disease outbreaks, especially when coordinating multilateral efforts to counter COVID-19. In that regard, Russia has allocated financial aid and methodological resources to support the activities of this specialized United Nations agency. In addition, our national experts took part in WHO country missions to combat the coronavirus outbreak. We consider it extremely important that the international community unanimously and unequivocally support the work of WHO, which is at the forefront of this challenge today.

We would like to assure the Council that Russia will continue to make a significant contribution to global efforts to counter the pandemic and its consequences. We are contributing to multilateral efforts through WHO, the United Nations Development Program and other United Nations agencies.

We are continuing our bilateral assistance to the countries in need by providing personal protective equipment, testing systems and laboratory supplies to 19 countries, as well as by sending medical teams upon request. In Russia, a number of innovative medicines for the treatment of coronavirus infections, as well as their most serious complications, have been developed based on the results of clinical studies. Our scientists are continuing their research on other promising products, including vaccines against COVID-19.

We are ready to cooperate with all interested partners to ensure a coordinated international response to the spread of the coronavirus, and look forward to its early and final retreat.

Annex 13**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines to the United Nations, Inga Rhonda King**

I begin by thanking our briefers for their valuable remarks, and I commend the German presidency for convening this very timely discussion. The current pandemic has laid bare the critical weakness of a lopsided international system in which unbalanced global development undermines resilience and accentuates vulnerabilities, especially in the global South. For conflict-affected States, the complex and interrelated challenges of reducing hostilities, building and maintaining peace and promoting social and economic development have become quite urgent, and the key ingredient for a sustainable recovery is the unity and solidarity of the international community.

As we have witnessed with coronavirus disease, public-health emergencies are easily transfigured into international crises, as they are fuelled by and implicate travel, trade and other globalized tools that keep our societies in motion. To stifle the pandemic, these very structures are often the first to be suspended, thereby exacerbating vulnerabilities not only in conflict-affected countries but also for vulnerable groups elsewhere. A pertinent example is the thousands of seafarers that remain stranded aboard cruise ships and cargo vessels where they ply their trade, marooned as a result of border closures and immigration restrictions aimed at curbing the pandemic, but also due to owners and operators of maritime vessels who seek to abscond from their legal obligations towards them.

As supply chains are interrupted, the delivery of life-saving humanitarian aid is delayed, food insecurity is further exacerbated and social tensions are deepened along ethnic, communal and political lines, as the social contract in conflict-affected communities is gradually unravelled. More urgently, as competition over natural resources intensifies against the global backdrop of climate-induced shortages, the painful cycles of violence that are instigated affect — and are in turn affected by — the public-health emergency.

The interconnecting and overlapping health, socioeconomic, political and security risks associated with pandemics necessitate an integrated and coordinated strategy that brings the entire international community together to address each dimension of the crisis in a systematic manner. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines reaffirms its support for the key coordinating role played by the World Health Organization in ensuring effective epidemic preparedness, prevention and response within the framework of the International Health Regulations of 2005.

In the midst of a pandemic, while we cast our collective gaze towards health cooperation, the peacebuilding initiatives that prevent the outbreak, escalation, continuation and recurrence of conflict must be preserved and strengthened. More pressingly, we must adapt international public policy on several fronts to build capacities, ensure that inequalities are reduced and create pathways for peace and justice that are accessible to all, in accordance with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. To this end, our delegation welcomes the ongoing thrust to streamline peacekeeping operations under the Secretary-General's Action for Peacekeeping initiative, which brings political solutions to the forefront of our efforts aimed at maintaining international peace and security.

In conclusion, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines reiterates its support for the Secretary-General's calls for a global ceasefire and, in this vein, we welcome the unanimous adoption of resolution 2532 (2020), which, if upheld, will give vulnerable States the time and space to mend their social fabric. We congratulate France and Tunisia for their tireless efforts aimed at bringing us to this unanimous adoption. We

also advocate the waiving of unilateral sanctions — or other types of sanctions — that may undermine efforts to respond to the urgent health, socioeconomic, political and security challenges precipitated by the pandemic. While the most dangerous pathogens move with stealth, we must work assiduously to rebuild the social contracts upon which resilience is built.

Annex 14**Statement by the Permanent Representative of South Africa to the United Nations, Jerry Matjila**

I thank Foreign Minister Heiko Maas for convening today's briefing on the maintenance of peace and security, focusing on the impact of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. I also thank Secretary-General António Guterres, the President of the International Committee of the Red Cross, Mr. Peter Maurer, and the African Union Commissioner for Social Affairs, Ms. Amira Elfadil Mohammed Elfadil, for their respective briefings.

Today's opportune meeting is being held following the unanimous adoption by the Security Council of resolution 2532 (2020), on the COVID-19 pandemic in the context of maintenance of peace and security. By adopting this resolution, the Council has finally pronounced on this global challenge and its possible peace and security implications.

At the outset, I would like to reiterate my country's position that the attention the Security Council pays to global public-health emergencies should be clear and directly linked to issues that fall under the purview of the Council's mandate. We urge the Council to be cautious and refrain from focusing on international public-health matters and economic measures that are more appropriately addressed by the broader United Nations system, the Secretary-General and the General Assembly. As States Members of the United Nations, we should aim to strengthen those parts of the United Nations system that are set up to directly address global health matters.

An effective response to the extensive ravages and acutely global nature of the COVID-19 pandemic necessitates strengthened multilateralism, strong global solidarity and coordination. The pandemic has exacerbated existing humanitarian and socioeconomic crises, with particularly devastating impacts on those struggling to survive in conflict situations. Of specific interest and concern to the Security Council is COVID-19's disruption of the activities of peacekeeping missions and electoral processes in conflict situations, affecting progress on conflict-resolution processes and exacerbating the health risks and safety of peacekeepers. In this regard, South Africa remains concerned about the impact of the pandemic, especially the potential to reverse the vital gains made in peace and political processes in conflict situations.

I take this opportunity to reiterate South Africa's support for the Secretary-General's call for a global ceasefire and a humanitarian pause in order to focus due attention on the pandemic and attempt to mitigate its impacts. This call has been reiterated by the African Union.

All parties to armed conflicts must seize this opportunity to prioritize addressing the humanitarian impacts of the virus and conflict in general. The pandemic highlights the fundamental importance of unity and cooperation over divisions and violent conflict in addressing common threats to humanity.

South Africa commends the leadership and proactive action of the United Nations in putting in place measures to protect the health and safety of peacekeepers and navigate the effects of the pandemic. We take this moment to express our deepest condolences to the families of the peacekeepers who have lost their lives to COVID-19 and thank those peacekeepers who continue to put their lives on the line in order to execute their mandates. We also wish a speedy recovery to those peacekeepers who are still battling the disease.

South Africa believes that the Security Council can do more to alleviate the plight of innocent civilians affected by armed conflict and the spread of COVID-19.

In this regard, the Secretary-General has called for the waiving of unilateral coercive measures and sanctions in order to allow affected Governments and societies to have the requisite resources to secure much-needed life-saving and medical supplies and personal protective equipment to respond to the pandemic.

The Security Council has been briefed numerous times by the Secretariat and civil society representatives with first-hand information on the situations in which they operate and have made clear the severe impact of sanctions on ordinary citizens. We regret that the Council has not been able to take the necessary action to alleviate the impact of the pandemic on the humanitarian situation in affected conflict areas.

Sanctions should be used to support peace processes, and not as a means of collective punishment, which is made all the more devastating in the context of a pandemic that even the most capable economies have been struggling to deal with, as illustrated by the daily figures of infections and deaths. Despite the devastating consequences for all of us in all parts of the world, scientists are telling us that this virus is not going away anytime soon.

We are also deeply concerned about the plight of refugees, migrants and internally displaced persons, whose difficult living conditions have been exacerbated by the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. South Africa wishes to pay tribute to the bravery of the health workers and humanitarian personnel, whose perseverance and commitment to saving lives in the face of COVID-19 is commendable. It is paramount that they be provided with adequate and appropriate supplies to enable them to better perform their work.

In this regard, South Africa reaffirms its firm support for the critical leadership role being played by the World Health Organization (WHO) in preventing and mitigating public-health emergencies, and the centrality of the United Nations in leading multilateral responses to the COVID-19 pandemic. Furthermore, we reaffirm WHO's indispensable role and commend its work in assisting affected countries and regional organizations in addressing the spread of COVID-19. Accordingly, we underscore the vital importance of national, regional and international support, coordination and cooperation with WHO in formulating an appropriate global response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The World Health Organization's role is central to this global response, and should therefore continue to be supported and capacitated.

The spread of the virus in an increasingly globalized world has shown that we are only as strong as our weakest link. Sustained support and assistance to those most in need will therefore prove vital in ensuring that we emerge from this global crisis together. Half a million people worldwide have been affected by the pandemic; some are gasping for air to survive, while others are either in isolation or self-quarantine, hoping to overcome the disease. All the affected people expect us to unite, coordinate our actions, cooperate and support the specialized agencies leading the war against the pandemic. Let us extend solidarity to all States Members of the United Nations battling this pandemic.

In conclusion, every effort should be made to assist those trapped in conflict worldwide and to ensure that all essential facilities and infrastructure are protected in order to allow the International Committee of the Red Cross, local organizations, UNICEF and specialized agencies, inter alia, to deliver assistance, especially to women.

Annex 15**Statement by the Permanent Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations, Kelly Craft**

I thank Foreign Minister Maas and welcome the launch of Germany's presidency of the Security Council with a discussion of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, the global scourge that continues to affect our lives every day. This is a very important issue, and we are grateful that Germany has taken it up on its first day in the presidency. We express sorrow for the deaths, illness and other adverse consequences, including challenges to health-care and humanitarian personnel, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. We welcome the tireless efforts of the Secretary-General aimed at providing counselling and support services to United Nations personnel and their local and national partners involved in the urgent response effort.

As we have spent the last few months adapting our lives and working methods to stopping the spread of the virus, this is an opportune time to reflect on what we have learned, discuss the ongoing threat that health emergencies pose to international security and reflect on how we can fulfil our obligations to protect the most vulnerable communities. Early on, President Trump rightly pointed out the unquestionable need for complete transparency and the timely sharing of public-health data and information with the international community. Our recent experiences have only underscored that important point. Timely age- and sex-disaggregated data collection and accurate, science-based analysis of the origins, characteristics and spread of the virus also continue to be crucially important.

The United States continues to lead the world's humanitarian and health assistance response to the COVID-19 pandemic. We are working directly with Governments, multilateral organizations, non-governmental organizations, the private sector, academia and research institutions and other organizations responding on the ground so as to combat this virus in accordance with the International Health Regulations of 2005.

The United States is leveraging our long-standing investments and years of experience through the Global Health Security Agenda, the United States President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, the President's Malaria Initiative and numerous other initiatives to assist our partners in combating this pandemic and to build sustained global health-security capacity to better prevent, detect and respond to future infectious disease threats. The United States has already made available more than \$1.3 billion in emergency health, humanitarian and economic assistance to combat COVID-19, in addition to the funding it already provided to non-governmental organizations and international organizations. This assistance is part of more than \$12 billion that the United States Government has donated to benefit the global response, including vaccine and therapeutics development, preparedness efforts and humanitarian assistance. This is in addition to more than \$170 billion in United States investments in global health and humanitarian assistance throughout the last decade.

The global response of the United States to the pandemic is part of our All-of-America approach. In addition to the substantial United States Government assistance, the American people continue to show their generosity through private businesses, non-profit groups, faith-based organizations and individual contributions. This has been a true priority for President Trump.

We also support the Secretary-General's call for a global ceasefire, while continuing to conduct legitimate counter-terrorism operations. We call on parties to conflicts to respect existing ceasefire agreements or to conclude new agreements that

would help conflict-affected communities gain access to crucial aid and take steps to protect themselves from the virus. Furthermore, the international community must remain equally committed to maintaining our responses to ongoing humanitarian crises. This virus has not only claimed lives, but crippled economies and exacerbated already unbearable conditions for many around the world. Its impact has been acutely felt by vulnerable and marginalized populations, and they are counting on each of us now more than ever.

We have also seen the crucial role that women have had in the COVID-19 response. Women make up more than half of the health-care force globally, serving on front lines around the world as medical professionals, emergency workers, caregivers and other essential personnel who are courageously stepping up and responding to the needs of those affected by this pandemic. We thank them for their work. We are all indebted to them for their contributions.

Despite those contributions, however, the crisis has made a disproportionate social and economic impact on women and girls. In conflict areas, where women and girls typically have limited access to health-care facilities, those who contract the virus are particularly susceptible to dire outcomes. Moreover, in contexts where women and girls are already at risk of violence, the necessary public-health measures put in place to battle the spread of the virus, such as social distancing, self-quarantining and stay-at-home orders, may further put them at risk of gender-based violence, particularly domestic violence.

As part of our unprecedented humanitarian response to this pandemic, the Trump Administration proudly supports organizations that are responding to the increased risk of violence against women. Our increased efforts include programmes such as Voices Against Violence: The Gender-Based Violence Global Initiative, which provides emergency assistance to survivors and local civil society organizations. The United States also continues to support the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict to address violence against women globally throughout this crisis.

As we think about the future of pandemics and the impacts on international security, we must learn from our experiences in this regard and ensure that protections are in place to account for at-risk groups. Together with the United Nations and other international partners, the Trump Administration will continue leading the fight against this virus during this very crucial time. We will do all we can to ensure a safer world, a world more secure from infectious-disease threats, now and in future, because it is our responsibility to do so. Together, we will recover stronger.

Annex 16**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Afghanistan to the United Nations, Adela Raz**

As this is our first time participating under your leadership, Sir, allow me to congratulate Germany on its assumption of the presidency of the Security Council and wish you a successful month of work in the name of international peace and security. I would also like to thank Germany for convening this open video-teleconference meeting of the Security Council on the theme of pandemics and security and welcome the unanimous adoption of resolution 2532 (2020) on this matter of utmost urgency as we continue to tackle the threat of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19). We further congratulate the sponsors of the resolution and the Security Council members on this important achievement. Finally, I would also like to thank His Excellency Secretary-General António Guterres, Mr. Peter Maurer, President of the International Committee of the Red Cross, and Ms. Amira Elfadil Mohammed Elfadil, African Union Commissioner for Social Affairs, for their insightful remarks.

Undoubtedly, pandemics undermine and disrupt international peace and security. For the last four months, we have all been witnessing the socioeconomic and lethal consequences of COVID-19 across the world. Particularly, conflict-affected countries and countries emerging from conflict have seen their pre-existing challenges impacted by the additional burden of the pandemic. This has led to a deterioration of the humanitarian situation, which has especially affected vulnerable groups, such as women, children, the elderly, internally displaced persons and returnees. The pandemic has also shifted resources from national programmes for achieving sustainable peace and development to emergency plans for preventive and curative measures.

In addressing pandemics, collective efforts and measures are required at the national, regional and global levels. Particularly, the United Nations and the Security Council have the duty and responsibility entrusted to them by the Charter to act cohesively and deliver their mandates. I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his leadership and efforts in the response to the pandemic, and especially for the launch of the Global Humanitarian Response Plan for COVID-19. Furthermore, it is an honour for Afghanistan to be part of these efforts as one of the co-coordinators, along with Croatia, of the General Assembly's efforts on COVID-19-related initiatives.

As a country affected by conflict and that is experiencing the severe socioeconomic effects of COVID-19, Afghanistan understands how difficult it is to simultaneously respond to a pandemic with restricted resources while addressing the violence and instability emanating from conflict.

In addition, those in need of humanitarian assistance grew from 9.4 million at the start of the year to 14 million as of June as a result of the virus. In response, the Afghan Government has acted by taking preventive measures and adopting a response plan centred on health care, food security, public works and regional economic cooperation, and we will continue to address the pandemic with the support of and in coordination with the United Nations, the World Health Organization and regional and international partners. I would like to highlight our regional and international partners for their support in response to COVID-19.

The escalation of violence by the Taliban and its refusal to reduce levels of violence have increased the misery of the people in need of assistance and prevented the delivery of life-saving humanitarian assistance to vulnerable groups. Afghanistan is one of the 170 signatories to the joint statement in support of the

Secretary-General's call for a global ceasefire, and the Government has been consistently calling on the Taliban to observe a humanitarian ceasefire. Moreover, recognizing the imperative priority of peace, the Afghan Government is acting in good faith to see the immediate start of intra-Afghan negotiations. As part of this effort, we have prioritized the meticulous process of releasing close to 4,000 of the total 5,000 requested Taliban prisoners to build a stronger degree of confidence among all parties. Nonetheless, despite a three-day ceasefire during Eid al-Fitr, which raised the hopes of the citizens of our country, the Taliban has responded to our calls with increased levels of violence, going so far as to perpetrate attacks on humanitarian personnel and targeting civilians

We believe that by adopting resolution 2532 (2020), the Council joins the people of Afghanistan in demanding an immediate cessation of hostilities all around the world. It is time for all of us to join in the imperative task of delivering humanitarian assistance to all those who need it. It is time to come together and work with the United Nations and other organizations to ensure that nobody is left behind and that all vulnerable groups receive the resources and care they need. We reiterate to the Taliban that by continuing its attacks and refusing to heed the Secretary-General's call for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire, it is making a decision to go against an explicit call from the Security Council and, more importantly, the interests of its Afghan brothers and sisters, who are desperate for an end to the conflict and to receive the assistance that they so desperately need. The Government is doing our part; it is now up to the Taliban to respect the will of the Afghan people, lay down its weapons and work with us to find a peaceful solution to this 20-year conflict

In closing, Afghanistan welcomes the Security Council's resolution and applauds the Council's resolve to uphold its responsibility in maintaining international peace and security. COVID-19 is a multidimensional challenge and the global community will be able to effectively respond only through cohesive action that involves all different segments of the United Nations system and our global community. Afghanistan will continue to work and play its role, together with our neighbours and international partners, to address COVID-19 and to build back better at the national, regional and international levels.

Annex 17**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Armenia to the United Nations, Mher Margaryan**

I would like to thank Germany for launching its presidency of the Security Council with an open debate via video-teleconference on the theme of “Pandemics and security”. We also thank the Secretary-General, the President of the International Committee of the Red Cross and the African Union Commissioner for Social Affairs for elaborating on the interlinkage between the pandemics and peace and security in the context of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic.

We recognize that global health risks can undermine peace and security, in particular in regions already affected by conflicts and humanitarian crises. In 2014, resolution 2177 (2014) referred to the unprecedented extent of the Ebola outbreak in Africa, which constituted a threat to international peace and security and underscored that it could reverse the peacebuilding and development gains of the most affected countries and lead to a deterioration of the political and security climate.

The unprecedented crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic is reported to be the biggest challenge humankind has faced since the Second World War. Evolving from a public health emergency into a global crisis with far-reaching humanitarian, socioeconomic and human-rights implications, the pandemic presents an immediate challenge to the multilateral system. Among the hardest hit are people trapped in conflict, and the lack of humanitarian access to the conflict areas further exacerbates their suffering, endangering the rights to life and to health of the affected population.

The appeal of Secretary-General António Guterres for an immediate global ceasefire comes at a critical juncture, when the international community urgently needs to mobilize its efforts to fight the disease. Putting an end to ongoing hostilities and consolidating ceasefire regimes where they are in place is indispensable to ensuring safe and unhindered humanitarian access, with the aim of mitigating the impact of the pandemic and contain its spread.

We welcome the adoption of resolution 2532 (2020) on 1 July, recognizing the efforts and measures proposed by the Secretary-General concerning the response to the potential impact of COVID-19, in particular his appeal for an immediate global ceasefire and demanding a general and immediate cessation of hostilities.

Armenia fully and unequivocally supported the Secretary-General’s appeal, stressing the importance of assistance and access of the United Nations specialized agencies to people residing in conflict-affected areas and its readiness to provide all necessary conditions for their unimpeded work. The authorities of Artsakh (Nagorno Karabakh) also extended their support to the Secretary-General’s appeal, stressing that if it is to withstand the test with dignity, humankind will need to be guided by the principle of leaving no one behind. Confidence-building measures aimed at preventing and mitigating the spread of the disease can serve as an opportunity, including for parties to the conflict.

Regrettably, Azerbaijan has been pursuing the approach of instrumentalizing the situation caused by the pandemic to raise the tensions in relation to Nagorno Karabakh. Armenia has stressed the inadmissibility of Azerbaijan’s warmongering and unconstructive statements, which undermine the environment of the peace process and hinder the implementation of the commitment to preparing the populations for peace.

The disruption of the activities of conflict-related field operations due to the pandemic is a matter of great concern, as it may create the temptation to take advantage of the temporary absence of the international presence, including monitoring

mechanisms, and to resort to hostilities. Armenia and Nagorno Karabakh remain fully committed to the 1994 trilateral ceasefire agreement and 1995 agreement on consolidation of the ceasefire, which have no time limitation.

Armenia has welcomed the appeal of the co-Chairs of the Minsk Group of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) to the sides in the light of the suspension of monitoring activities by the Office of the Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office due to the spread of COVID-19, to reaffirm their commitment to strictly observing the ceasefire and refraining from any provocative action that could further raise tensions.

I want to conclude with a quote from the message that the Foreign Minister of Armenia, Zohrab Mnatsakanyan, delivered at the virtual ministerial meeting of the Alliance for Multilateralism on strengthening the multilateral health architecture and combating infodemics, held recently:

“With or without COVID-19, Armenia is a staunch supporter of the multilateral, cooperative international system with effective and functioning global and regional institutions. The crisis of the global health system caused by the novel coronavirus is a call for action, a reminder that against the challenge of global problems recommitment to effective multilateralism is an imperative.”

Annex 18**Statement by the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the United Nations, Yashar Aliyev**

At the outset, I would like to congratulate the delegation of Germany on assuming the presidency of the Security Council and on convening this open debate on the implications of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic.

Azerbaijan welcomes the long-awaited adoption by the Security Council yesterday of resolution 2532 (2020), in connection with the agenda item “Maintenance of international peace and security”. It is important that a resolution on a matter of such gravity and urgency enjoyed the consensus of the members of the Security Council.

Azerbaijan also highly appreciates the leadership and efforts of the Secretary-General to respond to the crisis.

The current situation demands common action to address effectively and in a timely manner the challenges the international community is facing amid the pandemic and its socioeconomic impacts. This objective can be achieved only through concerted, joint efforts aimed at overcoming fragmentation, strengthening cooperation and highlighting the central role of the United Nations in providing guidance for efficient international and national efforts.

Azerbaijan spares no effort to contribute to enhancing international solidarity, promoting multilateralism and mobilizing support and resources. The Government of Azerbaijan has made two donations to the World Health Organization and has also provided urgent humanitarian aid to 29 countries affected by the pandemic.

On the initiative of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, H.E. Mr. Ilham Aliyev, the Extraordinary Summit of the Cooperation Council of Turkic Speaking States was held via videoconference on 10 April 2020 on the theme “Solidarity and Cooperation in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic”. The Summit has become one of the first high-level meetings calling for expanded cooperation and urgent joint measures to prevent the spread of and eliminate the pandemic.

Another initiative of the President of Azerbaijan, put forward in his capacity as Chair of the Non-Aligned Movement, culminated in the holding, on 4 May, of an online summit-level meeting of the Contact Group of the Movement in response to COVID-19, under the theme “United against the COVID-19 pandemic”, with a view to assessing the impacts of the disease and identifying needs and requirements for possible remedies and action-oriented follow-up measures.

In his statement at the meeting, the President of Azerbaijan proposed requesting, on behalf of the States members of the Non-Aligned Movement, the convening of a special session of the General Assembly on the COVID-19 pandemic, via video-teleconference, at the level of Heads of State and Government. Following the further steps taken, in accordance with the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, a majority of members States from all regions and political groups expressed their support for the initiative. The thirty-first special session of the General Assembly shall be convened on 10 July.

Resolution 2532 (2020), adopted yesterday, considers that the unprecedented extent of the COVID-19 pandemic is likely to endanger the maintenance of international peace and security, demands in particular a general and immediate cessation of hostilities in all situations on its agenda, and calls upon all parties to armed conflicts to engage immediately in a durable humanitarian pause.

Being an important tool for the cessation of hostilities and humanitarian action, ceasefire accords must be implemented in good faith in order to achieve a speedy political settlement. Unfortunately, in some situations of armed conflict, spurious peacefulness and a declared commitment to truce and ceasefire, along with misinterpretation of the objectives of humanitarian principles, are among the means that aggressors frequently employ in attempts to freeze military gains achieved as a result of the unlawful use of force and other actions in contravention of the Charter of the United Nations and international law.

Thus, over the years since the establishment of the ceasefire between Armenia and Azerbaijan in 1994, the armed forces of Armenia have regularly violated the ceasefire, targeting towns and villages in Azerbaijan situated along the front line and the border between the two States to direct and indiscriminate attacks. Such attacks continue notwithstanding the appeal of the Secretary-General for a global ceasefire. Furthermore, Armenia has pursued the deliberate policy of consolidating the status quo of the occupation, including by strengthening its military build-up in the seized territories and changing their demographic, cultural and physical character, in clear violation of international law. Neither the ongoing peace process nor a global public health emergency has convinced the aggressor to halt illegal activities.

On the contrary, on 31 March and 14 April, illegal so-called elections were staged by Armenia in the occupied Nagorno Karabakh region of Azerbaijan, thereby once again vividly demonstrating that Armenia subordinates the well-being and safety of people to political expediency, in total disregard of public morality and in violation of international humanitarian law. Therefore, Armenia's statement on its alleged support for, and adherence to, the appeal of the Secretary-General for a global ceasefire is nothing other than an utter falsehood. No doubt, Armenia's objective is not to save lives and alleviate the suffering of people in need, but to prevent more than 700,000 forcibly displaced Azerbaijanis from returning to their homes and to colonize the territories it has ethnically cleansed and occupied.

Over the 75 years since the establishment of the United Nations, much has been done with regard to settling international disputes, resolving conflicts, eradicating colonialism and restoring hope to those affected by war, violence and instability. However, serious challenges remain, with the continued resurgence of conflict, increased levels of displacement and hate-driven violence. Peoples throughout the world continue to suffer from prolonged foreign occupation, ethnic cleansing and the lack of accountability for serious violations of international humanitarian law. Protracted conflicts and their political, military and humanitarian consequences must not be forgotten. Respect for the Charter of the United Nations and international law must be part and parcel of any efforts to address conflict situations and their adverse humanitarian impact.

