

**Security Council**

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**Letter dated 2 May 2021 from the Permanent Representative of
China to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General**

In its capacity as President of the Security Council for the month of May, China intends to organize a high-level open debate on the theme “Peace and Security in Africa: addressing root causes of conflict while promoting post-pandemic recovery in Africa” on 19 May 2021.

In order to guide the discussions on this topic, China has prepared a concept note (see annex).

Member States and observers wishing to participate are invited to submit a written statement of approximately 500 words through the eSpeakers module on the e-deleGATE+ platform (see enclosure).

I should be grateful if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) **Zhang Jun**
Permanent Representative
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the
People’s Republic of China to the United Nations



Annex to the letter dated 2 May 2021 from the Permanent Representative of China to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: Chinese]

Concept note for the Security Council open debate on the theme “Peace and security in Africa: addressing root causes of conflict while promoting post-pandemic recovery in Africa”

I. Introduction

1. During its presidency of the Security Council for the month of May, China intends to hold an open debate on the theme “Peace and security in Africa: addressing root causes of conflict while promoting post-pandemic recovery in Africa” on 19 May 2021.

II. Background

A. Post-pandemic recovery in Africa facing more difficulties and challenges

2. The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic is an unprecedented global crisis with profound and lasting impacts on global public health and the political, social and economic domains, among other areas. Such impacts will be particularly apparent in conflict-affected countries in Africa, especially in the medium and long term. As COVID-19 vaccination continues to roll out on a global scale, post-pandemic recovery is becoming the highest priority in the next step of international efforts. Owing to the lack of access to vaccines, conflict-affected countries in Africa have become the weak link in global post-pandemic recovery. The world cannot recover from the pandemic when Africa is left behind. It is a shared mission of the international community to help conflict-affected countries in Africa to cope with the challenges of COVID-19 and to promote post-pandemic recovery.

B. Impacts of the pandemic on conflict situations in Africa

3. As Secretary-General António Guterres clearly noted, the COVID-19 pandemic has profoundly affected peace and security around the globe, posing various challenges. Conflicts in Africa account for more than 50 per cent of the items on the agenda of the Security Council and 70 per cent of peace and security situations under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations. Since the outbreak of COVID-19, the root causes of conflicts in Africa have become an even more salient issue, including as outlined below:

- Public health and humanitarian crises have been exacerbated. As the pandemic continues to spread, weak public health systems in Africa are under severe stress. Both national and international constraints have affected the vaccination efforts in African countries, with humanitarian crises worsening in many parts of the continent.
- Peace and reconciliation processes in Africa are facing challenges. Affected by the pandemic and other shock factors, some diplomatic good offices cannot be conducted smoothly. In some countries, peace and reconciliation processes have

stalled. In others, electoral processes have been disrupted, leading to escalated tensions. Terrorist groups and violent extremist forces are taking advantage of the pandemic to promote their campaigns. United Nations peacekeeping operations have been hindered from carrying out their normal duties.

- Economic development has been significantly affected by the pandemic. Sub-Saharan Africa is suffering its first recession in 25 years. The pandemic has taken a heavy toll on economic growth and development across the continent in numerous areas, especially the private sector, which provides livelihoods to 300 million people throughout Africa, consequently increasing extreme poverty and social inequality. Statistics from the World Bank show that COVID-19 pushed 26 million people in sub-Saharan Africa into extreme poverty in 2020, causing great concern over food security in parts of the region.
- The international community should lend a helping hand. The pandemic has further undermined the ability of governments in Africa to deliver social services. The issue of the continent's 25.2 million refugees and displaced persons has become more pronounced. Those factors can all become triggers for unrest and violent conflict.

III. Focus of discussion

4. The debate is aimed at enhancing the Security Council's understanding of the difficulties and challenges of post-pandemic recovery and the impact of the pandemic on conflict situations in Africa and to explore ways to better help African countries to advance post-pandemic recovery, promote sustainable development and address the root causes of conflicts. The Council may wish to discuss the following questions:

(a) Successful post-pandemic recovery first and foremost requires keeping the pandemic under control. How can we help African countries to combat the pandemic and ensure equal access to vaccines for conflict-affected countries in Africa? How can we improve the public health system in African countries and strengthen capacity-building to better meet future challenges? What more could be done to encourage parties to conflicts in Africa to respond to the call for a global ceasefire?

(b) Sustainable development contributes to durable peace. What efforts can the international community make to help African countries to advance economic recovery and better implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063 of the African Union, in particular in terms of eradicating poverty, improving people's livelihood and enhancing food security, as well as in terms of infrastructure, education and employment? How can the United Nations peacebuilding efforts be better leveraged in that regard?

(c) Good governance is a building block for social stability. How can we help African countries to mitigate the impact and influence of the pandemic on state governance? How can we support African governments in strengthening their capacity-building efforts, including with respect to enhancing the rule of law and increasing efficiency and transparency in decision-making? How can we help African countries to improve social cohesion and solidarity and to create synergy in the pursuit of post-pandemic recovery? What can be done to enable women and young people to fully carry out their roles in that process?

(d) The pandemic provides weighty proof that all the countries of the world form a community with a shared future. Post-pandemic recovery cannot be achieved without the central role of the United Nations. International solidarity and cooperation should be advanced while implementing the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. How can we gather global resources and generate consensus, so

as to better support African countries, including in medical, humanitarian and financial aspects? How can we uphold the key role of preventive diplomacy and United Nations peacekeeping operations? How can we improve cooperation and create synergy between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations in Africa, in particular the African Union?

IV. Format of the meeting

5. The meeting will be held in the form of a videoconference, to be presided over by the State Councillor and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, Wang Yi. The Security Council will hear briefings by the Secretary-General, António Guterres, the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme, Achim Steiner, and an observer for the African Union (to be confirmed). In accordance with the working methods of the Security Council during the pandemic, non-members of the Council may submit written statements.

Enclosure

[Original: English]

Guidance note: submission of written statements**Security Council open debate on the theme “Peace and security in Africa: addressing root causes of conflict while promoting post-pandemic recovery in Africa”**

With reference to the Security Council open debate on the theme “Peace and security in Africa: addressing root causes of conflict while promoting post-pandemic recovery in Africa”, to be held in the form of a videoconference on 19 May 2021, delegations may submit written statements through the eSpeakers module.

Member States wishing to do so should transmit their statements in Microsoft Word format with a cover letter, duly signed by the Permanent Representative or Chargé d’affaires and addressed to the President of the Security Council, no later than the date of the meeting, 19 May 2021. The statements will be published as part of an official compilation document containing the interventions submitted in connection with the open videoconference debate.

- Delegates are invited to contact their access focal points to be granted access to the eSpeakers module on the e-deleGATE+ platform.
- Delegates can submit written statements by clicking on the eSpeakers sub-item in the Security Council menu item.

For technical support related to user logins and passwords, please contact the Office of Information and Communication Technology Help Desk at 212-963-3333 or by email at missions-support@un.int.

For other questions related to the open debate, please contact the Security Council Affairs Division at dppa scsb3@un.org.
