



Security Council

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Letter dated 14 August 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 enclose herewith a copy of the briefings provided by the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. António Guterres; His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon; Ms. Sarah Cliffe, Director, Center on International Cooperation, New York University; as well as the statements delivered by Her Excellency Mrs. Retno Lestari Priansari Marsudi, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Indonesia; His Excellency Mr. Pham Binh Minh, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Viet Nam; His Excellency Mr. Urmas Reinsalu, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Estonia; Her Excellency Ms. Naledi Pandor, Minister for International Relations and Cooperation of South Africa; His Excellency Mr. Niels Annen, Minister of State, German Federal Foreign Office; and by the representatives of Belgium, China, the Dominican Republic, France, the Niger, the Russian Federation, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Tunisia, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America, in connection with the video-teleconference on “Peacebuilding and sustaining peace: Pandemics and the challenges of sustaining peace”, convened on Wednesday, 12 August 2020.

In accordance with the understanding reached among Council members for that video-teleconference, the following delegations and entities submitted written statements, copies of which are also enclosed: Australia, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Denmark, Ecuador, El Salvador, the European Union, Georgia, Guatemala, India, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Liechtenstein, Malta, Mexico, Morocco, the Netherlands, Nigeria, the Peacebuilding Commission, the Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, the Republic of Korea, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland, Thailand and the United Arab Emirates.

Pursuant to the procedure set out in the letter dated 2 April 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 briefing and statements will be issued as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Dian Triansyah **Djani**
President of the Security Council



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

Let me begin by thanking the Indonesian presidency for convening this open debate on pandemics and the challenges of sustaining peace.

The concept of sustaining peace is essentially about positive peace, as opposed to simply ending wars. In other words, it is the idea that the international community accompanies a country well beyond the point of simply putting down guns, to the point where people feel protected and represented — where trust and the social fabric are going in the right direction, and not in the wrong direction. But the unprecedented challenges from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) clearly risk pushing things in the wrong direction.

As I highlighted in previous briefings to the Security Council, the COVID-19 pandemic has devastated communities and economies throughout the world, affecting the poorest and most vulnerable the most. The pandemic not only threatens hard-won development and peacebuilding gains, but also risks exacerbating conflicts or fomenting new ones. Questions are growing about the effectiveness of health systems and social services, trust in institutions and systems of governance. All of this means that our commitment to sustaining peace is more urgent than ever.

The challenges of this pandemic underscore, as never before, the imperative of coherent, multidimensional and cross-pillar responses reflecting the integrated logic of the Sustainable Development Goals. We know that conflict-sensitive and coherent preventative approaches that help address the health and humanitarian crisis will help deliver sustainable peace. But as we scan the horizon, I see three key dangers.

The first is the erosion of public trust. Pandemics can undermine faith in Governments and public institutions. The perception that authorities are mishandling the crisis, not being transparent or favouring political allies can lead to public disillusionment in Government and its institutions.

The second is the destabilization of the global economic order. I am particularly concerned about the effects of heightened socioeconomic vulnerabilities, fuelled by an unprecedented global economic crisis. Without concerted action, inequalities, global poverty and the potential for instability and violence could grow for years.

The third is the weakening of the social fabric — represented in, for example, the narrowing of civic space and the closing of avenues for democratic process and legitimate expression of grievances. We have seen many peaceful protests and, in a number of countries, COVID-19 has been an excuse for harsh crackdowns and a spike in State repression. At least 23 countries have postponed national elections or referendums, and almost twice as many have postponed subnational votes.

Despite challenges, the pandemic also creates opportunities for peace. The appeal for a global ceasefire earlier this year prompted positive responses from Governments and non-State actors across the globe. A number of conflict parties took steps to de-escalate and stop fighting. Yet, regrettably, in many instances, the pandemic did not move parties to suspend hostilities or agree to a permanent ceasefire.

Last month's adoption of resolution 2532 (2020), which demanded a general and immediate cessation of hostilities in all situations on the Council's agenda, is a step in the right direction, but much more is needed to translate early gains into concrete action on the ground.

The Council also plays an important role in bringing its influence to bear for an investment in prevention. In the current context that means several things.

First, our responses to the pandemic must be conflict-sensitive, starting with a multidimensional analysis that looks at how the pandemic affects underlying risks that drive conflict.

Secondly, inclusion is critical in the design of humanitarian and development responses to pandemics. Dialogue, especially with communities and marginalized groups, helps rebuild trust and enhance social cohesion. In particular, we must find avenues for far stronger engagement with women's groups, who play such a pivotal role in securing peace at the community level. They are also critical rebuilders of trust, which is often absent in fragile and fractured communities, and without which public-health messaging and behavioural change to slow the pandemic simply do not take root. Young people are also essential to peacebuilding solutions.

Thirdly, sustaining peace requires an integrated and coherent approach through strong collaboration among humanitarian, development and peace actors. For example, to sustain peace, we need to ensure that humanitarian challenges are fully addressed in a comprehensive way. Lebanon is a case in point.

We also need to build ever-stronger partnerships with Governments, regional and subregional organizations, the private sector and civil society actors.

And we must underscore the importance of ensuring that international financial institutions — the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and others — integrate sustaining peace as a priority and as a core element of COVID-19 recovery strategies and building back better.

The Council's ongoing collaboration with the Peacebuilding Commission is critical. Their complementary efforts can help marshal a collaborative response to the peacebuilding impact of the pandemic, drawing on lessons from previous health crises, such as the Ebola virus disease outbreak.

My report forthcoming next month — a key input to the 2020 review of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture — highlights substantial progress in fostering a systemic focus on prevention and a multidimensional approach to peace, in closer alignment with the development and human rights pillars and humanitarian actors.

Fourthly, we need to be flexible and tailor our approach to peacebuilding needs in the context of the pandemic. The Peacebuilding Fund has swiftly adjusted its work on the ground and identified new areas of support in response to COVID-19, seeking ways to shore up relations among communities, counter hate speech, reduce stigmatization and strengthen inclusion.

Unfortunately, demand for the Fund continues to outpace supply. We hope to approve \$210 million in projects this year, but that is still far short of the quantum leap I have called for here in the Council and elsewhere.

With a global spike in violence against women and girls, the Spotlight Initiative has repurposed some \$20 million towards the COVID-19 response, much of this in fragile, conflict-affected or humanitarian settings. But this is only a fraction of what is needed to tackle what has been termed a shadow pandemic. Gender-based violence is a pervasive form of violence and insecurity that undermines our best efforts to build sustainable peace.

I am heartened by some countries' willingness to think about how we can achieve adequate and predictable financing for peacebuilding, which is the best defence against conflict, and build a more equal and sustainable future for all. My report in September will make suggestions to that end.

COVID-19 is a human tragedy, but we can mitigate the impacts by the choices we make. More than ever, multidimensional, coordinated and conflict-sensitive responses and whole-of-society approaches are crucial. They are key to ensuring that peacebuilding and sustaining peace initiatives go hand-in-hand with inclusive and sustainable development, anchored in the protection and promotion of human rights, gender equality and the commitment to leaving no one behind.

The world is looking to all leaders, including the Security Council, to address this epic crisis in ways that make a concrete, meaningful and positive contribution to the lives of people. It is our responsibility to deliver.

Annex 2

Statement by His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon

It is my honour to deliver these remarks at this high-level open debate of the Security Council on “Pandemics and the challenges of sustaining peace.”

I take this opportunity to express my sincere appreciation to Her Excellency Mrs. Retno Lestari Priansari Marsudi, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, for inviting me to take part in this important briefing. My special gratitude also goes to today’s briefers, Secretary-General António Guterres and New York University Center on International Cooperation Director Sarah Cliffe.

The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has triggered unprecedented global turmoil over the past six months. This includes over 735,000 deaths and staggering socioeconomic disruption. It is truly astonishing that, in response to this pandemic, the world has placed billions of people under lockdown, closed international borders, suspended trade and migration and temporarily shut down a whole variety of industries — but has not managed to suspend armed conflicts.

I welcome the unanimous adoption of resolution 2532 (2020), which called for a humanitarian ceasefire for 90 days around the world. My fellow Elders and I strongly supported this initiative by Secretary-General Guterres. However, valuable months were wasted in arguments over the details of the text. That has weakened the message that the Security Council needs to send to all warring parties: now is the time to confront our common enemy.

The delayed decision by the Council further aggravated the current volatile global security situations in the midst of the global fight against COVID-19. The impact of COVID-19 on conflict-affected settings has been much worse than initially thought. This is true not only in terms of the immediate health and humanitarian ramifications, but also in the areas of social cohesion, governance and the rule of law. Global solidarity has been loosened, while multilateralism has been under threat. This jeopardizes ongoing international efforts to sustain peace, or may even cause a reversal in hard-won peace and security gains to date.

Meanwhile, as the pandemic places States under huge pressure, some see opportunities to ramp up attacks — from the surge in violence by Boko Haram and other militant groups in Nigeria, to growing mob violence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, to murders by cartels in Mexico. Some groups use health care itself as a weapon, and civilian suffering as a tool. In recent years in Syria and Yemen, we have seen hospitals repeatedly bombed, and in these countries and others, we have seen hunger deployed as a weapon of war.

Unfortunately, we are still in the early stages of this pandemic. Beyond the direct health effects, the economic impacts will be both long-lasting and severe, with ripple effects for many fragile and conflict-affected States. For example, we already see Lebanon’s political and economic crisis being compounded by the economic effects on COVID-19 on tourism and trade, while Iraq’s budget is stretched thin because of the collapse in oil prices. I take this opportunity to extend my deepest condolences to the families and the people of Lebanon for the tragic loss of lives and terrible destruction caused by the recent explosion of chemicals.

The World Food Programme has warned of the rising risk of famines in conflict zones. For instance, in the Sahel, there are alarming estimates that more than 50 million more people will face a food crisis because of the combination of conflict and COVID-19. The humanitarian impact is simply appalling. But some will find ways to benefit; militant groups can recruit more easily when young people are desperate for any source of livelihood.

And with more than 1.5 billion children missing school during lockdowns around the world, Save the Children has warned that 10 million kids may never return to school. This tragedy of lost opportunities will increase the scope for disaffection and radicalization in fragile societies.

With these stark realities in mind, today's debate is a timely opportunity to explore various ideas on how to dynamically respond to the current crisis and bolster international efforts to sustain peace in the post-COVID-19 era.

In 2016, the Security Council and the General Assembly adopted historic joint resolutions on peacebuilding (resolution 2282 (2016) and General Assembly resolution 70/262), which, together with the Goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, serve as the United Nations blueprint in assisting conflict-affected countries through peacebuilding efforts. The key messages from these landmark resolutions centre on the importance of prioritizing prevention, addressing the root causes of conflict and devising long-term, guiding strategies. This has offered an opportunity to increase the United Nations focus on preventing conflicts so that the systemic causes of conflicts, rather than just the symptoms, are holistically addressed. I believe these lessons learned can also be applied to our current response to COVID-19.

United Nations responses to the current pandemic should be in line with conflict sensitivity, which enables us to address patterns of systematic exclusion and the other root causes of conflicts. In addition, one of the major peacebuilding goals at the moment should be to strengthen the socioeconomic capacities of local communities and populations.

I commend Secretary-General António Guterres for his leadership in maintaining momentum on sustaining peace, even during the pandemic. I also strongly support his plan to emphasize the global responsibility to build back better by strengthening health systems, eradicating extreme poverty, reducing inequalities and investing in resilient societies.

The experience of this crisis should also spur us to change our priorities and our understandings of what threats and values really matter. We need to address the inequalities in our own societies and the gaps in social protection. We see that this virus has flourished disproportionately among marginalized communities, such as migrants without access to decent health care or those working low-wage jobs — whether in the global South or in the richest countries in the world. In this regard, this experience must remind us that inclusive, just, peaceful societies — as envisaged by Sustainable Development Goal 16 — are the best way to deliver public health.

This pandemic also demonstrates the genuine utility of sustaining peace and proves the benefits of enhancing the humanitarian-development-peace nexus. The COVID-19 crisis may be limiting United Nations peacebuilding operations. However, it is also serving as an opportunity to promote greater discussions and activities on emerging threats such as pandemics, inequality and climate change in the peacebuilding process. In that regard, I am confident that the 2020 review on the United Nations peacebuilding architecture will assess the achievements made since 2015 and suggest ways to prevent the current global health crisis from reversing the hard-won peace gains.

The pandemic has also shown that the United Nations must work more effectively with various partners, including regional organizations, international financial institutions, the private sector and civil society. The Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) is well positioned to help synergize such multi-stakeholder partnerships by making full use of its distinctive convening power. Building on its work in support of West African countries during the 2014 Ebola outbreak, when

I was Secretary-General, it should be encouraged to better fulfil its role in a few key areas.

These include raising awareness of country-specific situations, bringing about integrated support and allowing United Nations actors to carve out political space and identify entry points for peacebuilding with an in-depth understanding of the operating contexts and priorities of specific countries.

I welcome the PBC's work to promote women and youth in the peacebuilding process, proving how a more inclusive, whole-of-society approach will ultimately yield better outcomes. An increased focus on the role of regional organizations in providing an effective forum for the prevention, early detection and response to potential conflicts is also important moving forward.

There are also opportunities to make peacebuilding more inclusive by using digital technologies to bring together a much wider range of people — young people, women, people from remote areas or marginalized communities who might not be able to travel to traditional peace conferences. But this will work only if we can urgently address the digital divide, which is now ever-more important as a result of pandemic-induced lockdowns.

Even during the COVID-19 crisis, the ideals of sustaining peace and the underlying spirit of the twin resolutions — which empowers the crucial role of local communities, women and young people — should be further built upon.

Indeed, I believe that the United Nations and its Member States have a generational opportunity to use this concept to help build back better, further catalyse greater inclusivity and steer humanity and our planet towards a more peaceful and sustainable and future. The United Nations must elevate its efforts to harness this pandemic as a gateway to a brighter world.

Annex 3

Statement by the Director of the Center on International Cooperation, New York University, Sarah Cliffe

It is an honour to participate in this meeting.

I will not take up time going over the tragic impacts of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) in terms of human suffering or the immediate effects in countries on the agenda of the Security Council, with which I know all members are very familiar. Rather, I will focus on two main questions: how will the second-generation impacts of the pandemic likely affect conflict? What opportunities for peacebuilding may be present? I will cover five quick points under each question.

On the impacts, I think that we have to accept that the pandemic has exposed fragility in all countries, in our health systems and our economic, social and political fabric. Some of the key dynamics that affect conflict risk are the following.

The first is the still-growing economic shock and rising inequality. This shock is the deepest since the Second World War and the broadest since 1870. The projections for 2020 are continually worsening, and I think that we know now that we will be at not a 2 per cent but at a 5-6 per cent global contraction. By coincidence, five percentage points is the level at which we have seen in research major increases, around 50 per cent, in conflict risk. The impact is also exacerbating inequality between different groups, a factor that we also know increases conflict.

Secondly, there are practical problems in convening peace processes and elections. Physical meetings are important for trust and confidence-building: the intra-Afghan negotiations, for example, have faced difficulties due to COVID-19 conditions. Disputed elections are a trigger for conflict, and the pandemic makes disputes more likely because of difficulties in access and monitoring. Postponing elections is sometimes the only responsible action to take, but that will mean rising pressure for elections in late 2020 or 2021, when we are now likely to see double the number of countries holding elections from what was originally scheduled. In some countries, the pandemic is also seen as a pretext to postpone elections, shrink civic space and adopt increasingly authoritarian approaches.

Thirdly, concerning food insecurity, we already face a global hunger crisis; but at present that is because people do not have income to buy food, not because they cannot get food. However, we are seeing local spikes in food prices in conflict zones in many countries, such as Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Syria and Yemen. Food prices are the typical risk to watch, historically, for conflict levels.

Fourthly, as regards trends in remittances, trade and migration, remittances are projected by the World Bank to decline by \$110 billion this year, or equivalent to more than two thirds of the entire global official development assistance budget. Within the 10 countries that depend most on remittance inflows are eight that are post-conflict or conflict-affected and three that are still on the agenda of the Security Council — Haiti, Somalia and South Sudan. Trade and migration issues post-COVID also have the potential for conflict between countries.

Fifthly, I turn to the issue of inequality in access to public-health goods. Developing countries' difficulty in procuring personal protective equipment, test kits, medicines and equipment has already widened the gap in capacity to suppress COVID-19 and has damaged trust. This gap is set to widen further when vaccines are found. Current dynamics over vaccine development see developed countries outbidding each other in advance orders, with little capacity left for the developing world.

These five major drivers of conflict may all increase in the months to come. Many of them are universal, and indeed we have seen tensions rise in rich countries. But they hit disproportionately on already conflict-affected countries.

Let me turn to positive opportunities for peacebuilding.

My first point is on trust and multilateral action. We are seeing in opinion polls in all regions unprecedented demand for more international collective action. In effect, people have been brutally reminded of what we have Governments and international cooperation for — that without them there are some forms of crisis that cannot be solved by any one individual or country alone. However, trust bubbles typically last less than a year if no action is taken to sustain them; so this is an opportunity, but it is a time-limited one.

My second point concerns the call for ceasefires issued by the Secretary-General and supported in resolution 2532 (2020). There is still an opportunity to strengthen implementation, because in many countries COVID-19 is far from being under control and humanitarian needs are increasing. The Council could engage more closely with regional and subregional bodies such as the African Union and the regional economic commissions to amplify the call. The Council could also encourage the Secretary-General to report on ceasefire openings and implementation, in line with resolution 2532 (2020).

Thirdly, there is an opportunity to use a sustaining peace lens from early in the COVID-19 response. The initial health crisis is now an economic crisis, and without careful action can become a political and security crisis. The United Nations can help by linking its responses across humanitarian, development and peacebuilding areas and by building local capacities, State-citizen trust and a whole-of-society response to the pandemic. By embracing conflict-sensitive approaches that are sovereignty-supporting, the United Nations can also help Governments address risks before they escalate — for example, through subnational monitoring of food prices, serious investment to allow elections to proceed safely and reducing inequalities or corruption in the COVID-19 response. Nationally led prevention is also a promising area for greater alignment with the international financial institutions.

Fourthly, regarding investment in universal health and equal access to vaccines, let me say that this is an international and not simply a domestic concern, because the pandemic has taught us that no one is safe until everyone is safe. Domestically, we need to embrace the message that even those well-known revolutionaries at *The Financial Times* have been writing — that this needs to be paid for by higher taxes from those who have reaped a larger share of recent gains. Internationally, developed countries need to sustain and increase aid — which is still a drop in the bucket compared to domestic stimulus packages — and ensure global access to vaccine and treatment technology.

Why raise some of these socioeconomic issues in the Security Council? This is my fifth and last point: these problems may become international threats to peace and security if they are not addressed. The way to get them addressed, to raise their profile, is to raise them in political and security as well as developmental terms. The Council often refers to issues such as pandemics as non-traditional issues: there has, of course, been well-merited resistance to securitizing development. But these issues are not really non-traditional: if one were to ask the world's military agencies, most of them have planned for years for the impact of pandemics, extreme natural disasters and so forth, as potential security risks. Analysing the risk does not, of course, mean that the Council should try to direct health or economic activities. But this is an example of an extreme public health and economic shock that deserves to qualify as a peacebuilding risk. Let the Security Council raise its voice not to "securitize" the issue, but precisely so that it does not become an international peace and security disaster.

Annex 4**Statement by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Indonesia,
Retno Lestari Priansari Marsudi**

This pandemic is having profound impacts on international peace and security. It has increased the fragility of conflict-affected countries, and some of them are very close to falling back into crisis.

Many unresolved conflict drivers may add to the heightening of tensions, from inequalities to weak governance, from rampant poverty to poor health infrastructures, and from collapsing economies to food shortages. This unprecedented disruption may reverse years of peacebuilding efforts.

At the same time, the pandemic complicates the work of United Nations peacekeepers and mediation efforts on the ground. Peace processes may run off the rails. Since February, at least 69 countries have decided to postpone their elections, some of which are a critical part of a peace process. All in all, tasks relating to peacebuilding and sustaining peace have become even more daunting.

With that in mind, allow me to underline three important points.

First, sustaining peace must be a part of our comprehensive response to this pandemic. It is imperative for us to continue supporting the efforts of countries in conflict to take a holistic approach to addressing the interlinkages between the health crisis and its implications, which range from socioeconomic to peace-and-security-related.

Our support should focus on strengthening the institutional capacities and resources of conflict-affected countries. It should also address unequal access to public-health goods and coronavirus disease (COVID-19) treatments in conflict-affected countries. Competition in the acquisition of a COVID-19 vaccine, once it exists, would only leave them further behind.

Moreover, advancing the sustaining peace agenda requires the inclusive participation of local stakeholders. They have a better understanding of the risks of conflict that must be addressed.

A conducive international enabling environment is also important to sustain peace during this pandemic, including in my region, South-East Asia. For that reason, the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations issued a joint statement on 8 August that underlined the importance of the principles embedded in the Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality in South-East Asia and the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia to the maintenance of peace and stability in the region amid the current geopolitical dynamics.

Secondly, sustaining peace requires synergy between the work of all entities of the United Nations system. The United Nations system can no longer work on the basis of a silo approach. It must respond in a coherent manner by harnessing the strengths of its various organs. The United Nations should also integrate a conflict-sensitive approach into its pandemic response.

The Security Council must play its role to ensure the full implementation of resolution 2532 (2020). A general cessation of hostilities and a humanitarian pause would enable the timely delivery of aid and COVID-19 treatments to civilians caught in conflict.

As those operating directly on the ground, United Nations peacekeeping operations have the capacity to monitor risks of conflict that may be exacerbated by the pandemic, serving as part of an early-warning system.

Meanwhile, United Nations agencies, funds and programmes have the technical capacities necessary to address specific conflict drivers during the pandemic. The Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), as the lead United Nations body in sustaining peace, plays a vital role in coordinating responses across the principal organs of the United Nations and beyond, including regional organizations, international financial institutions and private sectors. The PBC must make use of its advisory role to develop a comprehensive United Nations strategy to deal with the long-term impacts of COVID-19. Our efforts to sustain peace during COVID-19 serve as a valuable input for the review of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture.

Thirdly, sustaining peace requires the smart use of resources. The latest report of the Secretary-General on peacebuilding and sustaining peace (S/2020/773) documented a decline in the share of the official development assistance budget dedicated to peacebuilding in conflict-affected countries. The majority of those countries are now faced with a hard choice between spending on health infrastructure or spending on peacebuilding. It is important, therefore, that we optimize the use of the limited resources at hand.

The partnership between the United Nations and international financial institutions is vital. At the same time, we need to continue thinking outside the box to explore innovative funding for peacebuilding, South-South and triangular cooperation and the involvement of philanthropists and private sectors.

The pandemic may aggravate some conflict dynamics, but I am an optimist, as history has taught us that crisis may also create an opening for peace. Let us use that momentum to better sustain peace.

Annex 5**Statement by the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Viet Nam, Pham Binh Minh**

It is a great pleasure to see you again, Madam President, albeit only virtually. I wish to thank you and the Indonesian presidency for having convened this meeting and for having invited the best briefers for this timely and important topic.

My special greetings go to Secretary-General Guterres and former Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon.

I am joining this meeting from Hanoi, Viet Nam — a country that has seen early success in controlling the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. A whole-of-government approach and strong and determined actions that leave no one behind have helped minimize casualties and impacts. Yet the recent re-emergence of the coronavirus in Viet Nam after three months is a stark reminder that no single country can win this battle unless and until everyone wins it.

Viet Nam has been enjoying peace, stability and long periods of growth for decades. But when the pandemic hit Viet Nam, it hit us hard. It put enormous strain on our health-care system and undermined our socioeconomic development. It disrupted every aspect of our lives in unprecedented and unthinkable ways. As such, we can only imagine the level of devastation this pandemic can bring to conflict-affected areas. The pandemic threatens to wipe out hard-won peacebuilding gains and worsen already complex and fragile situations, especially on the humanitarian front.

Such a multidimensional crisis demands multidimensional solutions. At a national level, a whole-of-Government approach is needed to tackle the pandemic from a disease-control perspective while strengthening institutions, building trust and fostering cooperation.

Special support must be given to the most vulnerable in conflicts and health crises, particularly the elderly, women and children, persons with disabilities, refugees and displaced persons.

Globally, a threat like COVID-19 can be curbed only by working together through multilateral efforts. Viet Nam welcomes the adoption of resolution 2532 (2020) and the Secretary-General's appeal for an immediate global ceasefire and facilitation of humanitarian activities.

We call for the lifting of sanctions that can undermine countries' capacity to respond to COVID-19.

We commend United Nations peace operations for continuing to fulfil their crucial mandates and support host countries, despite an increasingly challenging operating environment.

We urge the United Nations peacebuilding architecture — from Headquarters to field operations — to take coordinated actions and deliver as one. A whole-of-system approach is crucial for the United Nations to deliver its promises of sustainable peace and development.

Even the smallest actions to sustain peace during a pandemic can do a great deal to win the hearts and minds of local communities. I am particularly moved by the story of a resourceful Vietnamese woman peacekeeper in the Central African Republic who made face masks to help protect fellow peacekeepers and the local populations.

Lastly, the important role of regional organizations cannot be overstated. In Southeast Asia, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), of which Viet

Nam and Indonesia are proud members, is taking a whole-of-community approach in fighting the pandemic.

ASEAN leaders have reaffirmed their political commitment and taken coordinated measures to protect the health of our citizens, revitalize our economies and prevent the pandemic from undermining overall regional peace and stability.

No one can win this battle against the COVID-19 pandemic alone. Viet Nam continues to underscore the critical importance of international solidarity and strengthened cooperation in our response to COVID-19. We are strongly committed and call on all to join hands in this common endeavour.

Annex 6**Statement by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Estonia, Urmas Reinsalu**

I would like to congratulate Indonesia for assuming the Security Council presidency for the month of August and for convening this timely meeting today.

At the outset, please allow me to say few words about very worrying situation in Belarus. Sunday's presidential elections in Belarus cannot be considered free, fair and democratic. As a result, we are now witnessing unprecedented nationwide protests and the excessive use of force by the Government. Let me underline that violent crackdowns of peaceful protests is unacceptable. We call on Belarus to immediately end its political repression of the opposition, avoid any further violence and uphold respect for human rights.

Coming now to the matter of sustaining peace, I agree that the Security Council should not let new challenges to international peace and security slip under the radar. The focus of today's debate on the effects of pandemics, including the coronavirus disease (COVID-19), on conflict prevention, post-conflict recovery and peacebuilding is therefore very pertinent.

Conflict prevention ought to be at the core of the work of the United Nations. Estonia has been continuously advocating and contributing to prevention, post-conflict recovery and sustaining peace initiatives. We attach great emphasis to the role of the Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Fund. Estonia has been supporting the Fund's activities since 2013, and we see great added value in its work to ensure favourable conditions for local organizations to play the necessary role in sustaining peace.

We welcome the Peacebuilding Commission's renewed focus on conflict prevention, in addition to its more traditional post-conflict recovery analysis and activities. The Commission's advisory role vis-à-vis the Security Council is extremely important and is part of a holistic, cross-United Nations approach to conflict prevention and resolution. With that in mind, we see room for further strengthening the Commission's advisory role to the Council. Analysis provided by the PBC to the Council can play an important part of an informed decision-making process.

Undoubtedly, the COVID-19 pandemic puts an additional burden on already fragile situations. Economic, social and development pressures from the pandemic can essentially act as threat multipliers and exacerbate tensions. We have already seen that in the Sahel region, where armed and violent extremist groups are cynically abusing the situation for their own advancement. That, in turn, has multiplied the responsibilities of United Nations peacekeeping missions.

Estonia, together with other European Union countries, has pledged its continued commitment to United Nations peacekeeping during the pandemic. We urge others, in particular large troop and financial contributors, to follow suit. Peacekeeping missions require our continued uninterrupted support to remain willing and able to operate during the pandemic in order to deliver on their mandate, promote conflict resolution, support host States and protect civilian populations.

While it is important to discuss how United Nations peacekeeping missions could take more pandemic-sensitive approaches, that is only a part of the equation. For peacebuilding and sustaining-peace activities to be truly sustainable, we need political will and a strong sense of ownership from Governments and local communities. Peacebuilding processes need to be inclusive, taking into account the views of local peacebuilders, especially women and youth, who are often at the forefront of such activities and the ones most affected by conflict.

There are encouraging examples from Afghanistan, the Niger, Iraq and many other locations where the United Nations has successfully supported local peacebuilding capacities and initiatives, many of them led by women. That is especially important in the context of coronavirus, which has further exacerbated the vulnerability of the least protected in society. I would also like to stress that women's needs have to be factored into the response to the pandemic, and we need to ensure women's equal representation in all coronavirus response planning and decision-making processes.

In conclusion, the pandemic will most likely be with us for the foreseeable future. Regardless, we need to continue creative peacebuilding efforts, empowering local level initiatives and actively making sure that the pandemic is not being used as a pretext for restricting human rights, limiting freedom of movement or hampering the Organization's peacekeeping and peacebuilding efforts.

Annex 7**Statement by the Minister of International Relations and Cooperation of South Africa, Naledi Pandor**

At a time when the world is only beginning to understand the impact of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and efforts are being made in various international forums to deal with the multitude of adverse impacts, we thank Indonesia, through Minister Marsudi, for convening this Security Council debate to prioritize sustaining peace in the midst of pandemics.