Annex 19**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Bahrain to the United Nations, Jamal Fares Alrowaiei**

[Original: Arabic]

First, I would like to thank the delegation of the Federal Republic of Germany, President of the Security Council for the month of July, for convening this important meeting at a time when the world is facing one of its worst global health crises. The crisis, in turn, poses a threat to international peace and security and has an impact on the least developed countries and the most vulnerable groups, especially those affected by conflicts around the world. We welcome His Excellency Mr. Heiko Mass, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Federal Republic of Germany, presiding over the meeting.

I also wish to thank His Excellency Mr. António Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Peter Maurer, President of the International Committee of the Red Cross, and Ms. Amira Elfadil Mohammed Elfadil, Commissioner for Social Affairs of the African Union, for their briefings.

The unprecedented scope of the impact that the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has had on the world threatens international peace and security, as the Security Council affirmed in its resolution 2532 (2020), adopted unanimously yesterday. The COVID-19 pandemic was the direct cause of a global emergency that has killed more than half a million people worldwide.

In particular, the pandemic has had an impact on conflict-affected countries, where conditions on the ground, violence and instability undermine efforts to contain and end the pandemic, as the health-care sector in most of those countries has been devastated by years of conflict. Moreover, the large numbers of refugees and displaced persons in camps, most of whom are women and children, increase the likelihood of outbreaks of the virus due to the difficulty of enforcing distancing protocols. The suffering of those groups is also exacerbated by the difficulties that the pandemic may pose in terms of humanitarian access. In that connection, Bahrain supported the Secretary-General's sincere call for an immediate global ceasefire and for redoubled international efforts to combat and eradicate COVID-19.

It should also be noted that the pandemic will have adverse medium- and long-term effects, as its socioeconomic consequences may exacerbate the root causes of instability. This, in turn, may spark armed conflicts in some areas and cause existing conflicts to intensify, compounding human suffering and threatening international peace and security. In that regard, I wish to refer to the Secretary-General's plan to address the devastating social and economic repercussions of COVID-19.

Although the COVID-19 pandemic presents a challenge, it also provides a good opportunity, not only because it has demonstrated the value of cooperation and solidarity but also because it has highlighted the extent to which countries are interconnected and rely on one another. This underscores the importance of cooperation and collective action at all levels and of coordinating the international response under the auspices of the relevant international organizations, such as the United Nations and the World Health Organization. In that regard, effective regional cooperation, a principle enshrined in Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations, is an essential element of multilateralism, which cannot succeed if there are fundamental differences between States and global bodies. Regional cooperation is therefore vital and can play a key role in overcoming common challenges. Multilateralism and interdependence at the regional level also constitute important aspects of cooperation in these conditions.

In conclusion, Bahrain affirms its support for the efforts to contain and end the COVID-19 pandemic in order to implement the Sustainable Development Goals and maintain international peace and security for the well-being and prosperity of the world's peoples.

Annex 20

Statement by the Permanent Representative of Bangladesh to the United Nations, Rabab Fatima

I thank you, Mr. President, and the German presidency for organizing this virtual high-level open debate. We also thank the Secretary-General, the President of the International Committee of the Red Cross and the African Union Commissioner for Social Affairs for sharing their valuable insights.

The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has upended the entire world. The lack of an adequate and sustained response has taken the crisis beyond the health and socioeconomic sectors. It is affecting the political domain. The pandemic has also constrained the United Nations ongoing peace mediation and the work of the special political missions. Casualties among front-line responders, particularly law enforcement officials and other security sector personnel, and troop illness are also having an impact. All these factors are causing disruption in peace and security at the national and global levels.

Some of the secondary security implications of the pandemic are already visible. Violence against women and children is increasing; cybercrime and Internet-based criminal activities are growing; and massive joblessness and other economic shocks are already hitting hard. The loss of jobs or income, without hope of reinstatement, could result in increased criminal and anti-social activities, as well as other security threats. The work of civil society organizations providing support to women and other vulnerable communities has been disrupted. The pandemic is also causing additional vulnerability for returnee migrant workers. Economic uncertainties are increasing the vulnerabilities of certain sectors of the population, leading to their exploitation in the hands of organized criminal networks. Since such organized crime is mostly transnational and cross-border in nature, the impacts will not be confined within the borders of any particular country or region. There are some context-specific security implications of the COVID-19 pandemic at which the Council needs to have a closer look.

First, in humanitarian settings, COVID-19 is exacerbating the despair and hopelessness of people living in refugee camps or other settlements. The lack, or limited supply, of humanitarian assistance due to the pandemic-enforced travel restrictions is posing greater challenges. However, even bigger challenges could be caused by the slowing down of political processes aimed at durable solutions. For instance, both the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the International Organization for Migration have put a halt to their resettlement programmes in most situations globally. Last month, referring to the Rohingya crisis, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, in his briefing to the Council said:

“What worries me is that, among the refugees, there is a growing sense that solutions are not coming — that solutions, especially in terms of returning to Myanmar, continue to be elusive. We see this despair, and are multiplying our mental health programmes, because people are really very desperate.”
(S/2020/560, annex I, p. 7)

Indeed, the Rohingyas, especially young people, are gradually yielding to frustration and desperation, and we all can easily imagine what this desperation could lead to.

Secondly, with regard to conflict settings, due to COVID-19 civilians trapped in conflict situations are doubly victimized. While health infrastructure are already affected by conflicts, civilians continue to suffer from continuous threats of hate speech, xenophobia and confinements, as well as potential displacements. Despite

the Secretary-General's call for a global ceasefire, deadly conflicts continue to cause devastation in some parts of the world. In our neighbourhood, the clearance operations in Rakhine state have the potential to cause the suffering of civilians and perhaps a repeat of their exodus. The Council may like to take due cognizance of this important issue to pre-empt yet another possible crisis in Rakhine state.

Thirdly, in peacekeeping settings, even during the pandemic, our peacekeepers are responding to the call of duty and carrying out their mandated peace operations. Besides, they are taking up additional responsibilities to support national efforts to contain the spread of the pandemic. In the process, they themselves are becoming exposed, which is putting them at a higher risk than ever before. Embedding pandemic preparedness in the future planning and setting of mandates for peacekeeping missions may go a long way towards ensuring the safety of peacekeepers.

This pandemic, its security implications and, more so, the limited use of military solutions to such security challenges have perhaps brought to the fore the need to rethink the entire notion of security. Security has to be truly overarching. To address the security implications of the pandemic, what we need the most is global solidarity and cooperation, as well as the convergence of political will. Member States should be able to resolve the underlying causes of insecurity. There may be a need for the repurposing of resources.

The participation of all stakeholders is imperative. With its resolution 2532 (2020) now adopted, the Security Council should be better placed to rally support around the Secretary-General's global ceasefire appeal. It can ask all parties to a conflict to respect the cessation of violence and hostilities. Above all, the Council needs to step up fulfilling its responsibility by addressing the existing and traditional security challenges before they are exacerbated by COVID-19 and translated into new security challenges.

Annex 21**Statement by the Permanent Representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to the United Nations, Samuel Moncada**

Allow us first to express our appreciation for the convening of this open debate to address such an important issue, particularly at the current juncture. Similarly, we express our appreciation to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the President of the International Committee of the Red Cross and the Commissioner for Social Affairs of the African Union for their very valuable briefings. We regret, however, that this favourable opportunity was missed for hearing first-hand from the World Health Organization (WHO), whose role continues to be central in the global fight that we are all waging today against this deadly disease.

In a world already shaken by armed conflicts, including those of a protracted nature, as well as by the threats posed by terrorism and climate change, among others, the human crisis resulting from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic represents an unprecedented challenge to the international system and, potentially, to the maintenance of international peace and security. That being said, from the very outset, we would like to stress our preference for this issue, which affects us all, equally and without distinction, to be addressed within the framework of the General Assembly, which is the most representative organ of the United Nations.

Certainly, the current pandemic is one of the most pressing challenges that the world is now facing in the light of its many implications and devastating effects. It is the worst pandemic that has hit humankind in the past 100 years. Hence, addressing it undoubtedly requires collective, coordinated and decisive action by all members of the international community through an approach based on multilateral cooperation and international solidarity, that is, one that puts the human being at the centre of political action.

This is why we are seriously concerned by how some States seek not only to politicize the virus but also to exploit this moment of global upheaval in order to advance their neocolonial and warmongering policies, all of which violate both international law and the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, so as to obtain geopolitical advantages, even if this means sacrificing entire populations, currently subjected to actions of extermination, through the illegal application of unilateral coercive measures, the development of disinformation and propaganda operations and acts of aggression that include the use or threat of use of force.

From the very moment that WHO declared the evolution of the COVID-19 infection a pandemic, the Government of President Nicolás Maduro Moros put in place a series of measures to ensure the protection and well-being of the Venezuelan people, including their right to health and life, as well as to cooperate with global efforts aimed at containing the spread of this terrible disease.

Today, despite being located in a region considered to be the current epicentre of the pandemic, and despite the campaign of aggression to which our country is inhumanely and deliberately subjected as part of a systematic policy of maximum calculated cruelty, seen particularly in the obstacles faced, which includes the looting of our assets and resources abroad, including the gold reserves deposited in the Bank of England, and seeks to use the pain and health of the Venezuelan people to promote a coup d'état, Venezuela is the country with the lowest contagion rate and the least confirmed cases of COVID-19 per 1 million inhabitants in Latin America and the Caribbean, while being at the forefront in the number of tests carried out per million inhabitants in our region.

The success of our national strategy, which is being concealed by propaganda and disinformation campaigns, has been possible thanks to our Government's prompt understanding of the magnitude of the health emergency, as well as the solidarity and technical assistance provided by various international partners, including the United Nations system, in order to ensure both its effectiveness and the fact that it adheres to the international protocols that have been established.

In that regard, we take this opportunity to recognize the efforts made at all levels by the United Nations system, through both its main bodies and its specialized agencies, funds and programmes, to design and implement a comprehensive and coordinated response to COVID-19. Our special recognition goes to WHO and its Director-General, to whom we renew our full support, conscious of their efforts to lead the formulation and implementation of policies adapted to the various national contexts and realities. We believe that, at the current juncture, it is crucial to continue to provide all possible support to WHO, including financial, through predictable and sustained resources. We therefore categorically reject all inflammatory speeches aimed at disowning the important role that it continues to play in the fight against what is today our common enemy, as well as any arbitrary decision aimed at weakening its functioning.

Adopting the necessary measures to prevent the spread of the virus not only demonstrates the responsible and capable character of a State towards its population, insofar as the guarantor of their safety and well-being, but also demonstrates its responsibility towards, and appreciation for, the international community and the ongoing global efforts to combat the pandemic — bearing in mind that, in the interconnected world in which we live, it is impossible to succeed in this battle in an isolated manner. The lack of responsibility of one State in the timely adoption of decisions therefore represents a threat to the security of entire regions, thus increasing the risk of the virus spreading indefinitely.

In that regard, Venezuela takes this opportunity to denounce the criminal negligence of the Government of Brazil in addressing the COVID-19 pandemic, thus seriously endangering millions of lives both inside and outside that country, while undermining the actions that our national Government is taking to control the spread of the disease and its devastating consequences. This catastrophe is occurring at a time when there is a high level of human movement on our border with that country, as thousands of Venezuelan migrants — fleeing from the discrimination, xenophobia and other related forms of intolerance to which they have fallen victim in the neighbouring country — are voluntarily returning to Venezuela. That can only trigger the spread of the virus in our national territory, in spite of the protocols that are currently being implemented at our borders.

Ignoring multilateralism at a time of crisis such as this one is an irresponsible attitude that cannot be tolerated or promoted, since it puts at risk the well-being of all peoples. This pandemic can be overcome only through the responsible conduct of all States and based on their capacity to coordinate policies for the prevention and eradication of COVID-19.

We cannot conclude our statement without referring to two key issues. First, mindful of the need to foster an international environment that will enable us to jointly defeat the pandemic, we reiterate our support for the Secretary-General's call for an immediate ceasefire in all conflicts. Secondly, we renew our call to redouble efforts for the prompt development of a vaccine or other safe medical treatment against COVID-19. That can only be considered a global public good, and it is the only guarantee for effectively controlling the pandemic worldwide.

In conclusion, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela reaffirms its support for the work of the United Nations and considers that addressing this issue as a threat to international peace and security, despite its unprecedented reach, can be accepted only in conjunction with the premise that inequality is the main source of violence. Moreover, if the Security Council wishes to work constructively to prevent future conflicts, then it must condemn and combat the illegal application of unilateral coercive measures, which represent a criminal form of indiscriminate violence against entire populations and are today one of the main sources of inequality with regard to access to the resources, food and medicine needed to fight this pandemic. Only through our joint participation as equals, without political calculations, and with a real spirit of cooperation, can we together defeat COVID-19, a virus that knows no borders or distinctions of any kind.

Annex 22**Statement by the Permanent Mission of Canada to the United Nations**

Canada thanks Germany for convening this high-level open debate on pandemics and security.

The Security Council has addressed health crises before, responding to HIV/AIDS and to Ebola in West Africa and the Democratic Republic of Congo. The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic is a multifaceted threat that has significant international peace and security consequences, with sweeping implications for the Security Council.

Canada welcomes the adoption of resolution 2532 (2020), which supports the Secretary-General's call for an immediate global ceasefire amid COVID-19. The Council must ensure that this critical and long-awaited resolution is fully implemented.

Canada also deeply values the leadership and coordination role of the World Health Organization in the COVID-19 response. The rules-based international system is essential to help us accomplish together what no country could accomplish alone. In responding to COVID-19, Canada remains fully committed to multilateralism and multisectoral global health security cooperation to ensure our collective health, prosperity and security.

While the COVID-19 pandemic has focused global attention on the devastating impact of infectious diseases, global health security threats are not new. Just last week, the Democratic Republic of Congo emerged from a nearly two-year battle with Ebola. In recent years, other nations and regions have been battered by outbreaks of other devastating diseases. Taken together, those outbreaks, epidemics and pandemics reveal two undeniable truths.

First, more work is needed to build capacity to prevent, detect and respond to all manner of infectious disease threats — whether natural, accidental or deliberate in origin. In addressing the Council on 9 April, Secretary-General Guterres outlined a range of security threats spawned by the pandemic, including heightened bioterrorism risks. In that context, for nearly two decades, Canada's Weapons Threat Reduction Program (WTRP) has been delivering concrete programming to help build health-security capacity as part of our contribution to the Global Partnership Against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction, led by the Group of Seven. While much work remains to be done, capacity-building delivered by Canada's WTRP is supporting the global response to COVID-19, including biological laboratories in Africa, the Middle East and the Caribbean, and an infectious disease early-warning system in the region of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

Secondly, the Security Council must focus more attention on global health security. Today's open debate via video-teleconference is a welcome first step. The Council should consider holding additional briefings on the implications of global health security challenges on international peace and security. Canada recently joined the Republic of Korea, Denmark, Qatar and Sierra Leone to launch the Group of Friends of Solidarity for Global Health Security. The co-Chairs of the Group, which consists of 41 members from all regions, stand ready to support the Council's comprehensive consideration of global health security moving forward.

COVID-19 is affecting the lives and livelihoods of people everywhere, and will have implications for the work of the Security Council for years to come.

The pandemic is a crisis with grave human consequences. COVID-19 is more seriously affecting women and children, who already experience poverty, exclusion and marginalization more acutely and are disproportionately impacted during armed

conflict and in humanitarian emergencies. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex persons, people with disabilities, indigenous persons and other minority groups are also disproportionately impacted, and face the risk of increased stigmatization, scapegoating and marginalization.

For that reason, the Security Council must focus on the protection of the most vulnerable to ensure that civilians do not face compounding challenges due to COVID-19. The promotion and protection of human rights must also be at the core of the response to the pandemic. Initiatives that support the rights, well-being, health and specific needs of women and girls, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex persons, indigenous persons and all vulnerable communities must continue to receive adequate attention and funding.

COVID-19 is also exacerbating existing humanitarian emergencies. Canada is working with our partners to respond to the needs of the most vulnerable and the countries most affected. That includes support to health infrastructure to prevent the spread of COVID-19, including in conflict settings and detention centres. Canada salutes the bravery of all health and humanitarian personnel, who, at personal risk, continue to deliver life-saving assistance to those in need. Canada strongly condemns all attacks directed against medical and humanitarian personnel and their facilities.

Hard-won peacebuilding gains in fragile and conflict-affected States are also at risk. Canada is leveraging its role as Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission to focus on the risks that the pandemic poses for peacebuilding. There is strong consensus on the importance of coherent, cross-pillar, conflict-sensitive responses, which are essential to ensure that countries emerging from conflict do not relapse into instability and violence.

As the pandemic may contribute to increased instability in fragile and conflict-affected States, the role of United Nations peace operations is absolutely vital. Canada appreciates the extraordinary service and sacrifice of the civilian and uniformed personnel deployed to United Nations peace operations during the pandemic. We encourage all Member States to ensure the timely and full payment of assessed contributions and to facilitate the movement of United Nations personnel and material across international borders.

We must also focus on the socioeconomic fallout of the pandemic, which will exacerbate inequalities, reverse development gains and fuel the root causes of conflict and instability. Following the unprecedented 28 May High-level Event on Financing for Development in the Era of COVID-19 and Beyond, Canada will continue to advance concrete solutions to the development emergency caused by COVID-19. Decisive action is needed to ensure no one is left behind and that all countries recover and build back better.

Canada is committed to a robust and gender-responsive global effort to stop COVID-19 and address its devastating and multifaceted impact on people around the world. That includes regularly hosting a foreign affairs Ministerial Coordination Group on COVID-19 to coordinate global efforts and co-leading, with the United Kingdom, a contact group for Ministers for Development to ensure the coherence and effectiveness of international assistance. We are also working together with international partners to maintain open supply chains and support global economic recovery.

Guided by considerations of equity and support to the most vulnerable, Canada will continue to drive multilateral collaboration to reduce the peace and security risks of COVID-19 and other health security challenges to all.

Annex 23**Statement by the Permanent Mission of Chile to the United Nations**

[Original: English and Spanish]

We thank the German presidency of the Security Council for convening this timely debate, which takes place just after yesterday's decision on the long-awaited resolution 2532 (2020), on the impact of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) on peace and international security. We are equally grateful for the steady, tireless efforts of Tunisia and France in continuing to push the resolution's proposed action and finally succeeding in uniting the Council when it is most needed.

Chile joins the international community in the collective search for a response to COVID-19. We welcome the Council's decision because in meeting reports we have witnessed, with dismay, the depth of humanitarian crisis, an increase in human rights violations and the disproportionate impact that COVID-19 has had on women and girls.

Today, in the midst of the pandemic, more than 70 million people, equivalent to 1 per cent of the world population, are refugees. According to reports from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the risk of torture and mistreatment, especially in the prison systems has increased, gender-based violence is rising and fundamental rights, such as education and health, are limited.

Those vulnerabilities are exacerbated by pandemics, and we share the concern that the current one may erase hard-won achievements on the ground. We underline the importance of redoubling our collective commitment so that international cooperation, solidarity and coordination among the United Nations and its agencies, Member States and all relevant actors, can be our driving force in the fulfilment of our mandates.

More than ever, the machinery of the United Nations reform begun a while ago is being tested. Hence the importance of having timely and adequate information for decision-making. In that connection, we value the Secretariat's campaign to combat false news, especially on the ground, as this can destabilize peace in volatile areas and deepen conflicts.

Likewise, using the four axes prioritized in the Action for Peacekeeping initiative during the pandemic, we advocate for performance standards in the missions to be maintained without neglecting transparency and accountability, remembering that the safety and security standards of United Nations personnel, contingents and police are key to implementing mandates.

We know that we must focus on prioritizing life and the protection of civilians. But we also know that this cannot be done if the United Nations presence on the ground is threatened.

Chile supports the Secretary-General's call for a ceasefire and echoes other countries in giving a signal of multilateral commitment in that regard by joining initiatives to support the Secretary-General and ensure the consistent, efficient and timely response of the entire United Nations system to COVID-19, including all its associated complexities.

Now we have the will and decision of the Security Council to enhance this signal of multilateral unity and coherence. We also believe that this will affect civil society and all relevant actors, since, in the words of Nassim Taleb, this pandemic has become a black swan — an unexpected challenge that is having radical effects in every area of human life on a global scale. We see how it continues to advance and

threatens to reappear in places that seemed to have already been through the worst. This and other threats to global health persist.

In the face of the COVID-19 pandemic, we must redouble efforts to combat it, which would be very difficult without the global framework provided by the United Nations structure. We cannot foresee the future, but we can build an even more robust, resilient and sustainable multilateral system.

Every day we learn something new about how this pandemic develops. We need international collaboration to move beyond the individual efforts of each State and share experiences. The COVID-19 pandemic has prompted a search for new spaces and multilateral instruments to ensure timely responses and seamless equitable medical supply channels.

In that context, Chile firmly believes that the international community must redouble its commitment to coordinate best practices and alliances in the fields of prevention, preparedness and multidimensional responses to pandemics and public health emergencies.

We must therefore maintain the free flow of products and supply chains, strengthen access to markets and ensure technology transfer and humanitarian corridors that enable the human mobility of those facing border closure. We also must secure the necessary support of international financial organizations to help us bear the enormous economic and social costs associated with the pandemic.

That is why Chile — in New York and Geneva — has been very active in presenting various complementary proposals to address the issues already stated. We thank in advance those delegations that have expressed their support and willingness to advance those initiatives, and we also hope to clarify doubts and queries as best we can. We are confident that we will have the necessary support to improve the global response to, and our preparedness for, pandemics, which we know will continue to plague the world of the twenty-first century.

We do not have all the answers, but, since our challenges are interconnected, we can work together to reach them by strengthening multilateralism and our commitment to the Organization. We must listen to and work with and for the people, so that our response is not only collective, but also legitimate and representative. Multilateralism must use this opportunity to demonstrate that it can effectively deal with global crises.

Annex 24**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Costa Rica to the United Nations, Rodrigo A. Carazo**

[Original: Spanish]

Costa Rica congratulates Germany on its assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of July and appreciates the contributions to today's meeting by Secretary-General António Guterres and the other speakers.

While an invisible virus is sweeping the planet without consideration for the size, wealth or level of development of nations, we were concerned that the Security Council had not joined the Secretary-General's call for a global ceasefire. We therefore wish to acknowledge the leadership of France and Tunisia in finally adopting yesterday resolution 2532 (2020), on the current pandemic caused by coronavirus disease and calling for an immediate pause in the 90-day armed conflict. Weapons must be silenced so that countries in conflict can focus their energies and resources on fighting a common enemy that is affecting us all, but mainly those in fragile situations who are totally dependent on humanitarian aid to meet the challenge.

Since the beginning of the current pandemic, Costa Rica has insisted that health is a global public good. We believe that this is the first lesson learned from the pandemic and that in reliance on such a perspective we will be able to prevent and overcome similar challenges in future. The pandemic has caused triggered multiple crises, and their solutions must therefore be multilateral and based on solidarity.

Costa Rica believes that the World Health Organization (WHO) should lead the multilateral response to the pandemic. On 29 May, Costa Rica, the WHO and almost 40 other States launched a global repository to share data, knowledge and intellectual property and to facilitate equitable access to health products that could lead to cures and save lives. We also presented a proposal to the multilateral and regional financial organizations in support of action for the benefit of the most vulnerable and to take into account the deficits resulting from efforts to reactivate economies and combat impoverishment adopted following the health-care measures undertaken to contain the coronavirus.

In addition, Costa Rica would like to highlight two elements that, if left unchecked, could transform a health crisis into a security crisis.

The first is logistics, in particular the management of the transport of food, water, medicines and fuel. Logistics is the method that ensures that health workers are where they need to be and that the equipment and pharmaceuticals that support them are in the right place at the right time. During large-scale emergencies, such as the one we are experiencing today, if any of the links in the supply chain from the source to the consumer are broken, the effect is exponential and the break becomes a door through which fear, lawlessness and even the breakdown of social order can leak in.

The second is the difference between national territory and viral territory. When a solitary outbreak occurs, the viral territory can be clear. The opportunity to contain and destroy the outbreak is defined by the area where the virus lives. But when we face a pandemic, the territory of the virus transcends national boundaries. As it grows, it defines new territories and regions, sometimes connected, sometimes not. To fight the virus, we have to work in a coordinated way because without joint efforts the virus will act like the Lernaean Hydra of Greek mythology — one head is cut off and two others grow in its place.

In conclusion, in order to control and defeat a pandemic, we must cooperate to ensure that supply chains, particularly those for health-related products, are identified, understood and supported. We must also ensure that we understand the regions where the virus lives and, as an international community, coordinate our responses to control and attack the virus, always keeping in mind that the virus has no conceptions of nation, race or creed.

Annex 25

**Statement by the Deputy Permanent Representative and
Chargée d'affaires a.i. of Cuba to the United Nations, Ana Silvia
Rodríguez Abascal**

[Original: Spanish and English]

The coronavirus disease pandemic poses a challenge to everyone, generating a crisis of manifold and ravaging effects not only on health, but also on the economy, trade and our societies at large. It has emerged amid a situation characterized by the overwhelming economic and social inequality among and within nations, with unprecedented migration and refugee flows, causing xenophobia and racial discrimination to surface again, and at a time when the impressive breakthroughs in science and technology, particularly in the area of health, are increasingly concentrated in the pharmaceutical business and the commercialization of medicine, instead of being directed towards ensuring the well-being and healthy life of the majority of people. The pandemic does not respect borders or distinguish between ideologies or levels of development. The response should therefore also be global and shared, overcoming political differences.

It is not possible to accurately predict the extent of the pandemic's consequences. The great number of infected people and the considerable number of human lives lost reveal its ravaging impact on an increasingly interconnected world, which, nevertheless, has not been able to make good use of that interconnection in a spirit of solidarity and which is paying today the price for its inability to remedy the serious disparities among societies and nations. Indubitably, the pandemic poses a threat to the sustainable development of peoples owing to its severe impact on the economy, trade and our societies in general. It calls into question the possibility of moving towards the fulfilment of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

We know that we are on a path to a deep international economic downturn or depression and that the countries of the South will be the most affected by its repercussions. We are all experiencing the global economic downturn, and some of us are bearing the additional burden of criminal economic coercive measures, in violation of international law and the Charter of the United Nations. In the case of Cuba, the Government of the United States has tightened the protracted and genocidal economic, commercial and financial blockade with new measures designed to further hamper our national efforts aimed at tackling the pandemic and addressing the country's recovery.

Solidarity and cooperation are scarce. These are values that cannot be replaced by the pursuit of profit, a motivation that is the almost-exclusive domain of those who, by worshipping the market, forget about the value of human life. When the events that have kept humankind on pins and needles in recent months are reviewed, it is essential to mention the costly flaws of the neoliberal policies that have led to the reduction in management and capacities of States, excessive privatization, and the casting into oblivion of the majority of people. This pandemic has revealed the fragility of a fractured world built around exclusion.