We also welcome the important and insightful briefings by Secretary-General António Guterres, Former Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and Ms. Sarah Cliffe, which have lent substantial weight to our discussion.

South Africa has had to learn many lessons from the pandemic, such as the critical need for international collaboration and robust multilateral institutions, and the urgency of socioeconomic assistance in sectors that should be helping the most vulnerable. We support the Security Council addressing the possible link between the pandemic and peace and security.

This multilateral approach, which requires financial assistance, is of the utmost necessity given the intractable nature of global pandemics, in general, as well as the complex array of challenges that emerge from such a pervasive global phenomenon. It requires us to be aware of how deeply interconnected our world is and how solidarity and cooperation are becoming more and more indispensable.

South Africa is deeply concerned about the potential adverse effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on conflict situations that are currently the focus of the Council, particularly the potential to delay or reverse vital gains in peace and political processes. It is crucial for the international community to continue to support countries affected by conflict in order to preserve those gains and sustain investments in stabilization and peacebuilding.

Another impact area that will continue to require more attention is post-conflict reconstruction and sustaining the hard-won peace that has been achieved through the Council's efforts and those of the broader international community over many years. We must not lose sight of what it has taken to assist those in conflict situations to extricate themselves from violence, destruction and insecurity, and what the adverse effects of renewed instability and the re-emergence of conflict would entail. These may be especially pronounced due to the adverse humanitarian impact of coping with conflict amid a global pandemic.

In that regard, South Africa will continue to support the Secretary-General's call for a global ceasefire and a humanitarian pause in order to give due attention to the pandemic and attempts to mitigate its impacts, a call that has been reiterated and emphasized by the African Union.

At this stage, we must acknowledge and commend the leadership and proactive action of the United Nations, which put in place measures to protect the health and safety of peacekeepers and to help navigate the effects of the pandemic. In that connection, we commend in particular the leadership and critical role of the World Health Organization (WHO) and its Director-General, Mr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, in preventing and mitigating the broader public health emergency in which peacekeeping and other peace-related activities are embedded. The WHO has also been working with affected countries and regional organizations such as the African Union to address the spread of COVID-19, thus exemplifying a global cooperative effort.

While it is important to focus on post-conflict support in all peacebuilding efforts, we must be wary not to provide support, on the one hand, while inhibiting the adequate responses of Governments to protect their people from the pandemic and weather the economic difficulties and implications, on the other. It is for this reason that South Africa strongly supports the Secretary-General's call for the waiving of unilateral coercive measures and sanctions in order to allow affected Governments and societies to have the requisite resources to secure the much-needed life-saving and medical supplies, and personal protective equipment to respond to the pandemic. We also support calls for debt relief and deferral, and robust support for recovery in Africa.

South Africa has consistently held the position that 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.

The notion of a comprehensive response to the pandemic, which includes both additional efforts and resources, and the enhanced engagement of the Security Council in areas such as sanctions, will be key to the Council's role in the broader global effort. It is for this reason that South Africa believes that sustaining peace amid a global pandemic requires concurrently addressing the confluence of factors that determine the context for peace to endure in these trying times.

For Africa, in particular, countermeasures against the threat posed by the COVID-19 virus, such as stay-at-home and social distancing laws, have adversely affected informal economies on which many people's livelihoods depend. Family incomes, in particular, have been jeopardized, deepening the social plight of countless people across the continent. In mostly developing nations, this scenario is likely to pit distressed citizenry against national Governments through heightened national protests, thereby threatening national security, peace and stability.

Given the challenges that many African countries face with weak health systems, the implications of the COVID-19 pandemic on public health and peace and security in the COVID-19 landscape are dire. The linkages between public health, societal well-being, politics and the performance of national health systems are well documented in Africa, particularly in post-conflict countries and those experiencing protracted conflicts.

Furthermore, considering the economic toll the virus has taken on both low- and middle-income African countries due to resources to contain the effects of COVID-19, African countries may not be able to manage the debt service for a few years to come. These conditions undermine peace, stability and prosperity. South Africa maintains that it is in our collective interests for the United Nations to begin setting its sights on this grim reality by focusing the attention of United Nations agencies on the disruptive socioeconomic effects of COVID-19 on developing nations.

In conclusion, sustaining peace depends on the overall political, social, economic and physical health of societies. In addition, we inhabit a world that is increasingly global and interconnected. We must therefore come to terms with the necessity of prioritizing sustainable peace through forums such as the Peacebuilding Commission, in cooperation with regional organizations and their peacebuilding counterparts and mechanisms, while also drawing on a system-wide United Nations multilateral effort. That is especially necessary as we work to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, which seek to address the root causes of many conflicts we are facing.

It is only through cooperation in the face of the temptation to look inward that we will emerge from the current pandemic the better and confront a new world with a renewed spirit of global cooperation.

Annex 8**Statement by the Minister of State of Germany, Niels Annen**

I thank you, Sir, for convening today's open debate on pandemics and the challenges for sustaining peace. I would also like to thank Secretary General António Guterres, Mr. Ban Ki-moon and Ms. Sarah Cliffe for their insightful briefings.

Six weeks ago, the Security Council held an open debate on pandemics and security (see S/2020/663), chaired by the German Foreign Minister. Recently, we also had an informal exchange of Council members, with representatives of the Peacebuilding Commission, on the impact of coronavirus disease (COVID-19) on peacebuilding. In both meetings, we called on the Council to adopt a comprehensive understanding of peace and security. I am therefore grateful to Indonesia for providing us with an opportunity to build on these discussions today.

A comprehensive approach to peace and security means also addressing root causes and mid- and long-term challenges, as opposed to only acute crises. It means needing to find integrated solutions for interconnected challenges and strengthening prevention, peacebuilding and sustaining peace — no matter if we are facing the multidimensional challenges related to human rights violations, pandemics or climate change.

COVID-19 continues to rage across the world. It is a multidimensional challenge that adversely affects humanitarian, health, political, social, economic and environmental aspects. It also affects peace and security and undermines peacebuilding efforts in conflict-affected countries and countries in transition.

What needs to be done? Allow me to focus on four brief points. First, the Security Council needs to be active and engaged. It must follow up on resolution 2532 (2020), in which it explicitly recognized that COVID-19 might reverse peacebuilding gains. We should encourage the Secretary-General to fully integrate in his reporting the impact of the pandemic on security. Such reporting would support prevention and early warning.

The Council should further empower the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), which has a unique mandate within the United Nations system, to enable integrated and cross-pillar approaches. We commend the PBC for its rapid response and excellent track record since the outbreak of the pandemic.

We need to ensure that the United Nations and its presence on the ground, especially its peacekeeping operations and special political missions, are sufficiently equipped and mandated to address the direct and indirect challenges of the pandemic. This is particularly important in the context of transitions, such as those currently taking place in Darfur and Guinea-Bissau. This is the Security Council's core business.

Secondly, we underline the need for coordination and coherence. We need integrated peacebuilding efforts to respond to challenges such as COVID-19. The Secretary-General's briefing today (see annex 1) and his recent report on peacebuilding and sustaining peace (S/2020/773) have demonstrated how the United Nations system as a whole has adapted to the pandemic. However, we need to ensure further progress in achieving better coordination and coherence within the United Nations system, its agencies, funds and programmes.

There are lessons to be learned from the impact and response to the pandemic. We believe there is value in incorporating those lessons in the ongoing process of reviewing the United Nations peacebuilding architecture.

Thirdly, peacebuilding and sustaining peace urgently need funding. The COVID-19 pandemic has had massive, immediate socioeconomic repercussions. Peacebuilding needs are underfunded even now, despite the fact that a prevented crisis is much less costly than an acute crisis.

Germany continues to contribute to peacebuilding and prevention. For instance, we continue to support the Secretary-General's Peacebuilding Fund (PBF), to which we have just made an initial contribution of €15 million for 2020. With its flexibility and catalytic function, the PBF plays a crucial role in meeting such critical peacebuilding needs as those relating to gender and inclusivity, cross-border collaboration and, in particular, in contexts of transition. On a bilateral level, Germany has contributed to the Secretary-General's call for a global ceasefire by supporting additional efforts of its mediation partners on the ground.

Gender equality gains are at a risk of being lost as many Governments are diverting funds that were originally earmarked for the support of women and girls and their participation in peace processes. As a member of the Funding Board of the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund, Germany supported the establishment of an emergency response window within the Fund and made \$2.5 million available to this emergency window. Through this window, local women's organizations in countries in Asia, sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America, the Middle East and Europe can apply for funding that enables them to sustain themselves through the crisis and for programmes responding to the pandemic and its gendered dimensions.

But these efforts are not enough. To create sustainable and predictable financing for peacebuilding, we need strengthened partnerships with international financial institutions, regional banks and the private sector. Further, as donors, we should not forget: to make a difference: donors should coordinate better, use pooled funding if possible, and engage in good peacebuilding donorship.

Fourthly, inclusive approaches are needed to build resilience. All efforts will be in vain if they are not based on national ownership. We will be able to build resilient societies that can better withstand the impact of pandemics only by working in lockstep with affected countries. Respect for human rights and political processes that are inclusive and allow all parts of society, especially women, youth and marginalized groups, to participate in a meaningful way, are crucial in building up such resilience.

Let me conclude on a hopeful note. This pandemic, just like other multidimensional challenges, is providing us as an international community with an opportunity — an opportunity to strengthen cooperation, reinforce multilateralism and show international solidarity. If we manage to overcome traditional thinking and siloes and find integrated and coherent solutions, we will be able to defeat a deadly virus, eventually halt climate change and hopefully realize a world where everybody can live in peace and security.

Annex 9

Statement by the Permanent Mission of Belgium to the United Nations

Sustaining peace, which is both a comprehensive process and a goal, has never been an easy task for conflict-affected countries. The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has only magnified this challenge: human and health costs have soared, socioeconomic problems have proliferated, and the challenges of planning, implementing and following up on peacebuilding efforts have multiplied.

Indeed, over the last couple of months, we have witnessed unprecedented needs and repeated calls for an urgent and coordinated response. Moreover, on 1 July, we unanimously adopted resolution 2532 (2020), recognizing that the pandemic could reverse peacebuilding gains made by countries in transition and post-conflict countries and calling for all relevant parts of the United Nations system to accelerate response to the pandemic.

Now is the time to further reflect upon our approach and draw out some best practices and lessons learned. In this regard, we would mention four points. First, multilateralism, international cooperation, collaboration and collective responsibility are and remain essential. As long as the pandemic affects one of us, it will affect all of us. Collective problems require collective answers, and such answers can and will only be found if we — the United Nations and its Member States, regional and subregional organizations, international financial institutions, the private sector and civil society — work together.

Secondly, if effective multilateralism is based on respect for shared principles and values, the same should be true for our next steps in addressing the pandemic. COVID-19 should not be used as a pretext to infringe upon human rights or international humanitarian law. COVID-related restrictions are indeed sometimes disproportional, unlimited in time and taken without much — or any — scientific backing.

Thirdly, the whole conflict cycle has been negatively affected by the pandemic. We therefore need to be innovative in all aspects of conflict prevention, peacekeeping, peacebuilding and sustaining peace in order to preserve the hard-won gains of the past, build resilience and lay the groundwork for a better future. The Peacebuilding Fund, for instance, was able to add additional funding to an access-to-justice project in Haiti, to allow for virtual hearings and facilitate legal arbitration for the release of detainees.

Being innovative requires paying adequate attention to known thematic challenges that are closely linked to the pandemic, but which are intensifying, for example, climate and security or mental health. Furthermore, innovation consists in finding new ways to secure adequate funding to tackle these challenges, such as exploring additional budgetary partnerships with international financial institutions and the private sector.

Fourthly, best practices and lessons learned in addressing the pandemic should reinforce our ongoing review of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture. Given its function as both a platform and a bridge across the whole United Nations system as well as its early engagement in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Peacebuilding Commission, together with the Peacebuilding Fund, has been in a unique position to help tackle the pandemic. It is therefore appropriate to incorporate their views and recommendations in the review.

Efforts undertaken in the context of peacebuilding and sustaining peace can help to further increase national and local ownership, counter fragmentation in

the United Nations system and its pillars and help to foster additional partnerships between the United Nations and other stakeholders. In short, we need to be more strategic, focused and unified in tackling the pandemic. The peacebuilding architecture can play a crucial role to this end.

Annex 10**Statement by the Permanent Representative of China to the United Nations, Zhang Jun**

China welcomes Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi of Indonesia as she presides over today's open debate. I thank the Secretary-General and Mr. Ban Ki-moon for their briefings (annexes 1 and 2, respectively). I listened carefully to Ms. Sarah Cliffe's briefing (annex 3), as well.

The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) poses an unprecedented threat to the lives and health of people of all countries. The world economy is heading into a recession. The international community's efforts aimed at sustaining peace are facing great challenges. As noted in resolution 2532 (2020), the pandemic could reverse the gains in peacebuilding and development made by conflict-affected countries. We must step up our efforts to prevail over the pandemic and build back better at an early date.

Solidarity, together with cooperation, is the most powerful weapon in the global fight against COVID-19. Conflict-affected countries are the weakest link in this fight. Helping them build a strong line of defence is most important for ensuring victory over the pandemic and consolidating peacebuilding gains.

China calls on all parties to conflict to respond to the Secretary-General's appeal for a global ceasefire as soon as possible, not only to lay down their arms and silence the guns, but also to coordinate actions against COVID-19. We should support the United Nations and the World Health Organization in mobilizing countries to further strengthen policy coordination and increase resources to help with the preparedness and response of the conflict-affected countries.

China appreciates and supports the assistance to relevant countries by the United Nations peacekeeping operations. We support the Peacebuilding Commission in providing tailored responses and reconstruction programmes for these countries, and we encourage the Peacebuilding Fund to reprioritize its projects and resources for that purpose.

As we have seen, unilateral sanctions are seriously undermining the basic capacity of targeted countries to respond to the pandemic and safeguard livelihoods, making innocent civilians the greatest victims. We once again strongly urge relevant countries to acknowledge the negative humanitarian consequences of their unilateral coercive-measures actions and immediately move to lift them.

Since the outbreak of COVID-19, China has been actively engaged in the global fight against the disease. China has been doing its utmost to support and assist countries in need, including many on the Security Council's agenda. In June, President Xi Jinping chaired an extraordinary China-Africa summit on solidarity against COVID-19, which demonstrated the determination of China and Africa to fight COVID-19 together. China has decided to cancel the debt on interest-free loans made to relevant African countries that is due by the end of 2020. China has also announced that COVID-19 vaccine development and deployment in China, when available, will be made a global public good. China is ready to continue providing medical supplies to affected countries, share experience in diagnosis and treatment, and send medical experts to assist in countries' response.

Facing the impact of COVID-19, we need to better understand sustaining peace, improve and strengthen our approaches to peacebuilding. First, we should always be people-centred. The experience of many countries has shown that as long as we put people and life first, we can develop a set of effective methods for fighting the pandemic. In peacebuilding, we should also put people's interests front

and centre, respect people's ownership in host countries and promote an inclusive peace process.

Secondly, we should promote sustaining peace through development. Peacebuilding processes in conflict-affected countries can easily go back to square one after one or two crises owing to those countries' weak socioeconomic foundations. Development is the master key to solving all problems. The international community should attach great importance to the impact of COVID-19 on the socioeconomic situation of conflict-affected countries, help them improve their capacity for sustainable development, strengthen public-health systems and preserve and advance peacebuilding gains in order to build a solid foundation for sustaining peace.

Thirdly, we should strengthen political leadership and the participation of the whole of society. In many countries, strong political leadership and social cohesion have made it possible to undertake early detection, isolation, diagnosis and treatment of COVID-19 cases. Rebuilding political consensus, mutual trust and social cohesion is also an important underpinning for national reconstruction. We need to support strengthening the authority of the legitimate Governments of conflict-affected countries, so that they can lead their respective societies to safeguard the hard-won gains of peacebuilding and achieving long-term security and stability.

There is no doubt that the COVID-19 pandemic has had a tremendous impact on the world and brought great challenges to it. However, we have every reason to believe that humankind will eventually prevail and make the world a better place.

To make that happen, we must be united and uphold multilateralism. Countries are dependent on each other and have a shared future. No one can artificially sever the ties that connect us. Unilateralism is a one-way train heading to a dead end, and there is no other option but to turn back from it. We should give stronger support to the United Nations, better meet challenges and pursue common development through multilateral cooperation. We must uphold justice and the rule of law. Justice is the hope of all and is rooted in the hearts of people.

International law and the norms of international relations are important guarantees for international fairness and justice. All countries should honour their commitments and fulfil their due responsibilities and obligations. We cannot allow the practice of power politics, bullying and exceptionalism to take the world back to the age of the jungle. We must respect science and support technological progress. Advances in science and technology are the common pursuit of humankind.

Everyone is entitled to a better life, including those living in developing countries. The practice of putting up artificial barriers to hinder other countries' scientific and technological development and to interfere with market competition for selfish gains is immoral, irresponsible and against one's own interests. It is our sincere hope that States Members of the United Nations and the international community will act together, shoulder responsibilities together, share the benefits together and jointly build a better future for all.

Annex 11

Statement by the Permanent Mission of the Dominican Republic to the United Nations

I would like to thank the Secretary-General and Mr. Ban Ki-moon — and welcome him home — and Ms. Cliffe for their comprehensive briefings (annexes 1, 2 and 3, respectively). We would also like to express our appreciation to Foreign Minister Marsudi for her leadership on this issue and for organizing today's debate.

As the Secretary-General has pointed out, coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is more than a health crisis. It is a multidimensional occurrence, with complex and intertwined consequences and challenges for peacebuilding. It could, unfortunately, exacerbate drivers of conflict. As resolution 2532 (2020) recognizes, peacebuilding and development gains made by post-conflict countries and countries in transition could be reversed as a result of the pandemic.

COVID-19 has triggered a devastating human toll well beyond challenges to public health. In fragile, conflict-affected countries, it is upsetting economies and societies by aggravating the causes of conflict, and the shrinking of the humanitarian space is worrisome. Gender-based violence is escalating, as is the number of human rights violations. The foregoing illustrates the significance of this debate while we are also getting closer to the 2020 peace architecture review.

This pandemic has uncovered both structural inequalities within societies and existing disproportionalities in access to basic services, including education. People affected by conflict are among the most vulnerable and the most at risk.

Of particular importance is the strengthening of international cooperation, including South-South and triangular cooperation, work across the humanitarian-development-peace nexus and putting into practice what the Secretary-General set forth in his report entitled "Shared responsibility, global solidarity: responding to the socioeconomic impacts of COVID-19".

Sharing lessons learned and good practices within and across countries and regions is key. In this context, one of the main concepts that needs to be incorporated in any recovery and response to COVID-19 is the peacebuilding dimension. The Dominican Republic has consistently stressed how crucial a global, coordinated and unified response among countries and regions is.

Partnerships for peacebuilding and sustaining peace is also crucial, precisely with civil society, international financial institutions, academia, the private sector, donors, decision makers and local communities. All these actors must come together to better articulate their comparative strengths and develop mechanisms that will ensure a strong peacebuilding capacity.

The Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) has served as an exemplary platform in this regard. It is constantly brainstorming with different actors on how to enhance a response and support specific countries and regions. We reiterate the importance of the PBC's advice to the Security Council in this area, as well as the importance of amplifying the United Nations system-wide engagement.

Funding partners must aim at achieving the long-term benefits of peace, and not at offering mere short-term support. We commend the work of many international financial institutions in supporting risk mitigation in the most fragile settings. We commend the Peacebuilding Fund for providing timely assistance through its interventions to support countries in addressing COVID-19.

Part of the solution to the pandemic is responsive programming that is sensitive to conflicts and informed about risks. It should be context-specific and in line with the

needs of local communities, in particular of the most vulnerable and marginalized. This is crucial to keeping the pandemic from bringing detrimental consequences to peacebuilding efforts and from letting gains in this respect be undermined.

Responses that are excessively focused on security must not be deployed, nor should any measures that curtail or shrink civic space. Every approach should be undertaken in the spirit of doing no harm and reflect conflict- and gender-sensitivity. While they must also be people-centred, they should take advantage of the expertise arising from civil society, particularly women's groups and youth groups. Women's participation is central to achieving sustainable solutions. The pandemic has shed more light on how critical the women and peace and security agenda is to peacebuilding and sustaining peace.

As we celebrate International Youth Day today, under the theme of youth engagement for global action, it is relevant to recall in the Security Council that, as reaffirmed in resolutions 2532 (2020) and 2535 (2020), young people play a vital role in building and sustaining peace. Their vision is not to bounce back from this pandemic but to build back better.

Following this approach, learning from past examples that opened up spaces for actors to achieve central peacebuilding objectives, for example, the Ebola crisis, we should view COVID-19 as presenting a window of opportunity for peacebuilding, identifying pathways to be reinforced and ways to make the pandemic contribute to strengthening peace and social cohesion.

Annex 12**Statement by the Deputy Permanent Representative of France to the United Nations, Anne Gueguen**

[Original: English and French]

I thank Indonesia for taking the initiative to convene today's very timely meeting. I also thank the briefers for their briefings.

The recent adoption of resolution 2532 (2020) on the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, facilitated by Tunisia and France, was a crucial step forward. It highlighted our collective responsibility and unity in the face of this unprecedented crisis. The Security Council sent a clear signal in support of the Secretary-General's appeal and renewed demand for multilateral collective action.

The call of the Secretary-General for a leap forward in multilateralism and international solidarity has shown the way. Seventy-five years after the adoption of the Charter of the United Nations, there is an urgent need to revive the spirit of San Francisco.

We must now move from words to deeds. Accordingly, together with Tunisia, France calls for the collective, integrated and coordinated implementation of resolution 2532 (2020), which is the responsibility of not only of the members of the Security Council, but also of the United Nations as a whole, particularly in terms of their commitment to conflict prevention, mediation and humanitarian activities. The Peacebuilding Commission also has an important role to play in this, and the Peacebuilding Fund is a tool that has proved its relevance and its effectiveness. We fully support that.

Furthermore, I would like to refer to our responsibility with regard to fragile and crisis-stricken countries. Whether in conflict or post-conflict situations, those countries are particularly at risk in the context of the pandemic. COVID-19 and the measures taken to contain it may have fuelled tensions, hate speech and even violence. They have generated false rumours, anxiety-provoking stories and misinformation, and some have been tempted to take advantage of the pandemic to restrict civil liberties. The pandemic has also undermined confidence in institutions and the economic resilience of the most vulnerable. It is incumbent upon us to think collectively about how to address these threats.

A key element of stability in these countries is the resilience of their health systems. In that regard, we must support the efforts undertaken by the United Nations and the World Health Organization (WHO). The WHO must be strengthened in its normative, warning and coordination roles. That does not exclude, when the time comes, drawing lessons from the management of the current crisis and undertaking the necessary reforms.

Together with the United Nations, France is committed to supporting vulnerable populations affected by COVID-19. France has committed €500 million to the Access to COVID-19 Tools Accelerator project, which it initiated, to accelerate the development of and access to treatment, diagnostics and vaccines to fight COVID-19.

Finally, I wish to reiterate the importance of integrating a gender perspective into the response to the crisis we are experiencing and to give special attention to women and youth. We must take their specific needs into account in the response to the pandemic and guarantee their full, active and effective participation at all levels of decision-making in order to rebuild in a sustainable and egalitarian manner. France will actively contribute to this reflection, in particular through organizing in the

coming months the Paris Peace Forum in November 2020, and then, in partnership with UN-Women and Mexico, the Generation Equality Forum.

As we and the Secretary-General know, the solution to this crisis and, in the longer term, the construction of lasting peace, lie not in turning inward, but in increased cooperation and in the revitalization of the multilateral system. He can count on France's support and determination to these ends.

Annex 13

Statement by the Permanent Representative of the Niger to the United Nations, Abdou Abarry

My delegation would like to welcome the Foreign Minister of Indonesia to the Security Council today and thank her country for making this debate possible. Today's meeting is timely, as it comes on the heels of several discussions on the pandemic within the Security Council and Peacebuilding Commission, and most recently following the informal interactive dialogue that Niger co-organized with Indonesia and Germany.

But first, allow me to take a moment to acknowledge the Secretary-General, whose call for a global ceasefire and solidarity was a catalyst for the adoption of resolution 2532 (2020). I would also like to thank Mr. Ban Ki-moon, and Ms. Sarah Cliffe for their thorough and insightful briefings.

Unfortunately, the Secretary-General's ceasefire appeal is mostly not being heeded by belligerent parties on the ground. As shown from the recent attacks by Boko Haram and the Islamic State West Africa Province in the Lake Chad basin and the Sahel, violent extremists are trying to take advantage of the pandemic to destabilize Governments by ramping up their attacks on civilian and military targets. That trend was corroborated by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mohamed Ibn Chambas, during his briefing in April on the impact of coronavirus disease (COVID-19) COVID-19 on the Peacebuilding Commission. Those attacks have resulted in the loss of innocent lives and major disruptions to the delivery of basic social services to the population.

In addition to being both a public health and a humanitarian crisis, the pandemic is seriously affecting the economy of fragile countries, like those in the Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5 Sahel). It is estimated that the gross domestic product in some G-5 Sahel countries could contract by 7 to 8 per cent in 2020. As of June, the economic negative impact in the Niger had already reached \$339 million in lost tax customs and non-tax revenues, far more than my country's annual defence budget.

In terms of impact on the ground, peace operations are being heavily affected by the freeze in rotations and the risk of the spread of the disease among the troops and the population they are protecting. I would like to take this moment to once again commend the United Nations, the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali and the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel for putting in place strict and effective measures aimed at minimizing and mitigating the impact of the pandemic in the Sahel. Even though the operations of the United Nations peace, special and political missions are themselves heavily impacted, the current crisis offers opportunities to adapt, repurpose and even transform the responses of United Nations missions so that no one is left behind and the hard fought gains made in peace processes are duly maintained.

That starts, first and foremost, by ensuring that adequate levels of funding and financing for peacekeeping missions are maintained at their current level and, if possible, boosted, as the pandemic will further exacerbate the crisis in some regions of the world. Doing so will allow for the adequate troop and personnel levels to be deployed and essential activities to be carried on. Financing also means providing adequate support at the multilateral level to those countries in order to preserve the gains made towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Moreover, the extent to which the current pandemic has impacted the economies of countries will more likely than not lead to a world recession for the next year and beyond. It is therefore imperative that, besides the traditional

funding mechanisms, we encourage innovative means by reducing fragmentation in peacebuilding activities and integrating new tools into current approaches. We should support funding approaches that put forth countries' own priorities and allow those countries to develop locally grown innovative financing mechanisms.

When it comes to adaptation, this crisis has shown us that, going forward, a meaningful participation of communities — including women, youth, persons with disabilities and traditional, religious and civic leaders — is necessary. In times like this, they can be the relay for peacekeeping operations, as they have not only first-hand knowledge of the local customs and traditions, but also the necessary network and the trust of the local population. We should therefore strive to provide them with the necessary tools with regard to capacity-building, technology and mentoring so as to ensure that peacebuilding efforts continue in all situations.

In conclusion, as we celebrate the seventy-fifth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations, and given the non-traditional nature of this pandemic as a threat to peace and security, thinking outside the box and transforming our approach to peacekeeping might yield positive results. The drivers of conflicts today are different from what they were in 1945, and they involve socioeconomic, environmental, health, transnational and technological actors. The adaptation and transformation of peace operations to prevent and mitigate tomorrow's conflicts are therefore necessary.

Annex 14**Statement by the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations, Vassily Nebenzia**

We welcome the participation in today's discussion of the Indonesian Foreign Minister and other dignitaries who spoke earlier. We thank you, Sir, for convening this meeting and welcome it. We also wish to express our appreciation to today's briefers — Secretary-General António Guterres; Mr. Ban Ki-moon, former Secretary-General and Deputy Chair of The Elders; as well as Ms. Sarah Cliffe, Director of the Center on International Cooperation of New York University, for assessing and providing information on the impact of coronavirus disease (COVID-19) on peacebuilding and sustaining peace.

One of the speakers used today's debate to introduce a topic that is completely extraneous to the subject of today's discussion. We would encourage you, Mr. President, to discourage speakers from abusing Security Council meetings and call on all to limit their remarks to the announced agenda.

We are seeing the COVID-19 pandemic adversely impact the humanitarian situation in armed conflict and post-conflict countries. That leads to a wide range of challenges, including food insecurity, the degradation of national public health systems, difficulties in peacekeeping and special political missions and a slowdown of peace processes.

We recall that in its response to the Ebola outbreak several years ago, the Security Council introduced specific measures into resolutions on Liberia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo that contributed to containing the dissemination of the virus and mitigating its consequences, with the assistance of the United Nations and the international community. That proves the effectiveness of the Council's country-specific, rather than global, responses to pandemics.

Professional response, mitigation and recovery efforts should be made by the competent United Nations bodies responsible for those aspects. In particular, we wish to underline the crucial role of the World Health Organization (WHO) in ensuring the coherence of the multilateral response to the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact, especially the medical aspects of the global response to the outbreak of the coronavirus disease. We believe the international community should jointly support the work of the WHO.

Undoubtedly, the implications of pandemics impede the ability of some countries to fully implement their planned peacebuilding programmes and policies, and the gains achieved prior to the COVID-19 outbreak are at risk of being reversed, due specifically to unpredictable long-term socioeconomic consequences.

In his March 2020 report entitled "Shared responsibility, global solidarity: Responding to the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19", the Secretary-General proposed specific measures concerning the response to the potential impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. We supported most of those measures.