While global military expenditure exceeds \$1.9 trillion, out of which more than 38 per cent, some \$732 billion, is what the United States will have spent in 2020, the pandemic exacerbates the urgent problems of a planet plagued by profound inequalities, where 600 million people live in extreme poverty and where almost half the population has no access to basic health services.

In the midst of this complex situation, the United States is pursuing a foreign policy aimed at stirring up and promoting conflicts, divisions, chauvinism and

supremacist and racist positions. Further, it is attacking multilateralism and unfairly discredits the role of international organizations, in particular the World Health Organization. The constant aggressions against certain countries are real threats to international peace and security. Attempts to reimpose the neocolonial past on Our America, including the public declaration of the validity of the Monroe Doctrine, contravene the Proclamation of Latin America and the Caribbean as a Zone of Peace.

We support the urgent call of the Secretary-General “to put an end to the sickness of war and fight the disease that is ravaging our world: the coronavirus pandemic”. All wars, including unconventional warfare, must cease. The need to work together to address the challenges is confirmed. Together we must produce the responses needed. We must complement each other, providing the resources at our disposal, however limited they may be. We cannot afford exclusions of any kind.

It is the responsibility of the General Assembly to assume the pivotal role in the coordination of international efforts to tackle the pandemic and its consequences. The Security Council’s interference in matters outside its competence must cease, particularly with respect to those that fall within the mandates of the Assembly and of other specialized agencies of the United Nations system, particularly, the World Health Organization.

Any temptation to subordinate science to market forces must be resisted. At the juncture represented by this pandemic, it becomes necessary to provide universal access to any vaccine or medication that can be produced. It is indispensable to share respective experiences, enhance communication and identify those practices that have yielded results in other parts of the world.

Our country is willing to share its expertise with all those who need it. Despite the difficult situation, Cuba has been striving to meet requests for medical assistance from many countries. To date, there are 38 medical brigades in 31 countries and territories, comprising more than 3,000 health professionals. We are motivated by supportive and cooperative values, including the premise of sharing what we have, even if it is scarce. More than 400,000 Cuban professionals have fulfilled missions in 164 countries in Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, the Middle East and Asia. Cuban medical cooperation has more than half a century of experience and enjoys a high level of prestige at the international level.

Nevertheless, instead of engaging themselves in promoting cooperation and encouraging a global response to the pandemic, senior officials of the United States Department of State and anti-Cuban United States Senators dedicate their time to promoting legislative initiatives designed to threaten Governments that, in making a sovereign decision in the light of the tragedy of the pandemic, choose to request medical assistance from Cuba. However, the actions of the United States Government against Cuban medical cooperation will not stop our humanistic vocation. These American actions join the failed, inhumane and criminal actions that the United States Government has undertaken against the Cuban people and which affect the already deteriorated credibility of that Government by criminalizing and persecuting international solidarity for political and electoral reasons and by using false pretexts.

The reality we face requires putting solidarity and the will to act before inaction and selfishness. Humankind demands an effective solution. Together we can achieve it. In this situation, it is the duty of all States, and particularly the members of the Security Council, to defend multilateralism and the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, including respect for the sovereign equality of States and their political independence, unity and territorial integrity, the peaceful settlement of disputes, and refraining from the use or threat of use of force in international relations.

Annex 26

Statement by the Permanent Mission of Cyprus to the United Nations

The present statement complements the statement to be delivered on behalf of the European Union (see annex 30). We thank Germany for today's timely discussion, as well as France and Tunisia for their tireless efforts aimed at achieving the adoption of resolution 2532 (2020) in support of a global ceasefire.

The link between pandemics and security operates on three levels; it adds a layer to existing conflicts, it can complicate the work of United Nations peacekeeping operations and it can contribute to the aetiology of new conflicts.

The security threat stemming directly from a pandemic applies both to individuals as well as to State institutions, the latter not limited solely to health systems, as pillars of human security. However, over and above the direct and obvious threat, many derivative effects of large-scale global pandemics can be destabilizing factors: the economic impact, owing to the negative correlation between conflict and prosperity; inequalities — further amplified by the socioeconomic impact of pandemics — resulting from the unrest they can beget; emergency measures that may threaten democracy and the rule of law; violence against women and children, which can destroy the fabric of society; further marginalization of vulnerable groups; and non-inclusive recovery, including by failing to make vaccines global public-health goods.

These risk factors are compounded if the United Nations performs poorly. It is a litmus test for the United Nations and its effectiveness in delivering when faced with a global phenomenon that requires international cooperation, but also for the Council, specifically because the United Nations was designed to uphold international peace and security. The very essence of multilateralism is to go beyond each of us as Member States in order to construct an international community that is more than the sum of its parts. If we fail to exemplify international cooperation when it is most needed, we damage the United Nations and make concessions that disfavour solidarity in order to protect our own citizens. Instead of using the United Nations for its original purpose, we risk destroying the Organization, using its very *raison d'être* as our weapon.

As to the specific role of the Security Council, in the first instance, there is the need for it to ensure that the United Nations peacekeeping operations it has mandated are able to protect their own personnel and help a host country minimize the impact of a pandemic on the conflict afflicting it. But beyond this, and notwithstanding the clear primacy that should be afforded to hard security issues by the Council, we cannot overlook that factors beyond hard security have become existential. This fact compels us to adapt to the nature of threats and embrace a more comprehensive concept of security, given that just as root causes of conflict cannot be divorced or compartmentalized, nor can our response. In addition, conflicts have proliferated beyond what the Council was created to tackle, leaving prevention as the only route to maintaining international peace and security.

In our opinion, the only positive aspect of coronavirus disease is that it increases our awareness and compels us to review our performance as States Members of the United Nations in real time and make sure that we have at our disposal all the tools necessary to prevent future pandemics and that we are able to implement a comprehensive response plan that is mapped out in advance.

Annex 27**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Denmark to the United Nations, Martin Bille Hermann**

I have the pleasure to submit this statement on behalf of the Nordic countries — Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden — on the timely topic of health and security.

The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic poses a threat to the maintenance of international peace and security. The socioeconomic fallout of the crisis exacerbates the root causes as well as the consequences of conflict and risks reversing hard-won development and peacebuilding gains. The expected food crisis caused by the pandemic may also aggravate conflicts. Root causes of conflict also increase the risk of pandemics. Unmitigated climate change and escalating environmental degradation, including biodiversity loss, undermine the very basis of human well-being. Without immediate coordinated action, this will continue to lead to pandemics, global crises, displacement and conflict. The most important thing we can do to prevent such crises is to implement the Paris Climate Agreement and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Furthermore, vulnerabilities to cybersecurity threats have been exploited during the pandemic, with a notable increase in malicious cyberactivities, particularly against medical facilities. Misinformation and disinformation risk enhancing the likelihood of conflict, violence, human rights violations and mass atrocities.

We, the United Nations, must face the crisis with determination and resolve, in solidarity and through a strong multilateral response. The Nordic countries welcome the efforts of the United Nations and the Secretary-General to address the immediate and long-term consequences of the crisis, including through the launch of the Global Humanitarian Response Plan and a new multi-partner Trust Fund for COVID-19 Response and Recovery. We call on all Member States to support the important role of the United Nations system, and the leading role of the World Health Organization in particular, in mobilizing and coordinating the global response to the pandemic, with human rights at the forefront. This is also a unique moment for assessing the results brought about by the Secretary-General's reform agenda, including the extent to which the reforms have led to a more coherent United Nations system on the ground, under the strategic leadership of Resident Coordinators.

Health and global security are closely interlinked. Pandemics risk exacerbating ongoing conflicts and sparking new ones, potentially leading to an increase in social unrest and violence. This, in turn, undermines our ability to fight disease. At the same time, people in conflict-affected States are particularly vulnerable to pathogens as well as the secondary effects of the pandemic. There are examples of conflict parties exploiting the uncertainty created by the pandemic to press for a military advantage, and of the pandemic leading to the disruption of ongoing peace negotiations. For those processes where momentum is sustained, there is a risk of further marginalization and exclusion of already vulnerable groups as conversations shift to virtual forums. We know that for peace processes to be successful and sustainable, they need to be inclusive and transparent. We must therefore take proactive measures to ensure the full, equal and meaningful multi-stakeholder participation, especially of historically marginalized and vulnerable groups, such as women and girls, in political and peace processes.

United Nations special political missions and peacekeeping operations play an important role in safeguarding momentum on existing peace processes and sustaining peace, as well as in the COVID-19 response. Peace operations need to be innovative in adapting to the new reality and we support the comprehensive efforts that the

United Nations has made in order to ensure the safety and security of peacekeepers as well to support host nations in preventing the spread of the virus. At the same time, member state flexibility and solidarity is essential, if peace operations are to deliver on their mandate. The crisis also presents an opportunity to review mission mandates in light of a changing threat landscape. We therefore reiterate our support to the Secretary-General's Action 4 Peacekeeping Agenda, which we believe does exactly that.

The direct and indirect impact of COVID-19 exposes and exacerbates pre-existing vulnerabilities and inequalities, adversely affecting particularly the least protected among us. For populations in fragile and conflict affected contexts, coping mechanisms to address and handle pandemics are often reduced, sometimes even non-existent. We must reinforce and strengthen our resolve and commitment to leaving no one behind, and indeed reach those who are most vulnerable in the immediate response as well as in building back better and greener from the pandemic. To this end, recovery plans must be designed and implemented in a conflict-sensitive and gender- and climate-responsive manner, and we must ensure the full, equal and meaningful multi-stakeholder involvement of particularly women and girls in the design, implementation and evaluation of such plans. The combination of the pandemic, its socioeconomic consequences, and exacerbated conflict may lead to an increase in displacement and migratory movements and consequently place those already exposed in an even more vulnerable situation. We need to step up efforts to increase protection in the regions of origin and along migratory routes.

COVID-19 disproportionately affects women and girls everywhere, resulting in a "shadow crisis", in the words of the Secretary-General. Women are the majority of frontline health workers; women and girls bear the brunt of unpaid care work; women constitute the majority of those working in the informal sector, with low wages, no social protection and small chances of being reached by governmental support packages; and more girls than boys drop out of school. Many of these girls risk never returning to school when they reopen, often increasing their exposure to violence and harmful practices such as child, early and forced marriages, adolescent pregnancies and female genital mutilation. The crisis has also led to an increase in sexual and gender-based violence and domestic or intimate partner violence as well as reduced access to vital sexual and reproductive health services. Women and girls with disabilities face even greater risks.

Member States must address the structural gender inequalities and discrimination that place women and girls at greater risk during crises. This requires Member States to conduct systematic gender analyses of crisis response, and use sex- and gender-disaggregated data. Nordic countries place great emphasis on the protection of women and girls and on upholding their rights, as well as the safeguarding of universal health care and unhindered access to sexual and reproductive health care services.

A state of emergency like this pandemic requires extraordinary measures. However, such emergency measures must not be used as a pretext or justification for weakening universal values of human rights, democracy or the rule of law and must be necessary, proportionate, temporary and non-discriminatory in nature. We are particularly concerned about negative impacts on civil society, human rights defenders, gender equality, women's and girls' sexual and reproductive health and rights, and possible abuse of surveillance technology. We strongly support the Secretary-General's call to put human rights at centre stage in COVID-19 response and recovery. Addressing the crisis in all its dimensions and bolstering resilience require rapid response, good governance, legitimate leadership and a vibrant civil society.

Viruses and bacteria know no borders. The current pandemic has demonstrated that the world has not been sufficiently prepared to meet a health crisis of this nature and magnitude. The only way to ensure global health security is through a global coherent approach to preparedness and response based on solidarity, reinvigorated multilateralism and renewed commitment to the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda, with a particular focus on strengthening public health functions and institutions and promoting universal health coverage.

At its current stage, the COVID-19 pandemic is best curtailed by having a safe and effective vaccine and, once available, by ensuring equitable global access. We therefore welcome and supports initiatives such as the Access to COVID-19 Tools Accelerator and the Coronavirus Global Response. The International Health Regulations, furthermore, provide a unique legally binding framework for all Member States to prevent, protect against, control and respond to the international spread of disease, while avoiding unnecessary interference with international traffic and trade.

In closing, the Nordic countries would like to reiterate our strong support for the Secretary-General's global ceasefire appeal and encourage those Member States that have not already done so to join us. We also strongly welcome the Security Council's unanimous adoption of resolution 2532 (2020) in support of the appeal.

Annex 28**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Ecuador to the United Nations, Luis Gallegos Chiriboga**

[Original: Spanish]

I wish to begin by congratulating you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of July. I also highlight the work done by France during the month of June.

There could be no better way to start this month than with the unanimous adoption of the long-awaited resolution 2532 (2020), on the coronavirus disease (COVID-19), concerning which I appreciate the efforts of France, Tunisia and all the members of the Council, which brought to fruition a week of overwhelming support from the international community, reflected in the statement co-initiated by Ecuador in support of the Secretary-General's call for a ceasefire, endorsed by 172 countries.

I deem it necessary to emphasize that the resolution requires an immediate and general cessation of hostilities in all situations, and calls all parties involved in armed conflicts to an immediate humanitarian pause for at least 90 days.

In the current circumstances of the global health crisis, all members of the Organization and all its organs, including in particular the Security Council, must rise to this existential challenge. To that end, it is essential to ensure the implementation of the ceasefire worldwide. That is why, with resolution 2532 (2020), the Security Council has definitively joined international efforts to fight the pandemic. The Government of Ecuador reiterates its full support for the efforts of the United Nations and the Member States in the implementation of the resolution.

In thanking you for convening this necessary debate, Sir, I also highlight the briefings by Secretary-General António Guterres, the President of the International Committee of the Red Cross, Peter Maurer, and the African Union Commissioner for Social Affairs, Amira Elfadil Mohammed Elfadil.

In the May debate on the protection of civilians in armed conflict (see S/2020/465), we were able to make an early assessment of the devastating impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and of the need to protect people's lives, dignity and rights. But today's debate also offers us the opportunity to identify and recognize that pandemics exacerbate crisis conditions on the ground, weakening peace, stability and security.

The year 2020 should mark a before-and-after in terms of security, as it is the year of the review of the peacebuilding architecture and the first year of the Decade of Action, which also coincides with the commemoration of 75 years of the United Nations. In reality, the COVID-19 pandemic is accelerating that epochal division.

We have only one option; we must learn and cooperate to be more resilient. That issue cannot be the subject of this debate alone. It is imperative that the Security Council henceforth include the issue of the impact of pandemics on its agenda.

We need to generate efforts to improve the security conditions of health systems and infrastructures. We also need to move forward on a coordinated international response. We must permanently secure humanitarian access channels in conflict zones and we must place greater emphasis on the implementation of international disarmament commitments, in particular nuclear disarmament, due to the humanitarian consequences and risks posed by the mere existence of weapons nuclear.

Finally, in commemorating the first anniversary of resolution 2475 (2019), on the impact of conflict on people with disabilities, we must ensure the special attention of the Council and the international community, all the more so in the context of global health crises such as that caused by COVID-19.

I conclude by reiterating that multilateralism and international cooperation are the best mechanism for preserving stability, peace and security.

Annex 29**Statement by the Permanent Mission of El Salvador to the United Nations**

[Original: Spanish]

El Salvador considers it highly opportune for the Security Council to discuss the consequences of international pandemics and health crises on international peace and security, as well as the role and leadership that this United Nations organ should assume in its work to prevent conflicts in those contexts.

Health crises can cause or exacerbate instability and, in turn, could reverse the progress made in development, peace and human rights. HIV/AIDS and Ebola have shown us that the repercussions can be much more profound when countries are in the process of transition to peace or, in the worst-case scenario, in conflict. The consequences could also have an effect on all sectors and levels of society because, if not properly addressed, they can generate social tensions and a deterioration in the political and security climate.

To date, the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) has affected more than 10 million people around the world, and more than half a million have died. COVID-19, listed as a pandemic by the World Health Organization, is the largest health crisis in recent years and, as the Secretary-General has previously mentioned, the greatest challenge the Organization has faced in its almost 75 years of existence. Its implications are therefore much broader than other health crises and will require wide-ranging and exceptional measures.

For all of these reasons, El Salvador recognizes that the COVID-19 pandemic is an unprecedented health, social and economic challenge, as well as a threat to international peace and security, which requires innovative and supportive responses from all Members and relevant actors of the Organization.

El Salvador, concerned about the plight of women, children and all civilians in conflict and other humanitarian crises, strongly supports the global ceasefire in order to provide assistance and protection to those most vulnerable groups, thereby reducing the effects of the COVID-19 outbreak. In this regard, El Salvador has heeded the call of the Secretary-General for an immediate ceasefire worldwide.

We welcome the fact that the majority of the States Members of the Organization have accepted the call, and the progress that this action has made possible. We note with satisfaction the recent adoption by the Security Council of resolution 2532 (2020), endorsing the Secretary-General's call to address the consequences of the pandemic. El Salvador sees in this action a hopeful sign for those who are suffering the consequences of conflicts and, at the same time, urgently need health support.

El Salvador joins the Security Council's recognition of the role women play in response activities to COVID-19, as well as the reduction of the negative and disproportionate impact of the pandemic on the most vulnerable sectors of the population.

We highlight the commendable efforts of peacekeeping operations and the hard work of the more than 100,000 men and women working in them, in close collaboration with other actors in the United Nations system, particularly those supporting local authorities to contain the outbreak of COVID-19. El Salvador also commends the efforts to rapidly adapt to the evolving exceptional circumstances so as to fulfil the mandates assigned and assist in preventing, mitigating and responding to the effects and repercussions of COVID-19.

We support the actions of the Secretary-General on the ground where peace operations are being carried out, particularly those in support of measures taken by the host countries to mitigate the consequences of the virus. We believe it essential to continue to strengthen the training of peacekeeping personnel on issues related to the prevention and spread of COVID-19.

We would like to take this opportunity to honour the memory of peace operations personnel who recently lost their lives, particularly Lieutenant Colonel Carlos Moisés Guillén Alfaro, a member of the Torogoz V battalion, deployed in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali, who died in support of the tasks that El Salvador is carrying out as part of implementing the Security Council's mandate in Mali.

The COVID-19 pandemic has increased the many challenges for countries such as El Salvador, as the Secretary-General has stated in recent reports in which he highlights the economic impact across the world, in particular in developing countries impacted by the health crisis, through a reduction in their tax revenue, lower levels of productivity and decisions taken that may result in higher levels of debt to respond to the effects of the pandemic.

El Salvador is currently facing a major dual challenge — on the one hand, working tirelessly to combat COVID-19 and investing valuable resources to mitigate the effects of the virus, and, on the other hand, dealing with the consequences of the tropical storms Amanda and Cristobal. In that regard, we emphasize the urgent need to work on specific proposals that will not only bring about a recovery but also place us on the right path towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda, based on the premise that there can be no sustainable development without peace and there can be no peace without sustainable development.

The pandemic has the potential to increase dissatisfaction with public institutions, particularly if citizens perceive that the authorities are mishandling the response. As a result, levels of social division and unrest could increase, creating fertile ground in weaker countries for groups outside the law to take action to stall peace processes and prevent diplomacy in times of crisis, as well as possibly undermining or weakening human rights protection for many vulnerable sectors of society. That is why El Salvador believes that it is crucial to discuss and take immediate action to prevent a health crisis from becoming a security crisis due to the negative socioeconomic repercussions that often trigger conflict. States must commit to multisectoral policies, including plans for social and economic recovery, with a human rights-based approach, taking into account the needs of traditionally excluded groups, the most vulnerable and those who face multidimensional poverty.

It is important to ensure and safeguard food security and nutrition for all, including women, children, young people, the elderly, indigenous peoples, local communities, persons with disabilities and persons living in vulnerable situations, among others, by promoting economic and social policies that counteract the impact of COVID-19 and facilitate the eradication of hunger.

The challenge for States, international organizations and other relevant actors is to implement policies that seek equality and non-discrimination in mitigating, and recovering from, this crisis, providing them with the opportunity to respond appropriately and effectively to the needs of the entire population, especially the most vulnerable. The inclusion of a gender-based approach and the promotion of gender equality must be a priority throughout the COVID-19 crisis preparedness and response cycle, as well as in all stages of transition to normality, to ensure the protection and empowerment of women and girls, thereby promoting gender equality and gender equity. In such crisis situations, the participation and representation of

women in developing policies to transition to normality are crucial to addressing all the various impacts of the current pandemic crisis in a fair, effective and efficient way. Women have a voice in ensuring the gender perspective in crisis mitigation and recovery policies at all levels. It will also be important to put in place measures that address the impact on women's mental and physical health caused by the effects of COVID-19 on their lives due to the many additional tasks and roles as a result of the pandemic and the kind of violence suffered in their homes.

Moreover, new recovery policies must address the gender digital divide. Technology must also become an enabler for women's access to information, filing of complaints and access to essential services. Furthermore, the use of sex- and age-disaggregated data and gender-based analysis should be explored in order to promote gender equality in mitigation and planning measures during humanitarian crises.

El Salvador would like to take the opportunity of this open debate of the Security Council to express its appreciation to the United Nations system, through the humanitarian country team, for the support that it has provided to the Government in addressing various emerging and priority needs, such as the Grand Specialty Hospital and the quarantine centres, by providing medical supplies, protective equipment, tests and early detection equipment for COVID-19, hygiene kits, food baskets, basic necessities, supply systems and water systems, among other things.

Finally, El Salvador wishes to state that the fight against this pandemic requires greater cooperation and solidarity at all levels and a coordinated, inclusive and comprehensive international response in which the United Nations system plays a coordinating role. For that reason, we call on the entire membership to continue to support the efforts of the specialized agencies of the United Nations system, in particular to provide a response and humanitarian assistance with equal access for all, without discrimination.

Annex 30

Statement by the Permanent Delegation the European Union to the United Nations

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its member States. The candidate countries the Republic of North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania, the country of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Georgia, align themselves with this statement.

Let me start by thanking Germany for presiding over this high-level open debate of the Security Council on pandemics and security during these unprecedented, challenging times for us all.

Since the onset of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) outbreak, we have exceeded almost 10 million cases and 500,000 people have died due to the new virus, which has spread very quickly across the globe, putting health systems under extreme pressure everywhere, especially in countries that had weak systems to begin with.

We acknowledge that the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as other outbreaks such as Ebola, has led to a global concern about the potential threats of infectious diseases spreading across borders. Fast-moving complex emergencies such as COVID-19 require a whole-of-system and whole-of-society response through coordination, partnerships and the efficient use of our tools.

We are witnessing daily the direct and secondary consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic interacting with pre-existing humanitarian crises, adding another layer of complexity to already fragile situations, weak governance and health systems, with a disproportionate impact on the most vulnerable populations, who are experiencing a lack of access to basic services and health care, affecting their livelihoods and social protection.

Under these difficult circumstances, United Nations peacekeeping operations have a special role to play in supporting local communities in their handling of the pandemic. We are very supportive of the robust and comprehensive approach taken by the United Nations to ensure the continued engagement in political processes and that stability is maintained and civilians are protected while the pandemic is contained. Although it is still early days, we — the EU and the United Nations — have shared lessons learned on how peace operations are handling COVID-19 and the interaction with fragile societies by. We plan an EU-United Nations-African Union meeting to ensure a more systematic sharing of lessons learned among all parties concerned.

The COVID-19 pandemic is both a public health emergency and a human crisis, which poses a considerable risk to hard-won peacebuilding gains around the world. Unemployment, hunger, hyperinflation and the restriction of movement have led to social unrest and increased violence in a number of fragile or conflict-affected countries. The spread of COVID-19 and the consequences of the containment measures have had a major impact on people in vulnerable situations. There are deep uncertainty and deprivation, linked with growing mental health and psychosocial issues.

There is a strong correlation between preventing violent conflicts and working towards sustainable development, poverty reduction and the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms. The EU is rallying behind the Secretary-General's efforts to coordinate a United Nations-wide response and welcomes the comprehensive proposals enshrined in his policy papers addressing the impact of COVID-19. We are putting our full weight behind his appeal for a global ceasefire

and his call for building back better, as reaffirmed by the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Josep Borrell.

Many millions of people across the globe are living in extreme hardship. We expect that the humanitarian needs under the current circumstances will only continue to grow. The *Global Humanitarian Overview 2020* projects this year to be particularly difficult, with 168 million people expected to be in need of humanitarian assistance, requiring \$28.8 billion. Now, five months later, an additional \$6.7 billion is urgently needed due to the deterioration of humanitarian needs linked to COVID-19. The number of people in need of humanitarian assistance now exceeds 180 million. Global solidarity is of paramount importance if we are to ensure that the basic needs of the most vulnerable do not remain unmet.

The EU and its member States encourage a collective response to the COVID-19 crisis, which, if adequately addressed, may also bring about opportunities for advances in peace processes and for multilateralism. This challenge can create the conditions to engage conflict parties in talks that may provide opportunities for conflict transformation. We have to be ready to seize these opportunities, while promoting a sustainable recovery guided by fundamental freedoms and human rights, which will accelerate the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and the objectives of the Paris Agreement. This is the time to strengthen cooperation to end conflicts.

We support the central coordinating role of the United Nations in emergencies and welcome the joint United Nations approach behind the Global Humanitarian Response Plan for COVID-19 to ensure the most effective and efficient humanitarian response. We also encourage strong cooperation with other relevant actors, such as the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, international non-governmental organizations, local implementing actors and civil society organizations.

Given the long-term socioeconomic impact of this crisis, a strong humanitarian-development-peace nexus in the design and implementation of the response, in line with the United Nations reform, is indispensable. This should also be reflected in the work of the Executive Boards of the United Nations funds and programmes.

The EU and its member States have been at the forefront of the global response to the new pandemic. Under the Team Europe approach, we have mobilized a package of over €36 billion, combining contributions from the EU, its member States and financial institutions for the global COVID-19 response and recovery. This package supports, and will continue to support, partner countries in addressing the immediate humanitarian consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as the health and socioeconomic impact, strengthening health systems and the preparedness and response capacity of partners, including for the benefit of populations already affected by conflict and displacement.

We are adapting existing programmes to help communities cope with the consequences of the crisis and mitigate its security impacts. For instance, the EU recently launched a €10-million project to maintain and strengthen child protection mechanisms in sub-Saharan Africa during the COVID-19 crisis.

The EU has also set up a temporary humanitarian air bridge to facilitate the delivery of emergency supplies and the transport of humanitarian aid workers for the COVID-19 response to the most critical areas around the world.