We have also fully supported the Secretary-General's appeal for a global ceasefire. At the same time, we are concerned by reported attempts of illegal armed groups trying to take advantage of the pandemic situation to obtain benefits on the ground and undermine peace processes. In particular, increased terrorist activity was reported in the Sahara-Sahel region. It is therefore important that the humanitarian pause and cessation of hostilities do not apply to counter-terrorism operations, in accordance with resolution 2532 (2020).

We appreciate the Secretariat's efforts to promote the health and safety of United Nations personnel in the field, thereby contributing to the domestic COVID-19 response and recovery efforts in countries emerging from conflict.

It is necessary to ensure the continuity and effectiveness of the United Nations peacebuilding efforts, while strictly adhering to the applicable public health guidance. In that regard, the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) could help in mobilizing financial support to strengthen overstretched national health systems, at the request of host Governments. A comprehensive analysis of the adverse socioeconomic impact of the pandemic and its possible implications for the overall situation and humanitarian needs in a specific country on the PBC's agenda, conducted in conjunction with the national authorities, could also be valuable.

One of the urgent measures set out in the Secretary-General's report on shared responsibility is the need to waive sanctions, which seriously limit the capacity of the affected countries to respond to challenges related to the pandemic. We reaffirm our support for the proposals of the Secretary-General and wish to stress the dangerous and aggravating socioeconomic effects of unilateral sanctions on sustaining peace, primarily in developing countries. Such restrictions impede the ability of countries to finance their peacebuilding and development activities. Lifting such sanctions would allow those countries to respond more effectively to the challenges posed by COVID-19. We propose that the Secretariat prepare a policy brief on the impact of sanctions on the fight against COVID-19, which could include an assessment of the negative consequences of coercive measures for peacebuilding and sustaining peace.

Russia continues to contribute to the global efforts to counter the current pandemic and its consequences. We are working with the World Health Organization in order to financially support its COVID-19 responses and promote compliance with the International Health Regulations. Our country also collaborates with the World Food Programme and the United Nations Development Programme in that respect. Through multilateral channels, Russia has allocated more than \$30 million to foster responses to the pandemic. We also continue our bilateral assistance to countries in need by providing personal protective equipment, test systems and laboratory supplies and sending medical teams upon request.

Yesterday the Russian Federation officially registered the first COVID-19 vaccine in the world. Clinical trials have shown its high levels of effectiveness and safety. Several other promising vaccines are being prepared for clinical trials. In addition, several Russian antiviral drugs for the treatment of COVID-19, as well as diagnostics, have already been registered in our country.

We are ready for international cooperation with all interested partners in developing and introducing vaccines and medicines to ensure a coordinated global response to the spread of COVID-19 and a joint victory over the pandemic.

Annex 15

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

At the outset, I thank Secretary-General António Guterres, His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon and Ms. Sarah Cliffe for their insightful remarks, and we commend the Indonesian presidency for convening this timely discussion.

These are extremely challenging times. The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic continues to claim lives and livelihoods as it tests our collective resolve as nations, regions and an international community. Supply chain disruptions and sharp declines in economic activities have exacerbated inequalities within and among countries, while prolonged lockdowns have produced disastrous implications for humanitarian operations, education sectors and other social protections that are critical to sustaining peace.

For conflict-affected countries, the pandemic has accentuated security risks, as delicate peace agreements have become increasingly fragile, while many warring parties, including armed groups, continue to disregard our shared calls for a global ceasefire, as articulated in resolution 2532 (2020). Under such tenuous circumstances, persons in vulnerable situations have been disproportionately affected by food shortages, high levels of displacement, increases in sexual and gender-based violence and other humanitarian and protection concerns that threaten to reverse the hard-won peacebuilding gains in countries affected by or emerging from conflict.

Amid those immense challenges, the United Nations peacebuilding architecture has played a crucial role in strengthening the institutional arrangements between Member States and the international financial institutions in order to safeguard national development plans, reinforce social contracts and bolster national ownership over peace processes. These institutional arrangements, geared towards strengthening partnerships and providing predictable and reliable financing, are critical to preventing conflict in many fragile contexts. In that regard, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines welcomes the Global Humanitarian Response Plan for COVID-19 and the work critical to building and sustaining peace financed through the Secretary-General's Peacebuilding Fund. However, both remain significantly underfunded, and we urge donor countries and the international private sector to renew their efforts to provide financial support to those essential institutional mechanisms, which provide a critical lifeline for many in precarious situations.

In order to ensure that conflict-affected countries are able to mend their social fabric, advance political processes, strengthen institutions, restore State authority and provide justice and prosperity to all in accordance with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, we encourage the international donor community to honour their overseas development assistance commitments and explore additional pathways for providing debt relief. We also echo the joint appeals of the Secretary-General and the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, as well as the recent calls by a group of Special Rapporteurs on human rights, for the discontinuation of all unilateral coercive measures that impede countries' abilities to address the pandemic. Sanctions create unnecessary suffering in vulnerable societies. They serve to undermine national ownership and global cooperation, which are the most basic tenets of sustaining peace.

While we continue to grapple with the peacebuilding implications of COVID-19, we must renew our efforts to protect the most vulnerable. Concurrently, we must also maintain a watchful eye on other menacing threats that add further complexity to our twenty-first-century security landscape, such as climate change. As we look towards the intergovernmental phase of the 2020 review of the peacebuilding architecture,

we must work to further strengthen the synergies across the United Nations system, including by exploring new modalities through the Economic and Social Council for mobilizing comprehensive development responses to peacebuilding challenges at the national and regional levels. Only by strengthening and mainstreaming a cohesive and integrated approach across the peace, security and development nexus can we provide the inclusive, people-centred and climate-informed solutions needed to sustain peace.

I conclude by echoing what the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Indonesia said earlier today, “crisis may also create an opening for peace”. (*see annex 4*). Let us not waste this opportunity.

Annex 16

Statement by the Deputy Permanent Representative of Tunisia to the United Nations, Tarek Ladeb

At the outset, I would like to thank Indonesia for convening this timely debate. I also thank the Secretary-General for being with us today and for his tireless efforts in mobilizing the United Nations system and international efforts to address the impacts of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. And I also thank former Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and Ms. Sarah Cliffe, Director of the Center on International Cooperation at New York University, for their briefings.

The pandemic caused by the coronavirus disease is a massive global crisis and an unprecedented challenge that poses a significant threat to international peace and security and entails a health catastrophe, a profound economic downturn and serious risks of instability. It is affecting food security, employment, incomes and livelihoods. It also contributes to the erosion of social cohesion and potentially exacerbates underlying tensions.

Despite the global nature of the pandemic, which is affecting all countries without exception, it is mostly hurting those already suffering from conflicts, violence and unrest. It poses grave risks to traumatized and vulnerable populations of refugees and displaced people and, as the Secretary-General has observed, it threatens to highlight the typical root causes and underlying fragilities that can lead to, or exacerbate, conflict, which are the focus of peacebuilding interventions. All those aspects of the crisis contribute directly or indirectly to amplifying the challenges of sustaining peace.

In that connection, the pandemic has posed serious threats to the peace processes and transitions to peace and stability now under way. Moreover, there have been disruptions to and difficulties for United Nations peacekeeping operations and an upsurge in armed conflict in some hotbeds of tension during the pandemic, which further drives displacement and compounds already dire humanitarian situations.

On 23 March, the Secretary-General called for an immediate global ceasefire to “silence the guns” and “focus together on the true fight of our lives”. Since the very beginning of the pandemic, Tunisia has warned of the unprecedented and multidimensional impacts of the pandemic and the challenges that it poses to sustaining peace and security, especially in war-ravaged countries and those in post-conflict situations or facing humanitarian crises. Tunisia therefore expressed its full support for the Secretary-General’s appeal and believed its immediate implementation to be a crucial priority.

In that connection, Tunisia focused on the pivotal role of the Security Council in such critical circumstances in preserving peace and security, silencing the guns in all corners of the world, ensuring the continuation of peacekeeping and special political missions and creating conditions for the delivery of life-saving medical aid to people in places of high vulnerability.

Accordingly, together with France, Tunisia initiated resolution 2532 (2020), which was unanimously adopted on 1 July. The resolution states that the unprecedented extent of the COVID-19 pandemic is likely to endanger the maintenance of international peace and security and recognizes that the peacebuilding and development gains made by countries in transition and post-conflict countries could be reversed as a result of the pandemic. It also requests the Secretary-General to provide updates to the Security Council on the impact of COVID-19 on the ability of peacekeeping operations and special political missions to deliver their mandated priority tasks.

We believe that mitigating the impacts of the pandemic and addressing the challenges it poses to sustaining peace should be within a comprehensive multidimensional approach and guided by our firm collective political will and our interest in enhancing solidarity and cooperation at the international, regional and national levels.

In that context, we stress the importance of the implementation of resolution 2532 (2020) and the exploration of more effective support for war-devastated and post-conflict countries in order to contain the impacts of the pandemic and make positive progress on stabilization efforts and the peaceful resolution of conflicts.

Considering that peace is more sustainable when it is locally owned, led and implemented, it is crucial to focus on strengthening local conflict-resolution mechanisms, political peace processes and engagement of women and youth in peacebuilding initiatives, COVID-19 responses and inclusive dialogues.

In the same vein, we stress the importance of promoting cooperation and partnership between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations given their knowledge of the factors and specificities of conflicts and their ability to deal with the parties concerned, in addition to their role in achieving and monitoring peace agreements.

In conclusion, we reiterate Tunisia's firm commitment to continuing its active engagement in supporting all initiatives and efforts aimed at addressing the impacts of the pandemic and maintaining peace and security throughout the world.

Annex 17

Statement by the Chargé d'affaires of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations, Jonathan Allen

I thank Indonesia for convening this debate at this time.

The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) presents a crisis of unprecedented scope and complexity. It has triggered health, humanitarian, economic, social, development, political and security challenges with both immediate and long-term ramifications. We are seeing how interwoven those challenges are. To quote from a recent article by the International Crisis Group:

“[I]t would be a brave Ambassador at the UN who would bet that the health, economic and social fallout from COVID-19 will not lead to more political instability.”

That is why we have to get the response right, because, if we do not, we may end up in a scenario that sees decades of progress on peace and development reversed amid protracted turmoil and human suffering.

As a member of the Council and the only leading economy that meets the 0.7 per cent official development assistance target, the United Kingdom is committed to doing everything that it can to avoid countries tipping into crisis. In the case of COVID-19, that means playing our part to ensure coordinated, comprehensive and collaborative multilateral action. It means prioritizing support to the countries that are the most vulnerable to shocks. It means ensuring risk-informed, calibrated responses and mobilizing to prevent crises in a spirit of solidarity.

The United Kingdom is concerned about the impact of COVID-19 on the world's most vulnerable people, and we are reprioritizing many of our existing programmes accordingly. Despite pressures on the global economy, we must mobilize resources for the countries most in need. That is why, working with India, the United Kingdom pushed for an ambitious Group of Twenty action plan, including a \$200 billion package of support from the World Bank and regional development banks for investment in health programmes and emergency fiscal support for the poorest countries. As our work on a vaccine continues at a pace, we should also keep striving for a framework that ensures equitable access for the world's most vulnerable people.

As I mentioned during the recent dialogue between the Security Council and the Peacebuilding Commission — co-hosted with Germany, the Niger and your country, Sir, as President of the Council — the United Kingdom believes that the United Nations system still needs to do more to integrate peacebuilding and conflict sensitivity into the global humanitarian, economic and development responses to COVID-19. This means the United Nations and its partners supporting countries in order to generate a shared appreciation of conflict risks so as to ensure that responses do not inadvertently exacerbate drivers of instability. It means continuing to prioritize issues that we know to be central to a social contract, which underpins resilience, good governance, inclusion, respect for human rights and the rule of law. It also means seizing opportunities for dedicated efforts to defuse conflict and build on peace initiatives.

We should all be ready closely in the Council to take whatever action we can to support the United Nations in ensuring that countries do not tip into instability or, if we can, help them to build a pathway to that end.

I want to reiterate the request that the Secretary-General provide further guidance to the United Nations system on this matter in the form of a policy

brief on such an approach. The United Nations cannot prevent the loss of peace and development gains single-handedly. We need to work together to prevent destabilization. The United Kingdom is gravely concerned about the rising risk of famine in 2020, hastened by the impact of COVID-19. We will work closely with our partners to do everything that we can, not only to prepare for, but also to prevent, catastrophic food insecurity and related instability.

But the complexity of the COVID-19 crisis makes collaboration between the United Nations and the international financial institutions critical for an effective international response. The macroeconomic responses led by the international financial institutions and the socioeconomic responses spearheaded by the United Nations should be playing complementary roles. Again this requires, as a starting point, a shared understanding of risks and opportunity based on common analysis and with that common approach mainstreamed throughout, not only at the very top, not only at field level, but at all levels in between.

We have said previously that COVID-19 represents a real test of the United Nations reforms initiated by the Secretary-General. It has brought into even sharper relief the importance of a One United Nations approach and cross-pillar work to build and sustain that.

Those concerns have been at the heart of our engagement with the 2020 review of the peacebuilding architecture, and I take this opportunity to thank the Secretary-General for his 2020 report (S/2020/773). I also take this opportunity to recognize the work of Canada as Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission. We have been impressed with the agility of the Peacebuilding Commission in its response to COVID-19 at a time when other United Nations bodies, including, dare I say it, the Council have been rather slower. As this debate highlights, the peacebuilding approach is not just a nice to have. It is critical — it is fundamental — to responding effectively to the most pressing challenges of our time.

Annex 18**Statement by the Deputy Permanent Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations, Cherith Norman-Chalet**

I thank and we very much appreciate you, Minister Marsudi, for holding the meeting this morning. We also appreciate Indonesia for continuing the Security Council's discussion on the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. I also thank Secretary-General Guterres and former Secretary-General Ban for their briefings today.

It is difficult to put into words the deep and profound sorrow we feel over the deaths, illnesses and other terrible consequences that have resulted from the COVID-19 pandemic, including those affecting health-care and humanitarian personnel who put their lives on the line every day. They have given to a cause far greater than themselves, and our hearts and prayers go out to their families and communities during this difficult time.

Statement by the Political Adviser of the United States to the United Nations, George Ward

We adopted resolution 2532 (2020) a little over a month ago, supporting the Secretary-General's call for a global ceasefire to secure a respite for countries and regions that, weakened by violence and conflict, are especially vulnerable to the virus. We should now reflect on how the pandemic has affected particularly sensitive areas.

I will start by saying we were pleased that several armed groups declared ceasefires to heed the Secretary-General's call even before the Security Council adopted the resolution. As early as April, fighters in 12 countries had put down their weapons, including those involved in some of the world's most intractable conflicts.

Unfortunately, as we know, many of these ceasefires are beginning to fall apart, including in the Philippines. We also note with deep concern the recent escalation of violence between Armenia and Azerbaijan, and have called on the sides to resume substantive negotiations to resolve the Nagorno Karabakh conflict as soon as possible. We strongly urge Governments and other actors around the world to respect existing ceasefires, or to agree on new ceasefire arrangements so that they may focus on addressing the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) and protecting their citizens.

We strongly condemn the terrorist organizations that seek to take advantage of this difficult situation. What a terrible thing, in the middle of this pandemic, as legitimate Governments focus on containing the virus, that those organizations are working to advance their recruitment efforts and carrying out criminal, unjustifiable acts. For example, we have seen racially and ethnically motivated terrorist groups and actors advancing their interests by spreading disinformation and conspiracies regarding the virus outbreak and spread of the virus. It is inconceivable how anyone can be so evil — that is what we are up against.

The Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham (ISIS) has exploited security gaps in Iraq caused by the pandemic to relaunch a sustained insurgency. Through propaganda, ISIS, Al-Qaida, and other terrorist groups have used the pandemic as a recruiting tool. We will continue our legitimate and lawful operations and actions against those terrorist groups that threaten peace everywhere.

As the world's largest humanitarian donor, the United States remains unwavering in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic; we continue to support critical programmes in health, water and sanitation, and protection. We take seriously the Secretary-General's warning of a generational catastrophe due to ongoing school closures that have affected more than 1 billion students. We are working directly with those on the ground combating the virus, including Governments, multilateral organizations, faith-based organizations, non-governmental organizations, the private sector, research institutions and other organizations. At the same time, we look to meaningfully address other risks that may be exacerbated by the pandemic.

The United States has already announced more than \$1.6 billion dollars in additional economic, health and humanitarian aid towards our commitment of nearly \$2 billion in United States foreign assistance to combat COVID-19. That assistance is part of more than \$12 billion provided by the United States Government to benefit the global response, including through vaccine and therapeutics development, preparedness efforts and humanitarian assistance. That is in addition to more than \$170 billion in United States investments in global health and humanitarian assistance over the past 10 years. Indeed, the United States has been the world leader in such assistance by a large margin.

The international community must remain equally committed to maintaining its responses to other ongoing humanitarian crises as well. The virus has not only claimed lives, but crippled economies around the world. Vulnerable and marginalized populations, including in the United States, have been hit particularly hard by those secondary effects.

When we consider how best to manage future pandemics and limit their impact on international security, we must learn from our experiences of COVID-19 and recognize the vital importance of transparency. It is also crucial to ensure protections are in place for populations in conflict areas and for at-risk groups.

We must not let this virus stall long-standing efforts towards peace and security. We must not let it divide us. Together with the United Nations and other international partners, the Trump Administration will continue leading the fight against this virus during this critical time. And we will do all we can to ensure a world that is safer and more secure, now and in the future.

Annex 19**Statement by the Permanent Mission of Australia to the United Nations**

The global pandemic has impacted the whole world profoundly and poses particular risks for fragile and conflict-affected countries. We are seeing hard-won peacebuilding and development gains jeopardized, economic challenges exacerbated and societal tensions increased. Responding to the health, economic and social ramifications of the pandemic is now a central challenge, not just for individual States, but for the multilateral system. The United Nations, international financial institutions, regional organizations, non-governmental organizations and Member States need to work together and ensure that a conflict prevention perspective is incorporated into all responses to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19).

Australia supports the Secretary-General's call for a global ceasefire and continues to provide long-term core funding to the United Nations peacebuilding agencies. We welcome the adoption of resolution 2532 (2020) and commend the important contribution of United Nations peace operations and country teams to local and national COVID-19 efforts around the world.

In this crisis, we must continue to recognize the importance of social cohesion, resilience and inclusive approaches. We commend the United Nations peacebuilding agencies for consistently promoting gendered and youth perspectives, as well as the long-term peacebuilding efforts of the United Nations in the Pacific, particularly in Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands. We urge the United Nations and Member States to intensify efforts to support the meaningful inclusion of women and youth as agents of change in shaping our global pandemic response. This is essential given the evidence that the negative impacts of COVID-19 are disproportionately affecting already vulnerable groups in society, including women and youth.

We must not let the pandemic or our responses to it undermine gender equality, development, peacebuilding or human rights gains. We must use its disruption and urgency as an opportunity to build back better, including through taking forward United Nations reforms. This debate is particularly timely in the context of the peacebuilding architecture review. We welcome the Secretary-General's report on peacebuilding and sustaining peace (S/2020/773), which highlights good progress in a number of areas, particularly in relation to the resident coordinators' offices, which have a critical role in managing the COVID-19 response of the United Nations. We urge all stakeholders to continue to drive the implementation of the sustaining peace agenda. That work is vital, not only to combating the pandemic, but to creating resilience for other global challenges to come.

Annex 20

Statement by the Permanent Representative of Azerbaijan to the United Nations, Yashar Aliyev

At the outset, I would like to congratulate the delegation of the Republic of Indonesia on assuming the presidency of the Security Council and warmly welcome the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Indonesia, Her Excellency Mrs. Retno Marsudi. I would also like commend the Republic of Indonesia for convening this high-level open debate on the theme “Pandemics and the challenges of sustaining peace”.

The current situation demands common action to address effectively and in a timely manner the difficulties the international community is facing while carrying out peacebuilding efforts amid the pandemic. As stated in the concept note for this high-level open debate, “International cooperation, collaboration and collective responsibility with regard to principles-based multilateralism are essential.” (S/2020/765, *annex, para. 6*)

Azerbaijan spares no effort in contributing 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.

The initiative of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, His Excellency Mr. Ilham Aliyev, put forward in his capacity as Chair of the Non-Aligned Movement, to convene a special session of the General Assembly on the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic at the level of the Heads of State and Government, has received overwhelming support from more than two-thirds of Member States from all regions and political groups. Accordingly, on 10 July, the thirty-first special session of the General Assembly commenced its proceedings.

Azerbaijan welcomed the adoption this July of resolution 2532 (2020), which recognized that the unprecedented extent of the COVID-19 pandemic is likely to endanger the maintenance of international peace and security, demanding, in particular, a general and immediate cessation of hostilities in all situations on its agenda and calling 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 to achieve a speedy political settlement. Unfortunately, in some situations of armed conflict, spurious peacefulness and declared commitment to truce and ceasefire, along with misinterpretation of the objectives of the 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.

Therefore, over the years passed since the establishment of the ceasefire between Armenia and Azerbaijan in 1994, the armed forces of Armenia have regularly violated the ceasefire, targeting the 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 have convinced the aggressor to halt illegal activities.

On the contrary, even the devastating impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has not prevented Armenia from continuing its armed provocations. On 12 July, in blatant violation of international law, Armenia launched a cross-border attack against Azerbaijan in the Tovuz district, with the use of artillery and mortars, resulting in a number of casualties, including civilians, and necessitating a strong response in order to neutralize Armenian fire and deter it from further acts of aggression. 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 utter falsehood. No doubt, Armenia's objective is not to save lives and alleviate the sufferings of people in need, but to prevent more than 700,000 forcibly displaced Azerbaijanis from returning to their homes and colonize the territories it has ethnically cleansed and occupied.

Over the past few decades, the United Nations leading role in strengthening international efforts to sustain peace has produced notable progress in settling disputes, resolving conflicts, eradicating colonialism and restoring hope to those affected by war and instability. However, serious challenges remain, with the continued resurgence of conflict, increased levels of displacement and hate-driven violence. People throughout the world continue to suffer from prolonged foreign occupation, ethnic cleansing and the lack of accountability for serious violations of international law. Protracted conflicts and their political, military and humanitarian consequences must be addressed properly. Guided by the spirit of the Charter of the United Nations and international law, a comprehensive approach must be adopted to address the multidimensional risks to sustained peace posed by the global COVID-19 pandemic.

Annex 21

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

I thank the Indonesian presidency for organizing today's high-level debate on this important topic. Let me also take this opportunity to express my sincere appreciation to Her Excellency Mrs. Retno L.P. Marsudi, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Indonesia, for presiding over this meeting. I thank the Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-Moon and Ms. Sarah Cliffe for their insightful briefings.

The spread of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) and the multidimensional disruptions caused by it is proving to have profound and long-lasting implications for societies, including, in some contexts, inflaming existing grievances and threats facing communities. In particular, this has intensified the challenges of peacebuilding and sustaining peace in countries which are already affected by fragility, conflict and violence. Tackling COVID-19 is doubly hard in countries where social and economic conditions were already unstable because of weak governance and State institutions, and unequal access to services for vulnerable populations. Many among them also face compounding challenges, including climate change shocks, forced displacement and food insecurity. In some contexts, Government responses to the unfolding crisis have exposed the existing structural inequalities. We have seen a noticeable increase in gender-based violence and a decline in access to basic services, alongside justice and health care, which disproportionately affects women and girls.

It is therefore important that countries' immediate response and longer-term investments address these realities in order to avoid exacerbating existing sources of fragility and instead help build resilience, to both this crisis and future shocks. To achieve this, a major reorientation of peacebuilding approaches to respond to this multidimensional threat is required. Such approaches need to be conflict-sensitive and risk-informed, and should incorporate provisions for the most vulnerable and marginalized in society. If not addressed appropriately, our apprehensions are that efforts undertaken may undermine the peacebuilding gains made to date, and complicate future efforts to build more peaceful and inclusive societies.

National Governments in conflict-affected countries are doing their best to save lives and mitigate the worst socioeconomic impacts. However, efforts by national Governments alone will not be enough to tackle the crisis; they need to be complemented through responsible and collaborative approaches from the international community.

Let me share my thoughts for addressing the many impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on peacebuilding and sustaining peace.

First, a system-wide implementation of the sustaining peace approach is critical to ensure that the United Nations response contributes to decreasing risks of violent conflict in the longer term, including efforts to build back better. In this context, the value of the humanitarian-development-peacebuilding nexus in particular gains more relevance. The United Nations system, national Governments and international partners should avoid focusing only on emergency response; rather, all should collaborate to work across the three pillars. Given that the risk factors for violence may be increasing during this crisis, building back better is also an opportunity to promote peaceful societies.

Secondly, the activities of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) in supporting conflict-affected countries must factor in the need for investing more in State institutions, including those dealing with health, law enforcement, disaster

management, food security and education. Peacebuilding Fund projects should take this duly into consideration.

Thirdly, in the changed situations on the ground brought about by the pandemic, peacebuilding efforts can draw upon the adjustments already being exercised by peacekeeping in certain common areas. Reorientation in community outreach, the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda, addressing infodemics, and the protection of civilians could be some such areas to consider.

Fourthly, the Secretary-General's global ceasefire appeal and resolution 2532 (2020) could be used as the leveraging tools for rallying national Governments and warring parties to peacebuilding efforts. In that regard, the Security Council's explicit support for the work of the PBC will be crucial.

Fifthly, as recommended in the Secretary-General's latest report (S/2020/773) on the comprehensive review of the peacebuilding architecture, the Peacebuilding Commission should enhance its partnership with regional and subregional organizations, including the African Union Peace and Security Council. That has become more relevant in the context of the pandemic. Greater engagement between the Council and such regional and subregional peace and security organizations could be the way forward. That would help customize peacebuilding activities to regional and subregional realities, and hence make them more effective.

Sixthly, specific initiatives could be piloted in countries on the agenda. Current movement restrictions provide an opportunity to think about how to be more inclusive, since we have been able to work from home but still connect to each other. New actors can be included in the conversation as we create more robust virtual platforms. It can also change dynamics within societies. For example, since the disease affects young people to a lesser extent, it gives them an opportunity to be more active and meaningful contributors to building peace in their societies.

Finally, the Peacebuilding Commission could play a more concrete role in mobilizing funding to respond to increased peacebuilding challenges linked to the COVID-19 crisis in the most fragile countries and vulnerable sectors of societies, including women and girls, by deepening partnerships with international and regional financial institutions, as well as with non-traditional actors such as private corporations and philanthropic organizations. Attracting private-sector funding for peacebuilding may not be easy when the global economy as a whole is contracting, let alone when it comes to the economies of countries emerging from conflict. Yet sectors that flourished during the pandemic — such as e-commerce, telemedicine, online education, as well as building the digital backbone — are areas where such partnerships could potentially be envisaged. The Security Council can play a convening role in such contexts to facilitate a system-wide push towards the sustaining peace agenda.

In conclusion, I wish to reaffirm Bangladesh's commitment to peacebuilding and sustaining peace and our willingness to remain engaged in further strengthening the United Nations peacebuilding architecture at a time when peacebuilding and conflict prevention have become more challenging.

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

Brazil is thankful to the Indonesian presidency of the Security Council for organizing this high-level open video-teleconference on pandemics and the challenges of sustaining peace. We also thank Secretary-General António Guterres, former Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and all the other briefers for their insightful considerations.

Brazil attaches great importance to the effectiveness of United Nations efforts to build and sustain peace. Within our collective peace and security paradigm, investment in sustaining peace has proven to be most cost-effective approach. Particularly when considered in comparison with crisis-oriented approaches to maintain peace and security, the long-term engagement provided under the peacebuilding framework tends to be better suited to addressing underlying causes of conflict and strengthening national ownership and capacities to sustain peace.

The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic poses additional challenges to already vulnerable populations in conflict-affected countries. Brazil has supported the Secretary-General's call for a global ceasefire in the wake of this crisis, as, in our view, the historic humanitarian pause proposed by resolution 2532 (2020) deserves our full unwavering support. Bearing the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, the Security Council has a crucial role, under the terms of the Charter of the United Nations, in contributing to strengthening international cooperation efforts to alleviate the socioeconomic impacts of the pandemic in the context of sustaining peace.

Brazil encourages the United Nations and its Member States to enhance support of nationally defined responses to the pandemic. It is important to speed up cooperation projects tailored to the specific needs of populations on the ground and to prioritize initiatives that generate concrete results for those communities. In that context, promoting access to safe, quality, effective and affordable medicines, vaccines and medical products and supporting a multisectoral approach are essential elements in the fight against COVID-19 that can contribute to lasting peace.

Special attention must also be given to the balance between short- and long-term support. Similarly to security threats, humanitarian and health crises tend to focus our attention on the most immediate needs of populations at risk in conflict-stricken countries. Even though some of that emergency assistance can fall outside of the domain of development cooperation, it is essential that new humanitarian pledges be appropriately integrated into broad peace efforts and converge with the long-term goal of promoting structural development and lasting peace.

Since the beginning of April, the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) has redoubled its efforts to counter the possible negative impacts of COVID-19 in peacebuilding efforts. The PBC is particularly well-positioned to help conflict-affected and post-conflict countries address multidimensional challenges pertaining to the intersection between development and peace. The PBC should therefore continue to offer its platform to host discussions on the specific needs of countries engaged in peacebuilding, at their request. By making full use of its advisory capacities, the PBC can also assist the Security Council, the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council to coordinate their efforts and better serve the interests of Member States.