The EU also initiated the global COVID-19 pledging marathon in May, which, since the pledging event on 27 June, has to date raised €15.9 billion to accelerate the development and deployment of effective diagnostics, treatments and vaccines for all and to support tackling the social and economic effects of the crisis. We call for

universal, equitable access and distribution of vaccines, treatments and diagnostics, recognizing extensive immunization and treatments against COVID-19 as a global public good.

This year we celebrate the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations. The current state of the world, in which too many lives continue to be uprooted due to conflict, poverty, climate change and natural disasters, as well as COVID-19, is a stark reminder of the continued relevance of the United Nations.

We fully commend and highly appreciate the Secretary-General's leadership and multiple initiatives to address the multifaceted COVID-19 pandemic. We reiterate our support for the coordinating and operative role of the World Health Organization in the global public health response and in its role to ensure compliance with the International Health Regulations, as well as in supporting the most fragile and vulnerable countries.

While the vast majority of humanitarian needs today can be traced to conflict situations, COVID-19 is exacerbating pre-existing needs. The EU and its member States reiterate the need to ensure full respect of international law, including international humanitarian law, international human rights law and international refugee law.

Rapid, safe and unhindered humanitarian access remains critical, as does the free flow of critical humanitarian goods and personnel within and across countries, and the safety, security and protection of humanitarian and health workers. The EU and its member States remain at the forefront in advocating for this.

COVID-19 has not only created a global health crisis but has also had a severe impact on the protection of civilians, exacerbating existing inequalities. The pandemic and its socioeconomic consequences are having a disproportionate impact on the access to health services of women, children and older persons, and on all persons in vulnerable situations. Continued non-discriminatory access to safe, quality, effective and affordable health-care services, including sexual and reproductive health-care services, is particularly important in the context of COVID-19, endeavouring to leave no one behind, in full respect of all human rights.

Women and girls have been more prone to immediate protection risks linked to sexual and gender-based violence or the unequal sharing of responsibilities. The closure of schools during COVID-19 hinders the development of quality education. At the same time, women, who represent the majority of health workers, have been at the forefront of the response and will be the backbone of recovery in communities. Their role needs to be further recognized and promoted.

Protecting the right of everyone to the highest attainable standard of health requires access to reliable information. People must be empowered to protect their own health and that of others. In that respect, misleading or false information can put lives in danger. It is therefore crucial to resolutely counter disinformation with transparent, timely and fact-based communication and thus reinforce the resilience of societies while strongly safeguarding freedom of expression, including the right to seek, receive and impart information.

We also echo the Secretary-General's call for action on mental health and psychosocial support to ensure full integration of this component into the COVID-19 response to help people better cope with the crisis.

Building resilience through participatory processes, social inclusion and community engagement is key to succeed in responding to the pandemic.

Global health and global security go hand in hand. Efficient responses to outbreaks are possible through proper coordination and leadership, respect of International Health Regulations, comprehensive public health responses and inclusiveness.

We can recover from all hazards that create health emergencies and insecurity, but only with a coordinated one United Nations approach. The EU remains a strong supporter of the system of global governance, with an effective and efficient United Nations at its core. The United Nations can count on our continued support.

Annex 31**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Georgia to the United Nations, Kaha Innadze**

I wish to begin by extending my heartfelt thanks to the German presidency for organizing today's timely and necessary open debate. Let me also express my sincere appreciation to the distinguished briefers for their insightful interventions.

Georgia aligns itself with the statement submitted by the observer of the European Union (see annex 30). Let me add a few remarks in my national capacity.

Today we are facing a global health crisis unprecedented in the history of the United Nations. The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has ravaged the whole world, affecting all three pillars of the United Nations: peace and security, development and human rights. To date, the vicious virus has claimed more than half a million lives, shattered societies and plunged the global economy into a deep recession. In these unprecedented times, Georgia expresses its solidarity with all Member States that are fighting the COVID-19 pandemic and offers its heartfelt condolences for their loss.

But the worst is yet to come, especially if we continue to disparage the international security context of the existing health crisis. The exacerbated root causes of armed conflict, hindered national and international conflict-resolution efforts and the rapid spread of disinformation that we are already witnessing in different parts of the world are all visible harbingers of looming security turmoil. Therefore, responding to these challenges with heightened resolve and inclusive multilateral cooperation should have no alternative.

The first step to that end must be our staunch support and painstaking implementation of the Secretary-General's appeal for an immediate global ceasefire, which aims to silence guns in all conflict-affected corners of the world and enable unhampered humanitarian access to the most vulnerable groups of society, including women, children, older people, the forcibly displaced and people with disabilities. The adoption by the Security Council yesterday of resolution 2532 (2020), which supports the Secretary-General's appeal, was an encouraging development to that end.

We believe that the Security Council will take up the issue of global health emergencies with a focus on international security. This is equally relevant in the light of past examples of Security Council engagement with the epidemics that turned into global health risks, including severe acute respiratory syndrome, HIV/AIDS and the Ebola virus disease. Hence, it is paramount to urgently find unity among the Council members and spearhead a meaningful international response towards the implementation of the Secretary-General's appeal.

At this critical juncture, when it is particularly important to reaffirm our strong commitment to the principles embodied in the Charter of the United Nations, failure to do so might cause irreparable damage to international peace and security. This conclusion seems especially unmistakable from Georgia's perspective. While concentrating on the fight against the pandemic, my country has been afflicted by the negative effects of disregarding the rules-based multilateral order. Notwithstanding the fact that the Government of Georgia, in cooperation with partners and international organizations, has managed to effectively confront the spread of the virus within the country, our sovereignty and territorial integrity have been systematically targeted by one of the permanent members of the Security Council.

To be specific, the Russian Federation has deliberately intensified its use of hybrid warfare tools against Georgia and, with fabricated propaganda myths,

constantly attacked one of the laboratories of Georgia's National Centre for Disease Control and Public Health, the Richard Lugar Centre, which plays a crucial role in the fight against the spread of COVID-19 in Georgia. At first glance, the absurd claims by Russia that the Georgian Government has artificially spread COVID-19 in the occupied Tskhinvali region and collected biological samples from the residents of the region actually serve to undermine the trust of the local population in the Government of Georgia, which is yet another goal of creating managed chaos on the ground. We stress that such disinformation campaign by the Russian side represents an open attack on the health protection of the population and the national security of Georgia.

More than that, neither the pandemic nor the call of the Secretary-General for an immediate global ceasefire have prevented the Russian occupying regime from continuing the illegal processes of installing barbed-wire fences and so-called border signs or digging so-called anti-fire trenches along the occupation line in both occupied Georgian regions of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali/South Ossetia. In a recent instance, such illegal activities were going on simultaneously in up to 14 villages in the vicinity of the Russian-occupied regions of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali/South Ossetia.

To make matters worse, due to the irresponsible and inhumane approach of closing the so-called crossing points along the Russian occupation line, the population residing in the occupied regions — including children, older people, the chronically ill and the immunologically compromised— remain stripped of access to urgent care and medical evacuation. Thus, as a result of the denial by the Russian occupying regime of medical evacuation to those in need, the death toll of ethnic Georgians has risen to 14 since the closure of the occupation line of Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia in September 2019.

In concluding my remarks, I would like to call on the international community to urge all parties involved in armed conflicts or exercising effective control in conflict areas immediately to ensure the complete and unconditional elimination of any impediments to the effective delivery of and access for emergency humanitarian assistance to civilians living in the conflict-affected areas, first and foremost in the occupied regions of Georgia.

For its part, Georgia reaffirms its strong commitment to the principles embodied in the Charter of the United Nations and stands ready to contribute to the collective endeavour of strengthening rules-based multilateral cooperation in the fight against the pandemic and its negative effects. We urge the Security Council to consider the issue of global health security in greater detail.

Annex 32**Statement by the Permanent Mission of Guatemala to the United Nations**

At the outset, Guatemala thanks the Federal Republic of Germany, as President of the Security Council, for convening this important virtual open debate on pandemics and security. This debate is an opportunity to exchange views on the implications of international health threats and pandemics and the corresponding role of the Security Council in maintaining peace and security.

As we all know, the world is facing the unprecedented impact of a human and social crisis due to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. These challenging times require a coordinated response based on a reinvigorated multilateralism, in which international cooperation must be a priority.

As a Central American country, Guatemala has also been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. This situation reminds us of the critical importance of addressing this worldwide health emergency at the regional level.

First, since the beginning of the pandemic, the Government of Guatemala has established coordination mechanisms with countries in the Central American region to avert the consequences of this pandemic and its harmful expansion. Our primary focus is on the most vulnerable groups: elderly people, women, children, people with disabilities, migrants and indigenous people.

Secondly, despite the efforts made by our Government, the pandemic has adversely affected the health system. No country in the world was totally prepared to face the impact of COVID-19. This pandemic has revealed our vulnerabilities, but also proven that humankind — in solidarity and in unity — can transform the worst situations into scenarios of hope. Guatemala is firmly convinced that international solidarity, based on effective and coordinated partnerships through multilateralism, is the key tool for dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic and its widespread negative effects. Only through mutual cooperation will we find a comprehensive response for recovery. We are grateful for the cooperation provided by several partners, particularly the European Union and the Federal Republic of Germany, in these unprecedented times.

Thirdly, as a troop-contributing country, we believe that peacekeeping plays an essential role in countries emerging from conflict. In many peacekeeping operations, quick-impact projects can help local communities address the immediate needs of the populations. Hospitals, schools and emergency health centres can improve the capacity of host countries, particularly those with weak health systems, in order to deliver on their mandates in times of global crisis.

Fourthly, there is no conventional practice for addressing such unprecedented circumstances as currently affect the basic assets of the people we represent: their human rights, life and health. In that scenario, it is necessary to establish social protection mechanisms that can provide emergency assistance to the most vulnerable, prioritizing their needs. In this context, United Nations country teams as well as national institutions can also play an important role through planning, monitoring and providing adequate assistance.

In our country, Guatemalan women are agents of change who play an indispensable role in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic as main caregivers in homes and community spaces and as workers and professionals in the health, social work and humanitarian aid sectors.

In conclusion, Guatemala is pleased to have co-sponsored the Secretary-General's call for a global ceasefire. This is also a call to reflection, which reminds us that solidarity among nations must prevail. That solidarity must be considerable as there should be only one fight in our world today: our shared battle against COVID-19.

Annex 33

Statement by the Permanent Mission of India to the United Nations

We thank the President of the Security Council, Ambassador Christoph Heusgen of Germany, for convening today's important discussion on the implication of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic on international peace and security.

We also congratulate Germany on assuming the presidency of the Security Council in July. The briefings by Secretary-General António Guterres, President Peter Maurer of the International Committee of the Red Cross, and African Union Commissioner for Social Affairs Amira Elfadil Mohamed Elfadil have provided useful insights into the various dimensions of the pandemic.

COVID-19 has caused global disruption on a scale not before experienced by this generation. The disruptive effect of the pandemic is still playing out, and the implications will be profound and multidimensional. However, we need to remember that COVID-19 is foremost a health crisis, with far-reaching economic and humanitarian implications. It is not primarily an international peace and security issue, and we need to be mindful of this aspect.

Pandemics can exacerbate the humanitarian consequences of armed conflict. They also present obstacles to traditional tools for conflict resolution and the maintenance of peace and security, including United Nations peacekeeping and peacebuilding operations.

Consequently, the Security Council's efforts in this scenario must focus on the impact of the crisis on the functioning of peacekeeping missions, and on ensuring the continuity of peace processes. There has already been an impact on the operational capabilities of United Nations peacekeeping missions, largely due to measures taken to limit the spread of the virus, such as restrictions on movement and deployments.^[P] Despite these restrictions, it is heartening to see that peacekeeping missions are adapting and updating their contingency plans to ensure the safety of their personnel, protect their capacity to continue critical operations, help contain and mitigate the spread of the virus, and continue to deliver on key mandates. Equally importantly, they are also helping host countries in their COVID-19 responses, including through treatment, capacity-building activities with local authorities, logistics, awareness-raising, and the distribution of medical equipment.

As a leading contributor of troops, including women peacekeepers, India is proud to be a part of COVID-19 relief efforts. India has just responded to the Secretary-General's immediate requirement for upgrading the medical facilities of United Nations peacekeeping missions by agreeing to deploy additional medical personnel and equipment to the military hospitals of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in Goma, and of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan, in Juba.

In situations where peace processes or transitions are under way, COVID-19 restrictions may have stalled progress, including through electoral postponements, risking the loss of fragile gains made in the months preceding the pandemic. However, we should be careful not to exaggerate the issue. In fact, there is cause for some hope. In situations where in-person meetings and interactions have been restricted, the increased use of technological platforms has the potential to present new opportunities, by enhancing the inclusiveness of peace processes, including the participation of women and youth.

Even as the world comes together to tackle this challenge, the most egregious threat to international peace and security continues to be terrorism and its supporting networks. Terrorist groups will seek to exploit the situation, taking

advantage of diverted Government attention and resources to launch new offensives. Terrorists and terrorist entities have also incorporated COVID-19 narratives into their radicalization and recruitment efforts. The segments of society that have been most adversely affected by the disruption caused by the virus are easy targets for recruitment. The lockdowns by Governments and the enforcement of quarantine laws have been negatively interpreted and have begun to feature prominently in terrorist propaganda. We must remain ever-vigilant against such trends.

One of the key questions in the comprehensive concept note (S/2020/571, annex) circulated for this debate is, what are the triggers that can transform a health crisis into a security crisis? We believe that one of those triggers is the malicious intent of those who seek to exploit the public sense of fear and anxiety during a health crisis to sow distrust and enmity among communities and nations at large.

The infodemic confronting us is therefore as virulent as the COVID-19 pandemic. Such proliferation of fake news, doctored media and false narratives threatens to divide societies and create instability in many regions. We need strong international commitment to counter this scourge while protecting the space for informed public discourse. In that context, India was pleased to be part of the cross-regional group presenting a joint statement on the ongoing infodemic in the context of COVID-19 at the United Nations.

Another important issue is how to minimize the negative impact of pandemics on the most vulnerable, including in armed conflict situations. Women constitute more than half of the global health-care force, and are courageously serving on the front lines as medical professionals, emergency workers, caregivers and other essential personnel. Despite that, the COVID-19 pandemic has had a disproportionate social and economic impact on women and children. We must ensure that responses to the pandemic protect the most vulnerable.

There are, of course, other issues that do not have direct peace and security dimensions and may not trigger them. As we evolve a collective response to the pandemic, it is important that we learn from each other's best practices and experiences. None of us can be secure unless we are all secure. We must continue to work together to plan for safe and sustained economic recovery and growth, resilient vital supply chains and the speedy development and dissemination of vaccines and therapeutics.

Despite the ongoing pandemic and the challenges to global supply chain networks, India continues to cater to over 60 per cent of global demand for various vaccines and is the leading supplier for United Nations entities such as UNICEF and the United Nations Population Fund. We have also pledged \$15 million in support to Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance.

As India continues to deal with the considerable demands of managing the consequences of the pandemic on a billion-strong population, we have continued to extend a helping hand to our partners around the world, in keeping with our civilizational ethos of seeing the world as one family. We have done so by sharing our country's available stocks of medicines and sending medical teams to over 120 countries. We have also forged a common response strategy in our immediate neighbourhood.

The India-United Nations Development Partnership Fund is working rapidly to support projects responding to the COVID-19 pandemic in countries that need such assistance. These include projects for supplying medical equipment, building health-care capacities, mitigating socioeconomic impact and catalysing transformative recovery.

Finally, a key takeaway from this unprecedented global experience is that the complex challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic have demonstrated that our collective response to such crises can be effective only if our processes and institutions are representative of contemporary realities. This moment is a wake-up call for us to work towards a reformed and reinvigorated multilateralism, purpose-built to address today's challenges.

Annex 34**Statement by the Permanent Mission of Ireland to the United Nations**

The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is a global challenge unprecedented in its scale and impact. A collective response is essential. Ireland is therefore grateful to Germany for bringing this critical issue, with significant consequences for international peace and security, to the Security Council. We also congratulate France, Tunisia and all members of the Council for the unanimous adoption yesterday of resolution 2532 (2020), which firmly endorsed the Secretary-General's call for a global ceasefire and humanitarian pause.

Prior to the crisis, the world was already facing record levels of humanitarian need, with conflict as the primary factor. COVID-19 has made the outlook more challenging and complex. In addition to the immediate health crisis, we are also very concerned about the secondary impacts of the crisis, particularly the enormous economic shock that COVID-19 will cause.

In conflict situations, humanitarian access is a significant challenge that has been exacerbated by the pandemic. While countries have necessarily introduced movement restrictions to prevent the spread of COVID-19, we should ensure that these do not hamper the ability of humanitarian or health workers to reach those in greatest need. Those most impacted by conflict before a pandemic — internally displaced persons, refugees and migrant workers — are hit hardest during a pandemic. Without access to health and humanitarian workers, pandemics cannot be tackled. We are seeing that, where conflict continues, preventing the spread of a pandemic, mitigating its impact and protecting civilians is more challenging than ever.

Disasters and crises are highly unpredictable. If national and local systems are ill-prepared to deal with a crisis, the vulnerability of both individuals and communities becomes even more pronounced. The sudden increase in demand for essential health services brought on by a crisis often overwhelms health systems, rendering them unable to provide necessary services.

Triggers such as political instability and poor governance can often cause a breakdown of trust from society towards the powers that govern and, in a worst-case scenario, can lead to outbreaks of violence and, ultimately, a security crisis. Lessons can be learned in relation to this breakdown of trust by looking at the response to the Ebola outbreak in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. Engaging communities, influential figures and civil society was critical to ending the crisis, and showcased the importance of community approaches to crisis, especially in conflict settings.

Just as COVID-19 increases the risk of conflict, it also presents major challenges for ongoing peace and crisis management efforts. Ireland strongly supported the Secretary-General's call for a global ceasefire early in the pandemic. While there had been some initial examples of conflict subsiding, in too many other contexts conflict has continued and even intensified. COVID-19 has slowed the implementation of peace agreements in Yemen and South Sudan. Ireland calls on the Council to step up support to the work of all United Nations Special Representatives and political missions, regional organizations, national actors and local communities to build and maintain peace.

COVID-19 requires us to recognize the complex interlinkages where a coherent response built around local ownership will be key. Ireland has strongly supported the work of the United Nations to become more coherent. The guidance of the World Health Organization (WHO) to all countries on the response to the COVID-19 pandemic, its global coordination efforts throughout the crisis and its

assistance to the most vulnerable countries have been crucial. Recognizing that and as an expression of Ireland's global responsibilities to tackle COVID-19 in countries with less advanced public health systems, Ireland has increased its contribution to WHO fourfold this year.

In considering the link between pandemics and security, we need to also be conscious of how the pandemic is a multiplier of other risks and pressures. Global warming and the destruction of habitats are among the factors that raise the risk of health crises. COVID-19 places additional pressures on already vulnerable regions, such as East Africa, where existing challenges are already exacerbated by the impact of climate change and the locust outbreak.

United Nations Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed has highlighted the heightened vulnerability of women and girls to the impacts of the pandemic, but has also pointed out the potential of women and young people to support effective response in their own communities. We have numerous examples of that in the Ebola response in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Sierra Leone and Liberia. Supporting local ownership, improving leadership and broadening inclusion in conflict and fragile settings, with special attention to gender and youth, will be critical to an effective COVID-19 response and recovery. Ireland's work on the women and peace and security agenda informs our support for women and the critical role they play in response efforts for pandemics and security.

Globally, COVID-19 has seen unprecedented restrictions on human rights and fundamental freedoms in order to save lives. However, the implementation of emergency measures should not compromise human rights, which must remain at the heart of our global response to the pandemic. Early evidence shows that the COVID-19 pandemic is exacerbating existing trends of social exclusion among certain groups, thereby increasing their vulnerability. We are seeing worrisome trends in how, for example, older people, people living with disabilities, members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex community and ethnic minorities are being disproportionately affected. Ongoing response and recovery efforts, as well as future policy and programmes, need to be focused on building a more inclusive future that is tolerant, respectful to human diversity, resilient and sustainable.

COVID-19 presents unique and complex challenges to peacekeeping missions. United Nations contingents must continue to balance mandate-related operational requirements with host nation and local population sensitivities. It is critically important that the United Nations be seen as part of the solution, rather than as part of the problem. It is also important that the pandemic be viewed through a protection-of-civilians lens. For Ireland, that does not mean that United Nations peacekeeping operations simply continue to conduct operations to ensure the physical safety of vulnerable population groups. It is clear that such operations must continue. Rather, missions must leverage all capabilities, including strategic communications, outreach and engagement, civil-military cooperation, medical assets and key leader engagement, to address protection-of-civilian concerns in a holistic and integrated manner.

Annex 35**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Iran to the United Nations, Majid Takht Ravanchi**

Serious outbreaks of certain diseases with a high mortality rate entail security implications in conflict situations. One example is the impact of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic in the conflict situations in our region — from Yemen to Palestine to Syria.

In those countries, the pandemic has worsened the socioeconomic situation, negatively impacted de-escalation efforts and peace negotiations and, by adding a new layer to existing problems, has further complicated the overall situation.

In Yemen, where the nation is already experiencing the world's worst humanitarian crisis, the death toll from the virus could exceed the combined toll of war, disease and hunger over the last five years, as stated by United Nations officials present in that country.

At the same time, due to the inaction of the Security Council in confronting the foreign aggression against this country, the aggressors are emboldened and even take advantage of the COVID-19 pandemic to escalate air strikes and tighten the siege of ports and airports that channel humanitarian assistance to the people in need. Such unlawful measures have no other designation than war crimes and must be prevented.

In Palestine, the Israeli regime has continued its blockade, which has lasted more than a decade, against the Gaza Strip — even during the coronavirus outbreak — leading to further deterioration of the already fragile humanitarian situation there.

In Syria, where the situation in many parts of the country was improving as a result of the terrorist defeat and the restoration of the Government's control over its territory, the COVID-19 outbreak has slowed down, relatively, the return of displaced persons and reconstruction efforts. The humanitarian situation there has worsened, however, as a result of a permanent Council member's irresponsible policy of imposing unlawful unilateral sanctions against the Syrian people.

As a country that is experiencing one of the worst outbreaks of the coronavirus and as a victim of one of the most inhumane sanctions of the United States, the Islamic Republic of Iran is fully aware how such sanctions drastically hinder national responses of targeted countries from effectively preventing the spread of the virus.

In practice, such unlawful sanctions hamper the import of humanitarian goods, particularly medical equipment and medicine, mainly affecting the patients — the most vulnerable component of every society. That alone indicates how immoral, inhumane and illegitimate such sanctions are, particularly when the entire world is facing a highly contagious virus targeting the whole human family and the only way to push it back is solidarity in action and well-coordinated international cooperation.

Moreover, it shows that the application of unilateral sanctions, in the context of the current unprecedented global health crisis involving all nations, is against the common interests of humankind.

Despite strong international calls for their immediate removal, including by the Secretary-General, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and some other international dignitaries, as well as many former and current statesmen and stateswomen, parliamentarians, religious leaders, academics, non-governmental organizations and civil society institutions, the application of those illegal sanctions continues.

Furthermore, it must be borne in mind that measures such as the inhumane siege of Yemen and the Gaza Strip, as well as the imposition of unlawful unilateral sanctions such as the one recently imposed on Syria, could contribute not only to the spread of deadly diseases but also to the deterioration of conflicts.

While the impact of serious outbreaks of certain diseases with a high mortality rate in conflict situations needs to be addressed, the immoral and inhumane nature of unilateral sanctions and their impact in extending pandemics and worsening conflicts must not be overlooked.

Annex 36

Statement by the Permanent Mission of Italy to the United Nations

Italy aligns itself with the statement submitted by the observer of the European Union (see annex 30), as well as with the statement on behalf of the Group of Friends of Solidarity for Global Health Security (see annex 54), and would like to add the following remarks in its national capacity.

The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic is, in the first place, a global health crisis, requiring a coordinated and multilateral response. From the very beginning, Italy has strongly supported such a collective approach by actively advocating an international alliance to advance research on a vaccine and to guarantee its rapid development and equitable distribution. We were proud to be among the promoters — in partnership with the European Union and other key partner countries of the Coronavirus Global Response pledging conference on 4 May and of the following one on 27 June, which collected almost €16 billion for universal and fair access to vaccines, treatments and diagnostics to fight COVID-19. We were also among the pioneers of the Access to COVID-19 Tools Accelerator, and the main contributors to the COVID-19 Vaccines Global Access Facility through Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, Advance Market Commitment, which will ensure that developing countries have access to the vaccine.

At the same time, global health is a fundamental precondition for peace, stability and prosperity as it interacts with the tripartite peace-humanitarian-development nexus. Besides its tragic impact on public health and the profound repercussions on human rights and socioeconomic conditions at the global level, the COVID-19 pandemic has seriously exacerbated ongoing threats to the maintenance of international peace and security. In countries ravaged by armed conflicts or affected by political instability, the effects of the pandemic have aggravated the situation, hindering the delivery of humanitarian aid and intensifying the suffering of local populations.

For that reason, in all hotspots of the world, conflicting parties should heed the appeal of Secretary-General Guterres for a global ceasefire — which Italy fully supports — and join forces against the virus. In this vein, we welcome yesterday's adoption of resolution 2532 (2020), demanding a general and immediate cessation of hostilities in all situations on the Security Council's agenda and expressing support for the efforts undertaken by the Secretary-General in this regard. A durable humanitarian pause is indeed crucial to enabling the safe, unhindered and sustained delivery of humanitarian assistance, particularly to vulnerable groups, refugees and displaced persons.

In these difficult circumstances, United Nations peacekeeping operations have a special role to play in supporting local communities in their handling of the pandemic. Italy greatly appreciates the work of the Secretariat in implementing measures and procedures to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 and to protect peacekeepers and local populations.

Now more than ever, we need to remain committed to peace operations. Leaving peacekeeping missions understaffed and unable to fulfil their mandates would put local populations and mission personnel alike at risk. Together with its European Union partners, Italy has fully confirmed its commitments as a troop- and police-contributing country. Moreover, the Italian contingent in the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon has been providing medical equipment to local health services, thereby directly contributing to mitigating the impact of the virus. This shows how peace operations could serve as a flexible tool for preserving peace and stability and how the Secretary-General's Action for Peacekeeping (A4P) initiative has been

a fundamental step forward in modernizing United Nations peacekeeping missions. Italy welcomes the initiative undertaken by the Secretariat in reprioritizing A4P in this phase, with a stronger focus on safety, security, performance and protection, particularly as they relate to coronavirus prevention and containment and public-health support.