Peacekeeping missions have also offered relevant contributions in assisting national efforts in response to the pandemic. Together with Indonesia, Brazil has chaired the working group responsible for discussing the peacebuilding

and sustaining peace pillar of the Secretary-General's Action for Peacekeeping initiative. Through the Declaration of Shared Commitments on United Nations Peacekeeping Operations, Member States have agreed that the role of peacekeepers as early peacebuilders should be further enhanced and properly funded. Given the emergence of the COVID-19 crisis, there is an urgent call for peacekeeping missions to strengthen these components and improve their coordination with other forms of United Nations presence in the field in order to ensure that nationally defined peacebuilding and development goals can be fully realized. The continued support from the international community throughout the whole peace continuum is also especially important during mission transitions and drawdowns, with the aim of preserving hard-won peacebuilding gains and preventing countries from relapsing into conflict.

Finally, as we recall the commitments under the Action for Peacekeeping initiative, as well as the upcoming anniversary of the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security, Brazil would like to acknowledge the disproportionate toll that the pandemic has taken on women and girls, especially in the context of conflict-affected countries. In this sense, we call on the international community to recognize the challenges facing women peacebuilders and local women's organizations during the crisis, including those caused by a lack of funding, some of which has been diverted to projects dealing directly with COVID-19. As established by the Security Council, the presence of women on the ground has a positive impact on peacekeeping and peacebuilding initiatives, including the protection of civilians, a role made only more crucial in these trying times. Brazil extends its support to international initiatives under way to mitigate the additional difficulties brought about by the pandemic on the work of women on the ground.

Annex 23

Statement by the Permanent Mission of Chile to the United Nations

[Original: Spanish]

We thank the Indonesian presidency of the Security Council for organizing this debate, as well as the Secretary-General, former Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon, representing, The Elders, and Ms. Sarah Cliffe, Director of the Center for International Cooperation at New York University, for their briefings.

It is particularly timely that the Council take up this topic, especially as a robust and coordinated multilateral responses are required across the United Nations system and relevant specialized agencies, delivering on time and where needed most during the current global coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic.

We therefore believe that, alongside urgent responses to tackle the pandemic, it is essential to work towards peacebuilding and sustaining peace in areas at risk, to appropriately tackle emerging threats and preserve the gains made through years of international efforts and United Nations presence on the ground, as well as to lay the foundation for solid and comprehensive post-pandemic recovery, including preventing associated risks to international peace and security.

In this way, together with the people-centred preventative approach adopted within the United Nations, we have come to better grasp the multidimensional complexity that such emerging threats entail, since the possible ripple effects of the pandemic as a catalyst for violence and instability in areas of high volatility are of great concern to the Council's work.

Chile joined the Secretary-General's global ceasefire call last March, especially in the light of reports of the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on vulnerable populations, above all on women and girls — because of both the prevalence of sexual and gender-based violence in situations of conflict of tension, and the crucial role played by women on the front lines of the pandemic as essential health workers.

We therefore underscore the role of women in peace and security processes in addressing such new threats, and, moreover, almost 20 years on from the adoption of the resolution 1325 (2000), we continue to recognize the key role women play in sustaining peace through their participation in building resilient and cohesive societies.

Let me reiterate, on behalf of my country, that one of the main requirements in mounting an adequate response to these new threats necessarily involves international solidarity, and, although we understand that peaceful conditions would be the ideal context in which to tackle a pandemic, we recognize that conditions on the ground often pose adverse challenge to solidarity. It is therefore vital to count on the commitment of all relevant actors to guarantee safe and secure access for the delivery of international assistance, with due regard to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

In conclusion, we would like to acknowledge in particular how, through discussions such as this and the resolution adopted last month, the Security Council is contributing to the most urgent efforts and interests of the Organization and its Member States. We hope that discussion will continue on the various aspects identified during this debate, as well as on lessons learned previously, to address the challenges pandemics pose on the ground, including to peacebuilding, and with regard to mandates for the maintenance of international peace and security.

Annex 24**Statement by the Permanent Mission of Colombia to the United Nations**

[Original: Spanish]

I thank Indonesia for convening this open debate, as well as Secretary-General António Guterres, former Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon and Sarah Cliffe, Director of the Center on International Cooperation at New York University, for their briefings.

Today I would like to discuss the activities undertaken by the Government of Colombia to respond effectively to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) and to continue making decisive efforts towards peacebuilding. I also wish to share our vision of the important role that the Peacebuilding Commission is playing and the challenges it faces in the midst of the pandemic.

My country firmly believes that our response to the situation we currently face must be guided by the principles of solidarity, inclusion and respect for human rights. COVID-19 is not only a public health emergency; it is also a socioeconomic one, affecting the most vulnerable around the globe. In this regard, we must ensure the protection of citizens' lives by strengthening the response capacity of our health institutions and by offering economic alternatives.

Like other countries, Colombia is facing monumental challenges. My Government has implemented comprehensive measures to safeguard public health, provide support to the most vulnerable, safeguard jobs, protect productive sectors and guarantee the well-being of our citizens.

In the context of the pandemic, Colombia is proceeding with its firm commitment to implementing the terms of the 2016 Final Agreement for Ending the Conflict and Building a Stable and Lasting Peace. We have continued to make progress in the areas of work under the Peace with Legality policy. Its implementation is a priority for the Government of President Duque Márquez.

Among the main challenges that this situation has brought to light in a country such as Colombia is finding a balance between health care and economic activity. Efforts to foster social cohesion and resilience, as well as empowering local communities in all sectors by effectively supporting initiatives by women, young people and other key actors, are important in meeting the socioeconomic challenges resulting from the pandemic.

In Colombia, all the agencies in charge of implementing the policy on peace with legality have adopted measures for the prevention, care of and mitigation of the risks posed by COVID-19. The beneficiaries of those measures include ex-combatants, victims and farmers committed to the comprehensive national programme for the substitution of illicit crops.

We also continue to work hard in the area of the approval, financing and execution of development projects in the 170 municipalities most affected by violence and poverty, in which development plans with a territorial approach are being carried out. The stabilization efforts undertaken in those municipalities are financed mainly through the national budget, complemented by other public and private funds as well as international cooperation. The international community remains committed to providing support and has expressed its confidence in the results achieved.

I would like to underline that the Government has placed special emphasis on the participation of women in the consolidation of peace. The implementation

of that policy offers women, particularly rural women, better living conditions that translate into their empowerment and economic autonomy, as well as the creation of workspaces in conditions of dignity and equality, with the aim of breaking the cycles of violence that violate women's rights. I would highlight in particular the work being done by the gender group on the approval of productive projects within the framework of the reintegration processes set out in the 2016 agreement.

With regard to gender violence, in the context of the pandemic the Government has worked to mitigate the impacts of COVID-19 on women's rights, including specific guidelines to prevent and address such violence.

I would like to highlight the role of the Peacebuilding Commission during these months. Colombia, in its capacity as Vice-Chair of the Commission, is convinced that the Commission has made clear the added value that its convening power brings to the table, and, as such, we have met to discuss and advance peacebuilding priorities in the framework of the pandemic. The lessons shared in the Commission represent a vital input for the decisions that the Security Council must take and the work that it must carry out at this difficult time for humankind.

In that context, the commitment of international financial organizations and public and private donors is key in order to ensure the smooth flow of resources and information in order to achieve a more effective response. We need to reach a global consensus with the international financial institutions in order to increase the resources necessary to reduce payments on emerging countries' debt and contribute to their development. Financing for peacebuilding is linked to development and addressing the root causes of conflict.

Without economic growth, countries emerging from conflict situations and now facing the crisis resulting from the pandemic cannot generate enough opportunities for their citizens. For that reason, coordinated work among Governments and all the United Nations institutions on the ground is essential. In the case of Colombia, we have a country team of extraordinary professionalism in addition to the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia. Cooperation on the part of the Mission and the country team with the Government has been very positive and constructive over the years.

It should be stressed that international donor funds can never be enough for a country in the process of peacebuilding that is also facing a pandemic. Such funds work better as catalysts than as ongoing sources of funding.

I want to emphasize that peacebuilding is not an easy task even in normal times. Reaching an agreement is only an initial step. Achieving the transformations necessary to make those agreements a reality is the difficult, lengthy and most challenging part.

In that respect, neither individual countries nor the United Nations system can ignore the implications of complex contexts such as the pandemic or a socioeconomic crisis, which could threaten peace and security. This is a time for multilateral cooperation and international solidarity. We have to aim for two goals: humanitarian care and economic recovery.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate the commitment of the Government of President Iván Duque Márquez to the construction of a peace with legality. The support of the United Nations is decisive in order to achieve development in the territories most affected by violence and poverty.

In the midst of the current global crisis, we will spare no effort to continue to dedicate all possible resources to achieving the results that our citizens deserve.

Annex 25**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Costa Rica to the United Nations, Rodrigo A. Carazo**

[Original: Spanish]

Costa Rica thanks Indonesia, as President of the Security Council during the month of August, for having convened this debate, as well as Mr. António Guterres, Secretary-General, and briefers Mr. Ban Ki-moon, former Secretary-General, and Ms. Sarah Cliffe, Director of the Center on International Cooperation, New York University, for their contributions to this debate.

The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) has impacted all sectors of society, creating multiple crises that threaten peace and stability. Its impact is and will continue to be greater in countries in conflict or emerging from it, hence the importance of this debate.

Even though the Security Council has not recognized the new coronavirus pandemic as a threat to international peace and security — which does not mean that it is not — the Council must ensure that it does not pose yet another threat to peace processes and undermine the gains already made. In the Council are the world's main arms exporters, and Costa Rica would remind those countries of the need to carry out international arms transfers in a responsible manner, thus helping to prevent violent conflicts and alleviate tensions.

It is largely up to the Council to respond to the Secretary-General's call for a global ceasefire and to redouble its efforts to ensure that in those conflicts in which it has not yet been possible to silence the guns, that goal can be achieved in a timely manner.

The most vulnerable and unprotected are those who are suffering twice, as a result of both the conflict and the health emergency. Boys, girls and women require special protection at this time. It is not acceptable for hospital facilities and care centres for COVID-19 patients to be targeted by groups in conflict, especially when health systems cannot cope with the pandemic. The Governments of the world and their resources have to be focused on fighting the virus that has caused this crisis.

Silencing the guns will help bring immediate humanitarian relief but will not ensure the consolidation of the peace to which we all aspire. Lasting peace will be achieved if the only fight waged is against the pandemic and the socioeconomic effects of the prevention measures taken, mainly in areas where conflicts prevail and in countries with fewer resources.

That will be achieved only if we comply with the mandate of the Charter of the United Nations as contained in Article 26, which demands that the Security Council promote the establishment and maintenance of international peace and security with the least diversion for armaments of the world's human and economic resources.

Costa Rica fully supports the Secretary-General's call for solidarity and the creation of a fund dedicated to COVID-19, as well as General Assembly resolution 74/270, but we must guarantee that such resources are used only for sustainable development and peacebuilding.

The steps that we take to recover from the impact of the pandemic must involve building and rebuilding egalitarian and inclusive societies, in keeping with the commitment that we made when, as Members of the Organization, we adopted the Sustainable Development Goals. We must not lose sight of the fact that where there exist inequalities such as those suffered by young people and women, which are

accentuated in crisis and conflict situations, organized crime and extremist groups will exploit them for their own gain, threatening lasting peace.

To conclude, the Security Council must remain vigilant so that the achievements made in terms of international peace and security are not reversed, as COVID-19 has pushed many countries to the brink of a societal crisis and revealed political discontent in others. Some States will not be able to face those consequences on their own, and therefore the response they require must come from the United Nations system as a whole, based on international cooperation and the spirit of solidarity reflected in the purposes and principles of the Charter and expanded on in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Annex 26**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: Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden and Denmark.

Today's debate on peacebuilding and pandemics is timely, as we are about to embark on the formal phase of the 2020 review of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture.

The impact of the pandemic constitutes an additional threat multiplier that risks reversing the hard-won peacebuilding gains. For many communities in conflict-affected countries, the pandemic is a catastrophe on top of a crisis. Fragile and conflict-affected countries face the challenge of having to address the urgent health and humanitarian impact of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) while continuing to implement peacebuilding efforts in increasingly complex conflict scenarios. We have also seen how the pandemic and its devastating socioeconomic repercussions can deepen the root causes of fragility and conflict, such as inequality, food insecurity and the consequences of unmitigated climate change. In combination with a growing number of human rights violations and abuses, increasing racism and discrimination and rising incitement to hatred and violence, as well as countless examples of the spread of misinformation and disinformation about the pandemic, this threatens to escalate ongoing conflict and displacement, foment new tensions and reverse humanitarian, development and peacebuilding progress.

We, the Members of the United Nations, must therefore resolve to take immediate and coordinated action to effectively mitigate the escalatory potential of the pandemic while strengthening long-term foundations for lasting peace. Sustaining peace is one of the core tasks of the United Nations and must be a shared responsibility that flows across the entire peace continuum and all three pillars of the United Nations engagement.

We encourage the Security Council in particular to leverage all the tools at its disposal to support an integrated and coordinated United Nations response to the various phases of often complex conflicts, including prevention and peacebuilding. In particular, we hope to see even closer and more timely cooperation between the Security Council and the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC). We welcome the recently convened informal interactive dialogue between the PBC and the Security Council and encourage continued engagement between these two bodies going forward. The PBC can offer valuable advice, including during the early stages of mandate formulation through to review and drawdown strategies.

The impact of the ongoing pandemic on conflict dynamics has underlined the need for peace operations' mandates to be adaptable to changing political and operational challenges through the various stages of United Nations missions' engagement. Member State commitment, solidarity and flexibility are essential for peace operations to deliver on their mandate. We therefore reiterate our support for the Secretary-General's sustaining peace agenda as well as the Action for Peacekeeping agenda.

United Nations special political missions and peacekeeping operations play an important role at the country level in addressing the root causes of conflict by building capacity and fostering continued progress on peacebuilding processes, thereby increasing resilience to ongoing and future crises. What we do today has bearing on the longer term. We encourage a renewed commitment to integrating the efforts of United Nations peace operations with responses by the United Nations

country team and to ensure coherence between humanitarian, development, human rights and peacebuilding efforts under the stewardship of an empowered Resident Coordinator. That includes engaging all relevant actors in the design of the United Nations sustainable development cooperation frameworks, as well as adopting a conflict-sensitive approach to humanitarian and development programming. These efforts are crucial to reinforcing the link between the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the sustaining peace agenda.

Human rights must not become a casualty of the pandemic. The obligation to respect, protect and fulfil human rights must be front and centre in our response. Democracy and the rule of law must be upheld. The Secretary-General's February call to action on human rights is a tool at our disposal that we must apply in order to ensure that efforts to address the ongoing crisis do not exacerbate existing inequalities and the root causes of conflict but rather contribute to strengthening resilience and sustaining peace. We welcome the recent convening of an informal exchange between the Security Council and the Human Rights Council and hope to see similar exchanges happen more frequently.

From the onset of the pandemic, women have been on the frontlines as responders, caregivers and leaders in their communities. Alongside the COVID-19 crisis, a pandemic within the pandemic is happening, with increased levels of abuse and sexual and gender-based violence perpetrated against women and girls. Making sure that women are included in decision-making and that a gender-transformative approach is applied at all stages of peacebuilding must be our common priority.

We now have an opportunity to constructively advance the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda as part of the short- and long-term response to the pandemic. To ensure effective and context-specific advances on the women and peace and security agenda on the ground, we urge the Security Council to further utilize the recommendations provided by the Informal Expert Group on Women and Peace and Security. We also welcome the recent brief from the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and UN-Women on COVID-19 and conflict. Ensuring a holistic multi-stakeholder approach that advances the inclusive and meaningful participation of women, youth, indigenous peoples and persons belonging to marginalized groups, such as minorities and persons with disabilities, is key to sustainably addressing the long-term implications of the pandemic in conflict-affected settings while sustaining momentum on peace processes.

Partnerships are essential both in dealing with the immediate consequences of the current pandemic in the context of sustaining peace and in working to strengthen resilience to future crises. To that end, it is important that both the Security Council and United Nations peace operations harness a broad range of capacities and expertise by collaborating with local peace actors, as well as regional and subregional organizations. Such entities have proved critical in the face of the access restrictions imposed during the pandemic, and they provide a long-term presence, remaining well beyond mission drawdown.

In a similar vein, we would like to see the United Nations and the World Bank deepen their alignment of capacities, tools and resources in support of national Governments. There is a need for integrated analysis and joint strategies. Such a strengthened partnership between the United Nations and international financial institutions could be leveraged to reduce the risk of conflict, sustain peace and mitigate the long-term negative impacts of the pandemic by building back better and greener as a result of the crisis, in line with the commitments of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change.

The economic fallout from the pandemic, combined with the reversal of peace gains, makes it as important as ever to galvanize efforts to leverage new financing and foster collaboration with new partners. We need to think innovatively about ways to increase sustainable, predictable, more coherent and better coordinated financing for peacebuilding. On the one hand, we need to mobilize additional funding for the Peacebuilding Fund, which plays an important role as a catalytic and flexible tool for peacebuilding. But there is also an opportunity to further engage the private sector, where relevant, in conflict prevention and peacebuilding efforts. Beyond funding, the private sector can also support entrepreneurial action in communities to better recover from the crisis, while mobilizing support for peacebuilding efforts. As countries emerge from the crisis, it is critical to support skills development and create opportunities for decent jobs in more resilient and less vulnerable sectors and industries.

In conclusion, the ongoing pandemic serves as a stark reminder of the need for global solidarity and reinvigorated multilateral cooperation, not least in support of the peacebuilding agenda. Our collective response will determine how fast and how well the world recovers. In recent years, the international community has made important progress towards a shared commitment to the sustaining peace agenda. The different branches of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture must now be adequately empowered to urgently do their part to translate those principles into tangible results on the ground. The only way to emerge stronger from this crisis and prevent future ones is through a cross-pillar approach that prioritizes conflict prevention and addresses the root causes of conflict.

Annex 27**Statement by the Deputy Permanent Representative of Ecuador to the United Nations, Helena Yáñez Loza**

[Original: Spanish]

Let me begin by congratulating Indonesia on having accepted the request from several countries, including Ecuador, for the ongoing consideration of the risks to international peace and security posed by the pandemic. This dialogue should in fact be included in the formal agenda of the Security Council throughout the year so that we can assess the evolving situation.

I would also like to highlight the briefings by Secretary-General António Guterres (annex 1), former Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon (annex 2) and Ms. Sarah Cliffe, Director of the Center on International Cooperation at New York University (annex 3).

By adopting resolution 2532 (2020), on the coronavirus disease (COVID-19), on 1 July, the Security Council decisively joined the global efforts to combat the pandemic and those to mitigate and overcome the challenges that it is posing to peace and security. It is now crucial that the Security Council and all States Members of the Organization promote the effective implementation of the resolution, which calls for an immediate and comprehensive cessation of hostilities in all situations and calls on all parties to armed conflicts to engage immediately in a humanitarian pause for at least 90 days.

It is particularly important to implement the global ceasefire in order to facilitate humanitarian access and as a first step towards sustainable peace, as proposed by the Secretary-General and endorsed by 172 countries through the ceasefire statement co-sponsored by Ecuador.

Ecuador advocates that it be complied with now and that the call for a humanitarian pause be renewed for another 90 days, by 1 October. It would also be useful for the Security Council and the Secretariat to be regularly informed where the resolution is being implemented and in which areas greater support is needed to ensure its effective implementation.

The COVID-19 pandemic has already marked a turning point in peacekeeping and peacebuilding efforts, and it is occurring in the very year of the peacebuilding architecture review. Once the formal part of the review begins, we will need to take into account the outcome of this debate and acknowledge that pandemics exacerbate crisis conditions on the ground and undermine security and stability, thereby threatening peace. We need to promote efforts to improve the security conditions surrounding health systems and infrastructure. We also need to make progress on a coordinated international response.

Moreover, we should redouble our efforts to ensure that this and future pandemics do not affect the Organization's new approach to preventive diplomacy. For example, we must therefore support the border areas of countries suffering from conflicts, as well as their neighbours, as Ecuador has been proposing in the consultations on implementing resolutions 2282 (2016) and 2413 (2018).

Advancing the sustainable peace agenda did not anticipate a global crisis such as that resulting from COVID-19. However, it now requires cross-cutting and coordinated measures to combat COVID-19 and capacity-building so as to better address pandemics in the future, including through more robust and resilient peace and security frameworks.

Annex 28**Statement by the Permanent Mission of El Salvador to the United Nations**

[Original: Spanish]

El Salvador thanks the presidency of the Security Council for its interest in continuing to address the challenges posed by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, particularly those related to global peace and security, as well as all the efforts to hold this open debate.

At the outset, my country commends the outstanding work of peacekeepers around the world and pays tribute to the men and women who have given their lives for peace and whose work and commitment will endure over the years in the history of the Organization and of the countries that they so honourably represent. El Salvador reaffirms its commitment to peacekeeping operations by contributing its highly trained police and military personnel. Given the great challenges posed by the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, the importance of that mechanism, which has given hope to thousands of people around the world, has been highlighted now more than ever.

The Salvadoran military and police forces will continue to support the efforts undertaken by the Secretary-General and the Governments of the countries that have a peace operation on their territories.

As mentioned above, El Salvador believes that the pandemic represents a serious threat to peace and security and could mean a setback in the achievement of economic and social development. Furthermore, it highlights the fragilities of many peace processes, threatening the population's access to basic services, unfortunately opening the door to stigmatization and hate speech, and increasing economic differences among the population.

The pandemic also jeopardizes the population's levels of trust in public institutions, which may be further eroded in places where authorities are perceived to have not addressed the pandemic effectively or to have not been transparent about its impact. As institutions lose trust, they become more vulnerable and fuel social unrest, which could lead to even greater conflict because of the limited scope for action by States and the eroded political capital of Governments to address this challenge.

The pandemic requires considerable attention to mitigate its consequences and care for the population so that irreparable loss of life and a health system crisis in affected countries can be avoided. At the same time, it could create a major distraction from addressing all the threats to peace and security, which could be used by terrorist, extremist and organized crime groups to advance their illegal operations, exploiting the uncertainty created by COVID-19 as a tactical advantage.

El Salvador has taken note of the humanitarian difficulties in different countries and regions of the world and is paying close attention to how these have increased over the past few months as a result of the pandemic. My country calls for respect for international humanitarian law, improving systems for the protection of civilians in conflict regions and ensuring access to humanitarian assistance, through the principles established by the Organization. The pandemic cannot be a pretext for putting democracy and the rule of law at risk, which is why it calls on all political forces to take the necessary measures to guarantee the scheduled elections and reproaches all those attempts to ignore these important agreements, which will only fuel political tensions.

The threats posed by the pandemic require an urgent and unique response, based on understanding among all parts of this Organization, cooperation and international solidarity. El Salvador welcomes the fact that some 180 States have joined the international community in supporting the Secretary-General's call for a global ceasefire and in unanimously adopting resolution 2532 (2020). We hope that this understanding of the Security Council will be translated into genuine action by all parties to put an end to the conflicts and provide a true humanitarian response to the consequences of the COVID-19 outbreak.

The challenge for the Members of the Organization, together with other relevant actors, will always be the protection of millions of people affected by conflict and who are in situations of serious vulnerability. For this work, the Security Council, as the guarantor and protector of international peace and security, has a fundamental duty to make its voice heard and to make its influence felt at this juncture, through clear guidelines and by coordinating the support that should be given to operations on the ground, as well as the resources necessary to meet this challenge on a global scale.

El Salvador calls on the Security Council to continue to address this public health emergency. Political interests should not take precedence while the pandemic is spreading on the ground and endangering the situation of millions of people in areas of conflict and affected areas. Furthermore, the door should be opened for subsequently taking economic measures, which should be effectively promoted by the United Nations system and the General Assembly.

El Salvador appreciates all the efforts undertaken by the Secretary-General and the United Nations system in support of mitigating the spread of COVID-19 among peace operations personnel, and further welcomes the support that these missions provide to the Governments of countries that have a peace operation on the ground.

My country stresses the importance of protecting the health and well-being of all peace operations personnel, and calls for further efforts to provide all personnel with the necessary protective equipment to effectively and safely carry out their work.

Finally, El Salvador calls for all assistance plans to be developed ensuring support for the most vulnerable groups and sectors of the population, including migrants, displaced persons, civilians residing in areas controlled by non-State armed groups, detained persons and those working in the informal sector of the economy. It is also essential to ensure such assistance for older persons, a group highly affected by the pandemic, racial minorities, children and youth, and women, among others. The protection of civilians and actions that enable the building of community trust must be protected and maintained.

Annex 29

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

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its Member States.

The candidate countries the Republic of North Macedonia, Montenegro 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 Indonesia for organizing this high-level open debate of the Security Council on pandemics and the challenges of sustaining peace, in continuation of the high-level debate organized last month by Germany on pandemics and security (S/2020/663) and the very welcome adoption of resolution 2532 (2020), signalling the continuity of the engagement of the Security Council on this issue.

The EU and its member States have been staunch supporters of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture since it was first established in 2005, and of subsequent United Nations reforms to ensure that institutions, structures and instruments are fit for purpose. The peacebuilding architecture has come to play a key role in enhancing the integrated cross-pillar approach and bringing together political, security, humanitarian and developmental partners. Today's discussion is timely, as Member States are about to embark on the formal part of the review of the peacebuilding architecture.

The EU is committed to the 2016 twin resolutions (Security Council resolution 2282 (2016) and General Assembly resolution 70/262) on peacebuilding and sustaining peace, understood as an inherently political process aimed at preventing the outbreak, escalation, recurrence or continuation of conflict. While progress has been made towards what is set out in the 2016 twin resolutions, concerted efforts must continue to ensure their full implementation, with a comprehensive approach to sustaining peace.

The United Nations peacebuilding architecture needs to adapt to the new type of challenges that the world is facing, such as the consequences of climate change, environmental degradation and global public health crises, as well as emerging challenges and opportunities associated with new technologies.

We are witnessing every day the direct and secondary consequences of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic interacting with pre-existing crises. The pandemic adds another layer of complexity to already fragile situations affected by years of conflict but engaged in peacebuilding processes. It is creating new and amplifying existing problems and exacerbating existing human rights concerns and socioeconomic and gender-based inequalities, increased insecurity for women, girls and persons in vulnerable situations, as well as mental health and psycho-social concerns. 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 a combination of multilateral tools.

There is a strong complementarity between working towards sustainable development, poverty reduction, the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, and preventing violent conflicts. 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 call for action for human

rights, his appeal for a global ceasefire and his call for building back better, as reaffirmed by High Representative Josep Borrell.

The United Nations should lead a coordinated, collaborative and inclusive approach at all levels, based on the comparative advantages of all relevant humanitarian, development and security actors. Focus should be on addressing needs and respect for human rights, reducing risks and vulnerabilities and increasing the resilience of communities and States in the longer term. The humanitarian-development-peace nexus, applied with attention to conflict prevention, and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development should become the working method for the response to the pandemic. Indeed, a strong humanitarian-development-peace nexus in the design and implementation of the response, in line with 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 pandemic can tip the balance from unstable peace to violent conflict. The economic impact may rapidly translate into other threats to sustainable peace, ranging from food insecurity to an escalation of pre-existing tensions. We are in regular contact with United Nations and World Bank colleagues to prepare for post-disaster needs assessments and recovery and peacebuilding assessments to be carried out as part of the multilateral approach. We are also adapting ongoing activities to the changed circumstances on the ground.

This global crisis is likely to exacerbate many of the challenges that the world was facing before the outbreak at the local and regional levels, as well as at the global level. The crisis may also bring opportunities for advances in peace processes and for multilateralism. We have to be ready to seize these opportunities, promoting a sustainable and green recovery guided by human rights, fundamental freedoms and gender equality that accelerates the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and the objectives of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change.

In that respect, we believe that the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) can play a key role, including in its advisory capacity to the Security Council, promoting clarity and raising attention to and awareness of the particular threats that the pandemic is posing in peacebuilding and sustaining peace contexts.

We also see this as an opportunity for the PBC to strengthen its ties with other relevant United Nations bodies, such as the Human Rights Council, as well as with civil society organizations and communities on the ground. We welcome the recently convened informal interactive dialogue between the PBC and the Security Council, as well as the informal meeting between the Human Rights Council President and the Security Council. We all know that an effective response to the challenge will need to draw upon cross-pillar United Nations coherence to ensure a one-United Nations mandate delivery at the country level, with full respect for human rights, gender equality and the principle of non-discrimination. It will also call for regional cooperation and regionalized responses, as well as innovative approaches to dialogue and mediation support.

Respect for and the protection and fulfilment of human rights, gender equality, democracy, the rule of law and transitional justice play a central role in ensuring security, stabilization and sustainable peace. The consolidation of political and social institutions and core Government functions is essential. The Peacebuilding Architecture should more systematically integrate human rights and protection of civilian structures, tools and actors for conflict prevention purposes.

We need to ensure that the longer-term effect of the COVID-19 crisis is a strengthened multilateral global partnership that is better prepared to respond to global health crises and their aftermaths, while taking into account measures taken

at the national level. We can turn some of these unprecedented challenges into opportunities for peacebuilding and peacebuilding partnerships at all levels.

However, we also need to ensure sustainable, predictable and coherent funding for United Nations peacebuilding activities and peacebuilding efforts in general. The Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Fund — through its flexible and catalytic nature — have unique roles to play in supporting a conflict-sensitive international response to the pandemic, supporting the efforts of local peacebuilders and ensuring a coherent and mutually reinforcing peacebuilding response to COVID-19. The PBC's flexible working methods and ability to raise and sustain attention can bolster coordination and capacity-building and enhance long-term effectiveness.

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 and its health and socioeconomic impact and strengthening the health systems and preparedness and response-capacity of partners, including for the benefit of populations already affected by conflict and displacement. Beyond the immediate emergency, this response is also tailored to help sustain the peacebuilding processes of fragile societies in the long run.

We are adapting existing programmes not only to help communities cope with the consequences of the crisis and mitigate its security impacts, but also to support them in maintaining their efforts to sustain peace. For instance, the EU recently launched a €10-million project to maintain and reinforce child-protection mechanisms in sub-Saharan Africa during the COVID-19 crisis. In this regard, it is fundamental to continue ensuring humanitarian access and working together to remove access obstacles related to COVID-19.

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. At the same time, women and girls have been more prone to immediate risks linked not only to sexual and gender-based violence, but also to their sexual and reproductive health and rights or the unequal sharing of responsibilities. This is a major challenge to sustaining peace processes. The closure of schools during COVID-19 hinders the development of quality education.

We also echo the Secretary-General's call for action on mental health and psychosocial support in order to ensure the full integration of that component in the COVID-19 response, to help people better cope with the crisis and to foster sustaining peace processes. At the global level, we also need to address disinformation with due respect for citizens' freedom of expression as well as public order and safety, while also ensuring that effective and factual communication reaches all facets of societies. Social media plays a central role in such efforts.

As we celebrate the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations, we commend the Secretary-General's leadership and multiple initiatives to address the multifaceted COVID-19 pandemic. We reiterate our full support for the coordinating, normative and operative role of the World Health Organization (WHO) in the global public-health response and in its role to ensure the implementation of the International Health Regulations as well as in supporting the most fragile and vulnerable countries.

The EU and its member States reiterate the need to ensure full respect for international law, including international humanitarian law, international human rights law and international refugee law.

In matters of sanctions and restrictive measures, the EU's targeted approach reflects the key principles guiding the EU in the use of sanctions, in particular compliance with international law and human rights, and proportionality. In principle, when sanctions include export restrictions, such prohibitions do not cover the export of food, medicines or medical equipment. In addition, the EU policy of targeted measures is underpinned by a system of exemptions. That exemption system applies also in the context of a crisis such as the current one caused by COVID-19. The EU will continue following closely the matter and is always open to listening to the observations of experts on the ground, also with regard to any need for mitigating measures.

Global health and sustaining peace go hand in hand. An efficient response to outbreaks is possible through proper coordination and leadership, respect for the International Health Regulations, a comprehensive public health response and inclusiveness.

We can recover from the hazards that create health emergencies and insecurity, but only through a coordinated One-United Nations approach. The EU remains a strong supporter of multilateralism and a rules-based order with an effective and efficient United Nations at its core. The Council can count on our continued support.

Annex 30**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Georgia to the United Nations, Kaha Immadze**

Let me begin by thanking the Indonesian presidency for having organized today's open debate.

Georgia aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union (annex 29). Let me add a few remarks in my national capacity.

The unprecedented health crisis caused by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic poses a formidable challenge to the United Nations peacebuilding and sustaining peace agenda. It has already left a lasting imprint on all three pillars of the United Nations, including by exacerbating the underlying root causes of armed conflicts, placing limitations on existing peacebuilding action and putting additional pressure on already fragile security, political, socioeconomic and humanitarian environments. The negative consequences of the pandemic have had a disproportionate impact on conflict-affected women and girls, children, forcibly displaced populations, older persons and persons with disabilities. In addition, the direct effects of the pandemic have been reflected in the disruptions caused to United Nations peacekeeping operations, special political missions and the Peacebuilding Commission.

It is equally important to ensure that the COVID-19 pandemic does not distract us from our efforts to address the aforementioned root causes. Failure in that respect could cause irreparable damage to international peace and security. While, regrettably, there are many examples illustrating such a scenario in today's world, I wish to focus on the one that my country is experiencing these days.

Amid its efforts to fight the spread of coronavirus in the country, Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity have been targeted by one of the permanent members of the Security Council. In blatant violation of its international obligations and commitments, as well as in contravention of the Secretary-General's appeal for a global ceasefire, the Russian Federation has heightened the scale of its provocations directed against Georgia. Intensified military exercises and a military build-up, the continued fortification of the occupation line by erecting barbed-wire fences and other artificial barriers, the illegal practice of arbitrary detentions and kidnappings of conflict-affected people, and the denial of humanitarian access to both the Georgian regions of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia have further aggravated the security, human rights and humanitarian situation on the ground.

To make matters worse, the process of intensified ethnic discrimination and grave human rights abuses, coupled with lengthy closures of so-called crossing points, have compounded the already fragile situation in the occupied regions, ending in the deaths of 15 people who were denied the possibility of an urgent medical evacuation. On top of that, the Russian Federation has amplified its hybrid-warfare tools and disinformation campaign, attacking one of the laboratories of Georgia's National Centre for Disease Control and Public Health, the Richard Lugar Center and even the European Union Monitoring Mission, the only international mechanism on the ground mandated to facilitate peace and security throughout the whole territory of Georgia.

Notwithstanding the aforementioned harsh reality, Georgia remains committed to doing its utmost to ensure humanitarian relief for those conflict-affected people, who have been carrying the heavy burden of the grave consequences of Russia's illegal occupation in the time of the pandemic.

Let me conclude my remarks by once again calling on the international community to urge the Russian Federation to immediately ensure the complete and unconditional elimination of any impediments to the effective delivery and access of emergency humanitarian assistance to the civilians living in the occupied regions of Georgia and to start fulfilling its international obligations, first and foremost the European Union-mediated 12 August 2008 ceasefire agreement.

Annex 31

Statement by the Permanent Mission of Guatemala to the United Nations

Guatemala would like to thank the Republic of Indonesia, as President of the Security Council, for having convened this high-level virtual open debate on pandemics and the challenges of sustaining peace, as well as the Secretary-General, António Guterres; Mr. Ban Ki-moon, former Secretary-General; and Ms. Sarah Cliffe, Director of the Center on International Cooperation, New York University, for their presentations. We also would like to welcome the concept note (S/2020/765, annex) as a basis for our deliberations.

Globally, according to the World Health Organization, there are more than 19 million confirmed cases of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19), including more than 700,000 deaths worldwide. The COVID-19 pandemic is an unprecedented crisis that has affected us all. Efforts to flatten the curve could give rise to huge but unquantified costs for the most vulnerable people on the ground. For fragile and conflict-affected countries, the pandemic represents an enormous challenge in various pivotal areas for development, including health, the economy and politics.

This experience has shown us that pandemics cannot be addressed solely as a health issue. Beyond its immediate health and humanitarian impact, COVID-19 risks deepening pre-existing social, economic and political fissures. At the same time, the pandemic is leading to an increase in social violence and conflict. It is also a threat to the achievements made in the area of international peace and security and exacerbates existing grievances and inequalities, affecting in particular the most vulnerable in conflict-affected areas.

In that regard, Guatemala would like to emphasize the importance of paying special attention to a fundamental element for a peace consolidation strategy — addressing violence against women, which has increased significantly during the pandemic. We issue a call to action to eradicate all forms of gender violence, in line with resolutions 1325 (2000) and 2467 (2019), as well as General Assembly resolution 65/69.

It is evident that the pandemic has affected the work of the United Nations system, including peacekeeping operations, special political missions, and peacebuilding mandates on the ground. In that regard, the attention and support of the Security Council and the Peacebuilding Commission are crucial if we are to address the sustaining peace implications of this pandemic. We need to address not only the conceptual elements, but also the main needs in order to avoid a relapse to previous situations.

The current crisis is also creating opportunities for immediate ceasefires that could become permanent and ultimately lead to peace. In that regard, we welcome that the Secretary-General has called for a global ceasefire, which enjoys the support of various countries and relevant stakeholders around the world, thus creating the conditions for the delivery of humanitarian assistance, open space for diplomacy and hope for those most vulnerable to COVID-19. Guatemala concurs with Secretary-General António Guterres that

“[t]he most effective way to protect civilians is to prevent the outbreak, escalation, continuation and recurrence of armed conflict. As the world confronts the monumental challenge of the COVID-19 pandemic, the need to silence the guns could not be more acute” (*S/2020/366, para. 67*).

In that regard, the international community needs to mobilize a concerted, collective response in conflict-affected countries. It is critical that in crafting

responses to the pandemic, policymakers consider social fractures. It is crucial that policymakers adopt a proactive approach to mitigate the impacts of both the health crisis and the response to it, based on an assessment of pre-existing conflict risks.

Building peace is never a straightforward mission. We live in a time when the Security Council needs to adapt to the current crisis. Unless effective policy actions are taken to support highest-risk countries, the hard-won gains on the ground in peace, security, development and human rights may be reversed. The Security Council should continue exploring ways to strengthen prevention, early detection systems and operational action to avoid conflicts, on the basis of an approach that considers the interconnected elements of peace and security, development and human rights.

The international community and the United Nations system must see the coronavirus disease pandemic as an opportunity to address risk factors for violence in conflict-affected countries. It is important to identify opportunities to strengthen national institutions.

Health and peace are interdependent. We must recognize that while peace is a precondition for a healthy society, health could also be a bridge towards peace by delivering services equitably.

In conclusion, Guatemala attaches great importance to peacebuilding efforts worldwide. The prevention of conflict is critical for sustaining peace and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals while implementing a whole-of-system approach that bridges the three pillars of the United Nations. The pandemic has shown us the importance of pooling efforts worldwide to build resilient societies and of investing in social schemes, particularly health and economic systems, in order to meet the needs of our populations.

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

We thank the Permanent Mission of Indonesia, as President of the Security Council, for convening today's important discussion under the agenda item "Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace", on the theme "pandemics and the challenges of sustaining peace".

The briefings by Secretary-General António Guterres, former Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and Ms. Sarah Cliffe, Director of the Center on International Cooperation of New York University, have provided us useful insights into the various dimensions of the challenges we face today.

We are in the midst of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, which has caused global disruption on a scale that had not been experienced by this generation. The pandemic is still raging and its implications, though hard to foretell in exact terms, is certain to be profound and multidimensional. We do, however, need to remember that while pandemics can exacerbate the humanitarian consequences of any conflict situation and present obstacles to traditional tools for conflict resolution and maintenance of peace and security, including United Nations peacekeeping operations, COVID-19 is a health crisis with far-reaching economic and humanitarian implications.

In a 9 April Security Council meeting, the Secretary-General outlined several trends related to the pandemic, with implications for conflict prevention. Those include erosion of trust in public institutions, a rise in societal tensions associated with national Governments' response measures, conflicting public health risks posed by the desire of Governments to contain the spread of virus and easing lockdowns in order to soften the impact on economies. Some conflict actors are also exploiting the current climate of uncertainty to press their agendas, including through the spread of misinformation to foment discord and violence and even sponsor opportunistic terrorist attacks.

Peacebuilding, as a concept, essentially involves a range of initiatives, including conflict prevention, peacekeeping, reconciliation, institution-building, strengthening democratic frameworks, the protection of rights and development. A combination of several factors is needed to finally ensure the success of any peacebuilding effort. We must use this paradigm to look at peacebuilding in the context of the pandemic.

COVID-19 has adversely impacted almost all initiatives that usually help contribute to peacebuilding. In some ways, it has served to exacerbate conflict situations to the extent that we now have to tackle more strife and conflict, as well as a growing humanitarian crisis rather than address some of the other important issues relating to peacebuilding. That is where our current challenge lies. How do we prioritize between various needs?

National peacebuilding efforts and attempts to address the various facets of peacebuilding have been weakened by the diversion of national resources to tackle more immediate humanitarian issues of life and death. Opportunities for innovative solutions have also shrunk. For example, the use of digital solutions to bring communities closer together, especially through the sharing of life-saving information on how to survive the pandemic, and the involvement of women and young people to strengthen social cohesion need to be enhanced but require strong international support.

COVID-19 has also impacted internationally driven support for peacebuilding approaches due to interruptions in international travel and global trade and decreasing

resources of even the wealthiest nations. Consequently, it is important for international players to look at models of international development and humanitarian action that will strengthen not just the national response to COVID-19 but also promote the essential pillars of peacebuilding. When national and international resources are dwindling, prioritization becomes essential.

Let us not forget that conflict and violence are the single biggest impediments to development and the fulfilment of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). If tensions over scarce food, a breakdown in civic trust or rumours about the virus fuel violence and discord, then the core efforts to curb the spread of the virus will be undermined and progress towards the SDGs will be reversed. According to the *Sustainable Development Goals Report 2020*, an estimated 71 million people are expected to be pushed back into extreme poverty in 2020.

India has been a positive contributor to international peace and security. We are a major troop-contributing country to United Nations peacekeeping operations, including through women peacekeepers. As a responsible stakeholder in global-health supply chains and despite the pressures to guarantee medical supplies domestically, India has ensured timely access to essential drugs, medical services and medical equipment for over 150 countries in order to combat the pandemic. India has also responded to the Secretary-General's demand for an immediate upgrade to the medical facilities of United Nations peacekeeping missions by agreeing to deploy additional medical personnel and equipment to the military hospitals in Goma and Juba, which are affiliated with the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the United Nations Mission in South Sudan, respectively.

Given the context of the pandemic, India has the following ten suggestions to offer.

First, our immediate focus should be on ensuring that the humanitarian needs of a community in a conflict are met so that lack of availability of goods and services to fulfil minimum needs itself does not become the basis for greater conflict.

Second, national Governments should support and engage local peacebuilders to help design and lead COVID-19 sensitization and response efforts to help mitigate further conflict, prevent violence, adapt and sustain peace processes and rebuild social cohesion.

Third, if peacebuilding is to endure then it must rest on institutions and not on individuals. Consequently, the strengthening of national institutions combined with the strengthening of democratic structures should not be compromised in the face of the crisis brought about by the pandemic. It is only when institutions are strong can other factors, like equitably addressing the needs of the communities in conflict and the strengthening of human rights, be effective.

Fourth, it is clear that human-centred and cooperative approaches, which are at the core of peacebuilding work, are needed. We also need resilient approaches that can enhance local capacities, skills and attributes, and enable communities not just to bounce back but to build back better. These locally owned, conflict-sensitive, gender-sensitive and trauma-informed peacebuilding approaches are highly cost-effective and sustainable. They must not be sacrificed due to short-term reallocation of funds to what are deemed immediate pandemic responses. Short- and long-term responses to COVID-19 must be aligned.

Fifth, donors and international organizations should sustain financial support to and partnership with local peacebuilders during the crisis. They should also

provide flexibility for rapid programme redesign, as well as redirection of resources to respond to emergency situations.

Sixth, performance in peacekeeping must be ensured. The Secretariat needs to carry out realistic assessments of contingents being selected and deployed in the mission areas. Troop competencies need to be a critical requirement of selection criteria. Troop-contributing countries should guarantee adherence to training plans, including with respect to predeployment and mission training, so that key mission tasks are not left to learning on the job.

Seventh, it is of vital importance that our efforts are focused towards preventing a lapse or relapse into conflict. Poverty and lack of opportunity pose some of the most formidable barriers to sustainable peace. Development is therefore critical and should have the attention of the international community.

Eighth, ensuring women's participation in peacebuilding is not only a matter of women's and girls' rights. Women are crucial partners in shoring up three pillars of lasting peace: economic recovery, social cohesion and political legitimacy. Gender capacity should be deployed in peacebuilding initiatives, gender-responsive analysis of key issues mainstreamed across mediation work and gender-inclusive language incorporated in peace agreements.

Ninth, peacebuilders must mobilize to identify and counter misinformation. Community engagement and effective communication are critical to combatting the "infodemic" of false information that often drives fear and division.

Tenth, increased support for psychosocial and trauma-healing programmes during the crisis and through the recovery process needs to be provided.

While we are still in the early stages of adapting to the new reality of peacebuilding during a global pandemic, we must build back better to regain stability and spur peace and prosperity in a world that may have been changed forever. Ensuring a strong social-cohesion and peacebuilding focus and learning how societies and institutions recover from a crisis such as this is at the heart of turning the tide on the greatest reversal of human development and making it into a decisive leap forward.

Annex 33

Statement by the Permanent Mission of Ireland to the United Nations

Ireland aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union (annex 29).

As the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic emerged at the beginning of 2020, the world was already facing record levels of humanitarian need, with conflict as a primary cause. Today, beyond the immediate health crisis, Ireland remains deeply concerned about the interlinked political, social and economic impacts of the disease and the potential for these shocks to cause new, or exacerbate existing, conflicts. We therefore want to thank Foreign Minister Marsudi and Indonesia for organizing today's important open debate and for ensuring a continued focus on these challenges. We also thank Secretary-General António Guterres, His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon and Ms. Sarah Cliffe for their insightful and informative briefings.

First, Ireland strongly welcomed the Secretary-General's call for a global ceasefire and the adoption of resolution 2532 (2020). As an incoming member of the Security Council, Ireland will continue to support United Nations efforts aimed at addressing the COVID-19 pandemic in countries and situations of armed conflicts or those affected by humanitarian crises, as mandated by the resolution.

COVID-19 affects us all. However, its potential negative impacts are significantly multiplied in conflict-affected and fragile States, where pre-existing vulnerabilities in health and governance systems, as well as in community cohesion, are amplified, placing additional pressures on already vulnerable regions. For example, in East Africa, the ongoing impact of climate change and the locust outbreak are now compounded by COVID-19.

As the secondary impacts of this global crisis begin to hit, prevention and early response will be key. The importance of a coherent and joined-up United Nations system focused on peacebuilding and sustaining peace cannot be overstated. The pandemic will test the United Nations system and its ability to act collectively and build on the success of recent reforms that we have all worked hard to make happen. To rise to the challenge posed by COVID-19, we need to maximize the existing mechanisms, whether for coordination or flow of funds, to their greatest effect, including United Nations country teams and the strengthened resident coordinator system. We urge the Council to step up support for the work of all United Nations special representatives and political missions, regional organizations, national actors and local communities in building and maintaining peace, including through robust conflict analysis and early mediation.

As a member of the United Nations Peacebuilding Commission, we welcome the Commission's early efforts aimed at discussing the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on peacebuilding efforts both globally and as part of ongoing country discussions, and at briefing the Security Council on those discussions. In collaboration with resident coordinators, the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) has been proactive in supporting United Nations country teams, such as in Guatemala, Côte d'Ivoire and Mali, to adjust existing projects to address the peacebuilding and prevention dimensions of the pandemic. As the Organization's instrument of first resort for sustaining peace in situations at risk or affected by violent conflict, the PBF must be adequately funded. In recognition of this, Ireland is committed to providing multi-annual and predictable funding for the Fund. Our contribution of €6 million over the past three years was double the original commitment made in 2017.

The disproportionate impact of the pandemic on women and girls is visible in many ways, including adverse effects on their health, education, livelihoods, food

security and nutrition, and increased risk of gender-based violence. This must not be ignored. In the twentieth anniversary year of the women and peace and security agenda, we must continue to amplify women and girls' voices during peacebuilding and recovery processes.

Supporting local ownership, improving leadership and broadening inclusion in conflict and fragile settings, with special attention to gender and youth, remains critical to an effective COVID-19 response and recovery. We have numerous examples of the effectiveness of this approach in the Ebola response in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Sierra Leone and Liberia, and we commend the efforts of civil society to highlight and address these critical issues.

COVID-19 presents unique and complex challenges to peacekeeping missions. United Nations contingents must continue to be sensitive to the needs of the host nation and local population while implementing mandates. It is critically important that the United Nations be seen as part of the solution rather than as part of the problem. The measures that the United Nations has put in place to protect local populations and our peacekeepers from COVID-19 are welcome, and we urge full compliance with them. The current crisis is testing us all but it is also demonstrating that the security of each of us is inextricably interlinked. In the words of Mike Ryan of the World Health Organization, "none of us are safe until all of us are safe". While there are heavy domestic demands on resources, we must not lose sight of the benefits we all reap from conflict reduction and prevention. We must ensure that our missions are fully resourced to carry out the tasks we ask of them. Within missions, addressing the pandemic through a protection-of-civilians lens is vital. 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 34

Statement by the Permanent Mission of Italy to the United Nations

Italy aligns itself with the statement submitted by the European Union (EU) (annex 29).

Italy wishes to thank Indonesia for organizing this high-level open debate of the Security Council on pandemics and the challenges of sustaining peace.

The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has shown us the need to promote a coordinated multilateral response. Global health is a fundamental precondition for peace, stability and prosperity and interacts with the tripartite nexus of peace, humanitarian aid and development.

That is why, from the very beginning of this global emergency, Italy strongly supported international solidarity and an international alliance to advance research on a COVID-19 vaccine. Italy has made it a consistent priority to promote universal equitable access to the vaccine and other life-saving treatments, such as therapies and diagnostics, to make sure that no one is left behind.

We were proud to be among the promoters, in partnership with the EU and other key partners, of the Coronavirus Global Response pledging conferences held on 4 May and on 27 June, which collected almost €16 billion for fair universal 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 Vaccine Global Access Facility through the Gavi Alliance advance market commitment, which will ensure access for developing countries to the vaccine.

Italy believes that increasing our support to the most vulnerable countries remains an absolute priority, which we will also promote in the context of the upcoming Italian presidency of the Group of Twenty in 2021.

In addition to its severe impact on public health, human rights and socioeconomic conditions, the pandemic has aggravated existing threats to the maintenance of international peace and security and hampered the delivery of necessary humanitarian aid. A multidimensional crisis requires a multidimensional approach and response from the United Nations, which is at the heart of the sustaining peace agenda. As we celebrate the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations, we commend the Secretary-General's leadership and multiple initiatives to address the multifaceted COVID-19 pandemic. We welcome the adoption of resolution 2532 (2020), which calls for a global ceasefire.

In the coming months there are several priority areas to which Italy is ready to contribute.

In the present state of emergency, it is of paramount importance for everyone to have access to safe, nutritious and sufficient food. In that spirit, Italy is committed to supporting the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (FAO), the World Food Programme and all the relevant United Nations actors in their efforts to prevent a global food crisis. We have been promoting a food coalition through 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.

The pandemic has also reminded us of the importance of fully implementing the women and peace and security agenda, as well as the youth, peace and security agenda. Women and girls have been particularly exposed to sexual and gender-based violence, including domestic violence, and to an 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 local communities. We must redouble our commitment to achieving gender equality and to ensuring that women participate meaningfully in decision-making processes. COVID-19 is also exacerbating the already tragic condition of people living in conflict-affected areas, in particular vulnerable groups, such as children, women and girls. That is why it is fundamental now more than ever to ensure respect for international humanitarian law and to support the United Nations efforts for a global ceasefire.

In these difficult times, United Nations peacekeeping operations have a special role to play in supporting local communities in their handling of the pandemic. The support that troop- and police-contributing countries have provided to local communities — as in the case of our national contingent in the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon — shows how peace operations can serve as a flexible tool to preserve peace and stability. In that perspective, together with the other EU troop-contributing countries, we have committed to keeping all our military assets at their current levels and to complying with the guidelines set out a few months ago by the Secretariat in order to avoid spreading the virus in missions. The Action for Peacekeeping initiative has constituted a fundamental step forward in modernizing United Nations peacekeeping missions.

The unprecedented challenges posed by COVID-19 must be transformed into opportunities for sustaining peace at all levels and inform the process of reviewing the peacebuilding architecture. The upcoming peacebuilding architecture review should therefore stress the importance of strengthening existing partnerships between the United Nations and various international financial institutions and regional organizations and developing coherent comprehensive responses to complex interrelated challenges. It is crucial to involve local communities and the private sector in that effort. The only effective way to address the consequences of the current crisis is a truly concerted effort at the global level.

The COVID-19 pandemic must further drive our search for a whole-of-system response based on coordination, partnerships and the flexible use of existing platforms. The Peacebuilding Commission, which, under its current Chair, has proactively adapted its programme of work to address the challenges of the current situation, and a better financed Peacebuilding Fund have a crucial role to play. They must mobilize a conflict-sensitive international response to the pandemic, support efforts by local communities and foster a coordinated peacebuilding response to COVID-19.

Italy will continue to contribute to the current discussions on the review of the peacebuilding architecture. We must avoid any reversal in the hard-won gains in peace, security, development and human rights. Our collective effort in tackling the effects of the pandemic must remain focused on advancing our peacebuilding and sustaining peace agenda.

Annex 35

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

I would like to express my appreciation to the Indonesian presidency for convening this open debate. I wish to take this opportunity to further elaborate on Japan's views regarding the implications of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) on peacebuilding and sustaining peace, discussed during the informal interactive dialogue between the Security Council and the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) on 22 July, in which Japan had the pleasure to participate as the PBC's Vice-Chair for this year.

This will be a long haul. The adverse effects of COVID-19 are tremendous. In addition to the acute health threat, there are the economic fallout, the loss of jobs and income, the disruption of supply chains, food insecurity, the lack of access to basic social services, increased poverty and inequality, rising communal tensions and the list goes on, all making this pandemic an unprecedented human security crisis.

Resolution 2532 (2020) recognizes that peacebuilding and development gains made by countries in transition and post-conflict countries could be reversed owing to the pandemic and acknowledges the disproportionate negative impact on the vulnerable. We welcome the adoption of this resolution, which reminds us of our collective responsibilities to ensure that hard-won gains are not reversed.

Any response to COVID-19 needs to be sought through a human security lens. The pandemic poses a multifaceted threat to the survival, livelihood and dignity of people, disrupting social cohesion and exacerbating tensions. Therefore, closer attention to the interlinkages among peace and security, development, human rights and humanitarian needs is necessary. Coherent and coordinated engagement by the United Nations system is crucial to realizing an integrated multisectoral response across the humanitarian-peace-development nexus. Moreover, partnerships with international financial institutions, traditional and emerging bilateral donors, regional organizations, civil society and the private sector should be further strengthened.

The PBC has much to offer. From the outset of the pandemic, the PBC has worked tirelessly to shed light on the situation in different countries and regions, leveraging its unique bridging role to facilitate cooperation and coordination among multiple actors within and outside the United Nations system. The PBC can and should support the Security Council by providing valuable advice and sharing compiled diverse lessons learned and experiences. We are pleased to see that the Council is taking steps to engage more with the PBC, including at a recent informal interactive dialogue, where we saw Council members' willingness and readiness to take on board the PBC's inputs.

National ownership supported by sensible leadership is crucial for building and sustaining peace. However, national leadership is being put to the test by COVID-19, as it attacks weak health systems, impedes access to education and other basic social services, as well as delays the institutional reforms in the political and security sectors. A society can be peaceful when people trust their Government. Strong and sound institutions contribute to strengthening governmental credibility, reducing vulnerability and nurturing people's trust in their Government. The 2020 review of the peacebuilding architecture gives us a perfect opportunity to refocus our energy on these critical matters, in particular the importance of institution-building, in the context of peacebuilding and sustaining peace.

We are stronger together. At the PBC, we have seen Member States rallying around those countries that came to the Commission to discuss their peacebuilding

efforts, exchanging their stories and lessons learned and showing support and solidarity. Seeing this has made me believe that we can, and we will, get through this crisis and build back better together.

Annex 36

Statement by the Chargé d'affaires of Kenya to the United Nations, Susan Mwangi

As the coronavirus disease (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. Kenya therefore commends Indonesia for bringing the global reality of pandemics and their implications for peacebuilding and sustaining peace before the Security Council for consideration.

Resolution 2532 (2020), adopted on 1 July and regarding COVID-19, is further evidence that we need to act together to address the challenges posed by pandemics in sustaining peace and peacebuilding.

Efforts to flatten the curve are happening amid diverse realities in the peace-conflict continuum. The multiplicity of these challenges are indeed a test of international crisis management. It is therefore critical for the Council to have an established framework to mitigate the threat of pandemics in future, including in the areas of sustaining peace, health and economic security. Climate change and environmental challenges have also proved to be additional hurdles that countries have to overcome during the pandemic. Kenya and other countries in the Horn of Africa and the Central African region are addressing the pandemic amidst other competing emergencies, including floods and waves of locust infestations.

The various briefings by Secretary-General António Guterres, former Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and Ms. Sarah Cliffe, Director of the Center on International Cooperation, have further demonstrated that pandemics have multifaceted implications on peace and security and are spiking humanitarian needs, not to mention reverting peacebuilding and development gains with a disproportionate impact on the poorest and most vulnerable. Therefore, pandemics cannot be addressed solely as health concerns, particularly in conflict-affected regions and countries emerging from conflict. In that regard, it is indeed critical to strengthen socioeconomic capacities of countries in alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063 of the African Union (AU).

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

The role of regional and subregional organizations in addressing the impact of COVID-19 is critical. The African Union has continued to champion the region's work in solidarity with the ongoing mitigation efforts through the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention to ensure 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, and has proved to create interruptions to ongoing peace negotiations. In that regard, Kenya stands behind the

Secretary-General's call, on 23 March, for silencing the guns globally. We also fully align ourselves with the call of the AU Commission Chairperson, His Excellency Mr. Moussa Faki Mahamat's, on 8 April, that all of us focus on collectively fighting COVID-19 as a united global community.