In assessing the interaction between pandemics and security, we must also consider the impact of the coronavirus on food security. In a state of emergency such as the current one, it is of paramount importance that everyone have access to safe and nutritious food in sufficient amounts, and we must do everything in our power to keep trade routes open and supply chains functioning while carrying out initiatives to support food access for the poorest and most vulnerable people in our societies. In this spirit, Italy is committed to supporting the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Fund for Agricultural Development, the World Food Programme and all relevant United Nations actors in their efforts to prevent a global food crisis. Italy has also been promoting a food coalition against hunger through the FAO to mobilize expertise, provide policy support, establish a space for dialogue and promote initiatives focused on the creation of more resilient and sustainable food systems.

Last but not least, the pandemic has reminded us of the importance of fully implementing the women and peace and security agenda. As a result of the health crisis, women and girls have are being particularly exposed to sexual and gender-based violence and to the unequal sharing of responsibilities. At the same time, women — who represent the majority of health workers — have been at the forefront of the response and will be the backbone of recovery in communities. The pandemic calls us to strengthen our commitment to achieving gender parity and to ensuring that women participate meaningfully in decision-making processes for the sake of peace and prosperity for all.

Annex 37**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Japan to the United Nations, Ishikane Kimihiro**

I would like to express my deep appreciation to the German presidency for organizing today's open debate on pandemics and security, a timely and important topic for the Security Council, the United Nations and the world.

The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has created not just a health crisis, but a serious human-security crisis worldwide. Despite the tireless efforts of many around the globe, the disease continues to spread across borders and within the most vulnerable communities, damaging not only peaceful societies but also affecting international peace and security.

First of all, I cannot overemphasize the importance of global solidarity in the fight against this invisible enemy of humankind. Japan welcomes the adoption of resolution 2532 (2020) in response to the COVID-19 and expects it to be respected in full by the relevant parties. This is not the time for people to fight against each other but to unite in the fight against a common enemy. That is why Japan strongly supports the Secretary-General's appeal for a global ceasefire and why we co-initiated the statement of support for the appeal that was joined by 172 Member States and observers. The statement of support noted that we must "muster all our efforts to save lives and alleviate social and economic devastation on our peoples". The Statement also recalls our obligation enshrined in the United Nations Charter, namely, to settle international disputes by peaceful means, which is much better than to call for a ceasefire after the outbreak of military conflicts.

Under the current circumstances, I should particularly stress the importance of the rule of law and the peaceful resolution of disputes based on international law. When daunting challenges require us to show solidarity, it is out of the question to take advantage of the ongoing crisis and attempt to change the status quo by unilateral measures. Coercive actions need to be avoided as they inevitably divert attention away from the ongoing battle against our common enemy, COVID-19. Building on the appeal for a global ceasefire, we expect all relevant parties to take steady steps towards the peaceful resolution of disputes.

COVID-19 has seriously affected peace in societies by posing a multifaceted threat to the survival, livelihood and dignity of people, in particular the most vulnerable. Unless we ensure human security and restore peace in our communities, we cannot expect relationships between groups of people, including nations, to be stable. Human security calls for people-centred, comprehensive, context-specific and prevention-oriented responses that strengthen the protection and empowerment of all people and all communities, leaving no one behind. Health being the most fundamental element of human security, Japan has long promoted a global health agenda, including the fight against infectious diseases and support for universal health coverage.

The responses from all over the world to the Secretary-General's UN75 survey paint a clear picture of people's priorities in the time of COVID-19 and beyond: first, universal access to health care; secondly, strengthening solidarity between people and nations; and thirdly, rethinking the global economy to prevent inequality. COVID-19 has made it evident that achieving human security through greater collaboration and partnership so as to leave no one behind is of utmost importance today and in the days to come.

In response to the United Nations appeal for humanitarian assistance, Japan decided as early as in March to provide approximately \$140 million through six

international organizations for technical and other assistance for medical professionals and others. In April, Japan further decided to provide additional assistance in the amount of more than \$1.4 billion in order to strengthen capacity in the health and medical fields, increase the flow of medical and other supplies to developing countries, and support vulnerable people including women and girls. Japan made a pledge of \$300 million at the Global Vaccine Summit in June to accelerate access to vaccines.

At his briefing to the Security Council in April, the Secretary-General pointed out that the first pressing risk in the face of COVID-19 was the erosion of trust in public institutions, “particularly if citizens perceive that their authorities mishandled the response or are not transparent on the scope of the crisis”. A society can be neither peaceful nor resilient unless people have trust both in their Governments and in each other. The pandemic has put this trust at stake, especially in already fragile and conflict-affected countries with weak institutions.

Effective, accountable and inclusive institutions, whether in the security and judicial sectors or in socioeconomic fields, contribute to strengthening Governments’ credibility, reducing vulnerability, ensuring human security and nurturing people’s confidence that their Governments are respectful of their dignity. It is worthwhile considering stronger focus on institution-building in the ongoing review of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture, with the aim of realizing more effective system-wide support to countries affected by conflict, including through enhanced cooperation between the Security Council and the Peacebuilding Commission.

In conclusion, I would like to underscore that combating this pandemic requires greater international cooperation and solidarity and a comprehensive and coordinated international response. It also requires that the United Nations play a central role in this endeavour.

Annex 38**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Kenya to the United Nations, Lazarus O. Amayo**

Kenya commends the Permanent Mission of the Federal Republic of Germany to the United Nations for bringing the global reality of pandemics and their implications on security, including health security, before the Security Council for its consideration. We also welcome the Council's unanimous adoption on 1 July 2020 of resolution 2532 (2020), on the coronavirus disease (COVID-19), and thank France and Tunisia for their tireless efforts aimed at bringing about this outcome following protracted negotiations.

As the COVID-19 pandemic persists, Governments across the globe are taking measures to address the unprecedented political and socioeconomic impacts of the pandemic on their populations. For most countries, the challenges are multifaceted. Additionally, efforts aimed at flattening the curve are being undertaken amidst diverse realities in the peace-conflict continuum. The multiplicity of these challenges is indeed a test on international crisis management. We need to act fast and act together.

The various briefings by the Secretary-General, Mr. António Guterres, the President of the International Committee of the Red Cross, Mr. Peter Maurer, and the African Union (AU) Commissioner for Social Affairs, Ms. Amira Elfadil Mohammed Elfadil, have further demonstrated that pandemics have multifaceted implications for peace and security, causing humanitarian needs to spike and triggering the reversal of the progress previously made in peacebuilding and development. Pandemics cannot therefore be addressed solely as health concerns, particularly in conflict-affected regions and in countries emerging from conflict. My delegation also welcomes the African Union update, which underscored its policy of acting together and working in solidarity with ongoing mitigation efforts through the African Centres for Disease Control and Prevention in order to ensure that Africa is not left behind when it comes to production of vaccines and essential equipment.

Existing fragility and conflict situations are some of the triggers that can transform a health crisis into a security threat. The pandemic's impact in fragile and conflict-affected countries, for example in the Sahel, the Horn of Africa and other regions that are in protracted conflict situations, is proof that pandemics can be an evolving threat to peace. This health crisis also has the potential to create a platform where violent extremism and terrorism can further thrive. As noted by the Secretary-General, the pandemic has also caused interruptions in ongoing negotiations in the Juba peace process and in talks with Al-Shabaab on its terrorist activities in the Horn of Africa. In this regard, Kenya stands behind the Secretary-General's 23 March call for silencing the guns globally. We also fully align ourselves with the call on 8 April by AU Commission Chair Moussa Faki Mahamat for all of us to focus on collectively fighting COVID-19 as a united global community.

Climate change and environmental challenges have also proved to be additional hurdles that countries must overcome during the pandemic. Kenya and other countries in the Horn and Central African regions are addressing the pandemic amidst other competing emergencies, including floods and locust infestations.

The COVID-19 pandemic is also having an enormous impact on peace operations in mission settings. Similarly, ongoing peace negotiations between warring parties and humanitarian aid flows have been negatively affected, particularly in refugee and internally displaced persons camps. In this regard, my delegation wishes to acknowledge the sacrifices being made by peacekeepers, local

peacebuilders, community leaders, women's and youth organizations, civil society, and health personnel in Africa and globally.

Implementation of a global ceasefire will ensure that peace operations continue to deliver on their mandates in times of health crisis. National and regional policies that include transparency and accountability measures during pandemics will further ensure the safety of all personnel, including the free flow of humanitarian aid to the most vulnerable.

We have also witnessed the essential contribution of women in peace operations, as well as the contributions of women as community leaders and as front-line health responders. However, women and girls have also been disproportionately hit by the health, economic and social impacts of the pandemic. The security situation triggered by the pandemic has created an important opportunity to broaden and hasten the implementation of the existing recommendations contained in the resolutions on women and youth and peace and security, particularly in terms of the pillars of participation, protection, prevention and partnership, within the pandemic framework. In addition, upon request by national stakeholders, the international community can rally around fragile countries and offer support in building resilient critical governance infrastructure, particularly health-care systems, personnel training and the provision of essential equipment. Access to functioning health-care facilities can mitigate the risk posed by the health-and-insecurity nexus.

The pandemic has also put a tremendous strain on national health-care systems and economies across the globe, no matter the level of a country's development. Consequently, the health crisis also has the potential of exacerbating underdevelopment as a trigger to instability, particularly in already weak economies. Sustainable funding is also essential for the sustainability of essential infrastructure. An interdisciplinary approach is needed to harmonize medical, public and political responses to pandemics.

Given the significant impact of COVID-19 on the global economy, there is even a larger possibility of setbacks to the gains that have been achieved in ensuring food security, poverty eradication, growth of domestic industry, and regional integration. We observed significant setbacks during the Ebola crisis in West Africa in 2014 and 2015. There is therefore a need to prioritize, invest and identify new security partners, including health and technology experts, in order to build resilient infrastructure.

The Council also needs to start looking ahead in terms of what a post-COVID-19 world will look like for women and children and displaced, marginalized and vulnerable populations in conflict-affected and fragile countries and regions. Working in partnership with other United Nations bodies, funds and agencies, it will be critical for us to start building on and centralizing the findings and reports of national, regional and international stakeholders with respect to the health-peace dynamic, including in terms of the gendered and disproportionate impact of COVID-19, in order to develop informed and context-appropriate guidelines and recommendations moving forward.

Annex 39**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Kuwait to the United Nations, Mansour Ayyad Alotaibi**

[Original: English and Arabic]

At the outset, I would like to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your country's assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month. We are confident, Sir, that you will steer the work of the Council successfully. I would also like to thank Germany for choosing today's topic of discussion and for the preparation of the concept paper for this important meeting (S/2020/571).

The world is living in unprecedented times as a result of the outbreak of coronavirus disease (COVID-19). The pandemic poses a transboundary threat, has had an impact on all aspects of our lives — health, economic, social and political — has led to the death of half a million people and has infected 10 million more all over the world. The pandemic is, as described by the Secretary-General, the biggest challenge facing the world since the Second World War. It is also a living example of the close links between pandemics and security. That requires all of us to join efforts to confront epidemics and global health crises and to limit their harsh impact, through cooperation and coordination via the international multilateral system and regional and international organizations. A global crisis such as this requires global solutions.

We all witnessed the Secretary-General's historic appeal on 23 March 2020 for a global ceasefire in areas with armed conflict in order to focus together on the real battle in our lives — addressing COVID-19. We have seen some other initiatives aimed at mobilizing international efforts to reduce the spread of the virus and its effects on societies and people, especially the most vulnerable, such as women, children, people with special needs and displaced persons. But there is still more that can be done in that regard. The world needs more serious and decisive stances. In that regard, we welcome the adoption by the Security Council of resolution 2532 (2020), on this global health crisis, which we believe constitutes a threat to international peace and security. We note that the Council previously held clear positions on other health crises, such as Ebola and HIV/AIDS. I would like to pay tribute to the efforts of Tunisia and France in the past few months to adopt a Council resolution on COVID-19.

The effects of the pandemic are expected to touch on many of the issues discussed at the United Nations in general, and in the Security Council in particular. On the humanitarian front, we are witnessing that the humanitarian situation has started to deteriorate in a number of conflict-stricken areas and areas that suffer from fragile health systems as a result of years of war and destruction. Likewise, the spread of the virus will have economic and social effects that may reverse the development gains some countries have achieved, which may exacerbate the root causes of armed conflicts, such as unemployment, poverty, inequality and competition for natural resources. Furthermore, there is no doubt that the pandemic might have repercussions at the political level related to the ability of countries and Governments to respond effectively and efficiently to limit its spread and provide the necessary medical care to those in need. In addition, we see that the pandemic has complicated the way forward for political processes in some conflict areas.

Faced with those impacts of COVID-19, we urgently need collective and joint action and to unite efforts and visions in order to overcome this deadly disease by utilizing all the tools we have at our disposal and mobilizing the energy of experts, scientists and specialists to find a vaccine and ensure its equitable distribution,

especially in developing countries. We also need to work to build the health capabilities of vulnerable countries and societies; provide medical and preventive supplies and equipment to enable health systems around the world to confront the pandemic; ensure continued delivery of humanitarian aid, in the light of the pandemic's spread, to those in need in areas of conflict and natural disasters; and strengthen conflict prevention measures. It is difficult to achieve those goals without a comprehensive and effective system of multilateralism that contributes to coordinating the efforts of the entire United Nations system, regional organizations, international financial institutions and other multilateral entities in order to overcome the most difficult common challenge facing our world today.

Since the outbreak of the pandemic, the State of Kuwait has been a part of the international efforts to confront COVID-19. It has expressed its full support for the appeal of the Secretary-General for a global ceasefire on more than one occasion and has participated in various regional and international meetings on combating the pandemic. To date, the State of Kuwait has provided \$100 million to support global efforts to combat the virus. I renew the commitment of the State of Kuwait to support all international efforts aimed at preserving human life, protecting people's health and overcoming COVID-19.

I must take this opportunity to thank and appreciate all health professionals around the world and front-line responders for their noble and courageous efforts to confront COVID-19.

In conclusion, we ask Allah, the Almighty, to rid all of humankind of this pandemic and to preserve our homelands.

Annex 40**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Kyrgyzstan to the United Nations, Mirgul Moldoisaeva**

First of all, let me express my gratitude to the German presidency for the invitation to today's open debate of the Security Council. We commend it for the choice of this very timely and critical issue for consideration on this month's agenda.

I would also like to thank the Secretary-General, António Guterres, the President of the International Committee of the Red Cross, Peter Maurer, and the African Union Commissioner for Social Affairs, Amira Elfadil Mohammed Elfadil, for their very informative briefings. Let me also thank the organizers of today's event for the opportunity to speak on the important topic of pandemics and security.

We note with deep concern the threat to human health, safety and well-being caused by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, which continues to spread throughout the world. We draw attention to the unprecedented consequences of the pandemic, including serious disruptions to public life, economic development, travel and global trade, climate change, humanitarian and migration crises, rising poverty and increasing inequality and to its detrimental effects on both human well-being and international security, which will reverse hard-won development gains and hamper progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and other internationally agreed development goals, within their given time frames.

The advent and rapid spread of COVID-19 on a global scale has had a severe impact on the protection of civilians in conflict-affected States. We note with deep concern the continued spread of the coronavirus pandemic in all regions of the world, thereby posing a great threat to human health and safety. It is obvious that the people in conflict-affected States are paying the highest price in the fight against the pandemic, and this against the backdrop of ongoing armed conflicts.

The current situation requires the immediate unifying of our efforts and the adoption of decisive actions by the whole international community. In this matter, the central role of the United Nations and its Security Council cannot be underestimated. Accordingly, the Kyrgyz Republic supports the call of Secretary General Guterres for a global ceasefire and enhanced international cooperation to successfully counter the COVID-19 pandemic.

We recall the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and other relevant human rights instruments, which were designed to promote and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms and should be taken into account in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic.

There is a need to strengthen development cooperation and increase access to concessional financing, especially in the context of the global pandemic. We call upon donors that have not done so to intensify their efforts to fulfil their respective official development assistance commitments, particularly to least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States.

We reaffirm General Assembly resolutions 74/270, on global solidarity to fight the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), and 74/274, on international cooperation to ensure global access to medicines, vaccines and medical equipment to face COVID-19, and recall that the pandemic and related global economic and

commodity price shocks could significantly increase the number of countries in, or at risk of, debt distress. We are deeply concerned about the impact of high debt levels on the ability of countries — especially developing countries and those in special situations — to withstand the impact of the COVID-19 shock and invest in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

We welcome the steps taken by the Group of 20 to provide a time-bound suspension of debt servicing payments, and by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank to provide liquidity and other support measures to ease the debt burden of developing countries. We call upon all relevant actors, including international financial institutions, to address debt vulnerabilities, with particular consideration for the countries in special situations, and to assist with the pandemic response and recovery.

During this challenging time for international community, the Kyrgyz Republic fully supports the vital role of the United Nations and the Security Council in solving problems related to maintaining peace and security, developing friendly relations among nations, cooperating in solving development problems, reducing poverty, promoting respect for human rights, protecting the environment, fighting diseases and tackling the COVID-19 outbreak as it relates to peace and security in the world today. We believe that, given the existing and emerging risks resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic around the world, the role of the Security Council should be strengthened as much as possible.

The COVID-19 pandemic has reminded us in the most powerful way that we are closely interconnected and only as strong as our weakest link. Only by working together and in solidarity can we end the pandemic and effectively tackle its consequences. Only together can we build resilience against future pandemics and other global challenges. The United Nations must be at the centre of our efforts. The Government of the Kyrgyz Republic intends to continue to support efforts and to work actively in cooperation with all Member States, the United Nations system and international partners to achieve our goals.

Annex 41**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Latvia to the United Nations, Andrejs Pildegovičs**

We welcome this timely and topical high-level open debate on pandemics and security, organized by the German presidency of the Security Council. We commend the leadership and work of the International Committee of the Red Cross and all the staff who actively continue to both fight the pandemic and fulfil their vital mandate on the ground. The spread of coronavirus disease (COVID-19) has clear security consequences and should be approached comprehensively, including at the individual, societal, State and international levels. Therefore, it is appropriate that Germany has brought this very important topic to the attention of the Security Council.

Our response to the COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated the importance of the rule of law and a rules-based international order. International norms and institutions have given us guidance on how to better deal with the spread of the pandemic, with the United Nations and its agencies at the core of global efforts. And, clearly, the members of the Security Council should lead by example.

Only through good governance, trust and collective and international action can we curb the spread and become more resilient in dealing with the next pandemic. Strengthening collective resilience and making timely preparations for any further developments regarding pandemic-related challenges is in our common interests.

We were among those nations that welcomed the Secretary-General's call for a global ceasefire. Such a ceasefire should facilitate solving all protracted conflicts — both hot and frozen, including the one in Ukraine's east caused by Russia's aggressive actions. We reiterate our call to respect the principle of territorial integrity, including of Ukraine.

In that respect, military transparency is an important element of a more predictable and stable international security environment. It is all of our responsibility to preserve it under any circumstances, particularly if health safety measures hinder practical verification.

One clear security consequence of COVID-19 is the “infodemic”. Generally, the information space is linked to security, as threats and solutions are based on perception. There can be no doubt that the infodemic can be lethal, and fighting it is a priority for both Latvia and the European Union. Latvia has accumulated expertise in that domain, which we are ready to share.

In our cross-regional statement on the infodemic, endorsed by 132 Member States and Observers, we called all stakeholders, such as media workers, social media platforms and non-governmental organizations, to increase their efforts to fight the infodemic. We now call on all countries, both those who endorsed that statement and those who have not done so yet, to join our common effort. We should all work more actively towards implementing United Nations recommendations in this area. In that respect, we welcome the United Nations communications response initiative and the Verified campaign, and were glad to contribute to the social media campaign launched on 30 June.

The COVID-19 pandemic and its socioeconomic impacts highlight once again the multifaceted nature of threats and challenges in the era of global interdependency, which can increase security risks. Therefore, our response to COVID-19 should correspond to the aims of green recovery and building back better. That is key to ensuring stronger resilience and long-term, sustainable security for all.

Annex 42**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Lebanon to the United Nations, Amal Mudallali**

I wish to congratulate Germany on its assumption of the presidency of the Security Council this month and to thank France for its presidency in June. I would also like to thank Germany and Foreign Minister Heiko Maas for organizing this debate on the topic of pandemics and security.

The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has spared no one and has acted as a catalyst in many countries and regions of the world, aggravating their situation and, thus, threatening peace and security.

Pandemics of this scale have shown that the need to address root causes is real and urgent, and not just some abstract concept. Without seriously addressing social injustice, inequalities and poverty, prolonged unresolved conflicts, foreign occupation and dire humanitarian situations can only be exacerbated. The world has learned during this pandemic that, if our house is not in order and humans are vulnerable, there is no peace or security on our planet and no immunity from viruses or lethal pandemics.

It has also shown a need to reinvigorate the social contract between the governed and Governments, with more transparency and trust necessary between the two. Pandemics should not lead to a setback in the preservation of fundamental rights or be used to advance political agendas that are in complete violation of international law. It has also taught us that pandemics cannot be fought by curbing liberties, igniting conflicts or settling them through force instead of international legality, employing security or military options or rolling back gains in freedoms.

The pandemic will not disappear if people are silenced; it is only people's ability to fight it that will be curtailed. That is why Lebanon, as well as the overwhelming majority of countries, has supported the call by the Secretary-General for a global ceasefire during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Misinformation has spread and hit almost as hard as COVID-19, creating havoc and threatening security and stability in many parts of the world. Lebanon has co-sponsored a Latvian initiative on combating the infodemic and supports the Secretary-General's initiative to promote trusted and accurate information regarding this crisis.

In Lebanon, the COVID-19 outbreak has further exacerbated the economic and financial crisis, as well as the humanitarian one. As the members of the Council already know, my country, which is heavily indebted, has been hosting the highest number of refugees and displaced persons per capita in the world.

Lebanon is in need of multilateralism now more than ever because it is only through support from the international community and by working together that we and all countries under the stress of the pandemic can recover. With the support of the international community, Lebanon will continue to play its role as a source of peace and security not only for its people but for the whole region.

It is absolutely essential that we all swim together, because, as this pandemic has demonstrated, if we do not, we will all drown together. Member States, regional organizations and the United Nations need to be better prepared for future crises of this scale. More cooperation is needed, because it is in the national and security interests of everyone to address this crisis globally. That no one is safe until everyone is safe is truer than ever.

This is one of the most challenging times for the United Nations. Its credibility — our credibility — has already been tested. It will continue to be tested through our ability to draw the lessons by planning better and building comprehensive responses that encompass the various dimensions of a pandemic.

Annex 43**Statement by the Deputy Permanent Representative of Liechtenstein to the United Nations, Georg Sparber**

Liechtenstein welcomes this open debate and thanks Foreign Minister Heiko Maas for his leadership in bringing urgent attention to the coronavirus disease pandemic — a crisis of enormous proportions that will continue to significantly shape our domestic and international policies for the foreseeable future.

Never before in the history of the United Nations have more people felt more insecure than today, faced with the immense health, economic and social fallout of this global pandemic. It is high time that the Security Council addressed the security implications of the pandemic after months of self-inflicted oblivion. Liechtenstein welcomes resolution 2532 (2020), on coronavirus disease (COVID-19), finally adopted yesterday after painstaking negotiations. The Security Council's call for a general and immediate cessation of hostilities in all situations on its agenda and its support for the Secretary-General's efforts in that respect, as well as its call for a 90-day humanitarian pause, are important political signals. They would have been more impactful had they been issued with fewer caveats and closer to the Secretary-General's call for a global ceasefire, which is supported by an overwhelming majority of the United Nations membership. Liechtenstein has, together with other States, pursued early action on the pandemic in the General Assembly and is encouraged that General Assembly resolution 74/270 ultimately also helped the Security Council to overcome its deep divisions for the sake of a common position on COVID-19.

Today's debate is an important contribution to a much-needed effort in the Security Council to broaden its overly narrow security paradigm. That paradigm has proved insufficient to embrace the full spectrum of security dimensions that determines international relations and domestic policy today and to deliver on the expectation of the membership that the Council act preventively against threats to international peace and security. The so-called thematic agendas of the Security Council are an essential contribution towards implementing its mandate, and they must obviously include global health emergencies such as the current pandemic. The pandemic has significant and visible security impacts, from wide-ranging human rights restrictions and increased risks of mass poverty and hunger to deferrals of important political processes and heightened social tensions. It has also highlighted the interlinkages between global health and developments in climate change, biodiversity and cybersecurity, inter alia. A proactive approach by the Council to these developments could significantly increase the efficiency of its work, in particular in its preventive dimension. There is a strong indication that the number of situations of concern before the Council that are driven by climate change, health emergencies, economic tensions and other external shocks will only increase in the future.

In addressing the drivers of conflict, the Security Council should display openness to embracing and building on the work of other organs of the United Nations to address global challenges to our common security. The extent to which the Council succeeds in that respect will also determine how relevant its work is in the eyes of the membership and the general public over the next 75 years. With the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the international community has agreed on the most ambitious and most comprehensive human development programme ever devised. The SDGs include a clear acknowledgement of the security dimension of sustainable development and constitute a human security programme based on international law, in particular human rights, cooperation, solidarity and multilateralism. The SDGs provide a model not only for how to overcome the crisis of the current pandemic. They are also our blueprint for how to better prepare for

future crises of this dimension by comprehensively addressing climate change, poverty, hunger, health, education gaps and inequalities, among other things.

While the pandemic affects all countries and impairs human activity at all levels, the challenges are by no means evenly distributed. Past experience points to complex interlinkages between health emergencies and conflict situations. On the one hand, health emergencies, such as the Ebola outbreak, have had very severe security impacts. On the other hand, conflicts have led to increased vulnerability to disease as, for example, in South Sudan. The COVID-19 pandemic is exacerbating already fragile security situations in Yemen, where it is overwhelming an already fragile health system, and in Syria, where cases continue to rise, adding to the plight of the many civilians in need of humanitarian assistance in both countries. People on the move are particularly vulnerable, as the Secretary-General's call for a ceasefire acknowledges and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees recently reaffirmed before the Council (see S/2020/560). Women face higher exposure to the virus in their essential roles as front-line workers, and they may experience greater economic hardship, as they are overrepresented in the informal sectors. Women in lockdown also face an increased risk of physical and psychological abuse. Children across the world are missing out on education and are at increased risk of suffering abuse and violence and, in situations of armed conflict, forced conscription. The pandemic and its ripple effects exacerbate the problem of modern slavery and human trafficking, which requires renewed determination to implement bold solutions, including those promoted by Liechtenstein's Finance Against Slavery and Trafficking initiative.