The COVID-19 pandemic is also having a huge impact on peace operations in mission settings. Similarly, humanitarian aid flows and ongoing peace negotiations between warring parties have also been negatively impacted, particularly in refugee and internally displaced persons camps. In that regard, my delegation wishes to recognize the sacrifice of peacekeepers, local peacebuilders, community leaders, women and youth organizations, civil society and health personnel in Africa and globally.

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

We have also witnessed the essential contribution of women in peace operations, namely, women as community leaders and also 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 pandemic-related security situation creates an important opportunity to broaden and hasten the implementation of the existing recommendations contained in the resolutions on women and peace and security and on youth, peace and security, particularly with respect to the pillars of participation, protection, prevention and partnership within the pandemic framework.

Additionally, the international community, upon request from national stakeholders, can rally around fragile countries and offer support in building resilient critical governance infrastructure, particularly health-care systems, and ensure the training of personnel and the provision of essential equipment. Access to functioning health facilities can mitigate the risk posed by the health and insecurity nexus.

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

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

Annex 37

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

Let me first of all express my gratitude to the Republic of Indonesia for the invitation to today's open debate of the Security Council. We commend you, Sir, for having chosen to put this very timely and critical issue on this month's agenda for consideration during your presidency. I would like to thank António Guterres, Secretary-General; Mr. Ban Ki-moon, former Secretary-General; and Ms. Sarah Cliffe, Director of the Center on International Cooperation, New York University, for their very informative statements.

Let me thank the organizers of today's event for the opportunity to speak on this important topic, entitled "Pandemics and the challenges of sustaining peace".

We note with deep concern the threat to human health, safety and well-being caused by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19), which continues to spread throughout the world, and we would draw attention to the unprecedented consequences of the pandemic, including serious disruptions to public life and economic development as well as challenges in the area of travel and global trade, climate change, humanitarian and migration crises, rising poverty and increasing inequality, and its detrimental effects on both human well-being and international security, which will reverse the 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 conflict-affected States. We note with deep concern the continued spread of the coronavirus pandemic in all regions of the world, which poses a major threat to human health and safety. It is obvious that peoples in conflict-affected States are paying the highest price in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic, and this is happening against the backdrop of ongoing armed conflicts.

The current situation requires the immediate unification 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. Considering this, the Kyrgyz Republic supports the call of the Secretary-General, António Guterres, for a global ceasefire and enhanced international cooperation to successfully counter the COVID-19 pandemic. We welcome resolution 2532 (2020), which demands a general and immediate cessation of hostilities in all situations on the Council's agenda and supports the efforts undertaken by the Secretary-General and his Special Representatives and Special Envoys in that respect.

There is a need to strengthen development cooperation and to increase access to concessional finance, especially in the context of the global pandemic, and 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 COVID-19, and 74/274, on international cooperation to ensure global access to medicines, vaccines and medical equipment to face COVID-19. We are deeply concerned about the impact of high debt levels on the ability of developing countries, particularly countries in special situations, to withstand the impact of the COVID-19 shock and to 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-service 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, and we call upon all relevant actors, including the international financial institutions, to address debt vulnerabilities, with special consideration given to countries in special situations, and to assist with the response to and recovery from the pandemic. We call in particular on all donors to consider allocating funds for the purchase of the necessary medicines and equipment and the implementation of additional assistance measures to the most vulnerable States. Also, owing to the acute shortage of the medical personnel during the COVID-19 pandemic, all United Nations Members need to take serious response measures for the protection of medical personnel and medical infrastructure and consider sending medical volunteers and groups to the countries most affected.

During this challenging time for the international community, the Kyrgyz Republic fully supports the vital role of the United Nations and its Security Council in solving problems related to the maintenance of international peace and security, developing friendly relations among nations, cooperating in resolving development problems, reducing poverty, promoting respect for human rights, protecting the environment and fighting disease and the COVID-19 outbreak response in relation to peace and security in the world today.

We believe that, given the existing and emerging issues related to the COVID-19 pandemic around the world, the role of the Security Council should be strengthened as much as possible. In that regard, we fully support the peaceful resolution of ongoing conflicts and crises around the world by promoting dialogue between all political and military forces under the auspices of the United Nations. In particular, the Kyrgyz Republic pays close attention to preventive diplomacy, peacebuilding and peacemaking, and civilian protection. We call upon the international community as a whole to actively participate in the settlement of international and local conflicts, in United Nations peacekeeping operations and within the framework of the Peacebuilding Fund.

The spread of COVID-19 has added an additional burden to achieving the goals of United Nations peacekeeping operations. Nevertheless, today it is very important to continue to ensure peace in the respective territories, as United Nations peacekeeping missions do. In that regard, the timely rotation of peacekeepers plays an important role so that they can perform the assigned tasks efficiently. It is also necessary to provide them with appropriate means in order to protect them from infection by the coronavirus.

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 and actively to work in cooperation with all Member States, the United Nations system and all international partners to achieve our goals.

Annex 38

Statement by the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of Liechtenstein to the United Nations, Georg Sparber

Liechtenstein conveys its gratitude to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Indonesia, Retno L.P. Marsudi, for having convened this second open debate on the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. The Council thereby has set a basis for a hopefully regular engagement on the primary security topic worldwide.

Sooner rather than later, that engagement should also yield tangible results, building on resolution 2532 (2020). In addressing the pandemic, the Council is taking an important but insufficient step to revise the paradigm of peace and security, which has been proved inadequate to deliver on the expectation of the membership that the Council act comprehensively and preventively against all threats to international peace and security. The Council should prioritize upholding human security and analyse how threats to it can be best prevented or resolved, an imperative given the increasing evidence that crises of a similar nature are likely to recur.

With its peace operations, the Security Council has a powerful tool at its disposal to foster sustainable peace and comprehensive security. Unfortunately, the use of that tool diverges greatly in terms of political aspirations and technical quality. In some contexts, such as in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali and the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic, the Council has been able to articulate a more comprehensive approach to security in its peacekeeping mandates. But its handling of peacekeeping mandates remains inconsistent and is dominated by a militarized approach. The ongoing pandemic offers an obvious opportunity to review that approach.

Many States already stated the obvious in the Security Council in July (see S/2020/663): never in the history of the United Nations have more people felt more insecure as a result of not only the virus itself but of its devastating knock-on impacts. The world has seen wide-ranging human rights restrictions and increased risks of mass poverty and hunger, a massive negative impact on education, increased inequality and heightened social tensions.

For that reason, Liechtenstein appreciates the fact that the Council has chosen to look at COVID-19 through the lens of sustaining peace. In this way, the Council has an opportunity to embrace and build on the work of other organs and agencies of the United Nations. The exceptionalism often displayed by the Security Council is as much outdated as its restrictive agenda setting. Both need to change if the Council is to retain relevance and legitimacy in the light of the present security threats. Formats for cooperation across the United Nations system should be expanded; some already exist, most notably the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC). The Security Council could contribute constructively to the work of the Commission in helping to reassess the criteria to establish configurations. It should also have an interest in introducing a clear justice component into the PBC's work — an omission that has prevented the Commission since its inception from maximizing its potential and that should be rectified also in the light of the parameters for sustainable peace given in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

In the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the international community has agreed on the most ambitious and most comprehensive human development programme, and indeed human security programme, ever devised. They include a clear acknowledgement of the need to sustain peace based on international law, in particular human rights, cooperation, solidarity and multilateralism. They would

indeed have provided a model to significantly limit the pandemic's impact had there been better progress towards their achievement before the outbreak of COVID-19.

But the SDGs are also the blueprint for how to build back better in a way that remedies vulnerabilities in our current system. The Security Council and its peace operations can play a key role in that regard. Human rights and the rule-of-law components of peace operations can help lay the foundations for more accountable institutions, enhancing inclusion and strengthening democratic processes and the fight against corruption, in accordance with SDG 16. Accordingly, the mandates of all United Nations peace operations should systematically include strong and effective human rights and rule-of-law components. While standards in this respect vary significantly within the various peace operations, Liechtenstein sees room for improvement across the board. Moreover, Liechtenstein is concerned at the sustained efforts being made by certain States to weaken this dimension of peace operations, including regularly during budget negotiations.

Where the Security Council takes a broader and deeper look at security, it can have positive impact, such as with its current thematic agendas. The Council should draw the right conclusions from that and ensure that it contributes to system-wide discussions on the negative security impacts of the pandemic, including but not limited to the areas of climate and biodiversity, poverty and hunger, health, education, gender, freedom of expression and information and privacy. The Council has laid a foundation on a limited number of these issues, including through its women and peace and security as well as climate and security agendas. These should be expanded and complemented by a similar engagement in all other security-relevant areas.

A more open attitude on the part of the Council towards the work and expertise of the rest of the United Nations system is a necessary first step in this regard and would be a welcome sign that the Security Council understands itself to be an integral part of the United Nations that contributes to the overall goals and purposes that the international community has committed to through the Charter and the countless important agreements developed on its basis.

Annex 39**Statement by the Permanent Mission of Malta to the United Nations**

Malta thanks the Indonesian presidency of the Security Council for having organized this high-level open debate on pandemics and the challenges to sustaining peace following the high-level debate organized last month by Germany on pandemics and security and the very welcome adoption of resolution 2532 (2020), signalling the continuity of the engagement of the Security Council on this issue.

Malta fully aligns itself with the statement submitted by the European Union (annex 29) and would like to add a few remarks in its national capacity.

At the outset, we would like to share the view expressed by colleagues that pandemics are not simply a health crisis and cannot be addressed solely as health issues. Important signs are already visible that the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) risks the deepening of pre-existing social, economic and political fissures. The pandemic is raising known risks for intensifying conflict, including food insecurity, hate speech, mass migration, instability in border areas and the unequal delivery of basic goods and services.

Before the pandemic, 135 million people were already experiencing crisis levels of acute food insecurity. COVID-19 has exacerbated socioeconomic problems and pushed countries to the brink of famine. The importance of food security and agriculture has been highlighted in the global humanitarian response plan and has been recognized as one of the strategic priorities to mitigate the situation.

If farmers do not have access to their fields or do not have the means or access to buy seeds and other inputs to plant or buy food for their animals, planting seasons will be missed, cultivation will drop significantly and animals will be lost. That means less food to nourish populations in both rural and urban areas. We must urgently recognize that our efforts need to be stepped up if we are to get back on track to fulfilling our commitments under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The agricultural sector is key to the provision of nourishment and to ensuring healthy living, and is the fulcrum if we want to end hunger. We need to continue working on achieving more sustainable agriculture through the adaptation of sustainable practices that respect our ecosystem and our environment.

Earlier this year, at the height of the pandemic, Malta was facing an agricultural export crisis. A decision was taken to send 500 tons of potatoes to Namibia as an act of solidarity with its people because of the severe drought it experienced. That initiative fed around half a million persons in Namibia, prevented food waste in Malta and yielded an opportunity for the long-term benefit of both countries.

COVID-19 is our common enemy, which requires us to do more together. Our actions today will affect tomorrow's generations. Our vision for a better tomorrow will become a reality only if we all work together today. We have to recognize that the only way we can overcome the challenges we are currently facing is by taking an innovative approach and adapting to the new circumstances.

We cannot but support the view shared in the statement (annex 29) submitted by the observer of the European Union that the United Nations peacebuilding architecture needs to adapt to the new type of challenges that the world is facing, such as climate change and environmental degradation. In that context, Malta welcomes the recent report of the Secretary-General on Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace (S/2020/773), which covers the continued implementation of resolution 70/262, on the review of the peacebuilding architecture.

Above all, Malta believes that we need to maintain a high level of transparency with the Peacebuilding Commission, United Nations agencies and other actors to be better equipped with the necessary and correct information to better support efforts by conflict-affected countries to advance peacebuilding and sustaining peace during this and any future pandemic. That transparency can be achieved through sharing best practices, exchanging information and combating disinformation. That will ensure and further enhance mutual solidarity during these challenging times.

We are now witnessing the direct and secondary consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic interacting with pre-existing crises, adding another layer of complexity to already fragile situations due to years of conflict that are engaged in peacebuilding processes. The pandemic is creating new problems and amplifying existing ones, such as socioeconomic division, gender inequality, increased insecurity for women and girls and other vulnerable groups, and mental health and psychosocial concerns. Fast-moving, complex emergencies such as COVID-19 require a whole-of-system and whole-of-society response through coordination, partnerships and an efficient use of our tools.

We agree that 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. Malta supports the EU's efforts in rallying behind the Secretary-General's initiative to coordinate a United Nations-wide response, and welcomes the comprehensive proposals enshrined in his policy papers addressing the impact of COVID-19.

As highlighted by colleagues, COVID-19 represents a dramatic threat to life in war-torn countries. The impact of an outbreak of the virus could be nothing short of catastrophic. COVID-19 poses yet another serious obstacle to the well-being of the already-vulnerable civilian populations of war-stricken countries such as Libya, Syria and Yemen, particularly when one takes into account the state of the weakened health infrastructure and the over-crowded conditions in camps for refugees and internally displaced persons. The recent outbreak has additionally exacerbated the economic situation in conflict regions, resulting in a decline in aid deliveries and the drying up of remittances, which has led to spikes in poverty rates and hindered access to basic necessities, including food and medicine.

In order to overcome those challenges, it is crucial for all relevant parties to desist from ongoing hostilities, take immediate action to protect civilians within their areas of effective control and ensure the depoliticization of the humanitarian infrastructure through the lifting of restrictions imposed on humanitarian workers and life-saving aid deliveries.

Pandemics do not respect borders, functions or ranks. They pose a risk to the entire human race and further complicate the work of United Nations peacekeepers, who already serve in difficult environments. International efforts that seek to address this precarious situation, such as the EU's support for the Secretary-General's 23 March appeal for an immediate global ceasefire in the light of the pandemic, as well as the adoption of resolution 2532 (2020), are to be welcomed and provide a solid platform upon which further action needs to be considered.

As the Secretary-General underlined in his report on peacebuilding and sustaining peace, the world's population continues to face increased poverty, inequality, exclusion, as well as threats to peace and security. Unfortunately, the situation has been further exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Refugees and other people displaced because of conflict are among the most marginalized and vulnerable, and are particularly at risk during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) reported that, as of 13 July, the crisis in Syria, combined with the COVID-19 pandemic and the closure of a number of commercial crossings, is significantly jeopardizing the protection of displaced communities, who already face obstacles in securing livelihoods. Persons with disabilities, particularly women and girls, are at a heightened risk of experiencing violence, abuse and neglect. UNHCR and its partners must continue to be supported to ensure that the needs of the most vulnerable are met, for the benefit of all.

During such unprecedented times, the impact of this crisis is disproportionately felt by women, with far-reaching consequences that are amplified in contexts of fragility, conflict and emergencies. The full, equal and meaningful participation of women must be at the centre of recovery efforts if we are to build a more peaceful, just and resilient world, ensure an effective pandemic response and promote peacebuilding.

Malta joins the Secretary-General in calling on all States Members of the United Nations to forge a common and multilateral vision, show solidarity and use our common systems and capacities across the United Nations to adequately support Member States in their efforts to achieve inclusive, sustainable development and sustain peace. An integrated approach is key if we are to mitigate the effects of pandemics, and the inclusion of partners is more critical than ever. We need solidarity and must enhance our capabilities.

Annex 40**Statement by the Permanent Mission of Mexico to the United Nations**

[Original: Spanish]

Mexico would like to thank Indonesia for convening this debate. The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic is, without a doubt, one of the greatest challenges the international community has faced since the founding of the United Nations 75 years ago.

The devastation resulting from the pandemic is a global challenge that requires global solutions. It is not only a health crisis, but also an economic, political and social challenge that has challenged progress towards poverty eradication, food security, gender equality and many other Sustainable Development Goals. We face unprecedented multidimensional disruption, which is exacerbated in conflict and post-conflict situations.

We reiterate Mexico's unequivocal support for the Secretary-General's call and for resolution 2532 (2020), on a general and immediate cessation of hostilities. The humanitarian truce is essential to addressing the pandemic.

Effectively addressing the pandemic is imperative in order to preserve the peacebuilding and development gains in transition and post-conflict countries. The effects of the pandemic are likely to magnify existing challenges in the areas of violence, inequality, poverty, unemployment, health services, human rights and democratic governance systems, among others. We also face a misinformation challenge, which may hinder strategies to respond adequately to the pandemic.

In addition to the health consequences, the pandemic affects social, economic and security aspects, and the relevant bodies and specialized agencies must provide a timely and coordinated response based on their respective mandates.

The Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) is the United Nations body best positioned to assist in addressing some of those challenges, as its action as a hinge between United Nations bodies and its convening capacity has been helpful in promoting dialogue between key actors in countries emerging from conflict. That dialogue, in turn, strengthens the relationship between the Security Council and the General Assembly, thus contributing to the legitimacy of the former. Mexico urges the Security Council to continue to take advantage of the advisory role of the PBC.

In order for the United Nations system to overcome the present crisis as a matter of priority, it must contemplate inclusive and universal access to an eventual vaccine. We must make vaccines, medicines, preventive instruments, laboratory tests, reagents, support materials, essential medical supplies and new diagnostics available to all, since no one is safe until everyone is safe.

Vaccines should be a global public good and — as the Secretary-General said — should be the people's vaccine, because the most effective solution lies in the development, production and distribution of an effective vaccine. In that regard, we must ensure strict implementation of General Assembly resolution 74/274, submitted by Mexico and co-sponsored by 179 countries.

The Security Council should maintain its support for the measures that the Organization has taken to ensure that peace operations can effectively carry out their mandate under current conditions and remain alert to the impact that the pandemic may have on the conflict situations under its agenda. Flexibility and speed of action in a changing context must also be ensured.

In Mexico's view, it is important that, in addressing the links between public health and international security, the Security Council carefully consider the following questions. How can coordination with the World Health Organization, other regional bodies and non-governmental organizations be strengthened to address pandemics and other health challenges in conflict areas? What steps can be taken to facilitate humanitarian access and ensure the safety of medical personnel in conflict areas? What measures should be taken to combat radicalization, violent extremism leading to terrorism and the actions of terrorist groups in the context of the current pandemic? How can we best use the specialized tools available to the international community, such as the International Health Regulations, to ensure that decisions are made on the basis of technical and scientific considerations and that this agenda is not politicized?

In the face of this multifaceted global health emergency, we must generate effective multilateral solutions that consider the structural causes of conflict and include the entire peace continuum, incorporating the concept of sustainable peace as a guiding thread of United Nations preventive action.

Annex 41**Statement by the Permanent Mission of Morocco to the United Nations**

The Kingdom of Morocco wishes to congratulate the Republic of Indonesia on its presidency of the Security Council for the month of August in this very challenging year. We welcome the initiative of the Indonesian presidency of bringing the Security Council's focus to pandemics and the challenges of sustaining peace, and we wish to thank Her Excellency Mrs. Retno Marsudi, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, for presiding over this important and timely high-level open debate.

This meeting undoubtedly constitutes another major milestone for the Security Council in recognizing the impact of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) on peacebuilding, following the Council's landmark unanimous adoption of resolution 2632 (2020) on 1 July.

Over a matter of only a few weeks, we have unfortunately witnessed the detrimental impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on political and socioeconomic conditions in different parts of the world. That compels us today to acknowledge that pandemics such as COVID-19 do bear the traits of modern-day, global, unforeseen and multidimensional threats to peace and security and should be considered as such, as this exceptional worldwide scourge has proven to make no distinction between categories of Member States and populations.

However, the new and volatile challenges triggered by the global health crisis are particularly harmful for regions and Member States currently battling to build and sustain peace; safeguard their security, socioeconomic development and stability; and meet their global sustainable goals.

Indeed, this deplorable reality has pressed the international community to quickly realize that the propagation of the pandemic has an undeniable exacerbating effect and acts as a threat multiplier, especially with regard to day-to-day peacebuilding and sustaining peace challenges. It has had severe socioeconomic consequences and has led to the imposition of restrictive, but necessary, containment measures that have hampered daily life and sustenance.

In Member States in transition, post-conflict or peacebuilding contexts, the combination of pre-existing and emerging challenges has considerably strained already heavily burdened vital areas, such as the health sector, service delivery and food security. For other Member States, it has also generated heightened levels of uncertainty and vulnerability with regard to the implementation of important peace and political processes.

Unfortunately, the urgency linked to the pandemic has risked shifting the attention of the international community away from the primacy of the socioeconomic dimension, especially for Member States in peacebuilding and sustaining peace contexts. It is worth recalling that the peace-security-development nexus has become a reality, as consistently highlighted at the United Nations, including within the Security Council.

It is safe to say today that this pandemic can affect not only future and long-term sustaining peace efforts but is also likely to hamper, stall or even reverse very hard-won global peacebuilding gains achieved so far. As such, our first collective step in addressing the question of pandemics and the challenges for sustaining peace has to be based on the accurate assessment that a pandemic has considerable destabilizing potential for national, regional and international peace and security.

Only with an earnest stocktaking can the international community come up with adequate and efficient comprehensive responses for addressing unpredictable future global shared threats such as pandemics and their devastating effects. We therefore wish to take this opportunity to highly commend Governments, women, men and youth of the Member States affected by both the pandemic and challenges to sustaining peace for their continuing efforts aimed at containing and preventing the spread of COVID-19 and at mitigating the socioeconomic effects of the global health crisis.

However, while striving to sustain peace, Member States cannot fight the adverse effects of pandemics on their own. The global nature of pandemics dictates that the international community should act in unison and work towards an integrated and coordinated response. In this regard, Morocco highly welcomes the great efforts the United Nations deployed at the earliest stages of the pandemic to mitigate the scale and severity of the global and borderless crisis, including from humanitarian, health and development perspectives.

Morocco wishes in particular to commend the proactive engagement and mobilization of the Secretary-General, who has come up with concrete steps and initiatives such as his plan to address the potentially devastating socioeconomic impact of COVID-19, as well as his report *Shared responsibility, global solidarity: Responding to the socioeconomic impacts of COVID-19*, of March 2020, which paved the way for the recent launch of the United Nations framework for the immediate socioeconomic response to COVID-19. The framework is an important tool that will also act as an operating arm in the peacebuilding and sustaining peace contexts. We welcome the Secretary-General's numerous appeals, including those calling for people to come together to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic and for an immediate global ceasefire in all corners of the world.

In addition to praising the major international mobilization, my delegation wishes to commend in particular the current and the past Presidents of the Security Council who spared no efforts to ensure business continuity in and transparency of the work of the Council throughout the succeeding stages of the pandemic. Despite all the real and virtual complications imposed by the pandemic, important issues and discussions were advanced throughout busy and challenging times. It is of paramount importance that the Security Council uphold its mandate by remaining seized of pressing international peace and security matters and by maintaining a continuous focus on the specific effects COVID-19 has had on various parts of the world and on other issues on the Council's agenda.

The group of actions the Security Council took to shed an appropriate light on the effects of the pandemic and to help address its implications for sustaining peace culminated in success with the historic adoption of resolution 2532 (2020) and the organization of today's high-level open debate. We once again thank the Indonesian presidency for making the issue of pandemics and sustaining peace a priority of the Security Council.

As Chair of a country-specific configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), Morocco cannot but commend the pioneering role the Commission has stepped up to play since the start of the global health crisis by trying to highlight the various consequences of the pandemic in different parts of the world. Indeed, despite the very well-known challenges related to the global crisis today, members of the international community — and of the PBC — have before them historic opportunities to come up with new avenues of cooperation and innovative and effective partnerships in order to help preserve ongoing peacebuilding and peace-sustaining processes.

The foresightful 2016 twin resolutions 70/262 of the General Assembly and 2282 (2016) of the Security Council on the review of the peacebuilding architecture have felicitously created space for the PBC to diversify its working methods and enhance its efficiency and flexibility, so it can be increasingly engaged in regional and cross-cutting issues relevant to peacebuilding and sustaining peace. These resolutions also provided for more coherent and coordinated support for regional peacebuilding priorities and greater partnership between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations, which has proven critical in the current global crisis.

Thanks to its unique status within the United Nations system, the PBC has been, by design, able to play a constructive role in current times, primarily by maintaining continuous attention on the challenges affecting specific Member States and regions; taking the mobilization of key partners forward; leveraging its advisory role, especially to the Security Council and to its country-specific configurations; and pooling the extensive experience it has gathered so far to come up with innovative ways to help prevent and mitigate the effects of pandemics, such as the COVID-19, as it had previously done with the assistance it provided in fighting the adverse effects of outbreaks, such as Ebola.

However, in the context of the current 2020 review of the peacebuilding architecture, Morocco wishes to highlight the importance of reflecting on the disastrous effects pandemics can have on efforts and gains made in sustaining peace, in order to enable the United Nations to better respond to future occurrences of unforeseen pandemics or global crises like the present one.

In conclusion, and sharing the same concern about the impact of pandemics on sustaining peace, the Kingdom of Morocco, under the leadership of King Mohammed VI, has also reflected on the need for a continental preventive response to the COVID-19 pandemic in order to overcome the social and economic impacts of the pandemic. Because Morocco gives the highest priority to the African continent, in the immediate aftermath of the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, on 13 April His Majesty King Mohammed VI launched an action-oriented initiative with African leaders, aimed at enabling the sharing of experiences and good practices and establishing an operational framework to support African countries efforts in the various phases of the management of the pandemic. Within the framework of this initiative, on 14 June His Majesty King Mohammed VI issued his very high instructions to send essential protective medical aid, equipment and medicines to 20 African countries with a view to supporting their fight against the coronavirus. All the protective products and equipment were produced in Morocco, complied with the World Health Organization's standards and have already been delivered to the concerned countries. Moreover, Morocco recently decided to make a contribution to the Peacebuilding Fund with the firm belief that increased cooperation and solidarity can provide a response to preserve peace and to address the challenges linked to global crises such as the current pandemic.

As dire as the consequences of pandemics can be for efforts aimed at sustaining peace and at ensuring global peace and security, the international community has before it a historic opportunity to reflect on how better to prepare for future global crises and to build back better, as we have all witnessed how a pandemic can not only disrupt national and regional peacebuilding processes and social cohesion but also turn our daily lives and the business-as-usual approach completely on their heads. We therefore commend the critical reforms engaged in early on by Secretary-General António Guterres with a view to restructuring the United Nations to make it fit to tackle novel contemporary threats and to serve peace and development in

all their forms, particularly at a time when the Organization is commemorating its milestone seventy-fifth anniversary.

More than ever before, the international community must remain committed to bringing a helping hand to the Member States and regions affected by the twin challenges of setbacks to sustaining peace and the fight against the pandemic, in full respect of their national priorities and ownership.

Annex 42**Statement by the Permanent Representative of the Netherlands to the United Nations, Karel van Oosterom**

Let me first congratulate Indonesia on assuming the presidency for the month of August. We thank the Indonesian presidency for convening today's timely and important debate.

The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) has acted as a contrast agent that has brought already visible geopolitical differences into sharper focus. On the ground, the pandemic has been seen to exacerbate existing tensions in fragile regions, fuelling popular discontent and putting peacebuilding gains at risk of reversal. In societies where human rights were already under pressure, we see a reflex to further curb civic space.

The pandemic and its direct and indirect effects are by definition an issue of global concern, which means that we must come together as an international community to address it urgently and comprehensively. That means first and foremost that we need a strong and effective United Nations, especially in the area of peacebuilding and sustaining peace.

Accordingly, we wish to draw the Security Council's attention to three elements that are essential for the United Nations to be able to deliver: first, United Nations reforms; secondly, financing for peacebuilding; and thirdly, mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS).

With regard to United Nations reforms, in many ways, the COVID-19 pandemic provides a test case for such reforms. The challenges posed are so multifaceted that they can be addressed comprehensively only by involving a variety of relevant United Nations actors, all which would contribute in distinct ways to the aim of sustaining peace. Achieving sustainable peace requires parallel progress on development, security and human rights. Therefore, more than ever, United Nations actors on the ground must pursue cooperation and partnership with the guidance of a resident coordinator. The fact that the Peacebuilding Fund proves so effective at bringing United Nations actors together at the country level is one of the reasons why we are one of its biggest donors. Similarly, we have decided to immediately support the United Nations COVID-19 Response and Recovery Multi-Partner Trust Fund, as it is the centralized United Nations response to the socioeconomic consequences of this crisis, which is a key dimension of sustaining peace.

Secondly, with regard to financing for peacebuilding, peacebuilding efforts remain greatly underfinanced, unfortunately, even if needs continue to rise as a result of this pandemic. The Netherlands hopes to continue its substantial funding of different multilateral peacebuilding instruments, but times are uncertain and concerted action by States Members of the United Nations is needed in this regard. We must therefore use the review of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture to discuss in earnest ways to significantly increase means available for peacebuilding. We expect the Peacebuilding Commission to play a role in this regard.

The financial proposals set forth in Secretary-General's 2018 report on peacebuilding and sustaining peace (S/2018/43) are still largely unimplemented. Based on the imminent report of the Secretary-General, coming later in 2020, we look forward to joining hands with other Member States to find new and innovative ways to ensure more structural and predictable funding for peacebuilding, including good peacebuilding donorship.

Lastly, with respect to MHPSS, the pandemic has laid bare the need for more attention to be paid to mental health and psychosocial support, as outlined by the

Secretary-General's policy brief on MHPSS. MHPSS in peacebuilding settings is absolutely critical for creating conditions for sustaining peace. To avoid the cycle of conflict and to counter social disintegration in fragile societies, it is key that we integrate MHPSS in peacebuilding from the outset. Local and national Government institutions, including those working on health, grievance management, transitional justice, dialogue and reconciliation, play a central role in this effort.

From the two consultations on the integration of MHPSS in peacebuilding we have organized for the review of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture — one with experts and one with representatives of States Members of the United Nations — it became clear that many participants would like to see an enhanced inclusion of MHPSS in peacebuilding efforts.

MHPSS needs to be structurally and explicitly taken into account, in peacebuilding analyses, programming, monitoring, evaluation and learning. The Netherlands looks forward to continuing to make its contribution to bringing this issue forth in the formal phase of the 2020 review of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture, and to work together with many of the participants in today's debate.

Annex 43**Statement by the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of Nigeria to the United Nations, Samson S. Iteboje**

At the outset, let me thank the Permanent Mission of Indonesia for organizing today's open debate. Our special appreciation also goes to Mr. António Guterres, Secretary-General; Mr. Ban Ki-moon, former Secretary-General; Ms. Sarah Cliffe, Director, Centre on International Cooperation, New York University; as well as all the other speakers, for sharing their perspectives on this important subject.

My delegation would like to make the following additional remarks in its national capacity.

The surge of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic in the early months of 2020 is already reshaping our politics, societies and economies both domestically and globally. However, owing to lack of immunity within populations, it is likely to remain a global threat for a protracted period. This situation has also fundamentally affected the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, with this impact being more pronounced in fragile and conflict-affected States.

The crisis created by the pandemic is beyond the immediate health impact. Governments' initial responses to the deadly virus, which included immediate shutdown of borders and of formal and informal sectors, have affected economies worldwide, leading to food insecurity, job losses and deepening inequality. These issues can intensify pre-existing social-structure challenges in any country, creating additional layers of grievances, as the most vulnerable populations become more disproportionately affected. In some situations, these issues create new threats to international peace and security, particularly when they take place across sensitive regional boundaries.

The resultant effects of the inequalities created by the pandemic within societies, across continents and between countries can be seen in the faces of disadvantaged and vulnerable groups, especially refugees, the internally displaced and millions of people eking out a living in informal settlements across the globe. Unfortunately, current responses to the crisis at the international, national and local levels have not adequately demonstrated conflict-sensitivity or taken an inclusive peacebuilding approach. Rather, the lockdowns have led to horrific increases in violence against youth, women and children and had an impact on the social and political tensions that persist in the absence of any meaningful response to addressing these inequalities in protecting human rights even where failure to do so undermines democratic values.

In conflict-affected countries where populations already suffer from multiple risks associated with the pandemic, the situation is further aggravated by a lack of access to markets, disruption of supply chains and mobility restraints leading to closure of markets. The inability to maintain social distancing among populations where health and sanitary facilities are inadequate, especially in camps, also presents another challenging security-risk scenario, with a potential for a high rate of infections that could spread to nearby communities. The COVID-19 pandemic has therefore unmasked the gradations of inequality as well as the prospects for resilience and recovery.

Women have perhaps been the most affected by the effects of the pandemic. While they have been at the receiving end of having to maintain the socioeconomic fabric of families despite job losses, they have equally been subjected to domestic violence and other unsavoury conditions. However, women bring a unique perspective

to the peacebuilding process, which is why gender issues should be institutionalized in policy frameworks that include decision-making and peace-building initiatives.

All factors associated with the crisis have highlighted new patterns of exclusion in a very direct way and provide opportunities to create inclusive dialogue around health and socioeconomic issues and the need for Governments to reach underserved areas. Although the risk of violence may have increased during the pandemic, building back better is also an opportunity for the promotion of peaceful societies, in line with Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16. This would present a more deliberate effort by Governments to ensure that countries are able to navigate the health crisis and its socioeconomic consequences, while minimizing social conflicts.

Furthermore, the challenges posed by the pandemic have significantly hampered the work of the United Nations system, including peacekeeping operations, special political missions and the Peacebuilding Commission, whose peacebuilding efforts have been disrupted. The lockdowns have limited movements of peacekeeping missions and may have also led to scepticism by local populations towards the peacekeepers for fear of virus transmission. This has also put on hold person-to-person dialogues and workshops. Another impediment that has been highlighted on a more operational level among some agencies is the use of protective gear, which prevents the facial recognition of the populations being attended to, thereby increasing a sense of mistrust.

The United Nations system can strengthen the advancement of sustaining its peace agenda in the COVID-19 response by continuing to adopt a more integrated and coherent approach. This should involve all United Nations organs and agencies, along with other crucial entities, including regional and subregional organizations, international financial institutions, the private sector and civil society groups. A holistic and systematic approach needs to be harnessed to address the multidimensional risks to peace generated by the COVID-19 pandemic. All opportunities should be exploited to unlock the possibilities for strengthening peacebuilding and sustaining peace.

In order to ensure that no one is left behind and for the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs to remain a keystone of an international commitment to sustainable development as the world moves through and beyond the public health emergency presented by COVID-19, we must continue to work towards building peaceful societies, as they are a panacea for the 2030 Agenda in its last decade of action.

Nigeria fully supports the Secretary-General's 23 March global ceasefire appeal to combat COVID-19 in conflict-affected countries. It is also heartening to commend the Security Council for finally adopting, on 1 July, resolution 2532 (2020), demanding a cessation of hostilities in all situations on its agenda and calling for all conflict parties to engage in a humanitarian pause for at least 90 days. It also calls for all relevant parts of the United Nations system to accelerate their response to the pandemic, with emphasis on countries in need.

We wish to express our gratitude to the United Nations, the European Union, the United States of America, Norway, financial institutions, et cetera for their contributions to Nigeria's efforts to mitigate the effects of COVID-19. Nigeria, in coordination with the United Nations, is to set up the Nigeria COVID-19 Response Fund as a single national platform and financing framework that will foster coordination, the effective mobilization of resources and the deployment of strategies for an impactful response. Such palliative funds or facilities by international organizations and financial institutions could be sustained within short- to medium-term frameworks, or as dictated by unfolding circumstances, for States in need as

they gradually recover from the economic slowdown occasioned by the pandemic. This also reduces conflicts related to the vulnerability of weakened economies.

In conclusion, there is no gainsaying the fact that the challenges brought about by the pandemic are enormous and, since no single country can confront the problem alone, we urge for the continuation of the ongoing joint and collaborative efforts towards the mitigation of, and a possible solution to, the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic to allow for the timely realization of the Sustainable Development Goals. We therefore wish to thank the President-elect of the General Assembly at its seventy-fifth session, Mr. Volkan Bozkir, for taking cognizance of the need for sustained multilateral action on COVID-19 by adopting the theme “The future we want, the United Nations we need: reaffirming our collective commitment to multilateralism — confronting COVID-19 through effective multilateral action” for the session.

Annex 44

Statement by the Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission, Louise Blais

I would like to congratulate Indonesia on its presidency of the Security Council this month and for organizing this timely high-level debate.

In my capacity as Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), I wish to express my appreciation for the constructive informal interactive dialogue between the Security Council and the PBC, organized by Germany and co-hosted by Indonesia, the Niger and the United Kingdom on 22 July, and the enhanced collaboration between the two bodies, notably to help address the present public health emergency and contribute to durable peace and sustainable development.

Today I will update the Council on the PBC's continuing efforts to support national and regional stakeholders in addressing peacebuilding challenges in conflict-affected contexts exacerbated by the recent coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and on observations from the work we have done to date.

As noted in resolution 2532 (2020), this is a critical time for countries affected by conflict. Hard-won peacebuilding gains are at risk, as in several cases the impact of the pandemic has destroyed livelihoods, threatened social cohesion, strained the capacity of governance institutions and contributed to risks of increased instability. The crisis may potentially exacerbate underlying tensions and inequalities, while compounding already dire humanitarian situations in affected countries. Overall, the pandemic risks setting such countries even further behind in attaining the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The PBC has been extraordinarily active over the past several months, convening virtual ambassadorial-level meetings and adjusting its work plan to focus explicitly on the impact of COVID-19 on the abilities of Governments and their partners to deliver on emergency and national peacebuilding priorities. The PBC was among the first United Nations bodies to rapidly shift to using virtual platforms in response to the pandemic. Within a few weeks of the closure of the United Nations, we were able to convene an ambassadorial-level video-teleconference meeting that focused on how to mitigate the impact of the pandemic in peacebuilding contexts.

At its thematic meetings on the impact of COVID-19 on peacebuilding and the socioeconomic consequences of the crisis, the PBC echoed the Secretary-General's call for a global ceasefire and urgent action within the framework of his plan and report *Shared Responsibilities, Global Solidarity: Responding to the Socio-Economic Impacts of COVID-19* in order to fight the pandemic and deliver on national priorities. The PBC has been advocating for strengthened partnerships in support of coherent, conflict-sensitive and inclusive responses that recognize the importance of leaving no one behind and ensuring that the most vulnerable are protected and empowered. In that connection, it is particularly important to ensure that the impact of the pandemic does not reverse progress on achieving gender equality and women's empowerment, as well as the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda.

In addition, since April, the PBC has convened a series of consultations to hear directly from countries and regions, including in the Central African region, West Africa and the Sahel, the African Great Lakes and the Pacific Islands, how they are affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Allow me to share some observations on the basis of those discussions.

First, conflict-affected countries are in crisis, as the challenges they face in delivering on their national peacebuilding priorities have been exacerbated and multiplied by COVID-19. Most of the countries and regions where the PBC has

engaged are already confronted with escalating humanitarian crises, high levels of displacement, food shortages and collapsing economies. It is urgent that we act to save lives and prevent the reversal of peacebuilding gains.

Secondly, this crisis cuts across the United Nations traditional silos and requires a coordinated, multisectoral global response. This is also true for conflict-affected countries, where governance capacities and institutions are weak and societies are deeply divided. Recognizing that an integrated and coherent approach among relevant political, security and development actors, within and outside the United Nations system, consistent with their respective mandates and the Charter of the United Nations, is critical to peacebuilding and sustaining peace and essential to improving respect for human rights, gender equality, empowering women and young people, strengthening the rule of law, eradicating poverty, building institutions and advancing economic development in conflict-affected countries, it is important to continue cross-pillar support to United Nations peacebuilding activities in the field, while acknowledging that each pillar has its intrinsic value and specific mandate. In countries where the PBC has engaged, the impact of the crisis has been most severe on the poorest and the most vulnerable. If national responses are perceived to be slow, inadequate, ineffective or unfairly distributed, existing tensions could be further exacerbated. It is important that Government responses to the pandemic and international assistance in that regard not replicate or exacerbate existing inequalities or social division. This means strengthening the United Nations socioeconomic response, as well as better understanding and addressing the possible root causes of conflict. Attention is also needed to mid- to long-term efforts to strengthen inclusive and accountable national institutions.

Thirdly, the socioeconomic impact of the pandemic has been severe. Even after decades of international peacebuilding support, many countries are only one or two shocks away from falling into deep crisis. Several countries where the PBC is engaged are at risk of seeing double-digit contractions in economic growth, and there is no social safety net or economic stimulus package that can make up for the destruction of livelihoods of entire communities. Small and medium-sized enterprises, which employ 90 per cent of the workforce in Africa, are suffering severe consequences and are often overlooked in recovery plans. This requires us to pay attention to livelihoods, incomes and inclusive economic development. The PBC will consider, where relevant, socioeconomic risks in its future advice to the Security Council.

Fourthly, the news is not all bad. In every country and region where the PBC is engaged, we have heard remarkable stories that testify to the resilience of communities, the role of civil society and the innovation of the private sector. The various consultations have served as a valuable platform for the exchange of lessons learned, good practices and innovations among countries to build back better, including lessons from the successful fight against Ebola in West Africa. We must continue to support, learn from and replicate these success stories.

Finally, it is important to respond to this crisis through strengthened partnerships and financing. There is great concern that the coming years will see a global recession and reduction of official development aid flows. Consequently, resources could be shifted away from longer-term investments in building the institutions that help sustain peace to short-term humanitarian and emergency response. Countries affected by conflict are already the furthest behind in attaining the SDGs, and this pandemic risks setting them back even further. They need predictable, sustainable, coordinated financial and technical support.

During the consultations, the PBC highlighted the urgent need to support countries in safeguarding their capacities to fight the pandemic, while continuing

to accompany them in the advancement of their medium- and long-term national peacebuilding priorities. The Commission underlined support for a coherent and coordinated approach among all relevant actors, within and outside the United Nations system, consistent with their respective mandates, and the Charter. The PBC also called for predictable, sustainable and coordinated financial support and, in that respect, welcomed the Peacebuilding Fund's quick positioning to help address the peacebuilding and sustaining peace dimensions of its work in the context of the pandemic.

The constructive nature of those discussions, based on the principles of national ownership and partnership, have encouraged new countries and regions to seek consultations with the PBC, leading to the PBC's first regional discussions on Central Africa and the Pacific Islands, with the consent of all countries concerned. The consultations have also encouraged Governments to take into account the needs of all segments of society concerned when designing their COVID-19 responses and implementing nationally owned peacebuilding priorities.

The meetings demonstrated the value of the PBC as a flexible, demand-driven platform that allows for collaboration across the different pillars of the United Nations system and among diverse actors, such as the World Bank, other financial institutions, local civil society organizations, the private sector and regional organizations, so as to ensure multipronged and coordinated political and financial support to countries in addressing conflict risks and delivering on national priorities. In that connection, the initiative of the Peacebuilding Support Office to fast-track support for joint United Nations-World Bank data and risk assessment and analysis has been welcomed.

At a time when the impact of the multifaceted crises posed by the COVID-19 pandemic on conflict-affected countries is significant and the work of the United Nations, including in peacebuilding and sustaining peace, has become more challenging, the PBC's response to COVID-19 has demonstrated the value of the convening platform that it provides to foster unity and solidarity among Member States, the United Nations system and relevant actors to stay the course in their support to peacebuilding and sustaining peace efforts.

I thank the members of the Security Council for their continuous support to the work of the Commission.

Annex 45**Statement by the Permanent Representative of the Philippines to the United Nations, Enrique A. Manalo**

The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has unleashed an unprecedented crisis that has exposed the fragility of societies and in particular has threatened the gains already achieved in finding just and lasting peace in conflict-affected areas.

Recognizing the potential impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the work to achieve peace, President Rodrigo Roa Duterte declared a unilateral ceasefire with the Communist Party of the Philippines and its affiliates from 19 March to 15 April, days before the Secretary-General issued his appeal for a global ceasefire on 23 March. Recognizing that initiative, the Secretary-General said that “upholding these commitments will be crucial to enabling an effective response to, and recovery from, the COVID-19 crisis”, encouraging “both sides to build on this momentum and translate these expressions of goodwill into a lasting political solution”. The ceasefire demonstrated the Philippine Government’s commitment to the swift and unimpeded provision of public health assistance, especially the safe movement of health-care workers, to stricken communities in dire need of immediate medical care.

To begin with, conflict-affected regions lag in development — economic, infrastructure, social, human and sustainable development. COVID-19 prompted Governments to impose restrictions that affect economic activities in order to protect public health, while having to reassess needs and redouble efforts and human and financial resources to assist and support conflict-affected regions in bouncing back once such restrictions are loosened.

Despite the onset of COVID-19, armed conflicts and violence persist. Clashes between Government forces and non-State armed groups and between clans still erupt, displacing populations and affecting civilians and livelihoods.

With the setback in the implementation of peace agreements and communities beset with new and grave challenges caused by the pandemic, sentiments around neglect and grievances against the Government are stirred, paving fertile ground for violent extremism. As such, it is important to catch up on the implementation of the peace agreements in order to continue the critical work of resolving long-standing issues of “unpeace” and address the causes of armed conflict.

The impacts of COVID-19 are disproportionately felt by vulnerable groups in conflict situations, especially women. In conflict situations, the women and girls are mothers, sometimes of female-headed households as widows or single parents; daughters, including orphans; and sisters who are not just passive bystanders or only victims or targets. One will also find women combatants and non-combatants who are still members of armed groups, both State and non-State.

Women’s existing vulnerabilities prior to conflict — such as a lack of education, poverty, discrimination, marginalization and non-recognition of rights — are hundredfold in times of conflict, with the occurrence of internal displacement and gender-based violence in emergencies. These vulnerabilities are further heightened during the pandemic because their physical, social and economic capacities to deal with their multiple roles and burdens as caregivers and breadwinners are further limited, stretched or weakened, and their access to social services is undermined by community quarantine restrictions.

To address the impacts of armed conflict and COVID-19 on women and other vulnerable groups, there is a need to ensure the functioning of mechanisms that were established to empower, promote and mainstream women and gender equality.

Institutions accountable for protecting the human rights of women and girls before, during and after conflict situations and for preventing incidents of violence against women must remain fully operational to ensure that the gender-responsive and culture and conflict-sensitive and peace-promoting approaches continue to be observed.

It is important to recognize the important role of women, youth, the elderly, the differently abled, cultural minorities and other vulnerable groups in peacebuilding spaces, whether in conflict prevention, conflict management, conflict resolution or conflict transformation. There must be a commitment to continuously promote and increase their meaningful participation in all stages of decision-making in the peace-promoting policies, programmes and projects. As such, responsive and timely measures must be undertaken to address the impact of the pandemic on these vulnerable sectors, taking into account their added vulnerabilities caused by the intersectionality of natural disasters and armed conflict, and to strengthen their capacities to respond to the impacts of the pandemic.

In the context of the Philippines, peacekeeping operations play a role in humanitarian assistance. In cases of clashes between clans, which are prevalent in Mindanao, peacekeeping missions serve as the first responders in mitigating the armed conflict, directly communicating with the parties to the conflict and mediating to reduce the tension. They also help build and strengthen capacities on conflict resolution to address the persistence of violence on the ground and help reach local peace agreements between those involved.

Strengthened coordination between peacekeepers and local Government units should be pursued to ensure that communities, particularly the vulnerable segments of the population, are protected against threats of armed conflict and from COVID-19 infection. There is a need to sustain capacity-building on conflict-sensitive and peace-promoting approaches, including conflict resolution processes for peacekeepers, Government and humanitarian aid actors involved in peacebuilding work or who are delivering interventions in conflict-affected areas, to ensure that stakeholders continue to benefit from the peace dividends of the peace pacts forged. This will help minimize frequent horizontal conflicts that indirectly affect the peace process. Moreover, this should be done together with a robust information and education campaign on minimum public health standards and disease awareness and prevention.

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) community and its partners, including the United Nations, are being called upon to extend support for ASEAN member States that are pursuing peace and development in troubled and conflict-ridden communities through humanitarian support to adapt to the risks of COVID-19. This humanitarian intervention will serve as a foundation to effectively resume the implementation of the peace agreements forged.

The United Nations should encourage cooperation among its Member States in addressing the fissures that were magnified by COVID-19. These are heavy on development, but have lasting impacts on peace. Channelling resources to health, education, socioeconomic development and environmental protection will benefit the quest for peace in the long term must be encouraged.

The United Nations should also continue to offer technical and core support for the institutional development of States with internal conflicts, and that should be tailored and context-specific. The Security Council could facilitate knowledge and experience sharing by harnessing other countries' good practices and lessons learned in managing and mitigating these crises.

While we are in the middle of a crisis and we cannot begin to guess its end, it is never too soon for a post-pandemic recovery plan. We are bracing for a steep

decline in economic output, and a steep rise in the cost of social safety nets to soften the fall to the ground.

Giving special priority to countries plagued with internal conflict in terms of financial aid, humanitarian assistance and vaccines against COVID-19 will ensure that the gains of the peace process and peacebuilding will be sustained.

The reprioritization of programmes and funding should allow for existing peacebuilding initiatives to continue to mitigate the risks arising from conflict and the pandemic. Financing strategies should be flexible and informed by conflict and context analyses, taking into consideration also the secondary effects of the pandemic. The distribution of support to communities should be based on a conflict-sensitive assessment to prevent the escalation of conflict and to give priority to the most vulnerable and marginalized groups.

To bridge the gap between today's crisis and the future we want, we must address the vulnerabilities COVID-19 has exposed. The Philippines believes that addressing the challenges of sustaining peace in a COVID-19 context must be anchored on sound strategies, with a clear political vision for United Nations field missions, and integrated into a culture of accountability.

Given the multidimensional risks to sustaining peace, global leadership and cooperation are needed more than ever to combat the biggest test that the world has faced since the Second World War.

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

We commend Indonesia for convening this timely debate, and we welcome Her Excellency Mrs. Retno Marsudi, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia. We also thank Secretary-General António Guterres, His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon and Ms. Sarah Cliffe for their significant contributions to this debate.

The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has had an enormous effect on the work of the United Nations. Continuity has been disrupted for peacekeeping operations, special political missions and the Peacebuilding Commission. They, along with United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, have been challenged in adjusting their operations to assist countries in addressing the pandemic.

This widespread pandemic threatens not only development and peacebuilding gains, but also creates a high risk of rekindling conflicts or of igniting new ones. In some countries, fragile peace processes could be hindered by the crisis, if not disrupted. That is why a call for a global ceasefire, of which Poland was a staunch supporter, to foster multilateral efforts in addressing the pandemic and its impact as a matter of priority was launched by the Secretary-General.

We welcome the fact that, in July, the Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 2532 (2020), in which the Council recognizes that the pandemic could reverse peacebuilding gains made by countries in transition and post-conflict countries and calls for all relevant parts of the United Nations system to accelerate the response to the pandemic, with particular emphasis on countries in need. Poland considers the role of the Security Council crucial in addressing the sustaining of peace in the world crippled by the global pandemic.

COVID-19 is aggravating the humanitarian situation in the world's perilous conflicts and threatens to trigger an economic plummet that will most probably unleash violence. As the most recent report of the Secretary-General on peacebuilding and sustaining peace (S/2020/773) alarmingly mentions, the world's population continues to face increased poverty, inequality and exclusion, as well as threats to peace and security. By the end of 2019, 79.5 million persons had been forcibly displaced, which is twice as many as 20 years ago. Those numbers are only going to spike owing to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and climate change.

The current pandemic is hindering aid programmes, drawing away both the attention and resources of major stakeholders battling the deadly virus on the ground, and cutting off support to already fragile, war-torn economies. Restricted by lockdowns, the movements of peacekeeping troops, envoys and non-governmental agencies are witnessing a hampering of mediation efforts and impediments in the distribution of urgently needed aid to vulnerable civilians. Humanitarian agencies struggle to keep up with the demand for help, especially in places where COVID-19 is spreading out of control.

Owing to travel restrictions, United Nations peacekeeping missions have struggled with the logistics of troop rotations, while for some countries they are the only guarantors of security and health safety. We welcome mitigation measures to promote the safety, security and health of all United Nations personnel while maintaining the continuity and effectiveness of United Nations peacekeeping operations.

Previous reports of the Secretary-General on the protection of civilians in armed conflict demonstrate powerful evidence that existing crises have exacerbated and magnified structural gender inequalities. Recent data have only confirmed an

increased level of gender-based violence. In our response to COVID-19, we must therefore put the safety of women and girls first.

The verified numbers of violations against children presented in the reports of the Secretary-General are highly disturbing, though we are aware that they do not reflect the full scale. Poland expresses its serious concern over the detrimental and multidimensional impact of COVID-19 pandemic on children, especially those living in areas of armed conflict.

The present challenge of COVID-19 to global health security could become a case in point of how it can be managed through multilateral frameworks. Poland is convinced that the World Health Organization will remain the lead coordinator of the global response to pandemics.

The best way forward is to continue to build upon its present assets. Among those, the most important tools are the International Health Regulations and Solidarity Trial protocol that are aimed at minimizing the burden on countries' health systems when it comes to effective treatment options against COVID-19. Poland is engaged and supports financially both the European Union initiatives on solidarity and leadership in seeking global solutions and the United Nations system response to the COVID-19 emergency. In this moment of global crisis, we must leave no one behind.

Annex 47

Statement by the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of Portugal to the United Nations, Nuno Mathias

Portugal aligns itself with the statement presented by the European Union and, in its national capacity, would like to add the following points.

The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic is having a devastating impact on communities and economies. Yet again, those who are in the most vulnerable situations are the ones who suffer the most. Furthermore, the indirect effects of COVID-19 and some of the actions taken in response can contribute to increasing tensions, violence and hate speech and may exacerbate existing drivers of conflict and undermine social and economic resilience, while violence against women and girls continues to escalate.

Health crises worsen already precarious situations: fragile health systems become unable to cope and Governments fail to provide basic needs and services, such as health care, justice, public safety and food security. The erosion of trust in local institutions leads to increasing instability and unrest.

The reallocation of both financial and human resources to support prevention and containment measures during the pandemic has had an impact on States' ability to deal with insurgencies and terrorist groups, but also on States' capacity to respond to the needs of their population and communities. The further weakening of State institutions and their capacity to deliver on public goods could endanger the medium- and long-term sustainability of hard-fought gains in theatres, such as the Sahel, the Central African Republic and Somalia. 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.

Given the transnational reach of pandemics and the increasing interdependence of States, the greater part of the solution lies in international cooperation. International support, during and in the aftermath of the pandemic, in countries and regions affected by conflict must not neglect the importance of State and institution-building. Such support will be decisive in preventing the expansion of terrorist and armed groups, as well as their recruitment capacities. The economic recovery phase following the pandemic will also present an opportunity to boost resilience through focused reforms in key areas, such as health, education, social protection, climate change, good governance, human rights and the fight against corruption and impunity, thereby achieving a more sustainable response to instability-inducing factors.

There is a risk that the pandemic could be used as a pretext to restrict the political and civic space, weaken commitments to peace processes, ongoing post-conflict efforts, such as reconciliation and reintegration mechanisms, or transitional justice mechanisms, under the guise of sanitary requirements. In that context, careful attention should be given to the possible negative impact of the pandemic on previously agreed political road maps and electoral processes. A balance must be found between effective and adequate implementation of health measures and the preservation of important peacebuilding processes.

We should also advocate for the pursuit of global health security. Previous health crises have highlighted how coordination among actors across the development-humanitarian-peace nexus and a whole-of-United Nations approach — both at Headquarters and in the field — is key to ensuring a coordinated and effective response. The international human rights framework also provides a critical foundation for sustaining peace. We welcome the steps taken thus far and encourage further use of human rights mechanisms — special procedures, treaty bodies and

the universal periodic review — by the United Nations peace and security and development pillars.

Building inclusive societies, based on the protection and promotion of human rights and gender equality, remains the best defence against conflict, poverty, inequality and exclusion. We need to keep focusing our collective efforts on conflict prevention. The costs — human and financial — of responding to crises instead of preventing them are evident. Comprehensive cross-pillar approaches are, therefore, fundamental to sustaining peace.

Peacekeeping operations play a major role also in this regard, alongside their intensive technical and logistical support to national Governments and their deterrence effect against actors aimed at destabilizing the political processes.

The Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) continues to play a unique role in bringing together development and security. This linkage is of crucial importance to ensure that the United Nations, its Member States and other relevant stakeholders act together in preventing the recurrence of conflicts. The country-specific configurations are instrumental to implementing the PBC mandate. Their concrete focus on the field is one of the main reasons. We need this permanent feedback loop between headquarters and the actors on the ground. It enables the promotion of local appropriation and a better integration and coordination of regional and international efforts. Sustaining peace can only be achieved if peacebuilding is implemented in partnership with local communities, including women and youth.

Therefore, we 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 them to the new COVID-19 pandemic.

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

Annex 48**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Qatar to the United Nations, Alya Ahmed Saif Al-Thani**

[Original: Arabic]

We would like to thank Mrs. Retno Lestari Priansari Marsudi, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, for convening this important thematic meeting and giving us the opportunity to participate. We would also express our appreciation to Secretary-General António Guterres and former Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for their participation, as well as to Ms. Sarah Cliffe, Director of the Centre on International Cooperation at New York University, for her valuable briefing.

Since the beginning of this year, the crisis caused by the spread of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) has been the primary concern of countries and communities around the world. It has also unexpectedly become the concern of the United Nations and the Security Council. This is because the disease affects not only those who contract it but everyone on Earth.

Anyone who reads the reports published recently by various United Nations bodies and agencies will note that the pandemic has had complex and overlapping effects on security, economic and social affairs and development. Consequently, the pandemic will have long-term effects on peace and on the possibility of sustainable peace. As with peacebuilding and peacekeeping, a sharp focus on security would be unhelpful; it is necessary to address the social, economic, political and developmental dimensions of crises. The same holds true for addressing the various dimensions of the response to the COVID-19 pandemic. That response must be integrated and coordinated, and the approach taken must be informed by peacebuilding, not solely by health considerations.

In that connection, from the very beginning Qatar has taken action at the local level in its response to the COVID-19 pandemic, including precautionary measures and by marshalling the resources needed to enhance health care, while taking other steps to mitigate the impact of the disease, such as developing distance-learning methods for students in the aftermath of school closures.

Alongside those national measures, Qatar has made concerted efforts at the international level, including by providing emergency financial and in-kind assistance to help address the threat of the pandemic. Qatar has also continued to support sustainable development, taking into account the fact that the coronavirus crisis has diverted the country's attention from those priorities, which are more vital now than ever, particularly in order to respond effectively to the coronavirus and its impact.

The COVID-19 crisis is taking a much greater toll on conflict-affected countries and communities, as well as on those in the transition and post-conflict stages, given the fragility of their economies, the deterioration of their health systems, humanitarian crises and social, security and logistical challenges that make more difficult or hinder outright preventive and therapeutic measures to counter the virus and its effects.