All this points to the clear need for a better understanding of the links between pandemics and security. The Security Council should significantly increase its efforts to analyse these links with a view to improving early and preventive action. Today's debate is a good start to that discussion, and Liechtenstein expresses its hope that the Council will sustain its engagement.

Annex 44**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Malaysia to the United Nations, Syed Mohamad Hasrin Aidid**

I thank you, Mr. President, for organizing this much-needed open debate and for providing this opportunity for the wider United Nations membership to speak on this important topic in the Security Council since the outbreak of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic.

The COVID-19 pandemic has taught us a valuable lesson — that we are only as strong as our weakest link and that no nation is safe until every nation is safe. Across the globe, our peoples are feeling the effects of the pandemic's far-reaching consequences for our health systems, economies and day-to-day lives. Of the three pillars of the United Nations — namely, peace and security, development and human rights — none has been spared. It is only through collective will and effort that we can ever hope to overcome this challenge.

In the context of peace and security, the pandemic can potentially create or further escalate social unrest and violence. At the same time, the continuation of hostilities will undermine efforts to fight the pandemic by restricting the ability to deliver humanitarian aid in fragile and conflict-affected situations.

Malaysia is also concerned that such security vulnerabilities resulting from the pandemic could be exploited by terrorists to attract new recruits and stage a broader resurgence of acts of terrorism. To make matters worse, this could occur at a time when the established tools for maintaining international peace and security, such as mediation, peacekeeping and peacebuilding, are operationally challenged by the COVID-19 situation.

Malaysia strongly believes that efforts to relieve human suffering and conflict resolution should go hand in hand in leading efforts to address the pandemic. We must muster all our efforts to save lives and alleviate the social and economic devastation of our people, especially in addressing the plight of vulnerable groups that are affected by the hostilities, such as women and children.

Recently, Malaysia initiated a statement of support to the Secretary-General's appeal for a global ceasefire amid the COVID-19 pandemic, which garnered the strong endorsement of 172 Member States and observer States. The statement, which was issued on 22 June, represents a clear and strong political message, reaffirming the moral commitment of the 172 signatories to an immediate cessation of hostilities in all corners of the world towards fighting this deadly pandemic and what Malaysia hopes would pave the way for sustained peace. It also reaffirms the commitment to multilateralism and the peaceful settlement of disputes, as enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. On this note, we are pleased that yesterday the Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 2532 (2020), on COVID-19, supporting the Secretary-General's appeal for a global ceasefire. Malaysia commends the Security Council for the adoption of that resolution.

With regard to maintaining international peace and security, Malaysia has continued to contribute troops to United Nations peacekeeping missions all around the world throughout this challenging period. As part of their mandate, our peacekeepers will support national authorities in their response to COVID-19.

As a member of the United Nations Group of Friends of Mediation, Malaysia will continue to promote and advance the use of mediation in the peaceful settlement of disputes and conflict prevention and resolution, including in our region.

In fighting this deadly pandemic, Malaysia also continues to advocate for the establishment of a comprehensive, systematic and coordinated global response to the outbreak. As one of the regional hubs for the United Nations Humanitarian Response Depot in Asia, we continue to ensure the integrity of the global supply chain and have been facilitating the delivery of humanitarian relief aid to countries and peoples in need.

In closing, allow me to reiterate Malaysia's ongoing readiness to work closely with all Member States on our shared values for peace and security. Amid this deadly pandemic, we must remain united in our shared humanity and in giving peace a chance.

Annex 45**Statement by the Permanent Mission of Malta to the United Nations**

I am pleased to extend Malta's appreciation to Germany for organizing this high-level open debate to accentuate the correlation between pandemics and the maintenance of security, the more so during these challenging times.

Malta aligns itself with the statements submitted on behalf of the European Union (see annex 30) and the Group of Friends of Solidarity for Global Health Security (see annex 54) and would like to add a few remarks in its national capacity.

At a time when we have to rethink what constitutes major threats, the world has had to contend with a threat that went beyond the conservative awareness of what we understand by threats to security. We have been rudely awakened by the fact that pandemics can give rise to grave security and economic concerns that are equally widespread and devastating as any other commonly perceived major threat. The only difference is that in this case we are fighting one common enemy, the coronavirus disease (COVID-19), for pandemics know no creed, ethnicity, gender or social standing. We are all equally susceptible and potential victims.

However, pandemics tend to have much longer-lasting effects and create more collateral issues than any other threat, be it localized or global. For one, we are witnessing COVID-19, which is wreaking havoc in fragile States, triggering widespread unrest and severely testing international crisis management systems. Its implications are especially serious for those caught in the midst of conflict, especially women and children, since the disease has disrupted humanitarian aid flows, is limiting peace operations and is delaying, or distracting, conflict parties from nascent, as well as ongoing, efforts at diplomacy. The negative economic impact resulting from the pandemic makes a bad situation much worse.

The efforts of one country to curb the spread of a pandemic may also have secondary effects on the security landscape of another. Restricting travel and closing borders, for instance, impacts the movement of peacekeepers and the transfer of aid to conflict-ridden nations, further intensifying the effects of conflict.

Pandemics also further exacerbate the deterioration of already existing humanitarian crises, particularly in terms of food insecurity. In curbing the potential evolution into a hunger pandemic, humanitarian workers must be allowed unrestricted access to fragile areas for vital food provisions. In that regard, we cannot fail to take this opportunity to commend all the vital work being undertaken by several humanitarian actors on the ground that have continued to work towards their mission notwithstanding the severe challenges brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic.

These turbulent times call on us to explore creative ways and opportunities in ensuring the timely attainment of our development goals, while addressing urgent needs. Undeniably, every single person on the planet has been affected to some extent by this pandemic. For that reason, reaching out to the hardest hit and most fragile countries, as well as those in vulnerable situations, is crucial to ensuring that no country or person is left behind.

Perhaps more than any other known pandemic, COVID-19 has put a strong spotlight on how interconnected and interdependent our world truly is. For one country to be safe, all countries must be safe. It has undeniably provided us with yet another opportunity to continue to strengthen collaboration and to explore potential avenues for cooperation. It has highlighted the importance of strengthening and upholding multilateralism.

On this front, we cannot fail to mention the tireless efforts of France and Tunisia that yesterday resulted in the adoption of the historic resolution 2532 (2020), endorsing the Secretary-General's call for a global ceasefire. The adoption of that resolution will not only send an important signal to parties to conflict, and may help change calculations on the ground, but also provides a vivid example of what unwavering efforts to strengthen multilateralism can achieve.

COVID-19 has reinvigorated us with strength and resilience, empowering us with the will to transform challenges into opportunities. Let us not miss this opportunity to try and work together to defeat this common enemy. We have been given yet another chance to come together. Shall we take this opportunity and rise to the occasion?

Annex 46**Statement by the Permanent Mission of Mexico to the United Nations**

[Original: Spanish]

The topic chosen for this meeting could not be more relevant and timely. We thank the German presidency for convening this open debate. The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic is undoubtedly one of the greatest challenges the international community has faced since the establishment of the United Nations 75 years ago.

Mexico welcomes the fact that, yesterday, the Council was finally able to adopt a resolution calling for an immediate cessation of hostilities to deal with the pandemic and supporting the efforts of the Secretary-General. We acknowledge, in particular, the efforts of France and Tunisia that led to that result. We hope that the adoption of resolution 2532 (2020) will be a first step towards meaningful and effective action by the Security Council in tackling the effects of COVID-19, particularly in countries in or emerging from conflict or facing humanitarian situations. At the same time, it is essential to start thinking about the most effective way to face future pandemics.

Today more than ever, we must rethink the existing relationship between health crises, disease, public health and the different dimensions of security. In recent years, the Security Council has explored various aspects of emerging challenges to international peace and security, including the health crises caused by HIV/AIDS and the Ebola virus disease. In 2014, the Security Council determined that the Ebola outbreak in West Africa constituted a threat to international peace and security. Among the elements that led to this determination were such considerations as the rapid spread of the virus and its mortality rate, the inability of health systems to react in a timely manner and the negative socioeconomic impacts and peacekeeping challenges in the region.

However, the pandemic we are facing today has different characteristics — all Member States have been affected in one way or another. Globally, there have been 10.5 million confirmed cases and, regrettably, at least half a million people have lost their lives.

To prevent the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic from further exacerbating situations of armed conflict, Mexico calls for the Security Council to take steps, especially relating to sanctions implementation, to guarantee the continuous and effective distribution of humanitarian assistance and that humanitarian actors who must operate in such contexts are not criminalized.

Another aspect that must be taken into account is the increase in racism and xenophobia caused by the pandemic, which drive conflict in our societies. The Secretary-General has pointed out in one of his reports that the stigmatization of those affected by the virus has increased and that migrants and foreigners have been blamed for the spread of COVID-19. We unequivocally condemn these acts of racism and xenophobia.

As global problems, pandemics require global solutions. The international global health system, led by the World Health Organization (WHO), has successfully worked to eradicate such diseases as polio and smallpox, and the lessons learned from that work will help us now and in the future. To that end, we must ensure that, once a COVID-19 vaccine is developed, it is made a global public good. The General Assembly made progress in this regard with the adoption of resolution 74/274, introduced by Mexico and co-sponsored by 179 countries.

We must take into account the lessons learned from previous health crises, as well as the current one, in order to generate effective multilateral solutions to global health emergencies. Mexico advocates the creation of synergies within the United Nations system that meet today's multidimensional threats.

The creation of such synergies must be a joint endeavour based on science and evidence. The International Health Regulations have been a great tool, but we will have to redouble our efforts to ensure that all Member States have the capacities to fully comply with their provisions. There is room to improve information-sharing in the interests of global health. We could, for example, explore a pandemic procedure similar to that for influenza, whereby the degree of risk is continuously assessed on a scientific basis.

Mexico supports the strengthening of the WHO and all tools, regulations or protocols intended to save lives. Prevention is a priority. In this regard, we recall the prerogative of the Secretary-General who, pursuant to Article 99 of the Charter of the United Nations, may bring to the attention of the Council any matter which in his opinion may threaten the maintenance of peace and international security.

Effective action by the Security Council to tackle the risks that may arise from health emergencies of international concern will help strengthen the multilateral institutional architecture. The task is not to replace or to duplicate efforts, but to ensure that international cooperation, transparency and solidarity are the norm when we again, unfortunately, face a pandemic.

Annex 47

Statement by the Permanent Mission of Morocco to the United Nations

At the outset, I would like to congratulate Mr. Heiko Maas on Germany's assumption of the presidency of the Security Council, as well as on the excellent timing and choice of subject for this high-level open debate on pandemics and security, which coincides with the very recent adoption of resolution 2532 (2020), on the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic.

The Kingdom of Morocco commends the efforts deployed throughout this process by all members of the Security Council — particularly the penholders, France and Tunisia — and welcomes the adoption of resolution 2532 (2020), which, among other things, supports the Secretary-General's appeal for a global ceasefire to tackle the COVID-19 pandemic. In that regard, my delegation reiterates its unwavering support for the Secretary-General's appeal for a global ceasefire and other appeals and actions regarding the fight against COVID-19, and joins the international community in expressing its concern about the devastating multidimensional impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic across the world, especially in countries ravaged by armed conflicts, in post-conflict situations or affected by humanitarian crises.

In addition, allow me to welcome the participation of the Secretary-General, President Peter Maurer of the International Committee of the Red Cross and Ms. Amira Elfadil Mohammed, African Union Commissioner for Social Affairs, and to thank them for their detailed and enlightening briefings.

The COVID-19 pandemic has wreaked havoc on livelihoods, societies, health systems and economies. Accordingly, my delegation would like to express itself on the following key areas.

First, on our shared commitment to multilateralism, solidarity, international partnerships and cooperation, my delegation believes that the COVID-19 context reflects the deep need for a joint commitment to international cooperation and multilateral responses in facing the pandemic and its unprecedented consequences. Morocco therefore welcomes the emphasis placed on a collective response to COVID-19, with the United Nations at its core, and stresses the need for the creation of whole-of-society and whole-of-Government synergies to innovate and search for solutions to the multiple issues raised by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Secondly, on leaving no one behind, COVID-19 has proved to be, first of all, a human crisis. Morocco reiterates the importance of taking a holistic approach that covers the three pillars of the United Nations and reflects our obligations under international law and relevant international commitments while emphasizing the importance of full respect for human rights and stressing that there is no place for stigma, hate speech, hate crimes, xenophobia, racism or any form of discrimination in the response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Thirdly, on recovering together and rebuilding better, Morocco highlights that the efforts deployed by developing countries, especially in Africa, to contain and control the transmission of COVID-19 are extremely commendable and must be supported by appropriate economic, financial and trade measures to enable them to recover swiftly from the crisis. My delegation continues to place strong emphasis on the need for building more equal, inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable societies while redoubling efforts towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Decade of Action.

In accordance with the spirit of solidarity and South-South cooperation, on 13 April His Majesty King Mohammed VI launched an initiative of African Heads of State and Government aimed at establishing an operational framework to work with

African countries in the fight against the pandemic. It is a pragmatic and action-oriented initiative, dedicated to sharing experiences and best practices to deal with the health, economic and social impacts of the pandemic.

In the framework of that royal initiative, His Majesty King Mohammed VI issued regal instructions on 14 June for the sending of medical aid to several brotherly African countries, to provide them with protective medical equipment and products and support their efforts to fight the COVID-19 pandemic. That aid comprised nearly 8 million face masks, 900,000 visors, 600,000 hygiene caps, 60,000 medical gowns, 30,000 litres of hydro-alcoholic gel, as well as 75,000 packs of chloroquine and 15,000 packs of Azithromycin, which were produced entirely in Morocco and by Moroccan companies, in full compliance and conformity with World Health Organization standards. The aid benefited 20 African countries across all subregions of the continent as well as the Commission of the African Union in Addis Ababa.

Finally, Morocco takes this opportunity to reiterate to the German presidency its appreciation of the convening of this high-level open debate and to renew its commitment to global solidarity, collective responsibility and enhanced multilateralism and cooperation.

Annex 48**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Myanmar to the United Nations, Hau Do Suan**

The novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has caused over 520,000 deaths and 10.8 million infections around the world since its discovery, over six months ago. While the pandemic is seriously impacting global public health, it has also challenged international unity and cooperation in response to a global emergency. The unprecedented and devastating consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic are unlimited and unforeseeable. Its impact is greatest on the poor and the vulnerable and on politically unstable and conflict-stricken countries.

The current situation highlights the importance of strong leadership and unified responses at the global and national levels. Therefore, the United Nations leading role in the fight against COVID-19 is indeed crucial and central. In this respect, I wish to share briefly what Myanmar is doing to fight against COVID-19 with its own limited resources and with international and bilateral assistance from friends and well-wishers.

Myanmar took a whole-of-nation approach at an early stage in the spread of COVID-19 to respond to, prevent and mitigate the pandemic. We mobilized the strength of the people and galvanized public participation, which were pivotal to the success of our national efforts to fight COVID-19. State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi personally chairs the Central Committee for the Prevention, Control and Treatment of COVID-19. The Central Committee launched an intensive public-awareness campaign and disseminated health guidelines and directives throughout the country, including in the internally displaced person (IDP) camps in Rakhine, Shan and Kachin states. In the areas where Internet data access had to be suspended, COVID-19 information has been disseminated via mobile short message service and oral announcements.

In response to the Secretary-General's appeal for a global ceasefire, Tatmadaw announced a three-month unilateral nationwide ceasefire to help fight the COVID-19 pandemic. The unilateral ceasefire will be applied to all areas except where terrorist groups have taken positions.

The Government has also invited all ethnic armed groups to work together for the prevention, detection and treatment of the virus in rebel-controlled areas along the border with neighbouring countries. Many armed groups have responded positively, and the cooperation has been working well.

The economic impact of the pandemic has also been devastating for Myanmar, as a developing country. More than 5,700 factories, workplaces and restaurants have been closed, leaving over 140,000 people unemployed. The situation has been compounded by the return of more than 100,000 migrant workers.

To mitigate the economic fallout of the pandemic, a comprehensive economic stimulus plan was announced in April. Moreover, community-based job-creation schemes have been initiated in rural areas for returning migrant workers and local young people.

To prevent the spread of the virus from returnees, we are imposing strict quarantine measures through massive facilities in border towns and in major cities. Testing facilities have been increased and conduct testing with all returnees, including those individuals who returned voluntarily from the IDP camps in Cox's Bazar by their own arrangements.

Despite the tremendous challenges posed by increased armed clashes in Rakhine state, the Government has scaled up its efforts to grant humanitarian access to displaced people, especially women and children. The World Food Programme and the International Committee of the Red Cross have been granted permission to provide food and emergency items to affected people in Rakhine state and southern parts of Chin state.

The Government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic adheres to the principle of leaving no one behind. Recently, Myanmar and the International Committee of the Red Cross formalized an action plan to support Myanmar's efforts to prevent a potential COVID-19 outbreak in Rakhine state. Thousands of people in Rakhine state, including those living in IDP camps, are benefiting under that plan.

As we are still quite far from finding a solution to this global pandemic, united and collective global approaches are crucial. Politicizing the pandemic will have long-term negative consequences, the brunt of which will be borne by the most vulnerable and least protected population from poor and conflict-stricken countries, with women and children at the forefront.

Myanmar is grateful to the United Nations, international institutions and agencies, as well as individual friendly countries, for their support of Myanmar's efforts to fight the COVID-19 pandemic and mitigate its socioeconomic and security consequences. We are determined to fight this pandemic with our united national strength, with the help of the United Nations and in cooperation with regional and international partners.

Annex 49**Statement by the Permanent Representative of the Netherlands to the United Nations, Karel van Oosterom**

Please allow me to congratulate you, Sir, on assuming the presidency of the Security Council for the month of July — the third and last consecutive presidency in the European spring. Without question, the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) will remain at the top of everyone's agenda throughout the summer. I therefore applaud the fact that you start your presidency by organizing this debate on pandemics and security. It shows the commitment and energy infused to the Council by elected members, and I congratulate all the newly elected members that will join the Council in 2021.

Even without the extraordinary changes brought about by COVID-19, 2020 was already going to be a challenging year in many respects. We need only to look back at the Secretary-General's January speech (see A/74/PV.54), where he outlined the four horsemen in our midst: geopolitical tensions on the rise, global mistrust on the rise, the climate crisis and the dark side of technology.

So far, the coronavirus has acted as a contrast fluid, putting geopolitical differences that were already visible into sharper focus. It has also exacerbated global mistrust and put into play the dark side of technology. The World Health Organization (WHO) must now fight not only the pandemic but also an infodemic fuelled by cyberattacks and disinformation. Societies where human rights were already under pressure are now pushed to curb civic space further. Many important international meetings to agree on common action against climate change are being put on hold.

At the same time, 75 years after the signing of the Charter of the United Nations, we see many around the world coming together in search of a global response and international cooperation. As an example, I need only point to the Global Goal: Unite for Our Future event last weekend, which brought together an incredible roster of celebrities and politicians expressing their desire to emerge from this crisis stronger, more united and safer.

COVID-19 is already having a profound impact on the daily lives of the world's most vulnerable, with adverse effects on their employment, equality and security. I would now like to focus on three points, namely, the role of the Security Council, peacekeeping operations and building back better.

First, when it comes to issues of peace and security, the world looks to the Security Council for leadership. In its 75 years of existence, the Council has contributed to unparalleled growth in prosperity and peace worldwide. That is why it is so disheartening to see that well-known and regrettable stalemates in the Council over the last few years have in recent months also extended to the fight against COVID-19. Although we are glad that resolution 2532 (2020), on COVID-19, was adopted yesterday, the failure of the Council to agree on a resolution on the pandemic at an earlier stage remains a disappointment.

In the case of Ebola, resolution 2177 (2014) determined that the outbreak constituted a threat to international peace and security by undermining the stability of the most affected countries and possibly leading to further instances of civil unrest, social tensions and the deterioration of the political and security climate. It is therefore hard to understand why the Council could not come earlier to a similar conclusion on the far-wider-reaching coronavirus.

In addition, in 2018, when we were a member of the Council, the Council united behind the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic

Republic of the Congo to work closely with WHO to provide safety to health workers in eastern Congo and help eradicate the Ebola virus there. Last week the region was declared Ebola-free. That proves once again that the Council can and must also make an impact on the ground when it comes to pandemics.

We ask the Council to look past its differences, to enshrine the multilateral response to the pandemic as outlined by the Secretary General and — especially — to keep echoing his call for a global ceasefire, which my country has wholeheartedly supported on several occasions.

Secondly, over the past decades, peacekeeping operations have provided an invaluable contribution to peace and security in the world's most difficult places. This Tuesday, we remembered the 77 persons who paid the ultimate price in the service of peace over the past year — many in United Nations peacekeeping operations — and we pay tribute to their sacrifice.

Apart from the risks that are always inherent to peacekeeping operations, the pandemic has added an extra level of complexity. The first is the significant challenge of rotating troops in and out of missions. With 2010 still in our minds, when the cholera outbreak in Haiti was linked to United Nations peacekeepers, we must take the utmost care to prevent a spread of the virus in already vulnerable areas.

In addition, mandates have to be discharged and troops must continue engaging with the target populations. That demands a great deal from our Blue Helmets. Mediation efforts and interaction with the local population, essential to the implementation of the mandates, have become challenging at best.

We are also mindful of the risk of potential implications of the COVID-19 pandemic on the incidence of sexual exploitation and abuse. We support the Secretary-General's efforts to prevent an increase of such cases in the context of humanitarian and peacekeeping settings during the pandemic.

We must also be aware that peacekeeping operations are more than ever targets of disinformation campaigns. False rumours about missions spreading the virus need to be countered immediately so that missions do not lose popular support.

In addition, the funding of peacekeeping is still in dire straits. We call on all countries to pay their contributions promptly and in full, especially in these difficult times. We are glad that we have adopted a timely resolution on peacekeeping budgets that also allows for the requested flexibility to absorb the financial implications of the pandemic.

As champions of both performance and the protection of civilians in the Action for Peacekeeping agenda, an initiative we have supported since its launch in 2018, we underline the need for missions to be able to properly carry out their mandates.

Thirdly, the socioeconomic consequences of COVID-19 and the lockdown measures taken in response are increasingly visible, and are so severe that they have resulted in nearly universal setbacks in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In our response to the crisis, we must focus on the needs of those most vulnerable if we are to leave no one behind.

Their exact composition varies by context, but we know that women and girls are among the hardest hit. We must also remember that the most affected need to be involved in overcoming the crisis. Their voices need to be heard.

This crisis has laid bare the deep inequalities that exist within and among countries, and those inequalities inherently carry the risk of conflict. That is why we found it necessary to support to the Secretary-General's COVID-19 Response and Recovery Multi-Partner Trust Fund as the centralized United Nations response

to the socioeconomic consequences of the crisis. This pooled fund is providing an immediate, context-specific response with the ultimate goal of building back better towards the Sustainable Development Goals with a strong Resident Coordinator and United Nations country team within the spirit of the reform of the United Nations development system. To that end, the Kingdom of the Netherlands has quickly provided €15 million.

In conclusion, we have only begun to understand the devastating effects of the crisis on people everywhere. The broadest possible support of the Fund in further funding rounds is essential if we are to enable the United Nations, including the Security Council, to play its role in protecting those most vulnerable. It is also critical to leverage what is already being done, and to move from crisis mitigation to truly building back better together. Only thus can we ensure that the current crisis does not set us back, but instead makes us look towards a better future, with a more balanced global economy and measures to combat climate change.

Annex 50

Statement by the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of Nigeria to the United Nations, Samson S. Iteboje

At the outset, we wish to commend the Permanent Mission of Germany to the United Nations for taking the initiative to convene this important and timely debate on pandemics and security. We also wish to thank Secretary-General António Guterres, Mr. Peter Maurer, President of the International Committee of the Red Cross, Ms. Amira Elfadil Mohammed, African Union Commissioner for Social Affairs, and other briefers for their informative briefings.

Pandemics are infectious diseases that can kill millions of people and cause trillions of dollars in economic damage in countries, regions and the world, and thus become a threat to international peace and security. Beyond the debilitating, sometimes fatal, consequences for those directly affected, pandemics also have a range of negative social, political and economic consequences. Only a few other events can pose such a great threat to human lives and cause such great damage to the global economy. Pandemics do not respect international borders, and therefore have the potential to simultaneously weaken the political, social and economic foundations of many societies.

The novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) has affected at least 10 million people, with over 500,000 reported fatalities, and has spared but a few countries. National responses have been strikingly uncoordinated, even at the level of regional and subregional bodies. The dominant approach among affected countries has been to lock down or restrict non-essential activities and impose sharp limitations on national and international travel. The disease and the response measures have had immediate effects on some of the world's wealthiest countries, which were among the first to be hit. The pandemic has revealed the inadequacies of the health-care systems in many countries to swiftly manage and contain the spread — as we have seen with shortages of hospital beds and specialized equipment for a crisis of this magnitude, including personal protective equipment for front-line responders.

Unlike the proactive measures taken by the Security Council during the HIV/AIDS and Ebola outbreaks in West Africa — measures prompted by the United States, largely, to generate more focused attention and serve as a call for action in situations where global responses had been insufficient and poorly coordinated, which subsequently led to the adoption of resolution 2177 (2014) — the COVID-19 pandemic, the worst crisis since the Second World War, which demands even more urgent attention, has not received the needed attention from the Security Council. That has vitiated the globally coordinated response and worsened the outbreak. As a result, the virus continues to spread through countries, exacerbating the humanitarian situations and overwhelming already failing health-care systems.

The spread of the virus and the unanticipated and unprepared swift lockdown measures taken by States on a global level have hampered their social and economic development and exposed their weak governance, which failed to support and protect its population. It has also exposed the inadequacies of Governments in dealing with unexpected situations of such magnitude that they not only threaten lives but also food security. As the world battles to contain the pandemic, it has become glaringly evident that effective prevention and response to a pandemic require national health systems that are well-funded, equipped, accessible and well-staffed, with emergency response measures capable of tackling the current novel coronavirus and other related diseases of such proportions.

We stress the need for a cessation of hostilities in times of pandemic, as emphasized in the Secretary-General's call for a global ceasefire. The ongoing

conflicts have hampered access to timely deliveries of supplies and have hindered the implementation of control measures, thereby making access difficult for humanitarian relief agencies. The Secretary-General's call has been endorsed by 114 Governments, regional organizations and leaders. In addition, civil society groups and 16 armed groups have also supported the call. The effects of that support has not yet been fully felt.