In view of the manifold threats posed by the pandemic, it is, at the very least, imperative to put an end to armed conflicts and silence guns, so that all efforts and energy can be devoted to combating the common enemy, namely, the coronavirus, and to prevent the spread of the pandemic from reversing peacebuilding gains. In that connection, we would like to reaffirm the Secretary-General's call for a comprehensive ceasefire and the substance of resolution 2532 (2020).

In the light of the repercussions that this pandemic, and any similar crises to come, may have for peacebuilding and peacekeeping, the Security Council and the Peacebuilding Commission have an important role to play in an integrated and coordinated response. Moreover, the missions that peacekeeping operations carry out to support peacebuilding efforts are just as important. Therefore, the continuity of those operations throughout the COVID-19 pandemic must be ensured. Qatar, which is cognizant of the need to maintain the continuity of the Organization's work in these particular circumstances, has facilitated the movement of United Nations staff to mitigate the impact of the pandemic on the activities of peacekeeping missions.

The coronavirus is a global threat that is not confined to a single country. As such, it cannot be addressed without a joint international effort. The United Nations and its agencies and programmes have an indispensable role to play in coordinating efforts to control the spread of the virus and address its implications for sustainable peace and development. Qatar is therefore committed to supporting the Organization's work and emphasizes the importance of international and regional cooperation, in spite of unilateral actions that hinder cooperation and coordination under the auspices of international and regional organizations. What everyone needs in these extraordinary circumstances is for all efforts and energies to be directed towards addressing the coronavirus and other global threats to security, peace and stability for the sake of all, without distinction.

Annex 49**Statement by the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea to the United Nations, Cho Hyun**

My delegation takes this opportunity to commend you, Mr. President, for having convened today's timely open debate of the Security Council on "Pandemics and the challenges of sustaining peace". We would also like to thank today's eminent briefers, Secretary-General António Guterres, former Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and the Director of the Center on International Cooperation, New York University, Sarah Cliffe, for their extensive and insightful interventions today.

We are now collectively coming to terms with the understanding that the challenges facing conflict-vulnerable countries and populations have multiplied due to the prolonged coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. Therefore, the international community needs to pay increased attention to the unique situations of such vulnerable countries, and my delegation feels that today's discussion is essential, as it reflects a common response to this challenge.

As noted in the unanimously adopted resolution 2532 (2020), it is crucial to recognize that the COVID-19 outbreak could reverse the peacebuilding gains made by countries in transition and post-conflict countries. With that in mind, the Republic of Korea hopes that the Security Council can maintain its focus on this issue and contribute to strengthening resilience for such countries. We also hope to see more cooperative and constructive discussions on this critical topic moving forward.

Against that backdrop, the Republic of Korea would like to highlight the following four points.

First, we must carefully assess the pandemic's impacts on domestic and international conflicts. Furthermore, based on the shared assessment of conflict risks, we must also integrate a conflict-sensitivity lens when we establish international response strategies for countries in need. Due to the socioeconomic shocks of COVID-19, we face the possibility of a surge in conflicts. As such, it is high time to scale up our investment in the United Nations system-wide peacebuilding process in order to prevent a reversal of the peacebuilding gains that we have accomplished over the years. At the same time, we also need to consider COVID-19's impacts on inequality, which, of course, can also be a driver of conflict on its own. In that connection, it is critical to adopt an inclusive approach in any response plan to aid conflict-vulnerable countries. By increasing the engagement of civil society and local communities, we can also help deal with the root causes of conflict more effectively.

In that respect, my delegation hopes that the 2020 peacebuilding architecture review can serve as an important opportunity to open up a new chapter for the entire United Nations system to introduce a conflict-sensitivity lens to the overall system-wide approach.

Secondly, my delegation would like to emphasize that as this unprecedented pandemic continues, it is crucial to strengthen the coherence of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) with the Security Council and enhance the complementary relationship between the two bodies. We take this opportunity to commend the leadership of the PBC in showing agility and flexibility in responding to the crisis. We also hope that the PBC can catalyse its unique convening power to serve as a hinge in linking the three pillars of the United Nations system. As noted in the letter from the group of independent eminent persons addressed to the President of the Security Council,

“the Peacebuilding Commission and the Security Council would benefit from enhanced interaction, particularly concerning peace operation mandates” (*S/2020/678, annex II, p. 8*).

Thirdly, we would also like to bring more attention to the role of the United Nations and the importance of its capacity-building, particularly in the areas of technology and health care. Recently we have been witnessing a trend where peacebuilding mandates are regarded as an important element of peacekeeping operations’ missions. The COVID-19 pandemic continues to place restrictions on implementing peacebuilding mandates such as engagement with the local community. With that in mind, it is now vital to redouble our efforts in applying the latest technology, particularly to assist missions in areas related to telecommunications, intelligence-gathering and enhancing digital technology. Such efforts would go a long way towards offering timely support to those in the field striving to carry out their mandates in the time of COVID-19.

Additionally, to support the medical capacities of vulnerable host countries, peacekeeping operations must go further in building up their own medical capacities. As the host country of the 2021 United Nations Peacekeeping Ministerial Conference, to be held in Seoul next April, the Republic of Korea hopes that there will be elevated interest on these two topics — technology and medical capacity — and looks forward to further developing in-depth discussions on those issues at the Ministerial.

Fourthly, with regard to the financing situation related to sustaining peace, my delegation is concerned that financing for peacebuilding could diminish as a result of the surge in humanitarian aid related to the COVID-19 crisis. We hope to continue to discuss innovative solutions with a view to achieving a breakthrough on the issue. In line with Korea’s strong national commitment to peacebuilding, which includes our tenure as Chair and then Vice-Chair of the PBC, we are proud to not only contribute to the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) each year but also to increase our annual contributions. However, we are concerned that funding for peacebuilding activities, including contributions to the PBF, does not yet meet the current demand from the countries in need. Therefore, broadening and diversifying the donor base is essential, particularly alongside continued cooperation with the international financial institutions.

In his report on peacebuilding and sustaining peace, contained in document S/2018/43, Secretary-General António Guterres suggested exploring opportunities for contributions from the private sector. Considering the current fiscal realities, we hope that that suggestion will be duly considered.

COVID-19 is an ongoing crisis that continues to hit the peacebuilding and sustainable development sectors of the international community hard. However, we can also use this crisis as an opportunity to refocus our discussion on the 2020 peacebuilding architecture review. In that regard, we hope that the sustaining peace approach can be more firmly established in the United Nations system. The Republic of Korea, as a member of the PBC and a member of the Group of Friends of Solidarity for Global Health Security, will continue to strive to make an active contribution to the enhancement of sustaining peace in response to this unprecedented pandemic.

Annex 50

Statement by the Permanent Representative of Romania to the United Nations, Ion Jinga

I would like to commend the Indonesian presidency for having convened this timely high-level open debate of the Security Council on “Pandemics and the challenges of sustaining peace”.

Allow me also to express my deep appreciation for the informative briefings given by Secretary-General António Guterres; Mr. Ban Ki-moon, former Secretary-General; and Ms. Sarah Cliffe, Director of the Center on International Cooperation at New York University.

Romania aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union. I will make now a few remarks in my national capacity.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a devastating effect worldwide, affecting in particular vulnerable communities — women and children, people with disabilities, the marginalized, displaced persons and refugees — and exacerbating already existing inequalities. As has been reiterated, the pandemic is adding yet another layer of complexity to already fragile situations. The pandemic is not merely a health crisis. Its direct and indirect consequences, including unemployment, food insecurity, lack of access to basic services and the inability to send remittances, can act as risk multipliers and increase tensions and fuel instability. By exacerbating the drivers of conflict, the pandemic directly undermines the social fabric of societies. Its corrosive effects span the social, economic and political dimensions. The way in which we address this unprecedented challenge will represent one of the biggest tests for our global solidarity and our capacity to react collectively.

We are of the view that the pandemic poses a significant threat for hard-won peacebuilding and development gains. Resolution 2532 (2020) recognizes that the COVID-19 pandemic is likely to endanger international peace and security. Disruptions have already been noticed across the United Nations system, impacting peacekeeping operations and special political missions and affecting the work of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC). The pandemic has the potential of tipping countries over the edge into violent conflict, especially countries emerging from conflict or fragile States.

In that context, we stand fully behind the Secretary-General’s appeal for a global ceasefire. Warring parties need to step back from hostilities, silence the guns and concentrate on the common enemy, the pandemic. By opening precious windows for diplomacy, as the Secretary-General himself has stated, the ceasefire could create more opportunities for building peace.

The pandemic has brought to light that the root causes of instability, violence and conflict can run the entire political, development and human rights spectrum. Hence, the humanitarian development-peace nexus must be the framework within which the United Nations system, Member States, specialized agencies and other relevant actors should work to achieve inclusive sustainable development and sustain peace. An adequate response requires a whole-of-system and whole-of-society approach. We must step away from thinking in silos. In that connection, we salute the Secretary-General’s efforts towards a United Nations-wide response, and we stand behind the measures proposed in his policy papers to address the impact of the pandemic by using a multidimensional and cross-pillar response.

Despite the dire picture, we believe that crises can reveal opportunities. At the institutional level, we are of the view that the PBC, in its advisory role to the Security Council, can provide the Council with particular insights on regional

and country-specific situations. The PBC has a unique capacity to foster greater coherence and coordination, thus contributing to building stronger partnerships among the various national, regional and international actors. We reiterate our strong support for the United Nations peacebuilding architecture and the 2020 peacebuilding architecture review process and their instrumental role in creating synergies among security, political and development actors.

Additionally, we encourage the continuing involvement of regional and subregional organizations, and emphasize the importance of using their existing and potential capabilities to address the pandemic. Owing to their knowledge of their respective regions, regional organizations are well-positioned to understand their specific dynamics. They also offer a deep and accurate portrayal of regional perspectives and dynamics. The whole international community can benefit from the experiences of different regional organizations to develop best practices and approaches to development and security concerns.

Romania has been a steadfast supporter of regional organizations. In 2005, under the Romanian presidency of the Council, we promoted the very first United Nations resolution on cooperation with regional organizations, resolution 1631 (2005). Nowadays, the practice of cooperating with regional organizations has been institutionalized as one of the cornerstones of the peace and security architecture, but Romania was the first country to enshrine that item on the Council's agenda, in 2005.

As we mark the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations this year, and as we find ourselves confronted with different and more complex challenges, this crisis highlights the opportunity to build back better. The pandemic has made inequalities and fractures in society all the more obvious, making it easier for Governments to target specific objectives in an effort to rebuild. We strongly believe that we can do that by adopting people-centred and conflict-sensitive responses and by giving countries the opportunity to renegotiate their social contracts through inclusive and comprehensive dialogue.

Secretary-General António Guterres spoke about the need for networked multilateralism in which the United Nations works hand-in-hand with regional organizations, international financial institutions, development banks, specialized agencies and civil society to bring multilateralism to the people. Obviously, the international community is going through a crisis, but we have now the unique opportunity to come together and shape the "future we want, the United Nations we need" by pooling our energy, capacities and skills.

Annex 51**Statement by the Deputy Permanent Representative of Slovakia to the United Nations, Róbert Chatrnúch**

I thank you, Sir, for organizing this important debate on pandemics and the challenges of sustaining peace during these unprecedented, challenging times for us all. I also wish to thank Secretary-General António Guterres, former Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and Ms. Sarah Cliffe, Director of the Center on International Cooperation at New York University, for their insightful briefings.

My delegation associates itself with the statement submitted by the observer of the European Union (annex 29). Allow me to make a few additional observations.

We are witnessing direct and secondary consequences of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic interacting with pre-existing humanitarian crises, adding another layer of complexity to already fragile situations and weak governance and health systems and disproportionately affecting the most vulnerable populations, who experience lack of access to basic services and health care, which impacts their livelihoods and social protection. The pandemic threatens to reverse sustaining peace and development gains made by transition and post-conflict countries.

United Nations peacekeeping operations have a special role to play in these difficult circumstances in support of local community efforts to manage the pandemic. Slovakia supports the robust and comprehensive approach taken by the United Nations to ensure that complicated political processes continue, stability is maintained, civilians are protected and the pandemic is contained.

I would like to reaffirm Slovakia's support for the Secretary-General's reforms aimed at rendering United Nations peace operations a more effective tool in the promotion of peace and security and enhancing support for political processes in host countries. We highly commend the Secretary-General's leadership in this domain, including through the Action for Peacekeeping initiative, which has garnered a strong sense of ownership among Member States.

Slovakia has been an active troop- and police-contributing country since its admission to the United Nations. We currently have peacekeepers deployed in the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus and the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization missions, and have participated in military and civilian missions of the European Union, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

Slovakia fully supports the 2020 review of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture, which offers a timely opportunity for adapting to the immediate challenges posed by the pandemic with regard to sustaining peace. My country underscores the need for stronger partnerships with international and national health and financial institutions and reaffirms the advisory, convening and bridging roles of the Peacebuilding Commission in supporting a coordinated and coherent international response to the crisis.

We need to enhance interlinkages between peacekeeping missions for a more effective use of peace, security and stability instruments, including through integrated planning, implementation and assessment to ensure consistency and coherence. The COVID-19 pandemic requires effective, agile and responsive United Nations peace operations.

Last but not least, we should keep working to smooth the transition from peacekeeping to peacebuilding and to ensure a joined-up approach across the United Nations system, donors and other stakeholders.

All reviews of peacekeeping mandates must consider exit strategies that seek to help lay the foundation for long-term sustainable peace. Member States increasingly view security sector reform (SSR), as embedded in resolution 2151 (2014), as an important priority for peacekeeping, including with regard to the timely conclusion of peacekeeping missions. For years, Slovakia has identified SSR as one of the key elements for effective conflict prevention and successful post-conflict rebuilding and stabilization. The direct experience from many United Nations peace missions and operations clearly shows that nationally led and inclusive SSR is key to developing security sector institutions that are non-discriminatory, representative of the population and capable of effectively responding to specific security needs.

As many have said, peacekeeping is a unique tool, but the pursuit of long-lasting political solutions is critical, and the mandates of peacekeeping missions must continue to evolve with the context and needs on the ground.

The United Nations peacekeeping architecture needs to adapt to the new types of challenges that the world is facing, such as climate change and environmental degradation. Particular attention needs to be given to how the COVID-19 pandemic is creating new problems and amplifying existing ones, such as socioeconomic divides, gender inequality and increased insecurity for women and girls and other vulnerable groups.

Slovakia strongly supports the Secretary-General's call for a cessation of hostilities and the implementation of a global ceasefire, as well as an urgent and coordinated response to the COVID-19 pandemic through three lines of action — tackling the health emergency, focusing on the social impact of the crisis and the economic response to it, and working to build back better.

Slovakia encourages a collective response to the COVID-19 crisis, which, if adequately addressed, may also bring opportunities for advancing peace processes and enhancing multilateralism.

Annex 52**Statement by the Permanent Mission of Slovenia to the United Nations**

We wish to thank the Indonesian presidency of the Security Council for this high-level open debate, the Secretary-General for his statement and former Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and Ms. Sarah Cliffe, Director of the Center on International Cooperation at New York University, for their valuable contributions.

No matter how we put it, the world is facing the biggest challenge and danger since the inception of the United Nations, and we were not prepared. The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) crisis has resulted in a severe health crisis and has had devastating social and economic consequences.

The role of United Nations peacekeeping missions is vital in addressing armed conflict and post-conflict situations. It is also clear that pandemics cannot be treated solely as a health issue. With the COVID-19 outbreak, people in conflict zones are now faced with yet another life-threatening danger, and we are faced with the double challenge of implementing and sustaining peacebuilding efforts around the world.

Slovenia emphasizes the role of peacekeeping as a tool for the international community to maintain and safeguard peace and security. Slovenia is committed to maintaining a presence in peacekeeping and improving training. We support the Action for Peacekeeping initiative and the Declaration of Shared Commitments on United Nations Peacekeeping Operations to make peacekeeping operations an even more credible mechanism for establishing peace in crisis areas in many parts of the world. But is it absolutely necessary that we deploy well-trained and well-equipped peacekeepers, with robust and wide mandates that include a human rights component.

In Slovenia we have already come to the conclusion that we need to increase our resilience. To that end, we are investing in additional airlift capabilities for the Slovenian Armed Forces. The United Nations and its specialized agencies, for their part, could make an important contribution by providing greater transparency and enhancing their early-warning capabilities.

Ensuring access to clean water as a key factor in ensuring global health and food security is an immediate and long-term challenges that COVID-19 poses for peacebuilding and sustaining peace in countries affected by, and emerging from, conflict. The use of 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 contagious diseases.

This pandemic has also forced us to become more creative, think differently and seek solutions elsewhere. Our attempts to better cope with the pandemic and sustain peace should go hand-in-hand with strengthened cooperation between 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 with regard to the very fragmented area of water.

Let me conclude by saying that multilateralism is not obsolete. On the contrary, it is the necessary guarantor of democratic dialogue and promoter of progressive solutions to many problems and challenges we face as a global family. Multilateralism, as the sum of international cooperation, with the United Nations at its core, is not a luxury, nor is it an option. It is a necessity.

The Security Council holds the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. That is why upholding and implementing international agreements and norms and ensuring the rule of law, including through ongoing peacebuilding efforts and mitigating new coronavirus-related risks for fragile peace, is the basis of a functioning and democratic international community.

Annex 53**Statement by the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of Spain to the United Nations,
Pablo Gutiérrez Segú Berdullas**

[Original: Spanish]

I align myself with the statement submitted by the observer of the European Union (annex 29).

I would like to thank the Indonesian presidency of the Security Council for organizing this open debate to continue assessing the threats the coronavirus disease pandemic poses to multilateralism. In that regard, I thank Secretary-General António Guterres, former Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, and Ms. Sarah Cliffe, Director of the Center on International Cooperation of New York University, for their statements.

Spain is committed to inclusive multilateralism, especially now that the pandemic is a threat to multilateralism. The current crisis must be resolved through universal agreements and common efforts. In that regard, resolution 2532 (2020) was a great achievement, and Spain will continue to firmly support the Secretary-General's call for a global ceasefire.

The Secretary-General's call continues to be important because the pandemic response must be based on the peace-humanitarian assistance-development-human rights nexus. The current crisis consists of three major challenges.

First, movement restrictions can contribute to the curtailment of human rights and hamper humanitarian access and development cooperation.

Secondly, social distancing forces us to reimagine new ways to effectively mediate peace processes.

Thirdly, the global ceasefire must be accompanied by adequate humanitarian tools and relevant development mechanisms in order to build resilient societies.

Our actions must continue to be guided by the United Nations. The Peacebuilding Commission is a key player in the management of the crisis. Our actions must be based on an integrated approach that recognizes and makes possible the effective participation of women in the pandemic response and in peace processes. Similarly, we must broaden our approach to include mechanisms for the prevention, promotion and respect of human rights and protection of civilians, with special consideration for people in vulnerable situations.

I conclude by recalling that, in the greatest crisis of the twenty-first century, the international community must reinforce multilateralism, the centrality of the United Nations and the role of the World Health Organization. Only then will we be able to overcome these challenges.

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

[Original: French]

I would like to thank Indonesia for organizing today's public debate and the briefers for their briefings.

The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has evolved from a health crisis into an unprecedented economic and social crisis with uncertain medium- and long-term consequences. It has already presented a major challenge to international peace and security, as well as to conflict prevention and the sustainability of peace. The consequences threaten to reverse the gains made in peacebuilding and development, further repress human rights, increase social and political tensions and give rise to new conflicts. The Secretary-General's call for an immediate global ceasefire, his report on the socioeconomic impacts of the pandemic, his human rights policy paper and the reports from field missions and country teams clearly highlight these risks. The impact of the pandemic is being felt in all situations on the Security Council's agenda.

Sustainability and prevention are at the heart of any effective and sustainable response to the pandemic. The Security Council must assume its responsibility in the following three areas.

First of all, Switzerland welcomes the unanimous echo given in resolution 2532 (2020) to the Secretary-General's appeal. The resolution contains important measures on delivering humanitarian assistance and maintaining space for diplomacy. It must be translated into specific follow-up measures for situations on the Council's agenda, such as in the Sahel area, Syria, Yemen and the Sudan, where the intensity of violence is on the rise and the humanitarian situation is deteriorating. The Council must demand that the parties to armed conflicts guarantee rapid, unimpeded and sustainable humanitarian access so that the needs of populations are met. The Council must put all its weight behind mediation efforts and efforts to ensure the sustainability of peace.

Secondly, for a coordinated and integrated response to COVID-19, Switzerland calls on the Council to strengthen collaboration with other actors, such as the World Bank, regional organizations, national authorities and civil society. Such collaboration should include a joint analysis that reveals the risks posed by the pandemic, takes into account socioeconomic dimensions and addresses the root causes of conflicts. The Peacebuilding Commission, which has been particularly active since the beginning of the pandemic, plays a key advisory role in supporting the Security Council in this regard.

The Security Council needs to work better with human rights bodies and mechanisms that rightly highlight the accelerating impact of COVID-19 on human rights violations, which are often early warning signs of future conflict. The consultations for the review of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture in Geneva, organized by Switzerland, also highlighted the role of the humanitarian and disarmament communities. Switzerland calls on the Council to further integrate these different sources of expertise, including by inviting such representatives to participate in its work.

Thirdly, efforts to take COVID-19 into account in the renewal of mission mandates are progressing, but they are still insufficient. Switzerland calls on the Council to strengthen mission mandates to enable them to play a leading role in responding to the pandemic, in improving the resilience of the countries where

they are engaged and in sustaining peace. Strengthening these mandates in support of inclusive and accountable State institutions, the protection of civilians, human rights monitoring and the inclusion of women and youth is essential for a sustainable response to the pandemic and for peacebuilding.

Together we must strengthen solidarity and maintain our support for prevention and peacebuilding efforts, including through adequately funding such relevant entities as the Peacebuilding Fund. Despite the immense challenges, COVID-19 is also an opportunity for building back better and for increased commitment to sustaining peace.

Annex 55

Statement by the Permanent Mission of Thailand to the United Nations

At the outset, Thailand welcomes the Secretary-General's recently released report on peacebuilding and sustaining peace (S/2020/773), which was submitted against the backdrop of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. As highlighted in the report, the COVID-19 pandemic and its consequences can lead to increased tensions and violence and may exacerbate existing drivers of conflict and undermine social and economic resilience. Moreover, the economic, security and social effects of COVID-19 are likely to cause greater instability in conflict-prone countries. Therefore, the pandemic serves to underscore the need to create strong partnerships among all stakeholders to find tangible short- and long-term solutions in response to the pandemic.

Thailand wishes to highlight our vision and experience that could contribute to the multilateral efforts aimed at addressing the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic in the peacebuilding context.

First, Thailand encourages peacekeeping operations to continue carrying out their mandates while also further assisting host countries in their coronavirus response both in the short and long term. Against the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic, peacekeeping operations remain an integral tool in multilateral strategies to help establish a sustainable environment for achieving sustaining peace and sustainable development, including supporting the public health aspect. We believe that early peacebuilding tasks undertaken by peacekeepers would beneficially contribute to host countries' long-term development, including through capacity-building activities, logistics, awareness-raising and supporting the establishment of health-care infrastructure.

For its part, Thailand, through its Horizontal Military Engineering Company, has helped in the construction of COVID-19 screening facilities at the compound of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) in response to the pandemic at its early stage. It has also established a learning centre in the UNMISS camp to share with the local community our best practices on agriculture, water and land management, and health care, as well as our sufficiency-economy philosophy to help improve the people's livelihood. We truly believe that this is the face of forward-looking and sustainable peacekeeping.

Secondly, Thailand believes that South-South and triangular cooperation could be another innovative approach for creating peacebuilding partnerships. Because it is essential to mobilize common efforts to enhance inclusive peace and development, South-South cooperation could be a complementary path to revitalizing and renewing supports to sustaining inclusive development and peace. We also encourage enhanced exchanges of views and dialogue among countries, regional and subregional organizations and the Security Council as well as other United Nations bodies, in order to achieve synergy and ensure complementarity. As a development partner in South-South cooperation, Thailand has been constructively engaged with a focus on promoting community development with security and resilience, increasing mutual understanding and laying fundamental preconditions for creating contexts for peace and stability.

Equally important, Thailand firmly believes that peace does not exist in a vacuum. It is intrinsically linked with sustainable development and respect for human rights. We therefore believe that a comprehensive people-centred approach to peacekeeping is imperative. Also, inclusive national ownership is a prerequisite for successful peacebuilding and for sustaining peace.

Thirdly, inclusive multi-stakeholder approaches could ensure long-term solutions in conflict-affected areas. In conflict-affected States, where health-care systems are already weakened, the pandemic will worsen the situation for vulnerable groups, particularly the elderly, who are more prone to the virus. Women and children, as well as persons with disabilities, will face greater difficulties in gaining access to health care and other essential services. It is therefore imperative for all stakeholders to create strong partnerships, share best practices and provide socioeconomic opportunity to vulnerable groups through sustainable development approaches. We must place importance in including vulnerable groups in all peace processes at all stages in order to ensure consistent peacebuilding progress and provide long-term solutions for all challenges, including public-health crises.

Last but not least, the bridging role among relevant United Nations organs could foster cross-pillar approaches to the pandemic in the peace and security context. The COVID-19 pandemic could pose challenges on socioeconomic issues beyond those related to the immediate health and humanitarian impacts. Accordingly, the response to the pandemic requires systemic approaches for effective preparedness and solutions. A stronger and more coherent cross-pillar approach would lead to more efficiency in supporting countries to become more sustainable and resilient, which will contribute to a more peaceful society. Indeed, the ongoing review of the peacebuilding architecture in 2020 will be another critical milestone for all relevant actors to formally explore ways to further strengthen the work on peacebuilding. Thailand believes that peacebuilding and sustaining peace should be integrated through all pillars of the United Nations engagement at all stages of conflict and in all its dimensions.

As we confront today's challenges from the COVID-19 pandemic, achieving the goal of sustaining peace has never been more important or relevant. Therefore, in order to achieve the goal of sustaining peace more effectively, we must calibrate our ambitions to match our strengths and needs, enhance and modernize our capacities, and stay relevant.

Annex 56

Statement by the Permanent Representative of the United Arab Emirates to the United Nations, Lana Nusseibeh

The United Arab Emirates would like to thank Indonesia for ensuring the Security Council's continued focus on coronavirus disease (COVID-19) and its effect on the most vulnerable people. It is already abundantly clear that the pandemic is worsening conditions that both lead to and amplify conflict and violence, from hunger to disruption of basic services to hate speech. These impacts serve to underscore that States Members of the United Nations and the Organization itself must take a holistic approach to peace and security. Accordingly, we would like to share four thoughts on how the Security Council and its partners can work to sustain and foster peace in the face of the pandemic and other shocks.

First, we welcome the precedent set by resolution 2532 (2020) and its demand for ceasefires in the face of pandemics. The United Arab Emirates was one of the first countries to endorse the Secretary-General's original appeal for a global ceasefire in response to COVID-19, as we believe humanitarian pauses are a powerful tool for de-escalating conflicts, providing space for political processes and slowing the spread of disease, all with substantial associated peacebuilding benefits.

Secondly, Member States and the United Nations system should continue to empower Resident Coordinators in order to facilitate the international response to COVID-19 and enhance the work of the Organization on preparedness and peacebuilding. Resident Coordinators are best placed to ensure that there is lockstep coordination among the United Nations development, humanitarian and security pillars, with a view to achieving collective outcomes. As one dimension of coordination, we would expect heads of missions authorized by the Security Council to systematically liaise with Resident Coordinators in order to identify the contributions they can make to pandemic recovery and to longer-term peace and security, on the one hand, and the support missions need from other agencies, on the other hand. The role of Resident Coordinators should also be front and centre in ensuring that the work of the Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Fund coheres with the overall United Nations portfolio in a country.

Thirdly, we must accelerate efforts aimed at mainstreaming gender in peace and security. The Council and other United Nations bodies have established that gender equality is central to durable peace and economic recovery, and we have unfortunately seen the pandemic — like other crises — have a disproportionate impact on women and girls. Accordingly, the pandemic is a further prompt to ensure that the Council is always briefed on the role of women in peacebuilding and peace processes, that Council-mandated missions have sufficient gender resources and that United Nations peace and security activities have clear gender metrics linked to personnel performance evaluations. To support mainstreaming, my country has made gender equality a cross-cutting requirement of its foreign aid by 2021, including in conflict-affected countries, and we have completed two cycles of training for women peacekeeping training in partnership with UN-Women at the Khawla Bint Al Azwar Military School for Women, in Abu Dhabi.

Fourthly, we urge the United Nations to move towards anticipatory action. If there are credible warnings around health, climate change, violence and other factors that intensify or enable conflict, they should be matched by increased and coordinated development, humanitarian and peacebuilding activity to prevent or mitigate conflict. The United Arab Emirates is also working towards that end during the pandemic: of the over 100 countries to which we have shipped medical aid since March, a large percentage are countries on the Council's agenda. Our purpose is

to reduce the pandemic's intensification of fragility. Similarly, risk-informed early warnings could result in the Security Council's rapid mobilization of mandates and resources. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the World Food Programme, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and other humanitarian agencies have taken steps towards an anticipatory approach, including in their Security Council briefings. Their experience could inform how the Council and the United Nations system more broadly allocate resources and staff earlier with a view to preventing conflict.