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted peace operations, including restrictions on their movement and troop rotations. We commend the United Nations initiative to freeze rotations in countries where peacekeeping operations are fragile. That measure seeks to slow the spread of the virus to the troops and from the troops by limiting travel to countries in conflict. If unchecked, such movements of peacekeepers could potentially spread the virus to local populations, with huge fatalities.

Given that health care in conflict situations is delivered by a wide range of national and international agencies, extensive collaboration between relevant health authorities and implementing partners should be encouraged. The World Health Organization has a major role to play in assisting its regional offices to effectively cooperate with Member States in their respective regions.

At the regional and global level, the African Union and the United Nations may face a situation where peace operations have significantly less capacity. It is unlikely that the risk to civilians in those situations will be overcome in the short to medium term. The more likely scenario is that the effects of the coronavirus, coupled with other enduring factors, such as climate change and food insecurity, will likely exacerbate the instability and increase the associated risks. Nevertheless, most peace operations have demonstrated remarkable resilience in the way they have coped with and adapted to the crisis.

Africa, where the bulk of the peace operations are deployed, appeared to have been spared from the initial brunt of the crisis, but may perhaps be bracing to address the virus spread in the medium term. Essentially, the innovations and practices that emerged in this process and which are specific to the virus may change over time in response to the potential severity of the risk that the virus still poses as countries continue their search for the right vaccine for the novel virus.

Let me conclude by appealing for sustained vigilance by the international community towards our collective responsibility to protect civilians. If we act purposefully and in concert, we can better shield civilians from the ravages of armed conflict and its attendant security implications. The Security Council is expected to be the ultimate enforcer of preventive mechanisms to save the world from the scourge of war; its failure or success will determine the fate of humankind amid the myriad of threats to international peace and security arising not only from war and terrorism but also from deadly pandemics such as COVID-19, whose effect is especially profound, given that it is an unseen enemy that respects no individual, social stratum, race, religion, ideological tendency or military might, and which is capable of killing millions without a single nuclear or conventional weapon.

Annex 51

Statement by the Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the United Nations, Munir Akram

We congratulate Germany on assuming the presidency of the Security Council and thank it for organizing today's timely debate on the important issue of pandemic and security.

Following the Ebola outbreak, the Security Council pronounced in resolution 2177 (2014) that pandemics constitute a grave threat to international peace and security. They not only undermine the political, social and economic stability of the most affected countries, but also vitiate the overall security environment, becoming drivers of instability in the concerned regions and beyond. Unlike Ebola, however, which was contained within a region, coronavirus disease (COVID-19) has proved to be much more infectious, spreading exponentially all over the world and posing a threat to the lives and livelihoods of all nations of the world.

While the virus does not discriminate between rich and poor, it has nevertheless disproportionately affected the most vulnerable, including the elderly, handicapped persons and such displaced people as refugees and migrants, as well as those living in conflict zones and under foreign occupation. In more ways than one, this pandemic has shown that in today's interconnected world, no one is safe until everyone is safe. At the same time, it has also reinforced the idea that without coordinated international efforts to contain the virus and mitigate its multifaceted impacts, we cannot win the fight against this pandemic.

As COVID-19 rages through the world, two different streams of response have emerged. On the one hand, we have seen a rise in international solidarity and cooperation. The United Nations and other international organizations, including international financial institutions and several States Members of the United Nations, have stepped up relief efforts to help the most affected countries. Medical expertise, essential life-saving and protective supplies, scientific research and public-health data are being shared despite disruptions in the global supply chain and political tensions. The calls for financial assistance within countries and internationally have met with a positive response. Initiatives like debt relief for developing countries have seen widespread support, although much more is needed to address the monumental health, economic and social challenges of developing countries.

On the other hand, the COVID-19 pandemic has also exacerbated tensions between major Powers and brought about a sharp spike in their rivalry. A blame game on the origins of virus, increased polarization and reliance on populist narratives have exposed fissures in the global response, at the cost of solidarity, humanism and multilateralism.

One example of these divisions is the lacklustre response to the Secretary-General's timely and well-intended call for a global ceasefire. In many conflict zones around the world, there has been no real reduction in violence. Instead, some States have taken advantage of the situation and tried to consolidate their illegal occupations of foreign and disputed territories.

In occupied Jammu and Kashmir, India has callously exploited the COVID-19 crisis to further advance its unlawful occupation. For over 10 months, the Kashmiris have faced crippling restrictions on civil liberties and unrelenting human rights abuses at the hands of Indian forces. The coronavirus has now condemned them to a double lockdown, bringing them to the precipice of a vast human tragedy. The prolonged lockdown in occupied Jammu and Kashmir had already depleted essential medical supplies in hospitals, turning them into graveyards. Now with the coronavirus

spreading rapidly, they are entirely incapable of meeting the public-health crisis. Today, Indian-occupied Jammu and Kashmir is the world's most militarized zone, with 900,000 Indian troops suppressing 8 million Kashmiris, and there is only one doctor for every 4,000 Kashmiris.

While the world's attention is focused on the virus, India has taken advantage of the situation by implementing additional steps to consolidate its occupation. Besides the extended lockdown and a communications blackout, India has introduced a new domicile rule to engineer a demographic change in Kashmir with a view to transforming it from a Muslim-majority State to a Hindu-majority territory. These measures are in direct contravention of relevant Security Council resolutions and international law, in particular the Fourth Geneva Convention.

Hundreds of senior Kashmiri political leaders and thousands of young men, including human rights defenders and journalists have been arbitrarily detained and incarcerated to stifle the call for *azadi* — freedom — and suppress their legitimate struggle for their right to self-determination. Peaceful protesters, including children as young as four years of age, have been blinded by pellet guns. Women and girls have been dishonoured and threatened with rape and violence, hundreds have been killed in extrajudicial executions, and whole neighbourhoods have been destroyed as a form of collective punishment.

The Security Council has a primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. It cannot afford inaction and appeasement in the face of open aggression and atrocities against an occupied people. The Council must denounce India's illegal actions in occupied Jammu and Kashmir and take urgent actions to rein in its fascist ambitions, which are putting enormous strain on the peace and security of our region and beyond.

In this regard, the Council must urge India to, first, immediately lift the continuing military siege in occupied Jammu and Kashmir and rescind the illegal and unilateral actions undertaken since 5 August 2019; secondly, remove restrictions on communication, movement and peaceful assembly in Kashmir and restore Internet access so that people can get accurate and reliable information relating to the pandemic; thirdly, allow access to international human rights and humanitarian organizations so that relief efforts may be undertaken in Kashmir; fourthly immediately release arbitrarily detained and incarcerated Kashmiri political leaders and allow them to express wishes of the Kashmiri people; fifthly, freeze and reverse new domicile rules designed to change the demographic composition of Kashmir; sixthly, remove draconian laws that enable Indian occupying forces to commit human rights violations with impunity; and finally, protect the Muslim minority in India from apartheid-like segregation and oppression.

These actions are urgently needed not just to calm the tensions in our region, but also to protect the credibility of the Security Council and the continued efficacy of the United Nations in matters related to peace and security.

Annex 52

Statement by the Permanent Representative of Portugal to the United Nations, Francisco Duarte Lopes

Portugal aligns itself with the statement submitted by the European Union (EU) (see annex 30) and would, in its national capacity, like to add the following points.

The global health crisis we are facing today is unprecedented in living memory. As we celebrate the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations, we should continue to expand our approaches to international security to respond to new and emerging challenges. Given the transnational reach of pandemics and the increasing interdependence of States, the greater part of the solution lies in international cooperation.

The United Nations system has an important role to play in this regard, and the World Health Organization (WHO) remains key in enhancing solidarity and reinforcing health-care systems worldwide. We therefore welcome the inclusion of the relationship between global health and security in the agenda of the Security Council. We also welcome the adoption of resolution 2532 (2020), thank Germany for convening today's open debate and look forward to its practical outcomes.

Past pandemics, such as the Ebola and HIV/AIDS crises, have showcased how public-health crises and security crises exacerbate one other. Portugal would like to draw attention to the specific impacts of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic in countries previously facing humanitarian emergencies. These countries are in particularly vulnerable situations — owing to armed conflicts, environmental crises, outbreaks of other diseases, migration, starvation, lack of access to adequate housing nor sanitation — to which the spread of COVID-19 poses amplifying risks. These countries also lack conditions to fully implement the recommendations put forward by the WHO.

Existing inequalities can be a trigger that turn health crises into security crises, particularly in countries or communities that are less resilient. The exacerbation of already precarious situations, in which Governments may not be able to provide basic needs and services, may further erode the trust in local institutions, worsening the potential for increased instability and unrest. Moreover, in conflict situations, both warring parties and affected civilian populations are particularly exposed to pandemics. Militias, parastatal groups, and other non-State actors may also seize the context created by health crises to advance their own insidious goals. Only a ceasefire, as called for by the Secretary-General and stressed in resolution 2532 (2020), can fully ensure the delivery of humanitarian aid and the adoption of protective measures.

Past pandemics have shown how important it is to ensure the safety and security of United Nations peacekeepers and to provide adequate training. In these challenging times, good examples of how United Nations operations have been supporting local Governments and communities abound. Be it through the support of local authorities in disinfection activities in the Central African Republic, awareness campaigns in detention centres in Mali, or the distribution of radios in South Sudan, peace operations have shown their capacity to adapt.

Peacekeeping operations also must continue to promote dialogue, mediation and peace processes, as the global ceasefire may play a catalytic role in building trust between communities, providing a much-needed opportunity for silencing the guns. Concurrently, we need to maintain a steadfast commitment to peacebuilding efforts. In that context, amidst a pandemic, the forthcoming elections in some countries remain a challenge.

We should also advocate the pursuit of global health security. Previous health crises have highlighted how cooperation among actors across the development-humanitarian-peace nexus and a whole-of-United Nations approach — both at Headquarters and in the field — are key to ensuring a coordinated and effective response. We therefore call for global solidarity and a unified collective effort to cooperate and deal decisively with the challenges of this pandemic. It is important to pool resources efficiently, collaborating through pre-existing mechanisms for emergency humanitarian action and adapting these mechanisms to the COVID-19 pandemic. Development cooperation will also be key to help ensure that countries and communities, especially those most in need, are able to recover better.

Under the EU's Team Europe approach, we will continue to support health and sanitation capacity-building and efforts aimed at mitigating the social economic impacts of COVID-19. We have also contributed to the multilateral global response through several United Nations agencies, as well as the Access to COVID-19 Tools Accelerator initiative and the Global Vaccine Summit. Furthermore, under the EU Humanitarian Air Bridge Mechanism, Portugal co-organized a flight to Sao Tome and Principe.

At the heart of this pandemic, older people, women, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons, children, refugees and persons living in poverty and deprived of liberty are in a particularly vulnerable situation, and their needs must be addressed. Moreover, mental health and sexual and reproductive health and rights need to be addressed as well. Women represent 70 per cent of the workforce in health services and, in some communities, women are the main caregivers and sources of livelihood for their families. We must ensure their well-being as fundamental drivers of change, particularly in conflict and emergency situations. This commitment also includes fighting domestic and sexual and gender-based violence. Portugal welcomes the Secretary-General's policy briefs, which have focused on these and other contexts of vulnerability and provided action-oriented inputs.

Since the start of the pandemic, Portugal has implemented cross-sectional response measures, which we would like to highlight. We decided to temporarily grant migrants and asylum seekers with pending applications a right to stay and access to rights and services. Our health-care services have been tailored to specifically addressing the needs of older persons and persons with disabilities related to COVID-19 or other conditions or illnesses. To address the increasing risk of domestic violence during confinement, services and helplines have been made broadly available, and victims' support services have been strengthened.

This COVID-19 threat knows no borders, which means that individualized answers will inevitably fall short of addressing the challenges with which we are faced. We therefore reiterate the call for global solidarity and a unified collective effort.

Annex 53

Statement by the Permanent Mission of Qatar to the United Nations

I would like to thank the German presidency for convening today's important video-teleconference on pandemics and security. I would also like to welcome the presence at this meeting of His Excellency Mr. Heiko Maas, Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs of Germany.

We align ourselves with the statement submitted by the Republic of Korea on behalf of the Group of Friends of Solidarity for Global Health Security (see annex 54).

Qatar believes today's discussion is a timely one, as it is taking place at a moment when the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is affecting the entire world in a way we have never seen before, affecting all three key United Nations pillars: peace and security, development and human rights.

We are pleased that today's discussion is taking place as the Security Council strives to fulfil its responsibility by addressing the pandemic and its impact on international peace and security. This is not without precedent, as, in the past, the Security Council, has taken action when global health risks have undermined the stability of the affected countries and regions. An example of that history is resolution 1308 (2000), adopted unanimously on 17 June 2000 (see S/PV.4172), the first resolution to address the impact of HIV/AIDS on society and the first time the Security Council adopted a resolution on a health issue. Subsequently, in 2014, the Security Council adopted resolution 2177 (2014), making the determination that Ebola was a threat to world security.

We are concerned about the impact of COVID-19 on the most vulnerable, including women, children and the millions of displaced persons in conflict zones and refugee camps around the world, where fresh water is scarce, sanitary facilities are lacking, malnutrition is rampant and the health-care infrastructure has been decimated by war and continuous violence.

Robust global cooperation is essential. We must work together. There should be only one fight in the world today — the shared battle against COVID-19. Accordingly, common ground and effective solutions to current crises and tensions should be found in order to stop hostilities and facilitate greater access to humanitarian relief. We must not allow the pandemic to create incentives to escalate violence. Furthermore, ongoing conflict resolution efforts should not be delayed or postponed.

Qatar strongly endorses the call for a global ceasefire that Secretary-General António Guterres made in March and his appeal to stand united against the global threat of the COVID-19 pandemic.

As we celebrate the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations, COVID-19 is a wake-up call for effective multilateral cooperation. Let there be no doubt that only by acting in solidarity and strengthening international cooperation can we overcome this threat to us all, enable the most vulnerable to respond and recover, and build back better.

I am proud to note that Qatar has ramped up its support to humanitarian relief efforts. Just two days ago, we made a new pledge of \$100 million in humanitarian assistance to Syria, in addition to a contribution of \$10 million to the World Health Organization and \$10 million to the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization. As Qatar assumes the Chair of Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs Donor Support Group, the impact of the pandemic on existing humanitarian crises and its immediate impact on vulnerable populations in conflict-affected settings will be an ever-present issue.

Annex 54**Statement by the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Korea to the United Nations**

This statement is submitted on behalf of the Group of Friends of Solidarity for Global Health Security, an informal network of 41 Member States and the European Union, co-chaired by Canada, Denmark, the Republic of Korea, Qatar and Sierra Leone. The Group welcomes this Security Council open debate on pandemics and security.

As the Secretary-General has mentioned, the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic poses a significant threat to the maintenance of international peace and security. It is a threat to global health security and has intensified other, existing public health threats. The pandemic has further hindered national, regional and international conflict resolution efforts and threatens to undermine hard-won peacebuilding gains. The socioeconomic fallout of the crisis has deepened existing inequalities, including gender inequality, and may exacerbate the root causes of conflict and undermine sustainable development gains. Considering the sweeping implications of the COVID-19 pandemic compared to previous health crises, the international community must respond with heightened resolve and determination.

Against this troubling backdrop, the Group of Friends would like to highlight the following five points.

First, we welcome the Security Council's resolution on COVID-19 (resolution 2532 (2020)), particularly with respect to supporting the Secretary-General's appeal for an immediate global ceasefire. Parties to conflict must silence the guns in order to ensure the delivery of humanitarian assistance and open up space for diplomacy. Any military threat or attempt to incite violence must stop. We count on the Security Council to ensure that the resolution is meaningfully implemented.

Secondly, we emphasize the pressing need for a global response based on the guiding values of multilateralism and solidarity. COVID-19 is a global crisis that calls for a global solution. No matter how daunting the challenge, if we can respond in unity, the pandemic will serve as a valuable opportunity for, rather than a crisis of, multilateral cooperation. The Group of Friends stands ready to support the ongoing global efforts to respond to COVID-19, including international cooperation to ensure equitable, affordable and global access to medicine, diagnostics, vaccines and medical equipment. In that context, we fully share the Secretary-General's call for renewed urgency in support of global public goods and universal health coverage.

Thirdly, we emphasize the importance of ensuring that the most vulnerable and marginalized populations, particularly those in situations of armed conflict, are protected and that their humanitarian needs and priorities are met. Special attention must be paid to the plight of women, children, older persons, persons with disabilities, indigenous persons, migrants in vulnerable situations, refugees, displaced persons and others who are disproportionately impacted. We condemn attacks, acts of violence and threats of violence intentionally directed against medical and humanitarian personnel exclusively engaged in medical duties, their means of transport and equipment, hospitals and other medical facilities. We also urge for elevated action against stigmatization, discrimination and hate speech that engender division and violence. Further, international humanitarian and human rights law must be respected.

Fourthly, we highlight the important role that United Nations peace operations play in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, in addition to delivering on their existing mandated objectives. We encourage heightened attention on the resource

and capability requirements facing United Nations peace operations as resources are shifted towards supporting the COVID-19 response. Also, we underscore the importance of the safety and security of peacekeepers in the field.

Fifth and lastly, the global nature of the pandemic highlights the central role of the United Nations, including the World Health Organization. Recognizing that COVID-19 has had a profound impact on all three pillars of the United Nations, namely, peace and security, development and human rights, we count on the United Nations to implement a coordinated multi-agency, multisectoral and gender-sensitive response to address the multifaceted impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. We encourage all relevant stakeholders to actively engage with the United Nations in support of that effort.

To conclude, the Group of Friends supports the efforts of the Security Council to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic and help prepare for future global health security challenges. We encourage the Security Council to consider the issue of global health security in greater detail and stand ready to engage constructively in that effort.

Annex 55**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Saudi Arabia to the United Nations, Abdallah Y. Al-Mouallimi**

[Original: Arabic]

I would like to congratulate you, Mr. President, on Germany's assumption of the presidency of the Council and to wish you every success in presiding over the Council's work for this month, against the backdrop of the security and health crises and challenges ravaging our world today.

The Security Council is meeting today, for the first time in its history, not to discuss an issue, conflict or clash that poses a threat to international peace and security, but instead to discuss one of the most important health challenges facing our world today, namely, the spread of coronavirus disease (COVID-19). The pandemic has ravaged our world, claiming hundreds of thousands of lives in under seven months, and more than 10 million people around world have been infected by the virus. The pandemic has also endangered global health security and inflicted grave harm on national economies. With all aspects of life grinding to a halt as a result, people the world over have been forced into isolation and painful loneliness for fear of contracting this pernicious foe, which does not distinguish between men and women or between the elderly and infants.

Therefore, allow me to extend my condolences and sympathy to human beings worldwide, to all people everywhere who have lost loved ones. I wish healing to all those afflicted, whose suffering is being alleviated by health-care workers, the heroes of our struggle with this epidemic. I also wish to express our deep appreciation and full support for those on the front lines for their great and singularly courageous efforts in combating the COVID-19 pandemic, with which people of all sects, religions and ethnicities are contending.

Despite technological advances and global innovation that have yielded cutting-edge destructive weapons, the pandemic has shown us how fragile the world order is as it confronts a virus that cannot be seen with the naked eye. It is an ominous alarm that reminds us of the importance of cooperation and solidarity in overcoming our differences and narrow interests. We must promote a transparent, strong, coordinated, broad and knowledge-based global response in a spirit of solidarity. From the very start of the pandemic, Saudi Arabia appreciated the grave danger it posed and took all precautionary and preventive measures necessary to counter the spread of the disease in order to protect its citizens and residents from it.

Saudi Arabia, the current president of the Group of 20, is a firm believer in the importance of collective global action and is keenly aware of the need for an international response and international cooperation to address the pandemic. Thanks to the Kingdom's efforts at the international level, the Group of 20, chaired by King Salman Bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud, held an extraordinary virtual summit on 26 March, at which participating States and organizations were called upon to make every effort possible to address the pandemic; the Group of 20 has taken unprecedented measures and decisions in support of the global economy, including an infusion of \$7 trillion into the global economy; international cooperation has been strengthened as a result of the Kingdom's work with international organizations, namely, the World Health Organization (WHO), the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank Group and multilateral and regional development banks; and a donation in the amount of \$10 million was made by the Kingdom to the WHO fund in order to help countries with fragile health-care systems.

My country also supported the Secretary-General's call for a global ceasefire amid the novel coronavirus disease epidemic.

On 26 April, the Kingdom announced that it would contribute \$500 million to support international efforts to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, specifically allocating \$150 million to the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations, \$150 million to Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, and \$200 million to support WHO in its global fight against the epidemic.

At the regional level, my country has made great efforts to support and assist fraternal and friendly countries in fighting the spread of the epidemic, providing WHO with \$25 million in support of its efforts to combat the COVID-19 pandemic in Yemen. Saudi Arabia has also provided \$4 million in in-kind support to the State of Palestine and \$3 million in financial support to Somalia and is preparing to extend support to many other countries.

At a time when our world is witnessing an unprecedented challenge that knows no international borders, and in view of the danger that challenge poses to societies and peoples, especially those that are under the yoke of occupation and settlement-building, the occupying Israeli authorities continue to pursue their settlement-building policy in the occupied Palestinian territory. They do so with total disdain for all international covenants, the four Geneva Conventions and the relevant internationally recognized resolutions, compounding the oppression of the Palestinian people as it strives to exercise its legitimate rights.

Saudi Arabia condemns all Israeli attempts to annex more occupied Palestinian territories in the West Bank and the Jordan Valley. Those attempts by the occupying authorities constitute a serious violation of international law and relevant Security Council resolutions and would eliminate all chances of a lasting and comprehensive peace.

Finally, the Council meets today because the world has now grasped the limits of individual efforts to contain a pandemic of this magnitude, which poses a threat no less formidable than the security challenges that imperil international peace and security. We therefore stress the need to intensify multilateral efforts to address epidemics and diseases, as well as to take urgent steps to support global efforts to combat pandemics and ensure that their social, humanitarian and economic repercussions are addressed. Only by showing solidarity and cooperating will we be able to overcome this health crisis, enable our homelands to flourish and achieve prosperity and well-being for our peoples. We are certain that we will be able to overcome this crisis and come back stronger than before.

Annex 56**Statement by the Permanent Mission of Sierra Leone to the United Nations**

It is my distinct honour to address the Security Council at this open debate on pandemics and security. Let me at the outset congratulate you, Mr. President, for assuming the presidency of the Security Council for the month of July and also thank you for convening this timely debate.

Sierra Leone aligns itself with the joint statement made on behalf of the Group of Friends of Solidarity for Global Health Security (see annex 54).

My delegation appreciates the call for this open debate on the potential consequences of pandemics on global peace and security.

As the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic continues to have a severe impact around the world, nations continue to grapple with the debilitating consequences of the disease. It is no gainsaying that the COVID-19 pandemic poses not only significant risks to our public health and to our economy but also substantial risks to global peace and security. Its debilitating effect could be more disastrous in countries that are in conflict, emerging from conflict or experiencing humanitarian crises and weak and fragile economies. It has the potential to undermine peace and security and reverse gains made in peacebuilding and consolidation efforts and could be an existential threat to humankind. It is a global emergency that should be addressed holistically in all its dimensions in order to prevent catastrophic outcomes and ensure global stability.

The impact of this global emergency continues to be horrifying, and if we do not manage those risks effectively and do not put in place the right policy responses – the disease will significantly compromise our global health, economic and social progress and global peace and security, thereby undermining progress made towards maintaining international peace and security.

In that context, Sierra Leone welcomes the adoption by the Security Council of resolution 2532 (2020), which resonates with the Secretary-General's appeal for a global ceasefire to tackle the COVID-19 pandemic. We add our voice to the demand for a general and immediate cessation of hostilities in all situations on the Council's agenda and also join in calling upon all parties to armed conflicts to engage immediately in a durable humanitarian pause for at least 90 consecutive days to enable delivery of humanitarian assistance.

When Sierra Leone confirmed its first case of the coronavirus, on 16 March, the Government, in hindsight, announced measures to protect public health and safety, including the declaration of a state of emergency. That notwithstanding, COVID-19 has already taken a serious economic toll on Sierra Leone. Informed by expert advice, the Government intensified contact tracing and detection, scaled up testing and isolation, expanded treatment and undertook measures necessary to break the COVID-19 transmission chain in the country. Furthermore, 25 hospitals and 14 districts have personnel prepared to implement the National Infection Prevention and Control Guidelines. The Sierra Leone COVID-19 emergency preparedness and response has put in place mechanisms for the prevention, detection and response to the threat posed by the virus.

I would like, at this juncture, to thank the Security Council for adopting resolution 2532 (2020), on the response to the COVID-19 pandemic, yesterday, 1 July, and call for global solidarity on all fronts for the prevention, mitigation and recovery programmes for future global outbreaks. No one country can do this on its own and, until every country is rid of the virus, there is no safe haven for anyone.

Given Sierra Leone's experience with Ebola, the Government is aware that threats posed by public emergencies such as epidemics, pandemics, climate change and cybersecurity have long-term implications for economic growth and development. While developing economies will be the worst hit, with consequent effects on peace and security, the COVID-19 pandemic has the potential to cause the deepest global recession in recent history. As the United Nations, we therefore have an obligation to our present and future generations to be more strategic going forward and to dramatically shift the way we identify, prepare and respond to future pandemics.

A successful response to COVID-19 requires financial and technical resources, as well as real-time data. In that regard, international cooperation is key. We have benefited from working closely with other Member States and institutions on strengthening laboratory, surveillance, emergency management and workforce capacities to respond to disease outbreaks. We reiterate our support for the efforts made by the President of the General Assembly, the Secretary-General and groups of States, as well as individual States, in introducing and implementing various response measures across the globe.

In conclusion, we call on Member States to support actions of the United Nations in its response to health emergencies so that preparedness, response and recovery from global emergencies can be reinforced and integrated across all the pillars of our work.

Annex 57**Statement by the Permanent Mission of Slovakia to the United Nations**

First of all, I would like to thank the German presidency of the Security Council for organizing this timely debate on security challenges related to the spread of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. This debate could generate more focused attention and serve as a call for common action to help the most vulnerable countries and populations.

It is clear that the transboundary nature of the COVID-19 pandemic has strongly reminded us of the interconnectedness of the world community. This is the reason that we need to reinforce the common understanding that only together will we be able to overcome the negative consequences of this unparalleled global health crisis. In that context, we consider the Secretary-General's call for a global ceasefire and protection for the most vulnerable groups to be very important. We believe that no one should be left behind in the response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

At the same time, we should recognize that combating the COVID-19 pandemic will require concerted international cooperation. We all must try to do more and stay committed to working together and sharing experiences, best practices and information in a transparent and timely manner in order to decisively and effectively control the spread of the pandemic. This should be done while helping to meet the needs of vulnerable countries and populations, safeguarding people's well-being and security and maintaining socioeconomic stability.

This pandemic is unprecedented in many ways, but some issues related to it are very familiar to us. We remember very well the negative effects of past epidemics, such as severe acute respiratory syndrome, Ebola, et cetera, on the stability and security of the affected countries. Nowadays, we are witnessing again that the countries most vulnerable to disease outbreak are those in the midst of or recovering from conflict, where health systems have deteriorated and a lack of security can hinder prevention measures. At the launch of the Global Humanitarian Response Plan for COVID-19, on 25 March, the Secretary-General rightly pointed out that the pandemic threatened to divert international attention and resources from resolving ongoing conflicts and supporting peace processes.

Unfortunately, the spread of the coronavirus pandemic has already forced United Nations peacekeeping missions to reassess their activities in order to avoid the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic. Peacekeeping missions have had to adapt their operations to minimize the risk of spreading the coronavirus both to the people they are tasked to protect and to the peacekeepers themselves. They have been forced to take unavoidable steps to cope with the new situation. However, the full extent of the impact of COVID-19 on the mission setting is yet to be ascertained. But, undoubtedly, the pandemic has the potential to reverse hard-won gains towards achieving sustainable peace and reforming security institutions. Going forward, it will be important to continue to emphasize the importance of further investing beyond political commitment.

It seems that some of these new unprecedented measures are specific to the COVID-19 pandemic and will change over time in response to the development of the situation. On the other hand, we have to acknowledge that some others are likely to be more lasting. In that regard, we will need to discuss how to adjust the current structure and operating procedures of United Nations peacekeeping missions to the complexities of the post-COVID-19 era. We will need further substantial debates on how to achieve that objective, especially how to ensure long-term, reliable and predictable resources for United Nations peacekeeping operations, as well as how best practices and lessons learned in confronting COVID-19 during these

challenging times can be systematically incorporated into the work of United Nations peace operations.

The best news for all of us is that, despite the shift of attention, we managed to keep our key security tasks and United Nations missions up and running. We did it collectively, not individually. Not everything is, or can be, multilateral, but it is our conviction that multilateral solutions are the best ones in a world where global power competition comes with new faces and more cunning tentacles.

I would like to highlight that the security sector is a key component in the Government response to the COVID-19 public health crisis in many regions. Armed forces and police services play a critical protection role. They are often involved in sensitizing the public about these extraordinary measures, as well as enforcing social distancing measures. They also support the health services in terms of logistics and transportation. Armed forces medical personnel have reinforced the civilian health services. The trust of the people in the Government and the security sector, and that alone, is essential to stopping the transmission of the virus.

Even at the time of a global pandemic, it is of paramount importance to support women's participation in peacebuilding and their full and effective participation in all peace efforts. The need for urgent crisis responses often push gender considerations to the side, but maintaining a focus on the women and peace and security agenda is very important.

We also need to uphold human rights standards and make further efforts to better integrate human rights considerations into the work of United Nations peacekeeping missions, while ensuring that they deliver on their security commitments. At the same time, individual countries must prevent the deterioration of human rights situations related to emergency measures. The COVID-19 pandemic presents new challenges for our societies, but fighting the coronavirus should not mean abandoning human rights.

Annex 58**Statement by the Permanent Mission of Slovenia to the United Nations**

We wish to begin by thanking the German presidency of the Security Council for organizing this timely topical debate. The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic swept across the globe in an unprecedented fashion and caught us off guard. The effects of the pandemic on our societies are profound and far-reaching, including in the maintenance of international peace and security. It is therefore important that we come together and exchange views on the security implications of the crisis.

From our perspective, one of the main lessons learned is the importance of multilateralism, cooperation and solidarity. After the initial shock, countries and international organizations came together and responded to each other's needs. We would therefore like to point out that, in line with Slovenia's dedication to the stability and well-being of its immediate neighbourhood, most of our in-kind assistance during the COVID-19 pandemic has been directed to the Western Balkans. Assistance was delivered to North Macedonia, Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. Medical experts were also flown in to conduct COVID-19 testing among troops of the European Union-led peacekeeping force. However, we also decided to engage on a wider scale. We provided contributions to international organizations, such as the World Health Organization, the International Committee of the Red Cross, et cetera, and started the process of reprogramming our development assistance. As part of this global approach, we decided to maintain our personnel in all missions that we participate in abroad, including United Nations peace operations.

Regarding the procurement of medical equipment during the pandemic, we cannot but acknowledge some issues that the crisis has brought to the fore. I must express my concern about the difficulties that many United Nations States Members, including my own, encountered in procuring the necessary medical equipment and capabilities in the hour of need. This is security vulnerability, and it has to be treated as such. This issue is something that we must work on together. In Slovenia, we have already come to the conclusion that we need to increase our resilience, including by planning an investment in additional airlift capability for the Slovenian Armed Forces. The United Nations and its specialized agencies, for their part, could make an important contribution by providing a higher level of transparency and early warning.

Turning to the issue of water and COVID-19, the pandemic has also served to highlight access to clean water as a key factor in ensuring global health and food security. Ensuring water, sanitation and hygiene, particularly hand washing, is deemed one of the most effective and cost-efficient measures for preventing the spread of COVID-19 and numerous other contagious diseases. Our attempts to stop the virus should go hand in hand with strengthened cooperation among States and other relevant stakeholders through water diplomacy as a mechanism for building peace and health. The COVID-19 crisis has also revealed the essential role of efficient cooperation between multilateral agencies and the United Nations in the very fragmented area of water.

The COVID-19 pandemic has shown how important digital assets have become to our societies. We see an accelerated digital transformation across the globe, as many countries around the world struggle to sustain business, work and education processes during extended lockdown periods. Networks, connectivity, digital skills and cybersecurity have proved to be indispensable in tracking the spread of the virus and pursuing a robust recovery.

Another issue that has to be addressed is disinformation. There have been many examples of it, including a false story about a supposed outbreak of COVID-19 among members of NATO's multinational battalion battle group in Latvia. Let me say that we did not take this fake news lightly, not only as a NATO ally but also as a country whose soldiers form an integral part of that unit. This sort of propaganda in times of crisis must be stopped. We therefore think that the Secretary-General's appeal for a global ceasefire and resolution 2532 (2020) should be complemented by acknowledging the existence of hybrid threats. These are real and contribute to mistrust and animosity among countries and their peoples. As such, they should also be addressed by the United Nations.

With regard to a global ceasefire during COVID-19, Slovenia welcomes the fact that the Security Council finally adopted the resolution on a ceasefire, following the Secretary-General's appeal. However, we have to express disappointment that it took the Council more than three months to take action. The lukewarm, patchy and delayed reaction of the Security Council on this time-sensitive matter did not help the most disadvantaged, living in conflict zones. This is why Slovenia joined other countries in the core group that issued the joint statement in support of the Secretary-General's call for a global ceasefire. We are happy that the wide support confirmed the collective and unified endorsement of the call. With the COVID-19 outbreak, people in conflict zones are now faced with yet another threat to their lives. Despite the delayed action, the pandemic is still very much present in the world, and the second wave is projected to break out in the coming months. We therefore welcome the fact that the adopted resolution should bring about some relief for the people living in conflict zones.

COVID-19 and the pandemic's complex security implications are an example for my last point. While the States members of the Security Council hold the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, they do so not only in their specific national capacities but on behalf of the wider United Nations membership. This holds true for both the non-permanent as well as the permanent membership categories.

Extraordinary times such as these are no time for capricious politics. We sincerely hope that the Security Council and the United Nations will learn from the pandemic and come out of it stronger and more prepared for the upcoming challenges. In saying that, I fully acknowledge that the United Nations is us, the Member States, and Slovenia will continue to do its best to ensure a constructive and meaningful contribution to the joint effort.

Annex 59**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Spain to the United Nations, Agustín Santos Maraver**

[Original: Spanish]

My statement is in line with that made on behalf of the European Union.

I would like to thank the Secretary-General, Mr. António Guterres, the President of the International Committee of the Red Cross, Mr. Peter Maurer, and the Commissioner for Social Affairs of the African Union, Amira Elfadil Mohammed Elfadil, for their statements.

This relevant open debate on pandemics and security comes at an exceptional time. We are trying to overcome a global pandemic with multidimensional effects — a crisis that overlaps with other political challenges and that puts pressure on efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and the 2030 Agenda. Millions of people have been affected by the spread of the virus — 10.5 million people have been infected and 510,000 have died — but virtually the entire planet has experienced the impact of the pandemic, which has increased the risk of tension, conflict and division in recent months. It is therefore time for solidarity, coordinated action and effective multilateralism. The Security Council must play a key role in taking the decisions that each moment demands in order to lay the foundations for a better future, free of conflicts and threats to peace and security.

The current pandemic, which is forcing us to talk about security, has reminded us, first, that we are intrinsically interconnected; secondly, that prevention is the most powerful tool available to the international community and multilateralism; and, thirdly, that international cooperation is absolutely imperative.

In this regard, we must take note of the complexity of new emergencies and the need to build on the lessons learned in overcoming past challenges, such as the Ebola virus disease, not forgetting severe acute respiratory syndrome or Middle East respiratory syndrome.

The multifaceted nature of health emergencies like pandemics and epidemics calls for coordinated action on the part of the United Nations family. The so-called threefold humanitarian-development-peace nexus must serve as both a reference and an objective for prevention, preparation and response decisions.

Civil-military cooperation is another pillar that must be strengthened. To that end, United Nations peacekeeping missions must be equipped with the material and human resources, especially adequate protection officers, necessary to provide agile support to local communities in responding to health threats.

Another lesson learned from this crisis is that women and girls are victims twice over and that no effort should be spared in prevention and protection measures or in the provision of health services, including for sexual and reproductive health. At the same time, and perhaps more importantly, women have emerged as excellent social interlocutors and communicators whose contributions improve all phases of humanitarian, development and peacekeeping responses efforts.

Spain supports the Team Europe approach, which has mobilized €36 billion and strengthened partnerships for comprehensive COVID-19 response and recovery. We have contributed €125 million to the WHO Access to COVID-19 Tools Accelerator initiative, €50 million of which will go to the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization and €75 million to the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations. Those pledged contributions, together with other funds

mobilized for the health response, amount to a contribution of around €187 million from Spain to this appeal. Spain strongly believes that access to vaccines, treatments and diagnostics must be swift, accessible in terms of cost and able to be distributed on a global scale.

Finally, I would also like to highlight a series of priority actions to strengthen our institutions and societies in the face of health emergencies.

Spain has addressed the COVID-19 health crisis through its universal health coverage system, established in 1986 — thanks to which, no one has been left behind during this crisis. The effective response to the pandemic shows the need to strengthen national public health systems as a whole in the short, medium and long terms, and, at the global level, to promote an integrated health system model based on continuity of care across various levels of health-service delivery.

In the light of all of this, Spain intends to face future epidemiological outbreaks at the domestic level with enhanced primary care and strengthened public health through a COVID-19 preparation and response plan that will incorporate, among other things, strategic reserves of critical supplies, contingency planning to reactivate standby health resources, and a guide for control spikes, outbreaks and possible second wave. Moreover, at the international level, Spain will enhance and support global collaboration based on the guiding principles of multilateralism and solidarity.

Annex 60**Statement by the Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the United Nations**

[Original: French]

Switzerland wishes to thank Germany for having organized this debate and the speakers for their contributions. Switzerland welcomes, in particular, the leadership shown by the Secretary-General in strengthening United Nations actions in response to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and mobilizing Member States as part of a concerted and effective global response.

This pandemic, while primarily a health crisis, has triggered an economic and social crisis without precedent. It constitutes a challenge to human security and to international peace and security. It is therefore imperative to mitigate the security risks. A preventative approach that incorporates respect for human rights will be crucial to any emergency response and medium- or long-term strategy to combat the effects of the pandemic.

Switzerland wishes to highlight three important action areas for the Council's response to the pandemic.

First of all, the impact of the spread of the coronavirus exacerbates the many situations of armed conflict and other forms of violence on the Council's agenda. It is imperative to prevent the loss of gains made in peace processes. The stalled implementation of the agreement on South Sudan, linked to the pandemic, is, for example, creating a security vacuum that several armed groups are exploiting. In Yemen, United Nations mediation and access to vulnerable populations are becoming even more difficult. It is crucial that weapons be laid down and the pandemic response prioritized. Switzerland therefore welcomes resolution 2532 (2020), finally adopted by the Security Council yesterday, which calls for the cessation of hostilities in all the situations on its agenda and supports the efforts of the Secretary-General.

Secondly, Switzerland urges all parties to armed conflict to ensure that humanitarian actors have swift, unimpeded and sustainable access to affected populations. The humanitarian pause the Council is currently calling for should allow access for humanitarian assistance. In Syria, for example, COVID-19 underscores the urgent need to use all possible means to reach those in need. It is crucial that the cross-border mechanism for humanitarian assistance be extended and strengthened with the inclusion of Al-Yarubiyah border crossing. Given the pandemic's negative impact on the implementation of its priorities, the Council should ensure rigorous monitoring of its commitments on the protection of civilians, including women and children. Moreover, the Council and all Member States must implement resolution 2286 (2016) to protect medical assistance. It is unacceptable that attacks against patients, hospitals and medical personnel are on the rise amid a pandemic.

Thirdly, the work of the specialized agencies of the United Nations is crucial in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic and its effects. Civil society operational expertise is also important. The World Health Organization plays a central role in coordinating the United Nations response to the pandemic and in implementing the International Health Regulations, including through the dissemination of verified information. Disinformation and hate speech could heighten risks to peace and security. Switzerland therefore encourages all States to ensure that reliable information on the pandemic is swiftly made available.

In resolution 74/270, introduced by Switzerland and other Member States, the General Assembly called on 2 April — a full three months ago — for global

solidarity in the fight against COVID-19. We note with satisfaction that the Council made reference to that resolution in the resolution it adopted yesterday.

As shown by the developments in the situations on the Council's agenda over recent months, the COVID-19 pandemic both drives and feeds on violence and instability. Switzerland therefore welcomes the fact that the Council has recognized the linkages between COVID-19 and international peace and security, and that it has stepped up its commitment to responding to the pandemic. This sends an important political signal. Switzerland urges the Council and the international community to implement that resolution in the various contexts on its agenda.

Annex 61**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Turkey to the United Nations, Feridun Hadi Sinirlioğlu**

The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is a challenge that might define this era. What started as a public-health issue has quickly turned into a global crisis with severe social, economic, political and security implications. It could be the first truly global phenomenon underwritten by the very dynamics of globalization. It might also bring about the end of globalization as we know it. We are still in the middle of unfolding events and must find our way through this crisis.

Meanwhile, in the face of this unprecedented challenge, we must first ensure that the immediate humanitarian crisis is addressed. An effective and coordinated international response is urgently needed. This must be followed by a collective and rigorous effort to protect the achievements of the law-based multilateral system and revive our faith in multilateralism.

The immediate problems are manifold. On the one hand, in many parts of the world, especially in the least developed countries, diagnostic tests and basic equipment are urgently needed to fight against the spread of the virus and ensure effective medical responses.

We must step up our efforts to make sure that no one is left behind.

The pandemic is also a major disruptive event for the global economy. The efforts to contain the virus save lives but restrict economic activity. There has already been a huge fall in global trade, and more change is looming on the horizon. The heavy economic toll might push 70 to 100 million people into extreme poverty.

While even the healthiest economies require big bailout plans from Governments, least developed countries and developing countries are being hit hardest by the pandemic. They are facing an unprecedented health and economic crisis, with potentially extreme economic, social and sustainable development consequences that may reverse decades of progress in development and further jeopardize efforts to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Therefore, the international community urgently needs to unlock ambitious support to developing countries to prevent loss of life, contain the risk of aftershocks and invest in sustainable recovery.

The pandemic also presents enormous challenges for fragile States and conflict regions. Terrorist organizations are seeking ways to fill in any vacuums and create favourable conditions to spread instability. Peace operations and troop rotations are already being hampered by the outbreak, and mediation and facilitation efforts are stalled due to restrictions on movement. It is essential that we place some of our focus on building resilience and promoting good governance in vulnerable regions and countries.

The pandemic has also given rise to a new wave of hate speech and misinformation, causing scapegoating, stigmatization, discrimination and xenophobic nationalism.

While violence against women and girls is rising globally, disruptions to employment opportunities in critical health, humanitarian and development programmes have devastating consequences, especially for women and girls.

We must also remember that COVID-19 has exacerbated the tragedy of displaced people. They now face new waves of suffering due to border closures and limited access to health-care services.

It is true that the pandemic has brought to the surface the shortcomings of the existing system for international cooperation and coordination. But the need for effective multilateralism has also become more evident than ever. We must remember that no country is safe until all are safe. A lack of trust in multilateralism is on the rise because there is a lack of cooperation and solidarity among nations.

At such a critical juncture in world history, what we do today will define tomorrow. We will either try to confine ourselves within our borders and watch the unravelling of what humankind has achieved, with pain and blood, over the past century, or we will prevail together through greater cooperation and solidarity. The COVID-19 crisis is now a litmus test for global cooperation and solidarity, and is a stark reminder that we cannot recover from the current crisis unless we address our existing vulnerabilities. We must keep multilateralism alive. We cannot let it be another casualty of COVID-19.

Annex 62**Statement by the Permanent Mission of Ukraine to the United Nations**

We welcome this discussion on the linkages between pandemics and security. With the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic on the ascending curve, today's debate may be long overdue but nevertheless remains extremely timely.

For one thing, the world is only beginning to come to grips with the new reality, and there is no clear indication what the post-COVID-19 political, economic and security landscape will look like. The implications are numerous, and we have barely started to scratch the surface.

The scope of the pandemic's humanitarian impact, although profound, is yet to be calculated properly and in full. Most likely, any current estimates and assessments are on the conservative side of the spectrum and will have to be readjusted in future.

The immediate economic fallout is already visible, with many industries and businesses, small and large alike, around the globe feeling the pain and balancing on the brink. The long-term effects are utterly unclear, and recovery prospects still very much a guessing game. Moreover, a huge question mark hangs over current development plans and expectations.

The social consequences are only starting to take shape, and there is no definite answer as to how interactions within societies and between societies and States will evolve. It leads us to wonder what kind of social progress we can count on achieving under these circumstances, and how the primacy of human rights will be upheld.

The dynamics of interaction between and among States in the international arena are also being determined to a large degree by how each State views the COVID-19 challenge and endeavours to deal with it. Even though there have been some remarkable examples of international collaboration with States trying to help each other individually and collectively, we have also witnessed examples of power competition and attempts to manipulate the current health crisis in pursuit of political and economic gains.

Then there is the potential undermining of the operational capabilities of regular armed forces in the light of the spread of COVID-19. As we all know, United Nations peacekeeping operations had to adopt to the new reality and make significant adjustments in their day-to-day functioning.

Nevertheless, there is still no consensus as to how much pandemics constitute an immediate threat to international peace and security. Be that as it may, there is hardly anyone who would sincerely question the existence of a correlation between severe health crises and a deterioration of the security environment. Even though a health crisis per se may not necessarily trigger a security crisis, in any security crisis it would definitely be an exacerbating factor, complicating conflict-resolution efforts.

That point is illustrated rather vividly by the most recent example of the Secretary-General's appeal for a global ceasefire resulting in an almost universal expression of support, which was not reciprocated by actual developments on the ground.

Moreover, actors bent on escalating and exploiting the current crisis did exactly that. The monitoring activities of international organizations in conflict zones have been significantly, and sometimes critically, impaired by various restrictions on freedom of movement and on access to areas of hostilities or to civilian population. The delivery of humanitarian assistance, which had never been

easy, has in many instances been deliberately jeopardized even further, with new barriers and impediments denying access for humanitarian actors to those in need.

In that regard, the Council's adoption of resolution 2532 (2020), on COVID-19, includes, in paragraph 2, a clear and unequivocal call for parties to armed conflicts "to engage immediately in a durable humanitarian pause" for 90 days to facilitate the delivery of humanitarian aid is a welcome and long-awaited development.

This document has been long in coming. We recognize the efforts of the primary drafters and other Council members, whose determination proved to be a decisive factor behind the ultimate success of the collective endeavour that was put in motion by Estonia as early as March.

As one of the first States to express support for the Secretary-General's appeal for a global ceasefire, Ukraine is also heartened to see the Security Council demanding "a general and immediate cessation of hostilities in all situations on its agenda".

Our expectation is that one well-known non-elected Council member will finally start walking the walk, as opposed to just talking the talk, and that the relevant provisions of the Minsk agreements pertaining to establishing a ceasefire in Donbas will be implemented at long last.

Instead of expending energy under the false pretence of caring for those in need via manipulative initiatives aimed at undermining sanction regimes established in response to gross violations of international law and human rights, that non-elected Council member would do well to abandon its adventurist, extreme nationalist and aggressive policies against other countries, thus removing the core reason for the imposed sanctions.

One of the lessons drawn from the COVID-19 experience is that the lack of a single unified multilateral response to a crisis only exacerbates the situation. What is important to remember, however, is that piling the blame on multilateralism and international institutions for the lack of such a response, in addition to being simplistic, is also misleading. We should never forget that the ultimate power lies with sovereign States, and not with international civil servants.

When international institutions fail, it is a sign of not only a lack of transparency, accountability or effectiveness on the part of respective secretariats, but also of a lack of leadership, direction and control that should be coming from Member States.

To paraphrase a famous statement by Georges Clemenceau about war and soldiers, we can definitely say that international crises are too important to be left to professional international bureaucrats. It means that States' leadership and engagement are indispensable for achieving genuine international cooperation. Formulating a joint strategy, following up with coordinated efforts and concrete steps at both national and international levels, ensuring fair burden-sharing and engaging in regular and full exchanges of information are all necessary elements of proper international cooperation.

The recent experience should have taught us that, in an interconnected world, unrestrained competition for limited resources, attempts to hoard up medicines and equipment, and disruptions to supply chains only deepen crises, heighten tensions and divert time and resources from formulating a truly global response. Without such a response, stopping the spread of the virus in time, preserving the ability of national health-care systems to deal with the medical fallout, ensuring the continuity of international travel and cross-border transportation or averting a global economic crisis become hardly attainable goals.

The jury may still be out on whether the current COVID-19 pandemic constitutes a threat to international peace and security. However, not many other events can reshape and shake up people's lives on a global scale. The world would be wise to realize that the impact and consequences of a global pandemic is akin to a world war or a natural disaster of biblical proportions.

From that perspective, a virus that can wipe out a large proportion of humankind, cause severe fluctuations of the global economy, overwhelm national health-care systems, disrupt the provision of services by national Governments, sow the seeds for civil unrest and aggravate existing security challenges definitely deserves attention as a potential threat to international peace and security.

It is up to us to learn the lessons from our response to COVID-19, draw the necessary conclusions and start preparing for the next challenge of this kind, which will come. Our level of preparedness will determine whether humankind will be facing an existential challenge, with all its related consequences, or whether the emergence of a new deadly virus can be effectively contained and curtailed.

Annex 63

Statement by the Permanent Representative of the United Arab Emirates to the United Nations, Lana Nusseibeh

The United Arab Emirates would like to thank Germany for organizing today's open debate and maintaining the Security Council's focus on the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. We would also like to thank the briefers for their presentations.

The United Arab Emirates has long viewed health and security as part of a nexus, with one affecting the other, and both requiring close multilateral attention and cooperation. That understanding has informed our country's international response to COVID-19, including our endorsement of the Secretary-General's call for a global ceasefire, our contributions to the World Health Organization and the World Food Programme, and the bilateral delivery of more than 1,000 metric tons of medical supplies to over 70 countries, including many on the Security Council's agenda. That understanding is also reflected in our domestic action and our commitment to transparency in public data and free testing and treatment for citizens, residents and visitors alike. We believe in the adage that no one is safe until everyone is safe.

As COVID-19 has underscored, an effective pandemic response requires the simultaneous, coordinated mobilization of the Organization's development, humanitarian and security pillars. In the context of the Security Council's work, moving beyond mere recognition of the linkages between health and security requires new and careful thinking. However, the Council can and must play its part.

The consequences of the pandemic may bear on the Security Council's mandate, especially for countries on its agenda. Those effects could include the loss of humanitarian access, the displacement and large movements of people, increased recruitment among armed groups, increased violence as a result of induced poverty and the collapse of institutions, and limitations on the ability of peace operations to fulfil their mandate, ultimately endangering the maintenance of international peace and security.

Today we would like to share four initial reflections on how the Security Council could substantively respond to pandemics.

First, we welcome the adoption of resolution 2532 (2020), which calls for a general and immediate cessation of hostilities in all situations on its agenda and a durable humanitarian pause. The United Arab Emirates was one of the first countries to endorse the Secretary-General's global appeal because we believe that ceasefires have the potential to reduce the spread and toll of the disease, especially by improving humanitarian situations, which are otherwise highly conducive environments for contagion and fatalities. We hope that resolution 2532 (2020) is a turning point and sets a precedent for future Council action on pandemics.

Secondly, we echo the resolution's recognition of the important role that peacekeeping missions, in close coordination with host countries, can play in responding to health crises. We note the precedent established during the Ebola response, where peacekeeping missions lent vital support to medical and humanitarian operations in West Africa. Furthermore, peacekeeping staff must be protected from pandemics and, more important, must not contribute to their spread. We welcome the steps taken in that regard and highlight, as one potential solution, the use of the Organization's medical commodities stockpiles for peacekeeping and other staff found in United Nations supply depots, thus allowing for quick, needs-based deployment around the globe.

Thirdly, COVID-19 has exposed the fact that pandemics create conditions for increased sexual and gender-based violence, more reason for the Council to be

systematically briefed on gender-mainstreaming on the issues under its consideration and to ensure that missions have the appropriate staff and resources to deliver on strong mandates related to gender and sexual and gender-based violence. It is also incumbent upon Member States in the General Assembly, notably the Fifth Committee, to ensure that budgets related to gender and sexual and gender-based violence are protected and to drive progress through mandatory markers and other accountability tools.

Fourthly, given the crucial importance of humanitarian access in crisis situations, we see a potential role for the Council in addressing closed borders and ports during pandemics. Such efforts would have to be highly sensitive and must not infringe upon the rights and responsibilities of Member States to regulate the potential spread of disease, but the Council can be in a position encourage the flow of essential medical and humanitarian supplies to serve those most in need.

We hope that today's open debate will be one of many discussions on how the Security Council can operationalize the health-security nexus. COVID-19 has shown us that we must take united action in order to protect global health and security as critical public goods.
